



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Pupil Development Grant (PDG): overview

How the Pupil Development Grant is allocated and used to help children and young people reach their full potential.

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# Introduction

The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) is funding given to schools and educational settings (settings). Settings include nurseries, pupil referral units, and home tuition.

PDG, Early Years PDG (EYPDG), and Education other than at school PDG (EOTAS PDG) funding aim to raise the attainment of children and young people from low-income households. PDG-LAC is given for care-experienced or looked after children (LAC). It does this by reducing the barriers that they often face to achieving their full potential.

The PDG is a key resource for realising the Welsh Government's ambition of **high standards and aspirations for all**.

## PDG

The PDG is provided to schools and settings for children and young people aged 5 to 15. Use of the grant should focus on the following key areas:

- high-quality learning and teaching
- Community Focused Schools
- early childhood play, learning and care
- high aspirations supported by strong relationships
- health and wellbeing
- leadership
- Curriculum for Wales and qualifications
- supporting post-16 progression

## EYPDG

The EYPDG gives similar support to children aged 3 and 4 in schools and nurseries. This includes both maintained and non-maintained settings. This funding is used to support:

- emotional and social wellbeing
- physical development
- speech, language and communication

## PDG-LAC

The PDG-LAC is intended to support the educational attainment of:

- looked after children (LAC or CLA)
- children who have been adopted
- children who are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO)

The Welsh Government is working with:

- schools
- settings
- local authorities
- regional consortia and partnerships

Together we aim to find where funding can have the most benefit as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and in light of cost-of-living challenges.

## How PDG is allocated

The amount of PDG, EYPDG, EOTAS PDG and PDG-LAC funding given to local authorities, schools and settings is based on the number of:

- children and young people aged 5 to 15 in a school or setting (for example educated other than at school (EOTAS) or pupil referral unit (PRU)) who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) based on the latest school census (PLASC) data
- children and young people who are looked after, based on the Children Looked After Census
- children aged 3 to 4 in a school or non-maintained setting (for example nurseries) who are eFSM based on the latest school census (PLASC) data

Funding is given on a financial-year basis, based on the number of eligible children and young people. Funding is based on the criteria above, not academic ability.

## How PDG funding is distributed

PDG funding is paid directly to local authorities and distributed to schools and settings. Local authorities work closely with regional consortia and partnerships (where relevant) as well as schools and settings to ensure the grant is used for its intended purposes. Activity and impact of spend is reported to the Welsh Government by PDG Advisors (and PDG-LAC Regional Coordinators where relevant) and local authorities.

# How the PDG is used

## Schools and settings

### PDG

Schools and settings are expected to use the PDG funding for ‘whole-school or setting approaches’. These approaches can benefit all of their children and young people. However, they must specifically support the needs of eligible learners in light of the disadvantage they face. Approaches can include:

- professional learning for teachers
- tailored learning and teaching interventions

School leaders can decide how to spend their PDG funding. However, they should ensure they plan and spend it in line with the grant terms and conditions and reflect the **PDG guidance**.

PDG spend should focus particularly on:

- providing high-quality learning and teaching
- developing **Community Focused Schools**

### EYPDG

The foundations for progress towards the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales begins in the early years. The aim of the EYPDG is to provide additional support to our youngest learners, those aged 3 and 4.

EYPDG spend should have a particular focus on the importance of:

- emotional and social wellbeing, valuing quality interactions and relationships
- physical needs, focussing on a strong understanding of child development
- learning and development needs, placing high priority on language development

The EYPDG should focus on early identification and effective approaches aligned with foundation learning pedagogy that support child development.

High-quality nursery education is essential to children's development.

Relationships are key for young learners, and having opportunities for meaningful, quality interactions are essential. That means enabling adults need a thorough knowledge and understanding of child development. This will include the principles of play-based learning and how to support child-led learning.

**Enabling learning** sets out the key features of successful pedagogy with a particular focus on younger learners. Effective, child-centred pedagogy, which is responsive, dynamic and embedded in strong relationships, is essential. This is particularly the case with a child's language development. Children need time to develop good speaking and listening skills. High-quality experiences are essential to supporting children to develop social and communication skills. Environments should be communication-rich. Play is fundamental to physical, intellectual and creative development.

## **PDG-LAC**

Children who are looked after or care-experienced are likely to have experienced similar difficulties in their early years. The impact of those early negative experiences increases the risk of poor educational progress compared to other children.

PDG-LAC spend should focus on:

- disproportionately benefitting looked after and care-experienced children
- contributing to the development of inclusive schools and settings committed to equity and wellbeing
- funding for clusters of schools and settings to build capacity and to provide bespoke interventions, both of which need to meet individual learners' needs and be based on robust evidence of positive impact for their learning outcomes
- a person-centred approach which captures the views of the learner to be used to inform school, setting and cluster plans and the local authority or regional strategy

Further information for school leaders is available in our [guidance on using the pupil development grant](#).

## Local authorities

Local authorities are expected to ensure PDG funding will be used to improve outcomes for children and young people from low-income households and those who are care-experienced. The aim is to reduce the difference in attainment between these learners and their peers.

## PDG

Local authorities are required to passport PDG funding in full to schools and settings as set out in the [school and settings level allocations](#). They are also required to distribute in full any additional funding. This will smooth the impact of reductions to PDG funding following PLASC 2023 data revalidation, in line with local needs. Flexibility is important for this element of the funding to enable the local authority to respond to needs in their area. However, we expect the PDG allocation to be devolved in full to schools and settings.



Local authorities must also:

- ensure schools and settings are informed of this information, PDG guidance and relevant grant terms and conditions for the PDG
- support schools and settings to engage with PDG Advisors in planning and evaluating PDG spend as set out in the PDG guidance – this includes ensuring that they publish their PDG strategy statement on their website
- continue to fund, work with, and enable the effective delivery of activity of, the PDG Advisor, and PDG-LAC Regional Coordinator (where relevant), to report to Welsh Government on schools, settings, local authority and regional activity and impact of PDG spend

Local authorities are required to set out plans and report back on PDG funding via PDG Advisors and in regular returns. These should include which schools and settings have been targeted or have benefitted from additional funds, and the reasoning behind this. This helps to ensure that PDG funding is spent on initiatives or support backed up by evidence for children and young people from low-income households and those who are care-experienced.

## EYPDG

Local authorities are responsible for distributing the PDG funding for early years to schools and settings. This role includes:

- engaging with childcare settings delivering funded nursery education (for example Cylch Meithrin or day nurseries)
- engaging with Early Years Advisory Teachers and Foundation Learning Leads to ensure consistency and embedded in appropriate early education pedagogical approaches
- supporting schools and non-maintained nursery settings to forge closer links to ensure greater sharing of information and practice and to support the transition of individual learners

- support schools and settings to work together with other agencies. This could include settings working together with feeder schools and settings being involved in school cluster work where appropriate

## PDG-LAC

From 2024 to 2025, local authorities receive the PDG funding given to schools and settings for children and young people who are care-experienced. Local authorities should consider how they will use the grant effectively to plan, set targets for and support learners who looked after and care-experienced.

Local authorities are expected to ensure:

- funding (as it is allocated based on the number of learners who are in the care of the local authority) will be used to improve outcomes for care-experienced children and young people, and reduce the difference in attainment between this cohort and their peers
- that the element of the PDG allocated for care-experienced learners will be retained and managed centrally by the local authority (or consortium where existing arrangements are in place)

Based on local needs, local authorities can choose to:

- pass all the funding on to schools, settings and clusters
- keep some of the funding for activities that will benefit a group of, or all of, the authority's children and young people who are care-experienced
- keep parts of the funding to employ PDG-LAC local authority or Regional Coordinators (where regional posts exist, there is an expectation these continue to be funded for a transitional period)

In line with the Welsh Government's looked after children education plan ([Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of looked after children](#))

**in Wales**), our expectation is that the PDG funding can continue to be used to meet the costs associated with strategic coordination and oversight of the grant. These costs can be related to the local authority or the existing regional arrangements. Coordinators for PDG-LAC will work with the Welsh Government, PDG Advisers (if different) and with school, settings and counterpart local authorities to deliver improvements in the educational outcomes and attainment of care-experienced children.

Local authorities are expected to:

- continue to work with regional consortia and partnerships where relevant, and with schools and settings in their area to ensure the funding helps to achieve the outcomes in children and young people's personal education plans. Funding for local authority (and regional where relevant) priorities should be identified in the local authority or regional strategy and agreed through the accountability structures
- work collaboratively with other local authorities (and consortia or partnerships where applicable) on a joined up, strategic approach to support care-experienced children's outcomes. This will be overseen by the regional lead co-ordinator and PDG Advisor (where applicable) whose role is to provide support (join up knowledge and communicate evidence-based practice across regions) and report on the grant
- agree collaborative working arrangements between local authorities (and consortia or partnerships where applicable) at appropriate levels including LA leads for LAC or CLA and Virtual School Heads where applicable, to understand local needs and ensure effective decision making and lines of accountability which ensure that children and young people remain supported irrespective of where they live or are educated if support is needed

## EOTAS PDG

Local authorities are responsible for allocating the PDG funding for EOTAS. This role includes:

- engaging with settings (including pupil referral units (PRUs)) and education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)
- setting out arrangements for planning and delivering support to children in EOTAS in their local authorities (and regions), working with EOTAS Co-ordinators on these proposals

## PDG Advisers

PDG Advisers (and PDG-LAC Regional Coordinators where relevant) should provide robust, constructive challenge and high-quality support to enable school and setting leaders, as well as governing bodies, to improve the outcomes of children and young people from low-income households as well as children and young people who are care-experienced. This approach aims to:

- strengthen regional leadership arrangements
- ensure greater national consistency in supporting children and young people from low-income households and those who are care-experienced
- support our ability to gather evidence of impact

PDG Advisers are expected to continue to work with local authorities to provide schools and settings with the necessary support to use the grant in the most effective way and in line with the **PDG guidance**.

Support should include:

- robust and constructive challenge to schools and settings ensuring that they

use evidence-informed approaches

- high quality support to enable leaders, headteachers and governing bodies to improve the outcomes for learners living in low-income households
- collaboration between schools, and between schools and settings
- sharing effective practice
- monitoring the annual PDG strategy statements that schools need to publish on their use of the PDG and its impact
- ensuring there is a designated lead for learners from low-income households in each school or setting in receipt of PDG, and building networks of key leads and establishing local and regional 'networks of leaders'
- working with the local authorities to report to the Welsh Government on local and regional activity and the impact of PDG spend

## Funding rates for 2024 to 2025

The PDG and EYPDG are available to schools and settings, at a rate of £1,150 per child, for:

- eFSM children and young people aged 5 to 15 in compulsory school years
- eFSM children aged 3 and 4 in schools or funded non-maintained settings (EYPDG)
- eFSM children and young people in PRUs or those who are EOTAS
- children and young people aged 3 to 15 who are care-experienced (PDG-LAC)

A [breakdown of PDG allocations for each school or setting](#) is available for 2024 to 2025.

In addition, for 2024 to 2025, the PDG will:

- provide a share of £7.1m to local authorities to be distributed in full to

schools and settings

- provide a share of funding of £400,000 for the local authority or regional PDG Adviser

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