

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Forum on the outcome of the consultation on the provision of alternative education provision which ended on 20th February 2015, and the next steps which need to be taken in securing that provision.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Wirral defines alternative education provision (AEP) as supervised provision that is part of a pupil's regular timetable, away from the main school site and not led by school staff. AEP can be used to prevent exclusions, provide an additional curriculum element or to re-engage students in their education. Pupils on an AEP programme must receive a full-time timetable overall and English and maths must be an element of their provision.
- 2.2 In order to address the national drivers for change and emerging guidance, the local authority initiated a review of the local AEP. The review included consulting with a range of stakeholders; schools, special schools, pupil referral unit, pupils & families, local authority (LA) officers, Wirral Children's Trust and Wirral secondary school governors. The review (January, 2014) recommended the following;
- i. The local authority to bring together a Strategic Partnership Framework for AEP.
 - ii. The local authority to develop a Commissioning Framework for AEP.
 - iii. The local authority to fulfil its statutory responsibility for tracking pupils.
 - iv. The local authority to agree an appropriate Quality Assurance Framework.
 - v. The local authority to commission separate Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 AEP.
- 2.3 To date the progress is; Wirral Alternative Education Provision Strategic Group in place. Two Task and Finish Groups are also established with Curriculum and Data as key themes.
- 2.3 In order to inform the next stage in terms of full implementation of the AEP review findings three commissioning and delivery models were developed for consultation by the AEP Strategy Group (APPENDIX 1). The three models encompassed key processes for securing appropriate high quality AEP including; meeting pupil needs, financial arrangements, commissioning, quality assurance, provision access and data sharing. In summary the three models were as follows;

MODEL	CHARACTERISTICS
Model A	•Develop the Pupil Referral Unit (Emslie Morgan Academy) as a central 'HUB' or Centre of Excellence for all Wirral AEP.
	•AEP commissioned centrally on behalf of schools by the 'hub'.
	•Centrally coordinated application of quality assurance standards.
	•Central coordination of transport.
Model B	•Development of four schools partnerships based on geographical location.
	•Schools partnerships responsible for commissioning AEP.
	•Local authority retains responsibility for directly commissioning day 6 provision.
	•Transport arrangements commissioned on a geographical basis by schools partnerships.
	•Schools partnership has a responsibility for quality assuring all AEP.
Model C	•Local authority to devolve some funds to schools cluster groups to develop and deliver AEP.
	•Local authority and schools jointly commission and quality assure AEP provision from a range of providers.
	•Each cluster group would have a local authority representative to support and challenge.

2.4 Responses to the AEP consultation were sought from a broad range of key stakeholders and partners, including all secondary and special school Headteachers, members of the Children's Trust, members of the Standards and Inclusion Strategy Group, appropriate council officers and elected members etc. In summary six responses were received. Four responses indicated the preferred AEP model to be model A, one response indicated Model C and one response abstained from the vote.

2.5 The AEP consultation was also presented to the Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH), 13 January 2015. At that meeting head teachers clearly indicated that Model 'A' was their preferred option.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 In taking forward Model 'A' the next steps will include meeting with the Sefton Education Trust as sponsors for the Emslie Morgan Academy (late April 2015). This meeting will be to discuss, the Sefton Education Trust's role as a provider and commissioner of AEP at Key Stage 3 and 4. Members of the AEP Strategy Group, including two secondary Headteachers and the Local Authority's lead for SEN have been invited to attend the meeting.

3.2 A full analysis and report following the second (March 2015) full termly AEP data collection is to be made available and presented to the AEP Strategy Group, 30 April 2015, and WASH, 5th May 2015. The report is to include a full analysis of the Wirral young people currently participating in AEP, curriculum and types of AEP being accessed.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For the forum to note the next steps in terms of meeting with Emslie Morgan Academy and to report back to the Forum on progress made.

Julia Hassall
Director of Children's Services

Consultation on proposals for a revised Alternative Provision (AP) model for young people aged 11 to 16 in compulsory secondary education

Background

This document provides the background information, national and local concerns and details of the proposals intended to re-shape the Alternative Provision offer in Wirral. We welcome your feedback by answering the question in this document to support us to proceed with the next phase as we implement the recommendations from the recent strategic review.

What is Alternative Provision?

Wirral defines AP as supervised provision that is part of a pupil's regular timetable, away from the main school site and not led by school staff. AP can be used to prevent exclusions, provide an additional curriculum element or to re-engage students in their education. Pupils on an AP programme must receive a full-time timetable overall and English and maths must be an element of their provision.

The Wirral Vision

Following the recent Strategic Review of Alternative Provision in Wirral and its recommendations, we are focussed on developing a continuum of provision that encompasses the following features;

- A commitment to early intervention and reintegration
- An alternative provision offer that is developed by involving schools, learners and their families
- A robust referral and commissioning processes, ensuring effective data collection and information exchange, and developing partnership working
- Linking referral processes with multi agency panels or inclusion forums that provide an overview of a range of local provision and a

mechanism for matching that with needs and prioritizing where necessary (CiC).

- The engagement of schools at all stages of the commissioning and referral process
- A curriculum offer that priorities academic achievement, especially in English and mathematics
- A personalised approach through a range of AP pathways at each Key Stage
- Ensuring that accreditation is meaningful, relevant and transferable to enable young people to move forward successfully into post-16 provision or employment with training

The Current Arrangements

Wirral, like most Local Authorities, has a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). In general PRUs cater for pupils who are permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion. Our local PRU (KS3&4) is Wirral Alternative Schools Programme (WASP) and it was judged by OFSTED as inadequate in 2013 and subsequently is converting to become a sponsored academy. This PRU is registered and funded for 80 places at KS3 and KS4. The sponsor is Sefton Education Trust (SET) and the academy arrangements will commence from January 1st 2015. Both Wirral Council and SET share a commitment to review the admission arrangements from this date.

A range of independent Alternative Providers are active in Wirral and provide a broad range of alternative education at KS3, KS4 and KS5 including an AP Free School. These providers work with the PRU and directly with schools. The majority of these providers are not registered as independent schools so are not inspected or regulated by OFSTED. The range of provision offered is broad however the offer is fragmented and there is limited evidence of pupil achievement.

Wirral Hospitals' School delivers across a range of settings and provides education for pupils with medical needs, pregnant girls and young mums. It is registered and funded for 80 places at KS1-KS4.

In addition there is a Home Tuition service that supports those children who for medical reasons are unable to attend mainstream educational settings and so receive support in the home. The home education service is managed by the Headteacher of the Hospitals' School.

Funding Arrangements

AP is part of High Needs provision and is funded from within the Schools Budget. It is not Council funded.

There are 80 places each at both WASP and Wirral Hospitals School.

The combined cost of this provision at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is £2.5m a year. In addition, home schools will provide additional resources for a number of pupils, this is usually linked to pupil funding.

Wirral Review of Alternative Provision 2014

In order to address the national drivers for change and emerging guidance, Wirral initiated a review of their AP. The review included consulting with a range of stakeholders; schools, special schools, pupil referral unit, pupils & families, LA officers, Wirral Children's Trust and Wirral secondary school governors.

The review recommended the following;

1. The LA to bring together a Strategic Partnership Framework for AP
2. The LA to develop a Commissioning Framework for AP
3. The LA to fulfill its statutory responsibility for tracking pupils
4. The LA to agree an appropriate Quality Assurance Framework
5. The LA to commission separate KS3 and KS4 AP.

To date the progress is;

Wirral Alternative Provision Strategic Group in place. Two Task and Finish Groups are also established with Curriculum and Data as key themes.

Curriculum – a survey of AP was carried out with all high schools. This concluded;

- confusion regarding the purpose of the existing AP offer
- approaches to QA were patchy and inconsistent
- a need for more early intervention programmes
- a need for reintegration/transition support
- a need for bespoke/personalised pathways
- a need for an AP Directory to include local AP offer

Data - A process and data collection tool is in place to collect data on Wirral young people accessing alternative provision. Baseline data on all young people accessing alternative provision was collected in October 2014 and will be updated monthly pending notification from schools and academies. The local authority has a statutory duty to monitor all pupils not in full time education

Background & Context

Following a national review of provision offered by Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and by Alternative Providers (AP) the Department for Education (DfE) published revised regulations. The national review concluded:

PRU and AP provision is subject to unacceptable variations in quality and outcomes for young people;

Too few young people leave PRU and AP provision equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications to enter further education, employment or training with any confidence;

Raising standards will only be achieved by increasing the amount of influence local users, particularly head teachers, have over the direction and management of PRU and AP provision;

Direct funding of alternative provision by the local authority should be replaced by delegated funding in line with other schools.

Subsequent amendments to legislation and published statutory guidance (Alternative Provision – Statutory Guidance for LAs Jan. 2013) based on these conclusions mean that with effect from April 2013, PRU Management Committees will be, for all intents and purposes, governing bodies (although still known as Management Committees) with full delegated powers. As part of this change in status, Management Committees must ensure there is better representation of the communities they serve, and the majority of its members and the schools within it. In practice, this means a membership with the majority being Head teachers in the locality - especially those who regularly use the services of the provision. This strengthens a key principle of the Wirral AP review, which intends to develop high quality locally managed solutions for the delivery of AP.

Local authorities must make arrangements to delegate funding for Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) directly to Management Committees. These new responsibilities of full delegation over the budget and staffing will bring the functions of the new Management Committees in line with the governing bodies of Community schools.

In addition to these amendments to legislation, the statutory guidance published in January 2013 identifies “Good alternative provision” as:

academic attainment on a par with mainstream schools –particularly in English, maths and science;

addressing the specific personal, social and academic needs of students to help them overcome barriers to attainment;

improving pupil motivation and self-confidence; supporting re-integration to mainstream education, FE or employment

The guidance is clear that responsibility for ensuring that any additional provision purchased, such as vocational training meets these criteria rests with the commissioner of the provision. Quality Assurance is the responsibility of the commissioner.

Proposed Wirral AP Models

ALTERNATIVE PROVISION REVIEW CONSULTATION: COMMISSIONING & DELIVERY MODELS

	Financial Arrangements	Meeting Pupil Needs	Commissioning	Quality Assurance	Provision Access	Data sharing	Transport
MODEL 'A'	<p>LA devolves 'top up funding'. PRU accesses EFA planned places budget.</p> <p>Schools commission places from the AP HUB.</p> <p>Alternative Provision Hub (PRU)</p> <p>Externally commissioned and delivered provision</p> <p>Provision directly delivered by the AP HUB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KS3/KS4 Day 6. - short term / preventative (KS2?). - part time / outreach. - Reintegration. - Medical. - Up to GCSE & voc offer from both PRU & APs 	PRU commissions AP to a locally agreed standard and to meet the level of demand for schools to access.	<p>AP HUB SLA agreed with schools.</p> <p>AP HUB led (for direct delivery) –</p> <p>Framework for externally delivered AP provided by LA.</p> <p>Expectation that the AP HUB only uses LA provision that is Quality Assured.</p>	AP HUB led access panel with HTs to discuss / agree placements	<p>Schools provide all AP data to the LA</p> <p>LA strategy group with HTs reps to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Focus on reintegrating</p>	PRU to organise transport on behalf of school. Transport arrangements to be funded by schools.
MODEL 'B'	<p>LA devolves funding to schools partnerships on a formula basis but still commissions day 6 places</p> <p>Birkenhead Schools cluster</p> <p>Wallasey Schools cluster</p> <p>Deeside Schools cluster</p> <p>Special Schools cluster</p> <p>Directly commissioned AP Provision; may include PRU and other providers regulated by the partnership / schools cluster</p>	As above & develop in-reach and out-reach support in localities.	Schools partnerships / lead school commissions AP provision. Provision commissioning based on demand identified through the schools geographically based partnerships.	School partnerships led with some LA input to ensure LA statutory duties are compliant.	School partnerships HT & LA rep.	School partnerships provide all AP data to LA. LA strategy group to monitor and evaluate	Schools partnerships to organise transport on a geographic basis. Transport arrangements to be funded by schools partnerships.
MODEL 'C'	<p>LA devolves some funding to schools partnerships on a formula basis. LA commissions all AP from a range of external providers for schools to buy back. LA also still commissions day 6 places</p> <p>LA directly commissions AP provision; may include PRU and other providers regulated by the LA.</p> <p>Birkenhead Schools cluster</p> <p>Wallasey Schools cluster</p> <p>Deeside Schools cluster</p> <p>Special Schools cluster</p>	As above and to include behaviour support, managed moves, exclusions = 1 AP team.	Both the LA and Schools directly commission AP curriculum	LA officers and school representatives engaged.	LA officers and school representatives on a geographical basis.	LA officers collect data from schools and providers.	Schools to organise transport either collectively as a cluster or individually. Transport arrangements to be funded by schools.

Consultation questions and feedback;

This document has been circulated to head teachers and Chair’s of Governors of high schools, special schools, PRU and Sefton Education Trust. The Children’s Trust members and relevant council officers/teams, including health, police and children’s social care and local elected members will also participate.

Question

Please look at the proposed models and supporting information and indicate which model you prefer;

MODEL REFERENCE	INDICATE PREFERENCE
Model A	
Model B	
Model C	
Other - please provide details.	

Feedback questions;

Wirral is committed to seeking and understanding the views of those whose lives, both personal and professional, will be affected by the outcome of this consultation and would appreciate the expression of those views, with particular regard to the following questions:

1. A revised AP model is right to focus on improving academic outcomes for young people, by ensuring that all have the opportunity to study at least five GCSE subjects including English and Maths.

Do you;

AGREE	DISAGREE
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2. It is essential that young people in alternative provision should experience high quality teaching.

Do you;

AGREE	DISAGREE
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3. Increased local management of PRU and alternative provision will lead to improved standards of learning and attainment.

Do you:

AGREE	DISAGREE
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4. Schools and other agencies should intervene at an earlier time in order to support vulnerable young people who may become hard to place in education or at risk of permanent exclusion.

Do you;

AGREE	DISAGREE
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5. Young people in alternative education should have an agreed personalised pathway that will support their aspirations and

outcomes.

Do you;

AGREE	DISAGREE
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Please return all completed questionnaires to;

Norma Chapman
14-19 Service
Children and Young People's Department
Wirral Council
Birkenhead Town Hall
Hamilton Street
Birkenhead
Wirral, CH41 5BR

Or by email to normachapman@wirral.gov.uk by 20th February 2015

Timescale

This consultation document will be circulated by email in December 2014 and returned by 20th February 2015. Following this the feedback the chosen model will be presented to the Wirral Alternative Provision Strategy Group to progress.

Date	Action
December 2014	AP Consultation document circulated
20 th February 2015	Completed forms returned and collated