

Luton Schools Forum
Wednesday, 20 January 2021
5.00pm via Zoom
High Needs Block Funding for ACE and
ALPS

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Reason for submission to Forum	To update the Forum on the redistribution of funding between ALPS and ACE within the High Needs Block of the DSG
Voting	n/a
Executive Summary	This Paper sets out the rationale for the redistribution of HNB funding between ACE and ALPS from 2021/22
Recommendations	The Forum is asked to and note and consider this proposal.
Appendices (to be attached)	Appendix A – Service Strands ACE
Background Papers	None

Background

1. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision.
2. Luton has a 50 (full time equivalent) place Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), the Avenue Centre for Education (ACE). The Local Authority also has an Alternative Learning and Progression Service (ALPS) focused on the Council's statutory duties in relation to pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons are unable to attend mainstream school.

Report

3. The Council has worked with the Senior Leadership Team at ACE to refine the strategy for secondary aged pupils who are unable to attend mainstream school due to their challenging behaviour. This includes pupils who are permanently excluded, on the cusp of permanent exclusion or new arrivals to Luton with a history of significant challenging behaviour who (a) previously attended a PRU/alternative provision or (b) have not recently attended school.
4. At present these pupils are placed on one of two pathways:
 - Pathway A – on the roll of ACE (but may also access external specialist alternative provision for part of the week).
 - Pathway C - given a package of alternative provision. Unless the alternative provider is a registered school it is necessary to develop an education package involving two or more alternative provisions. Oversight of students on this pathway rests with ALPS.
5. The Council has procured a network of alternative education providers who meet clearly defined standards (including quality of education, safeguarding, health and safety, pastoral support etc). The diversity of provision ensures that creative and bespoke education packages can be developed to engage disaffected/disengaged students and address their barriers to accessing mainstream education and aid their transition into post 16 pathways. Having a variety of provision enables the separation of groups of young people for their own safeguarding and well-being, for example, members of rival gangs, those vulnerable to sexual exploitation, those with special needs etc.
6. Whilst the ALPS team undertakes robust oversight of the approved alternative providers, only one provider (Active Support) is a registered school.
7. It is proposed to reconfigure the responsibilities between ALPS and ACE to ensure that:
 - All pupils are placed on the roll of a registered school (at present, this would be ACE or Active Support). The pupils' education packages may also include time at one of the Council's approved alternative providers to facilitate bespoke and specialist education packages.
 - Oversight of all pupils' education packages, including the monitoring of pupil progress, would move to ACE. Having one approach for all pupils will aid consistency in respect of pathways, planning and support for transition into Post 16 opportunities. It is envisaged that ACE would be supported in this approach by registered alternative provision schools. Contract and performance management of approved alternative providers would also move to ACE.
 - ACE will expand their assessment facility for new arrivals and those who have been permanently excluded from school to ensure that pupils' education packages are tailored to address barriers to learning. In particular, the statutory guidance states: *A personalised plan for*

intervention should be prepared by the commissioner setting clear objectives for improvement and attainment timeframes, arrangements for assessment and monitoring progress, and a baseline of the current position against which to measure progress.

8. ACE will continue to offer its *Services to Schools* with each school having a core entitlement offer. It will also continue to play a lead role in the development of strategy within the town in relation to inclusion and reduction in permanent exclusions.
9. The different ACE service strands mentioned above are set out in more detail at Appendix A. It is proposed that an external commissioning budget for alternative provision is moved to ACE which is sufficient to accommodate a further 35 pupils on top of the 65 places available at ACE. This will provide for a maximum of 100 full time equivalent students.
10. ALPS will continue to be responsible for the following:
 - Annual procurement of alternative provision
 - Providing guidance and training to heads, senior leaders and governors regarding permanent and fixed term exclusions.
 - Attendance at Governor Disciplinary Committee Hearings and Independent Review Panels for permanently excluded pupils.
 - Developing strategies in partnership with schools and other services/agencies to support inclusion.
 - Reporting to BIWAB on the impact of strategies to support inclusion e.g. impact of the new secondary inclusion units.
 - Provide support to the neighbourhood primary behaviour provisions and to those transitioning into Year 7 with very challenging behaviour.
 - Work in conjunction with the Youth Offending Service to provide education support to those open to the service and to co-produce strategies to support inclusion.
 - Support the operation of the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.
 - Provide funding to secondary schools to support new arrivals with a history of very challenging behaviour who are being placed on roll, via the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.
 - Provision of education for children who cannot attend school for health reasons, including those in hospital.
 - Commissioning of any additional provision required, beyond the 100 FTE places.

Proposals

11. This proposal seeks to move £1,096,580 of funding from ALPS to ACE. ALPS will retain a budget of £561,117 to support medical and hospital tuition. It will also retain a budget of £845,063 to support the other functions set out in

paragraph 10 above. This includes a contingency fund for a further 23 FTE places in the event that the 100FTE capacity is exceeded.