
Vulnerable Children's Fund – Annual Report for 2016-17

Report being considered by:	Schools Forum		
On:	17/07/17		
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Item for:	Information	By:	All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Review of Vulnerable Children's Fund 2016/17

2. Introduction/Background

- 2.1 The Vulnerable Children's Fund (VCF) is a highly appreciated, relatively small fund, for small schools who have unexpected additional financial pressures due to in-year admissions of children with challenging behaviour. It is specifically devised to promote social inclusion, reduce exclusions and reduce the pressure on SEN budgets by providing temporary funding.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 Budget

The original VCF budget for 2016-17 was £60,000. An additional £40,000 was added to this from the 2015/16 carry forward under spend in the Permanent Exclusions cost centre, as agreed at Schools Forum on 6th June 2016.

- 3.2 Allocation of Fund

The table overleaf shows an overview of the allocation of funding over the past 3 years. The number of requests for the Vulnerable Children's Grant (VCG) has reduced from 102 in 2014/15 to 67 in 2016/17. However the overall spend in these two years were similar, indicating that the allocation of funding per request was higher in 2016/17.

The number of requests refused has remained the same over the past 3 years with 4 requests refused each year.

Primary schools accessed the majority of the fund (94%) in 2016/17. 53 primary aged pupils and 2 secondary aged pupils were supported. 21% of requests were extended beyond their initial term in 2016/17. In keeping with previous years the majority of the schools used their VCG to fund additional teaching assistant support.

Table 1 - Allocation of VCF 2014-2017

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Requests Agreed	102 (including repeats)	82	67
Requests Refused	4 because they had SEN statements 6 deferred until after April due to lack of funds	4 (2 x SEN/health needs, 1 early years, 1 LAC)	4 (2 EHCs and 2 repeats)
Schools Accessing Fund	41	46	31
Primary	36 (88%)	41(89%)	29 (94%)
Secondary	5 (12%)	4 (9%)	2 (6%)
PRUs	0	1 (2%)	0
Students Supported	66	69	53
Primary	54 £68,017	57 £53,487	51 £69,980
Secondary	8 £9,100	10 £6,327	2 £5,300
PRUs	0	2	0
Requests Extended Beyond Initial Term	17 (17% of total)	8 (10% of total)	14 (21% of total)
Type of Support:			
Additional TA	95%	90%	79%
External Package	3%	5%	5%
Holiday Support	1%	5%	0
Medical Support	1%	0	16%
Total spend	£77,117	£59,811	£75,280

3.3 Feedback

Feedback was sought from schools using a brief online survey. Schools were asked how the grant was used, whether any exclusions had taken place and whether the pupil in receipt of the grant had made progress. The survey had 13 respondents. 9 of the 13 respondents stated that no exclusions had taken place for the pupils in receipt of the grant. Only one commented that the pupil who had received the grant had not made progress. All other respondents reported that the grant had supported the young person to make progress. Case studies were also sought from a sample of schools.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The VCG aims to be fair, equitable and simple to request. Feedback from schools indicates that it is valued and has significant impact. If schools, particularly smaller primary schools, cannot access this support in the future it could lead to increased movement between schools, higher exclusion figures and increased pressure on the capacity of specialist support services.