



**Children and Young People Overview  
and Scrutiny Committee**  
5 February 2014

**Report from the Acting Director of  
Children and Families**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Alternative Education, Attendance and Behaviour Services –  
update on service transformation project**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Alternative Education, Attendance and Behaviour Project, which is part of the One Council Programme, and updates Members on current progress. The report also provides some information about how the impact of the new service will be monitored and evaluated.

**2.0 Recommendations**

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 Discusses the restructure of the Council's alternative education, behaviour and attendance services to form a new Inclusion and Alternative Education Service and the arrangements in place for measuring the impact of the new service.

**3.0 Detail**

**Background**

- 3.1 Over the last six months, the Children and Young People's Department has carried out a fundamental review of its alternative education, behaviour and attendance services as part of the One Council Programme. The range of services within scope of the review play an important role in providing support to Brent's most vulnerable children and young people. This includes: providing education for pupils excluded from mainstream schools or unable to attend due to health problems; improving pupil attendance at school and taking enforcement action as required; providing pre-exclusion and in-school behaviour support to schools; and helping looked after children to maximise their educational attainment

- 3.2 The review has sought to determine how the services could be reshaped to meet a complex range of policy, financial and operational challenges. These include:
- 3.3 **Responding to changes to the alternative education funding framework and ensuring value for money** – the Government has recently introduced new place-plus arrangements for alternative education and has a longer-term intention to devolve responsibility and accountability for excluded pupils to schools. This means that pupil referral units will increasingly be required to demonstrate value for money and potentially compete in an open market of alternative provision. While Brent’s alternative education services are generally performing well, the service was high cost, with some PRU places in excess of £30k per annum. Opportunities for new, more efficient ways of working which will continue to deliver a quality service for pupils needed to be explored.
- 3.4 **Responding to new service trends and demographic pressures** – Permanent exclusions in Brent continue to fall, offering opportunities to free up capacity and develop new ways of working. Increasingly the DfE will be scrutinising throughput within place-plus funded schools and questioning the need for PRU provision if there are consistently high vacancy levels. This means that there needs to be a closer match between the supply and demand for PRU places in the borough. Population growth and rising pupil numbers are also putting pressuring on both primary and secondary school places, making it increasingly difficult to reintegrate pupils who have been out of school for any length of time. Barriers to reintegration needed to be more effectively addressed.
- 3.5 **Increasing the choice and suitability of provision for pupils outside mainstream settings** - the existing KS 3 and KS 4 pupil referral units are based on a traditional teaching model. There is currently limited mental health support, or access to social workers and educational psychologists within PRUs. This reduces the PRUs’ ability to respond to some pupils’ needs effectively. Equally, the Brent Education Tuition Service (BETs), originally set up to address the needs of pupils with medical needs, has increasingly been required to support a wide range of children with varied and/or complex needs and cannot always meet the legal requirement to provide full time education for pupils (where this is appropriate). Our review found that some of the children within BETs could be better supported in more specialist or mainstream settings.
- 3.6 **Developing a more proactive, preventative service model** – in the existing service model around 70 per cent of in scope funding was targeted at pupil referral units, including BETs. However, research consistently shows that life chances are significantly reduced for pupils who spend a significant amount of time out of mainstream school or whose education is disrupted. An increased

emphasis on preventative work and inclusion is therefore required. This involve a changed pattern of resourcing, improved joined up working between agencies, and greater ownership and collaboration from schools.

- 3.7 **A need to strengthen strategic leadership of looked after children education team/Virtual School.** The looked after children education team play a valued role in supporting individual children in care to achieve their potential. However, more work was needed to strengthen the team's corporate parenting role and ensure that effective monitoring arrangements are in place to target resources effectively. Good practice suggested that the Virtual Head role needed to be held by a senior individual in the authority with direct access to Directors and Assistant Directors of Children's Services.
- 3.8 **Addressing wider financial pressures** – the Council is facing significant budget reductions across all services. It is therefore imperative that all services operate as efficiently as possible by reducing duplication, improving use of staff, data and IT resources, and introducing better ways of working. Services that are developed through restructuring need to be sustainable in the context of overall budget pressures.
- 3.9 The review process included process, workload and service mapping; pupil profiling within PRUs; and a review of good practice elsewhere. Regular meetings took place with the PRU Heads and their management committees to shape the service model and build support for the new approach, with a new single Management Committee recently formed to oversee the work of the three pupil referral units (Poplar Grove Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit; Stag Lane Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit; and Brent Education Tuition Service).
- 3.10 The vision for the new service is that it should be co-owned with the schools and schools have been involved in shaping the new service as far as possible. Schools' views on current behaviour, attendance and inclusion support helped to shape final service proposals, both through an independent review of behaviour management in twelve Brent secondary schools and six primary schools, and via feedback from schools' forums. Key issues for schools included: a need for more short-term preventative work in schools; improved support for primary pupils at risk of exclusion; and clear leadership on behavioural issues to benefit all schools. More support for behaviour work in early years provision, and at transition between primary and secondary schools, were also flagged as important priorities. Proposals for the new structure have actively addressed schools' concerns and were endorsed by the Schools Forum in June 2013.

### **The Pre – Review Service Structure**

- 3.11 Pre-review the in-scope services had a total of 97 posts, with a combined gross budget of £5.464 million in 2013/14 (£4.975 million net). 85 per cent of

overall service expenditure is met by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). In-scope services included the following services: the three pupil referral units, consisting of Brent Education Tuition Service (BETs); Poplar Grove (Key Stage 4) and Stag Lane (Key Stage 3); the Day 6 (Kingsbury) Assessment Centre; the Alternative Education Central Management Team; the Education Welfare Service; the Behaviour Support Team; the Pre-Exclusion Team; and the Looked After Children Education Team.

### **The New Service Structure**

3.12 The new structure for the new Inclusion and Alternative Education Service is set out in **Appendix 1**. In summary, the new service model is designed to achieve:

- A more cost efficient and focused model of service delivery thereby reducing the planned place costs of Pupil Referral Units and freeing up resources to invest in preventative and exclusion services.
- A greater focus on preventative work in primary schools and transition work between primary and secondary schools, with access to a wider range of support to address behavioural, social and mental health issues.
- An extended remit for the Pupil Referral Unit which includes a strong core offer of commissioned services, dual registration, pre-exclusion/behavioural support, and multi-agency work.
- Further reductions in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
- Strong links between the newly amalgamated Inclusion and Alternative Education Service, the Special Educational Needs/Disability Service and Early Help Family Support Service through either hub and spoke arrangements or co-location of staff/services.
- Much closer partnership working on behaviour and attendance between schools, supported by the development of a clear Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.
- Improved specialist assessment and support for particular groups of vulnerable pupils and those newly arrived in order to prevent an escalation of difficulties and to avoid high-cost Borough specialist placements.
- A more co-ordinated approach to the commissioning and quality assurance of alternative providers from the private and voluntary sectors on behalf of schools and the Local Authority.
- An increased focus on working with the Corporate Parenting Group to raise the profile of looked after children education issues.

3.13 Key features of the new service model are set out below:

3.14 **An amalgamated Key Stage 3 / 4 PRU** – the Key stage 3 and 4 PRUs are being amalgamated under a single Head Teacher, with teaching staff expected to work across both settings. The model will ensure more effective use of staffing resources, with professional expertise and leadership shared

across the service. There will be 36 places at the KS 4 PRU and 20 places at the KS 3 PRU. A key role for the PRU will be to strengthen the vocational offer for pupils and develop a programme of commissioned services /places for schools to buy into at the start of the financial year. There will be 27 permanent posts in the PRU, including leadership, teaching and support roles. A number of teaching and leadership posts within the PRU are currently out to advert, with the aim of having all posts filled on a permanent basis by April/May 2014.

- 3.15 **A Health Needs Education Service** – this service will replace Brent Education Tuition Service and have a specific focus on pupils absent from schools for more than 15 days due to physical or mental health problems. Unlike BETs, the new service will focus on short-term placements, with pupils remaining on their school roll. The service will provide up to 20 places and be developed in partnership with a special school, ensuring that both pupils and teachers have better access to specialist resources. Placements at the service will be made in line with a new Health Needs Education Policy that has been circulated to all Brent schools. The service will have 10 permanent posts, including leadership, teaching and support staff.
- 3.16 **A new multi-agency Inclusion Support Team** – this new team will focus on providing specialist support to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties within the pupil referral unit, health needs education service, and in mainstream schools. The team will include 11 directly employed staff, including behaviour support teachers/workers, parent support advisors, inclusion support workers and a SEBD caseworker (a shared post with SENAS). Clinical input into the team has been commissioned separately, with the Anna Freud Centre recently awarded a one year contract beginning in April 2014. This will provide a range of specialist support - from trained educational psychotherapists, clinical psychologists and play therapists. These resources will be directed at both one-to-one support for vulnerable pupils and targeted support to Brent schools, helping to further up-skill the wider teaching workforce in evidence-based behavioural approaches. The Inclusion Support Team is an exciting development and will ensure that vulnerable children get the specialist support they need and increase the likelihood that they will stay in (or be reintegrated back into) mainstream provision.
- 3.17 **The Looked After Children (LAC) Education team** – the team has been reshaped to put an increased focus on reporting LAC education issues to the Corporate Parenting Group, providing training and guidance to other professionals, and ensuring more effective data management and quality assurance of the education planning process for looked after children. The overall Head of the new service will be formally recognised as the Head of the Virtual School, helping to promote effective challenge and leadership on LAC education issues. The reshaped team will have 5 posts, including leadership, advisory teacher and information management roles.

- 3.18 **The Education Welfare Team** – this team (9 posts) will remain relatively unchanged. However, a new Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Exclusions post will be created to ensure more effective links between attendance and exclusion work. The new post will act as the designated EWO for the PRUs and other non school based provisions, advise schools on policy and practice relating to exclusions, and liaise with families of excluded pupils.
- 3.19 A small number of staff (3) will provide specialist support to the new service, including commissioning and quality assuring alternative education provision, developing traded services, and delivering improvement projects, such as the development of the virtual learning environment.
- 3.20 The new service will also be responsible for the management of projects set up for those children who are ‘educated other than at school’ (EOTAS) and funded by the ‘out of schools’ budget. This will help to streamline management arrangements and ensure that there are clear pathways between the full range of ‘other than at school’ provision.
- 3.21 The new structure contains 68 posts, compared to 97 posts in the old structure. This means that the new structure will lead to a reduction of 29 posts. However, as 39 staff opted to take voluntary redundancy during the restructuring process, the process has allowed the Council to minimise the level of compulsory redundancies. Most of the voluntary redundancies (25) were from the Brent Education Tuition Service, reflecting the changing focus of this service.

### **Measuring the impact of the new service**

- 3.22 The service transformation will deliver a number of benefits including improving the quality and accessibility of services. These are summarised in the table below:

Area of Impact	Project Outcomes
<b>Reactive to proactive service provision.</b>	The new service model has shifted resources from the PRUs, allowing greater investment in prevention and early help services for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural problems in mainstream school settings. Place based provision has been set at a level which broadly reflects demand, with scope to purchase further places offering more specialist support in line with demand/individual needs.
<b>More targeted and integrated provision underpinned by secure and timely referral and monitoring systems.</b>	The new service model offers a wider range of support, with new referral pathways ensuring appropriate signposting to

	services and support.
<b>Early intervention to prevent exclusions and sustain school placements.</b>	In the longer term the increased investment in preventative services will lead to reductions to the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions and less escalation of problems/and or need for costly interventions, including out of borough placements.
<b>Personalised curriculum</b>	The reorganisation of the PRUs will allow greater focus on Individualised alternative education programmes, built around the National Curriculum which focus on core skills, and offer more vocational options.
<b>Improved partnership working with schools and other agencies and better multi-disciplinary working</b>	The new model will ensure stronger links with schools and other agencies, with reduced risk of poor school attendance and exclusion. The remodelled PRU Management Committee now includes a number of Brent Head Teachers, some of whom are being directly involved in the recruitment of PRU leadership staff. Links with the Council's wider Working with Families agenda are also being strengthened, with strong links between the newly formed Inclusion and Alternative Education Service, the Special Educational Needs Service and Early Help and Family Support Service.
<b>Better procurement and commissioning</b>	Dedicated commissioning resources and a new SEBD caseworker within the service offer an improved understanding of the range of help and support available externally for excluded pupils and those with behaviour support needs. Centrally agreed quality assured Alternative Provision will also provide more options for vulnerable pupils and local schools.
<b>More cost effective provision</b>	The new service model has reduced PRU placement costs, largely due to the refocusing of the BETS service and more appropriate use of teaching and learning responsibility payments in all PRUs. In the longer –term, the more preventative service model should lead to reductions in more costly interventions/specialist placements.

3.23 As part of the project, a service transformation plan has been developed to ensure that the new service develops and embeds new working arrangements successfully, including referral pathways, information management systems and the development of a clear service offer to schools. As part of the plan, performance monitoring arrangements will be reviewed to ensure that the success of the new service model can be assessed and any under-performance can be successfully challenged and improved. This will also help to ensure that both managers and staff are clear about performance and delivery expectations and have the right information to identify and solve service problems at an early stage.

3.24 Some broad non-financial performance measures have also been identified to measure the impact of the transformation project and ensure that benefits are realised (see table below). These will in part be monitored through the corporate strategy reporting process which incorporates targets / measures on attendance and exclusion rates.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in rate of fixed term exclusions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in rate of permanent exclusions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in % of PRU pupils leaving KS 4 with GCSE grades A-C and/or vocational qualifications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases in Brent school attendance levels and school days lost</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the level of dual placements /registrations with PRUs/Brent schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of children receiving clinical/behavioural support in mainstream school settings/outcomes achieved e.g. evidenced improvements in behaviour and/or mental health and/or exclusions prevented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of school based support programmes delivered by the Inclusion Support Team/ school satisfaction ratings.</li> </ul>

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The full year net cost of the new service is estimated at £4.787m, compared to a previous headline net cost of £4.975m (based on 2013/14 budget costs). This represents a net estimated reduction of £188,000 per annum.

4.2 The remodelling of the service has reduced overall staffing levels but has maintained sufficient resources to deliver the new service offer. £480,000 of the cost reduction will be redirected to fund new initiatives within the service:



<b>Commissioned Services</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>£ 000's</b>
Clinical input to the inclusion support team	This will include a range of commissioned skills and expertise, including clinical psychology, educational psychotherapy and play therapy.	160
FAIR access payments	To provide schools with additional support to meet costs associated with Fair Access Placements. E.g. teaching asst time or other specialist support.	30
Development of virtual learning platform	To allow children to be taught at home and where necessary, be provided with full time education in line with statutory requirements.	30
KS 1 / KS 2 placements	The new service model does not have an in-house provision for excluded KS 1/2 pupils but has retained resources to purchase specialist support best suited to the needs of an individual child - current market rates at approx. £30-40k per placement	260
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>480</b>

The remaining sum of £188,000 will be used to offset the historic deficit on the schools budget.

- 4.3 Within the new service model, 49 per cent of the net budget will be used to fund the pupil referral units compared to 72 per cent under the original service model. This reflects the overall shift away from placed based provision and the increased level of investment in specialist support targeted at mainstream/school settings. In the longer-term increased investment in prevention, especially at primary level, should help to reduce service costs by stopping problems escalating.
- 4.4 Thirty-nine voluntary redundancies, one compulsory redundancy and one termination of a fixed term contract have been agreed to date as part of the restructuring process, leading to one-off redundancy and severance costs of £866,468 and related capital costs of £61,760, all of which will be charged to the Dedicated Schools Budget. All redundancy related costs have been met from within the 2013/14 service budgets included in the scope of the review, meaning that there will not be any longer-term costs for the Council to meet through either the DSG or General Fund.
- 4.5 Finance will work with the service to assess the scope for additional reductions in the non-staffing budgets in 2014/15, based on the new operating model.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The service structure will ensure that the Council will be able to meet its legal duties under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, specifically to provide suitable education at school or otherwise for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusions from school or other issues

may not for a period receive a suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

- 5.2 The staffing changes have led to one compulsory redundancy. All staffing changes were managed in line with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the trade unions. This helped to manage the potential legal risks associated with any restructuring process, with no formal grievances/appeals registered during the process.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 A predictive Equality Impact Assessment was completed to support the review process, with input and support from the Council's Equality Team. This indicated that services to young people of compulsory school age (5-16) who are more vulnerable, at risk of exclusion, or excluded from mainstream school will be enhanced by the new service design, with more focus on preventative work to keep pupils in school, to provide early help to prevent problems escalating and ensure that resources are targeted effectively. The new service model will also provide opportunities to develop more culturally sensitive provision for emerging needs among particular groups, such as Somali and Eastern European children. This should improve outcomes for pupils and increase educational attainment.
- 6.2 In terms of staffing, changes to the service had the greatest impact on women and staff in the 25-50 age groups as these groups form the largest part of the workforce. For most staff, the new structure will provide more opportunities for new ways of working and career development. However, reductions in the number of staff and/or changes in the nature of work has led to some redundancies (all but one on a voluntary basis). Support and training is being provided to help staff adjust to new roles /leaving the Council and are helping to lessen the impact of the changes.

## **7.0 Child Poverty Implications**

- 7.1 While poverty and deprivation are not necessarily an indicator of poor educational attainment and/or behavioural problems, national research shows that pupils who are eligible for free school meals are four times more likely to be excluded from school than their peers in all schools. The Government's Troubled Families Programme also recognises a link between poor school attendance and exclusion and other indicators of vulnerability, including benefit dependency and worklessness within the family. Many pupils referred to the Inclusion and Alternative Education Service within Brent will come from families who are adversely affected by the Government's welfare reform agenda and wider recessionary pressures. The new service will work holistically with families of excluded pupils/ those with behaviour and attendance problems to ensure that wider family support issues, such as parental mental health or financial problems, are effectively addressed. Strong working links with the

Early Help and Family Support Service, Housing Needs and Employment Service will ensure better signposting to and coordination of cases across, wider support services.

## **8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

- 8.1 There will be some minor changes in accommodation arrangements. In particular, we are currently exploring moving the KS 4 PRU to the KS 3 site (Stag Lane) and relocating the KS 3 PRU to Poplar Grove, partly to address safeguarding, security and service delivery concerns. However, management and teaching/teaching support staff at both centres will be expected to work across both locations. The Health Needs Education Team will be based at Ashley Gardens, with the potential for both services to use the specialist resources at the Village School currently being explored. This change will be subject to a health and safety/risk assessment. All other staff will be based at Brent Civic Centre.

### **Background Papers**

Proposals to restructure Alternative Education, Behaviour and Attendance Services, Consultation Document, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2013 (includes predictive Equality Impact Assessment)

Response to consultation on the Restructure of Alternative Education, Behaviour and Attendance Services and Final Decisions, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2013.

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## APPENDIX 1 : INCLUSION AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SERVICE – JANUARY 2014

\*The Head Teacher of KS 3-4 PRU and the Head Teacher of the Health Needs Education Service are accountable to the PRU Management Committee and matrix managed by the Committee's Performance Sub Committee and Head of Service.

