

MEETING:	SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE:	2 MARCH 2011
TITLE OF REPORT:	MEETING THE REQUIREMENT FOR 25 HOURS PRU PROVISION
REPORT BY:	Assistant Director: Improvement and Inclusion and Head of Additional Needs

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To conclude the deliberations undertaken to date regarding the statutory requirements of 25 hour PRU provision.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT:

- a) Schools Forum acknowledges the considerations already given to the requirement for 25 hour PRU provision and the cost implications for the current resource.
- b) Schools Forum supports the recommendation of HASH (2nd Feb 2011) and the option selected for funding BESD PRU provision as of April 1st 2011.
- c) Schools Forum supports the principle that DSG will provide the balance of funding during 2011/12 during the transition phase of this charging scheme.
- d) Schools Forum endorses the principle that the same level of funding (as in recommendation (b)) should follow a pupil to their new school if they are permanently excluded and are admitted to a different Herefordshire school or are in receipt of pupils through the managed moves programme and that;
- e) Current funding of £129,500 provided for medical tuition to be maintained at current level.

BESD Provision

- This paper forms a supplement to the papers presented in July 2010 and January 2011 to the Schools Forum. Forum members were asked to consider a range of models to fund the requirement to fund the statutory 25 hours of provision.
- The amount required to fund these additional hours for PRU pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties is estimated to be £156k.
- A recent meeting of HASH on 2nd Feb 2011 agreed that that the following was the preferred option to fund the £156k for BESD needs:

There would be a charge to secondary schools of £3,000 per PRU place each year, from April 2011, in order to fund the legal requirement to provide pupils at Pupil Referral Units with 25 hours of education. This would apply to new entrants from that date and would be proportionate to the remainder of the academic year.

The following points from the July 2010 paper remain pertinent to the discussion.

- There has been a requirement to offer pupils at Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) 25 hours of educational provision with effect from 1st September 2010 (Education and Inspections Act 2006). This applies to students admitted as the result of an exclusion or those unable to attend school on medical grounds (Children, Schools and Families Act 2010).
- Demand for the services of the PRUs varies considerably from school to school (See Appendix A to the July 2010 paper). It is therefore considered appropriate to seek support for the additional resource from the heaviest users. This would give a balance between support for the PRUs from all schools through DSG and a 'top up' in proportion to actual use.
- Herefordshire does not currently offer PRU intervention places at KS4. This is seen as a gap in the continuum of provision. Resource will also need to be identified by secondary schools if this is a service that is required.

Medical Provision

- The current level of funding allocated will support the 25hour delivery required within this area.

Alternative Options

Should the recommendations on the first page of this report not be supported, the following options could be considered:

1. A reduction in the number of PRU places available within the system. There would be a

risk that the places would be filled early in the academic year with the potential for further alternatives being needed to be found later in the financial year.

2. To commission the additional provision from one of the school-based intervention centres or other alternative provider using one of the funding options above.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 8 The reasons given in the July 2010 document remain relevant.

Introduction and Background

- 9 The background given in the July 2010 and January 2011 Schools Forum papers remain relevant.

Key Considerations

The following considerations given in the July 2010 Schools Forum paper remain relevant:

- 10 The number of permanent exclusions was reduced from 23 pupils in 2006/7 to 17 pupils in 2007/8 and has remained at 18 pupils since then.
- 11 If the level of permanent exclusion remains at this level, £156,000 would be required to provide the 25 hours of education and to maintain the current number of places. The calculations for this were presented to the February Schools Forum (p. 51 of the papers).
- 12 If the recommendations are followed, income from the charging would build up over 2 years to cover the required shortfall. See paragraph 21.
- 13 Permanently excluded pupils who are found a place at an alternative secondary school following admission to the PRU or via the 'managed moves' programme would have the funding transferred on to the new school if recommendation (f) is agreed.
- 14 Historically, there has been considerable variation in the numbers of PRU places required by different schools (see Appendix A of the July 2010 Schools Forum paper). This proposal strikes a balance between support for the PRU system from overall school funding via DSG and charging related to usage as suggested in this paper.
- 15 There should be an incentive to seek off-site intervention places before considering permanent exclusion. The intervention places have been successful in KS3 with 22 pupils returning to school this year following intervention at the Aconbury Centre. It is thought that this would also be successful in Yr10 for some young people and a number of secondary schools have indicated support for this approach. The use of these intervention places must follow extensive attempts by the school to provide successful intervention within the school. Again, the resource must be found to fund this intervention work. It is therefore suggested that only a proportionate charge equivalent to £3,000 for the full year would be charged. It would be anticipated that intervention places might consist of part school and part PRU provision or a short block of full-time intervention work at the PRU as negotiated between school and PRU. Should the intervention place prove not to be successful and the pupil ultimately needs a permanent PRU place, the amount paid for the intervention work would be taken off the annual charge.

- 16 The evidence of successful use of virtual learning environments (VLE) for excluded pupils is limited. Although it can contribute to an overall package of support, experience has shown that the nature of the difficulties encountered by PRU students usually means that such packages are of limited value. VLE packages do offer potential for older students with medical needs. A typical proven VLE package costs approximately £5,000 per annum per pupil place including set-up.
- 17 Alternative work-based packages can be used successfully with excluded students (for example as used by the Arrow Group at Brookfield Special School). However, this is not necessarily a cheaper option than students working on the premises of a PRU. In the longer term, this might provide the potential to reduce the physical space required and might allow a reduction in premises costs. This should therefore be explored as part of the overall Behaviour and Attendance Strategy.
- 18 It is too soon to fully evaluate the impact that the School-based Intervention Centres will have on the level of exclusions. Early anecdotal evidence is positive.

Community Impact

- 19 The considerations given in the July 2010 and Jan 2011 Schools Forum papers remain relevant.

Financial Implications

- 20 The implications given in the July 2010 and Jan 2011 Schools Forum papers remain relevant.
- 21 Since the recommendations do not apply retrospectively to those that already have a PRU place, the proposal will result in a build up in funding over approximately 2 years in order to fully achieve the required amount to cover the additional hours of provision. There would be a need to estimate of the projected shortfall for 2011/12 and 2012/13 and to cover this through DSG. Initial indications are that in 2011/12 26 PRU places would be charged for. (18 permanent exclusions and 8 places would be required without permanent exclusion). This would result in £78k of charges with a shortfall of £78k. In 2012/13, the number of CYP charged for would be doubled and the £156k would be covered completely.

Legal Implications

- 22 As stated in the Schools Forum paper of July 2010, the recommendations in this paper will allow the LA to meet the statutory requirement to offer pupils at Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) 25 hours of provision with effect from 1st September 2010. This applies to students admitted as the result of a permanent exclusion or on medical grounds placed in PRUs.

Risk Management

- 23 As stated in the Schools Forum paper of July 2010, there is a risk that the level of permanent exclusion or medical need is lower than predicted and that too many staff are taken on as a result. Careful use of flexible contracts can help to mitigate this.

Consultees

PRU Headteachers
PRU Review group including:
Relevant LA Officers
Head teachers at HASH
Head of Brookfield Special School and Specialist College

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Children & Young People's Directorate Leadership Team – RADAR - Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions June 2010
School-based Intervention Project – Herefordshire 2009-11
Herefordshire Schools Forum Tuesday 23 February 2010 Agenda Reports Pack
Herefordshire Schools Forum Tuesday 9th July 2010 Agenda Reports Pack
Herefordshire Schools Forum Tuesday 31st January 2011 Agenda Reports Pack
Government White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' (DfE;2010) Chapter 3