

Written Statement - Pupil Development Grant – Access

PDG Access will sit alongside the other elements of PDG and will have a particular focus on supporting parents with the additional costs associated with their children starting education, and with progressing into secondary school.

This new fund – amounting to £1.7 million – will be more flexible and relevant to the needs of disadvantaged learners than the previous school uniform grant; it will also support more learners. We are focusing the new grant on the entry point into education and transition into secondary school. For the first time, learners in both Reception and Year 7, who are eligible for free school meals, or are children who are looked after, will fall within scope of the funding.

Unlike the previous school uniform grant, all looked after children in these year groups will be covered, reflecting the particular barriers this group of learners face in terms of their education.

Funding of up to £125 will be available per learner, which is an increase on the previous school uniform grant. The funding will be distributed via local authorities.

In recognition of the variety of costs parents have when their children start school and to promote a greater uptake of wider activities by our disadvantaged learners, the funding is wide in scope.

It is simply unacceptable that some of our young people miss out on opportunities because of their personal circumstances and background. All learners should be encouraged to aim high and be supported to achieve their goals. That is the aim of the PDG and this new funding will further support progress in this regard by helping address the greater disadvantage learners face simply by not being in a financial position to engage in extra-curricular; enrichment and after school activities. That is why this funding will not be limited to supporting the cost of school uniform; it will support greater aspiration, cultural enrichment, well-being and resilience by covering:

- School uniform;
- School sports kit;
- Uniform for wider activities, for example sports, scouts and guides;
- School equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology; and
- Equipment for out of school hours trips such as waterproofs for outdoor learning.