

Education Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Child Poverty - School Uniform Grant

Item number	7.19
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	
Council Commitments	C33

Executive Summary

This report presents follow up actions to the previous Child Poverty – School Uniform Grant report presented the last Education, Children & Families Committee on 6 March 2018.

That committee meeting approved recommendations to streamline the criteria for entitlement to a clothing grant by aligning it with eligibility for free school meals, ensure primary school pupil entitlement is the same as the secondary school entitlement and increase the school clothing grant for an estimated 6400 pupils to at least £70.

This report provides the financial options and costs for increasing the School Clothing Grant to meet the higher figure recommended by the Child Poverty Action Group of £129.50 and information on the range of costs of school uniforms from outlets within the City of Edinburgh area.

Child Poverty - School Uniform Grant

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the financial options and costs for increasing the School Clothing Grant to meet the higher figure recently recommended by the Scottish Government of £100.
 - 1.1.2 Note the financial options and costs for increasing the School Clothing Grant to meet the higher figure recently recommended Child Poverty Action Group of £129.50
 - 1.1.3 Note information on the range of costs of school uniforms from outlets within the City of Edinburgh area

2. Background

- 2.1 Just over 20% of children in Edinburgh live in poverty, equating to about 20,000 children. This figure is projected to rise significantly by 2020 (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2015). Whilst there are well-documented concentrated areas of poverty in Edinburgh, it should be noted that every Ward registers a child poverty rate, after housing costs, of over 10%.
- 2.2 Families experiencing poverty often lack the money to pay for essential items such as school equipment and uniforms. This can be a particular challenge for families with more than one child and can greatly impact on children's learning, experiences and outcomes in school.
- 2.3 At the last Education, Children & Families Committee on 6 March 2018, recommendations were approved to streamline the criteria for entitlement to a clothing grant by aligning it with eligibility for free school meals, ensure primary school pupil entitlement is the same as the secondary school entitlement and increase the school clothing grant for an estimated 6400 pupils to at least £70.

3. Main report

- 3.1 At the last Education, Children & Families Committee on 6 March 2018, a Child Poverty – School Uniform Report was submitted for approval which highlighted the range of work taking place under the 1 in 5 Child Poverty Awareness project to address inequalities as a result of income.
- 3.2 Recommendations were approved to streamline the criteria for entitlement to a clothing grant by aligning it with eligibility for free school meals, ensure primary school pupil entitlement is the same as the secondary school entitlement and increase the school clothing grant for an estimated 6400 pupils to at least £70
- 3.3 Recent proposal from COSLA on behalf of the Scottish Government is consulting with local authorities on their interest in voluntarily increasing school clothing grants to a new recommended amount of £100.00 with their support. No final confirmation has been received yet.
- 3.4 The Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland estimates that the cost of a school uniform is £129.50 and the cost implication to increase grants to this figure is outlined below.
- 3.5 The range of costs of school uniforms from outlets within the City of Edinburgh area range from £12 from supermarkets (e.g. Asda) for the basic items of skirt/trousers, blouse and jumper to £91.95 (e.g. Aitken & Niven) for blazer, skirt/trousers, jumper, blouse).
- 3.6 These figures do not take in any additional items such as shoes, ties, cardigans, summer dresses, gym kits and other necessities.
- 3.7 Our *Making School Equal for All- Edinburgh's Pupil Equity Framework*, gives guidance on what schools should be doing to minimise school uniform costs including adopting a flexible uniform policy to allow purchase from a range of suppliers, schools not profiting from uniform sales and being discreet when addressing uniform issues. It also discourages the practice of using specific suppliers and raising additional income from uniform sales.
- 3.5 The '*1 in 5: Financial Support and Information*' booklet distributed to all Services for Schools and Communities staff contains information on how to support families to maximise incomes and access various grants, benefits and funds.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Increased school clothing grant is agreed and communicated to families across Edinburgh.
- 4.2 All schools are familiar with the Edinburgh's Equity Framework and are encouraged to follow the guidelines within with regards to allowing families to purchase uniform from cheaper suppliers.

- 4.3 Staff who work with families across the council are familiar with the 1 in 5: Financial Support and Information booklet in order to support income maximisation for families across Edinburgh.

5. Financial impact

5.1

	Options	Estimated numbers of beneficiaries*	Clothing Grant Entitlement	Budget required*
1	Current Situation	5,900	£43 - Primary £50 - Secondary	£241,848
2	Increased Clothing Grant for all eligible pupils (aligned with FME) as recommended in Committee 6 th March**	6,400	£70 all pupils	£448,000
3	Increased Clothing Grant for all eligible pupils (aligned with FME) as recommended as minimum rate by Scottish Government in accordance with COSLA consultation	6,400	£100 all pupils	£640,000 (may be less depending on contribution from Scottish Government)
4	Increase Clothing Grant for all eligible pupils (aligned with FME) to be in line with CPAG recommendations*	6,400	£129.50 all pupils	£828,800

*The figures above are based on projected estimates from the Transaction Team but this may increase given changes to welfare benefits. Scottish Government also encourage use of occasional discretion where necessary for individuals who would normally not be entitled.

**Note this would not apply in the case of blanket FSM programmes i.e. all P1-P3 pupils FSM funded by Scottish Government and FSM for all St Crispins and Oaklands pupils funded by CEC.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 Improved outcomes for, and greater inclusion of, children living in poverty.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Improved outcomes for children in poverty contributes to a range of sustainability indicators.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 None undertaken for this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [CPAG Website – School Clothing Grants in Scotland](#)

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11. Appendices

- 11.1 None.