

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>SCHOOLS FORUM</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>16 MAY 2014</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>USE OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Key Decision**

This is not an executive decision.

## **Wards Affected**

County-wide

## **Purpose**

To update Schools' Forum on arrangements and funding to support the achievement of Herefordshire's Looked After Children (LAC).

To set out proposals for the use of a pupil premium top slice to give the Virtual Headteacher immediate access to resources which can be used to improve the situation of and outcomes for those young people who are in care and the direct responsibility of Herefordshire Council.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT: Schools Forum is asked to note and support the Local Authority's proposed application of Pupil Premium Grant in respect of Looked After Children.**

## **Alternative Options**

- 1 An alternative would be to release the complete £1,900 to schools with no expectations. This would run counter the conditions of the grant and leave the local authority open to censure.

- 2 The local authority could release the complete £1,900, either in one lump or three equal packages on receipt of costed information from schools.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- 3 It has long been recognised that children looked after by local authorities make poor academic progress. The initiation of the Pupil Premium has been one way in which greater resource has been given to support their progress. There is also evidence to show the impact of a Virtual School, whose role is to champion and oversee the progress of this vulnerable group.
- 4 At present, the Virtual School has limited financial resource and is unable to offer additional support at critical times. The top slice of the Pupil Premium Grant for LAC will allow the Virtual School to target resources in a timely fashion and ensure support reaches the pupils appropriately.

## Key Considerations

- 5 Following a change in regulations, each Looked After Child (LAC) will now attract Pupil Premium, provided they have been looked after for at least one day as recorded in March 2014, and included in the Looked After Children Return (SSDA903) as being between the ages of 4 and 15 as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013.
- 6 In accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) conditions of grant the Pupil Premium for LAC will now fall under the direct control of the Local Authority's Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children, who, in conjunction with schools and through the Personal Education Plan (PEP), will determine how the funds are to be used for the educational benefit of each pupil. Schools are asked to note that this is a move from the previous position of an automatic award of the Pupil Premium for Looked After Children to schools.
- 7 Further guidance from the Department for Education in the form of Frequently Asked Questions confirms that although this is awarded on a per pupil basis at £1,900, it is not necessarily the case that spending should be agreed at this level for each child. Spending must be based around need, which should be clearly identified in the PEP.
- 8 At present the Virtual School has access to limited resources (£5,000 in the financial year 2013 – 14). This budget is solely to support the participation of LAC in school trips, where a parental contribution is expected.
- 9 The Virtual Headteacher for Looked After Children in Herefordshire believes that it would be prudent to apportion £300 per LAC to the virtual school to ensure flexibility of funds towards meeting both collective and individual demands in around LAC educational improvement. This will still leave an allocation of up to £1600 per LAC, an increase of £700 on the £900 allocated in the academic year 2013 – 14. Based on the number of children in care at April 2014, this would give the virtual school a budget of £47,700. The Virtual Headteacher will use this funding to support pupils as detailed below:

Activity		Expected Impact	Cost (£)
Letterbox Club	Award winning postal programme run by the Book Trust, for children in care, aged 6 - 13, designed to increase reading ability, love of reading and number skills.	Evaluation of the introduction in Wales concluded in 2011, showed: increased involvement in their own learning; gains in reading and number for many children; increased involvement of carers.	10,400 (£130 per pupil)
Educational Psychology Support to LAC – equivalent to one day per week.	Provide psychological support in the form of assessment, direct intervention and clinical supervision of cases.	Individual Assessment would provide a clearer understanding of individual difficulties and allow tuition and support to be appropriately targeted.	16,267
Direct Tuition	Use the LAC Teacher (0.4 fte) to provide tuition to individuals and small group work. Cover for PEP and case work could be provided through additional LAC Education Officer hours.	One to one tuition, along with small group tuition and summer schools, have been evaluated as effective in improving outcomes by a number of studies reported by the Education Endowment Foundation and The Sutton Trust. When required this would be additional to the Closing the Gap interventions in schools.	16,896
Additional Activities in line with Raising Aspirations paper.	Attending Summer school, visits to universities, theatres, sporting events.	Increasing the number of LAC who apply to attend higher education courses.	4,137
		Total	47,300

- 10 The Education Liaison for LAC team (ELL) (2.9 full time equivalent) currently provides limited support to looked after children in school. The majority of service time is used on Personal Education Plan meetings. The secondment of the current ELL LAC teacher, with backfill being provided in the form of LAC Education Officer time, would allow the service to provide direct tuition, where this is deemed absolutely necessary, and to supplement the interventions in schools.
- 11 Since April 2013 the Herefordshire Educational Psychology Service has provided input only to those cases where a statutory assessment of a young person's special educational needs has been initiated or, in some instances, where a Statement of Special Educational Needs is in place. The availability of specialist psychological support to assess and support those cases with significant needs will ensure that appropriate interventions are identified and support best targeted. It will also allow the Virtual Head to ensure such assessment take place as soon as the need is identified.
- 12 This will leave a balance of £1,600 per LAC for possible allocation. It is proposed that an initial amount (£500) is paid to schools in the Summer term to allow existing support plans to continue to the end of the academic year.
- 13 Any further payments will be dependent on receipt of appropriate documentation, recording how the money will spent and the expected impact (Appendix 1). A further release of money will be made in two instalments (£550 per term), based on the costed plans being approved by the Virtual Headteacher. It will be the duty of each school to submit, on time, robust and satisfactory plans detailing how the funds will target academic progress in looked after children.
- 14 Schools should also be mindful that in planning their spending for looked after pupils, they have also received £1,300 per Looked After Child through the formula allocation used by Herefordshire Council.
- 15 The Department for Education insist on having complete transparency in the use of the Pupil Premium funding to ensure these funds are targeted most effectively, and there is a financial duty imposed on Local Authorities to ensure compliance with the way this grant is managed and spent. In this respect, schools which are given this funding will be accountable for the targeted spending of the grant and must, if required, be able to provide a clear audit trail as to the use of the funds given. Accountability is a key part of the conditions of grant and may be tested by Government auditors to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Any unused Pupil Premium Grant will be returned to the DfE.
- 16 Advice from the DfE suggest that there is no necessity to offer Pupil Premium for Looked After Children where a looked after child's funding package is already considered to be more than adequate to meet their educational needs. In such cases, the Virtual Headteacher can refuse further support through the Pupil Premium, unless it is deemed to add significant extra value.

## **Community Impact**

- 17 It is widely recognised that the educational outcomes for looked after children are poor. The Pupil Premium aims to improve this picture and this proposal will target the most vulnerable more closely. Improved educational outcomes are key to success in later life and, therefore, to reducing the financial burden on society as these children get older.

## **Equality and Human Rights**

- 18 The proposal only relates to those children and young people who are subject to a care order and, therefore, the responsibility of Herefordshire Council.

## **Financial Implications**

- 19 The cost of these proposals will be met by a top slice from the Pupil Premium Grant (LAC) budget

## **Legal Implications**

- 20 None identified.

## **Risk Management**

- 21 None identified.

## **Consultees**

- 22 The use of the Pupil Premium for LAC was discussed at the April meetings of both the Designated Teacher for LAC Network and Corporate Parenting Panel. Further discussion is also planned with the Primary Heads Forum and Herefordshire Association of Secondary Headteachers.

## **Appendices**

- Education Provision Map for LAC.
- Pupil Premium 2014 – 2015: conditions of grant: Department for Education
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head 2014 – 2015: Frequently Asked Questions: Department for Education

## **Background Papers**

- None identified