
Vulnerable Children's Fund 2017-18

Report being considered by:	Schools Forum on 18 th June 2018		
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Item for:	Vulnerable Children's Fund	By:	Ian Pearson

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 Review of Vulnerable Children's Fund 2017/18

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 VCF budget for 2017-18 was £60,000. This is inclusive of the 2016/17 under spend. The budget for next year has been reduced by £10,000 in order to contribute to savings in the High Needs Budget.

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 slightly although the number of pupils supported has remained similar. The number of schools accessing the support has increased from 31 last year to 36 this year.

The number of requests refused increased this year. This was mainly due to repeat requests for this short term time limited funding.

Primary schools accessed the majority of the fund (94%) in 2017/18. 53 primary aged pupils and 2 secondary aged pupils were supported. Only one request was extended beyond the initial term in 2017/18. 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

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Requests Agreed	82	67	48
Requests Refused	4 (2 x SEN/health needs, 1 early years, 1 LAC)	4 (2 EHCs and 2 repeats)	10
Schools Accessing Fund	46	31	36
Primary	41(89%)	29 (94%)	34 (94%)
Secondary	4 (9%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)
PRUs	1 (2%)	0	0
Students Supported	69	53	55
Primary	57 £53,487	51 £69,980	53 £62,230
Secondary	10 £6,327	2 £5,300	2 £1,750
PRUs	2	0	0
Requests Extended Beyond Initial Term	8 (10% of total)	14 (21% of total)	1 (2% of total)
Type of Support:			
Additional TA	90%	79%	90%
External Package	5%	5%	6%
Holiday Support	5%	0	4%
Medical Support	0	16%	0
Total spend	£59,811	£75,280	£63,980

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. Excerpts from feedback from schools are below:

"The VCG funding enabled the school to put in additional adult support for 3 children in receipt of it. In all 3 cases the impact has been amazing. All 3 pupils have made accelerated progress in all Reading, Writing and Maths. One pupil has reduced the number of exclusions since being in receipt of additional support. The funding has allowed us to use the PPG to support in other areas...thank you. Long may this funding continue"

"With the money we were able to fund support which reduced the risk of the children being excluded from mainstream education...the money has helped them make a positive start"

"Both children came to us for a fresh start....they both came having had a traumatic time leaving their previous setting and needed a tremendous amount of support to add nurture opportunities to ensure they were ready to learn"

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.

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