

Report Title	Preventing Exclusions
Meeting	Schools Forum
Date	05 December 2023
Chair	Jenny Sims
Report Author(s)	Helen Gasparelli, Head of Inclusion
Open/Exempt	Open

1 Current Exclusion Picture in Sutton

- 1.1 Sutton's rates of exclusions had remained fairly consistent between 2018-2021, and below the national average. However, during the pandemic Sutton's rates of exclusions did not drop in line with our statistical neighbours and post pandemic have continued to rise at a higher rate than the national average.
- 1.2 Locally collected data for Academic Year 2022-2023 estimates that Sutton's rate of exclusion is 0.22%, which equates to an increase when comparing the previous year. This figure represents 80 permanent exclusions being recorded in 2022-2023 compared to 45 in 2021-2022. For the current Academic Year 2023-2024 Sutton has received 15 exclusions in Autumn term 1 (of which three have subsequently been rescinded). By comparison, in Autumn term 1, 2021-2022 we had received 17 exclusions.
- 1.3 DfE published data identifies that Sutton's rate of exclusion for children with an EHCP in 2021-2022 was 0.20% and representative of three children, higher than the national average of 0.13%. For the period 2022-2023 local data identifies that 11 children with an EHCP have been excluded from mainstream settings, and a further 8 children were going through the EHCNA process at the time of exclusion.
- 1.4 Feedback from schools regarding the reasons behind the rising rates of exclusion suggests a complex picture. The impact post pandemic is still felt through the lens of both school attendance and exclusion. Children's emotional and mental health needs have been impacted and there are ongoing difficulties in accessing support services for these needs (e.g., increased waiting times). The pressures of increasing school numbers and complex SEND students in mainstream schools, are also adding additional stress to the classroom and teachers' capacity to provide the necessary support to children with challenging behaviour.
- 1.5 Support services across education, health, and social care continue to be in high demand, with the volume of referrals often outweighing capacity, creating long waiting times.
- 1.6 It is recognised that a dual approach is needed: supporting children and young people in the here and now to prevent further increases to the exclusion rate and thinking strategically about future needs and how the local area can better support younger pupils at an earlier stage.

1.7 In April 2023 two new services were implemented and are currently supporting c70 pupils:

- **Early Help Integrated Youth Support** increased staff capacity, enabling a change in practice to have workers allocated to specific secondary schools - **Cost: £142,500 (+£110,000 DSG)**
- **Limes College:** introducing Turnaround Plus model, supporting pupils at secondary who are closer to permanent exclusion and need more intensive work. **Cost £53,237 per annum**

Early indicators of the impact of both services are positive as can be seen in service reports under options 3 and 4.

Headline Data

	Sutton	National	Sutton	National	Sutton	National	Sutton	National	Sutton**	National
Year	2018-2019	2018-2019	2019-2020	2019-2020	2020-2021	2020-2021	2021-2022	2021-2022	2022-2023	2022-2023
Total Exclusion	28	7,894	29	5,057	28	3,928	45	6,495	80	-
Total Rate of Exclusion	0.07%	0.10%	0.07%	0.06%	0.07%	0.05%	0.11%	0.08%	0.22%	-
Total Suspension	1,368	438,265	971	310,733	1,363	352,454	1,976	548,280	-	-
Total Rate of Suspensions	3.51%	5.36%	2.45%	3.76%	3.40%	4.25%	4.86%	6.91%	-	-
Number of Exclusions Secondary	25	6,753	26	4,269	23	3,492	40	5,658	72	-
Rate of Exclusion Secondary	0.13%	0.20%	0.14%	0.13	0.11%	0.10%	0.19%	0.16%	0.43%	-
Number of Exclusions Primary	3	1,067	3	739	5	392	5	758	7	-
Rate of Exclusion Primary	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02	0.03%	0.01%	0.03%	0.02%	0.04%	-
Number of Exclusions Special	0	74	0	49	0	44	0	79	1	-
Rate of Exclusion Special	0.00%	0.06%	0.00%	0.04	0.00%	0.03%	0.00%	0.05%	0.12%	-
Number of Suspensions Secondary	865	357,715	723	253,307	1,084	296,224	1,599	498,120	-	-
Rate of Suspension Secondary	4.47%	10.78%	3.92%	7.43	5.28%	8.48%	7.61	13.96%	-	-
Number of Suspension Primary	230	66,463	157	47,261	164	46,203	261	66,203	-	-
Rate of Suspension Primary	1.21%	1.41%	0.79	1	0.86%	0.99%	1.37	1.42%	-	-
Number of Suspension Special	273	14,087	91	10,165	115	10,027	116	13,957	-	-
Rate of Suspension Special	53.42%	11.32%	16.25	7.76	19.26%	7.29%	18.77	9.60%	-	-

** Local data by Sutton School, includes Sutton and OOB pupils DfE will publish July 2024

** rate worked out based on pupils on roll census 2023

2 Funding allocation

2.1 Following a permanent exclusion, schools receive a termly flat rate invoice comprising:

- 1) Statutory elements (AWPU) that include a basic entitlement, and additional educational needs factors such as Free School Meals, English as an Additional Language
- 2) An additional locally agreed amount to Limes that includes Pupil Premium (where the money follows the child/young person).

2.2 The Local Authority claims the pro-rata exclusion monies and the balance is transferred to Limes College to provide additional services to excluded pupils beyond their education.

2.3 The table below illustrates the statutory and non-statutory exclusions money.

	Total in LBS £	Statutory £	Non-Statutory (Limes/Returned) £
Balances			
2021/22	(158,052)	(96,788)	(61,264)
2022/23	(340,371)	(169,600)	(170,771)
2023/24 @ 1/11/23	(181,114)	(106,752)	(74,362)
	(679,538)	(373,141)	(306,397)
Statutory			
Committed (SF December 22)			
2023/24			
EHYIS workers attached to schools	142,500	142,500	
Limes Turnaround Plus	53,237	53,237	
Balance remaining	(483,801)	(177,404)	(306,397)
Non-Statutory			
Paid to Limes	193,712		193,712
Returned to Schools	14,138		14,138
	(275,951)	(177,404)	(98,547)

- 2.4 Currently there is £373,141 within the statutory pot of which £195,737 is committed expenditure to support Turnaround Plus and EHYIS workers in schools, leaving the balance available for preventative work at £177,404 as at the end of Autumn term 1 2023 which can be used for prevention activities.

3 Exclusion Support Options available

- 3.1 There is an opportunity to consider how the local area may wish to use the available statutory funding elements differently to tackle immediate need and also in the longer term. In considering the options the following should be borne in mind:
- Statutory elements of the exclusion funding should follow the child into their permanent setting if excluded and placed back in mainstream within the same financial year. If the child is not returned to school at the end of the financial year the money will no longer follow the child. Provision needs to be made to ensure that should a pupil return to a permanent school (mainstream or special) that funding is available.
 - The Education and Skills Funding Agency have confirmed that unused funding returns back to reserves at year end. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves can be used in line with funding regulations and Schools Forum approvals in line with the guidance. DSG reserves are not ring fenced by block at year end.

Option 1: Increase Paving the Way (PTW)

- 3.2 Recognising the need to build capacity in the primary sector and identify and support the needs of children and families earlier, there is an option to increase the capacity of the PTW service by employing one additional worker, who would focus support on Years 4-6 into Year 7 to support readiness for transition to secondary which has been identified as a local area priority.

PTW is an early intervention service that supports children with a range of needs including social communication, attention and concentration differences, and anxiety. They provide

holistic support that includes a range of assessments to identify root causes to behaviour differences, and a menu of support which includes 121 sessions with the child, at-home support through advice given to families, group work, the provision of strategies to support the child in all settings and the team form part of the Cognus community Autism diagnostic pathway.

Children, and families receiving a diagnosis via this path also benefit from access to the A-Plan and a greatly reduced waiting time on a families' journey to diagnosis due to the direct referral from PTW as opposed to a referral to CAMHS for referral to the Cognus Clinical Psychology Service. This is aided by the PTW reports providing more informed comprehensive referrals.

Service outcomes demonstrate that 96% of pupils make progress as a result of the intervention, 61% of pupils have improved self-esteem, 66% have improved behaviour, 54% are better able to manage school and learning and 50% have strategies that are helping to improve attention and concentration. Improvements in these areas supports improved behaviour both at home and in school. Children, families, and professionals better understand the child's needs and reasonable adjustments and strategies required to support them, improving their ability to access learning and social interactions.

Support given in the primary phase not only supports the child within the primary school but also supports a smoother transition to secondary and prevents exclusion by ensuring that children from reception to year 7, and their families receive the necessary help. Of the children supported 121 over a two-year (2020-22) period 92% remained in school. Developing focused support for years 4-6 would enable preparation for secondary transition, given the numbers of suspensions and permanent exclusions in year 7 (19 pex) and 8 (26 pex) when looking at local exclusions data Academic Year 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Increasing PTW capacity by 1 FTE, would enable the behaviour specialist to support 80 children on a 1-2-1 basis per year for approximately 10 weeks each.

Cost £45,000 for 1 member of staff

Option 2 : Increase Inclusion Capacity

- 3.3 A success in exclusion prevention has been the development of the Inclusion Coordinator role. With an increase in demand for the service, capacity was temporarily increased from 1 FTE to 2 FTE, but the funding ends in March 2024. The funding provided increased capacity via a dedicated specialist coordinator for primary and secondary phases focused on preventing exclusions and supporting schools to find alternatives through multi-agency support and developing effective packages of support, in addition to the statutory duties carried out in relation to exclusion, increasing prevention capacity.

Inclusion Coordinators provide direct and indirect support, their offer includes;

- acting as a system navigator to ensure families are schools are accessing the right pathways, systems and services, they support
- identification and management of risk through a safeguarding lens

- working with families to bring a reflective, restorative approach, and rebuild or prevent breakdown in relationships with other professionals
- active participation in the Vulnerable Pupil Panel, providing a wealth of information, guidance and professional challenge to ensure progress with cases
- provision of monthly surgeries for professionals and families
- training, and support for school staff and governors with policy and practice
- leading the development of prevention action plans and coordination of local area partners, as well as providing targeted transition support from Year 6-7.
- provision of bespoke targeted support to schools with high levels of permanent exclusions providing practical case support, risk management alongside wider practice development

The outcome of this work prevents exclusions and supports children, families, and schools to access education and receive the support that they need.

We would like to increase capacity by 1 FTE permanently. This increase would support approximately 80-90 cases each year and would increase capacity across both primary and secondary sectors.

Cost £ 45,000 for 1 member of staff

Option 3: Specialist Support Workers (SSW) attached to schools

- 3.4 In January 2023, Schools Forum agreed to build on the positive results seen with the Edge of Exclusion work previously delivered by two Specialist Support Workers (SSWs) from Targeted Early Help and committed to double the number of SSWs to four, attaching these workers to 8 secondary schools. The 8 schools were selected on the basis that exclusion data showed these schools to have the highest levels of permanent exclusion in the borough. The initiative was similar in idea to the Social Workers in School model that was previously piloted in some secondaries in Sutton but used SSWs rather than social workers, offering greater flexibility as SSWs do not have to work within a statutory context.

The Schools Team, within the Early Help Integrated Youth Justice Service, consists of a Team Manager and 4 SSWs. The team commenced their work in schools in April 2023 and have been set up as a 1-year pilot until March 2024. The SSWs are based in each assigned school at least 1 day a week to create a flexible and immediate response for young people identified by the school who need support. Schools refer directly to the team and decide which children are supported. In addition to holding a caseload of children who receive targeted 1:1 support, SSWs also have capacity to complete short-term, reactive interventions with children that the school identify need an immediate response. These children are supported without the school completing a formal referral or obtaining full consent from the child's parents/carers. This 'ad hoc' work does not feature in the performance figures below, which reflect formal referrals for case work and it should be noted that different schools have used the resource differently when it comes to 'ad hoc' work.

As of 1st November 2023, 93 children had been referred to the schools Team. This consisted of 61 boys (66%) and 32 girls (34%). 57% of the children referred were White British, with the

next highest ethnicities represented being: Black British (15.1%), Any other White (8.6%) and Mixed or multiple ethnicities (7.5%).

It should be noted when put forward as a proposal last year the target was for the team to support 80 children over the 12 months and thus the team has worked with more children than anticipated after just 2 terms- this evidences both the value for money and the need for this resource.

As evidenced in the table below, most referrals are for children in Years 8-10.

Year	7	8	9	10	11
Numbers referred	7	22	27	26	11

From the referrals received - the main presenting issues were:

- Defiance: 43 cases
- Emotional Wellbeing issues: 39 cases
- Relationship difficulties: 9 cases
- Aggressive and violent behaviour: 8 cases

Interventions from the SSWs has included the delivery of direct work sessions on the following topics:

- Healthy relationships;
- Self-esteem and identity;
- Improving overall communication with peers and teachers;
- Decision making skills;
- Managing emotions;
- Safety and trigger planning; and
- Future aspirations and goal setting.

To deliver the above intervention, SSWs have undertaken home visits; undertaken risk assessments; attended TAF meetings; undertaken family work, including restorative work to improve relationships between parent(s) and school; supported with reintegration meetings; and helped to coordinate plans of support including work in collaboration with the Therapeutic Hub, Targeted Early Help, Children's Services and Schools.

On average children were supported for 5 months before closing.

Of the 93 children referred, 7 (7.5%) of these have gone onto be permanently excluded. The Team feels that many of these children were referred too late and there was insufficient time for the intervention to take effect.

Regarding what has worked well:

- Responsivity- Schools can access a quicker response in terms of allocation and engagement of young person/parent, as opposed to waiting weeks/months for allocation.

- Flexibility- Cases are not following targeted early help and statutory practice requirements/standards which facilitates greater flexibility in the work the practitioner can deliver.
- Youth work- Schools have expressed they value the youth work-based model of approach.
- Relational- The SSWs have developed positive relationships with students, parents and school staff. They are embedded well in schools, and this has promoted effective work with Heads of Year.
- Differing views/perspectives- The Schools Team have been able to work positively with Schools to share alternative views and provide a different lens when exclusion is being considered, supporting discussions to look for alternatives to exclusion.
- Introducing new direction to divert from exclusion is being well received, and implemented at the stage of reintegration.

What has not worked so well:

- Decision making- The Team would like to see greater flexibility in some school exclusion/behaviour policies to allow for action plans and intervention to be offered to children involved in certain behaviours before the school decides to permanently exclude. Rather than the current situation where certain behaviours (e.g. possession of knives, distribution of illegal substances) lead to immediate permanent exclusion. To this end, the Schools Team would like the opportunity for greater input into school decision making, as it relates to permanent exclusion.

In terms of barriers and issues that the team have encountered:

- Breakdown between school and family- Ongoing relationship difficulties between some parents and schools impacts the Schools Team's ability to effectively engage some children/families.
- Prevention vs Reactive response- The direction from VPP, is for all edge of exclusion cases to be referred to Schools Team, despite the complexity and likelihood of exclusion for some of these children. As such several referrals have been made for children considered 'too far gone' by the school. The team is clear that it can be a challenge to turn things around and create change in a short space of time, particularly when the school's perception is that these children are 'too far gone'. Intervention with this cohort, requires more realistic goals to be set, e.g. PEX might still take place but potentially other outcomes could be achieved.
- Training- The Team has noted that some school staff would benefit from access to training to help them better manage challenging, violent and resistant behaviour by young people;
- Vaping/Smoking- The Team have been called upon to tackle groups of children who are vaping/smoking on school premises or truanting to engage in this behaviour during break and lunch periods.

Options for funding:

- 1: Continuation of funding from year 1 – service fully funded: Cost: £142,500 (+£110,000 DSG)
- 2: Subsidised £110,000 from DSG, with 8 schools sharing the cost of £142,500 (£17,812 per school)

3. Subsidised £110,000 from DSG + £62,500 exclusion money + contribution per school £10,000 (£80,000)

4: The offer could be expanded to more schools if they wish to buy in under the proposed funding model above or if those schools already supported want more resource than is currently available, they could increase their contribution.

Cost: £252,500 (£142,500 + £110,000 DSG 2023/24 funding)

Option 4: Turnaround Plus

- 3.5 Turnaround Plus builds on an existing model of intervention and support provided by Limes College. The Plus model meets the complex needs of pupils that need more intensive work and that are considered to be on the edge of exclusion.

Through a 6-week intervention programme, consisting of 3 half days where pupils attend onsite at Limes, pupils receive screeners to identify any underlying SEN needs, targeted support/mentoring from experienced staff, and group work to address the challenging behaviours that are leading to exclusion. The aim is to support pupils to have an improved understanding of self, have strategies in place to self-regulate, to communicate in alternative ways and to recognise and minimise the behaviours that have led to suspension and sanctions.

This programme was implemented in April 2023 for a pilot year, with funding agreed by forum in January 2023. In its first 6 months the programme is already seeing early indications of success.

Statistics from the Summer Term are:

- 10 Students attended over the 2 programs
- 1 Student PEX whilst on the program
- 2 students PEX after leaving program
- 2 students have joined us on dual registration after leaving the program, 1 on Group 4 Trauma program due to needs identified whilst on program and 1 who could/would not return to mainstream due to contextual issues
- 1 student still being supported via TAC

Although its early days these figures are showing that after 2 terms the Turnaround Plus have potentially avoided 50% PEX of that cohort.

Over a period of 12 months this programmes aim was to support 30 secondary age pupils per year, specifically targeting key Stage 3 pupils.

Cost £53,237 per annum – per child cost £1,775

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Through this support our vision is to see a longer term, sustained programme of work. The success of the support will see exclusions diminish. A reduction in exclusions will mean savings for schools. Rather than reducing successful services in line with available funding we see services continue through a dual approach.
- a) will prioritise services identified as most critical for funding on an ongoing basis using accrued exclusion money and
 - b) move to a model where services are subsidised or fully funded by schools.
- 4.2 School colleagues recognise reducing exclusions in their settings means cost avoidance/savings will be made, releasing funding that can then be used in prevention activities. We will continue to work with colleagues in schools to maximise resources to meet demand.
- 4.3 The recommendations have been made in collaboration with Chairs of primary and secondary vulnerable pupil panel (VPP), Chair of ELG, Acting Strategic Lead for Education, and in conjunction with providers who offer the services described in the proposal.
- Schools Forum are asked to indicate their support of the recommendations made.
- 4.4 **Value available £167,404** (£177,404 less £10,000 reserve). We need to keep £10,000 in reserve to follow a child if they return to a permanent setting (mainstream or special) within the same year (APWU balance)
- 4.5 **Recommendation 1:** Option 1, we recommend that capacity within PTW is increased by 1 FTE focusing support on children in years 4,5 and 6.
Cost £45,000
- 4.6 **Recommendation 2:** Option 2, we recommend that capacity within Inclusion is permanently increased by 1 FTE. Partners recognised this as a critical local area role that provides integral support and is a role that requires continuity of staff and would like to prioritise for funding on an ongoing basis.
Cost £ 45,000
- 4.7 **Recommendation 3:** Option 3, we recommend the continuation of the specialist support workers attached to schools project. Currently the service is fully funded, we recommend moving to a subsidised model. The proposal was discussed with school partners and they have agreed in principle to the proposed model. The model recommended is **£110,000 from DSG + £62,500 exclusion money + contribution per school £10,000 (£80,000 in total).**
Cost £62,500
- 4.6 **Recommendation 4:** Option 4 we recommend that the funding for Limes Turnaround plus project comes to an end after year one but the service offer remains as a traded offer to schools. Limes are in agreement.

However, to bring consistency across their offer we propose that existing commissioned funding for standard secondary Turnaround is used to subsidise both Turnaround and

Turnaround Plus. A charge of £850 per child would then be applied to schools for either programme.

4.8 Total cost of recommendations £152,500

5 Conclusion

In summary, there are a multitude of factors impacting upon the current exclusion rate and the local area has a duty to respond to address these worrying concerns. Any plan to address permanent exclusion requires both immediate and long-term solutions, which we continue to work on as a local area and through the inclusion strategy.