

Report to: **Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **7 March 2011**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **The Development of Provision and Curriculum at College Central**

Purpose of report: **To give an overview of the development programme of ESCC provision for excluded children and the wider curriculum opportunities available under the new organisation.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider and comment upon the developments in both the organisation of provision and curriculum offer for children for whom the Local Authority has a statutory obligation to provide; and**
 - 2) endorse the future developments for Personalised Foundation Learning.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The provision outlined below has been fully costed and falls within the agreed budget allocated to College Central.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty *"to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school, or otherwise (including Pupil Referral Units – PRUs), for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, will not receive suitable education without these arrangements."* Until September 2009, ESCC discharged these responsibilities through PRU provision managed under the responsibility of Cuckmere House School (for children in the west of the county) and New Horizons School (for children in the east).

2.2 In 2008, a comprehensive consultation on the organisation of PRU provision across East Sussex was undertaken with all key stakeholders. The outcome of this consultation was that there should be a reorganisation of provision across the county so as to ensure compliance with new legislation and to deliver an improved service for children and schools. This resulted in the creation of two Virtual Colleges and a re-modelled delivery model of provision in September 2009.

2.3 In order to create a more sustainable and consistent provision, and streamline the management of PRU-type provision across the county, the LA decommissioned the two Virtual Colleges and established a single, countywide PRU, College Central, from September 2010 with a capacity of 200 children. College Central is now responsible for the delivery of provision for all excluded children across the county. A phased managing change process is currently underway which will see the establishment of a final structure by September 2011.

2.4 In addition to the creation of the new establishment, a comprehensive review of curriculum has been undertaken. This has moved away from the historical model of in-house delivery to utilising a commissioning framework drawing provision from a number of providers to best meet the needs of children on roll.

2.5 At KS3 and below, the main aim for all children admitted to College Central is to reintegrate pupils to a new mainstream school as soon as possible; therefore the curriculum offer is based around that which would be provided in schools. The KS4 curriculum offer is more personalised building upon individual needs of children through providing access to a

wide range of learning opportunities. Core subjects are delivered by College Central staff, but a variety of additional learning opportunities are available from a number of different providers across the county. Through this process we have been able to support a number of small providers to develop provision which meets the needs of children with problematic behaviour.

2.6 The development of Personalised Foundation Learning (PFL) at KS4 has allowed College Central to expand the number of places available thus creating more places for vulnerable young people and achieving savings in the cost of placements as a result. A full breakdown of the provision on offer is detailed in Appendix 1.

2.7 In addition to the benefits the developments in PFL has achieved in LA statutory provision for children who are permanently excluded from school, the model also allows all schools to purchase placements on courses and make appropriate provision for children who find it difficult to engage with a full-time mainstream curriculum and are at risk of exclusion. This has helped schools expand the provision they are able to offer which has built a good foundation for incorporating developments outlined within the White Paper.

2.8 College Central works in close partnership with schools through Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships so as to ensure both a high level of support and provision for children across the county and to ensure that provision supports the return to mainstream school wherever this is viable. Discussions are now being held with groups of secondary schools to see how College Central can also support the development of provision, pre-exclusion, in the future.

3 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 Overall, the developments of both College Central and the Personalised Foundation Learning framework have seen significant improvements in the provision for children who are excluded from school. The current organisation of provision has been running since September 2010 and the early signs are that the bespoke nature of curriculum offer at KS4 is having a positive impact on children in terms of engagement and achievement. Proposals are now being drafted for the expansion of PFL to further diversify the curriculum on offer to children on roll of College Central. It is, therefore, recommended that the Committee endorse the structural developments undertaken through College Central and the expansion of PFL for children in Key Stage 4 in 2011/12.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents:

Appendix 1: Contextual Background of Personalised Foundation Learning at College Central



Contextual Background of Personalised Foundation Learning at College Central

1. Overview

By September 2013, all young people working predominantly at level 1 or below between the ages of 14-19 will be entitled to access a Foundation Learning programme. In East Sussex Alternative Education Provision is evolving into Personalised Foundation Learning and College Central is playing a central role in this. The commissioning of a range of off site Foundation Learning provision is increasing College Central's capacity at Key Stage 4 whilst supporting schools' to prevent permanent exclusion.

Provision which may previously have been 'non-formal' such as activities designed to re-engage learners is now included in the Personalised Foundation Learning offer and supports young people to accrue credits that lead to Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas.

2. Background

In 2009-10 across East Sussex

- 272 1 day per week KS4 Engagement Courses were attended including 69 KS4 Pre Engagement (ESF funded) ones
- 16 Young people accessed full time E2C/ VIP progression with local FE Colleges
- The Shaw Trust were commissioned to deliver 1-2-1 mentoring support with accreditation to School and Virtual College Pupils working towards and OCR is Job Seeking Skills

The Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme gave the impetus for a more coherent strategic approach to 'alternative' provision in East Sussex. Whilst there were examples of good practice, overall outcomes for young people were varied and stronger partnership working was required. College Central needed to significantly increase capacity at KS4 and meet the needs of young people working predominantly at level 1 or below.

In October 2009 the (KS4) Foundation Learning Commissioning Group was established with representation from the 11-19 Partnerships and Provision Team, Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Service and College Central (Virtual College East and West at the time). A collaborative piece of work evaluating

current practice, scrutinising data on attendance, outcomes and projected numbers was completed by March 2010 and a new model of Personalised Foundation Learning provision was agreed.

3. Commissioning

ESCC's Procurement and Contracts Team supported the commissioning of additional core provision for College Central to evolve and enhance VIP and E2C provision. Due to TUPE considerations and tendering time constraints, a waiver was agreed for the existing College providers to deliver 'Get Functional' provision in 2010-11. A fully competitive tendering process for 2011-12 core provision will commence in November 2010 after analysis of impact so far.

A wide range of Vocational and PSD Courses were commissioned with Colleges and External Training Providers to form the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit. The competitive commissioning process was open to all East Sussex approved¹ providers in the following pathways:

- Arts, Creativity and Media
- Sports and Active Leisure
- Services and Industry
- Hair, Beauty and Well-Being
- Construction and Development
- Land Based and Environment
- Employability and Life Skills

All providers have contracts with East Sussex County Council and are contracted to adhere to the East Sussex Standard Operating Procedures.

4. Core Provision

Core provision for Key Stage 4 young people at College Central now comprises of 3 main options which are full year with capacity for 'roll-on-roll-off' placements:

4.1 Get Real: Core Level 2 provision based at College Central Lewes for up to 16 young people and sites at Robertsbridge/ St Leonard's On Sea with capacity for up to 8 young people each. The curriculum is focused around GCSE's with additional PSHE options available. Young people access this provision for up to 5 days per week and can include provision from the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit, work experience or other courses according to individual need.

4.2 Get Functional: Core Level 1 Foundation Learning provision commissioned by College Central with Sussex Downs College for up to 32 young people and Sussex Coast College Hastings for up to 16 young people. The curriculum is focused around Functional Skills and Personal, Social Development with a strong focus on employability skills. Young people access this provision for either 2 or 3 days per week: The

¹ Approval refers to providers who have met the criteria of the External Training Providers Checklist and have provided evidence of relevant policies, insurance and safeguarding procedures.

remainder of a young person's week is comprised of provision from the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit, work experience or other courses according to individual need.

4.3 Get Creative: Core Level 1 Foundation Learning provision commissioned by College Central with the external training provider Respond Academy for up to 8 young people. The curriculum is focused around Functional Skills and arts-based vocational qualifications (including a BTEC in Music). Young people access this provision for 3 days per week: The remainder of a young person's week is comprised of provision from the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit, work experience or other courses according to individual need.

[Please refer to page 6 for an illustration of the core and personalised options available to College Central young people to offer a bespoke package of provision.]

College Central has increased capacity at Key Stage 4 for 2010 to a maximum of 96 (increased from 67)² through the commissioning of additional core and Personalised Foundation Learning provision. There are currently 22 young people at Key Stage 4 accessing Get Functional and Get Creative core provision as part of a full time personalised programme.

5. Personalised Provision

Young people from College Central accessing less than 25 hours per week core provision are offered fully accredited and personalised courses from the Key Stage 4 Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit. Schools are able to purchase this provision independently of College Central and provision is contract managed and administered by the 11-19 Partnerships and Provision Team.

College Central has worked collaboratively with the 11-19 Partnerships and Provision Team to commission 64 courses (512 spaces) for the 2010-11 academic year. College Central has ring fenced (and committed funding) for up to 50% of courses to enable a broad range of provision to be commissioned. All courses are:

- For 1 day per week delivered in 12 week blocks
- Delivered to groups of 8 young people with a ratio of 1 member of teaching staff to 4 young people
- Fully Accredited with Vocational and PSD Qualifications from the Foundation Learning Catalogue
- Adhering to the recommendations of the Back On Track White Paper for Alternative provision
- Quality assured by the Foundation Learning Commissioning and Quality Group
- Delivered by training providers who meet termly for an external training provider forum and are offered appropriate training and support
- Considered to be 'satellite classrooms' of College Central and schools which offer a quality alternative learning environment and curriculum

² This includes 8 spaces on a 'Get Connected' e-learning programme which is not currently in demand.

As of the 30th of October 2010 there are currently 52 courses being accessed by young people from school and 35 from College Central. There are 28 spaces remaining until December 2010.

6. Offer to Schools

Schools can purchase provision from the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit directly. Provision in the toolkit has been subsidised to schools by 50% using Foundation Learning Funding. The majority of courses cost £360 per young person per course and can be used for re-engagement prior to reintegration or as a full year provision.

Each school has been given 3 copies of the new KS4 Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit: 150 copies which were launched during 2 events in June attended by over 100 representatives from schools and services.

College Central now offer school's a full time alternative to permanent exclusion through the purchasing of Get Functional or Get Creative provision plus additional provision from the Foundation Learning Toolkit. Schools' maintain legal responsibility and duty of care for these young people but can now access provision specifically commissioned to support young people with challenging behaviour and barriers to accessing mainstream education. 3 young people on roll of schools are accessing full time packages of provision and there are 3 expressions of interest (as of 30/09/10).

7. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance begins with the commissioning of provision. All providers have evidenced their capacity to deliver the specification and adhere to the standard operating procedures

Get Functional and Get Creative Providers had individual meetings in June/ July 2010 to discuss the specification of requirements, measurable outcomes, attendance and behaviour processes. In addition a half day briefing took place on the 1st of September with all providers to reiterate expected standards, discuss quality assurance process, introduce Key workers and discuss the individual needs of young people being referred to the programmes.

Providers have contributed to the capturing of baseline data. All parents are being contacted via letter with details their child's current levels, provision and predicted outcomes this year. Through this College Central are demonstrating their accountability to young people and parents.

Key workers feed back any issues observed on provision to the Personalised Foundation Learning Manager who communicated this with the Contract Manager. Issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently and the partnership working between College Central and the 11-19 Partnerships and Provision Team is supporting the raising of standards. College Central staff are both supporting and challenging providers.

A schedule of lesson observations, file audits and follow up visits has been scheduled as part of College Central's whole school observation period. Get Functional and Get Creative providers will meet termly for twilight training meetings to share best practice standardise practice and address any cross-provision issues.

8. Conclusions

The expansion and diversification of College Central provision now enables earlier intervention and support before the young person reaches crisis point, disengagement and exclusion. The continuation of successful existing structures including the external training providers' forum, launch events and toolkit are enabling 'alternative education' to develop into the mainstream curriculum area of Foundation Learning. Collaborative working underpins these developments and the status of Foundation Learning alongside GCSEs and Diplomas is starting to rise.

Early indicators show that College Central students working predominantly at level 1 or below are benefiting from personalised packages of provision (evidenced by attendance data, verbal feedback and case studies). Provision is focused on high quality learning, appropriate provision and support and offers a safe and alternative learning environment.

College Central has significantly increased capacity at Key Stage 4 and now offers schools packages of support for those at highest risk of permanent exclusion. Schools' are also able to access part time accredited provision for young people vulnerable to exclusion through the Personalised Foundation Learning Toolkit. There has been a significant increase in the range of provision available for schools to purchase directly from the Local Authority or College Central which offers quality, meaningful and personalised alternatives to exclusion.

KS4 Personalised Foundation Learning (PFL) Menu

