

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Wendy Casson, Head Teacher, Educational Diversity
Date of Decision/ Meeting	8 December 2016

PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To review progress made against recommendations made by the Pupil Referral Unit Scrutiny Review Panel

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To scrutinise the update of actions undertaken.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the scrutiny of review panel recommendations.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? N/A

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience."

5.0 Background Information

5.1 In June 2016, following a review of the Pupil Referral Unit, an action plan was developed and agreed by the Pupil Referral Unit Scrutiny Review Panel. The aim of the plan was to implement a number of strategies, designed to reduce the number of students requiring placement within Educational Diversity and develop a consistent approach to exclusion across all secondary settings.

5.1.1 The Pupil Referral Unit Scrutiny Review Panel had been concerned that the number of young people being excluded from mainstream provision had been increasing year on year. A target from the Blackpool Challenge Board was to reduce this number and raise academic achievement for all: “100% of pupils making progress 100% of the time”.

5.2 **Recommendation 1:**
The Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee supports the Blackpool Challenge Board in its objective to provide a consistent approach across all schools and reduce the number of referrals to the Pupil Referral Unit through the introduction of the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership.

Update:

5.2.1 The Behaviour and Attendance Partnership was re-established and the first meeting took place on 17 November 2016. There have been ten meetings and 52 young people have been referred to the panel.

5.2.2 The Partnership is welcomed by all colleagues as it is a forum established to meet the needs of the hard to reach young people, and also to enable the sharing of good practice and develop an awareness of the quality alternative provision that is available. All data regarding exclusions, managed moves, Elective Home Education and referrals to Educational Diversity is shared and understood by all, allowing the appropriate challenge to schools where applicable.

5.2.3 As a direct consequence the number of permanent exclusions has reduced considerably as is shown below:

2014 / 2015 – 60 Total

2015 / 2016 – 44 Total (21 of these attributed to one school)

2016 / 2017 – 7 to date

The number of fixed term exclusions:

2014 / 2015 – 1,495 Total

2015 / 2016 – 1,221 Total

5.3 **Recommendation 1b:**
In order to measure performance against the objective, the Committee to receive regular updates on the number of exclusions and admissions to the Pupil Referral Unit with a view to making further recommendations if sufficient progress is not demonstrated:

5.3.1 The number of students accessing the Pupil Referral Unit during the last academic year rose to 336, prior to the Year 11 leavers, which accounted for an increase in 24 compared to the previous academic year. However, this increase can be attributed to one school in crisis, New To Area (NTA) and Elective Home Education (EHE).

5.3.2 There are currently 255 young people on the roll, compared to 237 during the previous academic year, the majority of which are once again new to area or elective home education.

5.4 **Recommendation 2:**

The Blackpool Challenge Board, be requested to adopt as an action “to assess the feasibility of introducing an appropriate educational diversity module within every school in order to provide consistent early intervention and help to address the causes of any behavioural problems before they escalate.

5.4.1 The Headteacher of Educational Diversity visited all secondary settings during the last academic year to review processes around inclusion. This also provided an opportunity to share good practice across the town and the findings were shared with Blackpool Challenge colleagues.

5.4.2 Each school has started to re-develop inclusion areas within school to support young people’s behavioural, learning and emotional needs. Although each setting is different, there are some shared practices developed through new learning, some of which is emerging through the Chrysalis project.

5.5 **Recommendation 2b:**

That the Blackpool Challenge Board report to the Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee regarding the implementation of the above recommendation:

An update was provided as requested.

5.6 **Recommendation 3a:**

The Inclusion Board be requested to consider the concerns of the panel regarding the reintegration of students back into mainstream education from the Pupil Referral Unit and consider introducing a mechanism to effectively review the needs of the children to be reintegrated and the wraparound of support to prevent future breakdown of reintegration:

5.6.1 All students who are ready for reintegration from the Pupil Referral Unit are referred to the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership (BAP). During the last academic year, nine students were referred to the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership from the Pupil Referral Unit and approximately six have remained in their mainstream setting.

5.6.2 Educational Diversity has been successful in securing £35,000 from the Laurel Trust to work in partnership with “Right to Succeed” to run a research project around developing an exclusion prevention programme. The programme looks to build on Educational Diversity’s experience in running the Pupil Referral Unit’s short term intervention programme named “Chrysalis”. This programme has a fantastic track record of preventing young people at risk of being excluded. In partnership with Right to Succeed, the aim is to take this learning into primary schools in Blackpool, targeting 80 young people at risk of exclusion.

- 5.7 **Recommendation 4:**
- a) That the Panel supports the proposed bid for external funding to the Department for Education Transformational Fund to provide wrap around social care and early help around clusters of schools to help address student behaviour and resilience. If the bid is successful it would result in a social worker being placed to work with a cluster of linked schools.
 - b) If the bid is unsuccessful, the Panel supports the Director of People in her aim to provide a more joined up approach to service provision by introducing improved links between the Family in Need Service and Pupil Welfare Team.
 - c) The Director of People to report to the Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee regarding the progress made in relation to the bid in June 2016.

5.7.1 At the 9 June 2016 Resilient Scrutiny Committee meeting, it was reported that the bid has been submitted to the Department for Education and that we were expecting to hear back regarding next steps. An update on this position is awaited.

- 5.8 **Glossary:**
PRU = Pupil Referral Unit ;
EHE = Elective Home Education;
NTA = New to Area;
BAP = Behaviour and Attendance Partnership.

List of Appendices:

None.

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.