



Children's Services - Education

Schools Forum

Date 6th December 2016

Report title: Responding to increasing School Exclusions

Purpose of report

This report provides an opportunity to consult with School's Forum to seek their views on the proposal to align resources using the capacity available in the high needs block and enable a multi-agency response designed to address the increasing trend of permanent exclusions. Using the estimated cost of £1M from high needs block DSG the service will be developed from existing capacity, but will be strengthened by operating across the partnership to enable a multi disciplinary response to address presenting needs when a child is at high risk of exclusion. Additionally, there will be greater emphasis on early recognition of high risk factors and refocusing of resources to address the root causes at an early stage.

To establish an understanding of why resources will be refocused, the LA has examined the exclusion data trends and looked at individual cases. This is presented in the background section of this report. It is widely recognised that permanent exclusion has a detrimental effect on the excluded pupils and school community and delivers very poor outcomes for the individual children involved. It is anticipated that a cohesive and timely response from the LA, partners and schools will help to stem the rising trend. Fundamental to our proposed new approach is the recognition that social emotional mental is as much a home issue as it is a school issue.

Background

The following tables provide information about Walsall's position. The latest published data of 2013/14 shows that Walsall has double the number of permanent exclusions in both primary and secondary phases. Figures 1 and 2 show reasons, age group and SEND for Walsall's permanent exclusions during last academic year.

Breakdown of Walsall Primary Permanent Exclusions 2015/16



No. of Permanent Exclusions by Year group	Rec	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	1	3	1	2	2	3	3

No. of Permanent Exclusions by SEN	ECHP	SEN Support	No SEN
	1	9	5

No. of Permanent Exclusions FSM	FSM	No FSM
	7	8

Reasons for Permanent Exclusions	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour (DB)	Physical Assault against an Adult	Physical Assault against a Pupil
	13	1	1

Figure 1

Breakdown of Walsall Secondary Permanent Exclusions 2015/16



No. of Permanent Exclusions by Year group	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
	3	23	15	22	11

No. of Permanent Exclusions by SEN	ECHP	SEN Support	No SEN
	0	32	42

No. of Permanent Exclusions by FSM	FSM	No FSM
	35	39

Reasons for Permanent Exclusions	Drug or Alcohol Abuse (DA)	Persistent Disruptive Behaviour (DB)	Damage (DM)	Other (OT)	Verbal/Threatening Behaviour against an Adult (VA)	Verbal/Threatening Behaviour against a Pupil (VP)
	4	60	2	2	4	2

Figure 2

In addition to children who have been permanently excluded, there are other layers of children who are at risk, for example; children on reduced timetables, chronic school attendance, children on managed moves and those who have no school place. These children are at high risk of underachievement and disadvantage and the LA is committed to reducing this group through this model.

In brief

- 43% of all secondary permanent exclusions in 2015/16 were identified as having SEN support
- 47% of all secondary aged children permanently excluded in 2015/16 were receiving free school meals
- Predominant reason for secondary permanent exclusions in 2015/16 was for 'persistent disruption' (81%)
- Since 2011/12 Walsall has consistently had higher numbers of secondary permanent exclusions than the national average

- Year 8 and Year 10 are the dominant year groups for permanent exclusions in 2015/16, but feature in all year groups
- 66% of all primary permanent exclusions in 2015/16 were identified as having SEN support
- 46% of all primary aged children permanently excluded in 2015/16 were receiving free school meals
- Since 2012/13 primary permanent exclusions have been double the national average
- Predominant reason for primary permanent exclusions in 2015/16 was for 'persistent disruption' (86%)
- Primary permanent exclusions 2015/16 age range : Reception to Year 6 (3 pupils in each of Y1, Y5 and Y6)

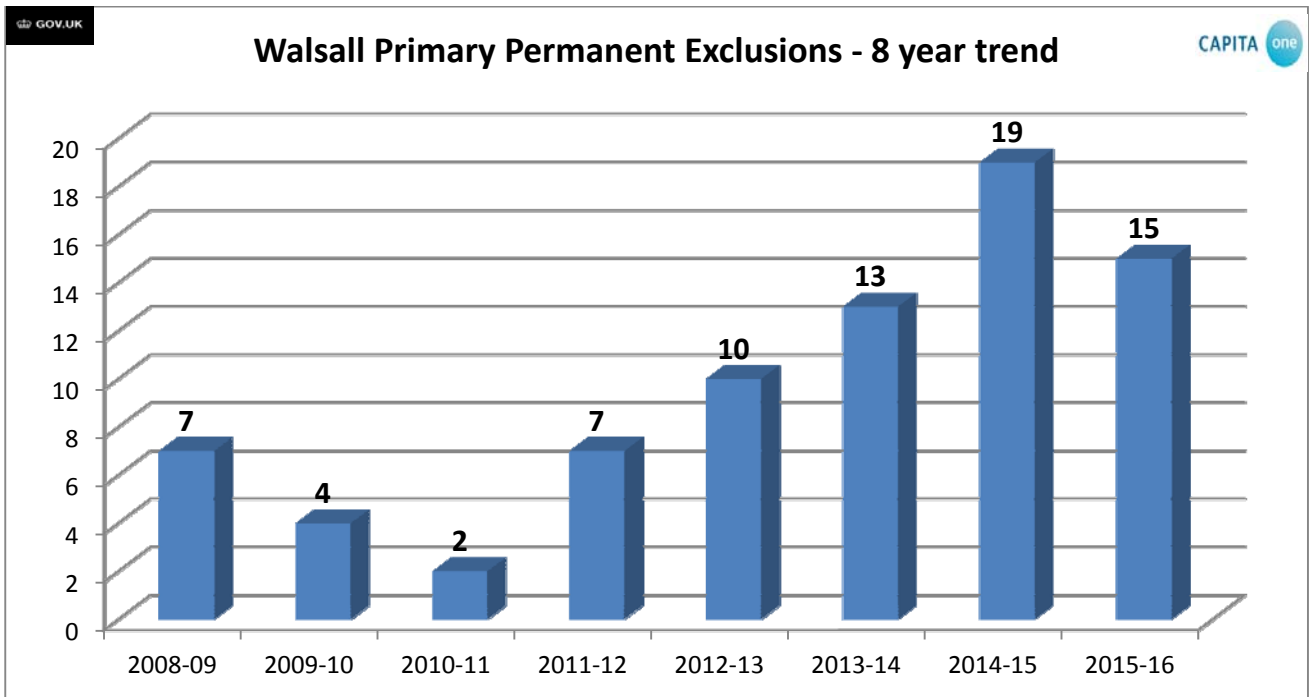


Figure 3

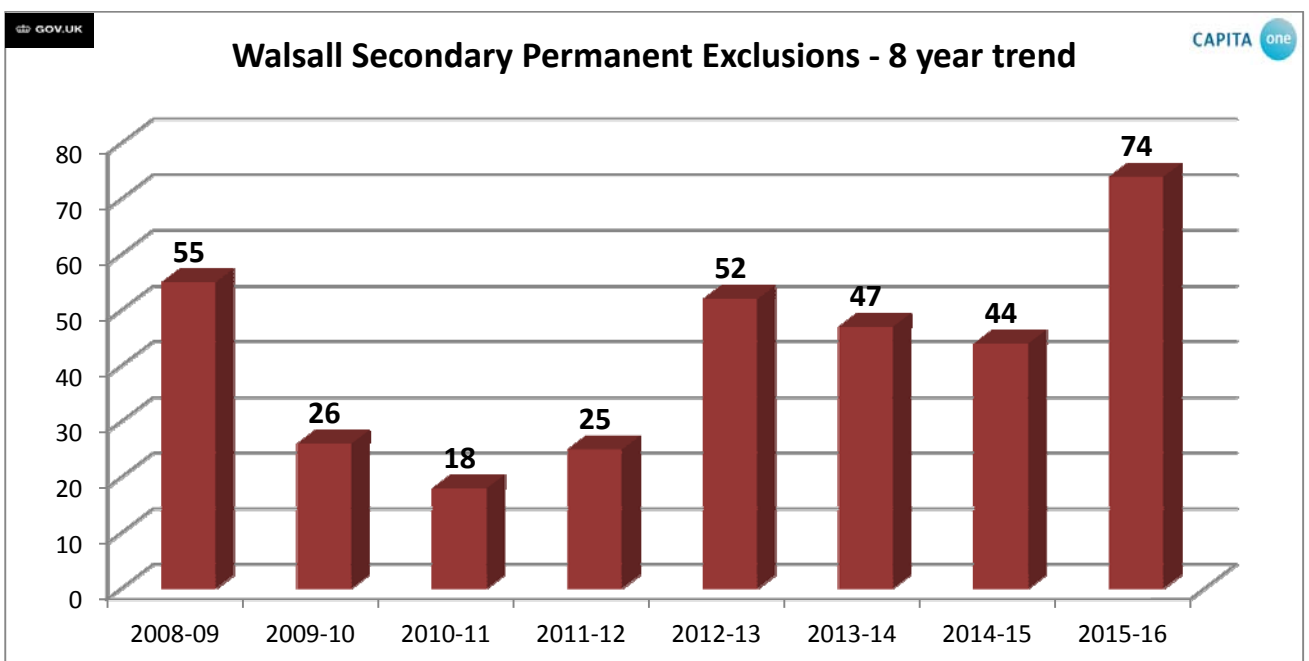


Figure 4

A comprehensive review of Early Help demonstrated that 40% of the demand around Early Help is related to behaviour with 20% of these referrals coming from schools. A review of these cases demonstrated that a large proportion of the behaviour is related to a toxic Trio (parent mental health, Substance misuse and Domestic Abuse)

Case Reflection and findings

To have a greater understanding of the reasons for exclusion and causes, exclusion data was examined and two individual cases were examined in more detail by a multi-agency forum.

Case 1.

Organisations involved in case reflection: Access, SEND, Early Help, School, Troubled families Coordinator, Children's Services Finance, parenting/toxic trio coordinator, Youth Justice.

Year 10 boy excluded Autumn term 2016 for persistent disruption. This child had three primary school settings and fixed term exclusions first appeared on his records when he was in Year 4 (an Education Psychologist assessment was undertaken as a result and had attributed behaviour to class room management. It is not known whether strategies suggested were implemented at the time - this may have led to a negative school experience to the pupils in that class). By year 6 there were no recorded incidents and he transitioned to his KS3 setting as a model pupil. Secondary school setting report there was only basic information about the pupil on transition. His behaviour was seen as disruptive soon after transition – with the secondary school reporting that incidents happened on a daily basis.

The case review identified:

- Lack of information sharing between school transitions stages – information was only shared based on what the receiving school requested
- Low expectation re academic achievement within the family - history of behaviour with two older siblings leading to them leaving school without qualification. Some concerns related to DA incidents related to older sibling. Younger sibling has just started secondary school and is displaying similar behaviour and even stating 'tell me what I need to do to get excluded). Both parents are not working and living on benefits.
- Lack of knowledge of family context
- Lack of consistent engagement by both parents
- Parents stating they are struggling with all children's behaviour – but youngest one is their biggest concern.
- Need to start work at year 5 – continue support though to year 7/8

Case 2.

Organisations involved in case reflection: Access and inclusion, Early Help, Troubled families Coordinator, Children's Services Finance, Locality panel chair (previous senior practitioner in TYS), Youth Justice, virtual schools, Residential manager, School improvement, Police, Social Care (IRS).

Education services had very little information about this case as school attendance appeared to be good (due to post registration truancy from Year 9) and there was one fixed term exclusion recorded.

Y10 girl. Not a permanent exclusion but became electively home educated (EHE) in January 2016. Prior to being registered as EHE both school and parent asked for help as the child was displaying risky behaviour.

Her attendance in year 9 looked good - however after drilling down into the attendance it was identified that she regularly went missing after registration (social worker assessment undertaken).

Identified low level criminal behaviour.

Young person has been and is continuing to be at risk of CSE.

Mother made the decision for EHE as a strategy to keep her away from associates. EHE services supported a college place. She passed entry level qualifications and her attendance was good however her aggression towards other students caused her college place to be withdrawn. With perceived identity issues, a violent natural father and Mother's new relationship, these factors culminated in an escalation of behaviour which led to her becoming a Looked After Child.

Young person has had 2 episodes of becoming looked after.

Information sharing at the reflection meeting identified that her behaviour may be related to:

- Separation of natural parents
- Issues related to identity as she is mixed race but lives with mum and step dad who are both white
- In contact with dad who is known to the police for serious criminal behaviour (assaults and drugs) – her only link to her African Caribbean Heritage.
- Good practice identified when Targeted Youth Support was involved – work undertaken around behaviour, parenting, keeping Safe, identity, etc which had a significant impact on behaviour at school and in the home. But as soon as this was redrawn support through school was not picked up and behaviour was not sustained.
- Young person was described as bright and had aspirations to become a teacher – this may now be difficult to achieve considering her behaviour seem to become more complex and her recent criminal record.
- No information related the support in place from school regarding her 'missing from school episodes'

Issues identified:

- Lack of information sharing
- Silo working and not following through across agencies.
- Need to Pick up behaviour pattern early and have a robust multi – agency response.
- Consideration if there is a need to do peer interventions as this young person is connected to other peers with risky behaviour going to the same school.

Proposal and Recommendations

Given Walsall's exclusions position against the national average and the expectation that the gap will widen when 2014/15 and 2015/16 data is published, there is a commitment to support schools and children by refocusing resources to work differently. We intend to develop in partnership a response which has both an improved early recognition of risk factors to identify children at future risk and also being able to galvanise a robust partnership response, one which includes specialist intervention when required.

Recognising the profile and nature of the children who are excluded, the following recommendations are made to standardise practice across agencies. Fundamental to its success is involvement and participation of school's senior leadership and governance whose views and involvement is pivotal to success of developing a robust response.

1. Early identification of known risk factors should be established in schools so a response is available at the earliest onset of signs of disruption - need to identify root cause and schools will need to consider the partners to work with to help in addressing 'root cause'
2. Better information sharing at key times with schools on community and home based issues related to the child's behaviour and develop a partnership solution, ie at transition or change in circumstances

3. Development of 'Bridging the Gap' transition behaviour support for 'at risk' children to ensure new setting has a complete understanding of complexities surrounding the child
4. Specialist support team through Access & Achievement to support transition and integration into new settings at KS3 to minimise the risk of Y8 exclusions (peak)
5. All children and young people who show a pattern of disruptive behaviour and projected to become at risk of permanent exclusion in the future to be referred to the locality panels for sharing of information and identify partnership solution
6. Specialist and mainstream services to be in a position to prioritise this vulnerable group in order to support avoidance of permanent exclusion
7. When adverse behaviour is observed there may be a learning difficulty masked by presenting behaviours, SEND is a risk factor for this group
8. C&YP at risk of exclusion given the same priority status/ level of response as other vulnerable groups ie LAC
9. Engagement with School Improvement to identify risks areas around Behaviour for Learning so a joint response can be planned
10. In order to raise the profile of this vulnerable group all education/support services to have a named champion for children at risk of exclusion, to increase knowledge of the detrimental impact exclusion has on families, increase awareness and a wider aspect of behaviour management other than their setting
11. Robust arrangements for all transition stages for C&YP at risk of exclusions
12. Behaviour training for NQT's so there is focus on differentiation in lesson planning to meet the needs of this vulnerable group and understanding of the causes for adverse behaviour
13. Closer working relationship between behaviour support team and the 0-19 locality teams so there is an understanding and co-operation of behaviour strategies and interventions used at school and for addressing behaviour in the home
14. Development of a multi-discipline response where exclusion could not have been predicted and which needs a rapid response from specialist services and partner agencies, managed under the Access and Achievement directorate

Financial implications/Value for Money

Value for money will be ascertained through development of services and outcomes for children and schools supported. Recognising an escalation of complexities faced by schools and families the developments will require strategic commitment to have flexible and responsive services which meet the demands of individual circumstances. The outcomes and demand will determine the value and financial implications.

Legal Implications

The local authority is accountable for the high needs block of DSG and has responsibility to ensure that sufficient places and support are in place to meet local demand for high needs services. The LA has a responsibility for this funding to meet its statutory requirements to this group because of the high level of support required.

The LA is seeking views of the School's Forum through this consultation.

School Improvement

It is anticipated that an improved response from partners will have an impact on behaviour in schools and at home. This can have a positive impact on behaviour for learning. In addition, engagement from partners leads to confidence amongst head teachers to seek alternatives to exclusion. Active earlier identification of high risk children and being able to respond appropriately aims to have an impact on teaching and learning.

Members eligible to vote