Halton Virtual School & College
PP+ Policy
2026-2027

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Introduction

Pupil Premium grant funding is additional educational funding from central government allocated to schools and Virtual Schools for disadvantaged pupils including:

- Pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals, or have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years (referred to as Ever 6 FSM)
- Children previously in the care of a local authority or other state care, including children adopted from stated care or equivalent from outside England and Wales
- Children in the care of a local authority

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) element of the grant is specifically allocated to support children in care (CIC). This is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) who hold a statutory role within all local authorities with the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of all children in the care of the local authority.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is managed by the VSH based on the educational needs of the child as identified in the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP). The Virtual School Head ensures PP+ spend is linked to raising achievement for CIC pupils and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers. The VSH manages the budget, oversees PP+ spend for all CIC pupils and reports on its impact. Unlike a physical school the Virtual School does not have a discreet Governing Body. However, oversight and governance of the Virtual School is primarily undertaken by the Children in Care Partnership Board. In addition to this, the VSH provides regular reports to the Children in Care Council (CICC), Head teachers, senior leaders, elected members and Halton Safeguarding Children's Board (HSCB).

VSH have a key role to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential. For CIC, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others. For children previously in care, the VSH will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible.

****For the purpose of this policy, when referring to carers, we include foster carers, residential staff and parents****

Guidance on the allocation of PP+ grant 2026-27

PP+ is allocated for CIC from Reception year up to the end of Year 11 who are looked after for one day or more on the statistical return to DfE. The child or young person must be looked after by Halton Borough Council to receive funding from Halton's Virtual School. For Pre-School aged children, accessing a setting, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is allocated on a needs led basis.

The DfE have outlined that it is up to the VSH to decide on the allocation of funding in consultation with the child's school, social worker and carer to ensure that PP+ is used on evidenced informed interventions to support the child's educational needs. Halton Virtual School have adopted a child's needs led model and funding requests must be made through a

robust and high quality termly personal education plan (PEP) linked to SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely) targets. This means there is no set amount allocated to each individual or school.

The Virtual School have a duty to ensure that we can evidence the impact this funding has on the outcomes of our looked after children. The evidence of this will be monitored and recorded in the PEP. PP+ expenditure and impact will be shared in the Virtual School annual report.

What can PP+ be used for?

Funding can be used to enhance the education or life experiences of a CIC that is over and above the offer that would normally be provided by the school/setting, carer or agency within Children's Services. Requests can also be made for training that will support the professional development and expertise of adults working with children looked after by Halton Borough Council (HBC).

The funding can provide support at 3 levels:

- **Centrally funded resources**
- **Contribute towards school based initiatives/interventions**
- **Fund additional support and/or enrichment for individual CIC**

The Virtual School provides a core service of advice, training, monitoring, and advocacy to all schools who have Halton CIC on roll.

The following criteria will be used to determine the use of PP+ and priority **MUST** be given to closing the achievement gap.

1) **Academic Achievement**: Closing the gap with their peers with priority given to literacy/numeracy as core curriculum areas. Data collected in the PEP, teacher knowledge and the views of the child/young person/parent/carer/social worker/educational case worker will be used to identify if:
    - A child/young person is working at below age related expectation for their year group or is not on track to make the expected level of progress.
    - There are gaps in learning/particular aspects of learning or development where additional support is needed.
    - They would like support with a particular subject/aspect of learning. This may be an area of excellence where accelerated progress is being supported by PP+.
    - Referrals to external agencies that will support the young person to be ready to learn and able to access the curriculum with less barriers for example, Educational Psychology.
2) **Improving attendance**: If attendance is below 95% there should be consideration of strategies to improve attendance which may involve the use of PP+.
3) **Strategies/interventions to promote social and emotional well-being:** e.g. where the effects of attachment and developmental trauma are a barrier to learning or when there is a 'spike' in behaviours due to factors causing instability such as placement move which impacts on learning. It will **NOT** be used to pay for therapy/counselling by

outside providers where evidence has not been provided to show why Barnardo's or CAMHS are not undertaking this work. Additionally, strategies to reduce internal and external exclusion through external services could be considered

4) **School-led enrichment/extra-curricular activities**: e.g. in an area where the child shows an ability/interest/talent they want to follow.
5) Key points of **Transition** where additional support may be needed.
6) **Resources:** e.g. a child may need additional resources to promote physical development.

Centrally Funded

Funding is retained centrally by Halton Virtual School, including additional grants where appropriate in order to provide the following core offer:

- Book parcels (Reception & tailored parcels requested through PEPs)
- Storytime magazine (Primary)
- Packs for key transition points when requested through the PEP
- Virtual School staff to enable all CIC to have a named Education Caseworker from the Summer term of Pre-School to Year 13 as well as additional support services
- Training for Designated Teachers & DSL's for CIC and other staff who support our CIC, Previously In Care and those children with access to a social worker
- Training for Governors in all Halton Schools, Academies and colleges
- Training for all social workers
- Funding for Educational Psychology consultations and other commissioned services
- IT & data support, including Welfare Call for attendance and PEPs
- Laptops for those who need one to access education/learning (see the Virtual School Digital Device Policy for more information)

School Based Initiatives / Additional support and enrichment activities

Provision	**Guidance around provision**
Support the training of school/pre-school staff (over and above the offer provided free by the Virtual School)	Additional training can be requested through the virtual school.
Contribute toward school/pre-school based initiatives that support vulnerable learners (for example the setting up of Thrive or Nurture Spaces)	Initially a contribution up to half of the costs will be considered. Evidence of impact will be needed for any future funding requests.
1:1 after-school tuition for children at home or at school	This can be sourced through school or through the bank of tutors that the Virtual School have access to.

Provision	Guidance around provision
Equipment and resources for children and young people.	It is expected that carers allowances will cover the majority of these costs, however requests for specialist equipment will be considered.
Short term Funding to employ LSAs/support staff (In the case of requests for group interventions – the cost for the individual CIC only must be requested)	1:1 school based interventions (core areas) 1:1 ELSA/Pastoral support Group based social emotional and well-being support Interim support for a child who is under-going an Education Health and Care Plan Needs Assessment or where evidence is being gathered.
Access to Personalised/ alternative curriculum.	Review at least half termly, commissioned wherever possible by schools. This would usually consist of bespoke timetables. These plans need to be shared with the Virtual School with a weekly plan of how reintegration will happen. Further guidance can be accessed through the Virtual School team.
School trips and visits and school-led enrichment/extra-curricular activities/opportunities that support education	Requests for funding for additional trips will be considered on a case by case basis.
Therapy - Provider must complete assessment, weekly monitoring and final report as part of the agreement.	CAMHS/Barnardo's must be explored initially and evidence provided why this is not being accessed and an alternative being sought prior to a request for funding through the PEP.

Process for requesting PP+

- Pupil Premium requests for school aged pupils and pre-school children, are discussed during PEP meetings. A request for funding with clear evidence for the support/intervention and expected impact must be submitted via the PEP.
- Where high level of funding is requested, a conversation needs to be had with the virtual school. If agreed, regular review of the impact of funding will be required.
- The PEP Lead will quality assure the document and discuss all PP+ requests with their Team Leader.
- Once a quality PEP has been signed off by the PEP Lead & Team Leader, the request will be sent to the VSH to process
- Interventions should be put in place straight away rather than waiting for funds to arrive in school account
- VSH will process all requests and send to the finance department to release funds.
- HBC maintained schools will receive payment via journal transfer.

Post-16 Funding Request

PP+ ends at the end of a young person's statutory school tenure (age 16). The post-16 grant is designed to assist local authorities in England in providing support for CIC and care leavers as they transition into post-16 education.

All post-16 funding requests must be referenced and requested through the PEP process, have an educational outcome and be referred to the deputy head of the virtual school. Considerations might include:

- English and/or Maths tuition where the young person is on role at an education provision, has attendance above 95% and is on a Level 2 course securing a Level 3 progression.
- CSCS card training
- Residential/work experience - These will be considered on an individual basis.
- College enrichment trip/overseas volunteering. For these opportunities part funding will be considered in partnership with both the young person's own fundraising and a contribution from children's social care.
- Requests for IT equipment such as laptops will be considered on an individual basis and will need to be referenced in the PEP document.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

For our Early Years Cohort (age 3-5), EYPP can also be used for interventions and resources which must be linked to high quality SMART targets and requested through the EY PEP. The EYPP, cannot be used to fund additional sessions, for consumables, uniforms or holiday clubs. All requests will be discussed in PEP meetings, or with the PEP lead directly.

Circumstances in which PP+ will not be provided

Halton Virtual School will not provide PP+ funding to schools in the following circumstances:

- To double fund or replace funding which should already have been allocated to the school to support the child and specifically to fund:
  - Services that should be provided via an Education Health and Care plan (in England only);
  - Other statutory work (e.g. statutory assessment or support from health agencies).
- For interventions that do not require extra funding
- The school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions
- The PP+ request in the PEP does not match the SMART targets requirements
- Residential trips (these will be considered on a case-by-case basis)
- Transport costs cannot be funded through PP+
- To fund interventions that do not demonstrate a positive impact on the child's educational achievement and outcomes
- To fund interventions that has impact only for other learners
- School uniform

- Interventions taking place in future terms (funding is requested termly for that term only)
- Interventions that are not school-led or overseen by the education provision of the child/young person

Individual Roles & Responsibilities

Designated Teacher

The PEP is the key document which will be used to plan for Pupil Premium spend and so the role of the designated teacher is key in ensuring that the PEP is of high quality and records the information below:

- Views of the child/young person and how these will be addressed.
- Prior attainment and current attainment data, whether the child is on track to make the expected levels of progress in key subject and attendance data.
- Educational needs must be identified using above data and knowledge of the child's wider needs. Intended outcomes must be clear and quantitative targets for improvement must be set.
- Full breakdown of costings for interventions with clear timescales must be provided
- Outcomes must be discussed and impact evaluated when the PEP is reviewed (without this, funding for the new term will not be agreed).

Child or Young Person

It is very important that the view of the child/young person is gathered, recorded and considered in the decision making and PEP process. There is a template within the PEP document to support this or schools can use their own methods of gathering views (must be uploaded to the PEP). If requests cannot be met an explanation must be provided to the child/young person and reasons recorded in the PEP.

Foster Carers / Education Case Workers / Social Workers

The team around the child/young person should share their views regarding targets set and interventions/support in place during the PEP meeting for the designated teacher to record on the document. The overriding principle is that the funding must focus on raising the educational outcomes.

Virtual School

The virtual school ensure that PEP meetings are taking place and documents are submitted in a timely manner on a termly basis. All PEP documents are quality assured and scrutiny is given to all PP+ requests before being agreed upon.