

ALP Statement of Action – Co-production

1.0 Background

Bristol City Council (BCC) commissioned an **independent review of Alternative Learning Provision (ALP)**. The review made 31 recommendations for improvement in the ALP system in Bristol. BCC has completed initial scoping of the work required to deliver against all of the recommendations. However, in order to deliver an inclusive ALP system that works for all, co-production with ALP stakeholders is required. This document sets out how this will be achieved, both in planning the work needed and subsequent delivery of the plan.

2.0 Engagement principles

BCC is currently developing a **Co-Production Charter** which will outline the principles for working with stakeholders to improve services. Until the charter is in place, co-production of the ALP Statement of Action will adhere to the following principles. Once the charter is available this document will be reviewed to ensure best practice is being followed.

In its simplest essence, to co-produce is to make something together. Co-production is not just a word, it's not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions.

Co-production is about developing more equal partnerships between people who use services, carers and professionals.

The National Co-production Critical Friends Group, a very diverse cross-sector network, agreed this definition:

“Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.”

The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance offers the following definition:

"Co-production" is when an individual influences the support and services received, or when groups of people get together to influence the way that services are designed, commissioned and delivered."

Transformative co-production is when:

- There is movement on from involvement and participation towards people who use services and carers having an equal, more meaningful and powerful role in services.
- People who use services and carers are involved in all aspects of a service – the planning, development and actual delivery of the service.
- Power and resources are transferred from managers to people who use services and carers.
- People who use services, carers and staff are assets and are valued.
- It is recognised that if someone makes a contribution, they should get something back in exchange.
- Frontline staff are seen as a group that needs to have more independence and a greater role in planning services.

3.0 Co-production proposal

In addition to the proposed workstreams to deliver against the recommendations in the ALP Review there will be a **cross-cutting co-production workstream**. This workstream has two purposes – to co-produce the delivery plan and, once in the delivery phase, to monitor delivery and ensure new systems and processes are fit for purpose.

There will be four **Reference Groups** made up of clusters of stakeholders. These groups are:



Each of the groups will initially contribute to developing and amending plans for delivery and make sure areas important to attendees of the groups are covered. Once the Statement of Action is agreed the reference groups will continue to meet regularly to track progress against the plan, sign off deliverables and provide expert advice and guidance.

3.1 Potential attendees

3.1.1 Education settings reference group

Comprised of representatives of the network of ALP providers, mainstream settings and special schools.

- Headteachers of Alternative Learning Provision
- BASHP (Bristol Association of Secondary Heads and Principals)
- Special Heads group
- PHAB – (Primary Heads Association, Bristol)
- HOPE Virtual School

An initial session was held with ALP providers on [23rd February 2021](#). In particular, the group were keen to use the opportunity of the ALP Statement of Action to address how ALP is used in the city with respect to SEND. In October 2020, a survey was sent out to local AP settings, including those not currently on the AP framework. This has been used to inform initial development of the draft [ALP Commissioning Strategy](#) and is reproduced in appendix A.

3.1.2 Children and young people (CYP) reference group

ALP providers will assist in identifying current CYP attending ALP to be part of this group. Mainstream settings will also be asked if there are CYP within their settings who may be appropriate to contribute. Previously basic engagement has occurred with this cohort at the end of 2021 in the form of a survey. This has been used to inform initial development of the draft [ALP Commissioning Strategy](#) and is reproduced in appendix A.

3.1.3 Parent/carers reference group

Along with representatives from parent/carers groups, individual parent/carers outside of these groups will be asked if they would like to be included. Parent/carer organisations include:

- Parent Carer Forum

- Families in Focus
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS)

One of the challenges in engaging parents/carers of CYP in ALP settings outside of the above groups is the [Education Directorate privacy notice](#), which Data Protection have said does not specifically allow contacting parents for the purposes of surveys. Therefore, previous surveys have gone largely through parties like the ones listed, where parents signed up to receive information, however, this skewed the results heavily to parents of Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) pupils.

If we want to properly reach a wide range of parents in ALP and engage a representative sample, the privacy notice will need to be updated to explicitly allow engagement of parents.

3.1.4 Key stakeholders reference group

An expression of interest to be part of the group has been received from a Councillor. In addition to Members, other groups will be approached to provide representation. These groups are:

- West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL)
- Council for Disabled Children (CDC)
- SEND Partnership Group
- Belonging and Attendance Group
- Schools Forum
- Foster Carers
- Social Workers

3.2 Resources

Co-production principles in section 2.0 above indicate, that asking CYP to give up their own time should come with some recognition.

Vouchers have been used with a previous young commissioners project - but the organisers of that also flagged that resources were needed for face-to-face meetings (food & drink, meeting rooms, transport (bus tickets), taxis etc.), as well as officer resource cost in recruiting and engaging young people to participate in the first place.

Other resources will likely be needed to distribute the consultation widely, including production of an easy read version.

A budget for this work needs to be established.

3.3 Timescales

BCC will be recommissioning a new ALP framework of ALP providers. This is due to be completed by 1st September 2022. A key part of this work requires consultation on the draft commissioning strategy and proposals before publication of the final commissioning strategy.

ALP recommissioning timeline

Stage	From	To
Consultation on draft commissioning strategy and proposals	24/05/2021	04/07/2021
Publication of final commissioning strategy	07/09/2021	
Opportunity for providers to submit tenders	03/01/2022	25/02/2022
Implementation of new framework	01/06/2022	31/08/2022
New framework and service level agreements start	01/09/2022	

Delivery of the ALP Statement of Action and the recommissioning of ALP are closely linked and so it makes sense to align co-production of the Statement of Action with the consultation. Prior to 24th May 2021 the reference groups will be formed and once in place, sessions will be held with the reference groups to cover both areas.

3.4 Methods

Ideally sessions with the reference groups would be held face-to-face. Initially this will not be possible in order to manage the risk of COVID-19. Therefore, meetings will be held electronically using Zoom/Teams for co-production and consultation events.

During the delivery phase of the Statement of Action it may become possible to hold face-to-face sessions with the reference groups.

4.0 Areas for co-production

4.1 Recommendations from ALP Review

The ALP Review made 31 recommendations for improvement of the ALP system in Bristol. The reference groups will review the recommendations and prioritise those which are considered to be most important.

4.2 Approach

BCC has developed an initial plan for delivery (see section 5.0). The reference groups will review the plans to ensure the right activity is covered and that implementation of the recommendations will be achieved. This is likely to result in changes to the initial planning to produce the final version of the ALP Statement of Action.

4.3 Recommissioning

The consultation for the recommissioning of ALP will obtain the reference groups' views on the draft commissioning strategy. This will result in changes to the strategy to ensure the framework proposals are fit for purpose.

5.0 Initial BCC planning

As a starting point for discussion, a draft [ALP Statement of Action](#) has been developed. This is not the end product but is intended to help guide the co-production process. Following the reference group sessions, the Statement of Action will be amended to reflect the views of participants.

The final agreed version of the Statement of Action will outline the activity that will occur to deliver against all of the recommendations and the timescales to do so. It will contain agreed milestones for delivery so that progress can be tracked in the delivery phase of the Statement of action.

6.0 Appendix A

Reproduced from draft [ALP Commissioning Strategy](#) section 6 Stakeholder Engagement.

Stakeholder Engagement

Proposals in this strategy have been shaped by initial engagement with stakeholders across pupils, parents/carers, providers, schools and other relevant professionals, and engagement work will continue throughout this process, alongside the consultation for this strategy. Results of this initial engagement is set out below.

Pupils

A survey was sent out to all pupils in full-time and part-time AP settings in July 2020, to better understand their experience, with follow-up phone calls for pupils who expressed an interest in further discussion.

In terms of the move into AP, there was a range of pupil experiences, with most pupils saying they got information about the setting before going, but only half feeling they were part of a discussion around which one was best. One pupil felt that they and their parent were given information about a setting including options for moving on, but that once they were in, they felt that these options fell away and the move felt much more permanent than was initially suggested.

Most respondents did not have any particular suggestions on what could have improved their experience starting at AP, although answers that were given focused on meeting staff beforehand and on travel time.

Around half of respondents (52%) were taught in groups of between 3 and 8 pupils, with 48% taught on a one-to-one basis. All pupils who responded were happy with their group sizes.

Pupils were also asked what, if anything changed for them as a result of their learning in AP. A significant minority (33%) said nothing changed for them. Of those who did identify a positive change, the main changes were:

- Behaviour (33%)
- Engagement in learning (22%)
- Confidence/ independence (17%)

Most pupils identified something that had worked well for them in AP. The main responses were:

- Relationship with staff/ consistent staffing (47%)
- Teaching and engagement in learning (18%)
- Support managing behaviour (12%)

Over half of pupils that responded stated that there was nothing that didn't work well for them. Of the pupils who did identify things that didn't work, these included: too much time off-site, feeling stereotyped by staff, distance from home, lessons starting too early, and not being comfortable in large groups. A number of these pose significant challenges for fostering a sense of belonging in their AP school.

Similarly, 42% of pupils did not identify anything that they would change about AP. Of those who did identify specific changes, these included: better facilities especially exercise facilities, more work

experience opportunities, more choice in settings, consistency in the offer (that is, schedules not being changed at the last minute) and more flexible timetabling.

Bristol is currently engaging with young people in mainstream schools to understand their experience of support available and their sense of belonging in school, as well as continuing to seek feedback from pupils in AP to further shape proposals, and ensure the pupil voice is central to any plans for alternative provision.

Parents/Carers

A survey of parents and carers of pupils in AP was published in November 2020 to seek views on their experience of AP. Response rate was low (8 parents/carers), with all pupils attending BHES, which, as a very distinct provision, makes it difficult to conclude more widely (although some pupils did also attend part-time AP commissioned through the current framework). As a result, further engagement will be undertaken with parents and carers.

Most parent/carers thought that the AP was appropriate for the needs of the child (86% agreed or strongly agreed), but results were more mixed when asked if the child made progress in AP (50% agreed or strongly agreed, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

When asked what went well about the AP the child attended, the most common responses were:

- Individualised and flexible learning approaches
- Small class sizes
- Relationship with staff

Whilst smaller class sizes may be harder to replicate in mainstream schools, the benefits of flexible and individualised learning approaches may be an approach for further consideration in mainstream as well as AP settings.

In terms of areas where AP has worked less well, parent/carers highlighted:

- Limited provision (some of which related to COVID-19 limitations)
- Lack of information provided on progress
- Not understanding or supporting the child's SEND

This does show the importance of ongoing engagement with parents and carers throughout pupils' time in AP, not just at the point of referral and move.

Schools

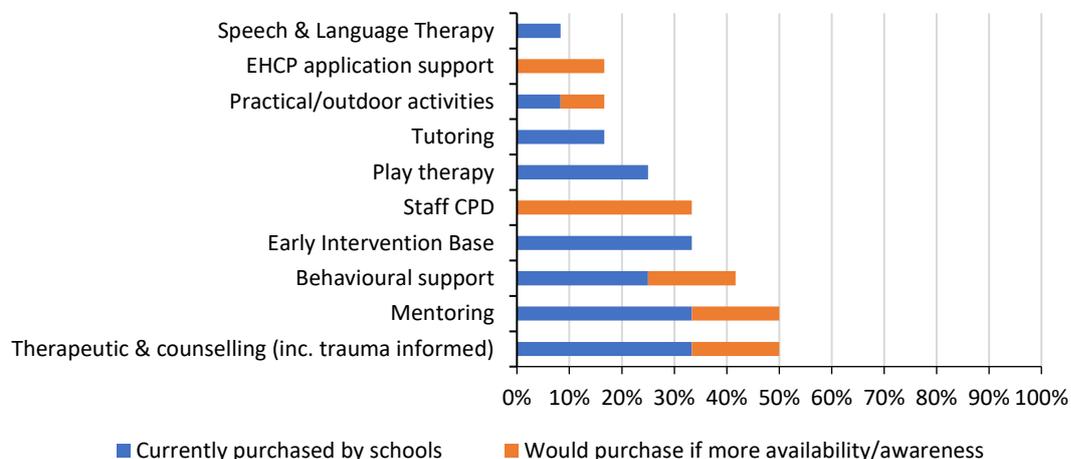
In December 2020, a survey sent out to all Bristol schools asked the main reasons for referring a pupil to AP. The most common responses given by schools were:

- Persistent disruptive behaviour
- Threatening or violent behaviour towards adults or pupils
- Needs unable to be met in mainstream school (often related to SEND)
- Prevention of PEX
- Disengagement with education

Schools were also surveyed about the support offered to pupils in-school prior to referral to external AP. 92% of the 12 responding schools said that they would be interested in purchasing more outreach services through the ALP catalogue if these were available, with the 8% of respondents who replied 'no' to this question highlighting strain on budgets and affordability of these services.

The following outreach services were identified by responding schools, in terms of what is currently purchased and what they would like to purchase if there was more availability or there was clearer information on services they could access (such as those already offered by the local authority):

School outreach support



Needs identified by schools that weren't currently met by the AP market included mental health support for pupils who did not meet CAMHS thresholds, outreach support working with families, and AP for pupils up to Key Stage 2.

Providers

In October 2020, a survey was sent out to local AP settings, including those not currently on the AP framework. Providers on the framework scored the following statements about their experience:

What the framework offered	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the framework agreement offers a collaborative approach across Bristol schools, alternative learning providers and BCC	13%	27%	47%	13%	0%
I feel the framework agreement offers a consistent referral and placement process	27%	27%	40%	7%	0%
I feel the framework agreement offers stronger assurance around placements being made	27%	7%	53%	13%	0%

In terms of what works well about the current framework arrangement, and what could be improved from a provider perspective, some of the main responses were:

What works well

- Opportunities to collaborate with other providers through the forum
- Clear expectations of service set out in the framework contract
- Catalogue is a mark of quality to promote services
- Good relationship and partnership with ALP Hub
- Opportunity to speak and work directly with senior school leaders

What could be improved

- More pupil information on demographics and need
- More follow-up information once a pupil placement is ended
- Increased training and CPD opportunities provided or advertised through the framework
- Moves into AP earlier in the school year to help relationships with pupils

Whilst the final point in particular is clear from a provider perspective, of primary importance are the needs of the pupil, and opportunities should be given to make mainstream education work.

Other stakeholders

A number of stakeholders interviewed also identified a need for provision that better supported pupils at risk or engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation, serious youth violence and gang involvement, as well as a need for AP that better supported children in care (CiC) returning to Bristol from out of area, in order to support their return to local residential or foster care.

Bristol City Council's Education Inclusion Managers (EIM) were among many stakeholders who were keen to emphasise the importance of early intervention work in keeping pupils in school and preventing pupil exclusions (PEX) or transfers through the Bristol Inclusion Panel (BIP). The success of the EIM's weapons in schools incidents was highlighted as an example of this, with 93% of pupils they worked with remaining in their school after intervention work. A similar scheme related to minor drugs incidents is now planned to be rolled out. The EIMs felt that a wider offer of external providers schools could access or purchase from, as well as a clearer route to publicise these services, would support this work.

7.0 Appendix B

Engagement log

Group	Date	Purpose	Outcome
Internal staff	22/01/2021	Review recommendations and develop response.	Working groups formed to develop ALP Statement of Action.
Special Schools Head Teachers	03/02/2021	Overview and establish how group would like to be involved going forward.	View captured.
AP Heads	23/02/2021	Review recommendations and establish how group would like to be involved going forward.	AP Heads' views captured.
People Scrutiny Commission	08/02/2021	Provide overview of report and next steps.	
Post-16 at Risk Group	27/04/2021	Review safeguarding and Post-16 recommendations and establish how group would like to be involved going forward.	Group's views captured.
Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership - Educational Group	10/05/2021	Review safeguarding recommendations and establish how group would like to be involved going forward.	