

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director of Children's Services

Report to:	Lincolnshire Schools Forum
Date:	13 January 2016
Subject:	Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy - Pupil Reintegration Charge

Summary:

All pupils and schools in Lincolnshire are our collective responsibility where every pupil and school is known, valued and supported to achieve in all areas.

Key Priorities

- Schools, the Local Authority and other agencies to meet young people's behavioural needs in school wherever possible.
- Intervene early through high quality support in order to prevent further escalation of need and reduce exclusions
- Deliver a service which is integrated, and is responsive to pupil, family and school needs.
- Commission an outreach service which is able to support schools to provide for pupils with complex needs and challenging behaviour.
- Arrange swift and equitable reintegration into an appropriate setting.
- Improve and increase educational alternatives for young people aged 14-19 at risk of exclusion.
- Improve outcomes, including attainment, for young people with challenging behaviour.

This report submits the endorsed Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy adopted by the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board. The strategy reports the significant issue within Lincolnshire of the growing number of permanent exclusions from schools. One element of this strategy is to seek approval from the Schools Forum to introduce a pupil reintegration charge that would be charged to those schools that could not demonstrate that they had done everything reasonable to prevent the exclusion of a pupil. Where schools could demonstrate this there would be no charge.

Recommendation(s):

To agreed to the introduction of a pupil reintegration charge for those schools that cannot demonstrate that they have have done everything reasonable to prevent an exclusion.

Background

Nationally, both permanent and fixed-period exclusions have been steadily declining in the last few years to around 0.06% of the pupil population in 2014.

In contrast, Lincolnshire has seen an increase and remains a high excluding authority. Pupils in Lincolnshire are more likely to be excluded than in many other Local Authority (LA) areas and was ranked 135th out of 139 for permanent exclusions from all school types.

Primary:

- Lincolnshire was ranked joint last position out of 95 publishing LAs
- 40 LA areas had no primary exclusions
- The national rate of permanent exclusion is 2 per 10,000 pupils; in Lincolnshire it is 7 per 10,000 pupils

Secondary:

- Lincolnshire was ranked 110th out of 132 publishing LAs
- 6 LA area had no secondary exclusions
- The national rate of permanent exclusion is 13 per 10,000 pupils; in Lincolnshire it is 23 per 10,000 pupils

It is recognised by the Local Authority and all schools that the numbers of exclusions is rising and as a consequence more of the dedicated school grant (DSG) will have to be used to meet the needs of pupils excluded from Lincolnshire schools, reducing future funding for every school. At the same time, it is clear that schools do not have access to an appropriate behaviour outreach service that can help them meet the needs of pupils whose behaviour challenges them.

A working group of head teachers and LA officers was established in designing this strategy and recurrent funding of £1.3 million per annum was committed by the Schools Forum on behalf of all schools, to support its implementation. The specification for the service is due out to tender imminently with the hope to award the contract by April for a delivered service by September 2016

The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership is the vehicle to support and strategically lead school to school collaboration across Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board (led by schools for schools) has contributed to the development of this strategy and will promote and monitor its implementation and success across the county.

The 'Inclusive Lincolnshire' strategy is dependent on the commitment of all schools and the local authority to do all we can to protect pupils from the damaging effects of school exclusions. Consistent expectations must be transparent so that schools, the LA and locality panels can challenge and support one another. The 'Lincolnshire Ladder of Behavioural Intervention' (LLBI) has been developed with schools for schools and outlines what schools, using good practice expectations, can do for themselves to meet the needs of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. It includes reference to the services schools can access, and more specialist provision is available to meet those pupils with the most challenging needs.

Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS)

Working on behalf of schools, the LA will commission a new Behaviour Outreach Support Service that will operate on two levels for all schools, in addition to running a whole school restorative practice programme with 20 schools. The service will be encouraged to offer enhanced traded packages of support to schools, or clusters of schools, who decide that this is a strategic priority for them.

Targeted Outreach Support

Accessible to all schools facilitated for individuals or small groups in the school setting and is focussed on pupils at risk of exclusion. This will involve bespoke interventions which increase capacity within the school setting and facilitate progress with individual pupils.

Schools should, at this point, consider the possibility of a managed-move as a means to avoid a permanent exclusion. Managed moves are a three-way agreement between the parent/pupil and the current and potential school. The outreach service will support schools to formalise a trial agreement where the pupil remains on the roll of the current school (as a dual registered – main registration) and as a subsidiary registration at the potential school. The current school is responsible for the transport arrangements of the pupil during the trial period. Transport costs will be met by the LA once the trial has ended successfully and all three parties are in agreement.

(In order to protect capacity at this level of the service, schools will need to demonstrate that they have deployed the best practice strategies of school-led interventions)

Escalating Need – Intensive Intervention

A small minority of pupils will need more support than can be provided in the mainstream provision. The 'Inclusive Lincolnshire' strategy offers schools access to flexible, bespoke pre-exclusion placements in specialist behaviour provision. These will be time-limited interventions with pupils at the point of permanent exclusion. These placements will be flexible and pupils will remain on the role of their home school throughout the intensive intervention. This level of the strategy will be led by the Local Authority.

(In order to protect capacity at this level of the service, schools will need to have accessed the targeted outreach support. As an interim measure a single, central decision-making panel will be created to gate-keep the access to services beyond the support of BOSS - targeted outreach support but in time this decision making will be delegated to locality panels, led by head teachers)

In Lincolnshire, our pupil referral units are referred to as The Lincolnshire Teaching and Learning and Centre (LTLC). Provision across these four sites was judged to require special measures by Ofsted in February 2015. As a key strategic provision in Lincolnshire, it is essential that, through the 'Inclusive Lincolnshire' strategy, LTLC becomes the specialist centre delivering skilled interventions which enable the majority of pupils to return to mainstream school and their local community. By working in partnership with local primary and secondary schools, the LTLC will provide alternative flexible education pathways.

The LTLC has four sites located around the County at Lincoln, Baumber, Boston and Grantham. There are 110 placements available for key stages 1-3 pupils and a potential 186 (142 block and 44 spot purchase) placements for key stage 4 (Solution 4). Placements are purchased for a full year in advance so that the PRU can have a stable workforce and meet unpredictable demand.

The funding for the PRU comes from the dedicated schools grant (DSG) as does the activity of managing the exclusion from day 1, through day 6 provision, PRU placement/next school place and reintegration to future mainstream school. In essence this is a statutory duty placed on the local authority so the cost is determined by volume: the more pupils excluded the more expensive the provision. Each key stage 1-3 placement costs on average £26,225.35 per annum and key stage 4 placement costs on average £17,797.54 (average due to variations in transport costs).

The Inclusive Lincolnshire strategy contains 8 actions that make up the 'Inclusive Lincolnshire Contract', action 6 is as follows:

'A reintegration charge will be introduced to be levied against those schools that do not engage with meeting the needs of pupils either through following good practice or accessing services available to them: those schools that do will not be fined. It is anticipated that, in line with other authorities, this could be in the region of £25k per exclusion.'

The strategy was presented to the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board on 3rd December where it was endorsed with amendments; these amendments have been made and recirculated to the Board. The pupil reintegration charge stimulated much debate but no amendments were requested on this point. Comments included:

- clarity was provided that the pupil reintegration charge would only be levied when the BOSS was in place and that the evidence submitted by schools for the exclusion did not demonstrate that action 6 had been achieved
- having a different pupil reintegration charge for primary and secondary schools to recognise the impact of the charge on small schools (at the time of the meeting we had not calculated the average placement costs for primary and secondary placements: now we know the costs the recharge suggested of £25k would be just short of the true cost for a KS1-3 placement) and again it would only be levied if a school could not demonstrate the above action
- Who would be the decision maker on the levy of the pupil reintegration charge? A practical solution could be that Headteachers could fulfil this role as a virtual panel of 3 Headteachers, rotating each term. As the number is anticipated to be small this would not be an onerous task and would give visibility to other peers as to variations in practice.

The pupil reintegration charge is designed to limit the cost incurred in meeting the needs of an excluded pupil onto those schools that do not identify and meet the needs of pupils with behaviour that challenges them. At present the cost is borne by all schools as a top-slice off the DSG. Those schools that work to identify and meet

pupils' needs, using good practice recognised through the county, will not incur escalating costs associated with exclusions.

Conclusion

Whilst recognising that there is no single solution to reducing the number of exclusions, the Inclusive Lincolnshire strategy outlines synergistic change across schools, the Local Authority and providers in order to achieve better outcomes for Lincolnshire schools and pupils. We need to change the way that we support pupils with challenging behaviour and shift away from specialist and statutory intervention to **earlier help and support**. We want to ensure that capacity and skills are aligned at all levels, and the thresholds between each level are clearly understood and implemented.

The pupil reintegration charge is just one of eight measures within the Inclusive Lincolnshire strategy that will help achieve this objective.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Inclusive Lincolnshire Strategy - November 2015

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by John O'Connor, who can be contacted on 01522 553213 or john.o'connor@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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