

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 15/01/2024

Subject: Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy

Report of: Councillor Alex Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Report author: Joe Gunning, Programme Lead, Children's Commissioning,

Responsible Director: Jacqui McShannon, Strategic Director Children's Services

SUMMARY

Alternative provision (AP) is where children and young people of compulsory school age can receive their education if they are unable to remain in their school some, or all of the time. This can be for health reasons, exclusion, or because they need some additional support beyond that which can reasonably be offered by their school.

In March 2023, the Department for Education published the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. This publication was the government's response to the public consultation on the SEND Green Paper; Right Support, Right Place, Right Time consultation, which took place in 2022.

Hammersmith & Fulham have subsequently developed our local area Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy which sets out our strategic approach in light of these developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Cabinet approves the Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy attached at Appendix 1.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	Ensuring a person-centred approach that delivers the right level of support to meet presenting needs of children, young people and their families – and in so doing provide them with the best opportunities to thrive.
Creating a compassionate council	Listening and responding to feedback from professionals, young people,

	parents, carers, education settings and wider partners regarding what was working well, what needed improvement and where the gaps were with regards to current support available.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	The development of this document has been guided by feedback from key stakeholders, including young people and practitioners working across education, health, and care services.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	This strategy provides a graduated approach to meeting needs within the borough, ensuring children receive the right support at the right time.
Taking pride in H&F	This strategy aligns to our vision of ensuring children and young people lead happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives and achieve their life goals.

Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications associated with the publication of the H&F Alternative Provision strategy.

It is expected that the implementation of the strategy and action plan will be managed within existing Children's Services approved budgets reported as part of the annual budget report to Cabinet and Council and as necessary through the regular financial monitoring reports.

This strategy will assist with the implementation of the traded outreach model which supports transformation in this area with respect to the Council's Safety Valve Agreement and linked to the wider sustainability of the Alternative Provision model.

Financial implications completed by Tony Burton, Head of Finance Children's Services and Education, 25th October 2023

Financial implications verified by: James Newman, Assistant Director of Finance, 24th November 2023.

Legal Implications

The Council also has duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 to make special educational provision for children and young people whose needs cannot reasonably be met from the resources normally available to schools and post-16 institutions.

The Council has additional statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to provide education for pupils needing alternative education and under the Children and Families Act 2014 to meet the needs of pupils and young people up to the age of 25 with special educational needs.

Publication of the Alternative Provision Strategy contributes to the fulfilment by the Council of these obligations. There are no other direct legal implications associated with the publication.

Implications completed by Jade Monroe, Chief Solicitor, Social Care 18 October 2023

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Proposals and Analysis of Options

1. The Alternative Provision Strategy establishes our strategic approach to the delivery of AP for children and young people in Hammersmith & Fulham, ensuring the offer is coordinated and responsive to the needs of our community.
2. The strategy sets out our shared vision, principles, and priorities to ensure that Alternative Provision in H&F remains high quality and delivers the best outcomes for our children and young people. The development of this document has been guided by feedback from key stakeholders, including young people and practitioners working across education, health and care services.
3. The strategy is fundamental to implementing our responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014 and will be seen as a key document by OFSTED under their local area inspection regime as this underpins the local area strategic approach.

Option 1 – Approve and publish the H&F Alternative Provision Strategy (Recommended)

4. In March 2023, the Government published the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan which sets out how we will work alongside children, young people, and their families, and those who work across every part of the SEND and alternative provision system, to deliver improvements for every child and young person with SEND and in alternative provision. The H&F Alternative Provision Strategy creates the infrastructure to deliver the recommendations within the green paper.
5. The AP Strategy clearly explains our strategic approach to Alternative Provision in H&F, in ensuring children and young people receive the right support at the right time. Approving and publishing this strategy enables the progression of key priorities in this area.
6. This option is recommended.

Option 2 – Do not approve and publish the H&F Alternative Provision Strategy (Not recommended)

7. This option will not result in the delivery of the priorities set out in the document, adversely impacting the life chances and outcomes of children and young people attending this provision.
8. This option is not recommended.

Reasons for Decision

9. The strategy is produced in the context of the statutory requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 together with the guidance in the SEN Code of Practice that was issued alongside the 2014 Act. These provisions include the duty to keep under review the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability and made outside its area for children and young people for whom it is responsible who have special educational needs or who have a disability (section 27 of the 2014 Act).
10. The Act also requires the authority to consider the extent to which this provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs, training needs, and social care needs of the children and young people concerned.
11. In addition, the council also has a duty under section 30 to set out a “Local Offer” which indicates the range of education, health, and care provision available in the borough for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability or outside the borough for those children and young people with special educational needs that it is responsible for or who have a disability where this may be needed.
12. Approval of the AP Strategy contributes to the fulfilment by the Council of these obligations.

Equality Implications

13. There are no direct negative equality implications for groups with protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010, by the approval of this strategy.

Risk Management Implications

14. The strategy sets out a vision and principles which will guide the local area in delivering the strategy; ensuring needs are met as early as possible and that children achieve the best possible outcomes through alternative provision. This is in line with being a compassionate council and in being ruthlessly financially efficient.

Implications verified by: Jules Binney, Risk and Assurance Manager, 26 October 2023

Climate and Ecological Emergency Implications

15. There are no anticipated climate and ecological implications as a result of publication of the strategy.

Implications verified by Hinesh Mehta, Assistant Director for Climate Change, 19 October 2023

Consultation

16. An Alternative Provision thematic workshop was held with key professionals across the local area, where they explored the role of Alternative Provision within the borough. The findings which emerged from this, contributed to the development of this strategy.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Alternative Provision Strategy