

Alternative Provision – Practice resource matrix

Context

Following an initial scoping exercise to gather information about Alternative Provision across the North West, an Alternative Provision event was held in September 2023. The session was held to start initial discussion around Alternative Provision and looked at best practice and development within the North West.

From this initial session, for the practice enquiry phase of the work, a Deep Dive was carried out into 8 local authorities' AP using the Deep Dive Areas of Interest template as a self-assessment document, with 6 authorities participating in further conversation about their provision.

The Deep Dive findings have formed the basis for the development of this document which presents the requirements for AP provision within the Area SEND inspection, the challenges local areas face, and where practice has been identified regionally.

Area of interest	Area SEND Inspection focus	Challenges facing local areas	Practice examples
Strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent and content of strategic plans for AP, including how partners ensure that they have the right type, quantity and range of AP to meet CYP's needs. • Different agencies' involvement in strategic planning. • How plans are communicated with local 	<p>Variance in local authorities as to whether their current focus is strategic or operational.</p> <p>A number of authorities identified that the voice of children, young people, and families, needs to be strengthened within both strategic and operational practice. A strategy is an appropriate place to lay out how voice of the child is incorporated into all stages of</p>	<p>LAs developing an AP Strategy that considers current and future needs.</p> <p>Strategic planning following evaluation of the quality and range of alternative providers across the area.</p> <p>Collation of information and monitoring to ensure that school-based alternative provision is best placed to meet needs.</p> <p>Regional good practice:</p> <p><u>Wigan:</u> Market engagement to attract independent providers, supported them to source a building, and places filled fast (26 places). Wigan also have developed a document for AP</p>

	<p>area partners, parents and carers and CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How local area partners check progress against strategic plans. • How local area partners work together to use data to improve outcomes for CYP. 	<p>the AP journey.</p> <p>Some areas are focussing on parts of the AP journey in the absence of an overarching strategy including needs assessment and future forecasting to inform market management and funding allocation.</p> <p>Some areas include AP within broader SEND strategies; where incorporated into SEND strategy, consideration for how strategy considers AP cohorts outside of SEND should be made explicit.</p>	<p>provision arrangements, advice and guidance.</p> <p><u>Salford</u>: Consult with potential providers; market engagement opportunities. Salford has an Education and Inclusion Strategy.</p> <p><u>Blackburn with Darwen</u>: Triangulation meeting held termly by LA to look at attendance, exclusions/suspensions, SEND Support service referrals (especially SEMH team), MHST referrals, and training uptake.</p> <p><u>Cheshire East</u> updated SEND strategy to include AP.</p> <p><u>Halton</u> have an AP strategy in development.</p> <p><u>Lancashire, Sefton</u> and <u>Trafford</u> have AP strategies.</p> <p><u>Blackpool</u> has an Education Improvement Plan.</p> <p><u>Oldham</u> has a SEND and Inclusion Strategy.</p>
<p>Commissioning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How AP placement decisions are made, including the factors that influence commissioners to commission split placements or AP that is unregistered or out of area; and decisions about which roll CYP in AP are on. • How commissioners assure the quality, safety 	<p>Sufficiency of places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - limited number of registered providers - local registered provision operating at capacity - lack of choice in registered provision - high cost one-to-one and bespoke provision - insufficient provision for primary-aged pupils - lack of clarity in AP funding streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA has robust oversight of AP commissioned by schools. - Places are commissioned for CYP based on a personalised programme of support rather than 'one-size-fits-all' AP setting for all pupils. - Places may be commissioned by schools, through LA, or jointly commissioned by different local area partners. Where a list of approved providers is present and shared with all parties this offers improved oversight of placements. - Market engagement to attract providers to meet local need, with evidence of forecasting of need to satisfy providers of

	<p>and suitability of AP placements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the LA is aware of AP commissioning happening outside its direct control, including commissioning by schools and multi-academy trusts, and sub-contracting by alternative providers. • The extent to which arrangements for AP in practice reflect local strategies. • How widely unregistered AP is used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unregistered provision offering a lack of qualified teaching staff, unable to offer GCSEs, or adequately measure progress and achievement - lack of suitable AP within the locality of the young person AP which meets specific needs – e.g., anxiety or SEN which for some means they are unable to travel or mix with others - willingness of providers to register, secure premises and employ staff due to uncertainty regarding future need and consistency of funding. - many AP settings e.g. PRUs are at capacity with permanently excluded pupils resulting in reduced availability for interventions supporting pupils at risk of exclusion and those who require short term intervention i.e. SEMH, EBSA, medical needs. <p>Sharing of existing framework or AP provider directories is not always happening between LAs and schools.</p>	<p>future demand.</p> <p>Regional good practice:</p> <p><u>Cheshire East</u>: Weekly meetings with AP providers to discuss permanently excluded pupils and which provision would best meet need - focus on moving away from competition between providers and focussing on outcomes rather than occupancy. Ambition to include schools in this discussion.</p> <p>Approved provider lists are in place in <u>Bolton, Salford, Trafford</u> and <u>Warrington</u>. Approved provider lists are used in <u>Manchester, Westmorland and Furness</u>, and <u>Bury</u>.</p> <p><u>Cheshire East</u> and <u>Trafford</u> use internal directories.</p> <p>A number of authorities including <u>Blackpool</u> and <u>Cheshire East</u> are hosting provider/market engagement events to shape and influence the local AP market.</p> <p>In some areas there are frameworks and directories but these are not, in all cases, shared or accessed by schools.</p>
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<p>Inclusion to prevent need for AP</p>		<p>Increasing complexity of needs of children and young people within mainstream settings. Increasing pressure on specialist places.</p> <p>Resource/ financial capacity within schools to develop/ implement additional or alternative strategies in schools.</p>	<p>Data is used to create a strategic overview of patterns of non-attendance which would allow intervention work to be delivered at the most effective times.</p> <p>Early intervention for CYP at risk of requiring AP e.g. mentoring models, therapeutic services within schools, and resource bases.</p> <p>Where the LA is working closely with school leaders to promote school staff training for inclusive practice.</p> <p>Where parents/ carers are offered support for challenges that their CYP may be facing with school attendance, this increases opportunities for co-operation with schools to help the CYP.</p> <p>Regional good practice:</p> <p><u>Manchester:</u> Using a mentoring model in schools to intervene early. Rewriting Emotionally based school non-attendance toolkit based on newer research. Also taking part in a part-time AP pilot.</p> <p><u>Halton:</u> Developing resource base support to schools. Multi-agency Team Around the School visit secondary schools weekly to discuss those most at risk from PEX and EBSA.</p>
<p>Monitoring and oversight/ Quality assurance</p>	<p>• Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for CYP receiving AP, including unregistered AP; and when CYP attend multiple</p>	<p>Lack of QA Framework.</p> <p>Workforce sufficiency challenges around completing the QA visits.</p>	<p>Leaders have established robust arrangements to check on the suitability of commissioned alternative provision and out-of-area placements.</p> <p>AP settings are routinely quality assured to ensure CYP placed</p>

	<p>settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability for completion of placements. • Oversight of CYP moving into and out of AP regularly. • Oversight arrangements for out-of-area and dual-registered placements. • Support for CYP when they transition into and out of AP, mainstream and specialist provision. • Support for CYP when transitioning to adulthood, including support provided to transition to and sustain their post-16 placements. • Transition arrangements for CYP attending out-of-area placements and/or who are dual registered. 	<p>Lack of clarity around who holds responsibility for QA.</p> <p>Lack of LA oversight of QA, where QA is completed by schools.</p> <p>Lack of information sharing systems and procedures for when there are concerns around the quality/ safeguarding within a setting, with particular concert re children attending out of borough AP.</p>	<p>there are safeguarded.</p> <p>LAs have an oversight of all AP settings commissioned by schools.</p> <p>There is a shared record of the QA for AP, whether QA is completed by LA/ schools/ other commissioners.</p> <p>Regional good practice:</p> <p><u>Warrington</u>: Have seconded an Education Officer for 2 days/week to complete QA on all known AP settings, and to ensure oversight of all AP providers being commissioned by schools.</p> <p><u>Westmorland and Furness</u> has developed a QA visit report template and QA framework. A LIS Officer maintains oversight of AP through regular contact with schools, services and AP providers. The LIS Officer carries out QA visits with all known AP providers which is followed up with an annual focus visit.</p> <p>Quality assurance is carried out in <u>Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Halton, Trafford, Westmorland and Furness</u> and <u>Wigan</u>.</p>
<p>Pupils in settings, transition, and enabling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How local area partners know whether CYP's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely 	<p>Information sharing – reporting and timescale of attendance and progress reporting for children</p>	<p>AP is viewed as an intervention and not a destination, with successful reintegration into mainstream where possible.</p> <p>Pupils' attendance data is reported in a timely manner, ideally</p>

<p>factors</p>	<p>and effective way in AP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How local area partners know whether CYP are receiving the right help at the right time in AP. • How local area partners enable CYP in AP to be well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes. • Where AP is effectively meeting or not meeting health, care and education needs. 	<p>accessing AP.</p> <p>Where attendance reporting is termly/ half-termly, this only allows retrospective identification of attendance concerns and gaps which may have safeguarding implications.</p> <p>Lack of sufficiency of placements offering accredited courses.</p>	<p>daily,</p> <p>Access to accredited qualifications and functional skills courses.</p> <p>Presence of child/ parent/carers' voice included in decisions at point of referral, throughout review processes and for re-integration.</p> <p>Progress checks, during and after the Alternative Provision programme to monitor and evaluate the impact of the provision – maintaining links/ oversight by school or LA commissioners.</p> <p>Regional good practice:</p> <p><u>Manchester:</u> Use of Iris Adapt software to track pupils and attendance (APs, schools, LA have access)</p> <p><u>Salford:</u> LA Officers coordinate and manage placements. Year 11 leavers' destinations are tracked for 2 years.</p> <p><u>Blackpool:</u> Distribute an online survey for CYP and families about their experience of AP at the end of placements.</p> <p><u>Blackburn with Darwen:</u> New Reintegration protocol (for PEX students) to be introduced in Spring term 2024.</p> <p>Review meetings held half-termly with mainstream schools for pupils who are on dual roll to discuss progress (academically & towards their individual targets).</p> <p>Dual roll placements reviewed at 6 and 12 weeks.</p> <p>Half termly meetings held between PRU's SENCO and SEND SEO to discuss pupils who have been on longer term placements and next steps.</p>
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