

Local First Inclusion

New Secondary Alternative Provision Information and Updates

21 July 2023

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this letter is to share updates about investment in the Local First Inclusion (LFI) programme to develop alternative provision (AP) in the secondary phase to provide earlier and more bespoke support to reduce the incidence of exclusion.

Thank you to all colleagues who have supported this work and/or attended one of the recent sessions. We appreciate the time which has been prioritised around this and for the rich and constructive feedback we have received.

During the leadership engagement sessions, we outlined the Norfolk context for this work and our evidence base for developing new provision. Our main strategic aim is to enable earlier access to support when persistent disruptive behaviour or one-off incidents may mean pupils are at risk of exclusion from school. The vision for this work has been shared and the principles for a model of school-led centres are being developed to provide new pathways for intervention. Whilst the framework for a Norfolk strategy was shared in the sessions, we are committed to working closely with school leaders and senior staff to ensure it will be responsive and adaptable to the specific needs of pupils across Norfolk.

How are schools and the education system connected to the development of this work?

A strong link has been established with the school system through a new Norfolk Alternative Provision Steering Group. Together with local authority officers, the steering group has representatives from Norfolk secondary schools, alternative provision and SEMH settings, and academy trusts. Additionally, we have secured a national leader of alternative provision, Mark Vickers (CEO of Olive Academies), who is providing consultative support and challenge as well as facilitating links with the DfE's AP development unit.

How will this work develop through the LFI programme?

[LFI is a six-year improvement programme](#) and the work to develop new AP has two specific phases:

1. An initial development phase to work closely with schools who want to pilot a schools-led model
2. A subsequent phase which develops provision to ensure all schools across the county have access to AP

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The revenue funding to support this project builds across the duration of the programme for two purposes:

1. It ensures new provision and models are appropriately developed and tested to ensure they effectively support pupils who are at risk of exclusion
2. It ensures there is appropriate LA capacity to support the development of new provision

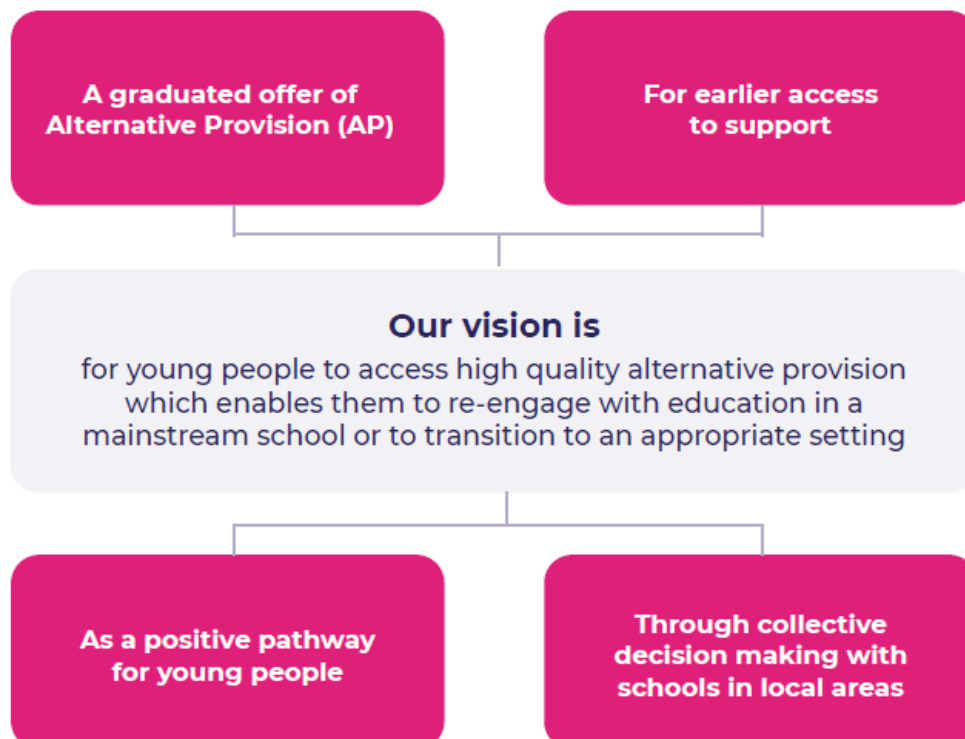
How does the Norfolk Vision for AP align with national policy?

The DfE SEND and AP Improvement plan outlines a blueprint for developing a national approach of tiers for AP which we aligned to:

The DfE Model for Alternative Provision



The Norfolk vision for AP outlines the principles which will underpin the strategic development of new provision as outlined below. A critical ambition within the programme is the development of appropriate pathways for young people who need access to support and intervention through high quality AP *without the need for exclusion*.



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How will the feedback from the leadership sessions inform the development of this work?

The recent engagement sessions were strongly supported by schools and senior leaders with 46 colleagues attending the three sessions, there have also been additional school visits when requested which will continue into the autumn term.

The feedback from the sessions has been collated and can be seen below. Overall, the vision for this work has been well received and there is strong recognition and agreement for the focus on persistent disruptive behaviour and the development of brokered and supported managed moves for one-off incidents when these may mean pupils are at risk of exclusion.

The feedback has been collated into two themes:

1. The vision and strategy for developing new provision
2. Logistical and operational questions for a new model

Vision and Strategy

The vision is promising

The focus on key stage 3 for earlier intervention and support is good

Positive there is recognition for alternative curriculum pathways and solutions in key stage 4

New provision needs to be evidenced based:

Understanding the drivers for exclusion and effective interventions which will support and prevent it

Local and geographical solutions will be preferential to Trust based solutions

Relationships and trust between schools is key

Acknowledgement there needs to be a culture change around exclusion as it has developed into a passport for accessing additional provision

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Logistical and Operational Questions

Admissions, access and transition

- Admissions needs to be easy to access
- Arrangements must not result in delays which could lead to needs escalating
- There is a need for consistency of access to, and quality of, new provision – this must be fair and equitable
- Need to consider transition at all points – KS2 to KS3, within KS3, MMs, from AP...

Curriculum model, Ofsted, progress 8

- Does the vision and strategy align to DfE expectations?
- Need to ensure a KS4 model supports Progress 8 where possible
- Provision and guidance must be aligned to Ofsted criteria

Role of wider professionals

- Family support networks need to be part of the offer to support provision
- How will this link to support from the new School and Community Teams?
- Wider multi-agency support will be key to KS3 centres being a turnaround model
- Pupil and parent voice needs to be a feature in provision and placement decisions

Transport, funding, recruitment and staffing

- Transport must not be a barrier
- Need to consider and support recruitment and the development of a skilled workforce
- Funding must enable needs to be met and not prevent schools from running provision

The work undertaken so far has identified many of these factors and risks and this feedback is now being built into the next steps of the programme.

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What will happen next?

Our planning will reflect on the feedback from the leadership engagement sessions.

A theme from the engagement sessions was *how new provision will be accessed* and what processes there will be to ensure this is *fair and equitable*. This was in the context that the Norfolk landscape has become increasingly complex and links between schools have changed as structures have developed. We will be working with trust and school leaders to understand how we can overcome any barriers across the system, acknowledging there are local, regional and national trusts. There was also consistent and strong feedback that developing effective local partnerships would lead to stronger outcomes for Norfolk pupils which we will explore with leaders in the autumn term.

We remain committed to working in close partnership with schools and there will be further opportunities to contribute to this work in the autumn term. There will be a series of workshops which will include further information on:

- The Norfolk AP strategy
- The model for schools-led provision
- How we can develop and facilitate close partnerships between schools and trusts

Mark Vickers will be working closely with us on the next phase of our engagement and will be leading some of this work. The outcomes of this will result in a set of recommendations which will be shared with schools towards the end of the autumn term.

In addition to the next steps for Alternative Provision development within secondary phase schools there will also be announcements, in the first half of the autumn term, regarding Expressions of Interest for Specialist Resource Bases for 'complex needs'. We want to ensure that when schools are considering approaches to alternative provision they are also aware of other specialist provision developments across the Local First Inclusion programme – watch this space.

If there are any questions, considerations, or wider expressions of interest around this work, please contact us using the Norfolk AP mailbox: alternativeprovision@norfolk.gov.uk.

We wish all colleagues a restful summer break and we look forward to working with you in the autumn.

Thank you for your support.



Andy Tovell
Assistant Director, Inclusion and Opportunity



Nicki Rider
Assistant Director, High Needs SEND and CWD