

<b>CHILDREN &amp; LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
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## **Report of the Director of Children's Services**

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### **ALTERNATIVE PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN PETERBOROUGH**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

- Inform Scrutiny Panel of the day-to-day work of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) and the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- Discuss and debate with Scrutiny members current issues and challenges regarding the PRS
- Present future plans for improving pupil outcomes including attainment and attendance

Over the last 18 months, government requirements and aspirations for alternative provision have been subject to significant revision, reflected in a White Paper entitled Back on Track (May, 2008).

The theme of the White Paper is that PRUs should be an instrument for Local Authorities (LAs) in order to make early interventions for young people in difficulties. This has always been the practice within Peterborough's PRS and 18 months ago the PRS was identified by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), in an Ofsted best practice survey, for good outreach work and good outcomes for students. The 2006 Ofsted inspection – the first made of the combined service rather than individual key stage units – evaluated the service as "good with outstanding features".

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Understand current and future issues relating to the PRS
- Understand student outcomes for the PRS and how the service plans to improve attainment and attendance in the future
- Contribute to the ongoing debate about the future of the PRS and its relationship with schools and key partners

### **3. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

The work of the PRS impacts directly on vulnerable groups and contributes to key corporate goals as reflected in the (Sustainable) Community Strategy, Corporate Strategy and the Children and Young People Plan. All Every Child Matters outcomes are influenced by the PRS but there are particular responsibilities for Enjoy and Achieve and Achieve Economic Wellbeing. The PRS can also impact on the level of offending by students and aspects of community safety. It is accepted that excluded students are much more likely than the general population to commit offences.

### **4. BACKGROUND.**

The White Paper examines the link between exclusion from school and offending:

**“Permanent exclusion from school for bad behaviour is a *defining moment for youth crime prevention*. For some of those excluded, what happens next will either accelerate them along the path to entrenched criminality or allow them to reassess and reshape their futures.” (Back on Track, p.12)**

Young people in the LA who are in care are seven times more likely than the general school-age population to have been permanently excluded from school and, consequently, to have been placed on the roll of a PRU or other form of alternative provision. This statistic underlines the key role of PRUs in terms of tackling chronic social exclusion.

The national data records that:

**Only 1% of 15 year olds in PRUs achieve 5 good GCSE grades; 11.3% achieved 5 passes of any standard and 82.1% gained 1 or more qualification.**

Peterborough’s Pupil Referral Service (PRS) is a comprehensive out-of-school service that brings together a range of functions and education provision into a single organisation. The work of the PRS is conducted at a number of different sites, all of which have certain specialisms depending on the characteristics and age of students.

Central to the work of the PRS is the concept of **dual-registration**. Students will be shared, for a defined period of time, between various PRS centres and their home school, in order to address particular needs. For some students, dual registration may take the form of in-school support, for others there may be the need for part-time attendance at one of the PRS centres. Dual-registration programmes are usually organised into six week blocks to enable pupils to return to full-time schooling as quickly as possible. The principal focus of the PRS is to support schools and pupils who present behavioural challenges but the PRS also supports students who have long or short-term interruptions in their education for a wide range of reasons.

**The following is a list of the PRS centres and activities:**

**A. The Riverside Centre (within Nene Valley School) and also St. George’s Centre (Dogthorpe Road/Lawn Avenue):**

This centre is for primary school pupils excluded from their schools or requiring specialist support to continue in their education and their attendance. The aim is to reintegrate pupils back into the right long-term placement. The success of this centre has contributed to Peterborough's low rate of primary permanent exclusion in (two pupils per year over the last three academic years). As many as 90 pupils may be in receipt of some kind of intervention at any one time but no more than 12 will be full-time, long-term pupils. For most students, interventions are part-time and strictly focused on a particular difficulty in school. The primary work is currently divided between two centres to differentiate between short-term support and quick reintegration back into mainstream school and longer-term support and core education programmes.

#### **B. Fletton Student Support Centre (Fletton High Street):**

This is a similar programme to the primary model but for students aged 11-14 years. There have been significant gains in attendance for almost all students. Gains in average reading ages, within the intensive programmes, have been commented upon in successive inspections. All students who returned to their schools within the last two academic years had successful re-integrations.

For pupils in KS2 and KS3, all planning is centred on transition to an appropriate long-term placement. The curriculum that students follow allows rapid movement into another school.

#### **C. The Honeyhill Centre (Honeyhill, Paston):**

This centre supports students aged 14-16. For many older students, reintegration to another placement is not realistic and for a large proportion of students on roll, this is a two year placement, similar to a special school programme. The Honeyhill Centre has the broadest range of students in Key Stage 4 and most have been permanently excluded from their schools. In the last academic year, 37% had statements of special educational need. The curriculum encompasses conventional accreditation and extensive opportunities for work experience and college placement.

#### **D. Peterborough LEAP (Learning, Education and Achievement Project) - Perkins' Engines, Vicarage Farm Road:**

This is a specialist Year 11 programme for pupils who are at risk of exclusion. The project is marketed to all Peterborough secondary schools who pay more than half of the cost of each placement. The LEAP project is located in the Perkins' Engines factory site and remains a very innovative programme in national terms. It has a distinctive vocational component with a well-developed work experience programme. LEAP achieves exceptional results with regards to achievement for students previously failing in their home schools. The project also achieves high percentages of students moving into employment, education and training, comparable to many local mainstream schools.

The Peterborough LEAP programme provides a very real introduction to the world of work, being located on an industrial site and providing very comprehensive work experience. With successive business partners – first Transco and now Perkins' Engines (Caterpillar) – this has allowed a very distinctive second chance to students under-achieving in their schools or being at significant risk of permanent exclusion. In 2007

Perkins' Engines achieved a prestigious Business in the Community Award for their support to this programme.

Attendance at the Peterborough LEAP programme achieved a remarkable average of 93% last year – exceptionally high for any type of alternative provision and comparable to good mainstream school achievement. This statistic is especially significant when placed in context. Of the 42 students placed on the programmes by their schools, and for whom accurate data was supplied, the average attendance was 78%. However, the attendance figure was in respect of attendance on a reduced timetable, sometimes severely so, for more than half the students. One student, with exceptional circumstances, came to the full-time programme from having attended only two sessions of individual tuition each week.

The best performance was that of a female student who spent much of the year in hostel accommodation and faced many other personal challenges. She gained 11 GCSE equivalent passes and was nominated for a number of awards for her personal achievement. She was referred to the programme by her school because she was deemed to be at exceptionally high risk of being permanently excluded and, despite her considerable personal potential, it was considered that her chances of success without referral were very poor.

Both Honeyhill and LEAP, offer a full range of accreditation opportunities to students. For example, it is particularly unusual to offer specialist science teaching up to GCSE level and this is not present in any other unit regionally.

#### **E. Teachers within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) - Neuro-developmental Service, Peterborough District Hospital:**

It is rare nationally for LAs to have a programme with such a high level of joint working between CAMHS and Children's Services and this reflects the current drive to integrated multi-disciplinary services for young people. The aim of this programme is to support young people, their schools and families in sustaining good levels of achievement in their school placement. Interventions vary greatly in character but both NHS and Ofsted evaluations consider that work with CAMHS is very effective in supporting young people.

#### **F. Home Teaching Programme:**

Many young people taught on this programme have very high levels of complex need. The programmes always establish clear goals for the teaching – chiefly towards reintegrating students to an appropriate longer term placement. The involvement of Community Paediatricians is high and has enabled pupil planning to be particularly detailed and well-informed. Service development during the last two years has ensured that the checking of referrals is exceptionally rigorous.

#### **G. Hospital Ward Teaching (Children's Wards, Peterborough District Hospital):**

The average hospital stay for children in Peterborough is only 1.4 days, therefore interventions are, typically, brief, highly-focused liaisons designed to ensure a successful transition back to school.

**H. Individual programmes for students:** At the heart of the PRS are personalised education plans for every student. Information gained by the previous school allows personalised programmes to be established and individual goals to be set and monitored. The over-riding goal of reducing exclusion is modified in line with pupils' ages and particular needs. Parents and carers receive weekly reports on the performance of their children, reflecting the urgency to achieve swift movement for students.

## 5. KEY ISSUES

The key issue nationally and locally for alternative provision is how to maximise the extent to which pupils are maintained in schools or returned to the right long-term placement. The Government's White Paper on alternative provision (May, 2008) was very clear:

**"The White Paper emphasises the key role for schools in identifying children with challenging behaviour early on, and being able to access the right support before they reach the point of permanent exclusion. As part of this, schools should be able to make more use of alternative provision as preventative early intervention." (Back on Track, p.2)**

Later in the report, this point is reinforced:

**"We believe that alternative provision should be used much more and more effectively as an early intervention and preventative measure, so avoiding the need to resort to permanent exclusion. Schools should be able to turn to local Pupil Referral Units...for specialist help in tackling pupils' personal, behavioural and learning needs. This early and appropriate intervention may mean that *more children come into contact with alternative provision, but for less time and without the need for exclusion.*" (Back on Track, p.15)**

The challenge for the PRS is to achieve the right balance in supporting schools and individual students and deploying resources to outreach work, intervening early and preventing problems, rather than maintaining students in out of school, long-term and costly placements. The PRS carries the important statutory obligation to provide full-time provision (25 hours per week) for all permanently excluded students and to do this within a very tight timetable, since the enhanced requirements, initiated in September 2007, require full-time provision from the sixth day of exclusion. In addition, various protocols give priorities and requirements for instant application of full-time provision in respect of groups deemed exceptionally vulnerable e.g. young offenders.

Partner schools are very clear that they value the availability of early intervention above anything else and it is considered a priority to respond to this demand.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

The work of the PRS impacts strongly on wards identified as being particularly economically deprived but the breadth of the work means that provision and support has to be city-wide. Currently, the PRS are considering whether the geographical location of

centres might need to change, given plans for the development of housing across the city, particularly Paston Reserve and Great Haddon.

The White Paper supports cluster working and the development of behaviour partnerships and the PRS will need to maximise the benefits of locality working on early intervention and preventative activities.

The PRS is currently in the midst of a significant whole service review, evaluating whether the balance in staffing is accurately matched to service requirements and student outcomes. The service is changing the way that members of staff work, intervening across Key Stages more freely, and this requires revised job descriptions and strong Human Resources support.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

There is wide representation on the Service Management Committee (SMC) including headteachers, although it would be helpful to have more member involvement with this governance group.

Consultation with parents also suggests a greater emphasis on early intervention is highly desirable.

## **8. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Scrutiny are informed and understand the day-to-day work of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) and the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)
- Opportunities for discussion and debate on current issues and challenges regarding the PRS
- Opportunities to present future plans for improving pupil outcomes including attainment and attendance

## **9. NEXT STEPS**

The PRS are expecting an Ofsted Inspection during this current academic year. A full report of the 2007/8 academic and attendance outcomes of the PRS need to be presented at a future Scrutiny meeting alongside key pre-inspection documentation e.g. the Self-Evaluation Form.

## **10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

White Paper entitled Back on Track (May, 2008).

## **11. APPENDICES - None**