

ENC 7 - X - Appendix A

Final Report of the Review of Sutton Tuition and Re-integration Service (STARS)

6th November, 2023

This report comprises three sections which cover:

Section 1: Report on the review and outcomes

Section 2: Recommendations

Section 3: Implementation plan

Section 1: The Report

1.1. Context

Chris Harrison and Alison Holloway from the independent organisation, SEND4Change were asked by Beverly Williamson the head teacher of the Sutton Tuition and Re-integration Service (STARS) to undertake a review of the pupil referral unit for children with complex medical needs known as the Drapers Centre.

Due to the planned relocation of the hospital service to another local authority area no consideration was made of the current hospital provision.

The service is currently experiencing difficulties in managing the demand for placements in the Drapers Centre and there are significant difficulties in reintegrating pupils back into suitable long term educational placements.

The review has been undertaken during the summer term of 2023 and this paper is the result of the review and contains a number of recommendations for consideration.

1.2. Aim of the review

The aim of the review was to:

- examine the role and remit of the STARS located at the Drapers Centre
- consider pathways into the Centre (admission pathways)
- consider pathways out of the Centre (reintegration back into mainstream schools)
- identify ways of improving pathways in and out of the Centre.

SEND4Change aimed to provide an insight into the challenges facing the service and possible ways of providing a more sustainable and manageable model of provision in the future that retains parental confidence, is affordable and is of significant quality and achieves good outcomes for its vulnerable learners.

1.3. Summary of Outcomes from the review

In summary the review showed that there are many strengths in the current offer. These include:

- pupils generally had a positive view of the provision (although some never attend)
- reviews and inspections show that the quality of teaching is good
- the Centre is a calm and supportive environment for pupils
- families are positive about placements at the centre.

However the review also showed us that:

- current arrangements are unsustainable.
- the profile of the pupil population has changed over time which presents a significant challenge
- there is increased demand for places which cannot be met
- five schools use the majority of the centre places that are available
- the aftermath of Covid and lockdown has had a significant impact on some pupils
- the threshold for admission lacks clarity as a result of recent changes
- the sense of purpose for the centre has become less clear
- for some pupils a long term placement is appropriate, for others it isn't and will negatively impact on their life chances
- the centre's offer addresses curriculum needs but does not fully address pupils' mental health needs
- there is a limited number of curriculum subjects which pupils can access
- there are limited examples of successful reintegration back into mainstream schools.

SEND4Change recommends that the local authority and the STARS management team consider the following proposals.

There is the need to develop a new collaborative partnership approach with schools and health colleagues which:

- **Strengthens and clarifies the admissions** arrangements
- **Rebrands** the centre's offer
- **Enriches** the centre's offer
- **Focusses on re integration**
- **Charges schools** for placements
- Provides **support for families.**

This will provide an opportunity to work with those schools that are high users of the provision and pilot new arrangements which will potentially reduce demand from the 'high use' schools.

1.4. The Review Process

The review examined the relationships between the centre, its pupils, their families, schools, the LA and its partner agencies in health and social care. It also considered the cost of the service and the effective use of resources.

The review followed the process described below.

i) **We defined the resources available to the centre:**

- staffing, roles and capacity
- expertise
- financial resources
- facilities
- other.

ii) We defined the current roll and purpose of the centre:

- what it is.... what it is not...
- what is its purpose and how successful is it?
- what is the curriculum offer?
- what works.... what could be better?

This involved:

- meeting school leaders and health professionals
- meeting all staff in the Drapers Centre
- looking at outcomes for young people
- discussions with LA commissioners.

iii) We examined the needs of pupils on the roll of the PRU

This involved:

- a review the level of need of those with EHC Plans and the content of EHC plans
- consideration of what sort of placements or provision are required for those needing a long term placement?

iv) We engaged with pupils and considered:

- what works well?
- what could have been better?

v) We facilitated discussions on pathways in and out of the Centre

We engaged with schools and with health partners in order to determine:

- patterns of referrals and source schools
- destination decisions – how are these made and what options are available?
- what else could be done to improve reintegration levels?

vi) We developed a number of options for consideration

Based on data analysis, evidence and discussions we:

- developed a range of options for future service delivery
- presented the outcomes to the STARS leadership team.

vii) We consulted stakeholders on proposals and options

Discussions were facilitated between SEND4Change and the following people:

- Jane Morgan – Head of SEND Support and School Improvement Adviser
- Carolyn Scott – SEND Commissioning Lead
- Kieran Holliday – Acting Strategic Lead for Education
- Nick English – Principal Educational Psychologist
- Amalia Banon – Head of SEND Service
- Bev Williamson – Headteacher STARS
- Debbie Gifford – Deputy Headteacher STARS
- Annika Clark – Clinical Lead Mental Health teams SWLSTG
- Dr Birgit Berg – Consultant Child Psychiatrist
- Janet Grimes – Head of Service Delivery for CAMHS & All Age Eating Disorder Services
- Marie Baxter – Interim Consultant Clinical Psychologist CAMHS
- Robert Beck – Parent and Councillor
- Drapers Centre Staff

Visits to the following schools took place:

- Glenthorne School
- Greenshaw School
- Carshalton Boys School
- St Philomena's RC school.

Discussions on proposals and options were also held with the Partnership of Sutton Secondary Schools Heads' Board and subsequently at a meeting with the following school representatives:

- Pete Naudi – Head of Cheam High School and Chair of the Vulnerable Pupils' Panel
 - Lynda Wallace – Deputy Headteacher, Greenshaw High School
 - Alex Fernandez – Safeguarding Lead, St Philomena's RC school
 - Paul Avery – Deputy Principal, Carshalton Boys High school.
- (Councillor Robert Beck also attended this meeting.)

viii) We developed an implementation plan

An implementation plan has been developed which sets out how, by whom and when the improvement priorities will be delivered.

1.5. What we learned

i) The budget

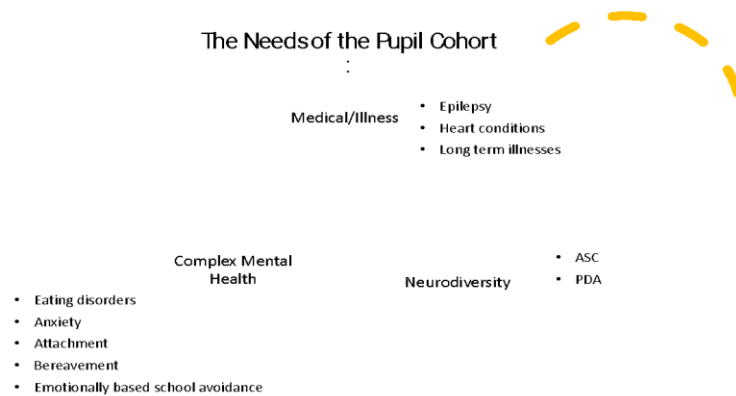
- The local authority commissions 75 places (Attendance is varied and for a number of pupils is very poor).
- Each place commissioned by the LA has a value of £16,700 (£10,000 Core funding plus £6,700 top up funding).
- The total income from place funding equates to circa £1.25 million.
- The Centre is currently able to balance the budget.
- Schools do not make any contribution to the cost of a placement at the centre.

ii) The Pupils

The needs of pupils placed at the centre have changed over time:

- there are fewer pupils with recognised physical medical conditions attending the centre
- there are increasing numbers of pupils experiencing school based anxiety
- there are increasing numbers of pupils with ASC.

The overall needs are summarized in the diagram below.



iii) **The Centre offer**

The Centre provides a curriculum offer which is either delivered virtually (on line learning) or face to face in classrooms at the centre.

The centre provides:

- a sympathetic and “therapeutic” environment
- a mainstream curriculum provided in a calm, small-scale space
- small class sizes taught by subject specialists
- a reduced curriculum offer
- an offer that is liked by the pupils
- taxi transport to and from school.

The centre does not provide:

- a highly medicalised approach
- an environment that allows access to mental health workers.

Use of the provision

62% of placements are made by 5 schools

84 pupils are on roll at STARS and five schools generate 52 of these placements:

- Greenshaw (13)
- Glenthorne (11)
- Carshalton High School for Girls (10)
- Oaks Park (9)
- Cheam High (9).

iv) **What we learned from the visits to schools**

- There was an inconsistent offer for pupil’s experiencing mental health challenges between the schools that were visited.
- Schools had different thresholds and levels of interventions which determined the point at which pupils were “passed over” to the local authority via referrals to STARS
- Some of the schools showed a very strong commitment to provide a graduated response to meeting the mental health needs of their pupils
- Some schools remained in close contact with STARS and retained an interest in the progress of their pupils. Others did not.
- Some schools expressed a sincere interest on taking pupils back, others were not so interested

- There was a general confusion about the new arrangements for referrals to STARS and a lack of understanding about the criteria for admission and the remit of the Centre. Schools generally felt that Dr Berg was the gatekeeper of places at STARS
- Schools did not seem surprised or alarmed about the prospect of contributing to the cost of placements for their pupils at the Centre
- Schools were not overly receptive to establishing provision on their school site for these pupils on the grounds of capacity (time and space)
- Schools indicated that they would support the development of new, fair and transparent arrangements. Each of the possible options were discussed and were generally well received. Schools indicated that they would be supportive of piloting new arrangements should this be required.

v) What we learned from health practitioners

The NHS offers a tiered approach to addressing the needs of pupils with mental health needs:

- Tier 1: Primary GPs and Health Visitors
- Tier 2: A combination of some specialist CAMHS and community based services
- Tier 3 CAMHS - higher level support for more complex cases (for fixed periods)
- Tier 4 : Outreach and in-patient care.

The mental health support teams based in some schools aim to prevent “drift” from Tier 1 into tiers 2, 3 and 4. They provide a standard package of interventions including:

- early intervention for mild moderate emerging cases
- staff training
- consultation and reflective practice.

They do not provide direct support to STARS pupils. The aim is to “turn off the tap before the sink overflows”.

There are concerns that Covid has impacted on many pupils. Whilst there was the perception that lock down during Covid enabled pupils with ASC to ‘self-indulge at home’, these pupils did not socialise and got out of practice of engaging with wider society and as a result have been reluctant to return to a school environment. Post Covid, the statutory obligation to attend school has become blurred.

It was commented that medicalisation of children in order to access STARS is not always helpful as some parents will then seek/pursue an inappropriate medical diagnosis in order to reach the threshold for STARS.

Health practitioners believed that there is a clear need to define the purpose of STARS. Children with high levels of anxiety ‘need to be exposed in order to help them to overcome their fears’. CAMHS recognise that health professionals are able to contribute but believe that it is unhelpful to expect CAMHS to determine whether or not a child should access STARS provision.

CAMHS is a small team of 5 – 6 clinicians and capacity is very tight. CAMHS professionals are not trained to educate but would be keen to work collaboratively with STARS and provide information to inform decisions for accessing the provision. CAMHS believed that the previous pilot scheme was not given sufficient time to develop but would be open to revisit and refine this scheme to enable it to work better.

Section 2: The Recommendations

As a result of these discussions and investigations, the following areas of activity are identified as priority actions. It is recommended that arrangements need to be in place which:

- i): Manage the flow of pupils out of mainstream schools into STARS by building resilience and capacity.
- ii): Manage the moves back into mainstream schools to increase positive and successful reintegration.

There are **5 main recommendations**:

1. **Decision Making** - strengthen the decision-making process to include criteria and a multi-agency decision making panel
 2. **Refocus the offer and create a menu of options** - create a menu of options and refocus the STARS offer and reintroduce the concept of fixed term placements and part time placements
 3. **Develop a STARS Family Support Offer** - enrich the STARS offer with mental health input and support to families
 4. **Reintegration** - develop robust pathways to reintegration arrangements
 5. **Redirect Pupil Funding** - develop a funding mechanism for STARS provision
- 1. Decision Making**

The Vulnerable Pupils Panel (VPP) will convene a monthly health panel to consider requests for STARS interventions. The panel process will need to include:

- A referral process (who can refer and how?)
- An admissions panel (multi agency decision making)
- Admissions criteria (the rules which support good decision making)
- A menu of placement options (type of placement and duration).

A “sub-group” of the VPP will administer and manage the referral process and decision making for STARS. Additional specialists who have access to health and education information will be invited to the multi-disciplinary admissions panel of professionals.

The membership should comprise the following representatives: Educational Psychologist, head of STARS, head of schools’ mental health support team, LA SEN team, Social Care and schools’ representative.

The VPP will facilitate the appropriate allocation of aspects of STARS provision from a menu of options. The panel will need guidance and criteria to support fair and transparent decision making. The panel will need access to good evidence and advice on which to base their decisions.

Evidence should be available to the Panel to consider relating to:

- what schools have already put in place prior to the request for support
- the level of health needs
- the child’s health status and ability to attend a school setting
- behaviour
- the content of the Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP)
- SEND
- social care status
- the ability to access a mainstream curriculum (match to the STARS curriculum offer).

Once the VPP has recommended a STARS package, schools and families will be briefed about the expectations and obligations that will be necessary to support the package.

The referring school will host and facilitate the discussions with the family. These discussions will take place at school.

There will be an expectation that the package is for a fixed period and the expectation is that the child would return to the host school and the end of the fixed period.

A programme of reintegration will be initiated on day one of the start of a STARS package of support.

2. Refocus the offer and create a menu of options

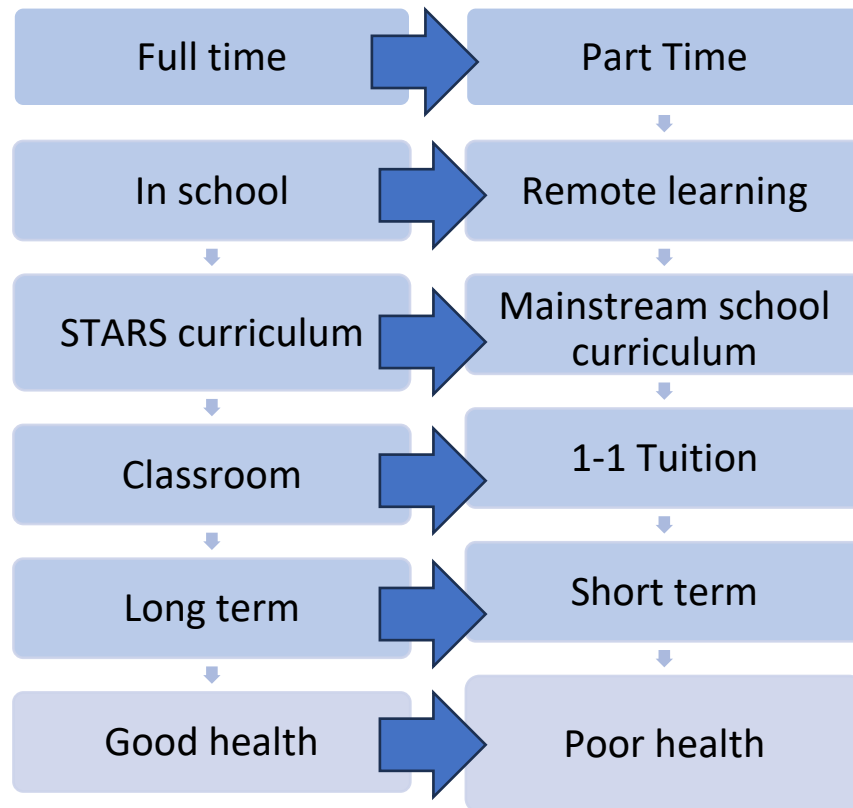
It will be necessary to:

- establish the concept of pathways for individual learners which lead to a healthy return to school or healthy independent adulthood
- refocus the STARS offer as a fixed term, part time offer (for some pupils a long-term placement is appropriate, for others it isn't)
- recommend remote learning or on-site learning
- consider part time placements (2 or 3 days per week with the remaining time spent in the host mainstream school)
- set out the expectation from the start that any placement is on a short-term basis
- share the curriculum offer with the host school with the host school providing, where appropriate, additional curriculum subjects that are not available from STARS.

VPP will have the option of allocating from a menu of which will include the options to:

- refer back to school for a graduated response
- provide school based remote learning
- provide a Tuition service in a school space (either original school or a "new school")
- provide a Tuition service in a non-school environment (for example in a library or at Sutton life centre)
- deliver aspects of the mainstream curriculum offer
- provide a fixed term on site package (morning sessions or 15 hours at STARS)
- non-attendance of pupils who stay at home (varying degrees) due to significant ill health
- provide a STARS Family Support Service.

All pupils are different and will require a tailored package of interventions to suit their needs and circumstances. The VPP panel will need to consider a number of variables in order to identify the most suitable package of interventions. The following list of variables will help the panel to reach a decision.



3. Develop a STARS Family Support offer

Establish an offer for families to support the resilience and health needs of the family.

The aim of the service would be to build family resilience and increase the likelihood of successful reintegration back into mainstream school.

The enriched offer will include:

- Psychology input
- Counselling
- Mental Health Support
- Building resilience
- Support at planning meetings.

The offer to families will aim to support them by providing:

- training on anxiety
- a family support worker to help the family understand what “tools” would positively support children
- support for families with their anxiety (self-help tools, self soothe tools)
- shared support sessions for the parent and child
- an explanation of the benefits of a fixed term placement and the negative impacts of a long-term placement
- support with the reintegration process.

4. Re-integration

Set out the intention for reintegration from the start of a package of interventions and agree a “contract” with the pupil, family and school. It will also be necessary to:

- set out clear the intention from the start by hosting the first meeting at the child’s mainstream school
- agree the clear intention for reintegration from the start of the placement and agree the “contract” with the pupil, family and school

- maintain positive active links with the mainstream school and share information on progress and timescales for the child's return to school
- maintain links with the mainstream school and offer incremental access to the mainstream site
- link with the mental health support team to prepare for reintegration
- identify outreach capacity from STARS to support an initial period of reintegration.

5. Redirect Pupil Funding

- Redirect schools funding to the value of £6,700 per pupil (equivalent value of top-up funds for STARS places).
- The amount will be on a pro rata basis for short-term/long-term places.
- The amount will be on a pro rata basis for full-time/part-time places.

STARS will recoup the appropriate funding from schools. The funds for placements at STARS will be used to create a Family Support Service which includes:

- commissioning CAMHS services
- commissioning Counselling services
- commissioning Education Psychology services
- providing capacity to support family and school liaison work.

Section 3: The Implementation Plan

In addition to actions associated with the five priority areas outlined above, the STARS leadership team in collaboration with partners, will need to manage the changes and communicate with stakeholders. The leadership team will need to create capacity to deliver the new service offer. This will involve stopping doing some things in order to start doing some things differently. This will require careful planning.

Managing Change and Communicating with Stakeholders

There is the need to set out the new proposals and the new STARS offer.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
LA feedback to secondary heads and primary heads			
STARS should send information to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Health • SEND clusters • Families • SEN team • Social Care. 			
Undertake an audit of staff skills and knowledge against the requirements of the new service.			
Identify strengths and challenges and identify areas of expertise which could be best deployed in the new service offer.			
Identify training needs of staff and identify and provide opportunities for CPD.			

--	--	--	--

Creating Capacity

There is the need to create new capacity in order to start providing a new menu of options. What can STARS remove from the existing offer in order to operate the new system?

Activity	Who	When	Progress
Audit all current pupils and identify appropriate pathways. Start discussions with families.			
Reduce Primary School inputs.			
Stop offering full time placements to new cases and start to offer a core package of 15 hours plus further additional options.			
Stop home visits and start meeting families in school.			
Meet with the parents of pupils who currently do not attend STARS and review their offer.			
Ensure that all SEN EHC Plan placements are appropriate.			

Priority One: Establishing A new VPP referral and decision making process

There is the need start operating the new referral and decision-making process through the VPP as soon as possible.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
Brief the Chair of the VPP and the LA			
Agree to process all new requests for STARS input via VPP and agree the start date.			
Establish the consideration of STARS cases as a regular agenda item on the VPP.			
Agree additional membership to include the Schools Mental Health Team.			
Expedite and arrange a "rapid" meeting in order to agree a matrix of indicators which will be used to inform panel decision making (these will need to include criteria for those which are school cases, and those which are STARS cases). Invite representatives from school, MHST), social care, STARS, EP and inclusion services in the LA . Parent carer forum to be engaged			
Ensure that parental permission is part of the referral process.			
Ensure that panel members have a list of the current menu of options which may evolve and increase in number over time.			

Priority Two: Developing New STARS pathways with a menu of options

There is the need to articulate the new menu of options that support learners' pathways back to school or independent healthy adult lives.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
Create a menu of options with a description of the interventions which include the options to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refer the case back to school for further school-based support • provide remote learning • deliver 1-1 Tuition (at school and other venues) • provide Classroom time at the Drapers Centre • provide family support • describe the capacity to deliver each option as units of intervention that can be allocated at VPP. 			
Describe the period of the intervention and duration specifying the number of weeks and number of days per week that the provision will be delivered.			
Brief the VPP on the offer that is available.			

Priority Three: Developing a STARS Family Support Offer

There is a need to create a new service offer that supports families.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
STARS will convene a task and finish group to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the needs of the family • the purpose of the support • the family offer • current staff skills and CPD requirements in relation to the offer • costs • interventions • whether any external services need to be commissioned • revise the existing "re-think it" offer and consider its use as a helpful tool for families. 			

Priority Four: Reintegrate

There is the need to ensure that pupils return to a mainstream school as soon as they are able to do so and that there are robust re-inclusion arrangements in place to ensure that this is successful.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
Establish key phrases and expectations setting out how the offer will be time limited and that reintegration will be the expected outcome of any STARS intervention.			
Write the terms and conditions of the STARS offer based on the principle of reintegration.			
Review the current reintegration process.			

Develop a readiness for reintegration tool.			
---	--	--	--

Priority Five: Redirect Pupil Funding

A new process needs to be established which allows for schools to pay a contribution towards STARS interventions which could be recycled back into any additional family support provided by STARS.

Activity	Who	When	Progress
Advise the LA that a cost recovery system will be in place and that any funding recovered will be used to provide a family support offer to parents with pupils attending STARS.			
<p>STARS to work with the LA to determine how the new cost recovery mechanism might work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ level of funding to be recouped ➤ use of recouped funding ➤ arrangements for primary schools and level of charge. <p>The LA to write and present a paper describing the new arrangements and cost implications for the schools forum.</p>			