

TITLE **EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION**

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From September 2007, all secondary schools will be working in partnerships to manage pupil behaviour and attendance. Schools in a number of pathfinder authorities have been working in this way from January 2006, with a further tranche commencing in September 2006. As part of their remit, school partnerships will be expected to identify and commission relevant alternative provision for pupils who need it. In light of this requirement, this study focused on providing exemplars of good practice in alternative provision. It aimed to provide practical advice for schools and local authorities seeking to commission and evaluate alternative provision for young people.

The overarching aim of the research was to answer three key questions:

1. What are the ingredients for successful delivery of alternative provision?
2. How can the conditions for effective delivery of alternative provision be created?
3. What lessons can be shared and transferred with other stakeholders?

The focus of the study was alternative provision in eight LAs identified as providing examples of good practice in this area from the LA survey of AP conducted for the then DfES during November and December 2005. Case-study visits took place during March 2006. Each case-study LA was visited for two days in order to conduct a range of interviews with practitioners and strategic-level staff, as well as young people and their parents/carers. A total of 138 interviews were conducted. A more detailed breakdown of the interviews conducted in each LA is included in Annex 1 of the report. Interviews focused on three broad themes:

- the commissioning of alternative provision
- details of the provision offered
- the effectiveness of such provision.

The report has been broken down into a number of key themes, which were identified by interviewees across the eight LAs as key ingredients contributing to the provision of effective AP. The ingredients identified were grouped into the following themes:

- Strategic-level overview, planning and coordination
 - Ø The integration and status of AP within the LA's overall approach
 - Ø Regular review of AP within the LA
 - Ø Identifying gaps in provision
 - Ø Partnerships with providers
 - Ø The existence of a strategic manager for AP
 - Ø Clear and formal contracting arrangements

RESEARCH SUMMARY

- Effective referral systems
 - Ø Collaborative decision making
 - Ø Clear systems for information exchange
 - Ø Procedures for identifying and selecting AP
- Supporting pupils in AP effectively
 - Ø Links between schools and mainstream schools
 - Ø Parental involvement
 - Ø The contribution from other services
 - Ø High quality staff working with young people
 - Ø The ethos of respect
- Components of effective provision
 - Ø Positive links between providers
 - Ø Involving pupils in their learning experience
 - Ø Access to a range of vocational opportunities
 - Ø A range of accreditation
 - Ø Personalised learning
- Monitoring and evaluation techniques.
 - Ø Using key measures to demonstrate outcomes
 - Ø Systems for ongoing monitoring
 - Ø Stakeholder feedback
 - Ø Cost-effectiveness

A summary of each theme is provided in the report, along with exemplification of these themes from individual LAs. The summaries are a distillation of interviewees' views and accounts of good practice. Section 2 of the report provides a summary overview of the findings. Sections 3 to 7 provide more detailed discussions of the themes identified.

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