

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 13th January 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children Young People
and Families

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Halton Consultation and Review of
Alternative Provision

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Consider the outcome of the Halton Consultation and Review of Alternative Provision (AP) to inform a revised model of delivery for KS3 & KS4 from January 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.0 That the Board endorse and support the approach to revising Alternative Provision in the Borough;
- 2.1 That further work is undertaken to identify and understand where there is low attendance; and
- 2.2 In line with the OFSTED review of pupils missing out on education a joint approach to information sharing is agreed which can be used on a case by case basis by health services, youth offending teams, police, education services and other key partners.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following a recent consultation and review of Alternative Provision (AP) in Halton a report was presented and the recommendations approved by the 11-19 Partnership and the Children and Enterprise SMT.

The review involved consultation with schools, AP providers, pupils, families and LA teams. The main recommendations in the report were that a Multi-agency Strategic AP Group should be established to agree a definition for AP and produce a revised model for AP for the Borough. This group would then establish task and finish groups and monitor and co-ordinate the work of these groups. The Strategic Group would be responsible for AP across the borough, including commissioning provision, monitoring provision and ensuring it is good quality and

tracking all the pupils not in full time education by reason of exclusion, illness or other reason. In addition, it was agreed that the Strategic Group would:

- identify the resources required for the revised model;
- ensure a consistent route to AP and identify the services responsible for its delivery;
- develop a menu of provision including full and part time programmes, outreach and CPD;
- establish clear entry routes and agreed exit outcomes;
- implement a robust quality assurance framework; and
- develop a satellite centre to deliver AP in Widnes

The first meeting of the Multi-Agency AP Group was 25th November 2013. At this meeting the group were presented with a broad overview of all partner's roles and responsibilities from the recent OFSTED focus on AP. The group agreed the Halton report recommendations, Terms of Reference and the partnership membership. It was agreed that two Task and Finish groups be established with the following remits:

3.2 A partnership approach to data collection to identify, track and monitor all children not accessing school in the usual way. This group will meet on 16th December 2013.

3.3 A revised model for AP to ensure all groups of young people accessing AP are correctly identified by key partners and their needs are assessed to provide a personalised programme from a comprehensive menu of provision. The aim is that this is delivered by one AP Service so that all provision can be rigorously quality assured and at there is the expectation that AP settings are at least judged as Good by OFSTED. This group will meet on 17th December 2013.

3.4 **The Bridge School PRU KS3 & KS4.**

- The existing PRU provision in Halton was of poor quality. It was judged as Satisfactory by OFSTED, and at significant risk of a poor outcome under the revised inspection framework.
- There were significant gaps in the leadership structure at both KS3 and KS4 over a period of time.
- The national DfE CharlieTaylor Report on Improving Alternative Provision (2012) provided 28 recommendations towards improvement in both PRUs and Alternative Provision.
- These key drivers resulted in the recent reorganisation of the PRU provision in Halton and there is now one school, The Bridge, which shares staff and school buildings. There is an interim head teacher in post and a substantive head teacher will be recruited early 2014 to lead on a full staffing restructure. This school currently requires improvement and is being monitored by OFSTED. However, at a recent monitoring visit, HMI reported they were confident that the LAs plans to remodel AP will support the on-going improvement of

the school. The Bridge has a Management Committee that has representation from 7 high schools and is well supported by LA officers.

3.5 Single Inspection Framework

The Framework and Evaluation Schedule for the Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers (2013) clearly indicates the responsibility for LAs to ensure they know and monitor all young people accessing AP and they are confident of the quality offered and that the pupils make good progress. This has implications for the LAs overall defining judgement for safeguarding. In Halton AP includes The Bridge School PRU, local training providers, Further Education Colleges and home tuition.

The OFSTED framework states that there will be a focus on those children and young people who are missing from education or being offered alternative provision. In order to receive a grading of good there must be evidence that steps have been taken to ensure that all children, including those who are missing from school, are safe. In addition, Children and young people who do not attend school have access to 25 hours per week of good quality registered alternative provision. OFSTED expect to see that these children and young people have been encouraged and supported to attend the provision and there is regular review of their progress. Urgent action must be taken to protect children where they are missing from school or their attendance noticeably reduces. OFSTED expect the local authority to hold clear records in respect of the number of children receiving alternative education and for those missing from education.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection>

These new requirements present a number of challenges for Halton.

The first issue is that currently there is no single record of pupil and students receiving alternative provision. A record can only be established with the co-operation of all partners, in particular all providers of education, including academies and free schools. Identifying the data required and a mechanism for collecting this data has been assigned to the data Task and Finish Group.

Secondly there is currently no process to ensure all young people have access to 25 hours good quality provision. The aim of the second Task and Finish Group is to develop the offer for Halton and establish a process for monitoring and tracking both the children and young people and their progress along with the quality of provision.

Finally, concerns were raised about the attendance of CIN, CP and CIC etc following the completion of Annex A information for the forthcoming OfSTED inspection. It was therefore decided to undertake a multi-

agency review of a small sample of cases where attendance was a significant factor for the child/young person.

On 14 November 2013 a multi-agency review of 8 cases identified by Children's Social Care was undertaken. The auditors of the review were Sharon Williams, Nicola Noon, Sue Wilkinson and Sue Graham.

- 3.6 The review considered 4 areas: (i) Timeliness/Escalation of Intervention (Halton's level of need). (ii) Partnership working (iii) Journey of the child/pupil voice (iv) impact of service delivered to support families.

The cohort consisted of 7 children in need, 1 child in care and 1 child missing education who was also a child in need.

Timeliness/Escalation: 2 reviews considered to be good. 4 reviews require improvement and 2 were satisfactory.

Partnership working: identified as good in 7 reviews and required improvement in 1 other.

Journey of the child/pupil voice: 5 reviews considered good. 1 requires improvement and 2 satisfactory.

Impact of Service delivered to support families: 1 was considered to be good. 4 satisfactory and 3 require improvement.

The key themes identified were as follows:

Communication:

Workers not always fully aware who is involved with a family and the purpose of their involvement. Additional intervention undertaken in isolation of existing plan.

Drift:

Child in Need meeting reviews not always undertaken. Reasons identified for this absence of Social Worker, change of staff and reallocation of worker.

Levels of Need:

Professionals not always clear about the level of need e.g. CAF, Child in Need.

Neglect:

No clear protocol to identify when school non-attendance becomes neglect, therefore cases not necessarily escalated appropriately.

Confidence:

Lack of confidence in understanding processes used by different agencies and about using the escalation process to challenge decisions.

3.7 Pupil Missing Out on Education Survey Report November 2013

Earlier in the year OFSTED undertook a national survey of AP including Halton Borough Council and local schools. This report has now been published and it estimates that there are nationally approximately 10,000 children not accessing school in the usual way. The recommendations clarify the roles and responsibilities for LAs, schools and OFSTED. These recommendations are consistent with those in Halton's report.

The recommendations are;

Each local authority should:

- establish a central record of all children not accessing full-time education in the usual way, including those who are accessing alternative provision full time away from mainstream school, regardless of where they are on roll; and maintain good information about the achievement and safety of any child or young person not accessing education in the usual way.
- identify clear lines of accountability for the quality and amount of provision, as well as the educational and social outcomes, for all children and young people of compulsory school age who do not access education in the usual way; taking note of the survey's finding that this was most effective when a named person at a senior level was held to account for this statutory duty.
- share information across local authority boundaries in a timely and appropriate way to minimise interruption to a child or young person's educational provision.
- ensure that every child is on the role of a school, regardless of circumstances, unless parents have elected to educate their child at home.

Schools, including academies and free schools, should:

- with immediate effect, stop unlawful exclusions and provide suitable support for children and young people with behavioural difficulties.
- establish clear accountability for the achievement, safety and personal development of all children and young people who are on the school roll but not accessing school in the usual way, and for the quality and amount of provision made for them.
- inform the local authority of any part-time education arrangements, regardless of the type of school.
- keep children and young people on the school roll during periods of illness or custody (or for as long as it is relevant), in line with Government policy and guidance.

- respond quickly to any early signs of children and young people's raised anxiety or dips in their progress, attendance or engagement in learning.
- give governors sufficient information about children and young people who are not accessing school in the usual way, so that governors can challenge the amount of provision being made and evaluate its effectiveness.

Health services, youth offending services, police, education services and other partners should:

- agree on joint approaches to sharing information, to be used case by case, so that education provision and safeguarding for any child or young person who does not access education in the usual way is effective.

Ofsted should:

- as part of its Integrated Looked After Children and Safeguarding inspections of local authorities, ask for a report on children for whom the local authority is responsible who are of school age and who are not in receipt of full-time school education at the time of the inspection. This report should include for each child:
 - the child's unique ID, date of birth, Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
 - type of educational provision being received, including home tuition
 - number of hours provision each week (in particular whether the child is receiving more or fewer than 25 hours)
 - if the child has been excluded, the type of exclusion
 - the date when the alternative provision began

This information will inform the selection of cases for further examination, including in relation to any safeguarding concerns, and may affect the overall inspection judgements.

- regard any failure by local authorities to comply with their statutory duty as a matter likely to affect the overall judgement on safeguarding.
- continue to ensure that all school inspections evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements for children and young people who are not able to access education in the usual way.
- ensure that meetings between local authority officers, Ofsted's Regional Directors and Ofsted's Senior HMI include a focus on the amount and quality of education, as well as the progress, attainment and safeguarding of children and young people who are not accessing education in the usual way.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupils-missing-out-education>

3.8 **The Bullfinch Report - Action in Response to Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire, November 2013.**

On 27th November 2013 Oxfordshire County Council published a report into the learning and actions they had taken following the Operation Bullfinch Investigation. This report suggests that a national response is needed to tackle the issues raised in a coherent way. It also emphasises the role each of the agencies need to play. In terms of schools it proposes that action should be taken to improve the behaviour and attendance of young people including:

- Establishing a scheme where carers of our looked after children are notified immediately if the child fails to turn up for school.
- New processes are in place to ensure that looked-after children who are placed in the LA from another LA are immediately placed on a school roll at our Pupil Referral Unit and provided with tutor support to ensure that there is no 'gap' in their educational provision.
- Working with schools to better understand how they address the needs of 'challenging' children through exclusions and other processes that may include reduced timetables.
- Providing information to schools on the intended use of the 'B-code' in school registers and the role of Ofsted in ensuring that pupils are actually being safely educated off site.
- A new Behaviour Strategy which clearly sets out that a school will retain responsibility for the educational provision of a child on fixed period exclusion. The child only becomes the responsibility of the local authority on day 6 of a permanent exclusion and at that point a suitable full time placement needs to be identified prior to a new school placement being located.
- The council rigorously monitors performance on attendance and behaviour issues and challenges Head Teachers where there are concerns.
- Developing a directory of providers of alternative education provision who meet agreed kite marked criteria to ensure that standards are met and usage and daily attendance of pupils can be monitored.

These key findings are in line with Halton's own findings and the recent OFSTED survey and inspection framework.

Although work has already started to work differently with schools and partners this work now needs to be rapidly progressed and the commitment is required of all partners to ensure that we have good quality provision available for all young people and we are aware of any significant reductions in attendance.

<http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/resources/files/30891>

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Halton's Children and Young People's plan have key priorities to raise achievements of all young people. These priorities include; Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support, Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning, Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The revised AP service will be funded through LA funds and contributions from schools

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Supports key priorities to ensure that Children and Young people do well wherever they live and provides opportunities for young people to access good quality education provision.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Ensure appropriate, good quality interventions and AP are in place and monitored supports Halton's key priorities to:

- Reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET).
- Need to improve educational outcomes for C&YP particularly narrowing the gaps for vulnerable learners (evidenced through PRU results and outcomes for CiC).
- The need to ensure that there is a consistent and fair approach to accessing all alternative provision.
- Improve the quality of AP. There are currently fluctuations in the quality of the provision (Evidenced by OFSTED judgements for PRU and inconsistency in QA process).
- Need to strengthen leadership, management and governance of the PRU and establish a staffing structure fit for purpose.
- Need for increased diversity and level of provision required.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Will create opportunities to further reduce NEET, young people in NEET are at a higher risk of ill health.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Young people who are not in education and/or NEET are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The following risks have been identified:

LA OFSTED, The Bridge OFSTED, C&YP NEET, narrowing the gap.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Halton Borough Council are responsible for arranging suitable education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such arrangements being made.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

None.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

From 1 January 2014.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
OFSTED requirements	See website below:	
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection		
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-and-evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-services-for-children-need-of-help-and-protection		
DfE Reports Exclusions Trial	See website below	
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-school-exclusion-trial-first-interim-report		
Charlie Taylor Report	See website below:	
http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/b00204776/taylor-review-of-alternative-provision		
OFSTED Surveys	See Website below	
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/alternative-provision		