Local Members Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee - Wednesday 13 November 2019

Alternative Education Provision

Recommendation

I recommend that:

a. The Committee is provided with an overview of alternative education provision commissioned for Staffordshire's vulnerable learners.

Report of Cllr Philip White, Cabinet Member for Learning and Employability

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

1. The committee is being asked to note the contents of this report, the progress in this area and to comment upon the Council's approach.

Report

Background

2. Section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996 requires Local Authorities to make arrangements for the provision of suitable full-time education for those children and young people who are unable to access school by reason of exclusions or illness. The Local Authority meets this statutory duty through the commission of Alternative Education Provision.

3. The statutory definition of Education provided as Alternative Provision (AP) is:

   a. Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education;
   b. Education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed-period exclusion; and
   c. Pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

4. There are a number of challenges facing the Local Authority at present which include:

   a. Pressures upon the High Needs Block with a projected overspend in 2019-2020 of approximately £4.6m.
   b. Current specialist providers, including Staffordshire's six short stay schools knowns as Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) are full.

c. Lack of good quality and Ofsted registered alternative education provision.
d. Continual high number of pupils being permanently excluded.
e. A number of pupils identified each month who are without education provision.
f. A growing number of pupils who are accessing alternative education but do not have an Ofsted registered school base and known as Education Other Than At School (EOTAS).
g. Increasing complexity of pupil need.

Funding

5. The AP High Needs Block (HNB) budget allocation for 2019-20 is £6,431,917, this is 8.1% of Staffordshire's total HNB and is forecast to be £0.8m overspent this year. 77% of the AP HNB expenditure is allocated to our PRUs through planned places and top-up funding for pupils who have been permanently excluded. 13% of the expenditure is allocated to provide alternative education provision to pupils who do not have a school roll (EOTAS). The remaining 10% of expenditure is through the primary and secondary District Inclusion Partnerships (DIPs) on a funding request basis linked to outcomes of reducing permanent and fixed term exclusions and improving attendance.

6. Where pupils are permanently excluded, under the School and Early Years Finance (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2018, funding should flow in-year from the school that has excluded the pupil to the provision that takes responsibility for the pupil. In the majority of cases this will be the Local Authority and therefore over the course of a financial year, approximately £500k is charged to schools who have permanently excluded a pupil and this income is used to supplement the cost of commissioning AP.

7. To support and encourage mainstream schools in meeting the needs of Key Stage 3 pupils following a permanent exclusion, the Local Authority offers HNB funding from the AP Budget of £5,000 for a period of one year. This funding is triggered at the point the pupil is placed on the single roll of the mainstream school and only remains with the mainstream school whilst the pupil is retained on their roll during the following twelve-month period. This funding will further develop inclusivity by building confidence and capacity of our mainstream schools and will support the SEND and Inclusion Transformation agenda and improve capacity within our PRUs. See Appendix 1

Permanent Exclusions

8. In 2018-19, there were 185 permanent exclusions in Staffordshire (unvalidated data). This is 4 fewer than the previous year. See Appendix 2

9. Staffordshire secondary schools excluded 163 pupils in 2018/19 slightly more than the previous year. The Cannock Chase, East Staffs and Newcastle district have the highest number of exclusions for secondary age pupils in 2018/19. Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the highest recorded reason for permanent exclusions in 2018/19 for secondary age pupils.

10. Staffordshire primary school have excluded 22 pupils in 2018/19. This is fewer than the 36 recorded in the previous year. The Cannock Chase and Stafford districts have the highest number of exclusions and persistent disruptive behaviour remains the reason most used by schools for permanent exclusions in 2018/19.

Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) / Short Stay Schools (SSS)

11. The Local Authority's provision for children and young people permanently excluded from school includes 6 short-stay schools or PRUs. The PRUs are governed and inspected as a school but are not required to deliver a full curriculum. This is because a PRU is not expected to provide long term provision but rather to offer opportunities for children and young people to access specialist support linked to a reintegration program back or onto an appropriate setting – a "revolving door".

12. Most pupils admitted to our PRUs have been permanently excluded and there is a PRU Admission Pathway document which sets out the categories of pupils who are eligible for admission. In addition there is a document that sets out the Local Authority's funding of our PRUs and both of these documents are accessible from the Staffordshire Local Offer and are referenced in Appendix 3 and 4.

13. The PRUs in Staffordshire include:

PRU/SSS	**Status**	**District**	**Current Ofsted Rating & Last Inspection Date**	**Planned Places as at September 2019**	
				Key Stage 3 & 4	**Key Stage 1 & 2**
The Hollies	Maintained	Stafford and South Staffs	Serious Weakness July 2018	60	
Chaselea	Sponsor led Academy	Cannock	Not Recorded (previously Special Measures)	46	
Kettlebrook	Maintained	Tamworth	Good Oct 2018	55	
Burton	Maintained	East Staffs	Good July 2018	51	
The Cedars	Maintained	Newcastle and Moorlands	Good Feb 2019	65	
The Bridge & Little Bridge	Maintained	Lichfield	Good June 2019	50	
		Lichfield & Cannock			18
			TOTAL:	**327**	**18**

14. Historically, very few pupils after entering a KS3/4 PRU return to a mainstream education and therefore remain receiving their education at the PRU until the end of Year 11. The high number of permanent exclusions from schools across

Staffordshire has limited the PRUs ability to support schools in a preventative way as the number of single roll students at our PRUs from the census returns exceeded 70% of their population during 2018/19 academic year but during the course of the year this ranged from 56% to 91% in some PRUs.

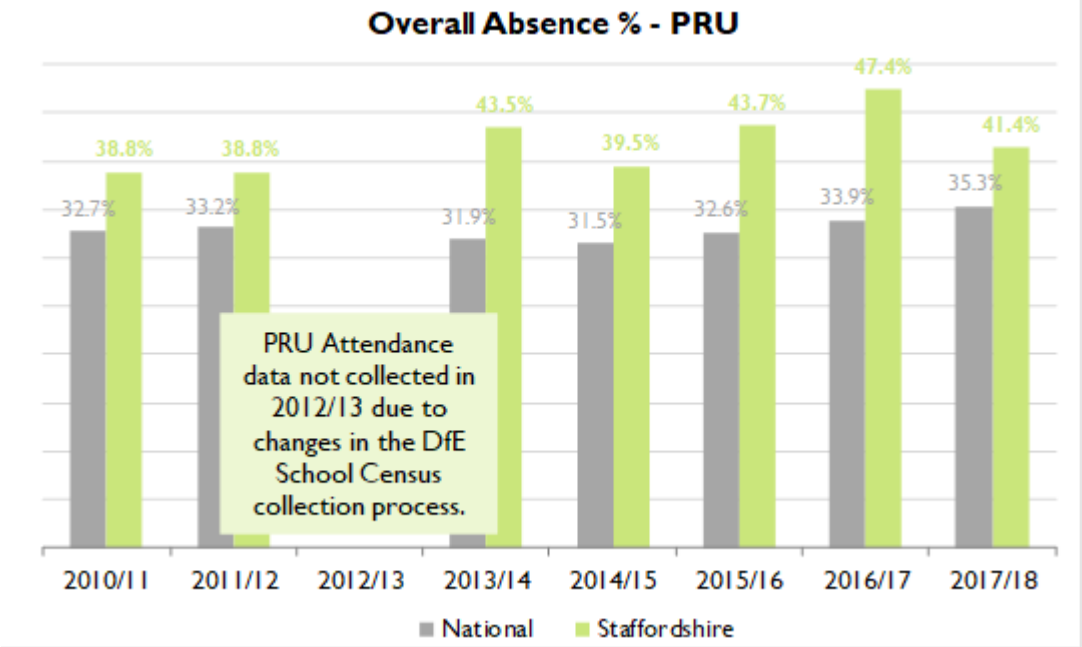
15. The PRUS have reported an increased number of pupils who demonstrate extremely complex learning or behaviour needs, which have been unmet by mainstream schools. As a result, the PRUs have initiated the Education Health and Care Plan Assessment. This highlights that some schools do not utilise the SEND pathway but focusing upon the behaviour pathway, resulting in increased permanent exclusion.

16. Below is a summary of the last three years termly school census returns from the 6 PRUs on their key stage 3 and 4 pupils on roll with an average number of pupils across each of the years. Whilst the overall number of pupils accessing their education from a PRU has declined 11% over the three years, there has been a 24% increase of pupils on the single roll of the PRU on compared to those accessing the PRU as a short-term intervention placement.

Year	Census	Sole or Main Reg at PRU	Subsidiary Registration (main registration elsewhere)	Other	Grand Total
2016/17	Oct	124	110	38	272
	Jan	156	122	48	326
	May	187	132	54	373
	Average	156	121	47	324
2017/18	Oct	154	99	24	277
	Jan	165	103	44	312
	May	189	124	46	359
	Average	169	109	38	316
2018/19	Oct	163	84	2	249
	Jan	193	102	1	296
	May	225	94	1	320
	Average	194	93	1	288

17. PRUs have to offer a balanced, broad and appropriate curriculum and therefore offer GCSEs in English, English Literature, Maths, Science, Art, Physical Education and Personal and Social Development including Promoting British Values in Schools. In addition, they offer functional skills in literacy and numeracy. The long-term goals of the PRUs are to enable pupils to achieve high standards, as is expected in mainstream educational settings at KS3 & KS4 and to encourage and support their personal development and prepare them for adult life. Historically most of the pupils who, on leaving the PRU at the end of Y11, go onto education, employment and training.

18. Attendance for pupils in our PRUs has historically been low however there is a continuing trend of improvement. The Staffordshire/national gap is now 6.1 percentage points (pp).



Enhanced Mainstream Schools

19. In order to support mainstream schools in meeting the needs of pupils through an early intervention offer, the Local Authority has been working in partnership with schools in developing enhanced mainstream provision. We will review the impact of these developments over the next 12 months and provide further information of their impact to the PSSC.

Alternative Provision Dynamic Purchasing System (AP DPS)

20. Since September 2018, the Local Authority has operated an Alternative Provision (AP) Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to ensure that all AP, including tuition, commissioned by the Local Authority is fit for purpose; has undergone the necessary checks e.g. DBS and safer recruitment, can demonstrate its ability and experience to meet the needs of vulnerable children, meets procurement regulations and provides the LA with value for money.

21. We currently have 27 Providers on the DPS offering a range of alternative provision opportunities such as tuition; activity based AP; vocational based AP and less formal options such as forest school and sporting activities. We have Providers that offer their service nationally so the area a young person is placed in is not a barrier to securing AP for Staffordshire pupils. All AP Providers can be viewed via the Local Offer pages and those who meet our compliance standards are indicated via a Staffordshire Knot symbol on the website

    https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0.

22. The AP DPS is continually developing and growing so that over time Staffordshire will have a diverse group of Providers able to meet the individual needs and offer creative solutions to support young people in Staffordshire.

Alternative Provision Panel (APP)

23. From January 2019 the Local Authority established a weekly meeting of representatives across the Vulnerable Learners Service called the Alternative Provision Panel (APP). PRU headteachers attend on a rotational basis and there is an open invite to representatives from schools and academies.

24. The purpose of the APP is to provide a level of scrutiny and problem solving to the allocation and ongoing provision for young people who have been either permanently excluded or require alternative education provision commissioned by the LA. The APP also considers Fair Access Protocol (FAP) cases and monitors and reviews the Local Authority's FAP.

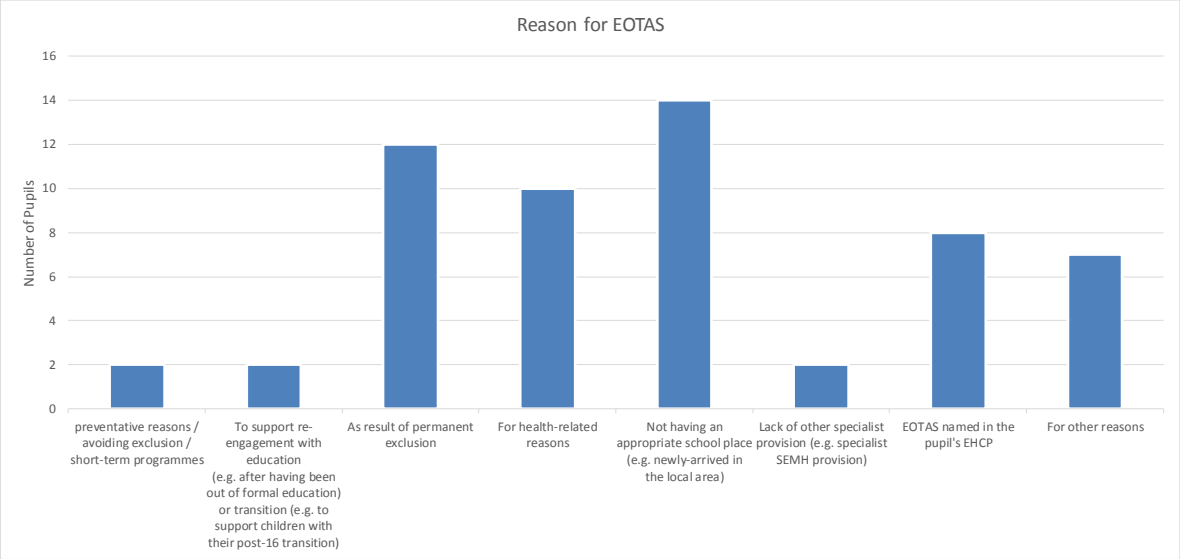
25. The APP ensure that appropriate checks are in place to evidence the young people are properly safeguarded and reviewed.

Education Other than at School (EOTAS)

26. Pupils who do not have a school roll but where the Local Authority have commissioned alternative education are recorded as EOTAS.

27. Over the 2018-19 academic year over 150 pupils at some point, accessed their education through the commission of alternative education. At the end of September 2019 there were 58 pupils across Staffordshire accessing AP. 59% of the pupils are secondary age with 24% primary and 17% post 16. All EOTAS pupils are managed and reviewed through APP (see paragraphs 23 and 25).

28. The reasons for the pupils accessing their education through alternative provision is detailed below:



Community Impact

29. This report provides an overview of Alternative Education Provision commissioned by the Local Authority for children and young people and is not proposing a change to any County Council policy or service. As such a full assessment of community impact is not relevant.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 Funding Mainstream Inclusion of Key Stage 3 Permanently Excluded Pupils Principles

Appendix 2 2018/19 Academic Year Permanent Exclusions (Full Year) - All Schools - Unvalidated Data

Appendix 3 Admission Pathway to a Staffordshire Short Stay School (SSS) / Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

Appendix 4 The STAFFORDSHIRE Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) High Needs Top-up Assessment Framework ELEMENT 3: Top up funding "TRIG-8"

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