

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



Exclusions and Alternative Provision Review

Implementation Plan June 2021

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Introduction

Purpose

Children and young people who access AP (Alternative Provision) are amongst some of our most vulnerable pupils. We recognise the challenges of offering engaging and purposeful educational AP opportunities, and we know many of our current providers also work hard supporting students and their families experiencing significant social, emotional and mental health issues. Yet our research in 2020 reveals that Worcestershire reflects the national position, where there are systemic barriers locally to ensuring every AP pupil obtains better outcomes.

WCF sees the AP system as part of the wider educational landscape, it is both influenced by and impacts on mainstream and special sectors. This review has held collaboration at its core, and we value the time and feedback from professionals, pupils and parent/carers at each stage of developing the implementation plan. We are committed to embedding on-going participation within the cycle of evaluation and review across AP commissioning.

Our local research highlighted key areas for improvement, and they have shaped the Priorities:

1. Exclusion prevention by mainstream
2. The exclusions and AP pathways
3. Communication and collaboration between settings
4. Integrated service approach
5. Equity and strategic clarity in commissioning arrangements and processes

We will forge a clear intervention / pupil outcomes pathway from mainstream universal and enhanced provision, through to alternative provision and specialist provision; we will ensure geographical equity based on evidence of need for AP; we will practise open and fair accountability when setting out expectations of AP providers; we recognise the urgency with shifting the effectiveness of integrated specialist services.

WCF can only achieve these goals with the continued collaboration of our partners. This has implications across educational providers: permanent exclusion of children and young people for *Persistent Disruptive Behaviour* is indicative of potentially unmet needs, which is why Priority 1 focuses on preventing exclusion in mainstream.

WCF is already committed to 'the appropriate use of alternative provision and an increase in successful integration¹'. Priority 2 addresses feedback that told us we need to re-establish shared aspiration for those pupils for whom reintegration is an appropriate ambition.

We know that WCF can engage more consistently: Priority 3 will enable clarity and shared agreement about relevant, manageable and useful information, both at pupil / family level and at organisational level (schools, AP, WCF). The expectations will be driven by experience of those who already working to support vulnerable pupils and believe that their entitlement as yet remains unfulfilled. We will be better placed to track pupils and avoid vulnerable learners falling through cracks in our local system.

¹ Worcestershire County Council, Education and Skills Strategy 2019-2024 Objective 1; Highly motivated, well performing and ambitious education providers

The demographic characteristics of pupils in AP nationally significantly differ from those in mainstream in a variety of ways.² Their vulnerabilities mean they and their families are more likely to need a range of support and this is why Priority 4 focuses on integrated services.

The alternative education available for pupils whose needs exceed a mature mainstream provision supplemented with outreach resourcing, has to be of equal quality with the educational experience of their mainstream peers. Priority 5 concentrates on the commissioning process, bringing together the intended outcomes of the Priorities 1 – 4. We will ensure a clear expectation of AP providers, reflecting our belief that AP is an opportunity rather than a consequence for learning and development; we will work on the basis that quality mainstream response to additional needs helps to inform AP planning and that reintegration is an entitlement where it is deemed to best meet individual pupil needs. Our purpose in evaluating and reviewing AP commissions will be to improve individual pupil outcomes.

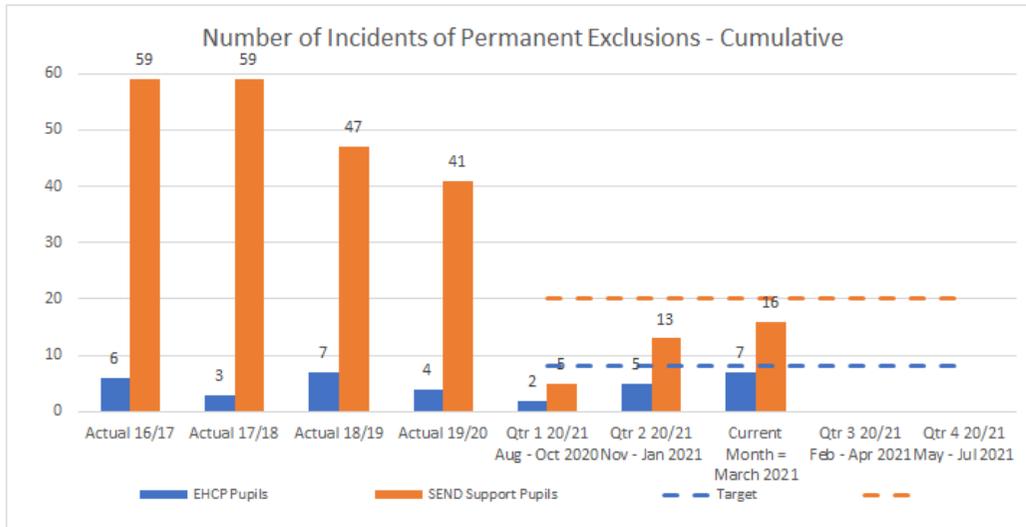
There is much to celebrate across the work of AP providers – they are innovative, skilled and dedicated to improving life chances for our vulnerable pupils and their families. This plan aims to capture the effective practice across *all sectors of our educational system* in Worcestershire and use it to re shape our current practice so that we consistently enable every pupil to achieve the best they can.

Local context

Worcestershire's Education and Skills Strategy 2019-24 includes the objective to improve capacity, skills and knowledge surrounding our vulnerable learners. The strategy outlines a commitment to reduce exclusions from schools and embed a graduated approach to provision and support. This objective identifies pupil inclusion as one of its goals. The Strategy's narrative describes a system wide approach, where working relationships secure integrated support for children and young people to achieve their best possible outcomes; explicitly fostered by a culture of collaboration, where precision assessment and planning of need drives timely and purposeful provision.

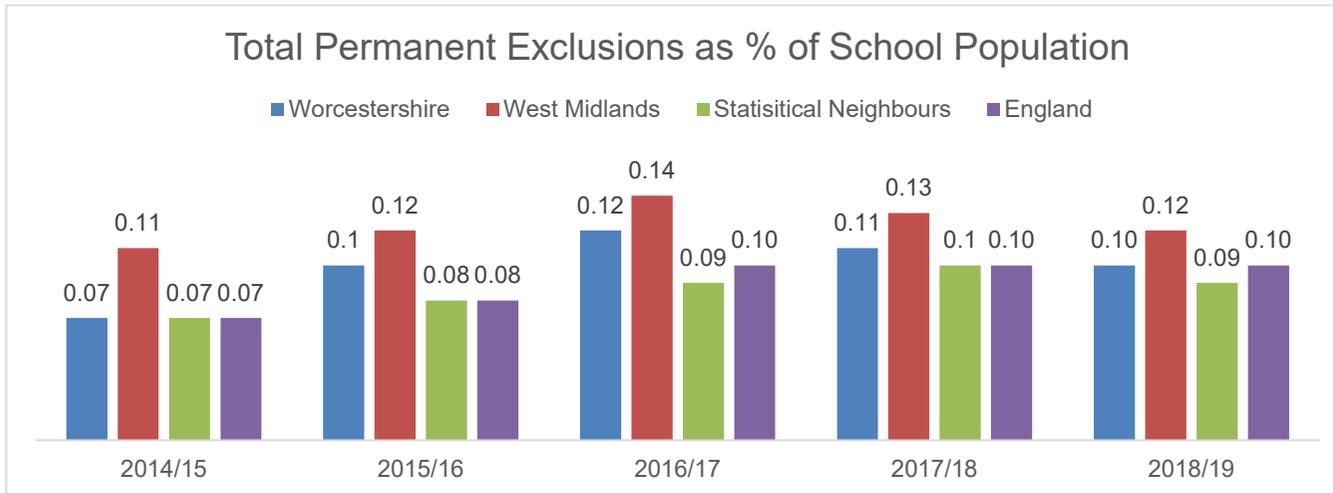
Inspection of Worcestershire's Local Area response to the 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms in 2018 identified that permanent exclusions of pupils with SEND were too high and that inclusive practice in mainstreams was inconsistent. We appear to be on a trajectory for addressing the issues highlighted by Ofsted in 2018. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic makes it problematic to track this trend of permanent exclusions during 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

² Department for Education, 2019. *Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, 2019*



Pressures on the High Level Needs budget used to meet the needs of vulnerable learners locally have resulted in significant overspend in recent years. This has resulted in a financial imperative to consider value for money and preventative approaches to exclusions and alternative provision for our learners. Local knowledge also indicates that learners who have been permanently excluded or are unable to attend mainstream education for reasons other than behaviour are not always able to access quality alternative provision when needed.

Although Worcestershire’s percentage of Exclusions is lower than the average number of exclusions across the West Midlands it is higher than the statistical neighbours and England; however, in 2017-18 the gap has narrowed.



National context

In 2019 the Timpson Review reported on a national rise in exclusion rates since 2013/14 and raised concerns about poor outcomes for these learners. There is considerable research evidence describing the negative impact of being excluded, both for the pupil and their parent/carer. Exclusion adversely affects emotional well-being, educational achievement and can be associated with mental health problems, criminality and poor outcomes in adulthood.

The 2019 OFSTED framework has a renewed focus on ensuring schools' use of exclusions and use of alternative provision complies with statutory guidance, evidenced in school inspections in Worcestershire since its introduction in September. The 'good' grade descriptors for the new quality of education judgement include 'leaders use or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.'

Analysis of current LA financial spend on AP/PRUs (including legislative context)

The budget for PRUs (maintained) and AP (academies) is funded from the HN DSG. There are currently 6 providers – 3 maintained The Beacon, The Forge and Perryfields; 3 academies Newbridge, ContinU Plus (CPA) and Aspire.

The funding is a combination of commissioned places (Exclusion E or Prevention P) and additional top up funding from the commissioner (WCC, another LAs or individual schools). Prevention places are also used to fund outreach work by providers in schools.

Agreed Outreach figures for financial year 2021-22		
Vale of Evesham	EY Outreach	20,000.00
Regency High	PD Outreach	190,450.00
Chadsgrove	PD Outreach	190,450.00
Fort Royal	EY Outreach	30,000.00

Provider	Type	E Places	P Places	Total Places	HN DSG Funding Places £'000	HN DSG Funding Top Up E Places Only £'000	Total £'000	Comments
The Forge	PRU	35	13	48	480	369	849	All WCC HN DSG Funded
The Beacon	PRU	20	25	45	450	262	712	All WCC HN DSG Funded
Perryfields	PRU	22	30	52	520	349	869	All WCC HN DSG Funded
Newbridge	Academy	65	3	68	680	554	1,234	All WCC HN DSG Funded including ESFA Place Deduction
CPA	Academy	40	50	90	253	412	665	WCC HN DSG Deduction 25.33 Places and Top Up Only.

								Remainder of places £647k funded by ESFA Direct
Aspire	Academy	10	95	105	29	56	85	WCC HN DSG Deduction 2.92 Places and Top Up Only. Remainder of places £1,012k funded by ESFA Direct
TOTALS		192	216	408	2,412	2,002	4,414	

+ ESFA Direct Funding **1,668**

= Total Funding **6,082**

The total budget provided to the six settings through WCF and ESFA funding (though ESFA funding is taken from Worcestershire County Council's Dedicated Schools Grant and directed straight to the providers) and total commissioned places are as follows:

- Total direct WCF/WCC spend per annum: £3.1million
- Total indirect WCF/WCC spend (issued to providers by the ESFA) per annum: £2.63million
- Total number of exclusion places provided to WCF: 192
- Total number of prevention places (including outreach activity) provided to schools: 243

Aims of the review

The aims of this review are:

- To understand the current model and practice of exclusions and use of alternative provision in Worcestershire
- To agree future needs and aspirations in regard to exclusions and use of alternative provision
- To agree a sustainable and effective approach to exclusions and use of alternative provision which will meet future needs and aspirations for children and young people

Values

The work carried out as part of this review and the agreed solutions to the challenges posed will be underpinned by Worcestershire Children First's Values:

- *Children at our heart:* We will keep children at the heart of everything we do
- *Value family life:* We will support and empower parents to care for their own children well
- *Quality education for all:* We will value education as the best start in life for all children
- *Protection from harm:* We will act in a professional and timely way to protect children from harm

Additionally, the steering group for this review subscribes to the following values:

- *Value educational provision:* We will value the role of educational providers and will support and empower them to care for and educate children well
- *Strengths based approach:* We will maintain a strengths and assets based approach to meeting children's needs and bringing about any change needed to the system
- *Engagement:* We will listen to and learn from the experiences of children and their families who have experienced exclusions and alternative provision



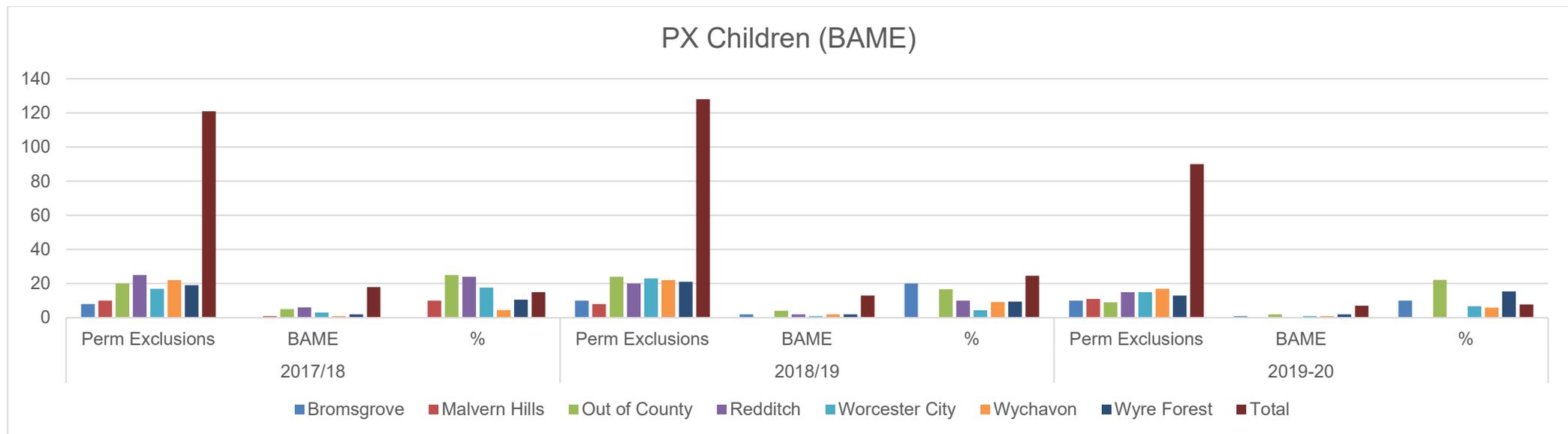
The project Advisory Group met in February 2021 to discuss potential solutions to the issues identified during phase 1. Through discussion, the Advisory Group generated **five priorities**, which have informed the Exclusions and AP implementation plan:

1. Exclusion prevention by mainstream schools
2. The exclusions and AP pathways
3. Communication and collaboration between settings
4. Integrated service approach
5. Equity and strategic clarity in commissioning arrangements and process

Worcestershire’s Current Position on Exclusions and Alternative Provision

1. Exclusion prevention by mainstream schools

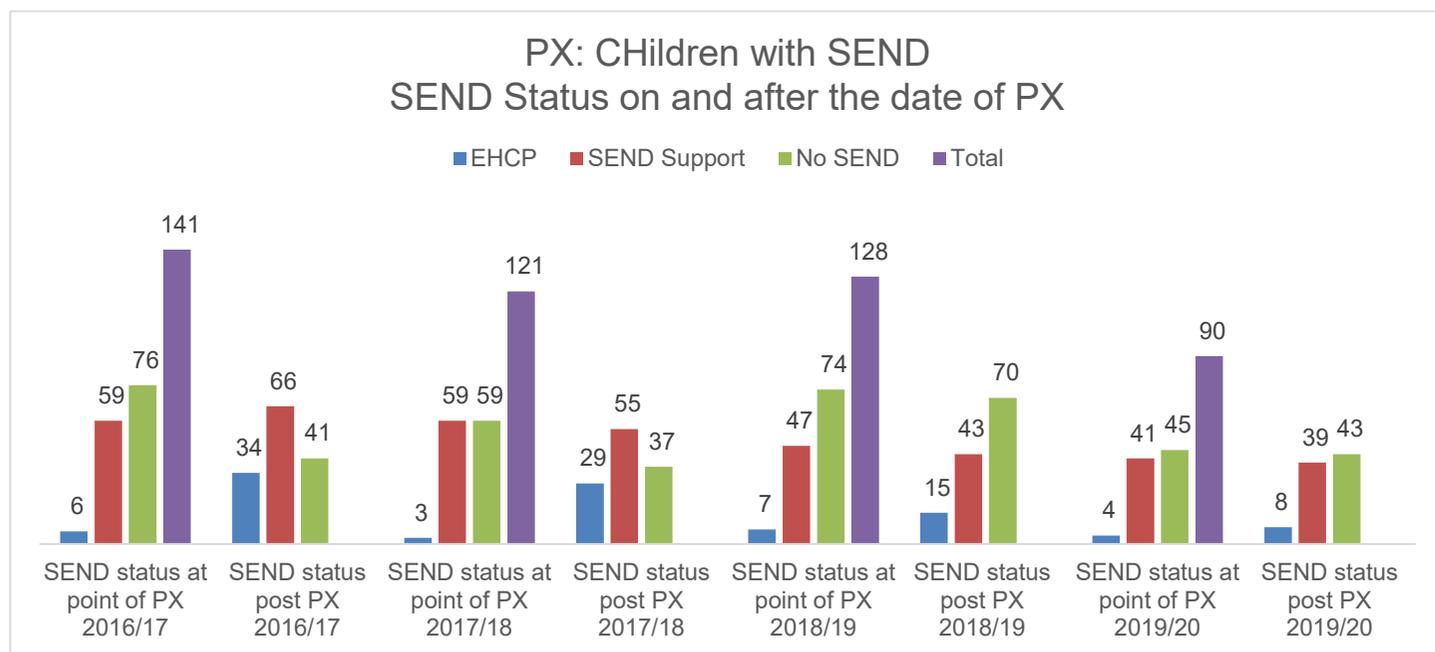
Although Worcestershire's percentage of exclusions is lower than the average number of exclusions across the West Midlands, it is higher than our statistical neighbours and England; however, in 2017-18 the gap across the county narrowed. We are aware that the highest consistently excluding areas are Redditch, Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest (please see table below).



The incidence and days lost to education because of Fixed Term Exclusion are increasing for children with no SEND and those recorded as receiving SEND Support but the totals have reduced for pupils with EHCPs and those identified as CLA (please see table below).

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Incidents	Total Days Lost	Average Length of Exclusion	Incidents	Total Days Lost	Average Length of Exclusion	Incidents	Total Days Lost	Average Length of Exclusion
Children Looked After	64	144	2.2	63	147	2.3	57	122	2.1
Children with EHCPs	663	1084	1.6	505	844	1.7	440	739	1.7
Children on SEND Support	766	1320	1.7	873	1589	1.8	760	1455	1.9

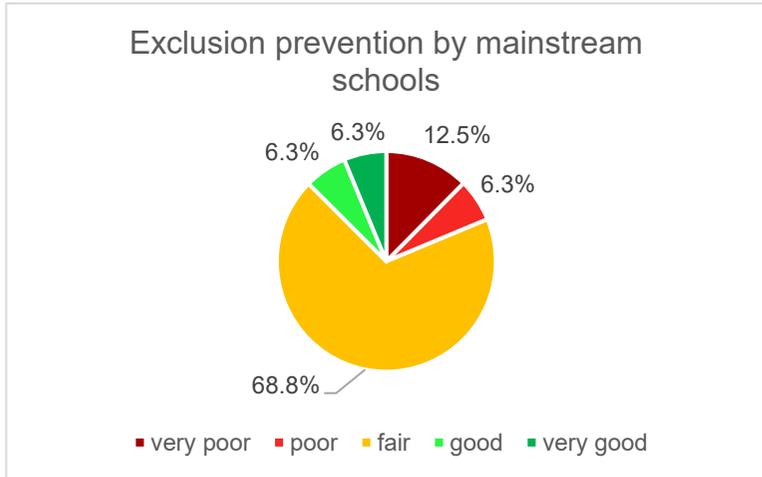
There has been an increase in the number of children obtaining an EHCP post permanent exclusion (please see table below).



Although there has been a decrease in the overall number of referrals in 2019-20 there was an increase in the % of referrals in KS2 and KS3.

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on current exclusion prevention by mainstream schools:

- 19.1% poor/very poor
- 68.0% fair
- 12.6% good/very good

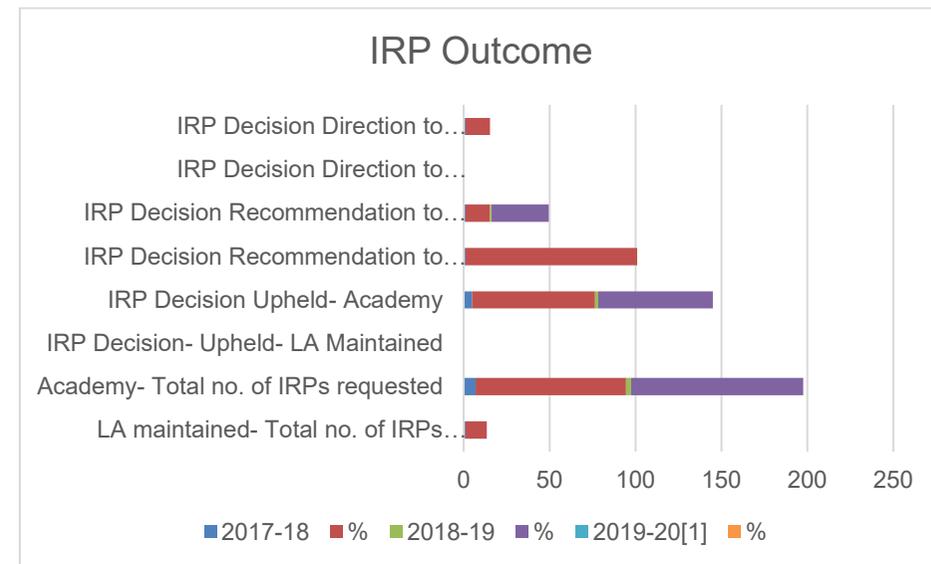
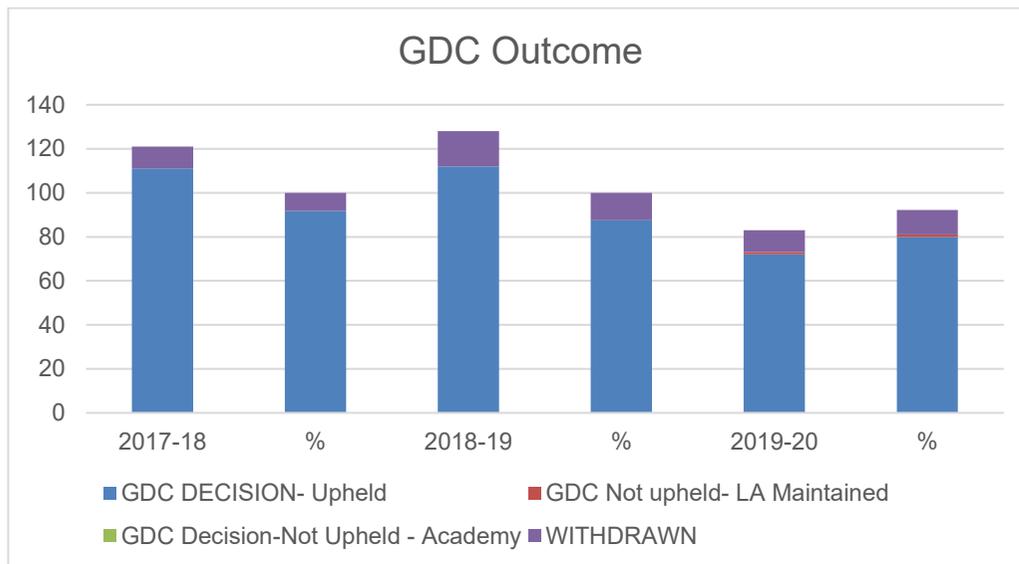


In addition it has been recognised that partnership working between mainstream schools and AP providers is not sufficiently embedded or consistent.

“Helping mainstream school by getting teachers from Alternative Provision to give support and advice. Teachers in mainstream need help to know what to do. Sharing good practice is a good thing to do” – feedback from a young person currently attending AP

Unlike larger scale markets, the AP demand is highly sensitive to supply. The existence of spare places can encourage schools to be less inclusive and so increase pressure on AP supply. Hence increasing supply while required at any moment in time needs to be one action within a larger strategy. The average cost in 2018 across the country per place per year was £18,000 (AP Market Analysis 2018).

Governing Board Reviews very rarely reinstate excluded children. IRPs very rarely Direct/recommend reconsideration of a Governing Boards decision to uphold an exclusion.



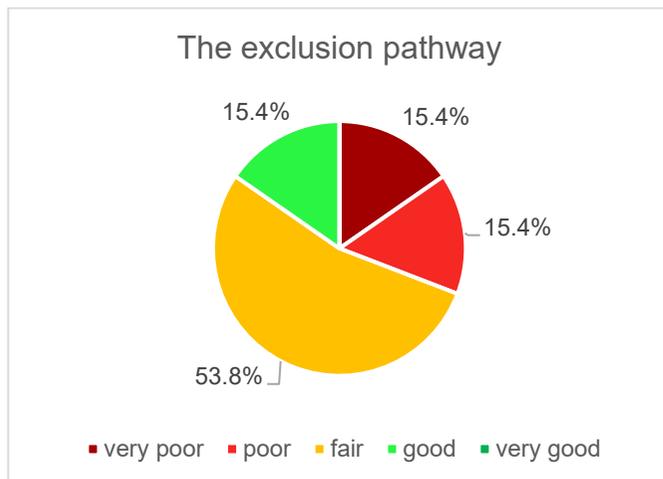
The reasons for and strategies for handling exclusions in Primary and Secondary schools are very different and need to be considered in context. In particular, there are more children with EHCPs as opposed to no identified SEN in the Primary sector, whereas in the Secondary sector more children have SEN support needs rather than having EHCPs. Both groups have similar issues with long-term placements but the triggers for accessing AP, and appropriate interventions / pathways may be different.

Of the reasons given for permanent exclusions, drugs & alcohol and assault have low incidences but are increasing.

2. The exclusions and AP pathways

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on current exclusions pathway:

- 30.8% poor/very poor
- 53.8% fair
- 15.4% good



Mainstream schools expressed that the waiting time for AP referral and for place allocation appear inconsistent.

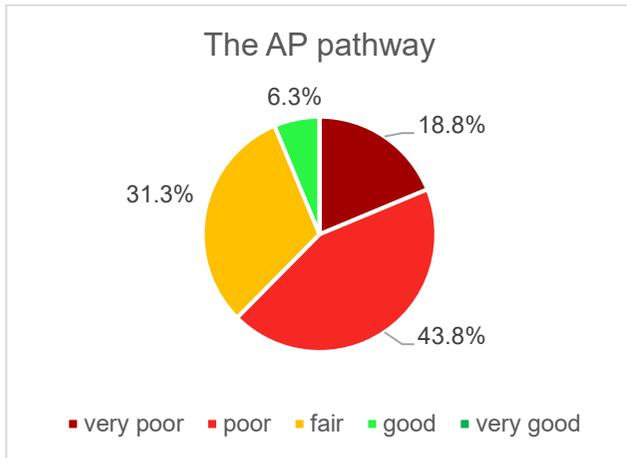
For short term placements it could be expected that perhaps such a place in an AP would be used by 2 or 3 pupils as they return to mainstream, leave school or are placed in a special school. Over the last few years many pupils have remained in AP for much longer, such that 1 place is frequently only used by 1 pupil for the year. It appears to be the longer-term placements that are the biggest factor in driving up the number of places required. Very few leaders expressed pupil reintegration into mainstream provision (where appropriate) as an organisational purpose, some did so when prompted.

Also, inadequate pupil referral information: the quality and amount of information shared is inconsistent which makes it difficult to determine appropriate placement and slows down provision planning when a pupil is placed.

Referrals of pupils without EHC needs assessment whose needs indicate this is necessary: it is time consuming to initiate and manage the EHCP request and assessment process, it is costly and slows down appropriate placement planning.

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on current AP pathway:

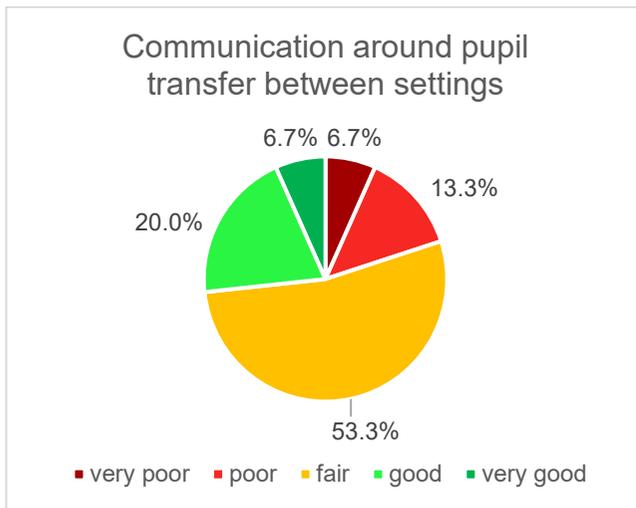
- 62.6% poor/very poor
- 31.3% fair
- 6.3% good



3. Communication and collaboration between settings

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on how communication around pupil transfer between settings is currently working:

- 20.0% poor/very poor
- 53.3% fair
- 26.7% good/very good



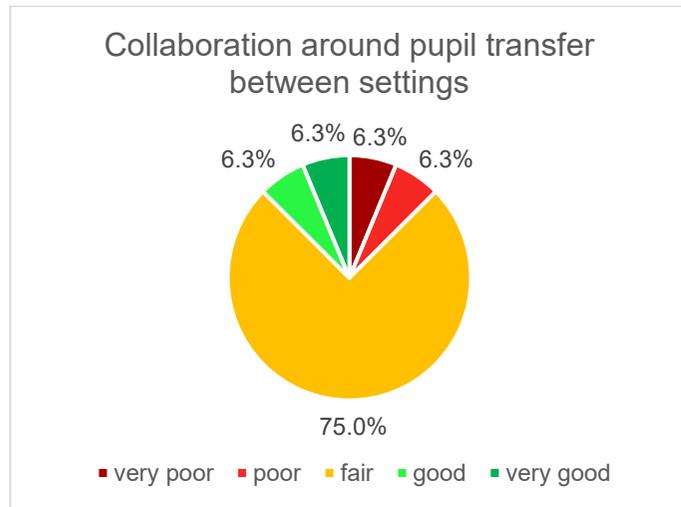
Furthermore, parents/carers expressed that they “felt not listened to at time of transfer from their previous school” and reported “not having a say in the process of changing schools”.

Mainstream schools raised concern that managed moves are not fairly distributed, and schools’ published admission number (PAN) intensifies this inequality; there has consequently been a request for resourcing of pupils whose move is managed to optimise their integration and achievement.

“Supporting other schools because they don’t know how to deal with me” – feedback from a young person

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on how collaboration around pupil transfer between settings is currently working:

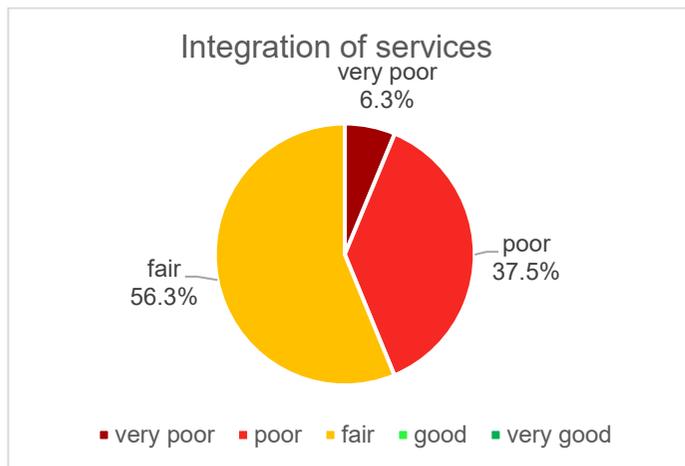
- 12.6% poor/very poor
- 75.0% fair
- 12.6% good/very good



4. Integrated service approach

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on how the integration of services in exclusions and AP is currently working:

- 43.8% poor/very poor
- 56.3% fair
- 0.0% good/very good



Mainstream schools raised External specialist support varies in quality. Schools feel isolated on occasions, being apparently unable to engage active support from external professionals, a specific example cited by more than one respondent resulting in no-one deciding nor agreeing to intervene, CAMHS and Family Front Door. Leaders expressed frustration and concern regarding access to quality specialist mental health support. Leaders shared that their experiences with social care professionals is inconsistent. Specialist provision for pupils with EHCPs needs to increase, a number mention SEMH needs.

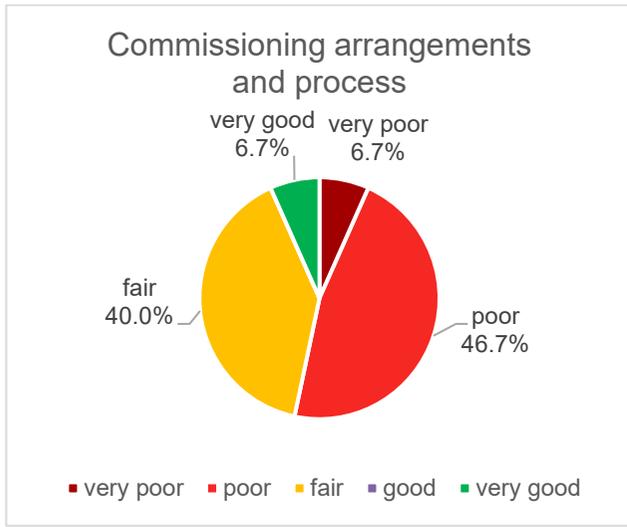
Professional concern regarding the sufficiency of specialist provision locally, and specifically for SEMH (social emotional, mental health); both mainstream and AP sectors expressed concern about pathways for pupils identified with SEMH needing to be clearer and better resourced. It is felt that insufficiency of specialist SEMH provision is placing additional strain on AP commissioned places, because those pupils are referred into AP places.

5. Equity and strategic clarity in commissioning arrangements and process

In terms of commissioning, inconsistent partnership working with AP providers was raised as an issue. This is reflected in feedback in March/April 2021.

Feedback from stakeholders (March/April 2021) on how commissioning arrangements and process are currently working:

- 53.4% poor/very poor
- 40.0% fair
- 6.7% very good



Mainstream schools expressed the geographical distribution of the AP sites is a frequently cited issue, because travel costs are prohibitive. There is no mainstream-based AP, it is all offsite. There is also no AP in Malvern, Pershore, Droitwich or Evesham, so any exclusions or prevention interventions in these districts must involve transport to Worcester. This situation has an impact on the transport budget and may impact on children's experiences of AP and their feelings of belonging in their communities.

Plan and Approach

PRIORITY 1: Exclusion prevention by mainstream schools

- Systematically using accurate exclusion data as an evidence base to inform strategic decision making
- Working with mainstream schools to clarify their provision responsibilities for vulnerable learners (including additional needs, FSM, SEN)
- Working with parents/carers to make sure there is clear and accessible guidance on pupil provision and entitlement
- Using existing effective practice in mainstream schools to inform system wide consistency with provision and exclusion
- Commissioning AP providers to deliver quality preventative support into mainstream
- WCF providing support and challenge to mainstream schools to ensure equality of opportunity to all pupils

Priority 1 Lead: Tina Partridge, Group Manager for SEN Support

Completion By: ~~October 2021~~ December 2021

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>1.1 Working with mainstream and special schools to clarify their provision responsibilities for vulnerable learners (including additional needs, FSM, SEN) and reduce pupil exclusion</p> <p>1.1.1 Meet with education quality and improvement team to agree the scope of working with mainstream and special schools to develop enhanced provision mapping, behaviour policies and exclusion prevention, 'Preventing pupil exclusion pathway'</p> <p>Quick win, understand what is currently in place, and seek advice what else could be done. Book meeting in to understand capacity from school imp team to support this work.</p> <p>1.1.2 Agree the lead officer and resource to undertake the</p>	<p>SEN Support rep, (Principle EP), AP rep, mainstream school rep</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collated range of interventions for mainstream and special sectors that can be published as 'Preventing pupils exclusion pathway' and considered alongside guidance for behaviour policy. • Shared understanding regarding mainstream interventions it is reasonable for schools to provide from within their DSG budget + funding premiums. • Shared understanding regarding special school interventions it is reasonable to provide from within their base budget + funding premiums.

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>work across mainstream and special sectors, primary and secondary phases; in mainstream ensure the work on provision mapping aligns with national and local guidance around school funding and the SEN graduated response together with national framework for quality of education; in special ensure the work on provision mapping aligns with national and local guidance around school funding and the SEN Code of Practice guidance around EHCP.</p> <p>1.1.3 The lead identifies existing effective practice in mainstream and special schools and invites mainstream and special school colleagues to form task and finish group.</p> <p>1.1.4 The group collates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the characteristics of support and challenge to ensure quality of teaching; • the range of whole school approaches in place to address pupils' additional needs; • the adaptations being trialled to manage the possible impact of the recent lockdowns: the evolving nature of universal provision (in mainstream, in special) regarding staff and pupil emotional health and wellbeing. • What funding do they use to support pupils e.g. pupil premium, IBP, nurture groups <p>1.1.5 The group considers the breadth of gender related interventions.</p> <p>1.1.6 The group asks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross phase mainstream SENCoS to share their SEN provision maps; align SEN provision maps to identify if further work is necessary to ensure coherence moving from whole school provision into SEN arrangements; 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for supporting consistent and appropriate pupil referral to AP – see 2.1. • Recommendations as to reasonable action by WCF in response to challenge / non engagement by schools. • Recommendations for preventative mainstream interventions (outreach) funded by WCF with transparent framework for allocating resource. Align additional funding into schools and AP (preventative and pupil led support) with thresholds for external specialist support – see 4.1.2. • Evidence of the extent to which AP currently contributes to additional needs provision planning in mainstream schools and to EHCP provision planning in special schools. • Evidence of the extent to which external agencies currently contribute to additional needs EHCP provision planning in mainstream, in AP and in special schools – see 4.1. • Evidence to inform strategic decision-making regarding mainstream outreach support to prevent pupil exclusion. Local framework for Exclusion Prevention commissioning preventative AP places and FTE/PEX places.

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross phase special SENCOs to share their EHCP provision pathways; align the EHCP pathways to identify if further work is necessary to ensure coherence with special whole school offer. <p>1.1.7 The group establishes agreement about costings for standard interventions in both mainstream and in special sectors; shares experience of how interventions can be combined to draw in budget from across school funding e.g. Year 7 literacy and numeracy, PE and sport.</p> <p>1.1.8 The lead collates information regarding the outreach resource dedicated to preventative support in mainstream schools over past 3 years together with the qualitative and quantitative impact of this support.</p> <p>1.1.9 The group examines data about preventative mainstream support and considers opportunities for embedding this resource in the 'Preventing pupil exclusion pathway' going forward – see 5.1.3.</p> <p>1.1.10 Lead officer liaises with the current review of High Needs Funding to ensure coherent decision making in both mainstream and special sectors.</p> <p>1.1.11 The group addresses anomalies ref HNF and SEN mapping to finalise whole school provision mapping 'Preventing pupil exclusion pathway' in mainstream and special sectors.</p> <p>1.1.12 The group proposes decision making criteria to inform allocation of preventative support resourcing in mainstream.</p> <p>1.1.13 Proposals for consulting with pupils and with wider mainstream and special sectors.</p>			

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>1.2. Promoting fair and appropriate (proportional) pupil exclusion</p> <p>1.2.1 Identify a lead to work with mainstream leaders e.g. Primary AHT, Secondary heads of Year.</p> <p>1.2.2 Lead to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. collect feedback from parent/carers regarding their experience over the past 2 years of the appeal process and the support they can access; ii. collate the training and take up provided for governors regarding pupil exclusion over the past 3 years; iii. verify the local authority's duty for exclusion appeal including challenge in relation to maintained schools and with academies; iv. identify related duties e.g. safeguarding, participation often linked to the pupil exclusion process; v. clarify recent trends of exclusion appeals including the nature of incident triggering pupil exclusion; vi. clarify the system currently in place regarding impact on pupil led funding to schools following exclusion; vii. track the recent history and implementation of the current arrangement; viii. determine whether the current system has impact, how and when does it make a difference ix. consult with other local authorities regarding; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclusion appeal data; • current arrangements and resourcing for governor training regarding pupil exclusion; • approaches within legal parameters for financial management following pupil exclusion. <p>1.2.3 Identify a lead to facilitate the task and finish group to revise the local guidance and WCF practice regarding pupil</p>	<p>Exclusions Team</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence to determine whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the current arrangements must be changed to fulfil statutory duties in relation to maintained schools and with academies; ○ local guidance needs to be revised and updated; ○ parent/carers feel empowered to appeal. • Use this evidence to decide if it is an efficient and effective use of funding to invest more in governor training and to identify any other changes needed • Pupil level data that assists timely referral into AP – see 2.1.1 iv. • Clear WCF systems in place to provide support and challenge for decisions regarding pupil exclusion, to reflect exclusion prevention by mainstream schools (priority 1) and the AP pathway (priority 2). • Resourcing for the WCF systems to ensure consistency and equity with support and challenge for schools regarding pupil exclusion. • Improved participation by pupils and by parents/carers to enable appropriate placement planning post exclusion.

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>exclusions process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree cross phase principles to underpin decision making in varying school settings; • propose manageable recording systems by schools e.g. testing interventions, evidence of impact, next steps; • recommend extent and means for engaging with parent/carers; • propose stages for WCF support and challenge mechanisms for school leaders, for parent/carers, for governors; • advise on expectations of school leadership monitoring and review of exclusion practice and decision making to inform school improvement planning where appropriate. <p>1.2.4 Lead to work with stakeholders on revised draft to strengthen shared understanding and ensure revised information is accessible for all. Consult with governor and parent/carer representatives on the draft guidance; work with pupils.</p> <p>1.2.5 Lead to investigate WCF resourcing of the system for routine support and challenge: seek advice from other local authorities as to their arrangements, expenditure.</p> <p>1.2.6 The group to propose existing forum for a standing agenda item that examines the rate/trend of pupil exclusion.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals in place to share with schools regarding future practice on pupil funding post exclusion. • Regular review of practice determines effectiveness of refreshed guidance and supports on-going system improvement.
<p>1.3 Using exclusion data to inform strategic decision making</p> <p>1.3.1 Work with Group Manager for vulnerable learners to identify a lead and to refresh reporting template for pupil exclusion by mainstream schools.</p>	<p>Donna Parker</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi professional data analysis generates evidence for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ escalating challenge with school leaders regarding whole school and targeted provision from within main

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>1.3.2 Group Manager for vulnerable learners proposes the mechanism to review data analysis e.g. half termly to inform strategic decision making. Consider opportunities for multi professional membership e.g. Early Help, YOS, EPS.</p> <p>1.3.3 Agree with the data team the nature and frequency of reporting.</p> <p>1.3.4 Lead officer establishes routine for analysing exclusions data.</p> <p>1.3.5 Lead officer liaises with schools and WCF colleagues to help interpret the analysis of data. Further detail collected in the instance of illegal substances and criminality.</p> <p>1.3.6 Lead officer initiates the regular cycle of data review, based on 1.1.2.</p>			<p>school budget / pupil exclusion procedures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WCF investment in preventative whole school intervention addressing apparent trends with challenging pupil behaviour; ○ recommendations about specialist service commissioning in response to user experience – see 4.1; ○ recommendations to commissioning regarding the nature / scale of AP contracts – see 5.3.2.

PRIORITY 2: The exclusions and AP pathways

- *Aligning pupil entitlement through exclusion prevention with access to AP – consistent access criteria*
- *Ensuring timely access to appropriate AP for support with explicit expected outcomes*
- *Securing equality of opportunity across the county in terms of AP offer*
- *Individual pupil outcomes inform timely transition planning*
- *Aligning AP resourcing with High Needs funding descriptors*

Priority 2 Lead: Donna Parker, Group Manager for Vulnerable Learners

Completion By: ~~December 2021~~ March 2022

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>2.1 The AP pathway</p> <p>2.1.1 Set up a task and finish group from across mainstream</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. characteristics of effective meetings between professionals regarding pupil at risk of / exclusion; (1) ii. typical evidence supporting pupil referral into AP (3) to prevent pupil exclusion – ref to output of 5.1.1; iii. factors to consider for HTs and governors when deciding on pupil exclusion in terms of evidencing preventative interventions; - iv. essential characteristics of pupil assessment data – for referral, for reintegration; v. process for referring pupil to AP; (2) (registered AP) vi. process for AP initiating transition out of provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles / responsibilities across setting supporting pupil transition out, • verify the pupil level data expected from AP provider, • nature of pupil participation and of parent/carer engagement, • factors to consider when planning timescale, • alignment with expectations of provision maps within mainstream i.e. school budgeted resourcing is included as part of reintegration planning, vii. escalation route for referral in and out of AP if pathway is diverted. <p>2.1.2 Identify the WCF resource to facilitate the proposed AP pathway; ensure capacity for systematic review of the implementation to identify system issues early on.</p> <p>2.1.3 Identify forum for leadership review of AP pathway based on monitoring information in 2.1.2 to support on-going improvement planning.</p> <p>2.1.4 Consult on the AP pathway across mainstream and AP</p>	<p>Donna Parker</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil level information is relevant for pupil planning within school, together with AP referral and/or going forward for EHCP assessment when evidence indicates that this is appropriate. • Clear expectations for schools and APs regarding family engagement. • Pupil referrals, including the pupil passport, directly inform AP allocation in terms of the nature and duration of appropriate AP: swifter pupil AP placements. • Parental feedback on their child’s support experience / exclusion process indicates improved participation. • Revised systems are consistently implemented by WCF and across educational settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ clear process for transitioning out of AP support time limited pupil placement in AP: short stay AP pupil placements increase, ○ pupil transition out of AP increases: pupil reintegration and pupil special school placement, as appropriate, ○ systematic update of ‘what’s working effectively’ together with alerts about issues that need to be addressed fed back to make informed decisions about preventative resourcing or school performance challenge,

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>sectors, with parent/carers.</p> <p>2.1.5 Respond to consultation feedback to finalise and set up the AP pathway.</p> <p>2.1.6 Determine how to disseminate the AP pathway to service users, to educational settings – user friendly guidance, on-line, etc.</p> <p>2.1.7 Plan WCF staff development of refreshed guidance and revised systems.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reducing challenge over time regarding pupil exclusion.
<p>2.2 Working with APs to clarify their provision responsibilities for vulnerable learners and maximise pupil reintegration</p> <p>2.2.1 Identify lead to work with APs and invite representatives of AP leaders to generate evidence informing commissioning decisions.</p> <p>2.2.2 The group collates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the characteristics of support and challenge to ensure quality of teaching; • the universal (Wave 1) range of approaches in place across APs for all pupils; • the targeted strategies frequently employed to address pupils' additional needs; • the adaptations being trialled to manage the possible impact of the recent lockdowns: the evolving nature of Wave 1 provision within the specialist AP settings regarding staff and pupil emotional health and wellbeing. <p>2.2.3 The group establishes how the impact of the approaches is assessed and is recorded.</p>	<p>School Improvement (Helen Pretty)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local framework for AP pathway underpins commissioning preventative AP places and FTE/PEX places. • Clarity supporting expectations for pupil transition out of AP – see 2.1.1 vi. • Opportunity to develop collaboration between AP and mainstream settings specifically regarding the exchange of pupil assessment data, supporting referral and reintegration – see 2.1.1 iv.

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>2.2.4 The group shares experience of how interventions can be combined to draw in budget from across school funding e.g. PP.</p> <p>2.2.5 The group collaborates to agree indicative costings for interventions and aligns these with descriptors for HNF.</p>			

PRIORITY 3: Communication and collaboration between settings

- *Robust arrangements in place between commissioners and AP providers for data sharing*
- *WCF leads stakeholders with collaborating to agree the non-negotiables for pupil level information sharing at the points of transfer / transition*
- *WCF establishes clear pathways for information sharing regarding AP system leadership, management and development*
- *WCF consistently makes use of the communication pathways so that stakeholders feel they are active partners in AP*
- *WCF facilitates mainstream and AP providers to develop on-going engagement with unregistered providers – focusing on quality of learning and personal development, safeguarding and value for money*

Priority 3 Lead: Jane Howard

Completion By: ~~January 2022~~ April 2022

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>3.1 Data sharing</p> <p>3.1.1 Check AP contract terms relating to GDPR are appropriate for pupil level information.</p> <p>3.1.2 Check that AP data agreement captures the information sharing protocol within AP contracts.</p>	Sam Davey	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP contracts and data agreements are in place and compliant for data sharing. • Clarity for service users is available in the published information at 4.1.1 regarding external pupil support.

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope opportunities and outline straightforward routine for engaging with unregistered provisions based on peer support principles; • liaise with safeguarding and parent/carer representatives to identify key issues from their perspectives; • engage commissioning team to maximise the opportunity for the process to generate evidence for a 'preferred provider' list; • explore the willingness of local leaders across mainstream and special educational settings to collaborate with unregistered AP providers around quality assurance; • work with unregistered providers to understand their opinion; • create a proposed model for systematic engagement between school (mainstream and special) and unregistered provision leads that is self-sustaining; • identify WCF resource required to facilitate the model; • clarify information sharing requirements for WCF to be able to populate and update a preferred provider list, to benchmark pupil placement costs; • establish review points for the model. 		<p>2021</p> <p>November 2021</p> <p>December 2021</p> <p>October 2021</p> <p>October 2021</p> <p>March 2022</p>	<p>provision: safeguarding, progress with pupil personal development and learning, engagement with parent/carer, staff development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased WCF commissioning evidence to inform pupil placement (pupil outcomes, statutory duties including safeguarding). • Live data of preferred providers available for schools and for WCF. • WCF works with evidence to benchmark pupil placement costs

PRIORITY 4: Integrated service approach

- *Ensuring that vulnerable learners and their families have more timely access to appropriate specialist support to reduce risk of (permanent / fixed term) exclusion: service user information and professional collaboration is improved*
- *Identifying and addressing contract issues within current commissioning agreements for specialist services*
- *Generating an evidence base for strategic decision-making regarding specialist support to align with the Pupil Exclusion and AP pathway*
- *Strengthening multi professional working to improve pupil and parent/carer experience*

Priority 4 Lead: Gabrielle Stacey, Assistant Director for SEND and Vulnerable Learners

Completion By: ~~January 2022~~ March 2022

Activity	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>4.1 Specialist support that enhances educational provision to meet additional needs of pupils and their families</p> <p>4.1.1 Set up working group, possibly drawn from Commissioning and Vulnerable Learners, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarify the terms of commissioning contracts for external specialist support regarding pupils at risk of exclusion e.g. CAMHS, YOS; • adapt the information about specialist service provision so that it is 'user friendly' and can be incorporated within priority 1 Exclusion prevention by mainstream schools; • identify how service users can contribute to commissioning reviews, communicate this to educational settings; • collate inconsistencies, if experienced, with delivery of the specialist support based on the contract detail; • consider how the proposed preventative strategies (mainstream mapping feeding into the SEN graduated response, commissioning AP preventative support for mainstream providers) aligns with provision model for Medical Education team; • identify frequently occurring shortfall in accessing support and possible solutions e.g. explore links to social care DPS for therapy services; • make appropriate recommendations for service contracts to be revised, based on nature/level of pupil and/or family need. <p>Second meeting with a smaller working group of volunteers from this group to draw up proposals for education/social care health delivery from this discussion to be checked with above</p>	<p>Gabrielle Stacey</p> <p>Gabrielle Stacey</p> <p>Gabrielle Stacey</p>	<p>January 2022</p> <p>August 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published details of access routes/contact information and thresholds more easily available for educational providers, young people and their families. • Mainstream provision mapping guidance (that aligns with guidance on the graduated response) is informed by 'easy to understand' outline of the additional interventions by external specialist professionals. • Evidence base for strategic review of current commissioning contracts for specialist support. • Decision regarding the capacity to increase the focus of preventative work. • WCF establishes a systematic approach to enabling and channelling feedback including offering professional solutions.

- Create a local AP commissioning framework based on stakeholder feedback, refreshed understanding of mainstream / WCF / LA responsibilities
- Foster the conditions via contracting agreement for system wide collaboration that is pupil centred
- Ensure equity in contract funding and address the system issues currently flagged by stakeholders
- Establish a consistent and participative cycle for contract review
- Align the AP commissioning framework with maturing mainstream school provision planning and sufficiency of special school places (SEMH)

Priority 5 Lead: Sam Davey, Commissioning Manager
Completion By: February 2022 August 2022

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>5.1 Determining the purpose and function of AP locally based on data, trends and mainstream core functions</p> <p>5.1.1 AP statutory regulation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish the statutory regulation around registered and unregistered AP, pupil entitlement and curriculum hours on offer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and agree template for the AP service spec ○ Identify services/leads to populate to spec ○ Decide if we want to go live on April 22 or February 22, are we looking at academic year or financial year? Needs to be decided before we agree on tender type. ○ Agree and understand tender requirements (full tender, negotiating) Sam and Judith – meeting with procurement on 21.06 Check if there is work request for procurement work. ○ Agree timeline for the AP tender ○ Decide if the current contracts can be extended again (currently up to 1st September) <p>5.1.2 AP local needs:</p>	<p>Donna Parker</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCF updates guidance for educational settings regarding the AP statutory regulation. • WCF establishes the range and variance of the recent unit cost per pupil placement. • WCF proposes and consults on its strategic position regarding AP (nature, duration, locations). • A local framework for AP commissioning co-constructed by schools with WCF Is published detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consideration of geographical and age variations when planning placements, ○ processes for managing individual placement, ○ assessment and monitoring systems, ○ reviewing provider performance, ○ arrangements with other local services.

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collate the AP providers on offer locally, informed by WCF and schools; record the key features; • collate unit costs for main providers per pupil; • identify the gaps/duplication in provision – geographically, age range, nature of need, nature of intervention, based on data predictions for pupil place needs; • refer to phase 1 data to understand service users' perspective of effective alternative provision. <p>5.1.3 Work with sample of mainstream leaders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree the function of AP both as preventative and responsive provision; • identify the cross-phase principles underpinning future commissioning, understand the phase distinctions as appropriate; • propose the types of AP provision informed by the nature of pupil need; • ensure local variations are evidence based on nature of need and incidence; • use the agreed function to make explicit the intended outcomes for the range of pupils who may access AP; • consider to what extent preventative resourcing in mainstream can address the gaps, the inequalities – see 1.1.5 and 1.1.8. <p>5.1.4 Determine likely AP requirements (place numbers, nature of provision) going forward.</p> <p>5.1.5 Consider implications for transport policy and expenditure of the proposed AP commissioning.</p> <p>5.1.6 Identify the implications for special school commissioning.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence base to inform commissioning decisions: preventative support into mainstream schools, preventative AP placement, exclusion AP placement. • Evidence base for special school commissioning decisions. • Clarity regarding efficient resource planning and management of pupil transport.
<p>5.2 Strengthening the AP commissioning cycle for unregistered AP provision</p>	<p>Sam Davey</p>	<p>February 2022</p>	

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>5.2.1 Explore networking opportunities/forum with other local authorities to share commissioning good practice.</p> <p>5.2.2 Work with AP leads to understand the operational stresses and opportunities within the current system for referring pupils by both schools and by WCF including the challenges of day 6 provision.</p> <p>5.2.3 Collate WCF Vulnerable Learners' feedback regarding the challenges presented by day 6 provision following permanent exclusion.</p> <p>5.2.4 Collate approximate data for unit costs of pupil placement using WCF data and sample of mainstream and special school data for unregistered AP providers.</p> <p>5.2.5 Examine 20% of unregistered AP placements in relation to pupil / family access to external specialist support services – feedback to 4.1.1</p> <p>5.2.6 Identify the gaps/duplication in unregistered AP provision geographically and for age ranges, informed by pupil place predictions.</p> <p>5.2.7 Draft a standard commissioning contract ensuring unregistered AP providers address statutory duties: pupil attendance, safe staff recruitment, pupil hours, pupil development planning and monitoring progress, engagement with parent/carer, pathway planning, engagement with performance review, commissioning review. Consult with 3.4.1.</p> <p>5.2.8 Identify resource to ensure effective monitoring and review of commissioning contracts with unregistered AP providers.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCF has a position statement in place regarding unregistered AP, underpinned by statutory regulation. • WCF ensures the position statement is regularly reviewed and updated as needed. • A 'working together' package is compiled and ready for use with unregistered AP providers: point of WCF contact, expectations of provision arrangements, process for commissioning/ placement/review, range of costs, willingness to engage with peer review process (see 3.4). • Evidence for commissioning reviews in integrated services – see 4.1.1. • Share template for commissioning and reviewing unregistered AP provision with mainstream, AP and special schools.

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
5.2.9 Set up commissioning cycle for WCF commissioning of monitoring and timely review of unregistered provision			
<p>5.3 Strengthening the AP commissioning cycle for registered AP provision and independent AP providers</p> <p>5.3.1 Develop service provision expectations informed by 5.1 and 5.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish funding equity across providers for delivering preventative mainstream support, for preventative AP, for FTE/PEX AP; • identify negative funding implications for AP providers and collaborate with them to manage the budget impact; • embed professional collaboration with AP providers within the commission cycle; • work with AP providers to develop a purposeful monitoring routine: pupil personal development, learning progress, family engagement, pupil aspiration; • develop a user friendly "cover page" for providers to provide at a glance information of the contract details, monitoring process, contract reviews. <p>5.3.2 Identify resource for consistent contract monitoring (including engaging with AP providers) and contract review.</p> <p>5.3.3 Draft proposed commissioning framework.</p> <p>5.3.4 Consult on proposed AP framework to determine the implications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent/carers and pupils; • mainstream provision mapping – see 1.1.10; • WCF funded preventative support into mainstream – see 1.1.8; • WCF high needs pupil led funding decisions. 	<p>Sam Davey, Donna Parker, Finance</p>	<p>January 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised commissioning process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ standardised unit costs across AP providers, ○ regular annual contract reviews, ○ robust contract monitoring and accountability, ○ more cohesive working between commissioning, service area and providers, ○ better facilitated service user feedback channels/mechanisms, ○ having clearly documented outcomes within the contracts and how we can consistently measure the outcomes achieved. • Pupils accessing AP for time limited periods can appropriately transition based on tangible assessment evidence. • AP leads have regular opportunities for structured engagement with WCF – updates, feedback, effective practice, alerts regarding system issues. • 'Intelligent data' evidencing pupil outcomes provides relevant information for pupil pathway planning including reintegration where appropriate. • Timely contract reviews which are participative, building on regular

Action	Lead	Completion Date	Indicators/Measure
<p>5.3.5 Agree how and when the commissioning framework is disseminated so that it informs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance for schools on whole school provision mapping that feeds into the SEN graduated response; • AP commissioning decisions for relating to WCF investment in exclusion prevention support; • WCF review of HNF budget. 			<p>engagement between WCF and AP providers.</p>
<p>5.4 Sufficiency of special school places</p> <p>5.4.1 Identify a lead to take forward this activity, reviewing sufficiency of special school places.</p> <p>5.4.2 Establish the parameters for review of special school place planning to ensure capacity for appropriate referrals by mainstream / by AP.</p>	<p>Zulkifl Ahmed</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan is developed and implemented focusing on sufficiency of special school places. • Sufficiency of special school places, specifically for SEMH, that reflects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ maturing mainstream provision, ○ revised contracts for AP, ○ consistent challenge and support around pupils at risk of / FTE / PEx, ○ assessment processes that are timely with compliant professional advice.

Glossary

AHT	Assistant Headteacher
AP	Alternative Provision
CAHMS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CLA	Children Looked After
Day 6 provision	schools and local authorities are required to provide full time and suitable education for pupils from the sixth school day
DPS	Dynamic Purchasing System
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
FSM	Free School Meals
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HNF	High Needs Funding
HT	Headteacher
LA	Local Authority
PEX	Permanent Exclusion
SEMH	Social Emotional and Mental Health
SEN	Special Educational Needs
WCF	Worcestershire Children First
YOS	Youth Offending Service

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