

Catch Up Funding

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee: 22 February 2022

COVID-19 Catch Up Funding

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government have allocated additional funding to schools to assist with the educational recovery. The extra catch-up funding has been allocated via a number of additional grants, including:

COVID Catch Up Premium

Additional funding to support children and young people to catch up on missed learning caused by Coronavirus (COVID-19). This funding was available for the 2020 to 2021 academic year and school allocations were calculated on a per pupil basis:

- Mainstream schools at £80 per pupil from reception to year 11 inclusive;
- The following settings got £240 for each place:
 - special schools, including special units in mainstream schools;
 - Alternative Provision schools;
 - hospital schools.

The National Tutoring Programme

The National Tutoring Programme provides additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help, which included:

- a schools programme for 5 to 16-year;
- a 16 to 19 tuition fund;
- an oral language intervention programme for reception-aged children.

Lancashire was the only local authority to be approved as Tuition Partners. The Ethnic Minority Gypsy Roma Traveller Achievement Service was approved as one of the Tuition Partners for the National Tutoring programmes in 2020-21. This means schools could access English as an Additional Language tuition to help their EAL pupils catch up at a highly subsidised rate – subsidised by 75% by DfE funding

COVID-19 Summer School Grant

Schools could express an interest in delivering a summer school programme and could claim grant funding to support the costs. Payments are awarded based on actual costs incurred, up to the value of a maximum allocation.

COVID Recovery Premium

The recovery premium provides additional funding for state-funded schools in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Building on the pupil premium, this funding helps schools to deliver evidence-based approaches for supporting disadvantaged pupils. The recovery premium is allocated using the same data as the pupil premium, with the following funding allocations:

- Mainstream schools allocations:
 - £145 for each eligible pupil in mainstream education;
 - £290 for each eligible pupil in a special unit.
- Other types of eligible schools get £290 for each eligible pupil.

School Led Tutoring Grant

The School-Led Tutoring is part of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) in 2021/22. Eligible schools receive a ring-fenced grant to source their own tutoring provision for disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils who have missed the most education due to COVID-19.

Funding is allocated for around 60% of pupils, in Year 1 to 11, eligible for pupil premium, per school. 75% of the cost is subsidised in academic year 2021/22, 60% in 2022/23 and 25% in 2023/24. Schools need to fund the remaining unsubsidised percentage (25%, 40%, 75%) through other budgets, for example recovery premium or pupil premium etc.

Allocations for maintained schools are passported via the local authority and the table below sets out the funding received by Lancashire in the financial year 2020/21 and in 2021/22, up to December 2021. Further 2021/22 allocations will be received up to March 2022 and some will continue until the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

DfE COVID Catch Up Grant Allocations to Lancashire Maintained Schools	
Financial Year 2020/21	
Grant	Allocation
COVID Catch Up Premium	£6,693,920
The National Tutoring Programme	£38,552
Total	£6,732,472
Financial Year 2021/22 (to Dec 2021)	
Grant	Allocation
COVID Catch Up Premium	£4,760,820
The National Tutoring Programme	£94,115
COVID 19 Summer School Grant	£1,004,589
COVID Recovery Premium	£1,236,964
School Led Tutoring Grant	£1,144,812
Total	£8,241,299
Total COVID Catch Up Funding to date	£14,973,771

It should be noted that the government has also made available other COVID related grants to schools, but the other funding allocations relate to additional operational costs, rather than educational recovery, so are not included here.

As part of the assessment for the catch-up funding, colleagues from the Schools Forum were asked for feedback about the access to these COVID related grants and their usage from a financial perspective.

Overall, Schools Forum members welcomed the additional funding from the government to assist in the educational recovery from the pandemic impacts but expressed a view that there was too much 'jumping through hoops' in accessing some of the funding.

Of particular concern was the school-led tutoring grant. The complexity of this grant was emphasised, with forum members indicating that the administration of the grant was onerous and very bureaucratic.

Concern was also expressed that the grant conditions were burdensome and the DfE have indicated that they will claw back unspent grant or grant funding not used in accordance with the conditions. Forum members indicated that many schools had no capacity to undertake the administration associated with grants, or release staff to undertake the pre-requisite training.

The forum was also worried that many schools maybe unaware of the conditions of grant and could therefore be at increased risk of the funding being clawed back, although it was noted that the local authority had published information on the Schools Portal about the grant conditions and the full list of school allocations.

Concern was also expressed about the initial lack of clarity around some of the outcomes data that would be required. Forum members felt that the outcomes data required should be much clearer in advance.

Comment was also made that the DfE level of contribution for the school-led tutoring grant dropped in future years making the costs associated with the administration even less appealing to schools. Some schools indicated that they may therefore not use the funding in future years, as the burden of applying outweighed the benefits, particularly as the proportion of government funding reduced.

Some forum representatives expressed a more positive view about the National Tutoring Programme, although it was noted that accessing the required systems was not easy at first.

Many forum members welcomed the Recovery Premium, as the similarities to the ongoing Pupil Premium Grant meant that schools were already organised for expenditure of this type and for the DfE's reporting requirements.

There was also a view expressed that some of the recovery funding was replacing other funding streams that had been discontinued, for example year 7 literacy and numeracy catch up funding.

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