

Cabinet – 16 December 2009

Restructure of Pupil Referral Units in Walsall – Secondary Age Range

Portfolio: Councillor Rachel Walker, Children's services

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

This report proposes implementation of an improved continuum of provision for secondary age pupils who are either permanently excluded or who are 'at risk' of permanent exclusion from school through the development of a new Pupil Referral Unit across Key Stages 3 & 4 (See **Appendix A**: The proposed continuum of provision).

This will involve closing the existing 20 place Key Stage 3 provision at Ruiz Centre and the extension of Key Stage 4 provision at New Leaf Centre to include 10 Key Stage 3 pupils. The same overall number of pupil places will be provided at each Key Stage through commissioning 10 places in mainstream schools.

There is no statutory process for closing Pupil Referral Units although Local Authorities are required to undertake reasonable consultation (see **Appendix B**: Consultation on the Proposals) which will be completed by 20th December 2009 and will form the basis of a Serco service restructure to be implemented in April 2010.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to delegate to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, authority to implement the following changes ensuring any comments made during consultation are taken into account:

- To extend the New Leaf Centre to make 'short-stay' school provision for both Key Stage 3 and 4 students from 1st January 2010
- To close the Ruiz Centre on December 31st 2009
- To commission 10 Key Stage 3 places in mainstream secondary schools.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Walsall currently provides three Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). The Shepwell Centre caters for 30 KS3 and 4 pupils who have a variety of medical, emotional and psychological difficulties as well as, occasionally, for pregnant schoolgirls. The Ruiz Centre and New Leaf Centre cater for KS3 and 4 pupils respectively who are either permanently excluded or who are 'at risk' of permanent exclusion. There are currently 20 pupil places at Ruiz Centre and 30 'on-site' places at the New Leaf Centre with a further 40 off-site alternative provider places.
- 3.2 At present, there is a wide variation in the quality of provision across these PRUs. This has resulted in a full consultation, consistent with statutory guidance, with the PRU Management Committees, Staff, Headteachers and others as set out in the table at section 10 in order to bring about rapid change to ensure that all provision is of an outstanding quality.
- 3.3 Shepwell is currently judged outstanding. Ofsted commented in March 2009 that the Centre is an outstanding PRU, "It transforms the prospects of students who attend by helping them very successfully to return to learning and secure a brighter future. Students make outstanding progress in their academic work and personal development because teaching, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support given are of a very high standard". There is no intention to make any changes to the current arrangements in place at the Shepwell Centre.
- 3.4 New Leaf and Ruiz Centres operate through separate Management Committees but with shared staffing. Some staff are based permanently at each site whilst other staff work across both sites. The quality of this provision is variable with the KS3 provision at Ruiz being judged inadequate.
- 3.5 Whilst there are twenty places available at the Ruiz Centre the challenges of the last 12 months have required a rapid programme of supported integration into mainstream schools with the co-operation of Head teacher colleagues. Currently there are five young people attending the Ruiz Centre. It is proposed that any Key Stage 3 student currently attending the Ruiz Centre will continue their education through a PRU at January 1st 2010 at the New Leaf Centre site at Rushall. This site is recently refurbished and provides much improved accommodation and facilities on those at the existing Ruiz Centre. Parents of these pupils will be consulted on the proposed changes.
- 3.6 The White Paper 'Back on Track - A Strategy for Modernising Alternative Provision for Young People' (May 2008) sets out expectations for developing alternative provision to school on the current provision made by PRUs. The White Paper recognises that, whilst exclusions are inevitable in some cases, there is a need to intervene early to support and challenge and to improve provision for those who are permanently excluded and that provision is of high quality enabling young people to 'get back on track'. Proposed legislation will designate PRUs as Short Stay Schools to emphasise flexibility in provision for young people who are 'at risk' of or who have been permanently excluded. Local Authorities should also have due regard to the recommendations of Sir Alan Steer (Learning Behaviour: Lesson Learned; DCSF 2009) which envisages closer collaboration between mainstream schools and alternative education

providers, particularly through operation of the Secondary Partnerships for Attendance & Behaviour (Statutory from September 2009).

- 3.7 Approving these changes will bring about significant improvements to existing services by extending the continuum of provision to include prevention, early intervention, targeted, specialist and intensive support strands which maximise opportunities for reintegration enabling students to 'get back on track' (see **Appendix A**).

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

All proposals to make changes will be achieved within the existing cost envelope for the provision of services currently made separately at the Ruiz and New Leaf Centres.

4.2 Legal:

Regulations Governing Re-organisation of PRUs should be registered with the DCSF so that they can be inspected by Ofsted. PRUs are not schools and they are not subject to the same requirement to publish notices or to undertake statutory consultation regarding opening new provision or closing current provision. The requirement (DCSF Guidance for LAs and Schools – PRUs and Alternative Provision) is to 'undertake reasonable consultation locally'.

4.3 Staffing:

All staff are employed by Walsall Children's Services, Serco. A new staffing structure was published on the 23 November and is subject to consultation with staff and trade unions.

5. Citizen impact

The modernisation of alternative provision will improve the experience of vulnerable young people who have to be educated out of ordinary schooling for short periods.

6. Community safety

There are no direct implications for community safety

7. Environmental impact

The Ruiz Centre is an annexe located at the Field Road site in Bloxwich which is shared with a range of other services. The accommodation has approximately 180 square meters of useable space. In the short and medium term the accommodation will be used for the PRU pupils and their staff. The Ruiz

accommodation contains the server for the Walsall Children's services – Serco Field Road accommodation.

Walsall Children's Services – Serco will continue to work with the Council and property service colleagues on the use of the accommodation.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 Risk:

The provision of significantly improved services consistent with current national policy expectations and statutory requirements will mitigate against any future inadequate judgements of Pupil Referral Units as vulnerable children provision and so reduce risk to overall inadequate judgements for the Children's Services authority.

8.2 Performance management:

The option to close the current education provision at the Ruiz Centre will remove Special Measures.

9. Equality implications

It is of crucial importance to the achievement of the council's strategic objectives that the young people in the area are able to achieve the qualifications they need to progress to employment and to further study, and improve aspirations.

10. Consultation

Consultation	Timescale
Chairs of Ruiz and New Leaf Management Committees	10 th and 12 th November
Secondary Head teachers	11 th and 16 th November 2009
Unions and professional associations	wb 23 rd November 2009
Primary Head teachers and other bodies e.g. Diocesan Board	wb 23 rd November 2009
Staff at New Leaf and Ruiz Centres	wb 23 rd November 2009
Individual consultation with the families of pupils in the Centre	wb 23 rd November 2009
Elected Members	wb 23 rd November 2009
Chair of Governors of Walsall secondary schools plus parent representatives from their Governing Bodies	wb 30 th November 2009

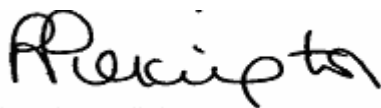
Background papers

Appendix A: an overview of the proposed model for development of provision made by Short stay schools

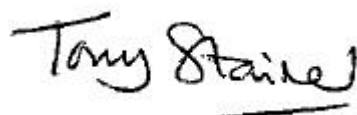
Appendix B: Consultation to Change Paper

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Date: 7 December 2009

APPENDIX A

Model Overview

Early Identification/ Prevention	Early Intervention	Targeted Support	Specialist Support	Intensive Support	Outcomes
<p>Early identification/ Prevention Specialist Adviser Trainers (SATs) Integrated Support Worker (ISWs) School Improvement Ofsted Grades/behaviour Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), etc</p> <p>Early identification and Assessment</p> <p>Pupils at risk of permanent exclusion would be referred to the Centre via the secondary Partnership Panels (North Walsall Inclusion Partnership [NWIP] & South Walsall Inclusion Partnership [SWIP])</p> <p>Following individual case review and assessment</p>	<p>Panel Outcomes A Panel outcome could be that a school would consider retaining a pupil following an assessment at the Centre</p> <p>Pupil retained by host school: Following appropriate intervention work and/or respite period, which would include parental engagement/participation on a pupil would then return to the referring school</p> <p>Possible Outcomes would include: Time-limited programme at Centre Time Limited programme 'Alternative Provision ' As above but part-time alongside part-time host school placement Parents</p>	<p>Managed Moves - Transition Support Alternatively it may be determined by the host school that a managed move would be an appropriate course of action. Once this has been agreed by the host school/receiving school/parents/carers/admissions</p> <p>Following appropriate intervention work and/or respite period, which would include parental engagement/ participation a pupil would then return to the referring school</p> <p>Possible Outcomes would include: Time-limited programme at Centre Time Limited programme 'Alternative Provision ' As above but part-time</p>	<p>Alternatives to Permanent Exclusions Pupils who would normally be permanently excluded: one off serious incident; persistent disruptive behaviour, etc. would be presented at the panel by the host school.</p> <p>These pupils would then be referred to the New Leaf Centre for assessment.</p> <p>An Assessment at the Centre would be to identify an individual reintegration pathway and a learning pathway</p>	<p>Short Stay School extended Placements—Based at partnership Centres/ New Leaf/ Ruiz Centre</p> <p>Alternative Provision Provider Placements</p> <p>Specialist Provision—out of borough placements, etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in permanent exclusions • Reduction in fixed term exclusions • Forms part of Local Authority (LA) response to behaviour challenge • Increased focus on Prevention • Increased Partnership working • Increased parental engagement • Personalisation • Extended Integrated support framework <p>Response focuses on prevention, early identification whilst recognising the need for targeted, specialist and</p>

<p>at the New Leaf Centre an individual reintegration pathway and a learning pathway would be identified.</p> <p>Early Identification/ Prevention</p>	<p>Parenting order Parenting Programme Pupil support</p> <p>Early Intervention</p>	<p>alongside part-time host school placement</p> <p>Targeted Support</p>	<p>for each pupil assessed. Each Individual Plan would include an individual pupil risk assessment</p> <p>Specialist Support</p>	<p>Intensive Support</p>	<p>Intensive support and the need for detailed</p> <p>Outcomes</p>
		<p>Reintegration Support Individual Reintegration Plans</p> <p>Parents Parenting order Parenting Programme Pupil support</p>	<p>Possible outcomes:</p> <p>Pupil Parent Interview/ Review – Reintegration</p> <p>Reintegration Support Individual Reintegration Plans</p> <p>Reintegration into mainstream education (within 7 days)</p> <p>Reintegration to include: mentor/project worker support- As above plus allocation of an Local Authority ‘named’ Keyworker</p>		<p>reintegration planning and support</p>

			(Integrated Support Worker (ISW)/Project Worker/Inclusion Worker) - 6 weeks Allocation of receiving school-based learning mentor/'named' Keyworker		
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NB: Individual Reintegration Plans are Integral to this model