

Pupil Development Grant

1. Background

In the Greater Gwent region, the Pupil Development Grant is administered by the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

2. Funding 2021/2022

The attached spreadsheet provides a breakdown, on a school by school basis of the PDG and School Improvement Grant (SIG), which is also administered by the EAS.

The spreadsheet shows that BGCBC schools will receive £2.5m for SIG and £2.7m for PDG.

3. Areas of spend

The grant award letter states that the purposes of the grant are as follows:-

The PDG will be allocated to support:

- learners who are eligible for free school meals and who are educated in maintained schools

- eligible learners who are singly-registered in pupil referral units (PRUs) and education other than at school (EOTAS)

- eligible learners in early years' settings where the Foundation Phase is delivered

- looked after children (LAC), and former LAC who have been adopted from care or who are subject to a special guardianship or residence order aged 3-15

The PDG Funding should be used to:

- develop staff, both teaching and support, in the use of practice such as growth mind-set and quality feedback, that are currently viewed to be the most effective for learners from deprived backgrounds.

- intervene early to address weakness, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This applies to early years but is also relevant at the start of secondary school and at any point that a weakness is observed.
- ensure that increased resources are targeted at Key Stage 3, both in the classroom and in enrichment activities and raising aspirations, while recognising the importance of Year 11 for all learners. In support of the principles of early intervention and prevention, the Minister for Education expects secondary schools to deliver an aspiration of 60% of PDG invested in Key Stage 3 learners.
- identify where and when support is required using appropriate diagnostic and tracking systems and what this looks like.

WG requires the EAS to set out how they will work with schools to ensure that effective use is made of the PDG to improve outcomes for learners who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) in maintained schools. In particular, we want to know how you will ensure schools:

- monitor and evaluate the impact of the funding;
- adopt a more equitable approach to funding to ensure that greater investment is made at Key Stage 3;
- receive the necessary support to enable Head teachers to identify, use and evaluate chosen approaches to ensure continued effective improvement.

WG ask that the EAS continue to work with maintained and non-maintained early years' providers to ensure they are making effective use of the grant, whilst strengthening your links with the non-maintained settings. We ask you consider cluster models when determining the most effective use of funding to support the delivery of improved outcomes for disadvantaged learners.

The Welsh Government acknowledges new schools will come on stream after the data collection period. We would expect you to continue to manage funding of schools that are closing; amalgamating or new in a strategic and planned manner as you have done previously. We also ask that you manage your Consortia led funding allocation as per the terms set out in the Grant Invitation Letter.

The looked after children element of the PDG, which supports the educational attainment of looked after children and other related groups who have similar needs, will continue to be managed regionally by the consortia. This will allow for continued strategic use of the grant, and you should consider how you will plan, set targets and support learners who are looked after, adopted and subject to care orders through effective use of the grant.

In line with the Welsh Government's looked after children education plan (Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales) the PDG should be used to meet the costs of identifying a lead coordinator who will retain strategic focus on looked after children in education and ensure the delivery of an agreed, strategic programme of work.

The lead coordinators in each consortium should work with local authorities and schools to identify and share good practice via the National Delivery Group for looked after children.

In addition to the PDG allocation for schools and settings, £100,000 per annum is provided to retain the services of the strategic advisers. This role is supplementary to the role of the looked after children lead coordinator and as such needs to be reflected in the structure of the posts and any administrative support. This will cover costs associated with the role, including travel and subsistence (in recognition of the geographical spread and the need to work with schools right across the region and the need to meet each half-term with the Welsh Government and Raising Attainment Advocate (although these meetings are expected to take place virtually in the short term at least)), and administrative support (to enable the lead to operate effectively at a strategic level).

Where the PDG strategic adviser and PDG-LAC lead coordinator roles are combined, evidence is expected to be provided to satisfy us that the Funding provided for the two distinct roles is being used solely and fully for the Purposes outlined. Where the two roles are combined and being performed by one member of staff, wider consortia resources and support will need to be put in place to facilitate the effective delivery of both roles.

PDG strategic advisers and PDG-LAC coordinators should provide robust, constructive challenge and high quality support to enable headteachers and governing bodies to improve the attainment of disadvantaged learners. This equitable approach will strengthen regional leadership arrangements and ensure greater national consistency in supporting disadvantaged learners across Wales.

PDG strategic advisers and PDG-LAC coordinators should facilitate a partnership approach to PDG and raising the attainment of disadvantaged learners across the region and collaboration and consistency at a national level.

PDG strategic advisers and PDG-LAC coordinators will work with the Welsh Government and our Raising Attainment Advocate, Sir Alasdair Macdonald, to strengthen collaboration across Wales and ensure that good practice is shared and built upon. They will be expected to have a strong knowledge of all settings (including non-maintained settings) in the region, including understanding the associated data, to allow them to identify schools that need support to improve and identify best practice so that this is shared regionally and nationally.

Building networks through identification of key leads within every school and establishing a regional 'network of leaders' to support and drive progress will be critical.

Strategic advisers and coordinators will be the point of contact for all schools and settings on effective and evidence based interventions. They will be expected to provide extra support and guidance advising on:

- appropriate interventions based on the latest evidence;
- using whole school approaches;
- the benefits of tracking;
- supporting evaluation of current practices; and
- facilitating regional support networks.