

**DONCASTER LOCAL AUTHORITY**

**REVIEW OF PROVISION FOR THE SUPPORT OF PUPILS  
WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH  
DIFFICULTIES (SEMH) (BESD);**

**Interim Report**

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## Introduction

This document aims to provide an interim report on the progress of the review of Doncaster's strategy for supporting children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH) / Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (BESD). As a local authority, Doncaster is required to provide a strategy that sets out arrangements for the education of this vulnerable group. The current local authority strategy has been drafted in response to relevant central Government legislation and guidance, as well as local pressures and priorities within Doncaster. This report is intended to identify the current challenges to and structure of provision with possible considerations for developing future strategy and provision.

The recent "One Doncaster" report recommends increased aspiration and ambition for all learners and that it is clear that a collaborative approach that promotes partnership and sharing of good practice would improve outcomes for children and young people; "change agents and energy creators ...working with all stakeholders must ...make a collective effort to develop a local culture of collaboration and self-confidence" (One Doncaster 2016).

Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act, and more recently, the `Alternative Provision- Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities`, published in January 2013, requires local authorities to arrange suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils, who for illness or other reasons would not receive suitable

education without such provision. Within this statutory framework, Doncaster is committed to improving social inclusion and increasing the capacity of mainstream schools to provide for all children and young people.

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties which can manifest in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may also reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Some children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder, which could also lead to behaviours which challenge and present a barrier to learning.

These descriptors are highlighted in the social, emotional and mental health category of the Code of Practice (DfE,2015) and it is the responsibility of local authorities, all schools, educational providers and support services to actively support the inclusion of children and young people who fall into this group. Behaviour and Discipline in schools, Advice for headteachers and school staff (DfE, January 2016) details further strategies for successfully managing behaviour and including pupils with SEMH (BESD).

The purpose of this interim report is to contribute to the future Doncaster provision that ensures that all children and young people, whose behaviour is preventing them from making progress and/or is inhibiting the progress of others, are appropriately supported. All schools and educational providers are responsible for enabling children and young people to thrive, to make progress and to be included.

As an Authority, there is a strong belief that the key to good behaviour in schools is positive engagement with learning. There are times, for some children however, when additional help is needed to keep them fully engaged. Since it is desirable that children remain as far as possible in their local schools and communities, the

Authority should seek, through its Behaviour Strategy, to establish a framework to guide future developments and improve outcomes.

The success of the approach should be measured using a range of performance indicators and the strategy should recommend that all the data should be shared with and between schools and that it should be used to promote best practice in local behaviour networks and partnerships.

During the last few years significant changes have taken place in the roles of local authorities and schools. It is crucial that schools and the local authority have a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities. Within this context, the local authority is aiming to clarify these roles and to develop provision which meets local need and statutory requirements. This is often best completed within a climate of inclusion and collaboration between all stakeholders involved in improving outcomes for this vulnerable group of children and young people. The current LA role includes the quality assurance of Alternative Provision, placement and education of permanently excluded pupils after 5 days exclusion, statutory processes for SEN and support and monitoring of schools in an Ofsted category which may include behaviour issues. In addition, further support is given with some outreach support and training which is bought in by schools.

## **Context**

Local and national research and analysis shows that more children and young people are suffering from poor emotional, social and mental health, and outcomes for these children are a cause for concern in Doncaster and across the country. National figures suggest around one in four children and young people will experience poor emotional and mental health in childhood, and the incidence of serious problems seems to be growing – e.g. recent rising trends in self-harm or eating disorders. The additional challenges these young people face as they grow to adulthood means that they are more at risk of poor outcomes – for example the proportion achieving

good GCSE results and the proportion of young people who are in education or employment is much lower than their peers. Without effective support these poor outcomes are likely to persist throughout as research shows that young people with SEMH needs are more likely to be at risk of adult unemployment, involvement with the criminal justice system or adult mental illness, e.g. 75% of long term adult mental illness is apparent by the age of 18.

### Physical environment

In physical terms, Doncaster is the largest Metropolitan Borough Council in the United Kingdom, spanning 227 square miles, with 67% of the land being registered as agricultural. It has a population estimated at around 304,185 (ONS mid-year estimates 2014) with more than 85% of people living in urban areas. Doncaster is placed sixth out of 21 local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber in terms of the size of its economy and second highest in the Sheffield City Region (SCR).

### Deprivation

Doncaster is ranked 48 in a list of the most deprived areas in England by the Index of Deprivation 2015 and fourth most deprived area in the Yorkshire and Humber region. This is higher than average. The levels of children living in poverty in Doncaster is higher than national and regional benchmarks with nearly 1 in 4 children under the age of 16 living in poverty (13,500 children, 23.8%).

### School Performance

Doncaster schools are 161 out of 163 for pupils who are in good to outstanding schools (Ofsted Annual Report 2017). In the primary sector 27,043 pupils are educated in 92 schools of which 77.4% are good to outstanding ranking 157 out of 162 authorities. In the secondary sector 17,352 pupils are educated in 16 schools of which 56% are good to outstanding ranking 153 out of 162. This presents the LA and its schools with huge challenges

in providing a high quality education for all pupils and particularly those pupils who exhibit challenges around behaviour and social, emotional and mental health issues.

## **1. Information Analysis**

Information, data sharing and monitoring about children and young people with social, emotional and mental health issues (SEMH) in Doncaster is currently fragmented and not fully informing effective practice. Schools data is generally unable to identify this specific cohort so that capacity to meet needs can be planned and in place. This area is where preventative and proactive approaches can often lead to successful intervention and targeted provision. Schools, both primary and secondary, use different systems to analyse need and to interpret thresholds for intervention. There are behaviour thresholds that inform schools and LA about a child's needs but they are often interpreted and used inconsistently by some establishments. Schools have recently improved their information around SEND but this does not always include accurate and specific identification of SEMH. This often leads to a wide range of children and young people being recommended for extra support, often including specialist off site provision, without first of all accessing appropriate early support. Specialist off site provision lacks capacity and often cannot deliver appropriate provision for the complexity and range of needs.

## **2. Pupil Referral Unit - Levett**

PRU provision is managed through a single school structure on several sites with different phases of pupils. Placement of pupils within PRUs is traditionally for pupils requiring short to medium term, temporary placement at key stages 1 to 3, with the majority of these pupils being reintegrated back into mainstream school. Provision at key stage 4 more often can be until the pupil accesses employment, education or training at the end of the key stage. Placements can be part time or full time. Pupils with EHC plans would not normally be placed in PRUs to meet their long term needs. PRUs normally have transient populations where pupils can be effectively

educated but, at the same time receive more specialist support to enable placement back in mainstream, alternative provision or in specialist provision e.g. special school .

Consultation so far is overwhelmingly of the view that the PRU is trying to meet the needs of children and young people who have widely different issues and difficulties. For example, there are a number of pupils who have been diagnosed along the ASD continuum and these need a different provision to those who might be ADHD or have similar disorders. In addition, there are pupils whose needs are long term and enduring and others who have been placed in the PRU with the aspiration and expectation of a return to mainstream. A large amount of the pupils described also have learning difficulties. The fabric of the upper PRU site is not fit for purpose. The PRU has little spare capacity and therefore with it being full of pupils with different needs it is now in a category of concern within the local authority framework. There is no special school to specifically meet SEMH (EBSD) needs in Doncaster and the out of borough total spend is currently £5.9 million.

### **3. Key stage 4 AP provision**

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

Currently Doncaster Local Authority commission Keys Northbridge Enterprise College which is in the Ofsted category of ‘requires improvement’ for up to 50 places to provide a pathway to students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools for a variety of reasons. Outcomes are improving year on year with over 65% of students in 2015/6 moving onto employment or training.

Feedback from consultation suggests that the AP provision within the authority is not delivering the outcomes that young people on these pathways require. Schools currently commission the Tops Team to co-ordinate and support young people on AP provision. The team is highly successful in engaging these young people but provision on offer is of varied quality.

#### **4. Behaviour Network**

Approaches to behaviour interventions are currently school centric, and often depend on the skills of a particular individual or group of individuals. Quality first teaching remains the key to containing behaviour needs, as with SEN needs. However, the recognised successful network of coordinated support for SEN – SENCO Network, does not have an equal for behaviour support professionals.

By working in partnership on behaviour related issues, rather than in isolation, schools could achieve the benefits of:

- shared resources – physical, financial and people;
- joint commissioning of provision from external suppliers, using existing school resources or additional resources devolved or delegated by the local authority; and
- shared expertise and knowledge of effective practice between schools, for example to help any school within the partnership which has only a ‘satisfactory’ or ‘inadequate’ behaviour judgement to achieve a ‘good’ one.



A coordinated approach and support network is required now across Educational settings and it would provide a long term, sustainable improvement. It would also provide a foundation stone for a Borough wide collaborative Strategic Behaviour Pathway which is the focus of the current Behaviour Review.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, this interim report on the Behaviour Review has outlined the current provision in Doncaster. The process will require both short term and long term solutions if a sustainable and comprehensive system of provision is successfully implemented.

In the short term, the LA needs to consider addressing the immediate commissioning of Key Stage 3 Learning Centre provision and the Key Stage 4 provision for pupils at level 5 of the behaviour thresholds; in addition, the LA may want to create extra capacity to cater for the bulge of pupils not succeeding in mainstream as well as helping mainstream schools to develop their skills and capacity to cater for the different needs of SEMH pupils. The short term option would be to extend the commissioning of these provisions to cover the academic year 2017/18. Also in the short term, the LA may want to consider creating capacity within its current staff and resources to thoroughly plan and discuss all options for the development of a comprehensive plan and way forward. This would allow the LA to make a decision on all provision to be included in a long term commissioning plan to start a new operation at the latest by September 2018. Any long term plan would need to be informed by further consultations with stakeholders including health, social care, parents/carers and children and young people. The LA options for provision extend to continuing with all or part of its current plan although the review has outlined deficiencies in some areas, commissioning of all or part of the resources to schools within the LA or to a Multi Academy Trust and the establishment of a new, planned provision fully or partially managed and run by the LA.