



Department
for Education

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Post-16 Pilot

Application guide

July 2021

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1. Executive summary

On Wednesday 16 June, the Government [confirmed](#) a £3 million pilot of funding for Virtual School Heads (VSHs) to support looked-after children and care leavers in Further Education (FE). This is alongside the wider announcement of £16 million funding to strengthen support for children with a social worker by extending the role of VSHs.

Each local authority (LA) is required to appoint a VSH to promote the educational attainment of children in the care of their local authority. VSHs currently receive Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding of £2,345 per child in care, aged 4 to 15. This is used to provide individual support that a child needs, as identified in their Personal Education Plan (PEP), as well as support for the cohort as a whole. This funding ceases when the child reaches the age of 16, but VSH duties and the need for bespoke support continue for as long as the child is in care.

This support is particularly important considering the increasing numbers of older looked-after children¹ and given looked-after children have lower outcomes across all KS4 measures compared to all pupils² – affecting progression to, and attainment at, post-16. The impact of Covid-19 has exacerbated the challenges faced by these young people, who do not currently benefit from the same levers of financial support as the pre-16 cohort.

The Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) post-16 pilot responds to the need for additional financial support by testing proof of concept of extending support to looked-after children and care leavers in general FE colleges.

Pilot objective

The PP+ post-16 pilot will run for two terms, from 4 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, and aims to test the proof of concept by focussing the extension of financial support to looked-after children and care leavers in general FE colleges. This will enable the Department for Education (DfE) to build an evidence base of what works, which will be used to inform any future support for this cohort.

This guidance should be read alongside the **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Post-16 Pilot Expression of Interest (EOI) form**. LAs interested in taking part in the pilot should complete and submit by the deadline of **23:59pm 22nd July 2021**.

Proposed outcomes

The proposed outcomes of the pilot are:

- **Outcome 1 – Raise the profile of looked-after children and care leavers in FE** by strengthening close working relationships and sharing expertise on the needs of this cohort.

¹ Underlying data of the CLA statistics release [here](#). Please see table [here](#).

² Outcomes for children in need, including Children Looked After (CLA) statistics release [here](#).

- **Outcome 2 – Improve the attendance of these young people in FE** by putting in place tailored interventions to support attendance.
- **Outcome 3 – Better support the delivery of Personal Education Plans, pathway plans or equivalent** at both an individual and cohort level.
- **Outcome 4 – Identify models of good practice used by LAs across the country** to respond to individual and cohort level needs, building the evidence base of what works well to support looked-after children and care leavers in general FE colleges.

The selected LAs will share and have access to Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 grant funding worth £3m in total. Each LA will be provided with funding in advance of the start of the pilot, with allocations provided based on the number of looked-after children and care leavers in the LA's Virtual School who will be attending a general FE college in years 12 and 13 (or equivalent) in the 2021/22 academic year.

Although funding in the first instance will be both calculated on and targeted at eligible pupil numbers in general FE colleges, VSHs in pilot site LAs will have the flexibility to use the funding as they see best to support other cohorts in wider post-16 settings, or those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Evaluation

The PP+ post-16 pilot in selected LAs will be evaluated alongside the VSH Children in Need (CIN) role extension programme, which will be running to similar timescales.

The pilot aims to test proof of concept of extending support to looked-after children and care leavers in general FE colleges and see a range of interventions on a national scale. Learning from the evaluation will inform future support for this cohort.

LAs taking part in the pilot will be expected to participate in research commissioned by the DfE to help develop an evidence base for VSHs working effectively with FE institutions to support looked-after children and care leavers. The research is likely to involve a mix of data collection and case studies. As referenced in the EOI form, LAs will be expected to complete a monitoring data proforma designed by the DfE and participate in other research tasks to inform the case studies.

LAs taking part in the pilot will also be expected to share good practice and learning with LAs not involved in the pilot as requested by the DfE.

2. Funding and eligibility

Available funding

The DfE has secured £3m for select LAs to take part in the pilot in the 2021/22 financial year. We intend to allocate this funding to a sample of LAs for use across two terms.

The funding is available for activity to 31 March 2022. The amount allocated to each LA selected through the EOI process covers the period from 4 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Who can submit an EOI?

All LAs may submit an EOI application to be considered for selection. LAs can only submit one EOI application on behalf of their own organisation, and joint applications (i.e., involving more than one LA) will not be accepted.

Should my LA submit an EOI?

Funding for the pilot is limited and will require LAs to develop and deliver proposals at considerable pace. We recommend that LAs only submit an EOI if they are confident in answering yes to the following questions:

- ✓ Do you have strong working relationships with general FE colleges in your area?
- ✓ Are you confident that you could use the funding to meet the objective and proposed outcomes of the pilot?
- ✓ Do you have existing ideas of how you could use the funding that you could quickly mobilise to meet the objective of the pilot?
- ✓ Do you have sufficient existing resources that would enable you to effectively pilot the funding?
- ✓ Are you confident that you could use the funding over two academic terms, and that running a pilot would not be detrimental to the delivery of other work that you currently do?

How will the funding be allocated?

Funding will be allocated to successful LAs via a Section 31 grant, with individual allocations calculated using a funding formula based on eligible pupil numbers. Funding will be made as single payment in advance of the start of the pilot, subject to the provisions of the DfE [General Grant Terms and Conditions](#).

The EOI form asks LAs to provide their estimated eligible pupil numbers based on those attending general FE colleges in years 12 and 13 (or equivalent) in the 2021/22 academic year.

Allocations will be calculated at £900 per eligible pupil. This will be an estimate and subject to change based on numbers of LAs taking part in the pilot, and on eligible pupil numbers agreed as part of the allocations process. The funding allocation is intended to be used as an overall budget, rather than a personal per pupil budget, to allow for both individual and cohort-level interventions. This level of funding and its impact will be tested through the pilot.

How should LAs use their funding?

The purpose of this funding is to provide support to LAs in England, to help them meet their duty to looked-after children and care leavers in FE.

LAs can spend this grant to support costs associated with meeting this duty. In doing so, they must take account of the statutory guidance [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) published on 26th February 2018, to help them implement this duty.

LAs can spend this funding on any interventions they, and the colleges they work with, identify as appropriate to help them to support eligible young people and that help them to meet the outcomes of the pilot. This may involve spending funding on:

- Enhanced group or 1:1 mentoring and tuition.
- Bespoke support linked to individual PEPs, pathway plans or equivalent.
- Purchase or delivery of training for staff on specific skills and approaches.
- Funding additional staff to support this cohort of young people.
- Investing in approaches that recognise the importance of early intervention.
- Approaches that support transition into, and out of, FE.

This list is not exhaustive, and LAs will be encouraged to use their funding on interventions that best suit the individual needs of their cohort of young people. LAs may also find it helpful to refer to the [Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit](#).

3. Application process

How to apply

The application period for round one will open from **1 July 2021** and will close at **23:59pm on 22nd July 2021**. The DfE must receive all completed applications by email by the deadline and will not be able to consider applications that miss this deadline.

Key dates and deadlines for the application process are set out in the table below.

Milestones	Dates
EOI opens	1 July 2021
EOI closes	22 July 2021
Assessment of EOI applications	Starting w/c 26 July 2021
Decision announced	Early September
Pilot launch in selected sites	4 October 2021

Completing your application

Please complete the accompanying EOI application form to the best of your ability. Further information and prompts have been provided to help you complete it and address the questions.

Some sections will require accompanying text to support your response and have stated word limits. Please ensure that you adhere to these, as your response beyond the word limit will not be considered. Please include the total number of words for each section at the bottom of each text box.

Sections marked with * are mandatory and must be completed for your application to be accepted.

Submitting your application

Please email a single Word or PDF version of your completed application to **pilot.pupilpremium@education.gov.uk**

Your '**LA name**' followed by '**Post-16 Pupil Premium EOI**' should be included in the email "subject" field when submitting your application.

When you have sent the DfE your application form, you will receive an automatic email response letting you know that your application has been received.

4. Assessing the application and next steps

The selection process will aim to identify a range of LAs to take part in the pilot based on delivery proposal, proposed costings, evidence collection and published metrics.

Completing the EOI

Delivery proposal. This will assess how you will use the funding to meet the proposed outcomes of the pilot, how you currently work with FE institutions, and the capacity and expertise of the Virtual School. **Responses will be scored out of a maximum of 5 points for each question with the scoring criteria set out in the EOI form:**

- a) A clear and realistic proposal of how you will use the funding during the period of the pilot, including:
 - a. High level milestones, risks and issues. **(5 points)**
 - b. How you plan to meet the following pilot outcomes:
 - i. Raise the profile of looked-after children and care leavers in FE. **(5 points)**
 - ii. Improve the attendance of looked-after children and care leavers in FE. **(5 points)**
 - iii. Better support the delivery of Personal Education Plans, pathway plans or equivalent at both an individual and cohort level. **(5 points)**
- b) How you work with general FE colleges currently, including any ongoing programmes of work and the impact they are having, established ways of working or communicating, and how you could build on this in the pilot. **(5 points)**
- c) The existing capacity and expertise you have in your Virtual School at post-16 and how you would use this to effectively manage the pilot. **(5 points)**

Costings. Funding will be allocated based on the number of looked-after children and care leavers in your local authority's Virtual School who will be attending a general Further Education college in years 12 and 13 (or equivalent) in the 2021/22 academic year, and on proposed costings. Please complete Tables A and B of the EOI form to provide this information. **This section will be scored with pass/fail.**

- **Table A.** Please provide details of the total number of eligible pupils (as detailed in Section 2, Question 1 of the EOI form), and the total funding requested (£900 x total number of eligible pupils).

Please note, this will be an estimate and subject to change based on numbers of LAs taking part in the pilot, and on eligible pupil numbers agreed as part of the allocations process. The funding allocation is intended to be used as an overall, rather than a personal per-pupil budget, to allow for both individual and cohort-level interventions.

- **Table B.** Please provide an estimate of proposed costs you might expect during the course of the pilot. Your costings should provide reasonable assurance that your delivery proposal and the anticipated interventions can be provided within the funding allocation. Please include the following:
 - **Resources:** Any existing and (if applicable) new posts to deliver the proposed interventions (e.g. Virtual School staff, teaching assistants, educational psychologists, tutors, mentors, etc).
 - **Activities:** Any activities to facilitate targets identified in PEPs, pathway plans or equivalent plans (e.g. buying in or delivery of training, use of data management tools, purchasing software/hardware, etc).
 - **Funding to provider:** Any funding likely to be allocated to FE colleges to meet specific targets.
 - **Other:** Any other costings not covered above.

Collecting evidence. This should be a short description of how you will collect information against the proposed outcomes of the pilot, which will feed into the formal evaluation process. **This section will be scored with pass/fail.**

Selection process

The selection process aims to maximise the number of LAs that can receive funding and ensure a national spread as well as spread in the size of eligible cohort. We are looking for at least two LAs in each region; however, the total number of LAs taking part in the pilot is not determined at the outset and will be determined based on the below process as well as the total amount of funding available.

Applications will be selected based on the delivery proposal scores, and will take into account **regional spread, eligible pupil numbers provided by each LA and care leaver NEET rates³** (where applicable) to allow for a range of LAs to be selected for the pilot.

- **Step 1:** Bids will be allocated to their appropriate region out of the following 9 regions: East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber.
- **Step 2:** Pass/fail criteria questions (Costings and Collecting Evidence) in the application form will be evaluated. All bids that pass step 2, will pass to step 3.
- **Step 3:** Scored questions (Delivery Proposal) in the application form will be assessed. To pass step 3, a bid must achieve a minimum score of 40% (12 marks) of the scored questions.
- **Step 4:** Within each region, bids will be ordered from highest to lowest number of eligible pupils, and the data will be divided at the median to create two bands; high eligible pupil numbers and low eligible pupil numbers. In the event that the number of eligible students within a LA is equal to the median

³ Based on the proportion of care leavers in 2020 aged 17 or 18 who were NEET published in the underlying data of the CLA statistics release [here](#). Please see data table generated [here](#).

number of eligible students for its region, the LA will be allocated to the lower sized band.

- **Step 5:** The highest scoring bidder in each band in each region will be selected. Where one or more bids receive the same score, bids will be ranked according to care leaver NEET rates; bids with the higher NEET rate will be ranked above those with lower rates.

In the event that a regional band does not have any bids that have reached this step in the selection process, the highest scoring bid within this equivalent band of a neighbouring region will be selected.

In the event that this process results in insufficient funding to allocate funding to two bids within each region, the lowest scoring bid to have passed step 4 across all regions will be deselected. Where one or more bids receive the same score, bids will be ranked according to their care leaver NEET rates; bids with the higher NEET rate will be ranked above those with lower rates.

In the event that funding allows for more than 18 selected bids, the next highest scoring bid will be selected. In the event that this bid is from a region which already has three selected bids (due to an additional allocation for a neighbouring region), the next highest scoring bid will be selected.

The assessment panel

Applications received will be evaluated by an assessment panel within DfE.

Application outcome

The bidding officer from each LA will be notified of the outcome of their application by email in September 2021, and successful LAs will be issued a formal grant funding agreement that will set out the terms and conditions of the grant. This should be agreed and signed by the Director of Children's Services or equivalent in the organisation.

Drawing of funding

Grant payments to the successful LAs will be made through Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and will be subject to standard DfE grant terms and conditions. Grants will be paid in September, in advance of the start of the pilot.



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