



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: Thursday, 30th November, 2017

Subject: Exclusions, Alternative Provision and Elective Home Education

1 Purpose of the Note

1.1 To provide an overview of:

- The number of permanent exclusions that have been implemented by Coventry Schools over the last three academic years;
- The post exclusion process, leading to either an alternative school offer or alternative provision. This includes recent service developments which were implemented in September 2017, as an outcome of the Education re-design process;
- Elective Home Education (EHE), setting out the numbers of families who have made a decision to EHE and the reason, highlighting those that may have chosen that route to avoid a permanent exclusion.

2 Recommendations

2.1 The Education and Children's Service Scrutiny Board are recommended to:

- 1) Consider and note the content of the report
- 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Information/Background

3.1 The rules governing exclusions from schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, are set out in s52 of the Education Act 2002. This is underpinned by Statutory Guidance "Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units – A guide for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion" (September 2012, updated September 2017). In summary, the guidance states that the head teacher of a publicly funded school, may exclude a pupil from the school for a fixed period or permanently

3.2 A fixed term exclusion is for a specific period of time. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). In exceptional cases, usually where further evidence has come to light, a fixed period exclusion may be extended or converted to a permanent exclusion.

3.3 Pupils whose lunchtime behaviour is disruptive may be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime period. An exclusion that takes place over a lunchtime would be counted as half a school day. The legal requirements relating to exclusion, such as the head teacher's duty to notify parents, apply in all cases.

3.4 An 'informal' exclusion involves a child being sent off the school premises, without this being officially recorded as an exclusion (e.g. where a child is sent home for a 'cooling off' period). It is unlawful for a child to be informally excluded from school, even where the child's parent/s or carer/s agree to the exclusion

- 3.5 A permanent exclusion involves the child being removed from the school roll. However, the head teacher must not remove a pupil's name from the school Admissions Register until the outcome of the Independent Review Panel (if this route is followed by parents).
- 3.6 The DfE reports that 6,685 permanent exclusions were recorded in 2015-16, up from 5,785 the previous year. This represents an increase of 13%.
- 3.7 However, the Statutory Guidance is clear that exclusion should be a last resort and that early intervention should be used to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour. Coventry schools invest heavily in social, emotional and behaviour support. Consequently, the level of permanent exclusions in the City, whilst rising remains relatively low.

4 Primary Exclusions and Alternative Provision

- 4.1 Table 1 sets out the number of primary school permanent exclusions in Coventry, over the last three academic years, alongside the recorded reasons.

Primary Reason for Exclusion	Academic Year			Total
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Bullying - Racism		1		1
Damage		2	1	3
Other	1	1	2	4
Challenging behaviour	1	3	2	6
Persistent violation of school rules			1	1
Disobedience		1		1
Persistent Disruptive Behaviour	1	3	10	14
Physical assault against an adult	1	4	4	9
Physical Assault against an adult		1		1
Physical assault against a pupil			2	2
Aggressive behaviour against an Adult		1	1	2
Threatening behaviour against a pupil – carrying an offensive weapon		1		1
Total	4	18	23	45

- 4.2 Of the 45 excluded pupils, it is noted that only four were girls. Thirty three pupils were of white British origin and 9 had an identified SEN. Eleven (25%) of pupils were excluded during their final year in primary school (NCY6). In 2016/17, it took an average of 19 days to secure an alternative school placement.

4.3 Provision

- 4.4 The vast majority of primary age pupils excluded from school, are offered an alternative mainstream primary school. In support, the Local Authority offer a specialist teaching, support and advice service to schools for social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The SEMH Team, which is part of the Traded SEND Support Service offer, deliver Team Teach Training across the City, this is a nationally accredited de-escalation behaviour management intervention. In addition, schools offer their pupils a range of highly specialist services including: nurture groups; the Thrive programme' language programmes; play therapy; psychology and counselling.
- 4.5 Consequently, the LA does not maintain a pupil referral unit provision for primary age children. Instead, in partnership with schools the LA delivers an intensive support programme known as the KEYS, which is targeted at children who are at risk of exclusion. The service is delivered from two designated bases within mainstream schools; Parkgate

Primary School and Frederick Bird Primary School. The 4 day a week programme is delivered by specialist teachers and support staff. It focuses on the child's individual needs, providing assessment, emotional support and intervention. Teachers offer an academic curriculum to enable children to fill gaps in learning. Children return to their registered school on Fridays.

- 4.6 In recognition of the number of permanently excluded pupils in the 2016/17 academic year, the KEYS programme was extended to KEYS+ from September 2017. The programme is delivered from a base at Gosford Park Primary School. The primary focus is assessment, with the aim of determining the child's individual needs and support requirements, before reintegration to a mainstream or special school begins. This intervention is designed to enhance the child's chance of success. When appropriate, children identified as requiring special school provision for SEMH, would be placed at Woodfield School. Woodfield is a special school for primary age pupils with SEMH. The school is rated 'good' by OfSTED.

5 Secondary Exclusions and Alternative Provision

- 5.1 Table 2 sets out the number of secondary school permanent exclusions in Coventry, over the last three academic years, alongside the recorded reasons

Primary Reason for Exclusion	Academic Year			
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
Damage	1			1
Drug and alcohol related	7	5	5	17
Other	4	1	9	14
Persistent disruptive behaviour	6	11	12	29
Physical assault against a pupil		4	9	13
Physical assault against an adult	3	3	1	7
Racist abuse		1		1
Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult	1	2	6	9
Total	22	27	42	91

- 5.2 Secondary schools across the City invest in a variety of internal behaviour support interventions, including specialist assessment, teaching, mentors and counselling. In addition, many schools have bespoke provision that enables young people to work in smaller focused groups organised through an internal unit. Key stage 4 students can benefit from a range of extended pathways including work experience and vocational training. Secondary schools have recently reviewed the managed move arrangements as part of a fair access protocol. It is intended that this process will facilitate fresh starts for those that might benefit from a change of school.
- 5.3 In addition, the LA has commissioned three school-based SEMH provisions at Barrs Hill, Lyng Hall and Whitley Academy. These places are used mainly for pupils preparing to re-integrate back into mainstream provision.
- 5.4 The LA maintains a Pupil Referral Unit (Coventry Extended Learning Centre), to secure an appropriate education for secondary age students who have been permanently excluded from school. The provision can provide assessment, intervention and reintegration and offer a full academic curriculum. Some students may benefit from personalised learning pathways that include vocational training and work experience. CELC operates from three sites
- Wyken (Key Stage 3 pupils)

- The Link (Key Stage 4 pupils)
 - Swanswell (Key Stage 4 pupils).
- 5.5 Depending on the most appropriate pathway for each individual student, full time suitable education is delivered onsite or through a combination of onsite and off-site work-related learning opportunities e.g. vocational courses delivered at a college or accredited training provider
- 5.6 The LA's Work Related Learning Team, work on behalf of schools to commission, coordinate and quality assure, off-site work-related learning provision for 13-19 year-old learners, particularly those who are most at risk of becoming disengaged from learning and 'not in education employment or training' (NEET). This provision complements and extends the education programme delivered by the responsible school. The team also work in close partnership with CELC to secure appropriate off-site courses for permanently excluded pupils. The service aims to positively impact upon participation, levels of progress and achievement and promote the social inclusion of all 13-19 year olds.
- 5.7 The LA also maintains a pupil referral unit for pupils admitted to the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW). The Hospital Education centre provides education for pupils aged 4-16 on three paediatric wards (Wards 14-16), who are well enough to access learning. The majority of children are short-term in-patients with one-off stays, of less than 3 days. Teaching is conducted mostly at bedsides.
- 5.8 A home teaching service is offered as part of 'Hospital Education', to make provision for pupils who are unable to attend school for medical reasons including physical or mental illness. The level of service is responsive to the child's specific medical needs. The service aims to provide a continuation of education until the child is well enough to return to school.

6 Elective Home Education (EHE)

6.1 The Legal Framework

6.2 Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, imposes a duty on the local authority to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children of compulsory school age in the authority's area; who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Local Authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education and do not have the power to meet with or directly speak to the child. However, if the Council believes a child is not receiving a suitable education or is at risk, separate powers are invoked to enable an appropriate intervention.

6.3 It should be noted that parents are not required to register their child for EHE, or to seek the local authority's permission or approval. Consequently, it is recognised nationally, that LA EHE registers do not include the whole EHE population.

6.4 Coventry City Council currently has a positive and respectful relationship with the EHE community and offers a supportive EHE service, delivered by a specialist teacher. The service routinely contacts all families on an annual basis and is responsive to any requests for information, advice and support. EHE meetings are held either within the home or at an agreed venue, subject to parental agreement.

6.5 Current Analysis of EHE register

6.6 As at November 2017, 192 children are registered with the LA as EHE.

- 82% (157 children) of families, are actively engaged with the LA
- 4% (7 children), have an Education, Health and Care Plan and are subject to statutory review

- 14% (28 children, 20 families), are currently refusing EHE visits or meetings
 - 2 (5 children, within 2 families), were referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) during 2017/18
- 6.7 During the 2017/18 academic year, 41 children ceased EHE: 34 returned to mainstream schooling; 3 were placed in specialist SEN provision; 4 left the area.
- 6.8 **Parental Reasons for EHE**
- 6.9 Parents are asked to categorise the primary reason they have chosen to EHE against a prescribed set of categories, at the point of registration.
- 6.10 The following table identifies that the majority of parents in Coventry, elect to home educate on philosophical grounds:

Table 3

Reason	Number of children	Percentage of cohort
Philosophical/religious/cultural	61	32%
Permanently excluded	2	<1%
SEN needs not met by school	10	5%
Dissatisfaction with School Environment	32	17%
Bullying	21	11%
Health/Medical	11	6%
Not preferred school	8	4%
New to area	6	3%
Mental Health/School Refuser/Avoiding fines	9	5%
Other	32	17%
Total	192	100%

- 6.11 Only two families have confirmed that they chose EHE following a permanent exclusion. Five more children are currently home-educated as a result of issues relating to permanent exclusion, including at risk of exclusion.
- 6.12 Summary of key issues in relation to EHE
- There has been an increase in the number of YR7 children being EHE, because parents have been unable to secure a place, at the secondary school of their choice.
 - The majority of parents that have chosen to EHE for reasons other than 'Philosophical/religious/cultural' have indicated that they would send their children to school, if they had confidence that the provision would meet their child's needs. In the vast majority of these cases, relationships between parent and school had broken down.
 - Integration with other services that can offer support, has led to an increasing number of children remaining in school following parental contact with the EHE team. For example, the parent of a child from a traveller family contacted the EHE Co-ordinator as she was receiving fines for non-attendance and initially wanted to EHE. The EHE team worked with the Ethnic Minority Support Service, who acted as an advocate for the parent.
 - It is recognised that there are many unidentified children in Coventry, who are EHE but have chosen not to inform the Local Authority, which is their right. The EHE team aim to build relationships with the EHE community and schools, to ensure that parents and carers feel confident in coming forward to receive support. In the meantime, the EHE team work continuously with all families that are known to the Local Authority to

encourage engagement, build links and thereby do all that can reasonably be done, to ensure EHE children receive a suitable education.

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