

Alternative Provision Meeting-27th May 2022

-Peter Feedback Notes

In the end, the meeting was just Geraint Griffiths (GG) and me.
Mel sent last minute apologies

Agenda: The discussions will focus on participants experience and what the Local Authority (LA) can learn from them to improve the alternative provision (AP) offer in BCP. The agenda will cover the following areas:

What we mean by Alternative Provision?

What have been participants experiences of alternative provision?

What does good quality alternative provision look like?

What needs to improve locally in terms of alternative provision?

What aspects of alternative provision are most important to parents and carers?

How could BCP better involve parents, carers, children and young people in assessing the quality of alternative provision?

Notes:

GG has 2 items of work

1. Reviewing the policies - triggered by the ombudsman asking for a review of medical provision policy
2. Review of AP quality - create a framework to make sure AP is of sufficient quality

He has been talking to Mel. She says that many would like to tell their story. But so far, more parents interested to talk about barriers to attendance.

So Geraint had only Mel and me accepted for this meeting.

GG wants to make sure that the BCP model takes account of parent/carer concerns.

How can we ensure that parent views are included in assessment of quality?

Eg survey to parents of children AP? Involvement in an inspection team?

I asked does AP include all sorts of EOTAS?

GG is only really looking at AP for permanent exclusion / medical exclusion. Eg former PRUs:

Tregonwell, Quay School, Christchurch Learning Centre.

But also considering some EOTAS settings eg Onwards and Upwards, Dorset Personalised Learning.

I said that the PRUs typically have more children excluded for behaviour reasons rather than SEND.

GG said a significant proportion of children who are permanently excluded have undiagnosed needs. Many children move from AP to specialist, rather than back to mainstream.

Quality commissioning team is designing a new tendering process for EOTAS.

Kim Ward is reviewing the current provision. What is available? What else should the LA be commissioning?

I asked - is there any parent involvement in this?

GG said there was a pan-Dorset consultation

I said I joined that, and Kim Ward was observing, but the meeting I was at, the LA people didn't want to hear the parents views on availability and delays.

There are two departments in BCP that commission AP - SEN team, and excluded pupils.

I said the issue is not just about the quality of the AP setting itself - there are broader issues about the time it takes to provide an AP setting for a child that cannot cope at their school, or after EHCP is finalised and the consultation responses all come back 'no cannot meet need' or 'no place available'.

GG said Permanent exclusion must be found within 6 days;

Medical exclusion has no statutory timescale

Is there a statutory limit for sorting out provision after an EHCP has been finalised? [I don't know]

I said we'd be interested in a much more broad discussion about the timely availability of AP / EOTAS, as well as the general questions:

What type of provision is missing?

What could be improved?

I said parents would be interested to help co-produce a bespoke package of provision for their children's specific needs.

GG suggested he could say that the breadth of AP policy is not wide enough, and ask who would be responsible for a broader view.

I said the broader question probably cut across multiple teams in the LA, and that's why it's in a mess!

GG will take this question back to Simon and Sarah.

Sarah R has also commission an external review of AP - will parents be involved with this at an early stage?

Policy documents - I said that I'd asked if member =s wanted to read/comment, and I'd sent them to several people, but none have come back to me yet. GG says he's got the same problem. Maybe policy documents are too try and dull?

Conclusion - I will share the gist of today's conversation to our members, and relay to Geraint any comments / feedback we get.

Geraint is ready to talk to parents individually or to receive written comments, or whatever suits them best.

Peter Phillips