

Changes To Secondary Specialist Provision For Young People With Behavioural Difficulties

Consultation (June 2007)

Summary and Recommendations

The Behaviour Review established the principle that Tameside would develop its provision for children and young people with behavioural difficulties who are of secondary school age to establish:

- a Learning Centre at KS4 which would make provision for young people from Hyde PRU and those in KS4 at Dale Grove School;
- two 14-place KS3 pupil referral units (PRUs) in different parts of the Borough, moving towards these developing preventative work which would move away from permanent exclusions, with each of these working more closely with mainstream schools;
- The KS3 part of Dale Grove rebuilt alongside a mainstream school.

It is now recommended that:

- The KS3 Dale Grove provision will be on a site which is adjacent to Hyde Technology School;
- One KS3 PRU will be co-located with the KS3 Dale Grove provision outlined above, and that the other will co-located with the new Denton School;
- The Learning Centre which will make provision for all KS4 students from the Hyde PRU and from Dale Grove School will be a new-build facility on the site of the former Globe Lane Primary School in Dukinfield.

Views are sought on the locations of these provisions.

Following a decision about the location of the various parts of the provision, there will be a number of detailed issues which will require resolution, relating to:

- The curriculum offer which will be made at each - what will the young people learn?
- The designations of the new facilities - should they be registered as special school or PRU?
- The staffing arrangements and structures which are required for the delivery of the curriculum and for the management of the facilities - how will the various members of staff work with each other, and who should they teach?
- The roles of each facility within the continuum of provision, with criteria for the young people who will be placed at each - who should attend Dale Grove KS3, the Learning Centre, and the KS3 PRUs?
- The relationship of each facility with the other schools in the Tameside Campus, and in the case of the KS3 facilities, more particularly with their co-located or nearest partners.

The full text of the document explores these questions and makes clear the Council's preferences on each of these, where appropriate. Views are invited.

Responses to this document should be sent before 20th July 2007 to:

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Context

As a result of the Behaviour Review undertaken by Tameside MBC in 2004-6, it was resolved that there would be changes to the organisation of Dale Grove EBSD special school and the Pupil Referral Service (PRS).

The following (points 44-56) are the relevant resolutions from the Key Decision report, which was approved in July 2006:

"44 As part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, the Tameside Campus will include a Learning Centre at KS4. This provision will be registered as a PRU in the first instance, and part of the staffing complement will be made up of the staff who currently work in the existing KS4 PRU.

45 There will be two KS3 pupil referral units in different parts of the Borough, operating according to the model outlined on page 19 of this report. Each of these will have the capacity for provision for 14 full-time equivalent pupils at any one time. Pupils attending the KS3 PRUs will be placed for a fixed period, which will be made explicit at the point of placement.

46 The KS3 PRUs will be linked to other schools to ensure that a full broad and balanced curriculum is available to the pupils attending these provisions.

53 Key Stage 3 and 4 of Dale Grove Secondary Centre will be split, with KS3 to be co-located with a mainstream school, and KS4 to be incorporated into the Learning Centre referred to in Recommendation 44, subject to recommendation 54.

54 The Council will commit to seek a mainstream school partner for the co-location of KS3 of Dale Grove Secondary Centre, using an appropriate model and in line with the timescales for Building Schools for the Future, and that this will be subject to further consultation and statutory notices through the appropriate body.

55 The Council will work with the headteacher and governing body of Dale Grove School to ensure that the KS3 Centre and the Learning Centre are appropriately staffed.

56 The Council will work with Dale Grove School to ensure the effective management of change in this school." (Key Decision Report, approved June 2006)

The Behaviour Review was undertaken in a context where behaviour was increasingly high on the national agenda. This was in the context of a realisation that children and young people behave

better where the curriculum engages them, and that the secondary curriculum needed to be transformed in order to meet the demands of the twenty-first century:

- on 18th November 2004 the Secretary of State outlined the expectation that all secondary schools should be working in partnership to improve behaviour and persistent absence by September 2007;
- DfES expects all secondary schools, special schools, Pupil Referral Units and Academies in a local area to participate in these partnerships;
- Tameside's BSF plan includes the concept of the Tameside Campus as a transformational lever for the secondary curriculum offer locally;
- the 14-19 agenda involves a flexible curriculum delivery where and how it is most appropriate;
- Co-location in its various forms is being encouraged by the DfES. Many of the examples of good practice that are presented include schemes where primary, secondary or special schools, colleges or PRUs share sites;
- DfES have clearly stated that they want schools to be more closely involved in the management of PRUs for children with behavioural difficulties;
- the DfES guidance " Guidance for school partnerships to improve behaviour and persistent absence" Nov 2006, states:

"The move towards all secondary schools working together in partnership by September 2007 inevitably means a change in role for local authority Education/Children's Services Departments. It reflects a more strategic role for local authorities and gives schools greater responsibility for making support and provision for pupils at risk of exclusion, persistent truants and those pupils that are excluded permanently. Most local authorities run Pupil Referral Units and they will continue to be responsible for them. Schools working together in partnership could be involved more closely in the management of PRUs and in making decisions about the range and capacity of provision."

The guidance is constantly being updated in this rather informal style, but the message about working closely together on behaviour is very clear, although the one rider to this is that partnership does not need to involve location, it is more about organisation, systems and a commitment from schools to the needs of all children in the authority.

Introduction

The first part of this paper seeks views on proposals for the physical relocation of the secondary phase of these two institutions. All these proposals involve new, purpose-built facilities which will be funded through the Building Schools for the Future programme. The responses to part 1 of this paper will feed into a report for a Key Decision about the location of the provisions which will be taken later in the summer term 2007. Following this Key Decision statutory notices will be published to enable the changes to take place.

The second part of this paper, which is the result of a number of meetings between the PRS Co-ordinator, the Head of Dale Grove and the Head of Inclusive Services, makes some more detailed, though not always comprehensive, suggestions about the new arrangements. These plans are complex. There are options for various aspects, and a wealth of detail which will need to be worked through with the staff from the PRS and Dale Grove School, and those who are involved in the governance of those two institutions, as well as the staff and governors at the other schools which

will be involved. Views are invited about these. Where the Council has a view about the preferred course of action, based on the discussions which have already taken place with the senior managers of the PRS and Dale Grove School, and on other information gathered during this period, this preference is indicated, in the interests of transparency.

Part 1

1. Relocation of Dale Grove Secondary Centre, Hyde Pupil Referral Unit and the secondary-aged students at Ashton Pupil Referral Unit

1. Dale Grove Secondary Centre is currently located on Wilshaw Lane in Ashton-under-Lyne; it has 42 planned places for young people with significant behavioural difficulties, of which approximately half are generally in KS3 and half in KS4. Dale Grove School is a 5-16 special school which is designated as EBSD (Emotional, Behavioural, and Social Difficulties)

2. It is proposed to relocate the KS3 provision on a site which is adjacent to Hyde Technology School. The special school will be accessed from Lower Bennett Street. In the first instance it will not be co-dependent with Hyde Technology School. The centre will have 21 planned places, funded through the special school funding formula. This location has been identified because of the long-standing links between Hyde Technology School and Dale Grove School, the approach to behaviour management at Hyde Technology School and because Building Schools for the Future will enable this facility to be built on a piece of Council land which is directly adjacent to the main school site.

3. This is a different model of a relationship between a mainstream and a special school than the previous co-locations which the Council has carried out, and is the result of consultation with schools and teacher associations about the most appropriate model for Tameside at this point in time. Nationally, although EBSD special schools are developing their relationship with mainstream schools in a variety of ways, we have found only one example of these schools being or planned to be co-located in the way that Tameside has pursued with its schools for children with learning difficulties, although a number of authorities are planning much closer relationships, principally through their Building Schools for the Future plans.

4. Re-locating the KS3 Dale Grove provision on this site will enable the school to develop, over time and as appropriate, links with Hyde Technology School as one of the members of the Tameside Campus. Dale Grove School has a clear aim of developing personalised programmes for the students on roll using the whole range of opportunities afforded by the campus, but Hyde Technology School would be the closest of these. In addition to the links which students might make over time, being located next to a mainstream school will give the opportunity for links between the staff from both schools, leading to a sharing of expertise. It will also give the opportunity to foster links between the staff from both schools, leading to a sharing of expertise and good practice, and helping to reduce the sense of isolation which can be an issue for any special school provision and which at times has been raised by staff at both Dale Grove centres.

5. The Ashton Pupil Referral Unit is on Katherine Street in Ashton-under-Lyne; it currently makes provision for children and young people who are permanently excluded from school and who are of primary age or in KS3. It is proposed to relocate the KS3 PRU provision and develop two centres as resolved in the Key Decision. It is proposed that one PRU will be co-located with the KS3 Dale Grove

provision outlined above, and that the other will co-located with the new Denton School. Each will have 14 places. A discussion about whether these PRUs will work on a geographical basis, one serving the east and one the west of the borough, or whether they should have different functions, can be found in part 2 of this paper.

6. In the course of coming to a conclusion about the location of the KS3 PRUs, a number of issues were considered:

The challenges which will be faced in having two groups of students in the same building if one group are intended to be returning to mainstream schools and the other group are on roll because of their long-term needs;

The possibility that the two groups of students may develop a territoriality which would lead to conflict between them;

The advisability of students from a pupil referral unit being educated near a mainstream school because of the danger that they would disrupt the mainstream school, or provide negative role models for students on roll there, or that pupils from the mainstream school would interact inappropriately with pupils from the PRU/special school;

Whether it would be possible to share any facilities with the mainstream school;

Whether this arrangement would enable the authority to have a full continuum of provision at KS3, with the different sites offering programmes tailored to different lengths of stay, from the very short-term placement to those needing a long-term alternative which provides a highly-structured and supportive programme.

7. Co-locating one PRU with the KS3 Dale Grove School provision has some practical financial advantages: it enables two very small education facilities to be purpose-built economically and in a way which will best meet the educational and social needs of the students on the rolls of the two institutions but which will retain some separation between these and the mainstream school.

8. There will also be educational advantages, in that the ability to provide a full range of curriculum for 21 or 14 children, were the two institutions to be separate, would be challenging.

9. Thirdly, one of the drivers for the behaviour review was the desire to bring PRU provision closer to schools, and to enable it to develop in a preventive way, as opposed to the current system, which is responsive to students' permanent exclusion. Moving the KS3 PRUs physically nearer to other parts of the system and the development of closer partnership working will have the potential to improve this aspect.

10. Many of the same issues were considered in reaching the conclusion about the location of the second KS3 PRU, although in this case the proximity to a mainstream school was the focus of debate. Tameside has been fortunate to secure an early place in the Building Schools for the Future programme, yielding £164million to improve the secondary school estate, and the Council is keen to improve PRU provision as part of this programme. Of the first three new schools, two will be Academies, where it will not be possible to locate a PRU, and the third is the new Denton School.

11. It is proposed that the Learning Centre which will make provision for all KS4 students from the Pupil Referral Unit and from Dale Grove School will be a new-build facility on the site of the former Globe Lane Primary School in Dukinfield. This centre will provide a base for 21 students from Dale Grove KS4 and 75 students from Hyde PRU, although it is envisaged that only half of these will be on site at any one time. The students will follow a highly personalised programme which will include alternative curriculum opportunities off-site.

12. This site is seen as ideal in meeting the long-term needs of the group of young people from KS4 of Dale Grove and those currently placed at Hyde PRU. These young people are not expected to return to mainstream school; the focus of their education is on the 14-19 curriculum and the opportunities which they will be able to take post-16. Many of these young people currently struggle to sustain engagement in education, employment or training when they leave the PRU and Dale Grove: the November 2006 Connexions survey showed that 20 of the 62 leavers from the PRUs and Dale Grove combined were NEET at that time. This is 32.26%, compared with a Tameside average of 8.19%. A closer relationship and a real working partnership with the work environment in the Globe Lane Estate area will have the potential to provide a sound foundation for positive engagement post-16, which will lead to improved outcomes for these young people individually, but also potentially in terms of community safety.

13. The Globe Lane site is seen as ideal for its proposed purpose, being centrally located within the Borough and with excellent public transport links. It is also within 0.5 miles of the Bridgeway PRU, which makes similar provision and would be working closely with staff based at the Globe Lane site. The site also has the advantage that it would be ideally placed to develop the necessary links with the proposed KS3 provisions on the Hyde and Denton sites.

14. Both Dale Grove school and the PRU also have a vision for a Learning Centre which could be used as a hub for local learning opportunities for people of all ages. As such, it could be a valuable resource to enhance the skills of the workforces of local businesses and industries, complementing the space and resources required for the education and training for the KS4 students.

15. It is recognised that this proposal involves locating provision for this group of young people away from any mainstream schools, which may be seen as counter to the Council's general policy of co-locating special school provision. The Pupil Referral Service and Dale Grove School are, however, both embedded in the Tameside Campus, and participate fully in its development. In this way, although physically separate from other institutions, it will be a full partner in the Campus.

16. In the longer term, in line with the development of thinking with in Tameside about 'area arrangements' and with central government thinking about the organisation of pupil referral unit provision, the Council intends to continue to explore the possibility of the development of further KS3 PRU facilities which would be able to undertake a preventive role in partnership with the heads of schools in each geographical area, probably on a 'purchased place' basis.

Part 2

2. Organisation of the secondary specialist provisions for young people with significant behavioural needs

1. There will be four elements to the new facilities. These, subject to the Key Decision, will be:

- A 14-place KS3 PRU at the new Denton School;
- A 14-place KS3 PRU on a site next to Hyde Technology School and co-located with
- A 21-place KS3 special school centre (part of Dale Grove School);
- A Learning Centre on the Globe Lane Primary School site which will make provision for 96 KS4 students, 21 places being taken by students who would have previously been at Dale Grove School and 75 places being taken by students who would previously have attended Hyde PRU.

2. Decisions about various aspects of these arrangements will be necessary following the physical changes which are proposed above. These relate to:

- The curriculum offer which will be made at each;
- The designations of the new facilities;
- The staffing arrangements and structures which are required for the delivery of the curriculum and for the management of the facilities;
- The roles of each facility within the continuum of provision, with criteria for the young people who will be placed at each;
- The relationship of each facility with the other schools in the Tameside Campus, and in the case of the KS3 facilities, more particularly with their co-located or nearest partners.

3. There are many challenges in these proposals, which will need to be worked through with the staff involved. The aim of the changes is to meet the needs of children and young people better, by improving the continuum of provision, refining the purpose of each of the parts of the system, expanding the ability of the specialist sector to work preventively and working more closely with the mainstream sector so as to support mainstream schools more effectively in their preventive work and increase their inclusivity.

4. Curriculum

1. If the suggestion in 2.7.6 is adopted (ie. that the PRU at Hyde is aimed at pupils who will be staying longer in the system and the PRU in Denton will act as an assessment and "short-stay" facility), the curriculum at the two proposed KS3 PRUs will necessarily have a different emphasis.

2. At the Denton site the priority will be to prepare the young person for a prompt return to school. This will entail detailed assessment of need and a programme designed to enable successful return. Tuition will be provided in study skills so that pupils can engage fully with the curriculum. There will be an emphasis on interpersonal, independence and social skills work, and the refinement of communication skills. Pupils will be equipped with a range of strategies to deal with difficult situations in mainstream schools. As far as possible, pupils will undertake work linked to the National

Curriculum but time spent on skill building will necessarily reduce the breadth of study, which will focus on English, Maths, ICT, Humanities, Art and opportunities for physical activity. The ethos, attitudes of staff, involvement of parents and relationships developed here will all be essential to the success of the programme offered at this unit. For a few pupils, assessment of their needs will result in a move to more specialist provision.

3. At the Hyde site the KS3 curriculum in the PRU and at Dale Grove will reflect the content of that offered in mainstream, while also providing an environment in which the young person is encouraged and supported to develop the skills and strategies needed to better manage their behaviour. This will be increasingly a skills-based curriculum, paralleling developments in mainstream, but delivered in a particularly relevant and accessible way within a very supportive framework. The challenge will be to present this broad, balanced and relevant curriculum in the way that best meets the needs of this group of young people, but also ensures they are equipped for part-time or full-time return to mainstream or progression to the KS4 Learning Centre, if and when this proves appropriate.

4. At the KS4 Learning Centre pupils will receive a curriculum and training that will prepare them for independence and the world of work, further education or training. Many of these pupils will not be expected to return to school, but opportunities will be retained for partnership working with schools and colleges across the Tameside Campus to offer part-time programmes for study in specific subjects that are not available at the centre. The curriculum will be designed in consultation with the young people to meet their individual needs, interests and aspirations. These individualised programmes will often have a strong practical aspect to them, but opportunities will be available to complete a wide range of GCSE and other accredited courses. There will be an emphasis on the learning of essential study skills, key skills and the core curriculum. There will be a strong emphasis on the importance of attendance at college and other training organisations and placements where appropriate. Most areas of study will be accredited. Work-related education will be further developed through involvement with local employers and the community. Attendance at this centre will be a positive and forward-looking experience for the young people and not merely a passive alternative to mainstream school.

5. Designation

1. There is no reason to change the designation of any of the KS3 facilities, and no apparent gain to be made from this. Thus the PRU at the Denton School will continue to be registered as a PRU, as will the PRU which will be co-located with the Dale Grove facility next to Hyde Technology School. The KS3 special school facility will continue to be part of Dale Grove School, which is currently registered as a 5-16 school with 70 places, designated to meet the needs of children and young people with significant social emotional and behavioural difficulties.

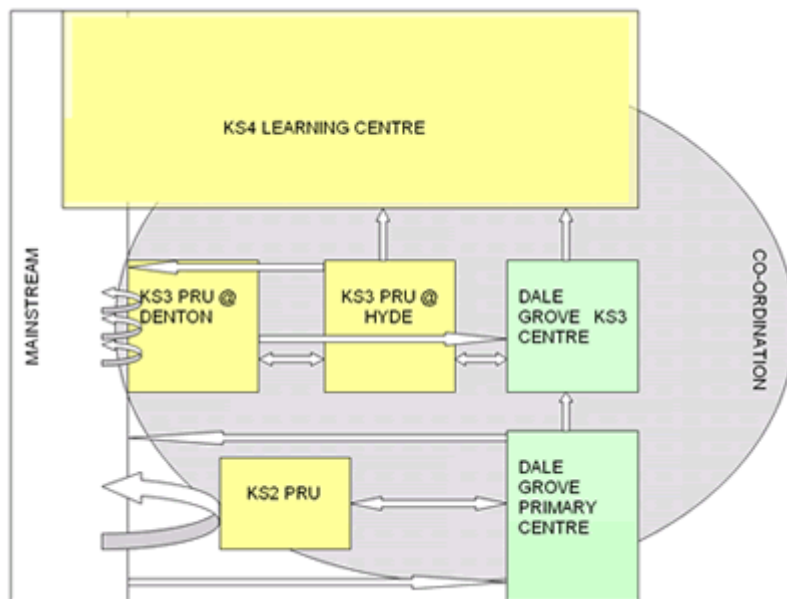
2. The designation of the KS4 Learning Centre is more complex: It could be registered as a PRU or as a special school for all the young people who attend. Although in general it is not expected that young people will be placed in PRUs for periods longer than a couple of terms, there is now more of a recognition that this might not be appropriate at KS4, when the focus of provision is to look forward to life beyond statutory school age, rather than a return to mainstream. This suggestion also recognises that at KS4 the needs of many of the young people on roll at Dale Grove and those on roll at Hyde PRU are similar.

3. The implication of this proposal would be that the age range of Dale Grove would most logically be reduced to make it a 5-14 school, and the young people who had previously attended there would leave the school at the end of KS3. They may or may not retain their statements of SEN. The reason for this is that if the young people were to attend the Learning Centre designated as a PRU fulltime, there would be no sense in which they would still be members of Dale Grove School. The implications of this suggestion would be that:

it would firmly establish the Learning Centre as one institution, which might enable greater consistency and coherence for the young people on roll, as well as clarity for inspection purposes;

there would be no confusion, for example, about where the special school which the young people from Dale Grove belonged to was situated - it is intended that the facility in Hyde will only take pupils in KS3 and will not be built to enable capacity for pupils in KS4;

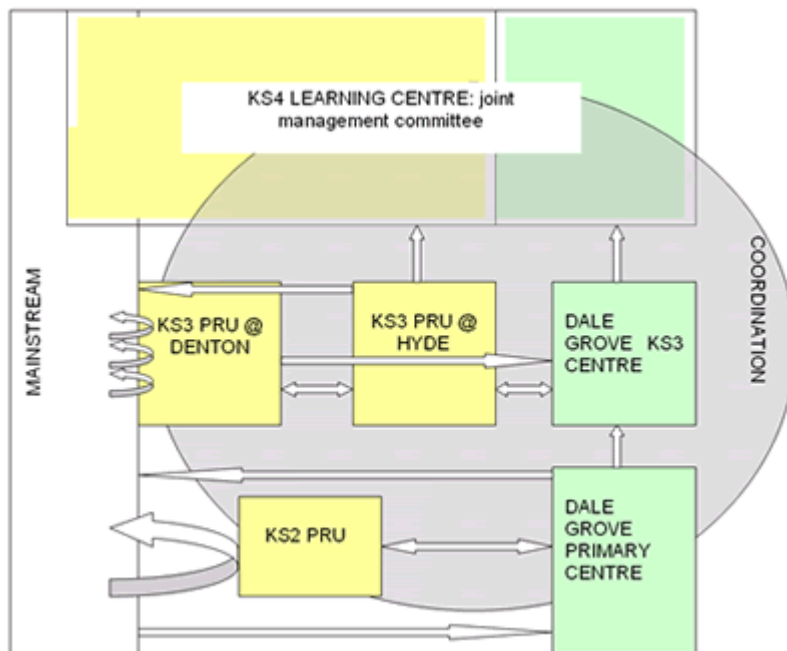
the staff from Dale Grove whose skills and expertise will be required in the Learning Centre would transfer from the school staff to the PRU: if they remained as school staff but taught at the KS4 Learning Centre they would be exclusively teaching outside the age range of the school, unless the age range were not to be changed. In this latter case, there may be an unnecessary and confusing complexity about accountability, particularly if the whole staff teaches all the learners.



4. Alternatively, it could be registered as a special school. The implications of this would be:

- all the young people attending the Learning Centre would require statements of SEN as, legally, young people cannot attend a special school unless they have a statement or are undergoing statutory assessment;
- the staff who previously taught at the Hyde PRU would transfer to become staff at Dale Grove;
- there would be no need to change the age range of Dale Grove, although approval would have to be sought to increase the number of places from 70 to 145.

5. There is a third option which is a hybrid of these two: it would be possible for the Learning Centre to be registered as a PRU, but the staff and pupils who came from Dale Grove to retain their current status, while still operating as part of an holistic centre. This is more complex, but would have the advantage of continuity for the young people, potentially, in 'belonging' to the same school (though in what sense this will be so may be a matter for debate), for the staff, who would retain their contracts with the school, and for families who may be concerned if statements of SEN were to be withdrawn. The main disadvantages would be in forging the coherence required at the Learning Centre, and the formalising of governance arrangements which would be necessary in order to ensure that the Learning Centre would operate effectively. This would be similar to the current arrangements which are in place for Acorn Nursery, which is an integrated nursery operating for Oakdale School and Yew Tree Primary. The Management Committee which runs this nursery has been in place for more than 8 years, has representation from both schools' governing bodies, and is responsible for all matters relating to the running of the nursery. This option might act principally in the interests of staff, except for the additional administrative burden inherent in the formation of a management committee.



6. The Council's recommendation is that the KS4 Learning Centre should be registered as a Pupil Referral Unit following the model outlined in 2.5.3. This clearly has a relevance to the discussion of staffing arrangements which follows. This is a complex picture: readers may find it helpful to refer to the graphics at the end of this document which attempt to show pictorially how the relationship between the specialist sector and the mainstream sector, and the relationship between the various parts of the specialist sector are envisaged, under the models proposed above in paragraphs 2.5.3 and 2.5.5.

6. Staffing

1. Dale Grove School currently employs 21.2 fte staff in its Secondary Centre. The teaching and support staff currently work across the age-range. 17 fte staff work at Hyde PRU, exclusively with students in KS4. The position at Ashton PRU is more complex, since the unit makes provision for

children and young people aged 5-14. (19) It might be judged, however, that just over 57 fte staff are involved in the education of young people of secondary-school age in Tameside who are not in mainstream education. This includes admin, cleaning and catering staff as well as technicians, teaching assistants and teachers.

2. We have considered the organisation of the staffing in the new facilities. At the heart is the knowledge that what happens currently is demonstrably good, and the understanding that whatever is planned must build on this good practice so that the future is at least as good as the present. In this, the wellbeing of both the staff and the pupils is important. We acknowledge that the process of change is unsettling to all concerned and seek to minimise the stress this might cause.

3. The following models were considered:

a. Current PRU staff remaining as a separate entity and teaching only those pupils assigned to the PRU (ie across the Denton PRU, the Hyde PRU and the Learning Centre), combined with Dale Grove staff remaining as a separate entity and teaching only those pupils assigned to Dale Grove (ie those in the KS3 facility in Hyde, and depending on the discussion in section 2.5, possibly those in the Learning Centre also);

b. Staff on a site teaching all the children on that site regardless of their designation. This would mean staff at the Hyde site, both Dale Grove and PRU, would teach both sets of pupils, and staff at the Learning Centre would teach any of the pupils on that site;

c. Staff at the Denton PRU having a close relationship with the Denton school in the same way that resource bases for children with learning difficulties at Egerton Park, St Thomas More and Hyde Technology do, while remaining part of the PRS;

Finally, where the contracts of the various groups of staff would lie was considered.

4. It was concluded that there would be advantages and disadvantages of any arrangement. In brief:

- If model a were to be pursued, this would: provide continuity for staff in terms of their management, contractual arrangements and colleagues;
- provide some continuity of staffing for the young people in each institution (but more especially Dale Grove) and capitalise on the specialist skills and experience of the staff, tailored either to young people in the PRU or in the special school;
- increase travelling time and costs, as each group of staff would be teaching both at the Dukinfield and the Hyde sites, and in the case of the PRU staff, also at the Denton site;
- mean that there may be a need for staff from the PRUs to teach in a different key stage to that which they are normally accustomed at present.

If model b were to be adopted, this would:

- result in efficiencies in terms of the time and financial resource issues identified above;
- ensure that staff from the PRU would continue to teach young people in the same age-range to which they are accustomed;
- result in staff from Dale Grove teaching across only one key stage rather than their current two;

- result in staff from Dale Grove going through a process where they would be matched to either KS3 or KS4;
- require that each group of staff would teach young people with needs which extend the range of their current skill-set: staff from the PRU would teach young people whose needs, while similar to those of their current pupils, were perhaps longer-term, and those from the special school would need to acquire the particular skills which enable the PRU staff to be successful in reintegrating some young people to mainstream reasonably swiftly after they have left the mainstream system. How different the needs of these two groups are is a matter of some interest, as they are undoubtedly part of a continuum, with pupils moving regularly from the PRU to Dale Grove, and a very few young people returning to mainstream from Dale Grove School. In terms of the resources which are deemed necessary to meet the needs of young people in the PRU and in the special school, both institutions aim to teach in groups no larger than 7, with two staff. Staff in both institutions receive the same SEN allowances in recognition to the severity and complexity of the needs of their students;
- raise practical issues which would need to be resolved: these would relate to line management and responsibility for the day-to-day running of the facilities.

5. Pursuing point c., the nature of the relationship between the KS3 PRU co-located with the Denton school and that school needs further exploration. One model might be analogous to the relationship between, for example, the ASD resource base at St Thomas More and the main school there. In this case, the Council provides staffing for the resource base through the outreach service, and those staff are employed by the Council. The Council remains the admissions authority for the base, though in this case (which would not be so for the PRU) it is following consultation with the main school, as it is expected that a proportion of the young person's time will be spent in mainstream lessons. Nevertheless, on a day-to-day basis they have a close relationship with the school. There is of course a complexity to consideration of this relationship, as the Denton school does not yet formally exist.

6. Where the contracts would lie would depend on the designation of the facilities, as discussed above. The Council's recommendation, in line with that in paragraph 2.5.5, would be that all the staff at the KS4 Learning Centre would be PRS staff, while the staff at the KS3 centre of Dale Grove would retain school contracts, and the staff at the KS3 PRUs would remain staff of the PRS.

7. Continuum of provision

1. One of the aims of the Behaviour Review was to ensure a coherent continuum of provision for children and young people with behavioural difficulties. While much of the focus was on the mainstream systems and organisation, there was also an acknowledgement that the continuum of provision for young people with more severe and complex needs could be improved.

2. It has been observed that there are young people within the current specialist sector whose needs may be met better by a different placement, particularly at KS3. For example:

- there are some young people who are having significant difficulties in mainstream school who are not able to benefit from the expertise of the staff in the PRU system until they have been permanently excluded from school;

- there are some young people who are placed in PRU provision as a result of permanent exclusion, but where there seems to be a general agreement that their needs are long-term, that placement in a special school would be more appropriate, and there is then a delay while the statutory processes are followed;
- for other young people it may be generally agreed that reintegration to mainstream school is appropriate, but there is then a delay due to pressures on staff to undertake the reintegration work or of a reluctance on the part of mainstream schools to take responsibility for the young person;
- finally, there may be some young people currently in the special school sector who could benefit from reintegration to mainstream school but who may not be able to move because of similar pressures on staff, or because the focus of the school is rightly on long-term placement.

Staff in both settings are experienced at observing and assessing the needs of young people with behavioural needs, and have indicated that they feel they can make some of these judgements relatively easily and early.

3. There is an opportunity through BSF to improve the continuum of provision for young people of secondary age. This would operate differently at each keystage.

4. At KS3, there will be three specialist facilities: two pupil referral units and one special school. This gives the opportunity to develop short-term/step-out provision, which is currently not available in Tameside but which is a valued part of provision in many other authorities. There are three options here:

- both KS3 PRUs could develop the full range of step-out and longer term provision, and operate on a geographical area basis;
- one KS3 PRU could develop step-out provision and the other retain the responsibility for the longer-term placements;
- this second option could be pursued at this stage, with a longer-term aspiration to focus mostly on short-term/step-out placements, expanding the provision of these to enable schools to take greater responsibility for their pupils and assisting them in reducing exclusions. This wider service could be developed on a geographical area basis.

5. The Behaviour Review proposed greater flexibility on some of the administrative processes which currently are seen to hamper the speedy access of some young people to appropriate provision, which may result in their needs increasing in severity in the interim. It can be seen that this will require close partnership working with mainstream schools, since speedy access to specialist provision can only work where the various parts of the system do not become choked.

6. We have considered the options in 2.7.4, taking into account the current situation, where Tameside has a high proportion of exclusion relative to other authorities, and thus has a system which does not at present move smoothly. For this reason, principally, it is proposed that:

- a. the PRU at the Denton site should act as a short-term placement facility, providing:

- step-out provision for young people who have been the subject of intervention in mainstream schools, who continue to challenge and for whom a placement of up to two terms in an intensive off-site provision is felt to be useful;
- assessment facilities for young people who are permanently excluded to determine if they should be returned to mainstream school or if their needs are longer-term.

This PRU would provide a curriculum which would be distinctively targeted at this group of young people (see details below in 2.7).

b.The PRU at Hyde should act as a facility for those who are anticipated to return to mainstream in the slightly longer-term, including those who may previously have been placed at Dale Grove School;

c.Dale Grove would continue to make provision for those young people whose needs are the most complex, severe and long-term.

7.It is anticipated that improving the continuum in this way may also assist with the current situation where young people are occasionally placed at Bridgeway PRU as 'best fit'.

8.At KS4, it has been observed that the needs of the young people out of mainstream provision are more similar, whether they attend the PRU or the special school. These young people have a core need to engage positively in preparation for life beyond school; for them the 14-19 agenda must be a reality to prevent them falling out of employment, education or training. Many of these young people have considerable skills, abilities and talents which they may struggle to express within the current systems.

9.By building a flexible provision which has effective links into all parts of the education and training system, as well as space on site, it is anticipated that the curriculum can be personalised for young people at KS4 to meet the whole range of needs. This facility will be expected to meet the needs of approximately 100 young people, though only half of this number will be on site at any one time. For each young person, the balance between activities on and off-site will be responsive to their needs and options available. In this way, the continuum of provision will be seen operating flexibly within and around one facility, although we recognise that there will be a considerable challenge in meeting the needs of every young person of this age within one arrangement.

8.Relationship to other schools and opportunities

1.Both Dale Grove School and the Pupil Referral Service are integral parts of the Tameside Campus, and have been involved in the BSF process as part of the first phase of this initiative. One of the aims of the changes proposed in this paper is to strengthen the links between these two institutions and the other schools and settings in the campus, so that young people who have behavioural difficulties have access to the full range of opportunities which will enable them to follow an appropriate, fully personalised learning path 11-19 and beyond.

2.The functioning of the Campus has yet to be made explicit. This will be a part of the Building Schools for the Future work to be undertaken by all schools and colleges in the borough.

3.It is clear, however, that there is a need for the further development of alternative curriculum opportunities on a shared basis with mainstream schools and colleges, in a way which may involve creating and encouraging opportunities as well as rationalising those which already exist. The developing 14-19 curriculum and the Tameside Campus will be at the heart of these developments.

4.It is essential that the responsibility for children with behaviour difficulties is shared by all the schools and pupil referral units in the authority. A real partnership is required in which there is active sustained involvement of senior managers from schools in the management of this partnership. The authority is already seeking to increase the involvement of school managers in the work of the Management Committee, which oversees the work of the pupil referral units.

5.The Local Authority wants its school leaders to be involved in planning and operating a system that meets the needs of all their pupils, including those with the most challenging behaviour difficulties. Working together as part of the Tameside Campus we could place the majority of pupils into appropriate provision on the basis of their needs, without recourse to the need to permanently exclude. Space would need to be freed up to achieve this, but the combination of Managed Moves, the Hard-to-Place protocol and an Admission Panel or some other forum for partnership working, would offer school managers the opportunity to have a strategic role in the decision-making process about the provision to be made for pupils with behaviour difficulties.

9.Conclusion

1.This work starts from a position of strength:

the Behaviour Review established the strategic direction for the specialist sector;

the Pupil Referral Service has close links with most secondary schools in Tameside through the permanent exclusion system and the desire to reintegrate young people wherever possible;

Dale Grove School also has good links with other secondary schools through the development of the Alternative Curriculum Programme and the headteacher is an active participant in Tameside Association of Secondary Heads;

all parts of the system have been externally tested recently by OFSTED and have received good reports.

2.This is, however, complex work, principally involving the PRU in three parts of the system, Dale Grove School in two parts of the system and two mainstream schools, one of which does not yet formally exist. In seeking discussion about the matters in this paper, the Council would welcome views from anyone with an interest.

3.Please send your views, before 20th July 2007 to:

Postal Address Claire Bibby, Head of Inclusive Services, Council Offices, Wellington Road, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6DL