

By: Mike Whiting, Cabinet member for Education, Learning and Skills

Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director for Education, Learning and Skills

To: Education Cabinet Committee - 9th May 2012

Subject: Review of AC/PRU Provision

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the background to the review of Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Curriculum provision across the County, gives the principles underpinning the review and recommends and 5 options for change.

Recommendations Members are asked to endorse the principles underpinning the review and approve the five options for change

1. Introduction

1 (1) This report sets out the background to the review of Pupil Referral and Alternative Curriculum Provision, identifies priorities for improvement and provides members with the outline of the consultation process. This review is an opportunity to engage partners in identifying opportunities to improve outcomes for 11 – 19 year olds, excluded from school or at risk of disengagement in learning programmes.

(2) During the process of review, there will be opportunities to shape the recommendations for a different approach to educating pupils who are excluded, or who need time out of school or who would benefit from alternative provision from age 14 onwards.

(3) This will be achieved by:

- Improving inclusion strategies across the county in both schools and PRU/AC provision. In some areas of the county these are excellent inclusion and preventative strategies which significantly reduce the number of permanent exclusions. These need to be shared and developed across the county
- Providing high quality 'Time out' placements within the KS3 PRUs with robust reintegration support.
- Ensuring that learners with additional needs who are at risk of permanently disengaging are identified and their needs are met to prevent exclusion
- Developing robust referral systems across groups of schools, which also provide opportunities for managed moves
- Providing KS4 Alternative Curriculum provision which leads to higher levels of learning (including English and Maths) and appropriate progression pathways up to age 18.

(4) The initial stages of this review have been informed by a scoping document which has been shared with Headteachers and PRU/AC Curriculum managers. The

feedback from this preliminary work has informed the 5 options for change outlined in this report in section 5.

Background to the PRU/AC Review

2. (1) The review of PRU and AC provision is underpinned by a number of national drivers for change for excluded pupils, pupil referral units and alternative curriculum including:

(i) New Requirements within the Education Act 2011

The Education Act 2011 aims is to support staff in maintaining a safe and well ordered environment that is conducive to learning and allows pupils to reach their full potential. This includes learners who are excluded from schools and academies.

Exclusion from school does not mean exclusion from education. The Local Authority duty is to provide suitable full-time alternative education for any permanently excluded pupil of compulsory school age from the sixth day of the exclusion*. Pupils who have been excluded from school, or for some other reason cannot attend mainstream school, can receive their education in alternative provision which includes local authority Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

(ii) Raising of the Participation Age by 2015

The Education and Skills Act 2008 legislated to raise the age of compulsory participation in education or training to the end of the academic year in which young people turn 17 in 2013 and to their 18th birthday in 2015, helping to ensure that every young person has the opportunity to gain skills and qualifications that enable them to progress to higher education, work and adult life. The vast majority of 16-17 year olds already participate in post-16 education or training, but there is a significant minority, often the most vulnerable who do not. The Local Authority has a duty to:

- Promote the effective participation in education or training of all 16 and 17 year olds resident in their area by 2015
- Make arrangements to identify young people resident in their area who are not participating and secure appropriate provision.

(iii) Taylor review of Alternative Provision: Department of Education Report

There are 28 recommendations contained within the Taylor report, which provides a useful framework for discussion particularly within the context of this review. It is hoped that Headteachers and Stakeholders will consider this report when considering the options for change.

(iv) The Education Commissioning Plan

As a result of publishing the draft Education Commissioning Plan we are setting out proposals for the development of new and improved education provision in Kent. The review of the PRUs and alternative provision will inform our future commissioning intentions for this provision.

(v) Bold Steps for Education, Learning and Skills

The review is designed to help us achieve our targets for 2015 set out in Bold Steps, which are to reduce exclusions, improve alternative curriculum provision and vocational pathways so that more young people will stay in education and work based training until age 19, reduce NEETs, and improve outcomes for all young people, especially the most vulnerable, at ages 16 and 19 so that gaps in achievement reduce.

Exclusions in Kent

3. (1) There is a high level of permanent exclusion in Kent, with variation across the districts. A high proportion of excluded pupils have special educational needs. While permanent exclusion may be necessary in some cases, in response to a specific serious incident or as a result of the risk of harm to pupils, in many cases it is possible to manage improvement, or a move to another school or a period of alternative provision.

(2) For this reason through the review there will be a move to ensure there are fewer permanent exclusions, and this can be achieved by changing the way pupils are supported and changing how arrangements for alternative provision are made.

*Foot note: Need to check implications with DoE of RPA

(3)

Table 1: Permanent Exclusions, 2006/07 to 2009/10

Year	Permanent Exclusions		
	Primary	Secondary	Total
2006/07	46	297	343
2007/08	30	280	310
2008/09	32	174	206
2009/10	35	167	202

Table One. Source: DfE Annual Statistical First Release

Current Overview of PRU/AC Provision in Kent

4. (1) Kent currently has a wide range of PRUs for KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 alternative provision, which fall into four categories.

(i) One KS 1, 2, 3, 4/5 PRU: the North West Kent Behaviour Service. This is an interim arrangement pending the outcome of this review. This service supports learners across Dartford/Gravesend and North Sevenoaks.

(ii) Key Stage 3 PRUs

Learner Numbers KS3 Provision

Districts Served	PRU Name	Main location	PAN	Pupil numbers
Thanet	Northwood	Ramsgate	12	16
Dover, Shepway, Ashford	The Brook	Folkestone	48	49

Canterbury	Grosvenor House	Herne Bay	16	12
Swale	Challenger	Sittingbourne	16	19
Maidstone	Cedars	Maidstone	24	18
Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks	West Kent Learning Federation Student Support Centre	Tunbridge Wells	24	21
*Dartford, Gravesham North Sevenoaks	North West Kent Behaviour Support Service	Dartford	72	66
Totals			212	173

(iii) **Key Stage 4 Alternative Curriculum Providers 31/01/12**

PRU	Total On Roll	Excluded	As a %
Ashford and Shepway	79	25	32%
Maidstone and Malling	50	24	48%
Thanet and Dover	136	28	21%
Canterbury and Swale	94	66	70%
Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks	60	7	12%
* North West Kent KS4 PRU (Formerly Dartford Gravesham and Sevenoaks)	73	20	27%
TOTALS:	492	170	35%

(iv) **Health Needs Education Service PRUs**

Districts Served	PRU Name	Base Location	Satellites	PAN	Pupil number
Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling, Maidstone	West Kent Health Needs Education Service (WKHNES)	Leybourne	Hawkwell, Seal	44	131
Thanet, Dover, Canterbury, Swale, Ashford, Shepway	Willows	Canterbury		42	97
Kent County	Oakfield	Staplehurst		12	8
KENT TOTAL					236

(2) Warm Stone: This PRU provision meets the needs of learners who have been excluded from special schools, particularly out of county providers.

Options for the review of PRU/AC Provision

5. (1) The current organisational structure and pattern of PRU/AC provision across the county as outlined in section 4 varies considerably. This review seeks to address these inequalities and will ensure that young people have appropriate and consistent support when required.

(2) It is clear from the evidence collected in scoping this review and through meetings with headteachers that in some areas of the county there are significant issues around the quality of accommodation, learning outcomes and progression pathways for young people. Improving learner outcomes is central to this review. This will include developing successful reintegration programmes which lead to appropriate high quality curriculum pathways (including English & Maths) to age 18.

(3) The number of learners who are permanently excluded also varies considerably between schools and districts. Overall, across Kent, the number of permanent exclusions is high and includes one of the highest rates of exclusion of SEN learners the country. An intended outcome of this review will be to reduce the number of permanent exclusions significantly by 2015 to no more than 50.

(4) The funding and resource allocations for the PRU/AC programmes are based on historical patterns of provision, not on a profile of need in localities or individual learners. Therefore, it is difficult to assess best value on the use of the £15.9 million allocated to the PRU and AC provision through DSG allocations. The review will seek to make better use of this resource in the short and medium term and ensure that at a local level the use of this funding can be effectively monitored and evaluated.

(5) There is evidence of good practice across the county. One of the keys to this success is where there are effective working relationships between schools, PRUs and Alternative Curriculum providers, particularly where there are robust systems in place to consider referrals to KS3 and KS4 provision (and in the future KS5). PRU and AC provision is also more successful when schools are directly involved in the decisions regarding the programme offer, delivery, quality assurance and when learners who are not permanently excluded remain on a school role.

(6) The review seeks to ensure that when planning provision, local opportunities on offer to young people will be seen as an integral part of the wider curriculum offer and there is sufficient flexibility to provide a personalised programme to meet individual learners' needs. The aim is to deliver high quality and appropriate curriculum options for young people with positive destination pathways in all districts in Kent. The review will inform future commissioning of local provision that is designed to meet local needs, and will inform the plans set out in the Education Commissioning Plan.

(7) **The Principles of this review seek to;**

- **Develop effective, local planning and referral systems in collaboration with all Schools, FE Colleges, PRU/Alternative Curriculum providers and with other partner agencies for learners who are at risk of disengaging or exclusion from School or College.**
- **Provide high quality placements including provision for English and Maths to help young people to re-engage in learning, enabling them to progress into higher levels of learning and/or employment post 16.**

- **Deliver the Bold Steps targets to reduce exclusions, improve alternative curriculum provision and vocational pathways so that more young people will stay in education and work based training until age 19, reduce NEETs, and improve outcomes for all young people, especially the most vulnerable, at ages 16 and 19 so that gaps in achievement reduce.**
- **Enable and support different District models of delivery and coordination best suited to reduce exclusions and improve outcomes for young people**
- **Ensure there is robust information and data sharing between Schools, FE Colleges and other providers to identify early intervention strategies, track progress and improve learner outcomes.**
- **Implement a successful quality assurance system across Schools, FE colleges and PRU/ Alternative curriculum provision.**

(8) Proposed 5 Options for Consultation

Following meetings with Headteachers and PRU/AC managers 5 options for further discussion are being put forward as part of the consultation, these are

Options	Action	Outcome
One Full Delegation to all schools	Delegation of PRU/AC resources to all schools by formula, no central retained services. This would include preventive work and funding for all PRU/AC provision	This would require all schools in a given district or locality to work together to ensure quality provision for excluded pupils and those at risk of exclusion. Schools individually would have to commission provision as appropriate.
Two Full Delegation to a lead school	Delegation to an agreed lead school, to manage and deliver preventive work and placements for learners in PRU/AC provision within a designated geographical area on behalf of all schools in the locality.	A school in the locality would become the lead accountable body for funding and overseeing the PRU/AC provision on behalf of a group of schools
Three Full delegation to a lead PRU	Delegation to an agreed lead PRU as above in option 2	A PRU in the locality would become the lead accountable body for funding and overseeing the PRU/AC provision on behalf of schools in the locality
Four Split Delegation 1. Funding to schools for	Delegate all funding for preventative work to schools	Schools would have to provide appropriate support and identify

preventative work 2. Devolve funding for PRU/AC provision to school or PRU	one formula basic Devolve funding for PRU/AC provision to lead School or PRU who would develop programmes to meet local needs.	early intervention strategies for pupils at risk of disengaging. A lead School or PRU would be the accountable for funding and for overseeing KS3/KS4/KS5 provision on behalf of the other schools in a locality.
Five Status Quo, no change Funding continued to be allocated to current PRU/AC provision	Funding is allocated to PRUs/AC working in partnership with schools (Current system)	PRUs/AC would remain the accountable body for funding and would continue to meet local needs in consultation with schools

6. Timeline for consultation and Implementation

May to June 2012	Discussions on the 5 options, response to preferred local option by the end of June
July to August	Options appraisal and ongoing consultation
September	Report outcomes to Education Committee Report to Cabinet to agree options
October to March	Transitional planning toward new delivery models
March 2013	Systems and interim structures in place in preparation for the new academic year.
September 2013	New framework and organisation structures (if agreed) in place.

7. Recommendations

Recommendations:

Members are asked to endorse the principles underpinning the review and approve the five options for change

Lead Officer
Sue Dunn
Head of Skills and Employability Team
01622 694322
sue.dunn@kent.gov.uk

Background Document

Report to inform the review of the Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Curriculum in Kent

Other Useful Information:

Bold Steps Priority 3/4
Taylor Review of Alternative Provision March 2012