

Virtual School for Children Looked After

Personal Education Plan Support Allowances (PEPSAs) and support for Leaving Care Young People

Within Lancashire County Council we have continued to support PEPSA funding for Lancashire's Children Looked After. This funding is limited and therefore, we need to ensure that we use the resources as effectively as possible to support as many young people as we can. The Virtual School also includes the Employment and Support Team working with young people until 25 years old. Year 14+ do not require a PEP to be completed but funding for support can still be requested via the PEPSA application form where support is required meeting the key principles below.

In addition to this, PEPSA also includes funding for University bursaries. These are paid per year to the young person to support their further studies.

Requests for funding must relate to the **current** financial year and approval must be **sought prior to expenditure being incurred**. PEPSA requests can be requested for 2019/20 from 1 April 2019 – 21 February 2020 (date subject to change) in line with financial constraints.

Key Principles

PEPSA funding is not an entitlement for all Children Looked After/Care Leavers but support for those who need it.

- Those children and young people at risk of not reaching expected standards of attainment or not making the expected levels of progress in their education are eligible to apply for a PEPSA, including those not educated in mainstream settings and those who are placed out of LA care.
- PEPSAs are not intended to replace, duplicate, or substitute the services or support that local authorities, social care, schools, carers or other practitioners already provide for Children Looked After or as universal services for all children in their area. Before a young person receives a PEPSA, schools and social care must demonstrate that a young person has already received the universal services they are entitled to in order to address any under achievement.
- The choice of activity must be linked to the educational targets set out in the CLA's PEP for school or college pupils. Details of the provision made through the PEPSA must be detailed in the child's PEP/Pathway Plan. In order to evaluate that the PEPSA has impacted on the CLA educational attainments, it is essential that the CLA's last PEP target outcomes, attendance and attainment data are included in the PEP.

- For CLA aged 16+ the PEPSA funding can be requested where it supports with progress with education, employment or training.
- Activities/funds should **not** be agreed before you receive an approval email from Virtual School. **Retrospective requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances with appropriate supporting information.**

The Amount of Funding

We expect where an application for funding is made, this will be scrutinised and evaluated before submission. Due to limited funding the maximum amount that can be claimed is £400 in any one financial year but this will be evaluated on a case by case basis in exceptional circumstances.

Payment of PEPSAs

PEPSA payments will be made by either Virtual School or Children's Social Care Finance depending on who payment is to be made too.

Receipts

Children's Social Care Team retain receipts on their recording system following their process.

Eligibility Criteria for the Allocation of a Personal Education Plan Support Allowance:

1. The child/young person must have a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) i.e. one that has been reviewed in the last term. If the young person does not have PEP (for example, completed Year 13 and is now older), he or she must have an active Pathway Plan.
2. The PEP/Pathway Plan must confirm most attainments and achievements in a way which demonstrates progress over time, and whether or not that the child/young person is reaching their expected/ targeted standard of attainment and achievements.
3. The proposed activity or resource must be linked to the educational targets set in the CLA's PEP or links directly to education, employment and training for young people after Key Stage 4.
4. Attendance and attainment data must be included in the PEP/Pathway Plan.
5. The child/young person must be involved in the choice of activity or resource.
6. PEPSA funding will not apply for retrospective activity/costs. Funds cannot be released for any activity or equipment that has already taken place.

7. The PEPSA funding will only be released after the PEPSA has been assessed and agreed suitable.

Non Factors

1. The length of time the child / young person has been in care (a PEPSA request can only be completed after completion of a PEP).
2. The type of school or education setting the child / young person attends.

Examples of the use of PEPSA funding -

- One to one tuition in any subject, either after school or at home or additional training to help the young person achieve a qualification.
- Swimming lessons (until child can swim independently).
- Support towards the cost of extra-curricular activities e.g. clubs and groups, requested on a termly basis.
- Specialist equipment (laptops may be considered for CLA from Key Stage 4 only - once every 3 years – iPads are generally not eligible).
- Vocational equipment linked to employment or training.
- Holiday clubs, before and after school clubs, where justified in the PEP i.e. not for childcare for a carer

What is NOT included;

Personal Education Plan Support Allowances should **not** be used to replace –

- The SEN support funding or the Pupil Premium funds delegated to schools.
- Resources that the Local Authority provides through its allowances for foster carers or children's homes fees.
- Basic equipment that the child needs for school, such as school uniform or equipment for physical education lessons.
- Alternative education for looked after children on a fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- Transport for school pupils.

- Nursery hours provision
- Additional religious or cultural activities
- Trips or residential breaks for school age pupils (application for HNF as appropriate)
- Bikes, can be requested from Social Store for free. Email employmentsupport@lancashire.gov.uk with size required and gender.

Process of claiming a Personal Educational Plan Support Allowance

For pupils in school up to Key Stage 4

The young person's Social Worker should, in collaboration with The Designated Teacher Officer for Children Looked After at the school or college at which the young person is on roll and with the child/young person carers, set appropriate targets on the PEP (behavioural, social, emotional and educational targets), indicating how the PEPSA could support the child or young person in achieving their PEP targets.

For young people Year 12 until 25 years old

The young person's Social Worker or Personal Advisor can request the funding or University bursary and record this on the PEP (until the end of Year 13) or the Pathway Plan.

The Social Worker/Personal Advisor should then complete the application form and submit to:

virtualschool@lancashire.gov.uk

The Virtual School Team undertakes to consider for approval any applications received as soon as possible.

Where the limit of £400 has not been reached, it will be necessary to re-submit a new application through the same process. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis.

University bursary

For Leaving Care young people under 25 years old a University bursary of £2000 paid over the duration of the course (paid yearly for a maximum of 3 years - 1st year £667, 2nd year £666, 3rd year £666) is available. It is expected additional resources would not be funded from this bursary unless in exceptional circumstances.

Measuring Impact

The impact of the PEPSA must be evaluated with measurable outcomes and recorded at the next PEP or Pathway Plan review. An Impact statement will be sent to the Social Worker/Personal Adviser for completion to evaluate the impact of the funding.

Statutory Reviewing Arrangements

PEPs are an integral element of the Care Plan and therefore reviewed within the Statutory Review Process by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IROs). The summary of the PEP review presented to the IRO should refer to the use and impact of the PEPSA.

It is expected that IROs will want to ensure that:

- The young person has achieved the targets set in the last PEP and that the PEPSA where necessary, was used appropriately and effectively.
- The new PEP ensures that the young person has access to PEPSA support if the young person continues to underachieve.

Audrey Swann
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