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## **BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To report the findings and recommendations of the Behaviour Support Task and Finish Review Group to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.

### **Background**

2. At the meeting of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee held on 5th September 2005, it was agreed to establish a Task and Finish Review Group to examine behavioural issues in school children and young people, and the behavioural support systems available within the Borough.
3. This report summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes adopted and the subsequent recommendations of the Group.

### **Membership of the Task and Finish Review Group**

4. The following members of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee comprised the membership of the Task and Finish Review Group:

Councillor J. B. Armstrong  
Councillor V. Copeland  
Councillor R. Francis  
Councillor D. C. Long

### **Terms of Reference**

5. The initial aim of the Review was to gain an overview of the behavioural issues in school children and young people and the behavioural support systems available, and to add value to the Pupil Support Service by increasing awareness of the support available. This could hopefully be further developed by the Children's Services Department, where officers and stakeholders can work together to provide early intervention to reduce permanent exclusions.
6. In order to achieve this, the Task and Finish Review Group determined the following terms of reference:
  - (a) To seek clarification of what support is available to resolve children's behavioural problems in relation to resources, people, structures and finance;
  - (b) To obtain information on the size of the problem in relative terms, and the categories and national statistics;

- (c) To consider indicators for early intervention.

## Methods of Investigation

7. The Task and Finish Review Group met on six occasions between 10th October 2005 and 16th August 2006, and held discussions during those meetings with Officers from the Children's Services Department; the Head Teacher of Hummersknott School and Language College; Officers from the Youth Offending Service, and representatives from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). **Appendix 1** reflects the complete notes of these meetings.
8. As part of the Review, the Task and Finish Review Group also visited the following venues on the 7th November 2005:
  - (a) EOTAS facilities at Central House, Gladstone Street, Darlington;
  - (b) The Pupil Referral Unit at McMullen House;
  - (c) The Old Eastbourne Nursery at Belgrave Street, Darlington.

## Findings

9. As the investigation into Behaviour Support has progressed a number of developments have been implemented which have resolved some of the issues highlighted. The following information is that which was collected at the time of discussion, and reflects the views of those interviewed, and, where appropriate, any updated information is added accordingly.
10. **Pupil Support Team:** The total budget allocated to Behaviour Support Services is £200,000 per annum. This pays for 4 Teaching Staff, 2 Teaching Assistants and 2 Peer Mentors.
11. School exclusions can be made after one-off incidents, even when there have been no previous behavioural problems, or after a series of incidents. One-off incidents of unacceptable behaviour may be caused by external pressures, such as mental illness in the family, domestic abuse or a family break up. The Pupil Support Team have been working with Schools to try and take steps to address problems before exclusions occur.
12. There are several types of exclusion. These are:
  - (a) Lunch Time Exclusion – a pupil is excluded from the school premises during the lunchtime period. The pupil is expected to return to the school to resume afternoon lessons.
  - (b) Fixed Term Exclusion - last for a specific number of school days – there cannot be more than 45 in a school year.
  - (c) Permanent Exclusion - means that a child may not be allowed to go back to the school again unless he/she is reinstated by the Pupil Discipline Committee or an Independent Appeals Panel.

13. The Group were unclear as to the overall benefits of Lunchtime exclusions.
14. Pupil exclusions from school have risen in Darlington, and fixed term exclusions are frequent. **Appendix 2** shows the exclusion rates within the Borough for the year 2004/05 and 2005/06, and the numbers of pupils that have been successfully reintegrated.
15. Unfortunately not all parents wish to engage with a school in order to resolve issues of poor, or anti-social, behaviour. Parenting Contracts are a formal agreement between parents and schools intended to improve pupils' behaviour. Parenting Contracts can be tailored to a particular situation and Parenting Officers, and the Education Welfare Service, can offer support. Schools have no enforcement powers if these contracts are not adhered to.
16. Parenting Orders are issued where parents do not engage with schools to achieve improvements in pupils' behaviour. Parenting Orders are usually issued following two fixed term exclusions.
17. It is important to highlight that schools need to be seen to be acting to protect teachers and other pupils, and therefore sometimes there is no alternative but to exclude a child.
18. The Pupil Support Team are committed to working closely with other agencies, and 'multi-agency' meetings with other stakeholders are held regularly.
19. In 2004/05, there were 250 individuals identified as appearing 'out of the system'. Darlington schools do not take pupils off the school roll, unless they appear on another one, and investigating these cases takes a considerable amount of time. Some children do not appear on any roll, for example, some travellers' children.
20. **Children's Services Department – Performance and Development:** The School Survey 2005, which was carried out by the Audit Commission, reflected Darlington's schools perceptions of the support they receive from Darlington Borough Council, and compared this with all participating authorities in England. Two survey questions were particularly relevant to the work being conducted by this Task and Finish Review Group. The overall responses to both questions considered that the support offered by Darlington Borough Council was rated between poor and satisfactory, and that this indicated that Darlington Borough Council fell into the lowest quartile nationally. **Appendix 3 and 4** reflects these questions and the responses. The Head of Performance and Development urged caution in interpreting these results, as he felt that Schools were sometimes not clear regarding who provides support services, there was only a 50% response rate to the survey and that the survey was conducted during a time of upheaval in the Children's Services Department.
21. An audit was conducted by the Behaviour Support Section to assess whether, pupils who had been permanently excluded from school, had previously been known to the section. This revealed that this was often not the case and on some occasions there had been no indication of problems within a school.
22. Individual, and collective, perceptions may contribute to a breakdown in communication. Pastoral and Teaching staff may perceive it as failure if they have to contact the Children's Services Department for assistance. The Group were also concerned that the level of pastoral care in schools was on the decrease.

23. Some pupils demonstrated behavioural problems at Primary School, however they had often been contained and such problems only accelerated in Secondary School. Such problems could have been more manageable, or even completely resolved, with earlier intervention. It was reported that work was being conducted at Skerne Park Primary School and Hummersknott School and Language College to develop a role to lead on early intervention with pupils at risk from exclusion. At a further discussion, held on the 16th August 2006, the Assistant Director of the Children's Services Department reported that a Pilot Scheme was now taking place at the Education Village, which aimed to identify early signs of behavioural problems at Primary School level.
24. Unauthorised Absence figures may also provide some indication of behaviour traits. **Appendices 5 and 6** show the Attendance/Absence figures for Darlington for the Academic Years 2004/05 and 2005/06.
25. Providing an extended curriculum, with an emphasis on vocational based learning rather than academic based learning, may engage those pupils not suited to an academic based programme. A further update from the Assistant Director of the Children's Services Department on the 16th August 2006 revealed that the 'Skills Plus' initiative has proved to be very successful. 70 young people, at risk from exclusion and unable to engage with the mainstream curriculum, attended the Darlington College to pursue more vocational options coupled with the core academic qualifications. The majority of these young people remained on the course and achieved qualifications. The Children's Services Department will now be asking all secondary schools to identify those pupils that they wish to send on the 'Skills Plus' scheme, and it is intended that a total of 140 pupils will attend the scheme for the Academic Year beginning in September 2006, and it is anticipated that this scheme will lead to a reduction in those pupils feeling disengaged and the numbers of referrals and exclusions.
26. **Hummersknott School and Language College:** The Head Teacher at Hummersknott School and Language College stated that he felt that the School did not receive enough support from the Children's Services Department, however appreciated that there was a high level of demand for this service.
27. Hummersknott School and Language College has had 3 permanent exclusions and 112 fixed term exclusions this year. 63 of these fixed term exclusions relate to 16 particular students.
28. The school creates clear boundaries on what action will result in an immediate exclusion and there is a clear Code of Conduct, in which the students have had an input, which clearly defines reasonable behaviour. It is felt that it is important that children are involved in key decisions that affect their lives. This may differ from other schools, which will have their own definitions of that behaviour which is deemed acceptable or unacceptable. This leads to a lack of consistency between schools. Behaviour, which warrants an immediate exclusion in one school may not in another, a fact that is acknowledged by Head Teachers. The Assistant Director of the Children's Services Department has subsequently confirmed that the Head Teachers of Darlington will be holding a workshop in the Autumn term to discuss a uniform approach to fixed term and permanent exclusions.

29. There are ongoing staff training programmes in behaviour management, as there is a need to ensure consistency of approach from the 120 teachers within Hummersknott School and Language College.
30. At the time of the discussion with the Head Teacher of Hummersknott School and Language College, the 1200 pupils had access to one half day per week for Anger Management Counselling with a Teaching Assistant and one half day per fortnight, every other half term, with a representative from the Outreach Service and EOTAS, however this service was currently clogged by the high level of fixed term exclusions.
31. The Head Teacher of Hummersknott School and Language College believes that the remits of the different agencies involved in these issues are very defined, and that a more flexible approach is needed. The Head Teacher also felt that there was a need for the agencies to come together more often and that there was little alternative to permanent exclusion, due to the high level of pupils within the system. The Head Teacher suggested that he felt it would be beneficial for the Local Authority to examine what other Authorities did, although he did welcome the change in structure and the move to the Children's Service's Department, which he felt was an opportunity to look at improvements and remodel the service. At the discussion on the 16th August 2006, the Assistant Director of the Children's Services Department stated that the Department were now working toward a multi-agency approach, and a figure of £150,000 had been set aside over the next 3 years to facilitate this.
32. **Youth Offending Service:** There are three main operational elements to the Youth Offending Service:
- (a) Restorative Justice – Concentrates mainly on reparations by junior offenders following a reprimand or a final warning.
  - (b) Prevention – Mainly concentrates on interventions with vulnerable young people who are at risk of offending, anti-social behaviour or substance misuse.
  - (c) Post Court – Concentrates on Young Offenders who are going through, or have recently been through, the Court Process.
33. The Youth Offending Service Manager explained the work that was being conducted in relation to the development of a '**Safer Schools Partnership**' and hoped to obtain funding for at least one, possibly two, schools. The intention of the initiative would be to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere in schools, with a Youth Offending Service Prevention Worker and a Police Officer in a school. The proposed strategy would be to identify areas where the level of first time offenders is highest.
34. The Youth Offending Service do have a '**Parental Support Service**' and contact parents offering assistance as soon as the case comes to the Unit's attention. Assistance can be in the form of advice, Group Working and providing Parenting Mentors. The Operational Manager suggested that one of the problems is the stigma attached to working with Social Services, but the programme is geared toward removing this stigma and is approached in a non-authoritative manner.

35. The Youth Offending Service Manager explained that the Youth Offending Service was established to work in partnership with all stakeholders, however links with individual schools could be improved.
36. The Operational Manager explained that since the Task and Finish Review Group had last spoken to the Head Teacher of Hummersknott School and Language College the school had been allocated a Prevention Officer from the Youth Offending Service, who is available to children at risk of offending, substance misuse or anti-social behaviour. The Task and Finish Review Group were pleased with this development and the Operational Manager stated that he would like to see such a development in each school, however the practical constraints of funding would not allow this at the present time.
37. The Group expressed the opinion that Schools appeared to have difficulties accessing services. This can be as a result of parental problems – the Unit support the use of ‘extended schools’ and the promotion of schools as part of the community.
38. The Group enquired whether there were any schemes that worked particularly well in the area. One of the most successful schemes is the **‘It’s Going to Work’ programme**, which is a scheme across the Tees Valley area. The scheme targets those young people with a low standard of education. The scheme is a four week programme, which is highly intensive to encourage an individual to obtain NVQ1. Each young person has a mentor, who is with them all day. Each young person gets paid £40.00 per week. The scheme encourages young people into employment. 78% of young people go onto employment or Further Education following the scheme.
39. The Group expressed concern at the variation in leisure opportunities available for children and young people across Darlington and would encourage school facilities, including the MUGA’s, be made available for the use of the local community.
40. **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS):** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services cover a very broad spectrum – from those with emotional or well being needs, to those with diagnosable mental illnesses. A high percentage of those cases referred to CAMHS are for behavioural difficulties, however in many of these referrals the behavioural problems are usually the primarily identified symptom, and an individual can be also suffering from a recognised diagnosable disorder (ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, etc.). This is known as ‘co-morbidity’.
41. 10 – 20% of children or young people (up to the age of 18) have experienced mental health issues.
42. One of the primary pieces of legislation important in the work of CAMHS is the Every Child Matters legislation, which introduced radical change in the whole system of Children’s Services, with emotional health and mental well-being remaining key issues throughout. The main focus on the initiative is on early identification and intervention, and strengthening health promotion in local communities.
43. CAMHS are required to ensure that all children and young people, from birth to 18 years of age, who have mental health problems and disorders, have access to timely, integrated, high quality, multi-disciplinary mental health services and to ensure effective assessments, treatment and support for them and their families.

44. In order to deliver this, four specific targets have been devised:
  - (a) Emergency and 24 hour access;
  - (b) Services for 16-17 year olds;
  - (c) Mental Health and Learning Disability Provision; and
  - (d) Complex Presentations/Behaviour Problems/Mental Health Needs
45. In addition, CAMHS provide a range of other services including workforce skills and training and development.
46. CAMHS received 500 referrals in the year 2005.
47. The longest waiting time for CAMHS Referral is 11 weeks.
48. Learning Disability waiting times are less than 11 weeks, but are increasing unfortunately, due to lack of staff.
49. There are a higher number of referrals for children without statement to Learning Disabilities.
50. Darlington is the only team that has a dedicated worker in the Youth Offending Service. It is funded partly by Darlington PCT and Youth Offending. The Darlington Youth Offending Service were quick to realise the link between Mental Health and offending.
51. There is a lack of qualified human resource available.
52. CAMHS will be carrying out a review over the summer period to make an assessment of 'ideal resource'.
53. 10% of the CAMHS current caseload have a 'conduct disorder', which represents an increase of 1.8% from 2004.
54. 19% of these 'conduct disorder' cases relate to Darlington CAMHS. The reason why the Darlington figure is so high basically comes down to crude numbers – a higher population.
55. Potential capacity constraints may limit full implementation without additional resource – For example, Primary Mental Health Workers have a wide remit including administration, care, diagnosis, etc.
56. Referrals can be made by school nurses or educational psychologists. Schools can make referrals directly to CAMHS, in which case CAMHS contact the family and the family are required to engage. Referrals are prioritised between conditions – emerging psychosis, self-harm and eating disorders are prioritised before schools referrals, as CAMHS have a better knowledge of the circumstances they are dealing with. This can lead to 2 systems running in conflict. An exclusion can happen while waiting for the referral to CAMHS, unless CAMHS are informed of any urgency on the referral. The quality of the referrals needs to be improved and a standard referral form is being devised.

57. One of the main requirements from the CAMHS Service is to build up the expertise within Schools.
58. **Pupil Referral Unit Development - Update:** The Group were pleased to receive an update from the Assistant Director of the Children's Services Department on the 16th August 2006, on the development of the proposed Pupil Referral Unit at Rise Carr Infant and Junior Schools. The Assistant Director reported that the development is currently running to schedule and should be completed in Autumn 2007. Presently the plans have been drawn up for the new development and it is hoped that the plans will be finalised very shortly, and that the Planning and Tendering processes can be implemented. It is envisaged that the new development will be able to accommodate 70-80 pupils at any one time.

## Conclusions

59. It is important to recognise that since commencing this Task and Finish Review in October 2005, a large amount of work has been conducted by the Children's Services Department in relation to behavioural support, particularly with an emphasis on prevention. Many of the problematic issues highlighted during the course of this review had also been identified by the Children's Services Department and measures have been taken to address a number of the key problems. The Behaviour Support Task and Finish Review Group welcome the responsive nature of the Children's Services Department toward these issues, and hope the Department continues to develop and evolve, however the Group do recognise that there is still a large amount of work to do.
60. The Task and Finish Review Group were pleased to note the number of people and organisations available to provide support in attempting to resolve children's and young peoples behavioural problems, however one initial concern was that these stakeholders were not working as cohesively as they may have done. This was reflected in the results of the School Survey 2005, where schools in Darlington rated the support of the Children's Services Department in relation to behavioural support as being poor to satisfactory, a view that was also supported by the Head Teacher of Hummersknott School and Language College. The Youth Offending Service Manager also admitted that links between the Youth Offending Service and individual schools could be improved. The Group were pleased to hear that the Children's Services Department had recognised this issue and were now adopting a multi-agency approach, utilising an investment of £150,000 to develop a multi-agency team. Group research uncovered two useful documents issued by the Department for Education and Skills, which provided guidance on integrated working (**Appendix 7 and 8**).
61. The Group were particularly pleased to hear of the work being carried out in regard to early intervention between Hummersknott School and Language College and Skerne Park Primary School, and at the Education Village. The Group concluded that this was the type of approach that they would like to see extended throughout the town to assist with early intervention.
62. The Group were concerned about the lack of consistency between schools in relation to behaviour that warranted an exclusion, and felt that this was something that should be considered when comparing the exclusion figures. The Group welcomed the confirmation of a workshop for Head Teachers to discuss good practice and a uniform approach to exclusions, and hoped that this would give a more consistent outcome.



63. The recent success and the progress that continues to be made with the 'Skills Plus' initiative particularly pleased the Group. It is extremely important that alternative educational opportunities continue to be offered for those who are unable to engage with the mainstream curriculum, and the Group were happy to note the increased number of schools becoming involved in the forthcoming academic year, and the increased number of placements being offered.
64. The Group were extremely interested in the placement of a Prevention Officer from the Youth Offending Service at Hummersknott School and Language College, and would be very interested to receive some feedback at a later date reporting on the success of this initiative and the possibility of extending the initiative to other schools.
65. In conclusion, initially the Group felt that there were a number of issues that needed attention, however during the period of the Review it was obvious that the Children's Services Department have worked very hard to identify such problems and put measures in place to address such issues. The Group feel that it is appropriate to commend the Officers of the Children's Services Department for the good progress that has taken place in such a short period of time.

### **Recommendations**

66. That the total number of Lunch Time Exclusions, Fixed Term Exclusions and Permanent Exclusions, per School, be reported to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis, in order to continually monitor the scope of the issue.
67. That an update report is received by the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee outlining the current position of the 14-19 Curriculum in Darlington.
68. That the Children's Services Department ensure that all Primary and Secondary Schools are aware of the support systems available regarding assistance in exclusions and behavioural support, and to ensure that accurate databases are kept, both by the Children's Services Department and all Schools individually.
69. That the use of the guidance provided by the Department for Education and Skills in the documents '**Information Sharing: Practitioner' Guide – Integrated working to improve outcomes for children and young people**' (Appendix 7) and '**Supporting Integrated Working: Outline Training Strategy and Plan**' (Appendix 8) be recommended in the development of multi-agency working.
70. That a report is submitted to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee at the end of the Academic Year 2006/2007 reviewing the placement of the Prevention Officer at Hummersknott School and Language College.
71. That the development of the new Pupil Referral Unit at the Rise Carr site remains on schedule and is completed by Autumn 2007, and that the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee receive quarterly updates on the progress of the development.
72. That the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee receive an update presentation from the representatives from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) later in the year.

73. That the work being conducted at the Education Village, and between Hummersknott School and Language College and Skerne Park Primary School, in the early identification of behavioural problems at a primary school level, be extended to school clusters.

### **Behaviour Support Task and Finish Review Group**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 (a)** – Notes of meeting with Head of Pupil Support and Team Leader, School Support and Family Mediator – 10th October 2005.

**Appendix 1 (b)** – Notes of meeting with Head of Performance and Development, Children’s Services Department – 3rd March 2006.

**Appendix 1 (c)** – Notes of meeting with Head Teacher at Hummersknott School and Language College – 15th May 2006.

**Appendix 1 (d)** – Notes of meeting with Youth Offending Service Manager and Operational Manager – 2nd June 2006.

**Appendix 1 (e)** – Notes of meeting with CAMHS Strategy and Commissioning Manager and CAMHS General Manager – 14th July 2006.

**Appendix 1 (f)** – Notes of meeting with Assistant Director, Children’s Services Department – 16th August 2006.

**Appendix 2** – ‘Permanent and Fixed Term Exclusion figures for Secondary Schools in Darlington for 2004/05 and 2005/06’.

**Appendix 3** – ‘The School Survey 2005 - Standard Analysis – All participating Authorities in England - Analysis of responses from: All schools maintained by the Authority’

**Appendix 4** – ‘The School Survey 2005 - Percentage Analysis - Analysis of responses from: All Schools maintained by the Authority’

**Appendix 5** – ‘Table of Secondary Schools Attendance Performance in Darlington for 2004/05 and 2005/06’.

**Appendix 6** – ‘Table of Primary Schools Attendance Performance in Darlington for 2004/05 and 2005/06’.

**Appendix 7** – ‘Information Sharing: Practitioner’ Guide – Integrated working to improve outcomes for children and young people’ – Every Child Matters – Change for Children.

**Appendix 8** – ‘Supporting Integrated Working: Outline Training Strategy and Plan’ – Every Child Matters – Change for Children.

**Appendix 9** - Acknowledgements