*This document was updated following the COVID-19 arrangements put in place at the end of March 2020. The key change is the details for securing of laptops for children in care to support remote learning. Attempts to secure laptops for distribution failed as the component parts / devices are not reaching the main supplier. The changes are seen in Appendix 1.*

“Looked-after children start with the disadvantage of their pre-care experiences.” [[1]](#footnote-1) The role of Medway’s Virtual Headteacher and the wider Virtual School team is to ensure these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential and be the educational advocate that parents are for others.

The aim of this guidance is to ensure that the pupil premium funding for looked after children is used, without delay, for the benefit of the looked-after child’s educational needs as described in their personal education plan (PEP). This guidance will be updated annually and will draw on feedback from schools, analysis of educational outcomes for pupils who are looked-after by Medway and any current guidance form the Department of Education (DfE) [[2]](#footnote-2)

Details of funding requests, matched to pupil targets, are incorporated into the PEP document. PEPs or PEP reviews are undertaken 3 times a year, occurring in the Autumn, Spring and Summer term. In addition, a school may make a ‘stand alone’ application outside the scheduled PEP meeting. In this way a school can maximise opportunities to respond to any change in circumstance. Whilst this is not a personal budget, any application must link specifically to the needs of the pupil. Applications should outline clearly the expected impact of funded intervention. This should also take into account the actions already being taken by the school to support the pupil. We aim to have an approach that provides consistency to all those involved but one that is flexible to meet the varying needs of the pupil and their circumstances.

If there has been a significant school change or more complex transition then additional funding may be appropriate. This means that the school loses no time in securing support and interventions to ensure that this change is successful and is quickly capitalised upon to ensure minimum disruption to learning.

Where schools have a larger proportion of Children in Care to Medway consideration is given to a cohort plan known as ‘project funding’. This is a working plan outlining the majority of the interventions to be undertaken by the school to close the gap in educational attainment for the cohort. This does not preclude other very specific applications through the PEP process. Plans are monitored and reviewed termly in partnership with the school DLACT and MVS.

Applications for PP+ are considered alongside the PEP targets and the panel response is noted on FWi / MOSAIC. The outcome of any application for funding is notified to the designated teacher and social worker through the use of a feedback form.

**Appropriate PP+ spend**

Expenditure is tracked through the PEP alongside specific pupil targets. Common areas of spend include individual or group tuition, targeted interventions, skills development. When making requests, it is expected that school leaders will consider evidence on what will have the most impact on their pupils. (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>). Targets developed from these considerations should be specific, measurable and understood by pupils and adults so that all those involved understand their contribution to securing improvements in attainment. Requests for funding that could be funded by other routes, such as school trips, uniform or equipment would not usually secure PP+ funding. For some pupils with SEN, schools will also make an application for higher needs funding. The local offer is detailed at <https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200307/local_offer>

**Support for pupils, schools, social workers and foster carers**

Members of the Virtual School work closely with all partners. Whilst we are not able to attend every PEP discussion, our attendance can be requested by the school, social worker or foster carer. Transition between schools, either at standard times (Primary to Secondary) or within year, have been identified as a priority in order to ensure that pupils settle quickly and are ready to access the opportunities available to them. Alongside this approach there are scheduled termly briefings and CPD opportunities that are publicised on SLAonline <http://www.educationservicesmedway.org.uk/>

**PEP Process**

PEP 🡪 application for funding application reviewed against pupil targets 🡪feedback to school and social worker in parallel to processing through exchequer services 🡪 PEP review must include a review of pupil performance against targets set.

PEP reviewed by MVS 🡪 targets tracked, PP+ application considered 🡪 panel decision 🡪 review of funding, with comments, sent to designated teacher and social worker 🡪 form passed for payment

**Centrally held funding**

* Training and briefings for designated teachers (DLACTs)
* Transition for Y6 – Y7 project August 2020 (based in Strood)
* Arts Award - certificated opportunities during school holidays / weekends
* Resources for all schools - online
* Attendance and data capture
* Staffing

**Contact details**

Medway Virtual School [virtualschool@medway.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@medway.gov.uk)

Children and Adults Directorate, Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham Kent ME4 4TR, tel: 01634 335664

**DfE Guidance**

* Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children. February 2018[*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children)
* Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children. February 2018 [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children)
* Pupil premium: conditions of grant 2020 to 2021 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021#looked-after-children-lac>

**Appendix 1** (March / April 2020)

**Context**

The vast majority of pupils who are in care to Medway Council are, at the moment, remaining at home.  This means they may well be accessing online resources or activities.

We are conscious that not all children will have access to a device in order to complete this work. The MVS view regarding laptops has been that laptops are not usually a Pupil Premium+ spend.  Due to the current situation it is recognised that any delay in accessing these resources will impact on the engagement of pupils in their learning and their connection with their school.

Should a pupil require a laptop please follow the process below.  Requests are being considered daily.  Please note **WE DO NOT have a supply of laptops** and any agreed purchase will need to be undertaken by the foster carer.   Currently Currys / PC World have a stock that can be ordered and delivered via their online service; there are other stockists.  We would advise against purchasing a refurbished laptop.

Should  a pupil (Year 6+) require a laptop:

**Process**:

* Social Worker to email Virtual School ([vritualschool@medway.gov.uk](mailto:vritualschool@medway.gov.uk))  with the following information:
  + Pupil name, school and reason for request for request  (note most already have sufficient access at home to complete their studies)
  + Virtual School panel will review  the request and reply via email either agreeing or providing a reason for the decline of the request
* If agreed
  + Foster Carers will need to order / purchase the laptop – this may be from an online supplier (PP+ will cover up to the value of £350)
  + MVS will complete paperwork for finance audit and share with social worker
  + Once the device has been delivered and received by the Foster carer, the receipt will need to be provided to the Social Worker or Virtual School
  + Virtual School will then arrange for payment to be made to the Foster Carer Via a Cheque, which they will receive in the post.
  + Most Schools are able to provide free access to Microsoft word – a document will be circulated if the laptop purchase has been agreed

*If it would be useful to discuss which laptop please contact virtual school for some key considerations; payments for any purchase made outside this route may not be funded by pupil premium+.*

**Responsibilities**

* Foster Carers to ensure a virus protection package is loaded onto the device.
* Foster Carers must have completed e-safety training and ensure that young person accessed and uses in a safe and informed way

**We would advise against laptops being used in bedrooms**.

This is **NOT** a scheme to provide every looked after children with a laptop.  We are aware that a large number already have access to an appropriate  device in the placement to be able to complete the learning they are expected to, as set by schools. This is only to be used where a looked after child does not have any access at home, and it is therefore impacting their ability to complete the work set.

**If you believe a child whom you work with requires a device, please follow the process above.**

1. [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2019-to-2020/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2019-to-2020>; [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)