
Vulnerable Children's Grant 19-20

Report being considered by: Schools' Forum on 25th January

Report Author: Michelle Sancho

Item for: Information **By:** All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 Review of Vulnerable Children's Grant 2019/20

2. Introduction/Background

2.1 The Vulnerable Children's Grant (VCG) 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 VCG budget for 2019-20 was £50,000.

3.2 Allocation of Fund

The table overleaf shows an overview of the allocation of funding over the past 4 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 decreased from 36 last year to 29 this year though many of the schools made and received more than one successful application.

Of the 50 applications, 15 were refused. The primary reason for refusal was that the need was not an unexpected one and schools would have had the ability to plan.

Of the 35 successful applications, 29 were from primary schools, 1 from an Early Years' setting and 1 from a secondary school. The grant supported 33 primary aged pupils, 1 secondary aged pupil and 2 early years' pupils. In keeping with previous years the majority of the schools used their VCG to fund additional teaching assistant support.

Table 1 - Allocation of VCG 2016-2020

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Requests Agreed	67	48	27	35
Requests Refused	4 (2 EHCs and 2 repeats)	10	8	15
Schools Accessing Fund	31	36	35	29
Primary	29 (94%)	34 (94%)	34 (97%)	27 (93%)
Secondary	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)	1 (3.5%)
Early Years				1 (3.5%)
PRUs	0	0	0	0
Students Supported	53	55	27	36
Primary	51 £69,980	53 £62,230	26 £49,300	33 £45,849
Secondary	2 £5,300	2 £1,750	1 £700	1 £2139
Early Years				2 £2012
PRUs	0	0	0	0
Requests Extended Beyond Initial Term	14 (21% of total)	1 (2% of total)	0	0
Type of Support:				
Additional TA	79%	90%	88%	86%
External Package	5%	6%	6%	8%
Holiday Support	0	4%	0	0
Medical Support	16%	0	6%	0
Other				6%
Total spend	£75,280	£63,980	£50,000	£50,000

3.3 Feedback

Schools were asked for feedback per individual pupil who had received the grant. The questions asked were:

Q1. How has the funding helped the pupil and/or the school?

Q2. What is the current rating on the Worry Scale? Is this an increase, a decrease or has it stayed the same?

Q3. Have there been any exclusions since you received the funding? Is this an increase, a decrease or has it stayed the same?

Q4. Has the pupil made progress since the receipt of the funding? Please comment.

The 'Worry Scale' is an opportunity for the school to rate their level of concern for the pupil in the application if nothing changes.

Feedback was received for 6 pupils. Please note that this evaluation was requested during the coronavirus pandemic so there were fewer returns than usual. 67% reported a decrease in their level of worry. 33% reported that their level of worry remains the same. There was no reports of an increase in worry levels. Only 2 of the 6 pupils had received further fixed term exclusion following funding. None of the pupils received a permanent exclusion.

Excerpts from feedback from schools are below:

"A settled into the Willows and formed secure and positive peer relationships within the year group. This helped with transition to Secondary School. It had a positive impact on his wellbeing – socially, emotionally and academically"

"Good progress made. B is a bright boy and has the potential to achieve well when he is emotionally secure and plans are in place."

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. Indeed, all of the evaluations reported an impact on the pupil once funding had been accessed. 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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