

## DfE Schools National Funding Formula Consultation

7 Mar 2016 to 17 Apr 2016

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula>

### **Extract from pages 39-41 of the consultation document:**

#### **Looked-after children and children who have left care**

2.69 In the current funding system, some schools with looked-after children receive additional funding through their local authority's school funding formula. In 2015-16, 88 local authorities chose to include a looked-after children factor in their formula, although the amounts of funding allocated varied significantly – from £212 to £3,000 per pupil<sup>62</sup>. The vast majority of local authorities had at least one looked-after child in 2015-16 and could therefore have decided to use a looked-after children factor<sup>63</sup>.

2.70 We have considered carefully whether to include a looked-after children factor in the national funding formula for schools. Doing so would mean that the funding of every school with a looked-after child would include an uplift based on looked-after child numbers. But, given the small proportion of the school population who are looked-after children (0.8% of all pupils<sup>64</sup>), this would be a relatively small element of a school's overall funding, unless an excessively high weighting were attached, and would not be particularly visible to the school. Given the particularly poor outcomes of looked-after children at all key stages compared to children who are not looked after<sup>65</sup>, the high proportion who become looked after as a result of abuse or neglect and who have special educational needs, and the relatively small size of the cohort, our view is that funding allocated to support this group should be visible and linked to clear accountability requirements. We therefore believe that the national funding formula would not be the most effective route for targeting funding to schools with looked-after children.

2.71 In 2014-15, the government introduced the 'pupil premium plus' for looked-after children and those who have left care through certain defined routes (adoption order, special guardianship order, child arrangements order). The pupil premium plus is additional funding for schools to support the educational needs of looked-after children and those who have left care. Schools receive this separately to their DSG funding, meaning it is much more visible.

2.72 Pupil premium plus funding for looked-after children is managed by the virtual school head<sup>66</sup> (VSH) in the authority that looks after them. They and their staff work in partnership with the child's education setting to help them use pupil premium funding to meet educational needs identified in the child's personal education plan. VSHs look across the looked-after population and make strategic decisions about the best use of pupil premium resources to have maximum impact on the children for whom their local authority is the corporate parent. Pupil premium plus funding for children who have left care is currently allocated directly to schools, based on data collected from schools through the census.

2.73 Our priority is to improve outcomes for looked-after children and post looked-after children. We need to maximise the impact of additional funding going to schools to support some of our most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people. Our view is that we can do this most effectively through the pupil premium plus, rather than schools' DSG funding.

2.74 We also believe that children who have been looked after, and those who have left care through an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order<sup>67</sup> should be treated equally by the school funding system. Children's experiences prior to entering care have a long-lasting effect on their educational attainment. When children leave care, through for example adoption, it is unlikely that their educational needs will change significantly simply because their care status has changed. Recent school performance data shows that children who have left care significantly under-perform compared to children who have never been in care<sup>68</sup>. We believe the funding system should treat both children in care and those who have left care equally.

2.75 We are therefore proposing to increase the pupil premium plus rates for both groups instead of including a looked-after children factor in the national funding formula. This change would take effect from 2017-18 onwards. If there is support for this approach in principle, the second stage of this consultation will include a detailed proposal.

*62 EFA, 'Local authority funding proforma data 2015 to 2016'*

*63 EFA, 'Local authority funding proforma data 2015 to 2016'*

*64 EFA, 'Pupil premium final allocations 2015 to 2016 by local authority area and region in England'- National table , March 2015*

*65 DfE, 'National tables SFR49/2014', March 2015*

*66 Every local authority in England must appoint an officer employed by the LA (called a virtual school head) who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by that LA by monitoring and tracking educational progress as if those children attended a single school.*

*67 Child arrangements orders were known previously as residence orders. For the purpose of this document 'post looked-after children' are defined as those who have left care through adoption or are subject to a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order.*

*68 DfE, 'Key stage 2 attainment for children recorded as adopted from care', July 2014*

**Question 17:** Do you agree that we should target support for looked-after children and those who have left care via adoption, special guardianship or a care arrangements order through the pupil premium plus, rather than include a looked-after children factor in the national funding formula?

## **CoramBAAF Response to Q17**

### **FACTORS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FORMULA**

- 17 Do you agree that we should target support for looked-after children and those who have left care via adoption, special guardianship or a care arrangements order through the pupil premium plus, rather than include a looked-after children factor in the national funding formula?**

Yes

#### **Please provide any further comments:**

The introduction of the Pupil Premium Plus for adopted children and children leaving care through an SGO or CAO in 2014 was welcomed by Coram BAAF and other organisations in the sector. It has enabled some creative use of this additional money benefitting both individual children and groups of children where schools have worked collaboratively with adoptive parents/ SGO & CAO carers to make best use of the allocation (as reported in the CoramBAAF report: Thomas, C., 2015, *Pupil Premium For Adopted Children: Case Studies*, BAAF [Online] Available at: [http://corambaaf.org.uk/webfm\\_send/3879](http://corambaaf.org.uk/webfm_send/3879)).

We would support an increase of the pupil premium plus rates for both looked after children and those who have left care through adoption, SGO or CAO instead of including a looked-after children factor in the national funding formula from 2017-18.

When looking at developing this proposal we would suggest that attention needs to be paid to ways in which the take-up and use of PP+ could be improved. Firstly we would support the extension of the role of the Virtual School Head as proposed in the Schools white paper. We also believe that schools should be encouraged to work more closely with adopters and other carers in determining how they spend the PP+. Adopters and other carers would be more likely to provide schools with the necessary information about their child's status if they believe there will be direct benefit to their child.

Completed by:

Elaine Dibben

Adoption Development Consultant, CoramBAAF

[elaine.dibben@corambaaf.org.uk](mailto:elaine.dibben@corambaaf.org.uk)

21 March 2016