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To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 16th May 2023

Subject: Inclusion and Pupil Referral Units

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/a

Future Pathway of report: N/a

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This paper outlines the practice of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provisions (APs) across the local authority and includes management, curriculum and provision, quality assurance and funding arrangements.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The challenges faced by children and young people have increased considerably due to the impact of the pandemic. This has resulted with an increase in the number of children and young people experiencing poor mental health, heightened anxiety and Emotionally Based School Avoidance.
- 1.2 As a consequence, there has been a decrease in the levels of school attendance both nationally and locally, and an increase in challenging behaviours in both society and educational institutions resulting in a rise in suspensions and permanent exclusions to above pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.3 Kent County Council recognises that the majority of children and young people are best served when their education provision is delivered by their mainstream school, with their peer group, accessing the breadth of curriculum and opportunities available.
- 1.4 It is schools' responsibility to identify and support, and then signpost to external partners the children and young people who experience the above symptoms. Kent County Council's programme of support ranges from early help and social work to youth justice and PIAS (PRUs, inclusion and attendance service).
- 1.5 PIAS's statutory responsibilities include school suspensions & permanent exclusions, children missing education, and child employment and entertainment, along with school attendance and attendance enforcement. PIAS

staff are currently working on the implementation of the DfE guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

- 1.6 Within the guidance there are clear responsibilities for local authorities, schools, governors and multi-agency services. School's responsibilities include developing and maintaining a whole school culture on promoting the benefits of good attendance, maintaining accurate admission and attendance registers, having robust daily processes to follow up absence and to identify and support pupils who have or who are at risk of poor attendance. These responsibilities should be communicated to all stakeholders through a school attendance policy.
- 1.7 For local authorities, responsibilities include having a strategic approach to improving attendance, making it a key focus across for all frontline council services e.g. early help, and having a School Attendance Support Team e.g. PIAS. Common barriers to attendance must be identified with schools and a named point of contact from the local authority must be supplied. Effective practice through network meetings must be offered and all schools should be visited three times a year to conduct Targeted Support Meetings (TSMs). In addition, local authorities must discuss with schools the pupils with or at risk of having high absence rates and signpost or provide services for support through a multi-agency approach. Where support is not working, legal intervention should be considered.
- 1.8 All local authorities have a legal duty to provide full-time and suitable alternative education for pupils who have been permanently excluded from school or are unable to attend school due to physical or mental health conditions. In Kent, this includes six PRUs and the Health Needs Service Alternative Provision, known as the Rosewood School. PIAS's responsibilities also include the effective management of these provisions in the county.
- 1.9 For the few who require this off-site support, the best practice is where schools, as the education expert, work collaboratively to develop local arrangements, design provision and make decisions regarding intervention which meets the needs of the children they serve. All placements should be primarily for short term respite with the main aim of successful reintegration to mainstream education.
- 1.10 Kent County Council currently maintains the majority of PRUs and Alternative Provisions (APs) within the local authority, with only North West Kent AP being part of an Academy Trust. KCC operate a model of funding which includes delegated funding to the PRU and devolved funding to the schools in the respective catchment areas.
- 1.11 The local authority is clear in its expectation that schools work collaboratively and inclusively and use their allocations flexibly to meet the needs of all the children and young people within their district. This includes those of primary school age and those challenging learners awaiting the outcome of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment.
- 1.12 Generally, children and young people who attend an AP or PRU exhibit a wide range of both emotional and educational needs, with some on the

neurodevelopment pathway, which by their very nature can impinge negatively upon their progress. A key principle for all APs and PRUs is to provide the highest quality local provision to meet the needs of the local cohort of children and young people. Children and young people placed at an AP or PRU are dual registered at both the PRU and 'substantive' school setting.

1.13 Within the County, there are six behaviour PRUs and one Health Needs Education Service AP.

Area	Pupil Referral Unit
Thanet and Dover	Enterprise Learning Alliance
West Kent	Two Bridges School
Folkestone and Hythe	Birchwood School
Dartford and Gravesham	North West Kent Alternative Provision
Maidstone and Malling	Maidstone and Malling Alternative Provision
Canterbury	Canterbury Inclusion Service
Service	Alternative Provision
Health Needs Education Service	Rosewood School (see Section 6)

2. Behaviour APs and PRUs - Management

2.1 The management and budget of PRUs and APs are fully delegated to the Management Committees of local headteachers, enabling them to oversee the provision and maintain the responsibility for the children and young people in their local area. This provides flexibility for leaders to support vulnerable learners at risk of permanent exclusion and to substantially improve the quality of alternative provision.

2.2 Local authority staff, in particular PIAS and Fair Access work strategically to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, supporting effective inclusion practices across the county, providing information, advice and guidance for the Management Committees of the PRU and In-Year-Fair-Access forums. Advice ranges from support with curriculum design and implementation, transition, managed moves and safeguarding.

2.3 The local authority recognises that best practice occurs when all schools are represented at these panels and Management Committees by staff with decision making authority. All schools can have representation on their PRU Management Committee if they wish to do so and it is strongly advised that Management Committees include Primary representation.

2.4 On a termly basis, the PRU Headteachers and the Chairs of the management committees meet with lead service representatives in KCC's Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate. At this meeting, key priorities are discussed, along with issues and interfaces that impact both the strategic direction and vision and operational activity for PRUs and APs in Kent.

3. Behaviour APs and PRUs - Curriculum and Provision

3.1 The PRUs and APs provide a curriculum which is enriched by a range of planned activities and experiences to enhance learning and personal development so that all children and young people become:

- successful learners, who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live a safe, healthy and fulfilling life
- active and responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of present and future generations.

3.2 Working together with Early Help and other Services, PRUs and APs play an important role in ensuring children and young people are effectively supported so that they will have a suitable and sustainable post 16 destination engaging in education, employment or training.

4. Behaviour APs and PRUs - Quality Assurance

4.1 Measures used to indicate the performance of mainstream schools do not work well for APs or PRUs. Children and young people entering alternative provision will do so having disengaged with education and have significant gaps in their learning, and provisions will often only have a short time to work with them to address those issues.

4.2 In order to monitor the progress and support collaboration of the PRUs, Kent County Council along with each PRU collate inclusion information three times a year that contains relevant live data and information such as attendance, reintegration to mainstream education and the number of young people awaiting an EHCP.

4.3 Four PRUs are currently graded as 'Good', one 'Outstanding' and one judged 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted. The latter transferred to multi academy trust in 2019. One PRU in Canterbury is considered as a component of an Academy Trust due to local and historic funding arrangements and therefore, does not have an independent Ofsted judgement.

5. Behaviour APs and PRUs - Funding arrangements

5.1 Funding provided by the local authority for APs and PRUs is from the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block and is in addition to the annual School Budget. The local authority calculates each Districts' allocations using an agreed formula. These budgets are re-calculated each year using the updated school budget datasets provided by the DfE. The total funding budget for 2023-24 is £12.5m, excluding administration and London fringe allowance).

5.2 Depending on local agreements by headteachers, the total available funding will be either fully devolved to schools within a District, or partly delegated directly to PRUs and partly devolved to a group of schools within the local area. For Districts where funding is fully devolved to schools e.g. Ashford, there will not be a physical PRU, but schools will use their devolved funding independently to support vulnerable learners. For districts with delegated budgets, there will be a formal PRU, which means it has a DfE number.

5.3 The distribution of funding is based upon allocating a fixed total budget across four different factors:

- Pupil numbers – KS3&4 50%
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children’s Index (IDACI) 40%
- Looked After Children (LAC) 5%
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) 5%

5.4 The pupil numbers used in the calculations are a 50:50 blended mix of actual headcount recorded on the census and published admission number (PAN). The IDACI, LAC and EAL are all calculated consistently with how they are dealt with in the school formulae budget. All calculations are completed at the school level and the District budget is the total of the school allocations in that District. All non-selective secondary schools will receive a sum of devolved High Needs Block funding for Alternative Provision as a pre-payment for delivering the agreed inclusion results. Any selective schools’ allocations are redistributed within each District to the non-selective schools.

5.5 The DfE rules stipulate that where there is a physical PRU they must have a delegated budget. The method for allocating a delegated PRU budget, prescribed by the DfE is ‘place plus’. The amount delegated to a PRU will be determined by an agreed number of commissioned places. The local authority will commission places in the PRU totalling 0.42% (national average of PRU students) of the Kent 11-16 pupil population.

No. of commissioned places (academic year 2022-23)

	Ashford	Canterbury	Dartford	Dover	Folkestone & Hythe	Gravesham	Maidstone & Malling	Swale	Thanet	West Kent	Total
No. of places	32	51	37	38	27	36	49	41	39	49	399
Physical PRU or AP	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	

5.6 Each commissioned place will be funded at £18k per financial year and this funding will be delegated directly to the PRU within the district. Any remaining District allocation will be devolved to the non-selective secondary schools within the District, selective schools do not receive any of the devolved funding. It is at the discretion of the schools who receive this funding to determine whether any of this devolved funding should be passed to the PRU.

5.7 If a district does not have a physical PRU with a DfE number then the funding will be devolved directly to schools within the district based on the annual formula calculation. Funding can only be devolved to schools or trusts, under a grant with the Local Authority. This arrangement includes the following provisions:

- i. Schools are required to ensure the best solution is designed and deployed for the effective provision and management of high-quality early intervention and prevention activities to reduce Permanent Exclusion, including:
 - offer a full-time provision (usually 25 hours).
 - ensure that the pupils' capacity to access provision will be carefully assessed in accordance with current educational guidance and good practice. Wherever possible, the focus of provision should be on reintegration of the pupil to mainstream education.
 - where pupils are unable to access full time provision, the school will inform the Local Authority of the reasons through the PIAS digital front door.
 - ensure programmes are educational and focused on achieving good outcomes in recognised qualifications, supporting the learning of new and relevant skills and acknowledged accreditation and helping the pupil to overcome impediments to successful learning and achievement.
 - ensure all pupils who need multi-agency support have the protection of a plan and take all reasonable steps to integrate the educational plan with those of other relevant services such as, Family and Social Care, Youth Offending Teams and Early Help and Preventative Services etc.
 - ensure that all elements of the programme are accessible to the pupil and are sensitive to their ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds and additional or special needs they may have.
- ii. If a school, trust or group of schools subcontract provision to another provider, this further provision must have DfE registration.
- iii. Subcontracting arrangements are not permitted to provisions who remove the pupils from the school's roll.

6. Rosewood School

- 6.1 The Rosewood School (TRS) is a provision for children and young people who cannot attend mainstream education due to medical, health and/or physical needs. The school has three sites across the county, these are based in Canterbury, West Malling and a residential adolescent unit in Staplehurst.
- 6.2 TRS sits between mainstream and special school provisions, with a core aim to reintegrate children and young people back to mainstream education. The school is an integral part of Kent's SEND offer and provides short term educational provision to children and young people who are either hospital in-patients or unable to attend a mainstream school due to their medical/physical/mental health needs.
- 6.3 For most children and young people, their placement at TRS is time limited with an anticipated return to mainstream, alternative or post-16 provision. This varies depending on the nature of the medical needs and associated recovery.
- 6.4 TRS provides a broad and balanced curriculum within a smaller environment which supports recovery and fundamentally the reintegration back to the referring school or post 16 provision. The school also offers remote provision to those with medical needs (compromised immunity) as well as outreach, this is all supported with access to a range of health professionals who also offer advice and guidance to Kent schools if required.

6.5 The Rosewood School in currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

7. Next Steps

7.1 Respond to the Green paper, in particular the 'single national SEND and AP system' and a 'reformed and integrated role for AP' and embrace the 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative (AP) Improvement Plan'.

7.2 Engage in the Kent County Council Special Schools and AP review.

7.3 Develop the role of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in supporting inclusion of children and young people with SEMH in mainstream settings.

7.4 Develop a primary school support/outreach work in each District.

8. Recommendations:

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is informed of the practice of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Provisions (APs) across the local authority and is asked to note the report.

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