

Evaluation of additional Supported Study Funding



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ADES



Evaluation of additional funding for Supported Study provided by Scottish Government

Spring 2022

Scottish Government provided additional funding to local authorities for Spring 2022 with the aim of supporting young people in the lead up to the 2022 SQA exam diet. The funding was aimed at additional study support activities. Scottish Government requested an evaluation of what was provided as a result of the additional funding and which groups were targeted. ADES agreed to carry out a simple evaluation focusing on what additional activities were undertaken beyond the normal supported study, perceived impact and which groups were targeted using the additional funding.

ADES alerted local authorities to the evaluation that would take place and then followed up with a survey to gather information on the use of the funding and the views of local authorities on the impact on young people. All respondents offered additional activities as a result of the funding and targeted the most deprived young people; those most affected by Covid; and those with additional support needs.

This report provides summary quantitative and qualitative information on the additional activities offered to learners. Overall, the view is that the funding was used as intended and resulted in an improved offer to young people across the country.

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Additional activities offered

The type of additional activities offered as a result of the extra funding beyond what was normally provided included free transport to hubs; extra online sessions; teachers working with smaller groups of young people; wellbeing sessions focusing on mental health and exam stress; café / hubs as well as a wider choice of subjects offered and increased hours.

Most authorities agreed that they had provided a different programme from what is normally provided and that the activities had been well attended. Almost all felt that the activities had a positive impact on those attending and that the experience they gained this year may shape their future arrangements.

Quantitative data from respondents

A survey was distributed to all 32 local authorities using Microsoft Forms to gather responses. The total number of local authorities responding was 23 representing 72% of local authorities. The following figures summarise the quantitative data gathered:

1. Did your Local Authority offer additional activities as a result of SG funding?

Yes 100%

No 0

2. Which groups of learners were targeted?

82% - Most deprived

73% - Young people with additional support needs

91% - Young people impacted most by Covid

36% - Other categories

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

This was a very different programme from the normal: 60% strongly agree / agree; 40% neutral / disagree

Additional activities were well received/ attended: 100% strongly agree / agree

Additional Activities had a positive impact on those targeted: 95.5% strongly agree / agree; 4.5% neutral

Experience gained may impact upon shape of future programmes: 86% strong agree / agree; 14% neutral / disagree.

Qualitative information relating to additional supported study support

In addition to the quantitative information gathered, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional descriptive detail about what was offered and the views on impact. The following represents verbatim responses.

A. Descriptive examples of the additional support offered to young people

1	Addition Easter Study Support classes
2	West Dunbartonshire already had in place a substantial programme of support sessions for young people. The additional funding allowed us to increase the quantity of sessions running, and to selectively target these sessions to specific groups of young people, based on the groupings identified by Scottish Government.
3	Schools offered a range of additional activities. One example is supported study via face-to-face sessions and online sessions. Budget restraints had impacted on the number and variety of supported study sessions and this funding provided the opportunity to address this.
4	Bespoke online/virtual supported study sessions were offered to complement the existing sessions that schools had already planned.
5	Pupils targeted who were in danger of not passing examination.
6	Additional study support for targeted young people including transport to school or other schools who were offering additional subject support
7	In order to engage targeted cohorts of young people we spoke to third sector partners Fife Gingerbread and DAPL who were able to ask young people they worked with what the barriers to attending study support were. We identified - anxieties with the school building, travel, anxieties around the number of pupils attending in each session as some of the main barriers. This led to us providing teachers to work with very small groups or 1-1 for young carers, care experienced, and young people affected by poverty. This was also extended to include those young people who had not been able to return to school post pandemic. These sessions focused on securing numeracy and literacy qualifications.
8	Additional in school Study Support during the Easter holidays, for some schools, targeting young people that had missed schooling as well as those young people that were looking additional learning time.
9	Bespoke wellbeing sessions were well attended to ensure children, young people and families were supported. More face-to-face study support sessions were offered to support learners preparing for SQA NQs.
10	Study hub/cafe with members of staff supporting with study skills

11	offer targeted sessions for learners during Easter and all of the 11 WL Secondary Schools had an in-person Easter study provision WB 4/4/22 and WB 11/4/22 with differing spreads of subjects depending on needs and availability of staff.
12	Schools provided a flexible learning offer which provided universal and targeted support for young people. This allowed for drop-in sessions with open access to teachers as well targeted interventions for young people. Where targeted interventions were planned PCS staff worked with the young people and their families to agree plans that would best meet the need of young people. PCS and School Councillors were available to young people during the holiday period to support HWB. This offer was supported by high quality comms from the schools so young people and families knew what they could access and when. Where families were in receipt of FSM monies were provided so children could buy lunches as part of their day
13	As well as a greatly increased and widened range of Easter Study classes across all secondary schools, which were very well attended, funded transport for those least able to reach the school during the break (rural locations, financial disadvantage, lack of personal transport) was provided through the SG funding, which allowed pupils in targeted groups to attend.
14	Easter Study School transport
15	Some of our schools use the money to buy in additional support around mental health and study skills from third sector providers.
16	Targeted senior phase Easter Supported study classes.
17	We worked in partnership with the FVWLric and the West Partnership to continue additional content and support to the national Esgoil offer/programme
18	It differed from what was normally provided in that it was a significantly greater offer than in previous years in almost all secondary schools and feedback has indicated that there was a greater willingness on teachers' behalf to support young people during their holidays. It was targeted at those who most needed it and was supported by study packs and resources as well as digital learning supports. Schools were able to offer those resources and food that they would not routinely have done. Young people have fed back to their schools that they found it more attractive to attend as the pre-information that went home appealed to those who had missed school due to issues related to Covid for example.
19	A much broader range of subjects and levels, over an increased number of days, with access to a quiet study area and smaller groups of learners for targeted groups. Our schools offered an extensive Masterclass Programme and an Easter School Supported Study Programme. This offered targeted pupils the opportunity to receive support in a small group setting.
20	After hours study support
21	We offered study sessions to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher pupils in a range of subjects. We were also able to offer study support where it was most needed and this included some practical classes e.g woodwork.

B. Descriptive examples of the perceived benefits / impact, including views of young people.

1	Very positive in reassuring young people impacted by Covid-19 absence/school disruption. Supported preparation for return to examination based end-point assessment. Young people were keen to have in-person intensive study sessions. Supported exam technique and revision of key topics. Strengthened confidence in exam technique/answering.
2	Great to be able to offer additional, targeted sessions for our young people.
3	A number of schools reported that young people felt the sessions were more tailored to their needs rather than perhaps the availability of teaching staff. The inclusion of virtual sessions was an example of this.
4	pupils were pleased with the offer of study support during the Easter break and lead up to exams; some young people who studied courses at other schools through our City Campus, commented that they were able to study with their peers at these schools where courses were being taught; pupils also stated that schools were very clear on what was on offer and were reactive to feedback on what pupils wanted to learn.
5	During Easter Approximately 14 000 senior pupils (some pupils will have attended more than one session) attended sessions across eighteen schools. It was really helpful to extend this beyond the holidays and include the provision of food and transportation.
6	The offer of funding was well received however the timing was very late. Also, given the number of staff absences that were ongoing in schools, many school leaderships teams were reluctant to ask teachers to give up time during the Easter break. Furthermore, given that for all school communities this was the first time many people could go on holiday it would seem, in some school settings that the offer had decreased from 2019.
7	The traditional model of Easter Study was far better and more inclusive. Yes, we had more SQA study support sessions, but the real success was how we could meet the needs of our community whereby there was not only a focus on S4 - S6 attainment. We were able to adapt and enhance our support to ensure 'education establishment' and 'community learning and development' could move to a locality model within each cluster to support families needs over Easter. Pleasingly, sessions that supported learners with additional support needs, including our care experience young people were better attended and suited their individual needs. A key feature was outdoor learning which young people relished.

8	Liked the focus on wellbeing, first year for some with exams and a focus on managing the pressure and stress was welcomed • Resource / study packs helped organise our studying • Getting transport and food meant that we could stay for longer
9	Schools welcomed the additional funding although longer timescales would have been more useful. Certainly taking account of additional study support right up to the exams is helpful and not just limited to Easter school. Keeping virtual options as part of the mix is very helpful too.
10	Feedback from young people was positive. They welcomed the opportunity to have extended access to teachers during the Easter break. They felt that extra support was required due to periods of self isolation of staff and young people. Facing formal SQA exams for the first time was also cited as a reason the additional support was valuable. Young people liked the flexibility of the offer in school- open access to teachers for general support, targeted interventions and a balance of in school/ online provision. .
11	Schools fed back that it was a challenge to direct the additional funding purely at those in the targeted groups, and that the funding had allowed the general increase of Easter Study provision for all pupils, while also permitting specific interventions (e.g. transport, meals, small group/one-to-one provision) to be put in place for targeted young people,, which were effective in broadening access in the desired manner.
12	Notification of additional funding was not in enough time to plan and provide a significantly different offer other than to pay staff to come in over holidays. There were challenges around staff availability - staff were already feeling the strain and pressure and expectations to offer more was too much for some. This was also the case for young people who needed a break over the holidays and needed a break before exams began but felt compelled to attend. The young people who attended appreciated the time.
13	The additional supported study classes were delivered in all our secondary schools on a targeted basis. They were very well received by our young people and uptake was positive. As a local authority we do not generally pay for our teaching staff to deliver supported study classes either during term time or holidays so the funding provided was very significant in providing additional support for our young people.
14	Some schools have reported that the additional study support enabled by this additional funding made the difference between young people achieving a full course award or not- taking cognisance of their progress and evidence pre-Easter, post-Easter and the recently published exam results.
15	The opportunity to plan differently was welcome. The criteria outlined supports deeper understanding of all staff of the wellbeing needs of our young people and the link to their attainment. Parents very much valued the opportunity for their children to be supported in this period of time. It gave targeted pupils an opportunity to receive support which focused on their development needs. This was delivered in small

	<p>groups to ensure that pupils could receive one-to-one feedback and quality interactions with staff. There is a willingness amongst staff to support Easter Study and there is a clear need for this to support pupils across all levels. Funding for this should be protected.</p>
16	<p>Those pupils who took part, enjoyed and benefited from the programme and they appreciated that sessions were targeted at what they needed. It was also good to be able to reward staff for giving extra time. However, the geographical nature of our catchment and the fact that the event took place during the holidays, made it very difficult to target and engage with those pupils most in need. Pupils enjoyed the more informal approach and being able to get detailed one to one feedback from their teachers. Pupils enjoyed that they were treated more as students and responded well to this. It is also really important for staff wellbeing, that they have an opportunity to step away from school during the Easter break. Staff were asked to consider very carefully if they wanted to take part. Given the pressure of the last couple of years, we did not have a large number of staff wanting to take part, this very much limited the range of subjects we could offer.</p>