



## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Report of the

**AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL**

into

**THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WHO HAVE  
BEEN PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED FROM  
SCHOOL (YEARS 7-11)**

**March 2002**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Panel**

Councillor Hillas (Chair)  
Councillors Allonby, Iredale and A Smith

Lead Officer: Adam Wilkinson  
Committee Administrator: Brian Tewkesbury

### **Background**

The Review was set up following consideration by the former Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel of a District Audit Report on Attendance and Exclusions in Kirklees. There was concern amongst Panel Members that the Service might not be meeting the needs of excluded pupils, and it was also considered appropriate to address the findings of District Audit in relation to identified improvements.

The Panel has met on five occasions and also has carried out separate visits to various provisions for excluded pupils (the Westfields Pupil Referral Unit, the Barnardo's Year 11 Project, the Rathbone Project and the LIFE Project).

### **Information and Evidence**

The Panel has considered the following in reaching its conclusions:-

- (a) District Audit Report on Attendance and Exclusions.
- (b) Presentations by Officers and Statistical Information.
- (c) Sample Case Studies.
- (h) Minutes/Notes of meetings and visits to the various projects.
- (d) Best Value Performance information and Service Targets.
- (e) Pupil Referral Service Conference Programme - 3 December 2001.
- (f) Evaluation of the Conference.
- (g) Key Stage 4 Referral Handbook.
- (i) Outcomes of informal interviews with Project Leaders, staff and students attending various provisions.

In addition the Panel has received valuable contributions from the following members of staff at the Council's Westfields Pupil Referral Unit:-

Joan Normington - Pupil Referral Service Manager

Phil Craig - Head of Service for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

## Findings

During its deliberations the Panel has noted the following:-

- (i) that almost 100% of permanent exclusions involved aggressive/violent behaviour.
- (ii) that it was believed that between 70% - 80% of permanently excluded pupils had severe/profound needs.
- (iii) that no additional resources would be provided by the Government to meet new targets from September 2002 so the funding implications for the Council would need to be properly addressed in order to achieve effective planning and targeting of initiatives which would work. It was considered important to have a multi-agency approach to address the needs of the pupils in a more holistic way, to facilitate the sharing of information and maximise the use of resources/funding.
- (iv) that reasons why some schools were seemingly more effective in controlling their students were complex; schools had varying discipline policies and systems which reflected their understanding of the problems within their catchment; some schools declared they were "non-excluding schools" and possibly achieved this through more effective management of the transfer of disruptive pupils to other schools. (The Panel felt there was an issue to address in developing a corporate approach within schools to tackling the problem of disruptive students, so as not to "pass the buck" as a means of resolving the problem.)
- (v) that there were broad variations in the willingness of schools to take excluded pupils.
- (vi) that submitted statistical information suggested a high degree of success with the policy of reintegration.
- (vii) that in the past year the number of pupils permanently excluded has been greatly reduced to a total of 71; this figure includes a reduction of 50% from 36 to 18 in the number of permanently excluded pupils in the Key Stage 4 Group (14-16 year olds). These figures represent a concerted effort by all the Units in Kirklees to try to prevent pupils at risk of permanent exclusion from being permanently excluded.
- (viii) that some projects preferred to use their own system for choosing which pupils they would take.
- (ix) that the funding issue for the Westfields Pupil Referral Unit caused much uncertainty amongst staff working at the Unit.
- (x) that there was a strong willingness amongst the staff of the Westfields Unit and the eight other Units in Kirklees to work closely together in dealing with pupils who had been permanently excluded from school or who were in danger of permanent exclusion. (At present there are 144 places available throughout Kirklees for permanently excluded pupils).
- (xi) that each of the projects in Kirklees considered themselves to be under-funded.

- (xii) that a common database was currently being set up within the Education Service which would help to deal with a range of issues in respect of excluded pupils such as attendance.
- (xiii) that a bid was being prepared for the individual projects to have dedicated Education Social Workers.
- (xiv) that the gender split with regard to pupils attending the Westfields Pupil Referral Unit (currently 56% boys, 44% girls), indicated that in Kirklees there was a much more even split in terms of behavioural difficulties between the genders than the national average of 75% boys and 25% girls.
- (xv) that the Education Service would be required, from September 2002, to provide full time education for all permanently excluded pupils. (Provision will be made for older pupils to be referred to the Westfields Pupil Referral Unit and other Key Stage 4 providers, with the likelihood that the younger pupils will be referred to the specialist provision situated on the Rawthorpe High School campus.)
- (xvi) that 10% of excluded pupils were homeless.

The Panel has noted that in the near future 100 extra pupils will be added to the roll of the new Pupil Referral Service. Currently these pupils are on a range of programmes provided by the voluntary sector. It is intended that the Pupil Referral Service will have oversight of all such arrangements. However additional funds for these pupils will not be available via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) allocation until 2003/2004. In the meantime resources will be available through the existing base budget and the Standards Fund.

The Panel has also discussed the importance of training provision for both Officers and Project Leaders and other staff who deal with permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of permanent exclusion.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Panel recommends as follows:-**

- 1. That as a consequence of the Local Education Authority being required to provide full-time education for all permanently excluded pupils from September 2002 consideration be given to increasing the funding allocation for this purpose.**
- 2. That a unified and rationalised scheme to deal with permanently excluded pupils be brought into operation supported by appropriate funding, with monitoring being carried out and reports submitted to the Education Scrutiny Panel on a termly basis.**
- 3. That local Members of Parliament be urged to support a request to the Department for Education and Skills for additional funding to be provided to support provision for permanently excluded pupils.**
- 4. That there should be one common referral system for all projects funded by the Local Education Authority.**

5. That work be carried out to develop core themes for use by all of the projects involving excluded pupils, whilst making allowances for the differing needs of pupils.
6. That multi-agency working be strengthened particularly with regard to support for permanently excluded pupils, and support should continue to be provided to young people after they leave the projects.
7. That Personal Development Plans be drawn up for all permanently excluded pupils to outline the educational, behavioural and pastoral support required and the action to be taken to meet their needs.
8. That training provision be increased for both Officers and Project Leaders/other staff who deal with permanently excluded pupils and those at risk of permanent exclusion.
9. That bearing in mind the fact that 10% of excluded pupils are homeless the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel established to undertake a Scrutiny of the Provision for Homeless Young People under 16 be requested to include the educational needs of homeless young people as part of its terms of reference.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference

Appendix 2 - Key Stage 4 Referral Handbook (January 2002)

Appendix 3 - Notes of visits to the Barnardo's Year 11 Project, Batley and the Westfields Pupil Referral Unit, Batley - 2 November 2001.

Appendix 4 - Notes of visits to the Rathbone's Project, Huddersfield and the LIFE Project, Huddersfield - 11 December 2001.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. To address the District Audit findings.
2. To identify the Council's current approach and be supplied with any current guidelines used by the LEA and any provided by Central Government.
3. To establish what happens to excluded students, particularly at Key Stage 4.
4. To gather statistical information/evidence.
5. To be provided with anonymous case studies.
6. To consider any emerging trends and compare information with previous years.
7. To establish whether there is any evidence that students permanently excluded are at risk of getting involved in other offences.
8. To establish the support offered to excluded pupils and their parents.