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# Vulnerable Children's Fund 2018-19

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**Report being considered by:** Schools' Forum on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

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**Item for:** Information **By:** Ian Pearson

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 Review of Vulnerable Children's Fund 2018/19

## 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 social and emotional difficulties. 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 2018-19 was £50,000. It was reduced from £60,000 from the previous year 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) reduced this year partly due to the fact that the fund was depleted well before the end of the financial year. The number of schools accessing the support has remained similar (35 this year and 34 last year). The number of requests refused slightly reduced this year. Refusals were mainly due to repeat requests for the same student.

Primary schools accessed the majority of the fund (97%) in 2018/19. No requests were extended beyond the initial term. In keeping with previous years the majority of the schools used their VCG to fund additional teaching assistant support.

Table 1 - Allocation of VCF 2016-2019

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Requests Agreed</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Requests Refused</b>	<b>4</b> (2 EHCs and 2 repeats)	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Schools Accessing Fund</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>

Primary	<b>29 (94%)</b>	<b>34 (94%)</b>	<b>34 (97%)</b>
Secondary	<b>2 (6%)</b>	<b>2 (6%)</b>	<b>1 (3%)</b>
PRUs	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Students Supported</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>27</b>
Primary	<b>51</b> £69,980	<b>53</b> £62,230	<b>26</b> £49,300
Secondary	<b>2</b> £5,300	<b>2</b> £1,750	<b>1</b> £700
PRUs	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Requests Extended Beyond Initial Term</b>	<b>14 (21% of total)</b>	<b>1 (2% of total)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Type of Support:</b>			
<b>Additional TA</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>External Package</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Holiday Support</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Medical Support</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total spend</b>	<b>£75,280</b>	<b>£63,980</b>	<b>£50,000</b>

### 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 school has used the funding to help support the child educationally, in Literacy lessons, and emotionally. Due to missing a year of schooling due to a brain tumour, he obviously has gaps in his learning. So we decided the best way to support him was to provide 1:1 help in Literacy lessons. This support has helped him access the curriculum and has also been used to help encourage good learning behaviours. We have been able to give him methods to allow him to start work independently and ask for help in an appropriate way. The 1:1 support has meant the work could also be adapted if needed.”*

*“The funding enabled us to maintain 1:1 support for the children whilst we gathered evidence for an EHC application. This was vital in supporting the children to regulate their emotions and to engage in learning opportunities.”*

*“The funding has been key in being able to afford a support assistant to support child A and be able to offer an individualised curriculum to enable him to avoid permanent exclusion.”*

#### 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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