

**PUPIL PREMIUM ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)**  
**APRIL 2014/15**

**Responsible Officer:**

Jeff Potts, Head of LAC Education & Health Team & Virtual School Head - Shropshire

e-mail: [jeff.potts@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.potts@shropshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01743 250124

Fax: 01743 250122

**1. Summary**

This report outlines the change in the management of the Pupil Premium grant for Looked After Children (LAC) which came into force from April 2014. It outlines the main changes and the impact that this has on Shropshire LAC, LAC from other local authorities placed in Shropshire, and Shropshire schools.

**2. Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**REPORT**

**3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal**

The Pupil Premium Grant is being used to support the educational progress and attainment of Shropshire's Looked After Children.

**4. Financial Implications**

Any underspend in the Pupil Premium Grant will need to be returned to the Department for Education at the end of the financial year 2014-15.

**5. Background**

- 5.1 Pupil Premium funding is additional funding given to publically funded schools in England to help them raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Funding is available to both mainstream and non-mainstream schools, such as special schools and pupil referral units.

Pupil Premium funding was introduced in 2011 and was available to three identified groups of disadvantaged pupils:-

- children and young people eligible for free schools meals;
- children and young people with parents in the regular armed forces; and
- LAC.

Funding allocations have increased over the years and previously the majority of this funding was paid direct into schools budgets.

## 5.2 **Virtual School Headteacher (VSH)**

The Children and Families Act 2014 confirmed that local authorities in England have a duty to promote the educational achievement of LAC and that they must appoint at least one person for the purpose of discharging this duty. That person must be an officer employed by that authority or another local authority in England and can be called the Virtual Headteacher for LAC (VSH).

## 5.3 **Main changes in the Pupil Premium for LAC - April 2014**

The conditions for grant for the pupil premium arrangements for LAC changed in April 2014. The three main changes are:

- a. “First, LAC attract a Pupil premium of £1900, more than double the amount they attracted in 2013-14;
- b. Secondly, the cohort of LAC who attract the pupil Premium is bigger and includes children looked after from the first day of care rather than, as previously, only those who had been looked after for six months or more; and
- c. Thirdly, for 2014-15 the Pupil Premium for LAC must be managed by the VSH in the authority that looks after them. Unlike in previous years, there is no requirement for an authority to pass the funding onto the school where the child is on roll to contribute towards meeting the needs identified in their Personal Education Plan (PEP). The presumption, however, is funding is passed to the school and this is strongly encouraged”.

Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15 FAQs (March 2014)

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/PupilPremiumforchildrenincare201415.pdf>

## 5.4 **Shropshire VSH and Schools**

5.4.1 The Shropshire LAC Education Team is a very well established multi-agency team led by the VSH that has been working with LAC, schools, carers, parents, social workers, health professionals, residential staff and many others since 1999 to promote the educational achievements for Shropshire LAC. The Department for Education have changed the arrangements for the management of the Pupil Premium for LAC to:

“...reflect more effectively the particular challenges of supporting their education. Now that VSH’s will be statutory they will be responsible as part of the corporate parent role to promote the educational achievement of children looked after by their authority. Ministers therefore want them to have a greater role in working with schools to ensure that duty is fulfilled.

The conditions of grant for 2014-15 states clearly that the Pupil Premium grant allocations must be managed by the designated VSH for the children looked after by the authority. This has statutory force ...”

5.4.2 Alongside this duty to promote the educational achievements of LAC sits the accountability for the VSH. It is clear that the VSH remains accountable to the Director of Children’s Services and/or the Chief Executive and the Lead Member for Children.

5.4.3 The VSH and LAC Education and Health Team have consulted widely and have briefed and trained Headteachers and Designated Teachers for LAC on the arrangements that will be made to support these changes in grant. Underpinning these arrangements are some core beliefs around LAC and Shropshire schools:

- that Shropshire schools generally are aware of the particular needs and challenges of LAC and do a good job in supporting individuals and groups of LAC;
- that there is a spirit of co-operation and working together already established in Shropshire between schools and the VSH regarding LAC;
- that resources should be targeted on those LAC most in need of support in a manner reflecting accountability and an overview of the whole LAC cohort;
- that all LAC should be supported to achieve at: at least expected levels of progress and should be challenged and supported to exceed this wherever possible;
- that schools are best placed to support our LAC on a day to day basis and that the LAC Designated Teacher should have access to Pupil Premium funding to support clearly designed support packages reflecting needs and potential progress;
- that this progress needs to be regularly reviewed and recorded to demonstrate the impact of additional targeted funding in raising the levels of attainment of each LAC;
- that educational targets and progress should be discussed and agreed with the child and a range of partners through the PEP process and that this in turn should be directly linked to the allocation of Pupil Premium funding.

5.4.3 The VSH will continue to report (in the Annual Report) to members on the outcomes for Shropshire LAC. Additionally in 2015 a report on the specific allocation of Pupil Premium funding and its impact on progress will be available.

## **5.5 Pupil Premium and Adopted Children/Special Guardianships/Residence Order**

- 5.5.1 The definition of LAC was extended in December 2013 to include those pupils recorded on the January 2014 schools census who were looked after immediately before being adopted on, or after 30<sup>th</sup> December 2005, or were placed on a Special Guardianship or Residence Order immediately after being looked after.
- 5.5.2 In order to attract the Pupil Premium grant it is for the parent to inform the school direct, for the school to verify and record this information on their school census, and that the funding (£1900) is paid into the school budget. The allocation of this aspect of the Pupil Premium grant does not involve the Virtual School Head (VSH).

## **5.6 LAC from other local authorities placed in Shropshire**

- 5.6.1 Historically, and currently, Shropshire have a significant number of LAC from other local authorities placed within county and attending Shropshire schools. The Shropshire VSH has always worked with Shropshire schools to support them in working with this cohort of LAC. The allocation and management of the Pupil Premium funding however will lie with the VSH from the local authority which looks after that child/young person.
- 5.6.2 Information gathered through the VSH national and regional groups suggests a wide variety of approaches to the allocation and monitoring of pupil premium for LAC across local authorities. Some local authorities are retaining a good deal of the grant to develop local resources for their LAC, which will have a direct impact on those LAC placed out of authority (and in Shropshire), some are giving schools a proportion of the funding (on a termly, half yearly or annual basis) and retaining a proportion for centralised services, and some authorities are passing the entire funding allocation directly to schools.
- 5.6.3 Understandably Shropshire Headteachers have raised concerns about this with the Shropshire VSH. The advice given has been to ensure that the needs of the individual LAC are clearly articulated alongside a clear, costed plan of action which can be discussed and agreed at the statutory PEP meeting for the LAC. The social worker from the placing local authority must then liaise with their own VSH to ensure funds are released to support the plan for the individual. Shropshire's VSH will continue to support any Shropshire school in liaising with colleague VSH's where there are problems/concerns.

## **6 Alternative Options and Appraisal**

N/A

## **7 Additional Information**

N/A

## 8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The impact of the changes in the management of the Pupil Premium grant for LAC is yet to be realised given it was recently introduced in April 2014. The transfer of responsibility for managing this grant to the VSH is welcomed as is the expectation that the VSH and schools will continue to work closely together to support the progress and outcomes for all Shropshire LAC. Shropshire have a long established positive relationship between schools and the VSH and outcomes for LAC are generally above national levels. However, there is still much work to do in closing the gap between LAC and the outcomes of their peers whether this is purely in academic outcomes, attendance at school levels or post statutory destinations. The emphasis on the potential to target resources on individual LAC thereby developing the knowledge and skills of designated teachers for LAC is considerable and Shropshire look forward to increased opportunities to work with schools around this.
- 8.2 The area of concern is how Shropshire schools will be able to support the progress and outcomes of LAC from other local authorities who attend their schools. The statutory requirement that all English local authorities have in place a VSH should enable direct contact and discussion to take place regarding the needs of individual LAC. Whilst Shropshire's VSH is able to advise and support Shropshire schools in this, it is important that schools have clearly developed and costed plans for individuals and can regularly and accurately feedback to VSH's and demonstrate progress of individual LAC.
- 8.3 The VSH will be providing a report on Pupil Premium, as required by OFSTED, in the Summer term 2015. This report will be made available to Members and at the following Scrutiny Panel the VSH and a Shropshire Headteacher will attend to discuss how this new procedure has been received.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014-15 FAQs (March 2014)

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/PupilPremiumforchildrenincare201415.pdf>

**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)**

Councillor Ann Hartley

**Local Member**

All

**Conflicts of interest declared by members**

**Appendices**

N/A