

# Vulnerable Children’s Grant 2021-2022

**Report being considered by:** Schools Forum on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Report Author:** Michelle Sancho

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

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 Review of Vulnerable Children’s Fund 2021/2022

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 That forum members accept this report.

<b>Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?</b>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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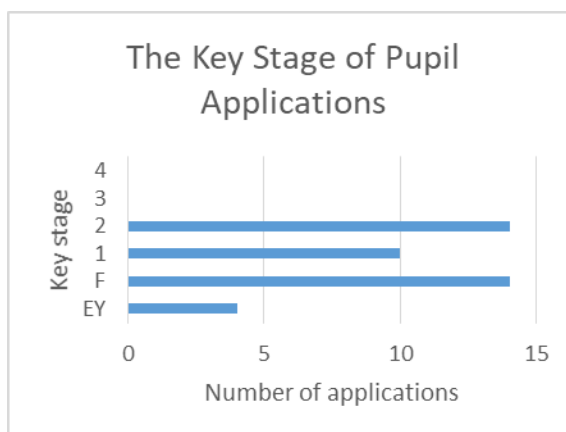
## 3. Introduction/Background

3.1 The Vulnerable Children’s Grant (VCG) is a highly appreciated, relatively small fund, for schools who have unexpected additional financial pressures due to in-year admissions of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or for children whose needs suddenly change. It is specifically devised to promote social inclusion, reduce exclusions and reduce the pressure on SEN budgets by providing temporary funding.

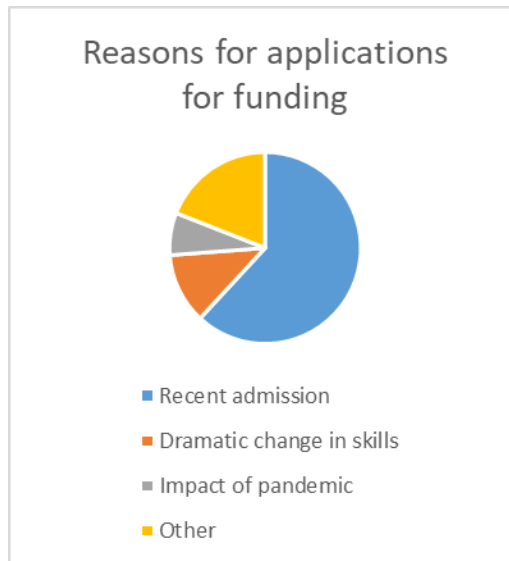
## 4. Supporting Information

4.1 The VCG budget for 2021-2022 was £50,000

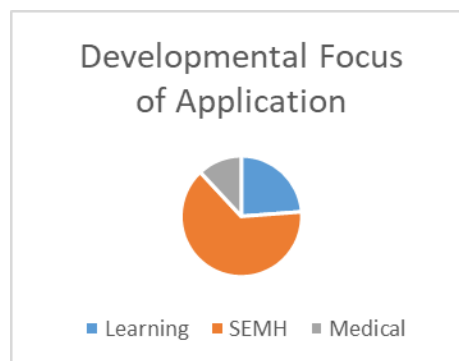
4.2 26 settings applied for VCG funding for 52 pupils. All successful applications were received from primary schools, though a few applications were received from early years settings:



Most of the applications received were for support for pupils who had arrived as an in-year admission, and the remaining 38% were due to a dramatic change in pupil need, the impact of the pandemic, or an 'other' reason, e.g. holiday clubs:

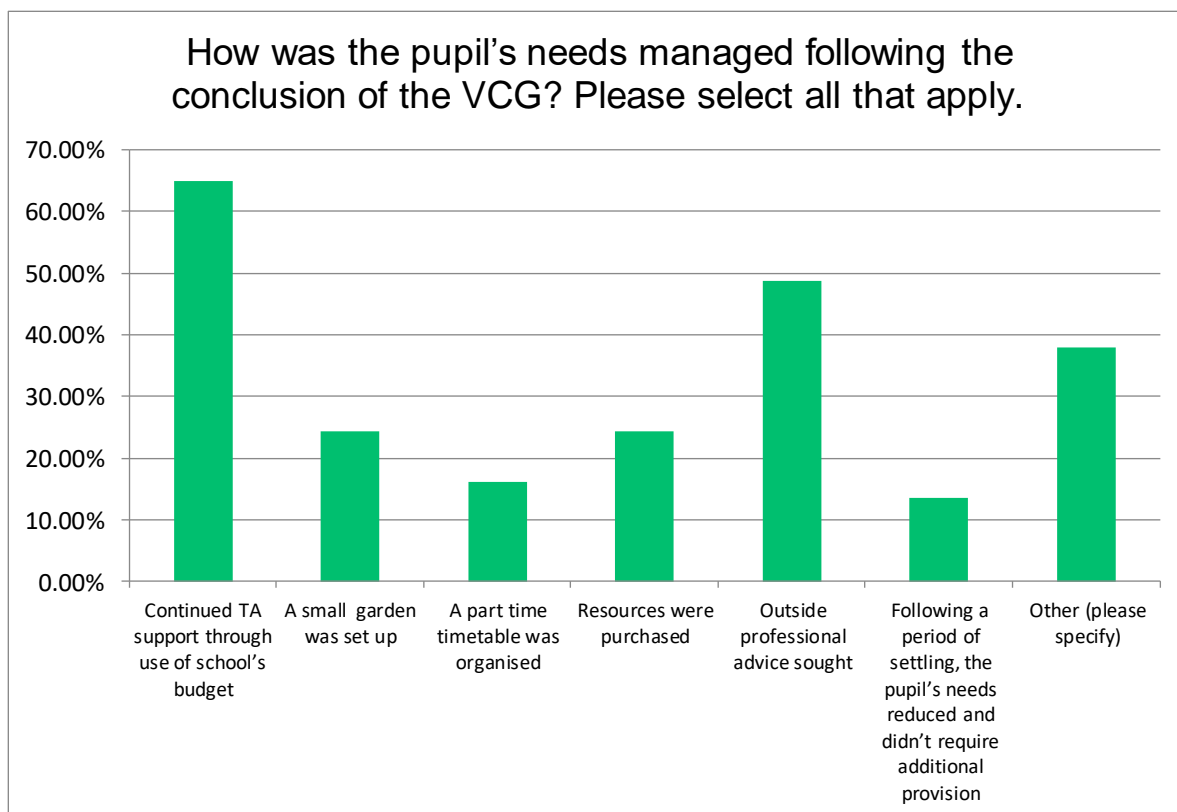


Most applications were to support a pupil's Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, with the remaining 35% requiring learning or medical support:

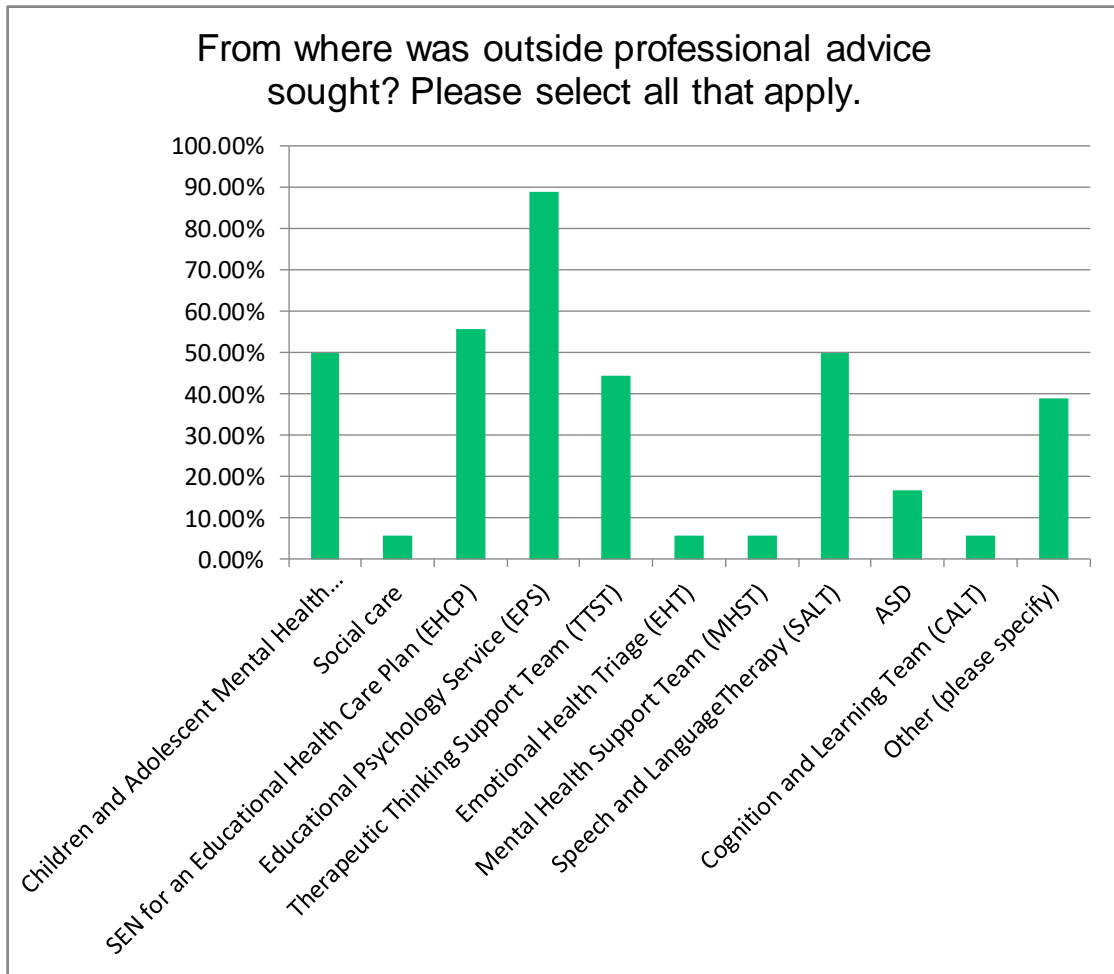


92% of applications requested funding for additional TA support. When schools were surveyed in April 2022, responses indicated that the TA support was predominantly used to support a pupil's SEMH needs and inclusion in school by providing additional support in class, or in a differentiated learning provision (a 'small garden').

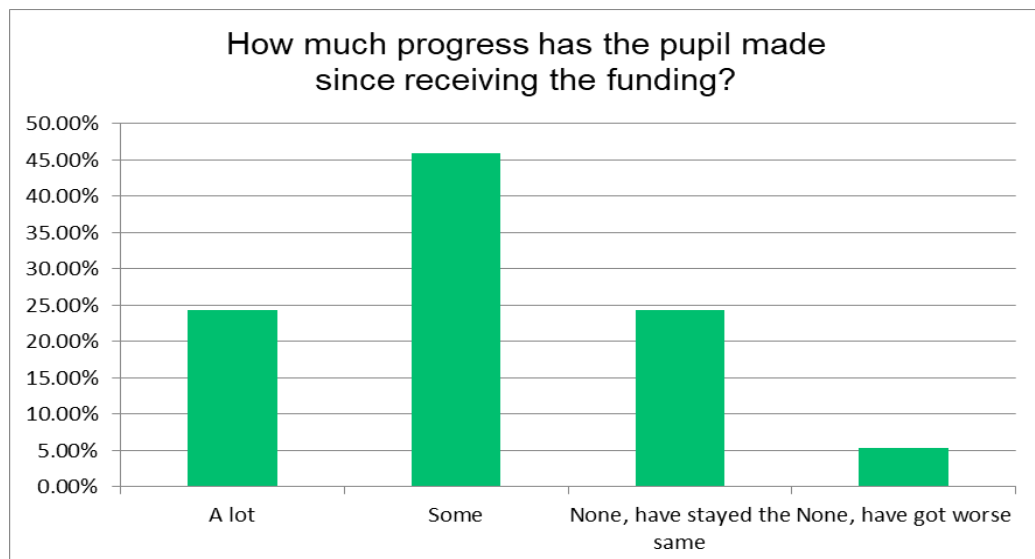
Although 13% of pupils didn't require additional support after the conclusion of the VCG, the vast majority did. Schools used their own budgets to continue to provide TA support, as well as supporting in other ways, e.g. purchasing resources.



The survey suggests that pupils in receipt of VCG had significant needs as Educational Psychology involvement was sought for 88% of pupils, and 55% of pupils applied to the SEN team for an EHCP assessment.



Schools were clear that the VCG is an effective use of funds. 70% of pupils were said to have made a lot or some progress since receiving funding:



Schools were grateful to receive funding as some of the quotes below illustrate:

*"The VCG enabled us to put additional support in place for XX which gave us clear evidence of the impact of very focused adult support. This helped when we applied for an EHC assessment."*

*"... a fantastic use of funds that enabled a successful transition into starting school for a young child. It was good to be able to meet his needs straight away rather than having to react afterwards."*

*"The funding has been vital to us being able to support new pupils when an immediate and unpredictable need has occurred. The funding has allowed a move that has had a positive impact on the whole family."*

9 applications were refused funding, mainly due to needs already being known by schools.

## 5. Conclusion

5.1 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.

5.2

## 6. Consultation and Engagement

Please set out here those people/key stakeholders/organisations that have been consulted in the preparation of your report.

6.1 All schools that used the VCG were surveyed.