



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you



**Brighter  
Futures for  
Children**

# Alternative Provision Strategic Framework 2024-2027

## **SUMMARY**

Reading's strategy to ensure suitable, safe and quality alternative provision for all children and young people who access it.

## **OWNER**

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## **VERSION**

V1.0

## **DATE**

August 2024

## **REVIEW DATE**

August 2027

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## Introduction and Local Context

### In 2023/2024:

**34** children attended unregistered AP commissioned by the Local Authority to ensure they were in receipt of an education whilst awaiting their school placement

**135** children in registered schools such as independent special or AP placements, and non-maintained special schools<sup>1</sup>

**38** children registered in Reading's Alternative Provision Academy

### Pupil voice:

To support this strategy, we sought the voices of children and young people in various alternative provision settings in Reading.

Children and young people helped us understand their experiences of alternative provision in Reading, and children feel generally positive about their community, relationships, safety, progress, curriculum and destinations after AP:

*"Used to have anxiety - felt horrible at school environment. Not much anxiety here... I feel comfortable here."*

*"Everyone listens when I need to chat - everyone listens to each other."*

*"At first, I could only come for like half an hour a day. Now I am attending full days... Everyone is so nice here... can have the most random conversations".*

*"I wouldn't behave at all at normal school, but here I learn to act better even though sometimes I am still quite hyper. I didn't like the staff and people at normal school - they always said things in a rude way so I would scream and walk away. Here they teach me to act better."*

*"It's really fun... I don't have to do lessons."*

*"They make us do ridiculous things that don't benefit us."*

*"...not really have any goals. Not really sure about my next step."*

*"School - boring, don't enjoy it, don't like work, pressured, pushed to do work and feel pressured. Worried about punishment if don't do work. Come here play football and do the things I like"*

*"It's really fun. I don't have to do lessons. I don't really like maths, but I love English. I play for a football academy. I get to play a steering game - quite a lot of different activities. Staff are cool - all of them"*

*"By the time I'm done here, I'll be ready."*

*"Although they listen to my needs and try to meet them, sometimes they don't. Might be can't, might be won't. Most of the staff try".*

*"Teachers are friendly. Subjects are taught in engaging way. Everyone is safe in general. It's all good."*

*"School - boring. I don't enjoy it. I don't like work, I feel pressured. Pushed to do work and always feel pressured. I'm worried about punishment if I don't do work. But I can come here... and do the thing I like."*

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with January 2024 Local Authority Alternative Provision Census

This strategy has been developed in response to local needs and an increased use of alternative provision in Reading in recent years. This strategy also responds to the SEND and AP Improvement Plan published by the Department for Education in March 2023 which follows from the SEND Green Paper, right support, right place, right time and will be utilised alongside the BfFC SEND commissioning strategy. A majority of children in receipt of alternative provision in Reading have social, emotional mental health needs as their primary special educational need.

This strategy supports Reading's overarching education strategy, that we will support education settings to develop inclusive practice, so that children receive high quality education, and achieve their potential. More specifically, a lever to achieving this priority is to improve attendance and prevent suspensions and exclusions through targeted work with priority schools and communities, combined with developing an improved Alternative Provision local offer, through our AP school and strengthened commissioning arrangements.

Locally, alternative provision is used in a variety of ways for children of all ages and phases. It can be utilised as part or all of a child's educational provision dependent on their needs. Typically, this is to either give the child a complimentary educational experience as part of their curriculum to develop a particular area, such as increasing a child's access to vocational subjects to improve their pathway into their post-16 aspirations. AP can also be used as an alternative pathway to reduce risks on site in schools and deliver a more inclusive curriculum of the child's needs that is not deemed possible within the school setting. Some children access alternative provision whilst awaiting availability of special education settings.

It is our commitment and passion that we continue to have high aspirations for all children accessing any form of educational provision. We commit to ensuring all our children and young people are included, supported, safe and have access to teams and services that are expert in ensuring they receive suitable, good quality education wherever this may be and whatever form it takes.

Alternative provision expansion and revision to our local offer in this area is not a replacement to address sufficiency needs in the special education sector, the work to address this area through the SEND sufficiency strategy continues in parallel to the progress being made in the alternative provision sector.

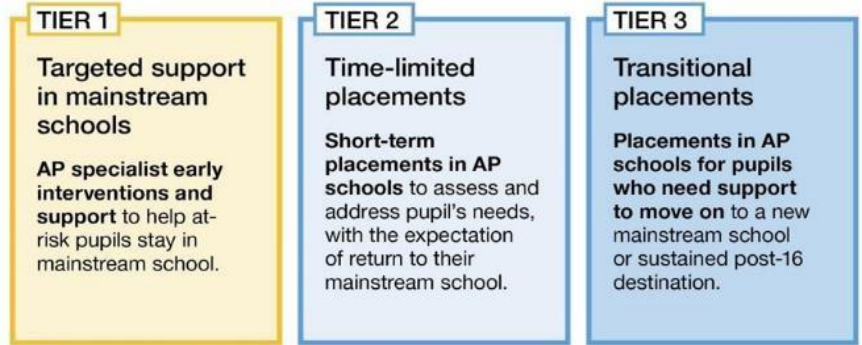
We recognise that alternative provision can be a tool used to educate some of our children and young people that are experiencing a number of complex needs and vulnerabilities, such as medical needs preventing school attendance, special educational needs and disabilities or extra-familial harm. It is therefore important that any strategy delivering this is co-produced with children, families and key stakeholders. In this strategy we set out our vision, local approach, intended outcomes and how we commit to delivering and evaluating this in the years to come.

## Our Local Approach to Alternative Provision

Children and young people in Reading have access to highly inclusive schools, and we are committed to ensuring children have access to quality schools and alternative provision that meets their needs, no matter how complex these may be.

**CLASSIFICATION: OFFICIAL**

Reading will ensure a ‘support first’ approach when considering alternative provision. Children will be able to access support from local alternative provisions within their school settings as a supporting feature of a graduated response to inclusion. This applies to all children, regardless of their needs.

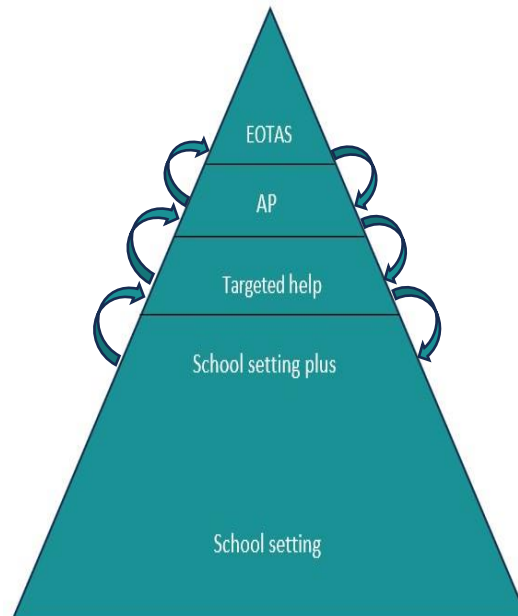


Department of Education ‘3 tier approach’ to alternative provision.

As a system of multi-agencies all holding a stake in ensuring alternative provision meets the needs of all children and young people that access it, we will be responsive to local needs. We will use data, child and family voice and co-production with schools and agencies at regular intervals to ensure availability and variety of provision.

**Local continuum of Alternative Provision**

| Area of delivery           | Local Teams & Services  |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>EOTAS</b>               | Education other than at school longer term AP placements in best interest of child, will be reintegrated into school placements where appropriate |
| <b>AP</b>                  | Short- or medium-term placements. Working to further assess needs, re-engage and transition back to mainstream or special where required          |
| <b>Targeted help</b>       | Utilising specialist services, bespoke plans, support from alternative providers to support school placement                                      |
| <b>School setting plus</b> | Identifying and assessing needs providing more individualised support through the school day, utilising some external services                    |
| <b>School setting</b>      | Quality graduated response, early identification of needs   |



In addition to the DfE's intended approach to alternative provision which has been considered and is reflective of the current offer in Reading, the local model has been developed further and is considered the local continuum of alternative provision.

It is not deemed the case that all children will follow the same pathway of experiencing alternative provision, but that all children and young people's pathways will be responsive to their needs with the ability to return to a school setting always. This model applies to all school types, whether mainstream or special.

### Vision statement

Alternative provision accessed by children and young people will be **good quality** and **safe**.

Alternative provision will **increase feelings of inclusion** and **increase emotional wellbeing** of all children and young people who access it.

Alternative Provision will deliver **child centred** practice, increase opportunities to **develop skills for life and work** and **embrace difference**.

### Strategic Priorities

- The inclusion offer of mainstream settings will be developed to increase inclusion of children that would ordinarily be considered for alternative provision
- Schools and partners will ensure a tiered approach to using alternative provision, and the provision provided will be purposeful and at the pace of the child
- Practice in alternative provision will be consistent, effective and safe and offer education in different ways
- Practice in alternative provision will clearly evidence the impact they are having towards children and young people's goals and progress measures
- Pathways in and out of alternative provision will be clear
- Publishing of a local AP framework will drive consistency in quality assurance, monitoring and escalation of performance concerns in alternative provision
- Arrangements for alternative provision will be co-produced by children, young people and families and key agencies and there will be meaningful engagement from providers
- The landscape of children accessing AP will be well known, and the needs of children will drive development of our local approaches

### Intended outcomes

Any child or young person accessing alternative provision through in-reach to their educational setting, or outreach via attending an alternative provision setting has the right to access support for a range of needs.

Some alternative provision/s may be accessed in order to address a specific need or area of vulnerability for a child or young person, such as improved socialisation or emotional regulation which is predominant in the profile of Reading children attending alternative provision. In these instances, alternative provisions are not expected to deliver fully rounded provision if they are only commissioned to work with a child or young person for a small portion of their education and to address a specific need.

Alternative provisions that have been commissioned to deliver a substantial amount of education to a child, or are the only provision a child accesses, will be expected to deliver a breadth of curriculum; clearly responding to the educational or vocational direction for their pupil/s.

All children with an EHCP have the entitlement to all provision prescribed within their EHCP, and BfC are committed to ensuring all children access what is required to meet their needs even if they are not educated in a school setting. Outcomes designed within an EHCP must be universally applied to all settings, including alternative provision.

#### Children and young people:

- Will have their voices heard, and steer personalised plans in what educational success looks like for them
- Will have opportunities to work towards educational goals, qualifications or skills for work and life
- Will be able to continue build friendships with a peer group and trusted relationships with adults
- Will reduce feelings of exclusion and build self-esteem, wellbeing and resilience
- Will have their needs identified early, and given appropriate support to meet their needs

#### Parent's and carers:

- Will have their voices heard, and steer personalised plans in what educational success looks like for their child
- Will understand the intention, time frame and benefits of the provision being implemented

#### Schools:

- Will have access to affordable, responsive provisions that work in a number of ways to address low and emerging difficulties, urgent or longer-term needs
- Will have local advice, guidance and personnel available to ensure consistency of approach and QA
- Will have local providers that meet the needs of children of all ages, abilities and vulnerabilities and clear transportation options

#### Alternative Provisions:

- Will have clear expectations of intended outcomes and delivery in how to support to children in our local area
- Will have consistent and reduced conflicting demands between schools and partners
- Will have an understanding of local needs, to support business model development and design

#### Partners:

- Will understand our local approach and intent of alternative provision
- Will know who to contact if they are concerned about the quality or safety of alternative provision
- Will know well the roles and responsibilities of those that commission, monitor and deliver alternative provision

## Delivery Model

### Expert mainstream inclusion

All schools regardless of phase, type or academy status will have access to:

- A local Behaviour Support Service
- Training and resources
- A SEND advisory service
- Alternative curriculum pathways within mainstream settings (including in-reach support)

### Consistent expectations

The expectations on alternative provisions, schools and partners will be clear from the local framework published on alternative provision in supporting Reading pupils, for areas such as:

- Good commissioning
- Tracking and monitoring and safeguarding pupils
- Site check schedule and quality assurance of provision
- Graduated response to alternative provision
- Local services, advice, guidance and training opportunities to deliver Reading's vision for AP
- Hearing parent and provider voice, and pupil views through methods accessible for all needs

### Accessible and effective Alternative Provision

There will be local alternative provision to meet a variety of needs of children and young people, and accessible at all levels of the local continuum of AP.

- Effective communication and relationships with alternative provisions will be maintained by the Local Authority
- Delivery framework for quality, safe and impactful provision will be embedded and evaluated
- The landscape of AP will be monitored well to address availability at all areas of continuum and required needs

### Effective evaluation and escalation

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of this strategy and the progress made against different areas will be governed through internal and external scrutiny within the Reading Education Partnership Board
- Key performance indicators and progress against AP strategy milestones will ensure robust review

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Delivery Framework

