

## **Understanding Pupil Premium Plus Funding for Children Previously in Care Cambridgeshire Virtual School**

### **Introduction**

This guide has been produced by Cambridgeshire Virtual School and aims to provide clarity surrounding Children Previously in care and Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) funding. The information contained within this guide is based on the current Department for Education (DfE) Pupil Premium Conditions of Grant 2025-2026 along with a handful of other documents for which references can be found at the end of the guide. This document is correct as of September 2025 and will be regularly updated to reflect ongoing changes as they come through government.

This summary is informed by the three key Department of Education (DfE) documents that detail the policy and practice arrangements for the Pupil Premium Plus for Previously looked-after Children (PLAC) for 2024-2025.

- Promoting the Education of looked-after Children and Previously looked-After Children (DfE 2018).
- Pupil Premium Plus Conditions of Grant 2025-2026 (DfE 2021)
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Head (DfE 2014)
- Pupil premium: effective use and accountability (October 2019)

### **Eligibility**

The Department of Education defines Children Previously in Care as:

Children who are no longer looked after by the local authority within England or Wales (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 this will now include children adopted from outside of England and Wales) because they are the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangement Order. (This currently does not include children who have been returned home to parents after being in care by the Local authority.)

Any child attending school from the start of reception to the end of Year 11 (summer term) is eligible to receive PP+. Children who are electively home educated or are post-16 students are currently not eligible for PP+.

The Pupil Premium grant per CPIC Pupil for 2025-2026 is £2630.

### **Why is there Pupil Premium Plus for Children Previously in Care?**

The DfE takes the view that many children who have been previously in care will have “experienced grief and loss and will have had traumatic experiences in their early lives. 72% of those adopted in 2013-14 entered care due to abuse or neglect. Their needs do not change overnight, and they do not stop being vulnerable just because they are in a loving home. Their experiences in early life can have a lasting impact which can affect the child many years after adoption. We therefore believe that teachers and schools have a vital role to play in helping these children emotionally, socially and educationally by providing specific support, to raise their attainment and address their wider needs”.

## Differences between CIC and CPIC Pupil Premium Plus Funding

Cambridgeshire's Virtual School Head is responsible for managing arrangements for Children in Care Pupil Premium Plus. This includes making decisions about the amount that is sent to schools, together with the frequency of payments. This is not the case for the Children Previously in Care PP+, which is paid directly to schools. It is schools, and not the Virtual School who are responsible for ensuring that the CPIC PP+ is spent in accordance with the conditions of grant. For further details, please refer to end of document for guidance.

## Applying for Pupil Premium Plus for CPIC

Department of Education Guidance Change – December 2020

From April 2021, allocations for children in mainstream and special schools will be decided based on the number of eligible children recorded in the **October census**.

Schools apply for Pupil premium plus for CPIC through the October census. Census Codes for Children Previously in Care can be found in the [School census 2017 to 2018: Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Schools receive £2,630 (2025-2026 funding) for each CPIC recorded on the October census. This is paid in the following financial year. For example, eligible pupils recorded on the October 2023 school census will qualify for PP+ funding from April 2024 to March 2025.

Schools can, however, use the £2,630 already sent in the previous financial year for another child to support more than one CPIC and do not have to wait until the next financial year to put in any additional support a child may need. Once a parent or guardian has written to the school to declare their Child's previous care status, they will not need to do this again unless the child moves school. For further information on how to inform the school of a previous care status, please refer to [Children adopted from care and the pupil premium: template letter - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-adopted-from-care-and-the-pupil-premium-template-letter)

It is important to give careful consideration as to how and to whom parents and guardians will provide the relevant documentary evidence in school. The information is sensitive and confidential, and it helps if procedures are clear, efficient and timely. The Virtual School will provide advice and support to schools and families in circumstances where parties are unsure how to proceed.

Additional Department Of Education Guidance around completing the School census can be found [Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complete-the-school-census-guidance)

## **Allocation of Funding to Schools**

### **Mainstream Schools**

*(which for this purpose includes infant, junior, primary, middle, secondary, high schools, all-through, special school and pupil referral units. It does not include general hospital schools or other alternative provision.)*

Cambridgeshire will pay PP+ to schools as a funding allocation each June/July for that financial year.

### **Academy Schools**

Academies receive their PP+ funding straight from the ESFA as opposed to the Local Authority.

### **Non - Maintained Schools and independent schools**

Education, Skills funding Agency allocates PP+ funding to local authorities CPIC in general hospital schools and alternative provision settings not maintained by the local authority but where the local authority pays full tuition fees.

This does not include non-maintained special schools, who will receive Pupil Premium Grant direct from ESFA.

### **Additional Information**

PP+ cannot currently be claimed for children who are home schooled unless this arrangement is being funded by the local authority. Pupils who attend independent schools are only entitled to claim PP+ if the local authority is funding the tuition fees. There are no plans to change this currently.

Please Note: It is up to the school to ascertain that a pupil has been previously in care and to ensure that the LA is aware of their status before the date of the October census. Otherwise, the school (if non-maintained school) or the LA will not receive PP+ for the following financial year.

### **Spending CPIC Pupil Premium**

Like other types of PP, the purpose of PP+ is to raise educational attainment and close the gap between children previously in care and their peers.

Although the main aim of the PP+ is to raise attainment, you can spend your PP+ on:

- • non-academic outcomes, such as improving pupils' mental health
- • non-academic improvements, such as better attendance
- • activities that will also benefit non-eligible pupils

Although this funding is not ring-fenced to individual children, Schools should be aware that the needs of FSM, Service Children and Children Previously in Care are different and therefore pooling all pupil premium together is not always the most effective way of

meeting their needs. CPIC are generally disadvantaged due to their early life experiences and therefore this funding should be used to address some of the subsequent difficulties they face within education. This is typically academic under achievement, social and emotional difficulties and school awareness of trauma and attachment needs.

Unlike CIC PP+, Schools are not expected to spend the CPIC PP+ grants entirely on individual children. The DFE states: “The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools to improve the educational and personal outcomes for pupils who have been adopted from care, including (but not limited to) their attainment. It is not intended that the additional funding should be used to back-fill the general school budget nor is it the policy intention that the funding should be used to support other groups of pupils, such as (for example) those with special educational needs or who are low attaining. The funding is not ring-fenced and is not for individual children – so the Department would not necessarily expect the school to spend £2,630 on every child adopted from care on roll at the school. This is partially because a child may have left the school and new pupils may have joined but also because a school is best placed to determine how the additional funding can be deployed to have the maximum impact. For example, a school may decide to train their staff in recognising and responding to attachment-related issues; or that a particular adopted child needs tailored support that is in excess of the £2,630 the school has received.”

There is a growing body of research and guidance to support schools. The DFE “encourages all schools to use robust evidence when making decisions about how to spend their Pupil Premium. Schools may contact their LA and national organisations such as BAAF and Adoption UK for support and guidance. The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit is also a useful source of information schools can draw on. The characteristics of formerly looked after children do not disappear overnight. Schools may also find Virtual School Head, Virtual School Staff and the Designated Teacher at the school a valuable source of information”.

Pupil Premium Plus is an opportunity to address the learning needs of children previously in care through the provision of **additional** interventions and learning resources tailored to the individual need of the child. It is **not** intended to replace services, support or resources that the local authority, schools, early year’s providers, parents/carer’s or other agencies working with children previously in care already provide, **or** that is provided to all children in the area as a universal service or as part of their educational entitlement.

The department of Education recommend Pupil Premium Plus should be used to improve outcomes for Children Previously in Care in the following areas:

- Acceleration of academic achievement and progress.
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is more able.
- Improving school attendance e.g. in cases of School refusal
- Reducing internal and external exclusion.

- Developing social, emotional and interpersonal skills where they are a barrier to learning and can be directly linked to under-performance.
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider.

### **Accountability**

Ofsted inspections look closely at the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the gap between them and their peers. At the end of each academic year, there is a legal requirement for schools to publish information online about their PP funding allocation, how it has been used and the impact this funding has had on disadvantaged pupils. The school are not required to provide a breakdown of costs per pupil who attract PP+ as this funding is not seen as a personal budget per child.

### **Role of parents and guardians**

The DfE takes the view that: “The role of parents and guardians in their child’s education is crucial and we expect schools will want to engage with them about the education of the pupils on their roll, irrespective of whether they attract the pupil premium. However, we would hope that schools would want to take advantage of this relationship with regards to formerly looked after children as the school may have only become aware of the child’s status when they are told this by the child’s parent ahead of the School Census. They may be unfamiliar with the detail of any barriers to learning individual children may be facing as a result of their history. Schools should, of course, be mindful of the sensitivities that may exist around the child’s history and ways in which their experiences prior to leaving care are affecting the child currently.” Parents and Carers are welcome to contact Cambridgeshire Virtual School if they wish to seek advice or further information.

### **Parents/Carers, Social Workers, Designated Teachers, – what questions should we be asking?**

- What is the current level of attainment?
- Is the pupil at Age Related Expectations (ARE)? (that is the expected point for their age in the core subjects)
- If they are not at ARE, what is being done to address any gaps in core subjects?
- What progress is being made in core subjects?
- If they are not making good progress, what interventions can be offered?
- Are there any additional special educational needs?
- Has an Education Support Plan (ESP) been written and needs assessment undertaken? What are the pupils & parent/carers views?
- Are there any long-term needs? Or requirements for therapeutic support?
- What extra support or interventions can be put in place using PP+?

## **Role of Cambridgeshire Virtual School regarding Pupil Premium Plus**

Although CVS is not accountable for the allocation or spend of PP+, our statutory remit does include providing information, advice and guidance to schools, parents and carers around pupil premium funding for Children Previously in Care in line with the current government guidance.

If you have a questions or concerns around PP+ for Children Previously in Care, please contact Clare Hawking our Advisory Teacher for Children Previously in Care

Email: [clare.hawking@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:clare.hawking@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Phone: 01223 699883

## **Further Information, Advice and Guidance**

[Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

[Pupil premium: effective use and accountability - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Pupil Premium - How schools are spending the funding.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Pupil Premium Guide | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

[Pupil premium – Why it can sometimes be difficult to get the right support for adopted children in schools – Schools, education and adoption... \(wordpress.com\)](#)

[School census 2017 to 2018: Guide \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## **Acronyms**

CIC – Child/Children in Care

CPIC – Child/Children Previously in Care

PLAC – Previously Looked-After Children

PPP/PP+ - Pupil Premium Plus

EYPP – Early Years Pupil Premium

CVS – Cambridgeshire Virtual School

FSM – Free School Meals

LA -Local Authority