



Doncaster Council

Date: 8 August 2019

To the Chair and Members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

INCLUSION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW- INCLUDING ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION, INCLUSION, ATTENDANCE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS.

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Nuala Fennelly Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, and Schools	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Doncaster currently has, over the last three years and beyond seen significant challenges regarding high numbers of fixed term exclusions, high rates of persistence absence. These challenges have been augmented by historically low performance of SEND support students across the school sector and high numbers of young people who have been educated away from the mainstream sector- in alternative provision, special schools or Elective Home Education.
2. The Inclusion Programme Board oversees a suite of projects aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable young people. These projects include the Behaviour Transformation Programme and the SEND and attendance strategies.
3. All of the above areas have been recently inspected as part of the OFSTED Local Area SEND Inspection and the report has been recently published (Appendix 1) which presents an outline evaluation of the work of the council and other local partners in this area. The inspection report identifies the accuracy of our local self-evaluation and the clarity of our strategy (Appendix 2) in this area as a strength.
4. The above self-evaluation and report identify significant challenges in delivering change in the local area. These challenges include the impact of Multi-Academy Trusts, particularly within our secondary sector, the historical policy for dissemination of the high needs block to support early intervention and the need to build stronger partnership and leadership capacity in our schools.
5. This report will set out a summary of our work in these areas.

EXEMPT REPORT

6. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. To note the work undertaken by the council since September 2018 and the current position in relation to the re-shaping of SEND and behaviour support within the borough and the continuing impact upon provision and outcomes.
8. To continue to monitor the impact of this work as the strategy is being delivered and as further outcomes are published.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

9. The large number of young people who are educated out of mainstream settings (including those educated at home) has a direct impact upon qualifications and the level of skill and expertise within the local workforce. As we equip and fund mainstream schools to meet student needs within their own settings, we will build the diversity, tolerance and capacity of our schools.
10. In addition to absence and exclusions, it is also known that young people who are accessing alternative provision due to their behaviour do not fare well academically and struggle to progress later on in life. Furthermore, due to their limited engagement in learning and the environments they grow up in, they are at a higher risk of engaging in risk taking behaviours/anti-social/criminal activity and potentially could suffer with low self-esteem/resilience/mental health. The development of a continuum of provision that accurately matches curriculum to individual need will allow a significant number of our most vulnerable young people to lead happier and more successful adult lives, thereby reducing the social costs mentioned above.

BACKGROUND

The current challenge around inclusion

11. Doncaster currently has high and increasing numbers of fixed term exclusions and managed moves and high rates of persistence absenteeism. More recently there has also been a sharp rise in the number of permanent exclusions issued by schools and growing demand for alternative provision places (children being educated in settings away from mainstream provision). There is a need to ensure that schools are both supported and challenged so that they are planning effectively to meet the needs of their students.
12. Doncaster's attendance and Persistent Absentee figures have been significantly below National Average in both compulsory phases of education for the last nine year and had worsened in the period leading up to the launch of the initial strategy. The national rank for absence in 2016-2017 was 133 / 151 for primary schools and 150/151 for secondary schools. The Doncaster absence profile features significantly higher rates of longer-term absences from school than the national average and there being a direct correlation between schools with high levels of fixed term exclusions and longer absences of this type.
13. The picture in Doncaster reflects the national trend of growing spending on specialist and out of area provisions for young people with SEND. This has been reflected in a higher than usual number of young people attending alternative provision (and concerns

regarding the historic quality and appropriateness of this provision). Whilst Doncaster has not experienced the funding challenges confronting the majority of L.A.s in administering the high needs block, we are seeing growing pressures in this area. There is an increasing reluctance by mainstream schools to embrace and plan for the needs of young people with SEND.

14. Whilst outcomes for young people with EHCPs are in line with national averages, the outcomes (including progress, exclusions, attainment, attendance and attainment) for SEND support (whilst improving) have been below national averages for a number of years.
15. Whilst the proportion of young people who educated at home continues to grow nationally, the rate of growth is also rapid in Doncaster. There are currently 634 young people educated at home in Doncaster. The vast majority of these are in the secondary sector (421) and there are nearly even numbers of males and females. Young people with vulnerabilities are overrepresented in these figures.

UPDATE ON STRATEGY IN KEY AREAS:

16. Attendance:

What have we done?

We developed our Attendance strategy in autumn 2017. The key actions were:

- We wrote to leaders and governors from 64 schools who were identified as having long-term concerns around attendance and identified them as schools requiring support. Our officers then worked with leaders in these schools in order to audit leadership practice and to build a whole school approach.
- We held attendance networks and professional development events.
- Attendance and behaviour teams have worked together to identify schools requiring further support to reduce the impact of exclusions upon attendance and to co-develop strategy in relation to reducing exclusions. The L.A. has developed new processes for analysing attendance data alongside other outcomes in order to identify schools for intervention and further action.
- A borough-wide attendance campaign during key points of 2018-2019 year. The L.A. also conducted a review of its own practice during this period. Impact:

17. Impact:

2017-2018:

Overall absence has stabilised at both phases of education during Autumn and spring of the last academic year. This is in the context of a national trend where absence is rising. Overall absence at primary remains 0.2% behind the National Average, but as absence has increased overall nationally and regionally, this has led to Doncaster improving its national ranking from 133 to 131st and ranking compared to 11 statistical neighbours from 10th to 9th.

Our secondary absence rates have remained at 6.6% whilst the national average has worsened to 5.4% and the regional average has grown to 0.2%. This supports an improvement of two places in the national rankings from 150/151 to 148/151.

Whilst P.A. (persistent absenteeism) is 18.1% at secondary level and has grown (from 17.8%), there has been a steeper increase nationally, regionally and amongst our statistical neighbours which has led to our national rank shifting from 149 to 145. The rate of fixed term exclusions has continued to grow in the secondary sector during this period, whilst it reduced in primary.

The 64 'focus' schools were identified due to their absence being a concern over the last three academic years. 31 out of the 64 'focus' schools made immediate improvements in their overall attendance figure over the first two terms of the intervention.

In our 'focus' primaries absence grew at a slower rate than in our other schools and the gap between the focus schools and the national average reduced from 0.8% to 0.7%. In relation to persistent absenteeism (P.A) the gap with the national average also dropped, from 4.5% last year to 3.8% this year. Persistent absenteeism (P.A.) dropped by 0.4% across our secondary schools, with the gap with national averages reducing from 8.9% to 7.7%.

18. 2018- 2019

There has been a notable improvement in outcomes compared to previous years in both absence and persistent absence across the borough during Autumn 2018. Compared to the same period for the previous year our overall absence rates improved by 0.7% in secondary and 0.1% in primary in schools. P.A. reduced from 18% to 15% in secondary and reduced by 1% in primary.

Update on Elective Home Education:

19. The Local Authority employs two officers who have a role in supporting families who offer home education and monitoring the delivery of education in order to ensure that children have appropriate education- although there are legal constraints on our powers to monitor and enforce. We spend £30k more than average (£57k) in this area.
20. The EHE Officers prioritise contact where there are vulnerabilities identified and will work closely with other professionals involved with the family. EHE Officers attend CP, CIN, TAC, TAF, strategy meetings.
21. The L.A. has a responsibility to monitor young people who are 'missing' from a school roll or are not receiving suitable education. This cohort are monitored by the Attendance team- a weekly report is published based on a variety of forms of data. This includes young people who are awaiting school places through the admissions processes.
22. Of the 634 children in the EHE cohort, 95 of these pupils are GRT, which is 3 times more than any other Yorkshire local authority. 232 have some SEN needs including 26 with EHCPs and 3 known to CAMHS. The number of referrals have increased over the last year, with 274 (Primary 107, Secondary 167) compared to 305 in total last year. Since September 45 of these have returned to school. There has been substantial growth in this population nationally, growing 32%. There has been much debate regarding extending legislative powers for local authorities in regard to intervening where there are concerns about quality of education and safety, but there are still no obligations for parents to co-operate with councils in these situations. Central government has announced that, in their view, there are sufficient safeguards in the system and are requiring L.A.s to maintain a register of young people in EHE.
23. The most common reasons given for electing to go into home education in Doncaster are traveller culture, philosophy and dissatisfaction with school.

Our Strategic response:

24. We have:

- Developed a new EHE protocol, which all schools have signed up to- effective from

Autumn 2019.

- This will define expectations of schools via a checklist.
- It will also allow an intervention/ cooling off period.
- Developed a mechanism for monitoring schools. All data regarding children coming off-roll is routinely shared with OFSTED and is raised in challenge meetings with academies. From Autumn 2019 we will provide this information to Lead Inspectors whenever an inspection is announced.

Update on behaviour

25. Activity against the three year plan since September 2018 is outlined below. Whilst there is no recent data available, we are aware that outcomes will remain challenging for the time being. Our absence figures for Autumn 2018 demonstrate that there is a reducing rate of fixed term exclusions at secondary level- a partial consequence of our initial phase of work with schools around the Inclusion charter and behaviour networks. However, there has been a growth of permanent exclusions at both phases, but particularly at secondary level. Much of our work in this area has aimed to achieve collective responsibility around permanent exclusions and developing a system-wide strategy for reducing these patterns. Our activity, described below by tiers of intervention, is set out below:

26. Tier One:

We have developed a borough wide 'collective responsibility' system through our work with the Opportunity Area. This work covers all of the areas stipulated in the original plan.

Schools have signed an Inclusion Charter which commits schools to:

- Principles regarding prioritising Doncaster children and families and reducing exclusions.
- Creating a plan for reducing exclusions and committing to attendance at all networks and strategic meetings.
- Co-producing future strategy regarding high needs block and key partnership activity such as Fair Access and other decision-making protocols.
- Developing a protocol between school for preventing Elective Home Education.

27. Head teachers in primary and secondary schools have conducted two 'Inclusion Summit' meetings in order to agree strategy regarding collective responsibility for processes, outcomes and funding around inclusion. Key areas of our SEND strategy are now being developed by head teacher groups and other partners, with a view to building a single school wide governance structure for Autumn term 2019. The key areas of this work including developing proposals for devolving behaviour and SEN funds, improving decision making and bringing specialist provision closer to schools and localities. This work will be brought together in September as part of the borough wide Transition conference for Head teachers.

28. Tier Two:

- The Primary Learning Centre closed in July 2018. The Team has now become the Behaviour Outreach Service (BOS), following a retraining programme in Autumn 2018 so that they have a full set of skills and knowledge in preventative and therapeutic support in order to support schools. The secondary behaviour support element comes online in September 2019. This will be accompanied by a transition team who will work across phase to develop strategic and operational consistency across the borough.

29. Tier Three:

- Learning Centres have been de-commissioned.
- The Pupil Referral Unit is being re-purposed in order to ensure a clear role in supporting specialist support and reintegration packages, with increased secondary school capacity.
- Pilot specialist AP- knife crime- Summer 2019.
- Big Picture Learning is now open and working with an initial cohort of 26 pupils.
- AP Framework with 32 providers launched in March 2019.

30. Tier Four:

- Provision is being developed within timeframe of original plan, with 10 SEMH spaces being available during 2019-202 as part of the new profile of our PRU.

31. Next Steps - to July 2019:

Tier 1	New decision making process in place for September 2019, with powers expanding for Summer 2020. Head teachers publish 3-year plan re devolved funding including definitions of SLA and accountability. This will involve schools taking responsibility for all aspects of permanent exclusion, thereby obviating the need for such exclusions. Introducing a new protocol for scrutinising and auditing inclusion practice within schools. Developing a transition calendar and contract for all schools.
Tier 2	Review use of special school outreach and align with new council outreach team. Building a learning and cognition outreach offer.
Tier 3	Define capital needs for future PRU provision at KS3. Extend range of providers on AP framework Use AP framework in order to ensure greater integration of students at KS4.
Tier 4	Review of existing specialist provision- planned changes over 3 years, with a view to increasing mainstream capacity and developing more local provision. Develop timeline for commissioning of future SEMH provision as part of the above based upon analysis of OOA and special school cohort.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION:

32. Not applicable. Update for information.

33. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are 	<p>This strategy will significantly impact upon the ability of our young people to be able to access fulfilling work, developing the skills and resilience of some of our most vulnerable young people.</p>

	<p>supported to flourish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inward Investment 	
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>The provision of high quality learning environments for young people will support their engagement in cultural and sporting activities within educational settings and beyond.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Young people will be more able to access education as they benefit from increasingly personalised experiences in all learning environments. Teachers and school leaders will benefit from the increases in skills and understanding that this strategy will deliver. This will, in turn, improve outcomes for children and secure an increase in the number of 'good' schools. We will diminish the difference between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children and young people as we improve educational provision and develop increasingly effective models of early help and prevention for young people from less affluent backgrounds</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>The plan will deliver an increasingly effective early intervention for vulnerable children and young people through strong assessment and placement in provisions that will be able to build their social skills and resilience.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money 	<p>We will engage all of our key stakeholders in managing the system more effectively through 'collective responsibility'. Curriculum within all of our settings will be increasingly focused upon building self-reliance in our young people.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

34. Key risks are:

- Not maintaining effective partnerships with schools.
- Schools failing to agree on principles and actions around a devolved model.
- More schools in the borough introduce steeply escalating behaviour policies.
- Demand for alternative provision places continues to grow despite our work.
- Funds not being available to extend and re-frame our EHE offer or to extend the attendance strategy.
- Not delivering change on time.

35. These will be mitigated by:

- Regular communication and transparency at all possible opportunities with leaders from across the school system through our continued engagement via the OA and the Inclusion Summit.
- Developing an improved graduated provision offer which clarified expectations at all points and transports greater funding to schools for early intervention on the basis of need.
- Sound financial planning around DSG / HNB in order to ensure that sufficient funds are devoted to preventative work.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS HMP 23.07.19

36. The provision of SEMH services are delivered within a legal framework set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. Local authority responsibilities include identifying and assessing a child's special educational needs and working with parents, carers and schools to make sure these needs are met. Section 33 of the Children and Families 2014 states that the local authority must secure that the EHC plan provides for the child or young person to be educated in a maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution, unless that is incompatible with: (a) the wishes of the child's parent or the young person, or (b) the provision of efficient education for others.

37. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs (*section 7, Education Act 1996 (EA 1996)*). LAs must make arrangements to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (*section 436(A), Education Act 1996*).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SB 26.07.19

38. The financial implications of many of the Services outlined within this report are funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is a ring fenced grant, provided by the DfE for these purposes, with carry forward of any balance to the

following year. It is the LA's responsibility to manage the High Needs Block of DSG within budget, with accountability to School Forum on how it manages and makes arrangement for provision.

39. The DSG High Needs Block medium term financial plan is currently being reviewed, with the overall position across the 3 year period from 2019/20 - 2021/22, taking account of changes included within this report to be presented to Schools Forum in September 19.

40. The medium term financial plan will show:

- High Needs DSG revenue grant funding that Doncaster is expected to receive across the 3 year period, increasing as a result of the DfE's National Funding Formula consultation (less deductions for places funded in Academies which DfE pass the funding on for);
- Current expenditure projections, including costs of Big Picture learning and the commissioning of new specialist provision for SEMH referenced in this report;
- A summary of the additional costs and savings expected as a result of the changes identified within this report: and,
- The overall balance of funding remaining for each year.

41. There are a number of risks and assumptions associated with the costs and savings within the overall budget that will require careful monitoring throughout the period to ensure that the High Needs Block DSG can be managed within the overall budget available. Should there be any significant changes to any of the figures these will need to be reviewed and if necessary the High Needs Block budget overall reconsidered & revised in order to ensure the budget remains balanced.

42. Should there be any capital requirements for future PRU provision at KS3 as detailed in this report this will need to be reported separately.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials KW Date 26/07/2019]

43. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials ET Date 29/07/19]

44. There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. ICT must always be involved via the technology governance model where technology-based procurements, developments or enhancements are required. This ensures all information is safe and secure and the use of technology is maximised providing best value.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CW Date 23/07/19]

45. Learning outcomes and health outcomes are intrinsically linked. Evidence shows that education, training and employment are key socio-economic factors in determining health status (Marmot, 2010). The inclusion programme described is aimed particularly at supporting groups who may suffer disadvantage in educational attainment such as children with SEND and minority groups such as GRT. Programmes that aim to improve accessibility and attendance to education, and reduce the gap in educational attainment are likely to impact positively on reducing long-term health inequalities in Doncaster.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials MO date 19/07/19]

46. The equality of expectation for all children, including those that are disadvantaged, is a core

value within all aspects of the work undertaken in education settings and underpins the support and challenge provided by officers. This strategy aims to ensure that our provision offers genuine equality of opportunity to young people, respecting the key themes of Chapter 6 of the SEND code of Practice (2014) and the presumption that young people should be educated within their locality/ community.

47. The Local Authority has established an Organisation of Learning Provision Strategy which is managed by the Organisation of Learning Provision Board. One of the key outcomes of the Strategy is to ensure there are sufficient places to meet the needs of learners with individual needs and those who require additional support in order to access an appropriate curriculum. It is therefore important that the future demand for such provision and for meeting Behaviour Needs arising from demographic changes are given full consideration as part of the Behaviour Review. This will include undertaking a review of the current and potential accommodation options. Where options require additional accommodation or disposal of premises these will be considered by the Local Authority's Assets Board with any necessary Key Decisions brought to Cabinet as necessary.

CONSULTATION:

48. Consultation with schools March- April 2018, June 2018.
SEND strategy and decision making changes September - December 2019

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doncaster LA SEND Report
Doncaster SEND Strategy

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