

Alternative Learning Provision Framework 2022-27

Commissioning Strategy

Contents

1. Summary	4
1.1 Executive Summary	4
1.2 What is Alternative Learning Provision?	5
1.3 ALP and SEND	5
1.4 Summary of framework proposals	6
2. Overview of Current Position	7
2.1 Current Education Provision	7
2.2 Use of Alternative Learning Provision	8
2.3 Bristol Inclusion Panel Review	11
3. Legislative and Policy Context	11
3.1 Legislation & Statutory Guidance	11
3.2 National policy developments in ALP	13
3.3 Bristol City Council policies and strategies	14
4. Demographic Analysis – Who uses ALP?	15
4.1 Pupil demographics	15
4.2 Pupil outcomes	17
5. Research and Best Practice	17
5.1 Pre-ALP (early intervention)	18
5.2 Moving into ALP	19
5.3 Thriving, Achieving and Belonging in ALP	20
5.4 Leaving ALP	22
6. Stakeholder Engagement	24
6.1 Pupils	24
6.2 Parents/ Carers	25
6.3 Schools	26
6.4 Providers	26
6.5 Other stakeholders	28
6.6 Consultation report	28
7. Market Assessment	29
7.1 Demand analysis	29
7.2 Current Alternative Learning Provision	30
7.3 Areas of need	31
7.4 Cost	32

8.	Commissioning priorities	32
8.1	Early Intervention (Pre-ALP)	33
8.2	Moving into ALP	34
	Information to support an effective move	34
	Commissioning ALP	34
8.3	Thriving, achieving and belonging in ALP.....	35
	Supporting positive outcomes	35
	Supporting additional educational needs.....	35
	Quality assurance.....	36
8.4	Leaving ALP	36
	Supporting pupils to their onward destination.....	36
	Supporting ALP settings	37
9.	Procurement recommendations.....	37
	ALP Framework	38
	Block Contracts	39
10.	Governance	39
11.	Equalities and Diversity.....	40
12.	TUPE	40
13.	Indicative Timetable.....	40
14.	List of acronyms	40
	Appendix 1: Needs Analysis	42
	Pupil numbers and ALP demand.....	42
	Pupil number projections.....	42
	Use of Alternative Learning Provision.....	45
	Local authority spend on ALP.....	47
	Pupil information and pupil needs.....	47
	Pupil demographics.....	48
	PEXs and FTEs.....	50
	Pupil need	53
	Inclusion and in-school support.....	56
	Outcomes	57
	Pupil experience.....	57
	Parent/carers experience	59
	Attendance, attainment and progress.....	59

Post-16 outcomes 60

1. Summary

1.1 Executive Summary

In June 2021, Bristol City Council published its Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) Statement of Action, in response to an independent review into ALP. The review set out 31 recommendations for improvement in the ALP system in Bristol, including the following incorporated into this strategy:

- A clear strategic joint SEND/ALP commissioning plan should be published
- Carry out a comprehensive Needs Analysis of ALP

In order to incorporate all the strands of work to implement systemic change through the ALP Statement of Action, a refresh of this strategy will be published for the start of school year 2022/23.

This strategy sets out proposals to support pupils who are not able to, or are at risk of not being able, receive effective education in mainstream schools, and require support through ALP. This could be for reasons of physical or mental health, exclusion or additional learning needs.

ALP is not a service that exists separate to the mainstream education system. When delivered effectively, it provides support throughout the pupil's entire journey from mainstream school into and out of ALP, through to the onward destination. This strategy therefore sets out a whole system approach to commissioning of ALP.

Proposals outlined in this strategy will cover the following 4 stages of a pupil's journey:

1. Pre-ALP (early intervention)
2. Moving into ALP
3. Thriving, achieving and belonging in ALP
4. Leaving ALP

This approach will be pupil-focused, and will be based on the following values:

- Pupils feel a sense of belonging in their education setting
- Pupils have a voice and can shape their education provision
- High quality provision matches the needs and aspirations of pupils, allowing them to achieve their full potential
- High quality provision reflects and understands the needs of Bristol's communities
- Education professionals can identify alternative education needs early, and are informed and confident accessing the full range of provision available to Bristol pupils

To ensure there is sufficient ALP available to meet needs, full-time and revolving-door ALP places will continue to be commissioned from AP academy schools, as well as through independent schools through a new flexible framework from September 2022. This framework will allow the local authority and Bristol schools to purchase ALP support from independent schools and part-time providers, across three distinct contract lots, supporting all pupils with alternative education needs:

1. Full-time and revolving door ALP (*registered schools only*)
2. Part-time ALP
3. Early intervention (in-school support)

1.2 What is Alternative Learning Provision?

Local authorities have a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time education for permanently expelled pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such Alternative Learning Provision (ALP). Schools are responsible for commissioning ALP for pupils on their school roll, where this is provided on a part-time basis.

ALP covers a wide range of services from pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital education and education for children in custody, to provision of full-time or part-time education outside of mainstream school. It also includes preventative programmes working with individuals or groups of children to prevent them from being excluded from school.

In addition to commissioning places from ALP academy settings and the maintained Bristol Hospital Education Service, Bristol City Council currently arranges full-time and some part-time ALP through an open framework. Providers approved onto this framework are advertised on the Bristol ALP catalogue, through which schools are also able to purchase part-time ALP.

Bristol currently uses the term Alternative Learning Provision (ALP), including in our previous commissioning strategy, to cover all provision. Bristol also uses the term Alternative Provision (AP) to refer specifically to full-time provision. National Department for Education terminology refers to all settings, both full-time and part-time, as AP. Therefore in this strategy, some references to full-time schools, and to reports and guidance, will use the term AP.

1.3 ALP and SEND

In Bristol and nationally a high proportion of pupils in alternative learning provision have SEND support needs, particularly social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. A snapshot of pupils in full-time ALP from June 2020 recorded 81% of pupils receiving some level of SEND support, with 22% of pupils having an EHCP. For all of these pupils, their primary needs were SEMH.

The high number of pupils in ALP with needs that may have been better met in specialised settings has also impacted on ALP capacity in Bristol, with waiting lists for some settings. This has been mitigated in the short-term by fewer pupils in ALP in the 2020/21 school year due to COVID-19.

Bristol is currently developing a policy for placing pupils with SEND in ALP where appropriate, taking into account factors including national DfE guidance, parent/carer preference and placement stability. This policy will be developed as part of the ALP Statement of Action, and will be included alongside the refresh of this strategy.

In addition to this work, significant work is also underway to increase the sufficiency of specialist SEND placements for Bristol pupils. In September 2020, Cabinet approved the SEND sufficiency and capital programme which will invest over £28million in Bristol's special schools, and result in major improvements to current special schools, as well as significantly increasing the number of specialist places available for students with SEND.

This programme includes new-builds, as well as the modification and extension of current buildings, increasing capacity of our specialist schools, and creating more specialist school placements in mainstream schools.

As part of the South West & South-Central Flexible Framework for Independent & Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) alongside 9 other authorities, Bristol can also commission specialist education places from 45 INMSS and Specialist Post-16 Institutions across the region, with more settings available after the current framework round. Through this framework we are developing our relationships with providers and undertaking market shaping exercises as a consortium.

Bristol is also part of the South West Sufficiency Project with 13 other local authorities; the project is being led by South Gloucestershire Council and received two years' funding from the DfE. The project's aims are twofold; to look at how LAs can work more efficiently with the independent sector and how LAs can commission, design and deliver services together. The project will:

- Produce a South West needs analysis to include an understanding of the market and aggregation of data to inform equality decisions.
- Produce one market position statement for residential, fostering, and independent / non-maintained special schools.
- Develop recommendations for new ways of delivering services including new ways of partnership working across LAs.

1.4 Summary of framework proposals

This strategy sets out plans to re-commission a framework for Bristol Council and Bristol schools to purchase ALP places from a range of approved providers, depending on pupil need and preference.

More detail on proposals will be set out in the strategy, as well as the rationale, research and stakeholder feedback behind these. The main priorities of the ALP framework, across the four stages of a pupil's journey through ALP, are as follows:

Pre-ALP (Early intervention)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Alongside the part-time and full-time/revolving door lots, a new framework lot for in-school support commissioned directly by schools, supporting children to stay in mainstream school where appropriate | 2. Existing providers of ALP encouraged to diversify their offer to provide more in-school support | 3. SEMH pathway and graduated response, ensuring adequate support has been made available to students before referral into ALP |
|--|--|--|

Moving into ALP

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Details of pre-ALP support, pupil needs and safeguarding details provided prior to referral | 2. Consideration of pupil needs to develop suitable ALP offer, including blended packages, with pupil and parent voice to be clear part of the process | 3. Consistent expectations of start times and induction processes post-referral |
| 4. Diverse range of providers on the framework, offering wide range of support, including support to meet the needs of harder to place pupils | 5. Value for money through limited permitted price increases for providers for framework duration | |

Thriving, achieving and belonging in ALP

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Focus on attendance and improved outcomes for pupils, based on appropriate baselining | 2. Evidence-based quality assurance processes, ensuring consistent high standards across all ALP settings | 3. High quality careers guidance offered early, supported by an ALP catalogue with distinct careers information, advice and guidance provision |
| 4. Ensuring providers have access to adequate CPD and resources to support pupils with complex needs | 5. Best practice and support facilitated through provider forum | 6. New Bristol mental health support teams working with AP schools |

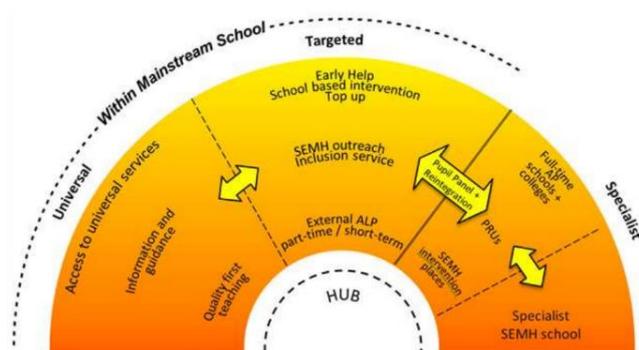
Leaving ALP

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Clear transition plans in place for pupils, including to post-16 education, employment or training (EET) for year 11 pupils | 2. Development of 'keep in touch' transition offer following move to EET, reintegration to mainstream school or move to specialist provision | 3. Provision of all relevant needs, support and safeguarding information to onward destination |
|--|--|--|

2. Overview of Current Position

2.1 Current Education Provision

Bristol advocates a whole system approach to supporting pupils with alternative learning needs including SEMH needs, with a pathway in place from universal services in mainstream schools to provision in specialist SEMH schools:



There is currently a range of different types of provision for pupils with SEMH needs and alternative education needs across Bristol:

Mainstream schools:

- 108 state-funded primary
- 22 state-funded secondary

- 2 state-funded all-through

AP Schools:

- Lansdown Park Academy (Revolving-door AP academy)
- St Matthias Academy (Revolving-door AP academy)
- Snowdon Village (Full-time AP academy)
- Learning Partnership West (Full-time AP independent school)
- Bristol Hospital Education Service (Maintained setting)

Part-time ALP settings

- 30 providers currently on the Framework covering a range of provision, including: tuition, sports and activities, mentoring, vocational and training, therapeutic, and early college

Early Intervention Bases for KS1 & 2

- North Star Outreach
- The Nest
- Lansdown Park

Special schools:

- 12 maintained, including 5 with SEMH speciality
- Framework to commission places from Independent & Non-Maintained Special Schools

2.2 Use of Alternative Learning Provision

ALP in Bristol is coordinated through a dedicated ALP Hub, which has responsibility for:

- Strategic oversight and support to partners
- Procurement and management of current ALP framework contract
- Advice and guidance to schools
- Processing referrals and administering pathway panels
- Finance and budget control
- Collecting data and reporting on outcomes
- Quality assurance and contract management
- Meeting statutory functions around permanent exclusions and coordinating Fair Access complex mid-year admissions

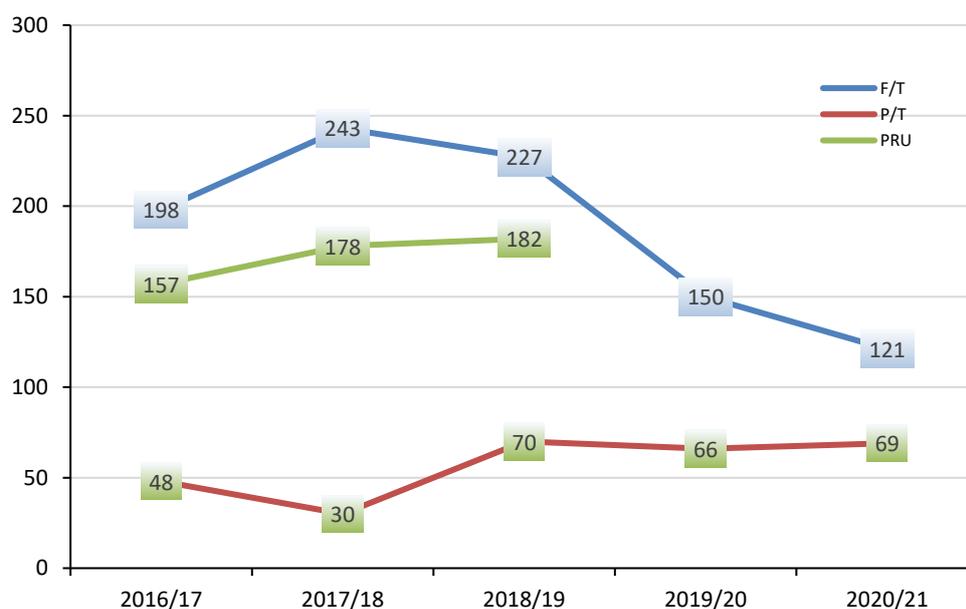
Part-time ALP settings and independent full-time AP schools have been commissioned through the current ALP Framework since September 2016. This includes a 10 place block contract with Learning Partnership West. 30 additional block contract places were in place with Include Catch22 until its market exit in 2019. Pupils previously at Include Catch22 moved to Snowdon Village, an AP academy.

In addition to the framework, full-time ALP is also commissioned from three AP academies - Snowdon Village, and revolving-door ALP from two AP academies operated by Learn@MAT (St

Matthias and Lansdown Park).¹ Further full-time ALP will be commissioned from North Star Academy when it opens in September 2022.

The chart below shows the number of pupils in PRUs and local authority funded places over the duration of the current framework contract (excluding Bristol Hospital Education Service). Figures are taken from ALP school annual reports, and part-time figures from the ALP Hub's internal database of placements. PRU/revolving-door data only goes up to 2018/19 due to a change in how numbers were recorded in subsequent years, counting school capacity rather than number of pupils through the year.

Full-time and BCC-funded part-time ALP placements



The use of ALP in Bristol has historically been high when compared to national figures. According to a 2020 report by the Centre for Social Justice, the proportion of Bristol's pupils in ALP as of January 2019 was the 8th highest of all English local authorities.² This is despite a significant decrease in the number of permanent exclusions since 2016, as moves into full-time ALP now largely come from Bristol Inclusion Panel (BIP) facilitated managed moves.

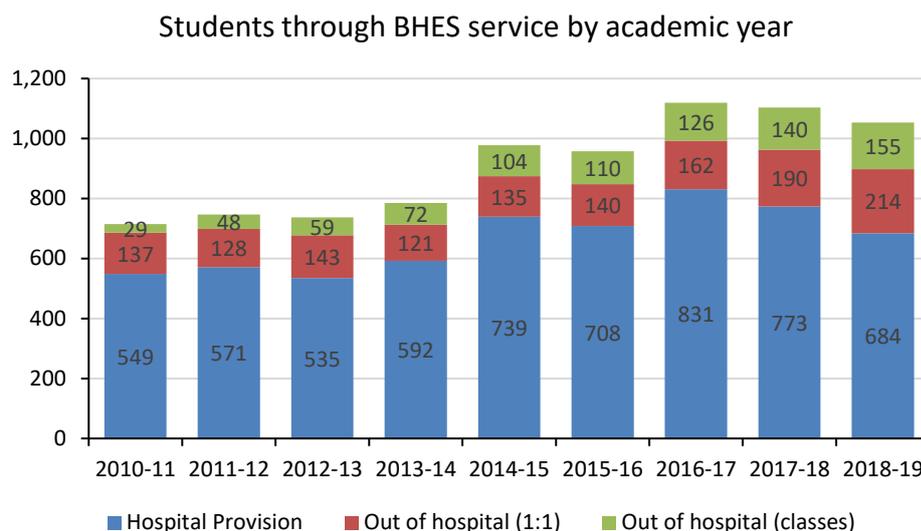
As well as changes in referral numbers into ALP, there also appears to have been a change in end outcomes for pupils over the duration of the framework, with fewer pupils referred into ALP through the BIP subsequently reintegrated back into mainstream schools:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Pupils who have moved to an ALP school/ out of an ALP or PRU into mainstream provision	47	22	26	9

¹ Revolving-door provision is commonly referred to as PRU. This reflects common usage, but is not the statutory definition of Pupil Referral Units, which are ALP schools maintained by the local authority

² Centre for Social Justice, [Warming the Cold Spots of Alternative Provision](#), May 2020, Figure 18

Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) has a budget for a nominal 200 full-time places per year, although pupils are usually seen for short periods of time, meaning in practice much higher numbers are taught per year. The chart below shows that pupil numbers have been over 1,000 per year since 2016/17 academic year. Out of hospital 1:1s and classes (taught at Falkland Road) have continued to rise year on year, although hospital provision at Bristol Children's Hospital and Riverside has decreased since 2016/17.



2019/20 data is not included as BHES stopped taking referrals during the first COVID-19 lockdown from March to July 2020 as managers in the children's hospital suspended teaching for this period.

BHES is a maintained setting, not a commissioned service, and so is not covered by the commissioning proposals in this strategy, although it will be included in the development of sector-wide service level agreements as part of the ALP Statement of Action.

Projected ALP use

Occupancy of ALP placements in Bristol and nationally has been significantly lower in the year to date for school year 2020/21 due to COVID-19, with fewer pupils moved from or excluded from mainstream schools.

There is however an expectation, reflected in a number of reports, that the impact of the pandemic will significantly increase the numbers of pupils at risk of exclusion.³ Pupils are likely to struggle with a range of challenges, ranging from grief at the loss of loved ones, to poor mental health, to pupils (particularly the most disadvantaged) struggling with educational engagement whilst remote learning. NHS England research found that the estimated prevalence of children with a probable mental disorder rose from 1 in 9 in 2017, to 1 in 6 by July 2020.

³ See for example, University of Oxford, [Excluded Lives](#), June 2020

Therefore whilst it is anticipated that an increased focus on early intervention in schools will lead to a reduction in referrals into full-time ALP over the 5 year duration of this next ALP framework, in the short term referrals may potentially increase beyond the levels of previous years.

Demand for ALP places is also likely to be impacted by increasing numbers of pupils in all settings at Key Stage 3 and 4. Pupil numbers at Key Stage 1 and 2 however are projected to decrease over the next five years. More details can be found in the Needs Analysis at the end of this document

2.3 Bristol Inclusion Panel Review

Pupils that move into full-time ALP in Bristol do so through the Bristol Inclusion Panel (BIP). A review of the BIP has recently been undertaken, looking into how the process can support more effective safeguarding and promote better outcomes for pupils. This includes reviewing the support available and offered to pupils in mainstream schools prior to referral to the BIP.

The implementation of the priorities in this strategy, particularly related to the 'pre-ALP' and 'moving into ALP' stages, will be informed by this review BIP.

3. Legislative and Policy Context

3.1 Legislation & Statutory Guidance

Statutory duty to provide alternative education

Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. Other duties in the 1996 Act include the duties to secure sufficient education in the area (sections 14-15B) and to promote high standards in education (section 13A).

Local authorities also have a power (not a duty) to arrange alternative education provision above compulsory school age. There is also a duty under section 10 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to promote the participation of 16-17 year olds in education and training.

These duties apply to all children of compulsory school age resident in the local authority area, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend. Full-time education for excluded pupils must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion (for a child in care of the local authority, this should be the first day after exclusion).⁴

While there is no statutory requirement as to when suitable full-time education should begin for pupils placed in ALP for reasons other than exclusion, local authorities should ensure that such pupils are placed as quickly as possible.⁵

In the case of fixed-term exclusions (FTEs), schools have a duty to arrange suitable full-time education from the sixth day of fixed period exclusion (or the sixth day of consecutive FTEs).⁶

⁴ Statutory Guidance on exclusions, 2017

⁵ AP statutory guidance, 2013

⁶ The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007, and The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014

Regulations to the Education Act 2002 were put in place in 2010 and 2012 with the intention to stop children, especially those with SEND, being put in ALP indefinitely as a way of unofficially excluding them. Where schools direct pupils off site to improve behaviour, the pupil's parent must be informed (or pupil if aged 18+) and the local authority too if the pupil has an EHCP. This must be done as soon as practicable, no more than two days before starting in off-site provision.

Local authority safeguarding duties

Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities are required to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the authority and its partners, to improve the wellbeing of children in the authority's area – including protection from harm and neglect alongside other outcomes. Section 11 states that this must also cover where services are contracted out.

Local authorities must, in discharging their education duties, ensure these are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, as well as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their area who are in need, by providing a range of appropriate services (section 17 of the Children Act 1989).

The 'Prevent' duty on local authorities states that they must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and extremism, as do schools (including independent schools). This duty on local authorities also extends to out-of-school settings. Authorities are also required to understand the range of activity and settings in their areas and take appropriate and proportionate steps to ensure that children attending such settings are properly safeguarded.

The full statutory safeguarding framework can be found in:

- [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Registering as an independent school

Providers of ALP are legally required to register as an independent school if they provide full-time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one pupil with an EHCP or one child in care of the local authority.

There is no legal definition of what constitutes 'full-time' education. However, the DfE considers an institution to be providing full-time education if it is intended to provide, or does provide, all, or substantially all, of a child's education. Generally, the DfE considers any institution that is operating during the day, for 18 hours per week, to be providing full-time education.⁷

Providers of part-time ALP are not required to register with any authority, and they are able to operate in whatever form they like so long as they comply with relevant legislation around health and safety, safeguarding etc.

Bristol City Council published [advice on AP providers and registering as independent schools](#) in 2019.

The DfE has proposed to introduce a legal definition of full-time education, as well as reviewing whether any additional educational institutions will need to register as independent schools, in a consultation which closed in November 2020 ('Regulating independent educational institutions').

⁷ DfE, Registration of Independent Schools: Departmental Guidance for Proprietors and Prospective Proprietors of Independent Schools in England, August 2019

Statutory guidance

Commissioners and providers of ALP must have regard to all relevant statutory guidance, including:

- [Alternative Provision statutory guidance](#)
- [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers](#)⁸
- [Children missing education](#)
- [Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
- [School suspensions and expulsions](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)

Section 5 sets out further details on good practice from the above statutory guidance.

3.2 National policy developments in ALP

ALP commissioning arrangements

In March 2018, the Government published a White Paper, [Creating opportunity for all: our vision for alternative provision](#). This looked broadly at:

- Sharing best practice (including AP Innovation Fund)
- Exclusions practices
- New statutory guidance on local authority and school commissioning responsibilities
- Developing a bespoke ALP performance framework with Ofsted

In 2016, proposals were set out to transfer commissioning responsibilities fully to schools, including where a child is permanently excluded. However, these were scaled back in the 2018 White Paper:

The Government set out plans to transfer accountability for AP commissioning and the education of pupils in AP from local authorities to mainstream schools [...] We remain committed to ensuring that schools play their part and work in collaboration with AP providers and local authorities to take more responsibility for these areas.

The Government also consulted on the proposal to devolve local authorities' high needs funding for ALP to schools, to fund ALP placements or provide support in school prior to a permanent exclusion ('SEND and AP Provision: Call for Evidence'). The consultation closed in July 2019. New statutory guidance was also scheduled in the White Paper for Winter 2019 but has not yet been published.

The AP Innovation Fund project ended in May 2021 with the publication of a report looking at how the fund was used across three areas: helping children back into mainstream or special schools, helping young people into further education or employment, and supporting parent/carer involvement in their child's education. The report will also be used to help inform the development of a new ALP performance framework.

⁸ In January 2021, DfE published its new careers White Paper, [Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth](#), which sets out proposals on careers information, advice and guidance, and is likely to be the basis for amendments to existing careers statutory guidance

Exclusions and ALP

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion was published in May 2019 to look at how headteachers used exclusion in practice, and why some groups of pupils are more likely to be excluded. The Government's response to the review set out a number of commitments, including:

- Design a consultation to consider how to reform school exclusions, so that the school retains responsibility for the outcomes of pupils it permanently excludes
- Consider changes to introduce sharing of expertise between mainstream schools and ALP
- Conclude the Children in Need (CiN) Review to look at what makes a difference to the educational outcomes of CiN
- Consider how to change guidance on SEND Local Offer, so that more support services for parents and children in ALP, or at risk of exclusion, are included
- After consultation, consider reducing the limit on the total number of days a pupil can be excluded in one year (45), and whether to strengthen the requirement to arrange ALP during fixed-period exclusions
- Revise 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' guidance, which contains specific information about how schools can support pupils through Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and on whole school trauma and attachment awareness

3.3 Bristol City Council policies and strategies

One City Plan and Belonging Strategy

The One City Plan is Bristol's plan for the next 30 years up to 2050 to create a fair, healthy and sustainable city. By 2050 all children and young people will be given a voice to influence and shape the decisions that are important to them. The city will belong to them, providing a place of safety where they can achieve their aims and aspirations:

In 2021, Bristol City Council will also publish its Belonging Strategy, setting out the One City vision for children and young people across four pillars: Belonging from the Beginning, Belonging in Families, Belonging in Education and Belonging in Community. The strategy has been coproduced by children and young people and has informed the One City Plan refresh in 2021. Children and young people clearly identified school and education as key to a sense of belonging, with 57% saying they felt they belonged in their school – although this was lower for certain groups including pupils with SEN, pupils from BAME backgrounds, young carers, and homosexual and bisexual pupils.

Key One City Plan objectives for children and young people over the next five years include:

2021:

- Delivery of the Belonging Strategy actions begins
- Tackle digital exclusion and respond to the severe impact of the pandemic

2022:

- Access for all to a range of out-of-school activities supporting mental and physical health
- Launching a Bristol curriculum that reflects the city's diversity and history
- Voices of pupils with SEND and their families are firmly embedded in city decision making

2023:

- Access to healthy food at school, and improved access to food education
- Schools are supported to deliver effective PSHE, linked to gender identity and sexual orientation, sexual health, menstruation, life skills, food/nutrition and sustainability

2024:

- Citywide action to ensure the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) model is embedded across all of Bristol's statutory organisations and trauma informed practice is commonplace
- Bristol has a better response to mental health, particularly for children and young people

2025:

- School attendance rates on track to be in the top quarter of local authorities by 2028

2026:

- Work with the Global Goals Centre and the Bristol Curriculum has empowered young people to be a key driving force for Bristol towards its sustainable future
- Citywide initiatives to increase the proportion of women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and disabled leaders across the education and public sector workforce

Schools and ALP will be key partners in delivering the One City Plan and Belonging Strategy goals.

Other Bristol policies and strategies

ALP in Bristol will also need to address key priorities of other strategies, including:

- [Bristol Corporate Strategy 2018-23](#)
- [Bristol Equality and Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2018-23](#)
- [Bristol Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-23](#)
- [Bristol Post 16 Strategy 2019-24](#)

4. Demographic Analysis – Who uses ALP?

4.1 Pupil demographics

An evidence review by the Education Select Committee for its [2018 inquiry into Alternative Provision](#) found particular groups of children disproportionately more likely to be educated in ALP:

- Children in care
- Children in need
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils from Black Caribbean and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) heritage backgrounds

The Select Committee report also looked at exclusions data as well as ALP attendance. However, the PEX rate in Bristol is very low compared to other local authorities (9 times lower than the national average and that of other core cities in 2018/19).

Data on pupil characteristics is taken from a snapshot of 140 pupils in full-time ALP in June 2020. More information on the analysis of these pupils and pupils in part-time ALP is set out in the Needs Analysis at the end of this document, as well as analysis of the differing experiences of fixed-term exclusions across pupil groups.

Headline figures from this analysis show that:

- 69% of pupils in full-time ALP are male
 - This is compared to 49% of secondary pupils in Bristol overall (2020 school census)
- 97% of pupils in full-time ALP are in Key Stage 4 (38% in year 10, 59% in year 11)
- There is a lower proportion of BAME pupils in full-time ALP (17.9%) than in the wider secondary population (29.8%)
 - As per the national picture, there is a higher proportion of pupils from a Black Caribbean or GRT heritage background – although small pupil numbers for these groups mean this is subject to significant confidence intervals
 - The proportion of White British and pupils of mixed ethnicities is also higher in ALP than the wider secondary population
- A significant majority of pupils in full-time ALP are from South Bristol (63%), compared to 37% of the wider secondary population
 - This may in part account for the higher proportion of White British pupils in ALP, due to the higher White British population in South Bristol
- 43% of pupils in full-time ALP were eligible for Free Schools Meals, compared to 21% of the wider secondary population
- 57% of pupils in full-time ALP had SEN support needs (SEMH), 22% had a recorded EHCP or EHCP assessment in progress, whilst 20% of pupils had no recorded SEND.
 - 15% of the wider secondary population were recorded as having SEN support needs or an EHCP in the January 2020 census
- The proportion of ALP pupils recorded as children in care was almost six times higher than the rate in the wider secondary population, although caution should be shown with these figures given the small number of pupils involved.
- Similarly, a higher proportion of pupils in ALP were recorded as having involvement with Bristol Youth Offending Team than the wider secondary population

Although ALP settings are instructed to record orientation and gender identity, none of the pupil information from the June 2020 snapshot recorded a pupil as LGBQ+ or transgender. This is potentially due to how providers record or ask, rather than indicative of no LGBTQ+ pupils, as 7% of year 10 pupils in the 2019 Bristol Pupil Voice survey identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual or other, and

1% identified as transgender.⁹ Consideration will be taken with the new framework on how best to record this information in future.

4.2 Pupil outcomes

Full-time providers of ALP are required to submit progress scores for each pupil across the school year, related to engagement and progress in learning (across core subjects – English, maths and science - and across other subjects), on a four-point scale. The average provider-submitted per pupil scores for 2019/20 were:

- Engagement – 2.8
- Progress in learning (core subjects) – 2.9
- Progress in learning (other subjects) – 3.0

A score of 3 demonstrates evidence of *limited* progress or engagement, and a score of 2 demonstrates *good* engagement (1=outstanding, 4=inadequate).

Overall attendance across the AP schools and PRUs (excluding BHES) for 2019/20 was 61%, which is similar to attendance rates from 2016/17 onwards (ranging between 59% and 62%). Further engagement is planned with pupils to look at reasons for these rates of attendance.

In terms of attainment, 89% of year 11 pupils in full-time ALP achieved exam passes in English and maths in 2019/20. This is an outcome that has improved markedly in recent years, up from 75% in 2018/19 and 61% in 2017/18.

The information on outcomes available from part-time providers is less consistent, and this will be addressed in developing a new quality assurance approach.

Further details on pupil outcomes are set out in the Needs Analysis at the end of this document.

5. Research and Best Practice

Research and best practice in Alternative Learning Provision summarised out below has been used, alongside stakeholder engagement and data analysis to inform the commissioning proposals set out in section 8. Information has been taken from a range of sources and reports, particularly:

- Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), [Warming the Cold Spots of Alternative Provision](#), May 2020
- Children’s Commissioner, [Children's voices: a review of evidence on the wellbeing of children excluded from schools and in alternative provision in England](#), November 2017
- Department for Education (DfE), [Alternative Provision Market Analysis](#), October 2018
- DfE, [Alternative Provision: Effective Practice and Post-16 Transition](#), January 2017
- DfE, [Alternative Provision: Statutory Guidance](#), 2013 (updated June 2016)
- DfE, [Investigative Research into Alternative Provision](#), October 2018
- House of Commons Education Committee, [Forgotten Children: Alternative Provision and the Scandal of Ever Increasing Exclusions](#), July 2018
- Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), [Making the Difference](#), October 2017

⁹ Bristol City Council, [The Bristol Pupil Voice Report 2019](#)

- IntegratED, [Annual Report 2020](#)
- Ofsted, [The findings from Ofsted's three-year survey of schools' use of off-site alternative provision](#), February 2016
- [Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#), May 2019
- University of Oxford, [Excluded Lives](#), June 2020

5.1 Pre-ALP (early intervention)

A number of reports argue that increasing numbers of pupils placed into ALP in recent years, for longer durations, has in part been the result of reduced early intervention and preventative support provided in mainstream schools.

The Timpson review found many promising examples of good alternative learning provision being used proactively where it was used as a first resort to help in identifying approaches that will help a child thrive in mainstream, or to provide enhanced support. This was set out as one of a number of inclusive practices mainstream schools should approach to reduce usage of ALP, including:

- internal inclusion units
- effective use of nurture groups and programmes
- transition support at both standard and non-standard transition points and across all ages
- approaches to engaging parents and carers
- creating inclusive environments, especially for children from ethnic groups with higher rates of exclusion
- proactive use of ALP as an early intervention, delivered in mainstream schools and through off site placements

The report set out an example of a PRU in the South East with an extended roll of 100 pupils, 90% of whom received ALP support outside of the PRU, such as through mentors commissioned into mainstream schools.

The University of Oxford report into the impact of COVID-19 on exclusions also pointed to a need and appetite for more early intervention, particularly staff continuing professional development (CPD) and training in social and emotional development and on the impact of trauma.

Evidence from Manchester Metropolitan University to the Education Select Committee also identified the need for additional resources to schools to support pupils who experienced trauma, abuse, mental wellbeing, chaotic or disruptive home situations, increasingly in primary schools.

Although the importance of early intervention is frequently emphasised, a number of challenges to provision in mainstream schools were identified in the 2018 DfE market analysis of ALP:

1. **At provider level**, reduction of capacity to provide preventative support due to capacity increasingly being taken up with longer-term placements
2. **At local authority level**, a reduction in many areas in the capacity of family support and early help services to step in and address issues in a child's family life that could be affecting their engagement with and behaviour in school

3. **At school level**, increasing pressure on budgets leading to schools being less likely to use their budget on preventative services, with the current system not incentivising such approaches and inclusion not recognised in the current inspection frameworks.

The market analysis report found that of the 24% of local authorities that had devolved some of their High Needs Block funding to schools, there was a greater usage of preventative ALP and early intervention. On average, devolved systems placed fewer pupils into ALP but the average cost was higher, indicating that those who were being placed likely had more complex needs. Where local authority oversight of a devolved system was maintained, it was often easier for local authorities to claim back devolved funding in the case of permanent exclusions.

The CSJ also emphasised the pressure on school budgets in its 2020 ALP report, and argued that early intervention needed to be effectively resourced, potentially from central Government through a system improvement fund:

“For any AP school or LA wishing to transition from a reactive model (focused primarily on receiving and educating excluded children) to a proactive model (structured around early intervention and outreach work with mainstream schools), financial support should be made available, along with a team of expert advisors and AP specialist school resource management advisors, to develop a needs-based local model.”

5.2 Moving into ALP

Research on the move into ALP for a pupil emphasised the importance of pupil and parental involvement in a move, an effective induction process, and ongoing responsibility of the mainstream school for pupils’ outcomes.

The impact of permanent exclusion on young people was frequently mentioned as well, with, for example, the Timpson Review highlighting examples of pupils finding exclusion traumatic in terms of welfare, mental health and self-confidence. The DfE market analysis highlighted the Bristol’s panel referral system and its focus on appropriate moves and reducing PEX numbers, with ALP providers feeling that pupils now make better progress in ALP because placements are considered as a positive and helpful intervention, rather than as a punishment following permanent exclusion. However, the IntegratED 2020 report noted that managed moves could still disproportionately be experienced by the same groups previously seeing high levels of permanent exclusions (particularly pupils from Black Caribbean or White and Black Caribbean backgrounds, pupils with SEND and pupils eligible for free school meals).

The Children’s Commissioner review did find some pupils who claimed to want permanent exclusion, although this was in the context of moving into ALP schools, so could arguably be seen more as a desire to be involved and consulted regarding any move, rather than a desire for exclusion.

The criteria identified as important for a successful induction in the 2018 DfE research paper were:

1. **Comprehensive referral information** - As well as safeguarding and other relevant information, this also should include educational information to help the ALP setting plan an appropriate learning package in advance.

The statutory guidance states that commissioners should provide all relevant information to the providers including SEND, literacy and safeguarding issues, and that this must be done in a data protection compliant manner.

2. **A '360-degree induction' for students and parents** - Including meeting staff in advance, visits to the ALP setting, taster sessions, and discussions of expectations around behaviour.

The report highlighted that often pupils were concerned about going to ALP as they felt they had no choice in the matter, and had often had negative perceptions of ALP. An effective induction helped the children the report spoke to feel involved in the process and feel more positive about a move to ALP.

3. **A 'soft landing'** - Including potentially a phased introduction to a full-timetable, and introductory sessions with staff to build trust and relationships.

The Anna Freud Centre has noted that this type of induction process is particularly important for children who have moved multiple times already, as this will impact on their sense of belonging at a school. Other examples of good practice they gave included a peer support or buddy system at ALP settings for new pupils.¹⁰ There should be awareness of a pupil's sense of belonging in the process, and any induction measures in place should be for the pupil's benefit only, not seen as any form of 'interview' or 'test' through which they can experience rejection.

Parental and pupil involvement was widely emphasised as important for successfully managing a referral into ALP, and helping a pupil get the most out of a placement. However, the CSJ argued that parental and pupil choice will be inherently limited, no matter what systems are in place, if there is insufficient choice of accessible, local provision in an area to choose between.

5.3 Thriving, Achieving and Belonging in ALP

The ALP statutory guidance sets out the following common elements of good ALP:

- Good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools – particularly in English, maths and science (including IT) – with appropriate accreditation and qualifications, and should keep up with pupil's current curriculum, timetable and qualification route
- Identifying and meeting specific personal, social and academic needs of pupils in order to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment
- Improved pupil motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education
- Clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement (such as reintegration into mainstream education, further education, training or employment)
- Good arrangements for working with other relevant services such as social care, educational psychology, CAMHS, youth offending teams and drug support services etc

According to a 2017 report by the Children's Commissioner looking at young people's voices on alternative learning provision, most pupils noticed a distinct difference in the curriculum between ALP and mainstream schools, with a greater focus on core subjects and more vocational areas.

¹⁰ Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, [Transitions](#)

Many pupils appreciated this different approach and greater vocational choices, as well as the benefit of a different learning environment that was often calmer than mainstream schools. However, some pupils were concerned that the curriculum did not match their ambitions in terms of doing particular academic subjects, or in terms of qualifications that were not recognised by colleges. This was something identified in the Timpson Review as well, highlighting comments from a parent that “our son lost half his GCSE courses on his expulsion”. The 2017 DfE report also highlighted concerns that often the vocational options for pupils were offered along gendered lines.

The Children’s Commissioner report also found that most of the pupils surveyed had seen their self-esteem improve whilst in ALP, often supported by additional services such as behavioural support or CAMHS support groups.

At a time of rollout of NHS England’s national programme of mental health support teams (MHSTs) in schools ‘trailblazers’, IntegratED argued that it was crucial that AP schools were fully involved in this rollout. The mental health needs of pupils in ALP are often more complex than educational mental health practitioners working in the MHSTs are used to, and therefore there needs to be strategic oversight to ensure pupils in ALP were not being excluded from significant mental health support because of the type of school they attended.¹¹

Differing outcomes for pupils in ALP was also highlighted in the Education Select Committee inquiry, which noted 1% of pupils on the roll of an AP school get five good GCSEs including English and Maths. The inquiry however did emphasise the importance of understanding distance travelled as well as levels of qualifications:

“In reporting outcomes by five good GCSEs, there is no recognition of the challenges that alternative provision and its pupils must overcome in order to achieve good exam results. We were told that it is rare for pupils to arrive with evidence of past work; that there are challenges when pupils have been studying a number of different exam board syllabi; and that schools often take pupils late into their key stage 4 journey. Alternative providers have to spend time addressing issues such as poor attendance, disengagement, building relationships with families and referring pupils for assessments for unmet needs before they can begin to focus on academic education.

Providers pointed out the range of successes that their pupils have achieved, even if they are not academic. We have also heard from and met pupils who are now better able to manage their anxiety or anger; are regular school attenders; are more confident and engaged with learning; and are on high quality post-16 courses or in jobs.”

The impact of meeting these challenges is often exacerbated by staffing challenges, according to the 2020 Centre for Social Justice Report. This argued that without qualified teachers in some ALP settings, staff were unable to challenge pupils academically with the focus largely on behaviour management instead, often leading to pupil disengagement and low attendance. A 2017 IPPR report also noted that the ALP sector has very little access to the knowledge base that exists in the mainstream sector, and that professional development in ALP rarely focuses on teaching, assessment or pedagogy, with the most common training covering reducing behaviour escalation.

¹¹ IntegratED, [Mental health trailblazers: Are they including excluded children?](#), October 2020

The CSJ report argued that effective baselines and benchmarks to measure progress against the Government's elements of good ALP should be measured. It is also important to ensure that any such benchmarks understand the interaction between different metrics, giving the example of reintegration of several high-attaining pupils to mainstream schools during key stage 4 (a positive outcome) would significantly impact the overall GCSE results of an AP school.

Effective monitoring of ALP also requires a clear national or local framework. The DfE market assessment from 2018 identified the following characteristics of good quality assurance, emphasising the need for involvement from schools and local authorities (LAs) in partnership:

1. **Roles and responsibilities** – clarity about the respective roles of schools and the LA
2. **A local ALP directory**
3. **Quality Assurance (QA) visits** – regular visits by a suitably qualified LA lead (usually with experience of teaching and leadership roles) to ensure the quality of provision, review outcomes, check statutory requirements are being met and help providers to build capacity and plan for the long term
4. **Tracking pupil progress** – clarity that schools are responsible, with established practice in place, for actively following up the progress of their pupils placed in ALP through visits and regular dialogue, and joint planning for reintegration. As part of the framework, the LA may also carry out audits of schools' use of ALP to ensure consistency, gather feedback and disseminate effective practice.
5. **Governance** – a governance board to oversee the QA process, made up of a mix of school leaders and LA officers
6. **Data-sharing** – agreement with schools and providers on sharing data on individual pupils, outcomes and costs so that placements and system-level performance can be tracked.
7. **LA oversight and liaison role** – "inclusion and attendance officers" to work with schools to provide advice, broker support and offer constructive challenge on pupils and placements.

The Ofsted review into off-site ALP found inconsistent practice across schools in terms of quality assuring part-time provision, ranging from limited questions on safeguarding, inconsistent checking of registration status, and not ensuring a wide curriculum was provided so that pupils could effectively progress in mainstream schools.

5.4 Leaving ALP

Plans for a pupil's next destination should be part of the ALP planning process from the point of referral, whether the proposed outcome is reintegration into mainstream school, move into a special school, or finishing KS4 in ALP to then move into further education, employment or training.

The AP statutory guidance emphasises the importance of continued involvement from the mainstream school in this process. Where reintegration to the school is an objective, there should be agreement on how to assess when the pupil is ready to return and the school should provide an appropriate package of support to assist their reintegration. If the placement does not end with reintegration into the school – for example, when a pupil reaches the end of Y11 while still in ALP – the school should work with the provider to ensure that the young person can move on into suitable education, or employment alongside part-time study or training.

The DfE analysis of post-16 practice highlighted the key factors for effective transition, including:

- **Partnership working** - Effective AP schools created strong partnerships with local community colleges and employers to provide students with post-secondary options for either continued study or employment and training.

Research suggested that a positive impact on transition and retention at post-16 was to be had through ALP staff providing support for attendance at tests, appointments or interviews. This was followed, in both cases, by staff maintaining their links with pupils in their early days at college which could include liaising with the counsellor there.

- **Positive relationships** – Relationships with trusted adults in ALP settings were often highlighted as significant for supporting potentially fragile post-16 transitions, including beyond the end of the ALP placement.
- **Behaviour management** - Therapeutic interventions may be needed to help students develop the self-management skills they need to make successful transitions into work or further education. Although students may respond positively to an individualistic, person-centred approach and effective behaviour management strategies whilst in ALP, this does not necessarily equip young people with the tools and strategies they need in post-16 settings.

The Education Select Committee report also noted the importance of ongoing support from trusted ALP settings, particularly in managing significant differences in settings and expectations in these settings – for example coming from a small PRU to a much larger further education college.

Also highlighted as significant was high quality careers information, advice and guidance, including meeting with careers advisers and business mentors. Statutory guidance on careers guidance states that pupils should be receiving careers support from at least year 8 onwards, and good guidance should meet the eight 'Gatsby' benchmarks¹²:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

From a further education perspective, a 2019 Association of Colleges report found that transition information provided by the pre-16 provider, local authority, or other referring agency (where students were NEET) as inadequate or patchy, although there were some examples of effective information-sharing. It was thought there was a culture of withholding information to give students

¹² DfE, [Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: Statutory guidance](#), October 2018

the opportunity for a 'fresh start' or 'clean slate' on entering FE, or out of a concern that the college would not be prepared to take the individual if they knew the full picture.¹³

A number of reports highlighted the significant difficulties in effective transition work, given that ALP settings are not funded for post-16 provision.

In light of the significant challenges posed for year 11 pupils due to COVID-19, the Government set up a short-term transition fund for 2019/20. IntegratED have called for a more sustainable, long-term approach to also be considered, such as a fund to support year 11 pupils without a September destination to remain at their current ALP setting for sixth form. They do however also note that some local authorities are choosing to fund ALP beyond Key Stage 4.¹⁴

6. Stakeholder Engagement

Proposals in this strategy have been shaped by initial engagement with stakeholders across pupils, parents/carers, providers, schools and other relevant professionals, followed by a public consultation. Results of this initial engagement is set out below, with additional information set out in the Needs Analysis at the end of this document, and further information on the consultation can be found in the 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' report. Engagement and coproduction work will continue through the ALP Statement of Action Reference Groups.

6.1 Pupils

A survey was sent out to all pupils in full-time and part-time ALP 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 ALP, there was a range of pupil experiences, with most pupils saying they got information about the setting before going, but only half felt 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 ALP, 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 ALP. A significant minority (33%) said nothing changed for them. Of those who did identify a positive change, the main changes were:

- Behaviour (33%)

¹³ Association of Colleges, [Meeting the needs of students aged 16-19 who were not in school for part or all of Key Stage 4](#), July 2019

¹⁴ IntegratED, [Covid-19: The case for a post-16 transition fund for children from AP](#), May 2020

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

Most pupils identified something that had worked well for them in ALP. 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. These factors pose significant challenges for fostering a sense of belonging in ALP.

Similarly, 42% of pupils did not identify anything that they would change about ALP. 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 ALP to further shape proposals, and ensure the pupil voice is central to any plans for alternative learning provision.

6.2 Parents/ Carers

A survey of parents and carers of pupils in ALP was published in November 2020 to seek views on their experience of ALP. 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 ALP commissioned through the current framework). As a result, further engagement will be undertaken with parents and carers.

Most parent/ carers thought that the ALP 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 ALP (50% agreed or strongly agreed, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

When asked what went well about the ALP 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 ALP settings.

In terms of areas where ALP 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 ALP, not just at the point of referral and move.

6.3 Schools

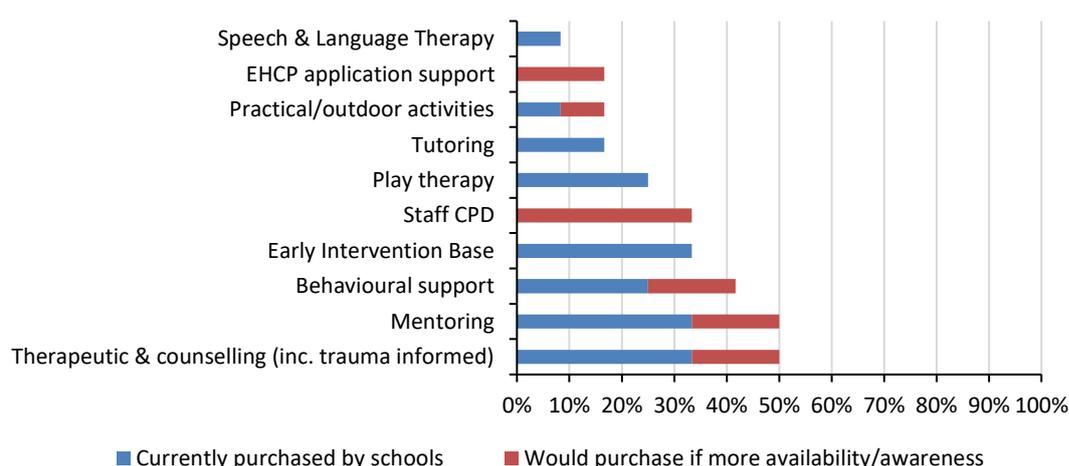
In December 2020, a survey sent out to all Bristol schools asked the main reasons for referring a pupil to ALP. The most common responses given by schools were:

- 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 ALP. 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. Concerns about physical space required in schools for additional early intervention support were also raised.

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 ALP market included mental health support for pupils who did not meet CAMHS thresholds, outreach support working with families, staff CPD and ALP for pupils up to Key Stage 2.

6.4 Providers

In October 2020, a survey was sent out to local ALP settings, including those not currently on the ALP framework. More information on responses can be found in section 7 of this strategy.

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 ALP 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.

There was general enthusiasm from providers in relation to additional early intervention in schools, and developing a keep-in-touch transition offer for pupils leaving ALP. However, concerns were raised about the demands this would likely have on existing staff to offer this, or that additional staffing resource would need to be funded to effectively provide this.

6.5 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 ALP 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 PEXs or transfers through the 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.

6.6 Consultation report

Between 11 June 2021 and 23 July 2021, Bristol City Council carried out a consultation on the draft commissioning strategy for the Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) Framework. The intended audience for the consultation was ALP providers, schools, parent/carers and children and young people in ALP and in mainstream education. It was promoted through channels including ALP provider and school distribution lists, press releases, the Local Offer website, community groups, social care and families in focus professionals, and through the Bristol Parent Carer Forum, and received 147 completed responses.

There was high levels of support for the priorities identified at each stage of a pupil's journey through ALP. Some of the main points, issues and concerns raised were:

Early Intervention (Pre-ALP):

- More ALP capacity is needed, particularly at Key Stage 1
- Needs to be an understanding of when in-school support is appropriate but also when it is not and a pupil's needs can be better met elsewhere
- Staff need appropriate training and reflect a trauma-informed approach
- Funding and resources are needed to effectively deliver early intervention

Moving into ALP:

- Pupils and parent/carers need a better understanding of available options when moving into ALP
- Induction process should be clear, have consistent elements, but should be tailored to the needs of individual young people
- Pupil and parent/carer voice needs to be central, including pupils' ambitions for the future and how provision can support this

Thriving, achieving and belonging in ALP:

- Needs to be choice and availability to ensure access to the right support, with staff skilled to deliver
- Settings need to reflect the needs of young people especially trauma informed practice and focus on mental health support
- Good links and communications are needed between schools, ALPs and other services
- Pupils and parent/carers need to be properly engaged with provision
- Providers should be held accountable for delivery of their offer to pupils

Leaving ALP:

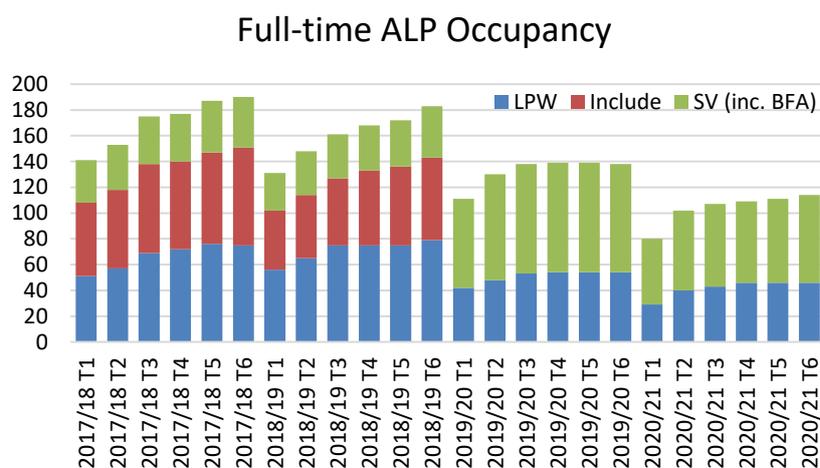
- Limited appropriate provision available or accessible at post-16 to support young people leaving ALP
- Transition support from ALP settings will require funding and resources
- Transitions are best supported through partnerships across schools, ALPs, colleges, businesses, young people and parents/carers

More details, including how this feedback will be used to further develop commissioning proposals, can be found in the 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' consultation report.

7. Market Assessment

7.1 Demand analysis

The use of ALP in Bristol has historically been high when compared to other local authorities, although comparative analysis between different local authorities is particularly challenging due to what ALP data is collected and how. According to a 2020 report by the Centre for Social Justice, the proportion of Bristol's pupils in ALP as of January 2019 was the 8th highest of all English local authorities.¹⁵ However since January 2019, the market exit of the largest provider (Catch22 Include), and the impact of COVID-19 on referrals, has significantly reduced the number of pupils in full-time ALP in Bristol.



¹⁵ Centre for Social Justice, [Warming the Cold Spots of Alternative Provision](#), May 2020, Figure 18

ALP capacity in Bristol has significantly reduced since the closure of Catch22 Include, which has led to referral waiting lists for parts of school year 2019/20. However, the relationship between capacity and usage is complex, as more capacity can potentially encourage mainstream schools to more readily refer into ALP. It can also change the profile of pupils in ALP, with a larger proportion of pupils moved or excluded from mainstream schools, rather than pupils receiving earlier intervention support on a short-term basis.

There is however an expectation, reflected in a number of reports, that the impact of the pandemic will significantly increase the numbers of pupils at risk of exclusion.¹⁶ Pupils are likely to struggle with a range of challenges, ranging from grief at the loss of loved ones, to poor mental health, to pupils (particularly the most disadvantaged) struggling with educational engagement whilst remote learning. NHS England research found that the estimated prevalence of children with a probable mental disorder rose from 1 in 9 in 2017, to 1 in 6 by July 2020.

Therefore whilst it is anticipated that an increased focus on early intervention in schools, will lead to a reduction in referrals into full-time ALP over the 5 year duration of this next ALP framework, in the short term referrals are likely to increase.

This highlights the difficulty planning for capacity given the levels of uncertainty around ALP demand over the next few years. However, most scenarios indicate that, at least in the short-term, additional capacity may be necessary.

7.2 Current Alternative Learning Provision

Full-time Alternative Learning Provision schools (secondary)				
School	Key Stage	Places	Locality (location)	Ofsted
Snowdon Village (Cabot Learning Federation)	3&4	100	East Central (with sites in South Bristol and South Gloucestershire)	Requires Improvement (May 2019)
Learning Partnership West	4	60	South	Good (April 2018)
St Matthias Academy revolving-door provision (Learn@MAT)	3&4	65	North (20 KS3 places) & East Central (45 KS3&4 places)	Not available
Lansdown Park Academy revolving-door provision (Learn@MAT)	3	30	South	Not available
Early Intervention Bases (primary)				
School	Key Stage	Places	Locality (location)	Ofsted
Lansdown Park Academy revolving-door provision (Learn@MAT)	2	20 + primary school outreach	South	Not available
The Nest, Snowdon Village (Cabot Learning Federation)	1&2	15 + primary school outreach	East Central	Requires Improvement (May 2019)

¹⁶ See for example, University of Oxford, [Excluded Lives](#), June 2020

North Star Outreach (North Star Academy Trust)	1&2	0 + primary school outreach	North	Not available
Part-time ALP				
The Bristol ALP Hub and Bristol schools also commission a range of part-time ALP from independent providers, covering a range of provision types including therapeutic interventions, tuition, activities-based learning and mentoring. A full list of providers can be found in the Bristol City Council Alternative Learning Provision catalogue				

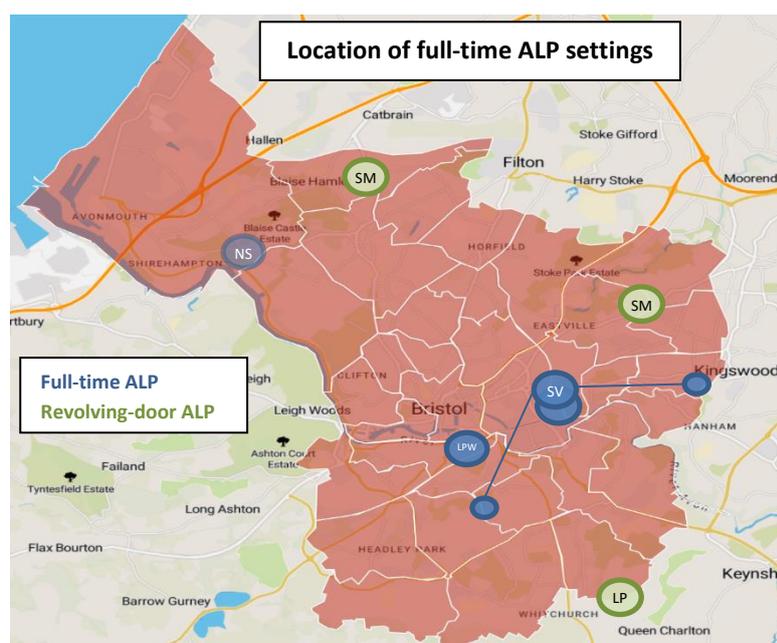
7.3 Areas of need

The above sections indicate a need for a short-term increase in full-time ALP and increased part-time (off-site) primary ALP in North Bristol, where provision is limited. Whilst there is more full-time provision based in South Bristol, there is still need for additional provision given the significantly higher number of ALP pupils from South Bristol.

North Star Academy, an all-through AP school based in Sea Mills, is a new free school in the pre-opening phase. This is operated by the same academy trust that runs the North Star Outreach early intervention base and will significantly increase ALP capacity in North Bristol over the next five years from its scheduled opening date of September 2022.

Needs identified by schools that weren't currently met by the ALP market included mental health support for pupils who did not meet CAMHS thresholds, outreach support working with families, staff CPD and ALP for pupils up to Key Stage 2. There has been a limited number of off-framework placements made for KS1&2 in 2020/21 due to a lack of approved providers on the framework.

Looking at a map of provision, there are still areas of South Bristol with more limited access to full-time ALP.



There are however significant challenges to increasing full-time ALP capacity in the short-term. There are currently no existing independent ALP schools in surrounding local authorities that could

be encouraged to expand into Bristol. Although almost 50% of the part-time providers who responded to the survey stated that they would be interested in providing full-time ALP as some of these respondents provide services remotely or online, it is possible that for many the requirements of DfE registration are not fully understood, or that the question was interpreted as wanting to provide more hours of their current service.

Further engagement with part-time providers found that the two major challenges to converting to full-time, registered provision was a) finding and acquiring a suitable school building within the Bristol local authority area, and b) the resource and staffing challenges of developing a full-time offer whilst continuing to run a part-time provision. There are also challenges in establishing new full-time ALP settings to meet short-term need, then have these no longer needed as the system across Bristol utilises fewer full-time places and more early intervention.

As well as the challenges of developing new providers, there are significant risks in terms of maintaining existing provision. Full-time and revolving door ALP schools are funded on a per pupil basis, and the reduction in referrals from mainstream schools due to COVID-19 has had a significant impact on their financial sustainability, as fixed-costs including consistent staffing for pupils have not dropped in line with pupil numbers.

7.4 Cost

The DfE market analysis of alternative learning provision found a national average for independent ALP of £20,400 per pupil per year, with a range of £7,000 to £49,000.

The analysis also found that the ALP market did not see a relationship between number of providers in an area and lower cost. This highlights that increased supply is a benefit in terms of additional choice for pupils, but it does not generate competition that drives down costs. Similarly, no relationship was found between number of places commissioned by a local authority and lower cost.

In terms of part-time provision, it is harder to directly compare as provision type varies significantly, so often it is not possible to compare like with like. The ALP Review however found that the cost of part-time provision for group activities and education ranged from £44 to £240 per day, with costs for 1:1 activities and education ranging from £25 to £130 per session depending on the provider.

Providers on the current framework are not subject to any restrictions on price increases, and some providers have increased prices significantly above inflation over the current framework duration. In order to better manage and plan expenditure, it is proposed that under the new framework, price increases will be limited through a contractual uplift mechanism, the exact design of which will be developed in collaboration with the sector

Places commissioned with AP academies and free schools have core costs funded directly by ESFA, with top-up paid by the local authority dependent on occupancy.

8. Commissioning priorities

Bristol City Council's priorities in commissioning ALP are to provide a range of education settings that best meet the needs of, based on the following values:

- Pupils feel a sense of belonging in their education setting
- Pupils have a voice and can shape their education provision
- High quality provision matches the needs and aspirations of pupils, allowing them to achieve their full potential
- High quality provision reflects and understands the needs of Bristol's communities
- Education professionals can identify alternative education needs early, and are informed and confident accessing the full range of provision available to Bristol pupils

Priorities for commissioning high quality ALP across all stages of a pupil's journey are set out in further detail below

8.1 Early Intervention (Pre-ALP)

Increasing early intervention in schools

In order to increase the number of pupils able to remain in mainstream education, where this is the best setting for them, this strategy is focused on increasing the availability and ease of accessing of early intervention support to mainstream schools.

This will be from a range of provision types, including local authority early help services, commissioned early intervention bases, as well as developing a new contract lot to the ALP framework for independent providers offering in-school support (this is on top of the part-time and full-time/revolving door lots on the current framework).

Provision will be focused on the areas identified by schools where they currently purchase or would like to purchase support from specialist, external providers including:

- Therapeutic, trauma informed and counselling support
- Mentoring
- Behavioural support
- Staff CPD

In order to support this approach, providers on the current ALP framework will be encouraged to offer support in schools, if they do not already, and apply to the early intervention in-school lot for the new framework.

Stakeholders have highlighted concerns that continued pressure on school budgets may limit the benefit this approach can offer. As with the current part-time ALP contract lot, the framework will be designed to allow the local authority, as well as schools, to be able to purchase early intervention support where necessary. Work will be undertaken between the local authority, schools and providers to ensure early-intervention delivers what is needed for children and young people and is funded in a way that is sustainable for providers.

AP schools have also signalled interest to provide more early intervention outreach support in schools at secondary level. A review of early intervention bases and early intervention work is to be carried out as part of the wider ALP Statement of Action.

SEMH pathway

In addition to services that schools can commission, the local authority is working to improve knowledge and understanding of other services available to schools (including local authority and free voluntary sector provision) available to pupils at risk of moving into ALP, particularly pupils with SEMH needs. This is supported by the newly published [Wellbeing in education: the Bristol catalogue of services to schools, colleges and early years settings](#).

This is part of wider ongoing work to refresh the pupil SEMH pathway as part of the ALP Statement of Action, and significant actions to increase early identification of pupils with SEMH needs as part of the response to the Written Statement of Action. The new framework will support the in-school, targeted part of the pathway, with clearer information on services for schools to access.

8.2 Moving into ALP

Information to support an effective move

Significant work is ongoing within Bristol City Council to look at the referral process for young people into ALP, particularly through the Bristol Inclusion Panel. This includes work to ensure that clear, consistent information is available to make informed decisions about appropriate onward destinations or plans for reintegration. For the benefit of ALP settings, this should also detail the pre-ALP support a pupil has received, safeguarding information and any other relevant information to support the pupil and the process, including voice of the pupil and parent/carer.

This work will also look at setting out clear expectations for providers of the process for a pupil starting ALP, including expected start times and effective pupil induction.

Bristol City Council aims to commission a wide range of ALP settings, full-time and part-time, that can meet a wide range of pupil needs, including young people who have traditionally been harder to place, such as those involved with serious youth violence or child sexual exploitation. The local authority is currently reviewing the support available to traditionally harder to place young people to inform the development of this commissioning priority.

Commissioning ALP

Given significant increases in per pupil costs in full-time ALP over the duration of the current framework, it is proposed that ALP commissioned through the new framework will request providers submit a fixed price for the duration of the contract with options for uplifts under limitations set out in the contract. This will ensure the local authority can better manage and plan expenditure, and provide more consistency in local authority commissioning approaches (for example this approach is used to commission INMSS settings). Consultation responses highlighted the need for any uplift mechanism to account for inflation, staff costs and allow providers flexibility to change their offer. The design of any uplift mechanism will be reviewed and developed with the sector, to ensure it meets these requirements, and does not put settings at financial risk.

AP academies and free schools will continue to be funded through ESFA place-based funding and local authority top-up, rather than through the framework, as there are different legal and contractual bases for academies compared to independent and unregistered settings.

8.3 Thriving, achieving and belonging in ALP

Supporting positive outcomes

Supporting pupils to achieve their full potential is the central priority of effective ALP, whether that is in an ALP setting long-term, or as part of a process of reintegration or managed move to a mainstream or specialist school.

ALP settings will be ambitious for Bristol pupils, and ensure that the programme of learning and development supports their interests and aspirations, as well as ensuring a good level of academic support is on offer. The significant majority of ALP settings, including part-time settings, indicated that their offer was provided by qualified teachers, and the local authority will continue to work with settings to ensure the most appropriate staff are in post.

Progress for young people will be monitored against their attendance, academic attainment, personal and social development including self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as progress towards intended next steps (further education, reintegration into mainstream education etc.).

Supporting young people's onward destinations will be enhanced by effective careers information, advice and guidance. It is a statutory requirement that all schools provide independent careers guidance, although the survey of providers indicated that this was not universal practice. The local authority will monitor the careers guidance provision, as well as supporting AP schools to effectively offer independent provision by encouraging specialist careers guidance providers to join the ALP framework and quality assuring these providers.

ALP settings have indicated that they find the termly ALP provider forums useful for networking, sharing best practice and understanding the needs of pupils. The new framework will continue to support a forum for providers.

In order to ensure consistency of provision and expectation across all ALP settings, new service level agreements with AP academies will be developed, informed by this commissioning strategy and the responses to it, to be in place at the same time as the new framework for school year 2022/23.

Supporting additional educational needs

As part of the national rollout of the NHS Mental Health Support Teams in schools (MHSTs), Bristol will initially be supporting two local MHSTs in South and in East Central. As these teams are rolled out into schools by January 2022, and as further teams are funded in subsequent rounds, Bristol will work with AP schools to ensure they are involved and supported in the rollout. This includes working with the MHSTs to ensure an understanding of and develop effective practice working with young people who may often have higher levels of mental health need than in mainstream schools.

Work is ongoing to assess the provision and support available for pupils for whom it has often been more difficult to find effective ALP, such as those involved in serious youth violence, child sexual exploitation, children in care returning from out of area, or children with multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This work will be used to inform the requirements on ALP settings, as well as

helping to ensure staff at ALP settings are able to access adequate resources, training and CPD in order to support the best outcomes for these young people.

Quality assurance

A new quality assurance approach will be developed alongside the ALP service level agreements and framework contract, ensuring that the priorities for young people set out above are adhered to by ALP settings. This will focus on safeguarding, school improvement and effective contract monitoring, ensuring consistency in approach with Bristol's commissioning of INMSS and SEND school places.

Quality assurance and monitoring of safeguarding practice will be supported by a new, annual self-assessment safeguarding audit for providers, based on the section 175 audit completed by schools currently. Effective ALP will be monitored against evidence-based benchmarking tools, including the [IntegratED Quality Benchmark Toolkit](#), which assesses quality against the following areas:

- Workforce development and wellbeing
- Home and family engagement
- Partnership working
- Use of evidence-based practice and innovation, including trauma-informed approaches
- Pupil induction
- Attendance and engagement
- Supporting pupils' needs, including literacy, SEND and health and wellbeing needs
- Quality of education
- Personal development
- Qualifications
- Assessment of need
- Appropriate transitions
- Post-16 destinations

Quality assurance information will be based on Bristol's own monitoring, as well as information from other relevant parties such as schools and neighbouring local authorities. Where monitoring identifies issues with pupil education, development, attendance or safety, improvement plans will be put in place, with the option for pupil placements to be stopped until progress against these plans are demonstrated.

8.4 Leaving ALP

Supporting pupils to their onward destination

In order to support onward destinations, particularly post-16 settings, ALP providers will be expected to provide onward destinations with all relevant information including safeguarding information in a timely manner (as well as in a data protection compliant manner). Expectations of information to be provided and timeframes will be set out in the new framework specifications and in the service level agreements for ALP settings.

Research has shown that a 'keep in touch' offer, where trusted relationships with staff at ALP settings are maintained over a limited period, can smooth the transition from ALP to mainstream

school, special school or post-16 settings. Many settings already offer such an approach, and all ALP settings will be requested to look at or develop a keep in touch offer.

Providers have raised the issue of funding for keep in touch offers, noting inconsistency in who is expected to fund this. It is recognised that such an offer can be beneficial for pupils, including in supporting reintegration into mainstream school – therefore delivering better pupil outcomes as well as value for money for the local authority.

Supporting ALP settings

Providers have also fed back that often once a pupil leaves their setting, that is the end of their involvement with or knowledge of a pupil. Where relationships have been developed, settings are often keen to find out how a pupil's development is continuing. Onward destinations will therefore be encouraged to work with settings to see what updates can be provided on pupil progress after ALP, including the impact of ALP, as long as this is done with a data protection compliant approach, and with the consent and involvement of the young person.

9. Procurement recommendations

This strategy proposes a continuation of the current mixed setting approach to ALP, giving pupils and schools a range of options to meet their needs, with an increased focus on early intervention. The provision types that will be available are (the below is a list, rather than a hierarchy of preferred types, as all placements will be made based on the needs of each individual young person):

Provision type	Key Stage	Provider type	Commissioning approach
Full-time provision	3&4	AP Academies and free schools	ESFA place funding + LA top-up
Full-time provision	3&4	Independent AP schools	Framework commissioned places
Revolving-door full-time provision	3&4	AP Academies and free schools	ESFA place funding + LA top-up
Part-time provision	1-4	VSCE and independent providers	Framework commissioned places
Early intervention bases, including school outreach	1&2 (with potential to expand to 3&4)	AP Academies and free schools	Service Level Agreements
In-school early intervention	1-4	VSCE and independent providers	Framework commissioned places
Hospital Education Service	1-4	Maintained setting	LA budget

Overall 2021/22 local authority budgets across all ALP settings are as follows:

- Early Intervention Bases £600,000
- Hospital Education £2,155,500

• AP academy top-up	£1,333,944
• ALP purchased through framework	£2,507,449*
• Total	£6,596,893

*This figure is local authority total expenditure and does not account for school contributions. Total income from schools to the local authority in 2020/21 was approx. £760,000. This figure also includes approx. £600,000 that will be paid to Snowdon Village through the framework as part of the emergency response to the market exit of Catch22 Include. In future, Snowdon Village will no longer receive funding through the ALP framework, instead through local authority top-up and ESFA funding, therefore this £600,000 is not indicative of future spend levels through the framework.

ALP Framework

ALP provision through independent registered schools and unregistered part-time providers will be purchased and quality assured through a new five-year open framework (school year 2022/23 to 2026/27), with the option for an additional one-year extension. The current approach has been effective in attracting a number of part-time providers to the market and offering choice for commissioners (although as set out above there is limited provision in some areas including for Key Stage 1&2).

Placements will be able to be commissioned by the local authority and by schools, through either spot purchasing as per criteria set out in the framework specification, or through expressions of interest (where appropriate). The contract will cover three distinct lots:

- Lot 1: Full-time/revolving-door ALP (only for registered schools)
- Lot 2: Part-time ALP
- Lot 3: In-school early intervention ALP

Providers approved onto these lots will be included on the ALP catalogue. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) has been issued to test market interest in joining the framework.

South Gloucestershire currently runs its own part-time ALP catalogue, whilst North Somerset is looking to develop one. Options for joint commissioning the framework are being explored. This would create a larger framework that may be more attractive to providers, and therefore offer more choice to pupils accessing ALP.

Although the current framework allows for commissioning of places by schools, there is no centrally collected information on all ALP commissioning across schools and the local authority. The new framework will be implemented in partnership with schools to agree consistent procedures for regular sharing of financial and quality assurance information.

Based on current framework expenditure levels adjusted for population increase, the maximum value of the framework would be £2.75m per year, £16.5m in total over the maximum six years. This maximum value will be higher if North Somerset and South Gloucestershire local authorities also join the framework, by approximately £1.6m per year.

However, the new early intervention lot and the review of early intervention expenditure could lead to significantly lower overall expenditure than the maximum framework value, if it leads to more

pupils able to remain in mainstream education, given the significant cost differences between early intervention support in school and full-time ALP

Block Contracts

In order to encourage a wide range of full-time providers to the market, the current framework tendered 4 separate 10 place block contracts in 2016, to cover a minimum of 3 providers across the 3 Bristol localities. This did not achieve the intended outcome, as only two providers successfully bid (LPW and Catch22 Include) with three block contracts going to Catch22 Include. With this provider now having closed down, there remains only one 10 place block contract for academic year 2021/22.

The usual benefits of tendering block contracts are set out below, neither of which currently apply:

- Ensure capacity in the marketplace

Due to COVID-19 and lower numbers of referrals into ALP, the market is already significantly under capacity. Block contracts for placements would likely mean the local authority is purchasing a number of places that aren't used, which is not an efficient use of an already stretched High Needs Block budget. In addition, high numbers of empty places can potentially have perverse incentives to schools to refer more pupils into ALP

- Securing a lower price per placement

Currently Bristol pays the same for a spot purchased place as a block contract place, so the current block is not delivering any price benefits.

Full-time ALP settings often set the placement costs on the assumption that not all places will be full, so prices are set higher than actual per pupil costs to cover fixed costs. Therefore it is arguable that a significantly larger block contract may generate cost savings on a per placement basis, however in the context of low occupancy, a larger block contract is unlikely to offer savings.

These factors mean that it is recommended not to reprocure the existing 10 place block contract in its current form for 2022/23. However, it is appreciated that uncertainty around pupil numbers post-COVID will be of concern for independent full-time providers on the framework. Pupil needs, demand and capacity will be closely monitored through the start of the 2021/22 school year. As a clearer picture of demand post-COVID is mapped, a commissioning approach will be developed sector-wide that offers greater certainty and ability to plan for all full-time providers, regardless of provision type, which may include block contracts if this is the most beneficial approach.

10. Governance

As set out in the above section, the current framework has not always facilitated regular reporting of expenditure and outcomes data from both schools and the local authority. It is proposed that the local authority will coordinate collection of this data to develop a more comprehensive picture of ALP in Bristol, and that this will be regularly reported to Schools Forum.

Any joint commissioning of ALP with North Somerset and South Gloucestershire local authorities will be governed by an inter-authority agreement, with respective data sharing and quality assurance responsibilities determined at the outset of the framework.

11. Equalities and Diversity

This strategy has highlighted a number of groups of young people traditionally over-represented in ALP, through analysis of data, research and engagement with stakeholders. Effective ALP can help reduce the educational gap between pupils from these groups and the wider pupil population, and have a positive outcome on development and life chances.

A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced, which sets out in detail the potential impacts of ALP delivery in Bristol on different groups of young people across different protected characteristics.

12. TUPE

As the current 10 place block contract is not being recommissioned, and no call-offs are guaranteed under the provisions of the framework, there are no anticipated Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) implications for the commissioning of the new framework.

13. Indicative Timetable

The dates below are indicative only and the local authority reserves the right to change these where necessary or appropriate.

Stage	From	To
Publication of final commissioning strategy	01/10/2021	
First 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	
Publication of Commissioning Strategy Refresh, incorporating further systemic changes through ALP Statement of Action	01/10/2022	

14. List of acronyms

ACEs – Adverse Childhood Experiences

ALP – Alternative Learning Provision

AP – Alternative Provision

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

BCC – Bristol City Council

BHES – Bristol Hospital Education Service

BIP – Bristol Inclusion Panel

CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CiN – Child in Need

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

DfE – Department for Education

EET – Employment, Education or Training

EHCA – Education, Health and Care Assessment

EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

ESFA – Education and Skills Funding Agency

FTE – Fixed-term exclusion

GRT – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

INMSS – Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools

LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and others

MHST – Mental Health Support Teams in schools

NEET – Not in Employment, Education or Training

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education

PEX – Permanent Exclusion

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

PSHE – Personal, Social, Health and Economic education

QA – Quality assurance

SEMH – Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs

SEN/SEND – Special Educational Needs/ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SLA – Service Level Agreement

Appendix 1: Needs Analysis

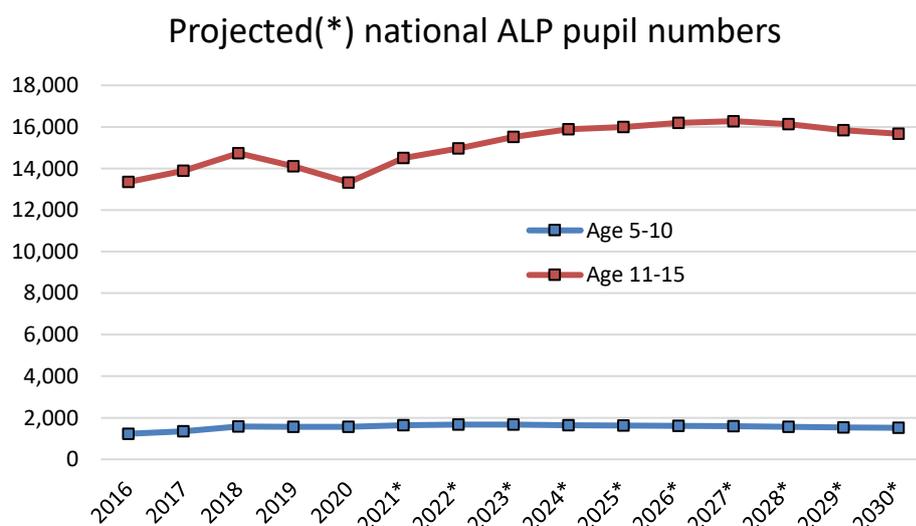
Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) is a statutory duty for local authorities to arrange suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who – because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. Schools are responsible for commissioning ALP for pupils on their school roll, where this is provided on a part-time basis.

ALP covers a wide range of services from pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital education and education for children in custody, to provision of full-time or part-time education outside of mainstream school. It also includes preventative programmes working with individuals or groups of children to prevent them from being excluded from school.

Pupil numbers and ALP demand

Pupil number projections

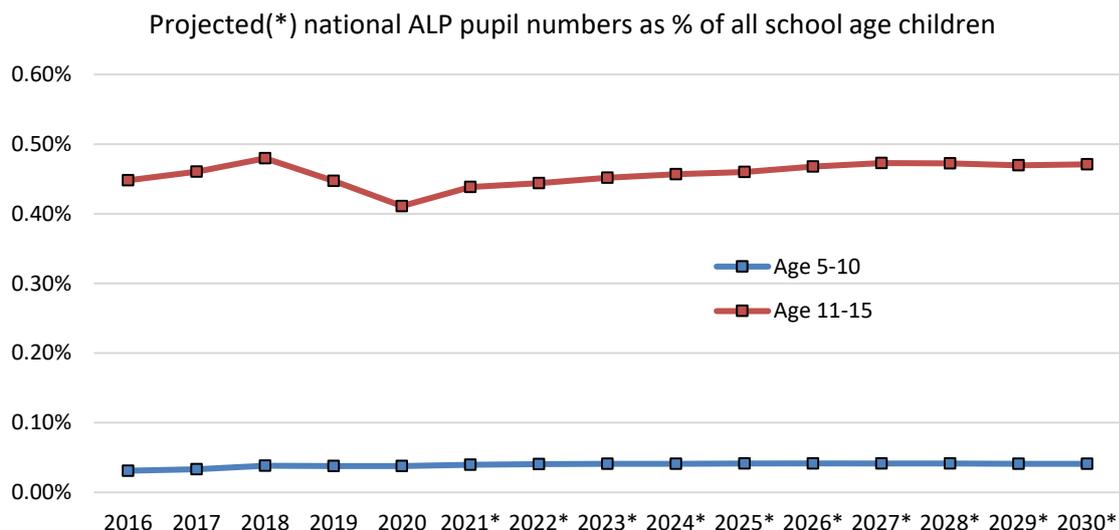
At a national level, pupil numbers at primary school age ALP are projected to begin decreasing year-on-year from 2021. At secondary school age, ALP pupil numbers are projected to continue to increase until 2027.¹⁷



Care should be taken however with this data, as projections have not been updated as a result of COVID-19, which significantly reduced the number of pupils in ALP in 2021. COVID may also have significant long-term impacts on pupils impacting on future ALP numbers. The DfE's projections do not indicate any long-term impact of COVID-19 on their projections:

“The 2021 school census data shows notable decreases in enrolment in... alternative provision compared to previous years. These are expected to be temporary, as a result of the pandemic, rather than long-term changes. However, using this data results in decreases across future years which are not considered to be realistic estimates of the pupil population over the next ten years.”

¹⁷ Department for Education, [National Pupil Projections](#), July 2021



Primary projections

Overall pupil numbers at primary level in Bristol are projected to begin to decrease from school year 2023/24, with a similar trajectory seen at individual locality levels as well, although the decrease in pupil numbers is projected to be much smaller in East Central.

Key Stage 1&2				
	East Central	South	North	Citywide
2020/21	7,904	11,523	11,651	31,078
2021/22	7,995	11,600	11,674	31,268
2022/23	7,991	11,568	11,572	31,131
2023/24	7,969	11,366	11,424	30,760
2024/25	7,825	11,150	11,181	30,156
2025/26	7,830	10,951	11,038	29,819
2026/27	7,783	10,829	10,939	29,551

In terms of percentage change in pupil numbers compared to 2020/21 numbers, this will see an overall decrease of 5% up to 2026/27, although this is a smaller decrease than national primary pupil numbers.

Key Stage 1&2						
	East Central	South	North	Citywide	National	
2021/22	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	
2022/23	1%	0%	-1%	0%	-1%	
2023/24	1%	-1%	-2%	-1%	-3%	
2024/25	-1%	-3%	-4%	-3%	-4%	
2025/26	-1%	-5%	-5%	-4%	-6%	
2026/27	-2%	-6%	-6%	-5%	-7%	

Secondary projections

Overall pupil numbers at secondary level in Bristol are projected to continue increasing up to 2026/27, with numerically the greatest increase in pupil numbers seen in North Bristol.

Key Stage 3&4				
	East Central	South	North	Citywide
2020/21	4,006	6,021	9,963	19,990
2021/22	4,239	6,165	10,387	20,790
2022/23	4,501	6,361	10,816	21,678
2023/24	4,655	6,502	11,159	22,316
2024/25	4,752	6,636	11,391	22,779
2025/26	4,801	6,699	11,507	23,007
2026/27	4,813	6,709	11,534	23,056

In terms of percentage change in pupil numbers compared to 2020/21 numbers, this highlights significantly higher increases compared to nationally, particularly in North and East Central. This is driven largely by even higher percentage increases just at Key Stage 4, with a projected 39% 2020/21 – 2026/27 increase in East Central pupil numbers.

Key Stage 3&4					
	East Central	South	North	Citywide	National
2021/22	6%	2%	4%	4%	2%
2022/23	12%	6%	9%	8%	4%
2023/24	16%	8%	12%	12%	5%
2024/25	19%	10%	14%	14%	5%
2025/26	20%	11%	16%	15%	5%
2026/27	20%	11%	16%	15%	4%

National level ALP projections show the percentage of secondary pupils in ALP continuing to grow to 2026/27, which combined with the higher population increase in Bristol compared to England, could lead to markedly higher need for ALP placements over the next five years. t

ALP demand will however also be based on a number of factors including the impact on COVID-19 on mainstream school engagement, and SEND sufficiency plans for Bristol which could see pupils currently educated in ALP being educated in new special school places instead. receiving earlier intervention support.

There is an expectation, reflected in a number of reports, that the impact of the pandemic will significantly increase the numbers of pupils at risk of exclusion.¹⁸ Pupils are likely to struggle with a range of challenges, ranging from grief at the loss of loved ones, to poor mental health, to pupils (particularly the most disadvantaged) struggling with educational engagement whilst remote

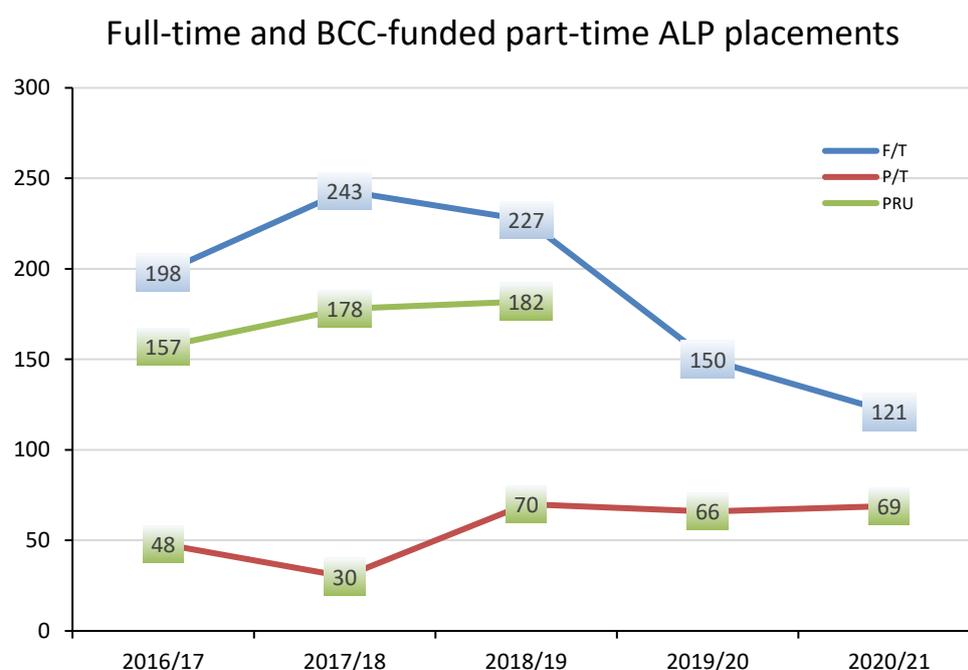
¹⁸ See for example, University of Oxford, [Excluded Lives](#), June 2020

learning. NHS England research found that the estimated prevalence of children with a probable mental disorder rose from 1 in 9 in 2017, to 1 in 6 by July 2020.¹⁹

Use of Alternative Learning Provision

The use of ALP in Bristol has historically been high when compared to national figures. According to a 2020 report by the Centre for Social Justice, the proportion of Bristol's pupils in ALP as of January 2019 was the 8th highest of all English local authorities.²⁰ Rates of ALP usage for 2019/20 and 2020/21 year to date are lower than previous years, however this is at least in part as a result of COVID-19.

The chart below shows the number of pupils in PRUs and local authority funded places over the duration of the current framework contract (excluding Bristol Hospital Education Service). Figures are taken from ALP school annual reports, and part-time figures from the ALP Hub's internal database of placements. PRU refers to full-time short-term ('revolving-door') placements. Data only goes up to 2018/19 due to a change in how numbers were recorded in subsequent years, counting school capacity rather than number of pupils through the year.



The significant trends over the period show an increase in the number of local authority funded part-time placements since 2018/19, with a corresponding increase in the number of part-time providers used. A similar decrease in full-time placements over the same period can be seen, accentuated by the market exit of the largest provider, Catch22 Include, in 2019/20.

The major driver of lower numbers of full-time placements has however been COVID. At the end of term 2 2020/21, full-time ALP schools were operating at around 67% capacity, whilst in a normal

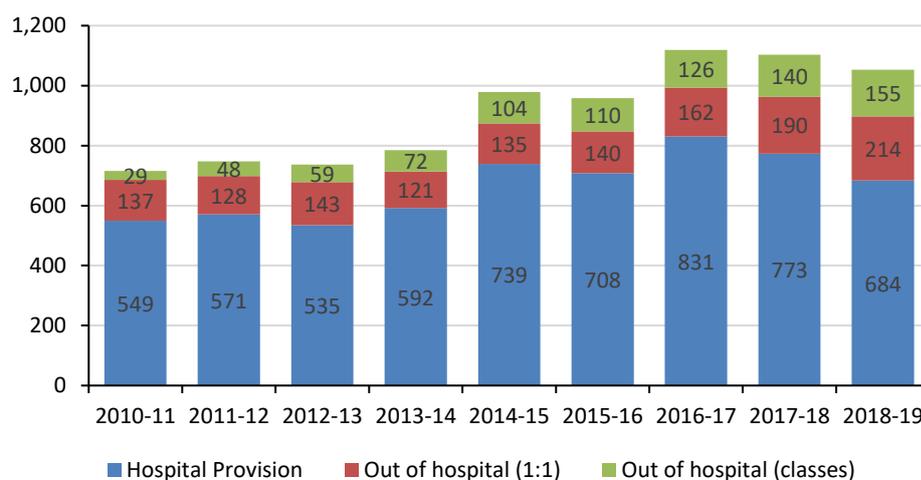
¹⁹ NHS Digital, [Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020: Wave 1 follow up to the 2017 survey](#), October 2020

²⁰ Centre for Social Justice, [Warming the Cold Spots of Alternative Provision](#), May 2020, Figure 18

year they have been operating around full capacity by January. PRUs were operating at around 75% capacity, which is also below the usual rate for that point in the school year.

Bristol Hospital Education Service (BHES) has a budget for a nominal 200 full-time places per year, although pupils are usually seen for short periods of time, meaning in practice much higher numbers are taught per year. The chart below shows that pupil numbers have been over 1,000 per year since 2016/17 academic year. Out of hospital 1:1s and classes (taught at Falkland Road) have continued to rise year on year, although hospital provision at Bristol Children's Hospital and Riverside has decreased since 2016/17.

Students through BHES service by academic year



2019/20 data is not included as BHES stopped taking referrals during the first COVID-19 lockdown from March to July 2020 as managers in the children's hospital suspended teaching for this period.

The local authority is not the only commissioner of ALP placements, schools are also responsible commissioners for children on their roll. Full data of all school placements is not held by the local authority, however the ALP survey of schools, carried out in December 2020, recorded the following snapshot of pupil places in 2019/20. Each school is different, with different needs, in-school support and approaches to ALP, so the below only represents the listed schools, and is not intended to represent an 'average' placement number:

School phase	Number of pupils
Secondary	6
Secondary	3
Secondary	2
Primary	1
Primary	1
Primary	2
Primary	2
Primary	0
Primary	0
Primary	1
Primary	0

Primary	1
Primary	0

Local authority spend on ALP

Local authority annual spend on ALP is approximately £2m on externally commissioned ALP, £600,000 on primary Early Intervention Bases (EIBs), £1.16m on AP academy top-up and £2.155m for Bristol Hospital Education Service including the Meriton.

Analysis of cost centre data for the current framework shows relatively consistent spend of around £2m up to 2019/20.²¹ Costs were higher in 2020/21 in part due to a whole year commitment for block contract, and due to increased spending with some providers:

Financial Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
ALP Spot Purchase	1,004,497	1,026,717	1,274,383	947,882	1,916,006
ALP Block Contract	1,007,004	999,196	1,022,248	1,073,387	1,650,038
Total	2,011,501	2,025,913	2,296,631	2,021,269	3,566,044

However, greater year-on-year variation can be seen with analysis of the ALP spot purchase cost centre for the same period, with expenditure rising significantly between 2016/17 and 2018/19, with equivalent increases of income from schools to keep overall costs more consistent:

Financial Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
ALP Spot Expenditure	1,669,618	2,113,726	2,651,179	1,941,974	2,680,256
ALP Spot Income	-665,121	-1,087,010	-1,376,796	-994,091	-764,250
Total	1,004,497	1,026,716	1,274,383	947,883	1,916,006

Bristol has 108 state-funded primary and 22 state-funded secondary schools, all of which are also commissioners of ALP. Although central records of school ALP expenditure is not held by the local authority, schools were surveyed about their spending in December 2020. The average 2019/20 per-school spend on ALP of those secondary schools who provided financial information was £28,563 (ranging from £0 to £63,000) and for primary schools was £6,300 (ranging from £0 to £24,000). Because annual spend varies considerably there is no 'typical' spend and extrapolating from averages would be misleading.

Pupil information and pupil needs

Data around pupils in ALP is complicated by the different recording systems used across the local authority. This was highlighted as an area of concern in the ALP Review, which recommended that migration onto a single system and a common language needed to be implemented as soon as possible. Unless otherwise stated, the figures in the below sections are taken from the ALP Hub internal records.

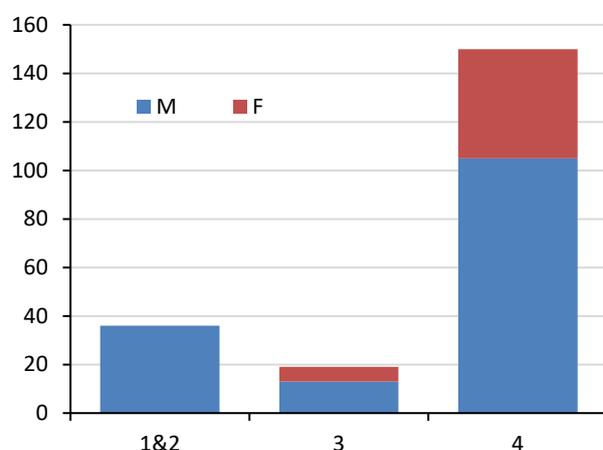
²¹ From financial year 2021/22, spend will reduce as provision through Snowdon Village will be purchase through AP Academy top-up rather than through the externally commissioned ALP framework

Pupil demographics

The below analysis of pupil demographics is taken from a snapshot of pupils in Alternative Learning Provision in June 2020.²² This is a partial dataset, as it does not include provision commissioned by schools, which the local authority does not currently have complete data for.

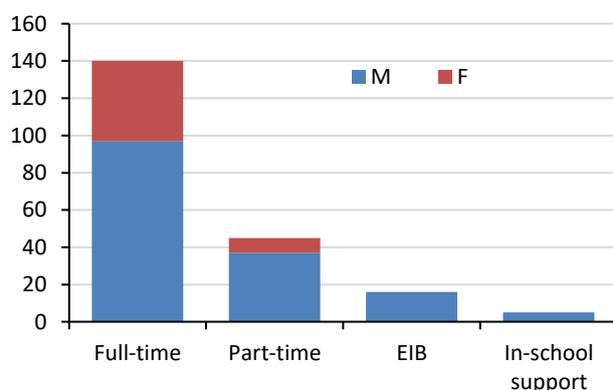
The majority of pupils in ALP (75%) are male. There was also more variety in the age at which pupils were in ALP amongst boys, for example 24% of male pupils were in KS1&2 ALP, compared to 0% of girls. There were also 8 bespoke packages of KS1&2 in-school support funded by the ALP Hub, all of which were for boys. This potentially indicates that intervention needs for female pupils are not identified as early, and there is a potential gap in provision for KS1&2 support provided for girls.

Number of pupils in ALP by gender and key stage



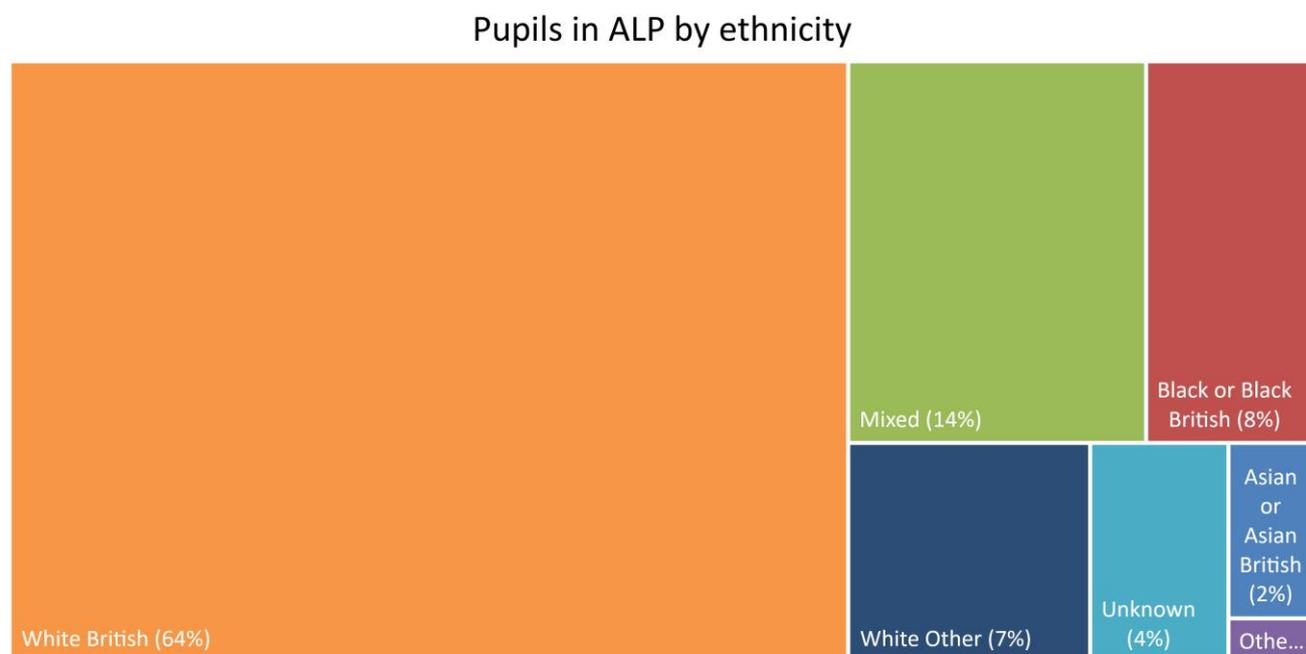
There was also more variation in the type of ALP provision, with a higher proportion of male pupils receiving part-time, Early Intervention Base (EIB) or local authority-funded in-school:

Number of pupils in ALP by gender and provision type

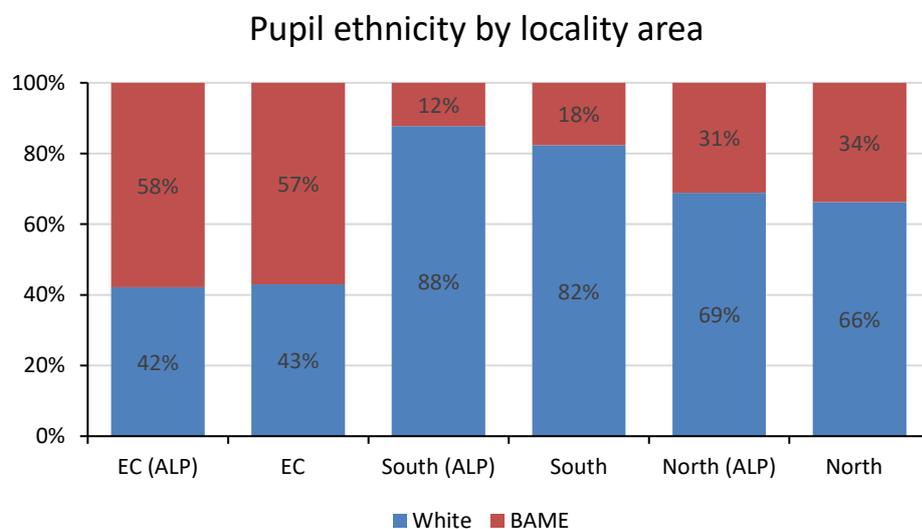


²² Due to the often short-term, fluctuating nature of pupil time in BHES and 'PRU' provision (St Matthias and Lansdown Park), and the more limited pupil data in ALP Hub records, these provisions were not included in the June 2020 snapshot analysis

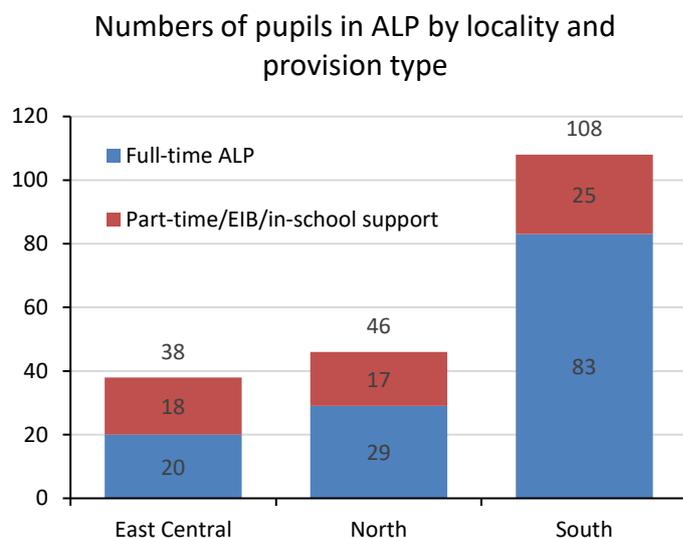
In terms of ethnicity, White British pupils make up the majority of children and young people in ALP. The combined White British and White Other figures make up 71% of all pupils in ALP. This is broadly in line with overall school ethnicity figures – according to the January 2021 school census, 29% of primary school pupils and 30% of secondary school pupils were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background.



As with Bristol pupils across all settings, the picture is more nuanced by locality, with 58% of ALP pupils coming from a BAME background in East Central, compared to 88% of ALP pupils from South coming from a White background. However, there does not appear to be any significant over- or under-representation of pupils from a particular ethnic background compared to the wider school population, as the chart below shows (wider school population data is from the January 2021 school census).



There is a significant variation in home locality of pupils in ALP. Pupils from South Bristol make up 56% of pupils in ALP, compared to 37% of the wider school population.



Of all pupils with a Bristol postcode as their primary address, the postcode areas with the highest proportion of pupil numbers were:

- BS4 (South) – 23%
- BS13 (South) – 20%
- BS5 (East Central) – 10%
- BS11 (North) – 8%
- BS10 (North) – 7%

Just under half the pupils in ALP are in receipt of Free School Meals (48%), and this figure rises to 58% for pupils in part-time ALP, EIBs and in-school support. 68% of pupils at Key Stages 1-2 are in receipt of FSM, with the figure falling to 44% for KS3-4. The figures for FSM amongst ALP pupils are significantly higher than for the school population as a whole. In the January 2021 school census, 26% of primary pupils and 24% of secondary pupils were recorded as eligible for FSM. 53% of pupils qualify for pupil premium.

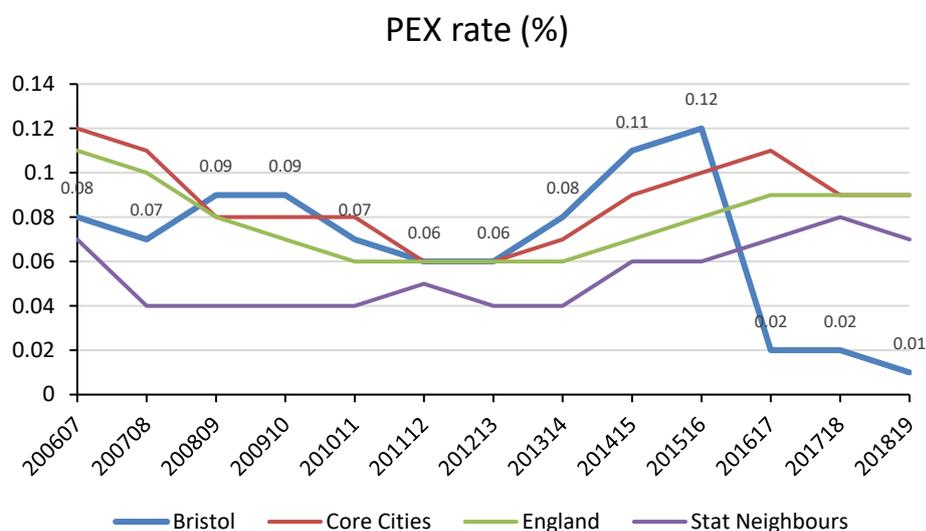
Although the workbook given to providers to record pupil data and progress had boxes to record orientation and gender identity, none of the records analysed recorded a pupil as LGBTQ+ or transgender. This is likely due to how the provider records or asks, rather than indicative of no LGBTQ+ pupils, as 7% of year 10 pupils in the 2019 Bristol Pupil Voice survey identified as gay/lesbian, bisexual or other, and 1% identified as transgender.²³

PEXs and FTEs

Permanent Exclusions (PEXs) are set out in legislation as one of the main reasons for a local authority being required to commission ALP (alongside ill health, which is largely covered by the BHES).

²³ Bristol City Council, [The Bristol Pupil Voice Report 2019](#)

Since the introduction of the Bristol Inclusion Panel (BIP) alongside the new framework in 2016/17, the PEX rate has fallen dramatically, below that of Bristol's statistical neighbours, as the PEX rate chart below shows:



However, the increase in ALP usage and spending since 2016/17 shows that a drop in the headline PEX rate has not equated to more pupils staying in their mainstream school, and that managed moves through the BIP have arguably led to a partial relabelling of PEXs rather than a significant reduction.

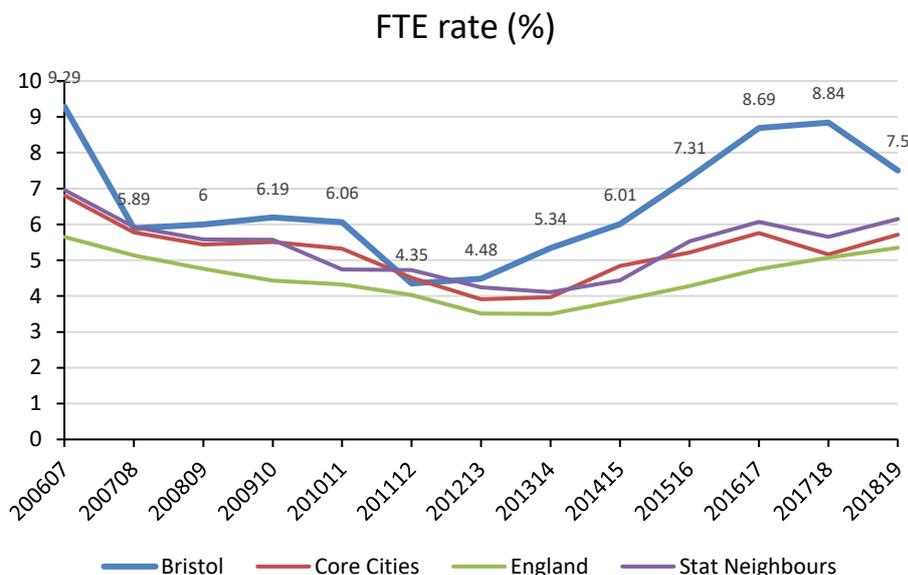
The tables below indicate the number of pupil movements via the BIP between 2016 and 2020. The data for 2019/20 is showing a lower number of children moving education provision and this is due to the BIP not running between March and July 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The low numbers of moves out of ALPs do pose questions about the purpose of such settings, and whether in practice there is a sufficient focus on reintegration into mainstream schools once a placement has started.

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Pupils going to ALP or a PRU from Bristol Secondary not PEX	103*	133	98	55

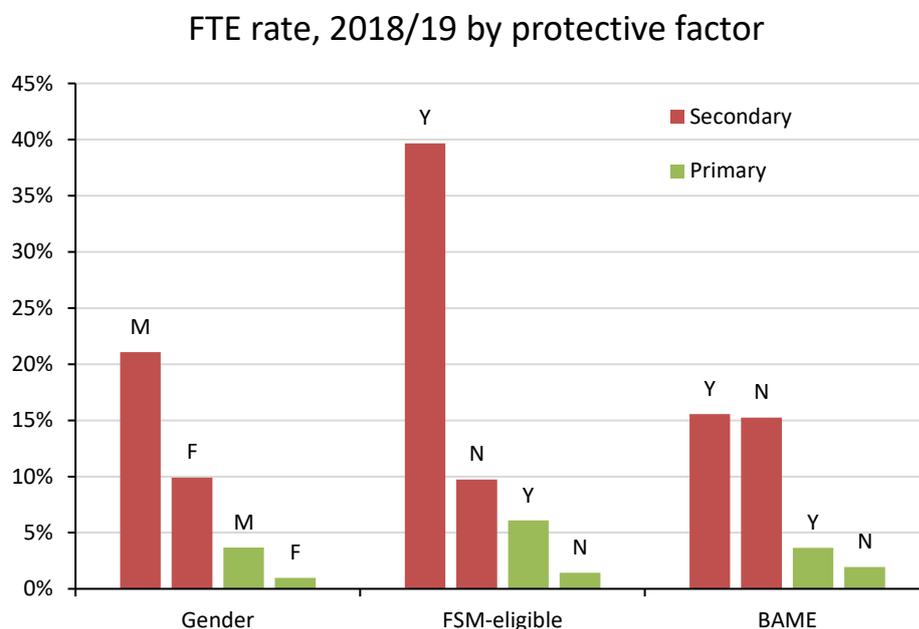
*includes Term 6 of 2015/16 (22 Panels)

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Pupils who have moved to an ALP school/ out of an ALP or PRU into mainstream provision	47	22	26	9

Bristol’s rate of Fixed Term Exclusions (FTEs)²⁴ remains persistently higher than its statistical neighbours:



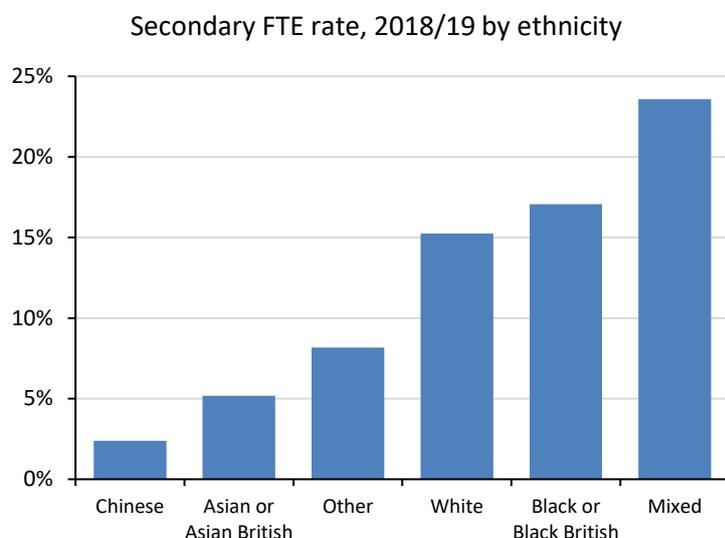
Examining the FTE rate by protective factors show that boys and FSM-eligible pupils have higher rates of FTEs. The rates for pupils eligible for FSM highlight a correlation between FTEs and deprivation.



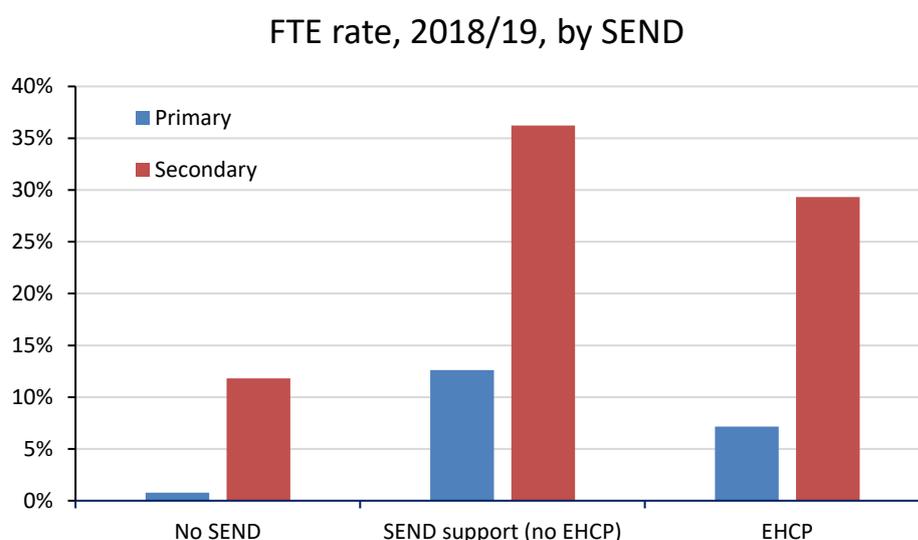
Whilst the FTE rate for BAME and non-BAME pupils at secondary level is near identical, this masks more variation looking at ethnicities in more depth. The chart shows that amongst pupils of mixed

²⁴ The FTE rate is calculated as number of FTEs in a year over number of pupils on roll

ethnicity, or of Black or Black British ethnicity, the rate of FTEs is higher than for pupils of White ethnicity:



There are also marked differences in FTEs dependent on SEND. The highest rate of FTEs comes from pupils receiving SEND support but without an EHCP.



Pupil need

The ALP Review²⁵ undertook case studies of 39 pupils to look further at pupil need, and its findings included:

- While some pupils make expected progress, other were coming from a very low starting point (one student identified in year 10 by the ALP provider's SENCO as having been missing from education since year 6 for a variety of reasons)

²⁵ [Review Report – Bristol Alternative Learning Provision](#), October-November 2020

- Undiagnosed educational needs, especially speech and language problems, were all given as reasons for poor outcomes
- There were high numbers of pupils who have been moved around the system a number of times to different settings
- Some cases were found where safeguarding information and educational difficulties were not being forwarded to a child's new school
- 58% of case study pupils who had EHCPs or were in the process of obtaining an EHCP

Pupils in ALP are also more likely to have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), with one full-time provider carrying out an estimate of its pupils in 2019 that they had an average of 6 ACEs each.

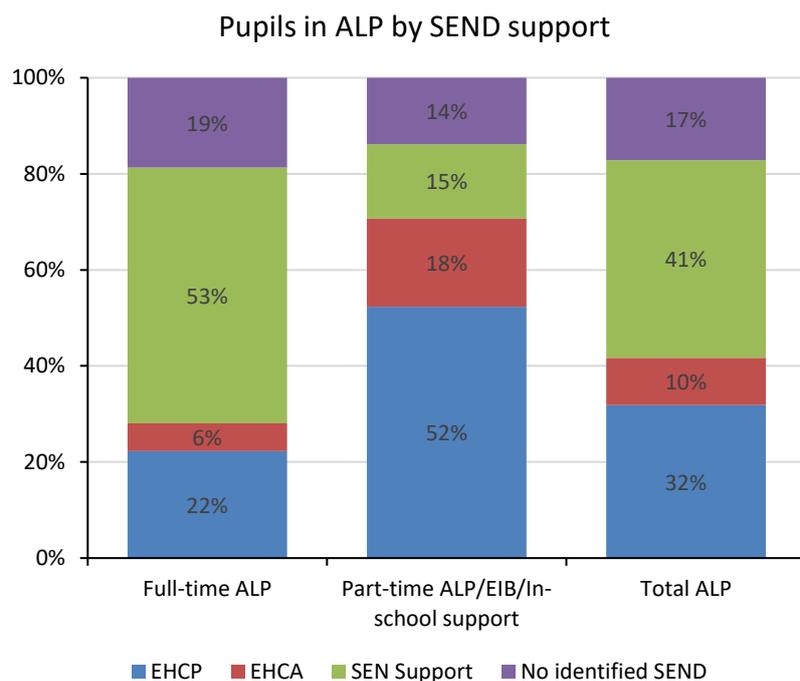
In terms of pupils with SEND supported by ALP, the ALP Review reported that:

To a large degree the ALP budget is covering lack of SEND placements. While it is an estimate as figures and reporting varies, with approximately 70% of ALP places taken up by pupils who have an EHCP or are in the process of the assessment and this figure is 58% in the case studies.

[...]

The main presenting need is SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health) though some pupils with ASD/Challenging behaviour have been recorded. Providers report in the case studies high numbers with speech and language problems, along with dyslexia and dyspraxia and potentially other undiagnosed issues.

Based on analysis of EYES, the snapshot of pupils from June 2020 recorded 22% of pupils in full-time ALP with an EHCP and 53% receiving SEN support. Of pupils with an EHCP or SEN support, 98% had SEMH needs (95% SEMH, 3% SEMH + other). The chart below shows this across full-time and part-time ALP:



In December 2020, a survey sent out to all Bristol schools asked the main reasons for referring a young person to ALP. 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

Of the 22 Alternative Learning providers who completed a survey on ALP in Bristol in 2020, 14 (64%) said that the number of referrals they received had increased over the past four years. Of these, 5 providers specifically noted increased numbers of pupils with SEND including SEMH needs. More information on providers' offers to meet pupil needs is set out in section 4.

The survey of providers asked if there were areas of pupil need that they offered a specialism in. Of providers who gave a response, the following areas were identified:

Areas of specialism	Providers citing this area as a specialism
Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs	87%
Offending	32%
School phobic	55%
Speech, language and communication difficulties	41%
Moderate learning difficulty (MLD)	50%
Specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)	36%
Severe learning difficulty (SLD)	18%
Autism without MLD or SLD	59%
Autism with MLD or SLD	36%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	36%

Attention deficit disorder without hyperactivity (ADD)	41%
Profound and multiple learning difficulty	9%
Physical disability	14%
Visual impairment	9%
Hearing impairment	14%
Multisensory impairment	9%
Attachment	14%
Trauma	5%

Providers were asked if they were planning to develop areas of specialism in the future. Responses included:

- Systemic therapeutic work for families at risk of breakdown
- SEND centre/provision
- Autism
- Early intervention
- SEMH
- Trauma informed approaches

A number of stakeholders interviewed also identified a need for more support for pupils at risk or engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation, serious youth violence and gang involvement. 5% of KS3&4 pupils from the June 2020 pupil snapshot had previous Youth Offending Team involvement.

Stakeholders also identified a need for additional ALP for children in care (CiC) returning to Bristol from out of area, in order to support their return to local residential or foster care. According to the HOPE Virtual School data, as of January 2021, 36% of CiC (yr R to 11) in education are in an out-of-authority setting. The June 2020 snapshot of ALP pupils had 12% of pupils recorded as a child in care, previously looked after child or child in need.

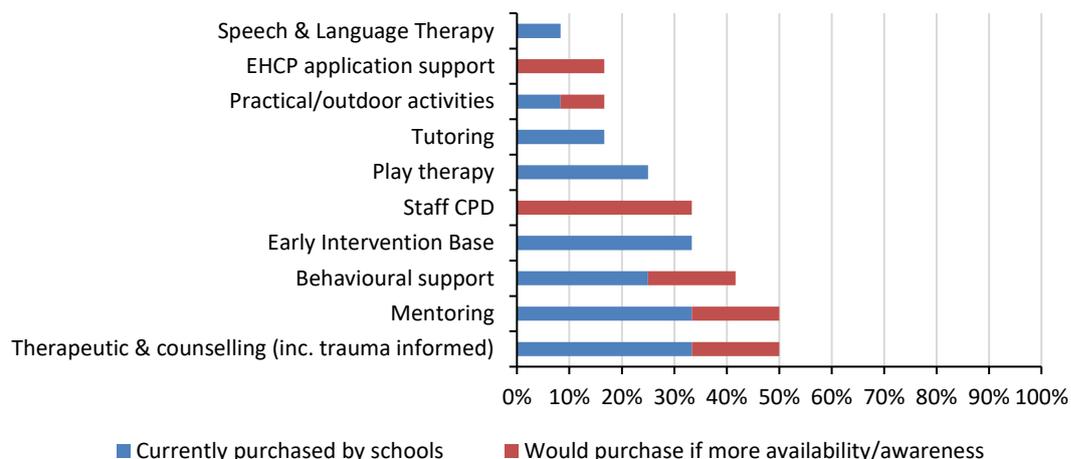
A review is currently being undertaken into the particular needs and challenges faced by traditionally 'harder to place' young people, such as those involved in Child Criminal Exploitation or serious youth violence

Inclusion and in-school support

Schools were also surveyed about the support offered to pupils in-school prior to referral to external ALP. 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 commissioned and what they would commission if there was more availability or there was clearer information on services they could access:

School survey - outreach support



A range of stakeholders, including Bristol City Council's Education Inclusion Managers (EIM) were keen to emphasise the importance of early intervention work in keeping pupils in school and preventing PEXs or transfers through the 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 commission, as well as a clearer route to publicise these services would support this work.

As part of the consultation on the ALP Commissioning Strategy, an Easy Read version targeted at children and young people in ALP was produced, with specific questions on what could have increased their feeling of belonging in mainstream school. The responses most commonly given were:

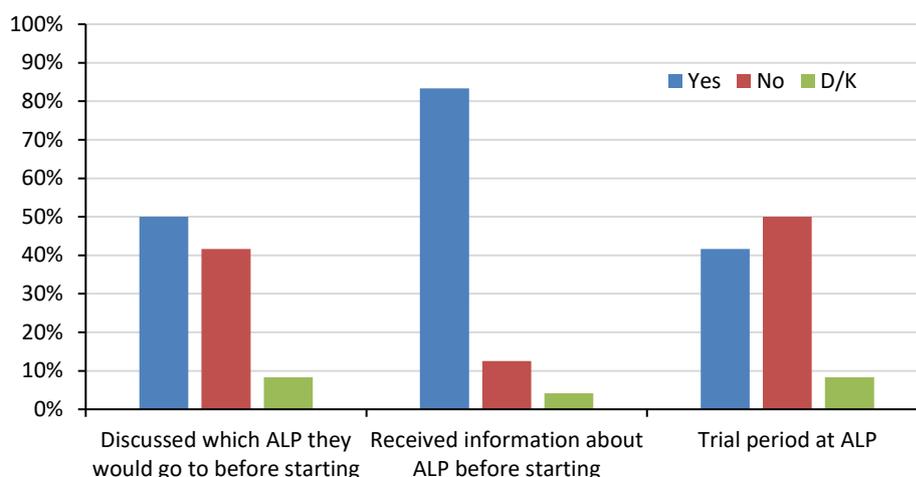
- A teacher or professional to offer advice or extra time
- Help and support with learning, including different ways of learning (such as visual learning, or group work)
- Sessions away from the classroom
- More support for pupils experiencing bullying

Outcomes

Pupil experience

A survey was sent out to all pupils in full-time and part-time settings in July 2020, to better understand their experience of ALP. The results are summarised below.

Pupil experience of starting ALP



Most respondents did not have any particular suggestions on what could have improved their experience starting at ALP, 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 ALP. 33% said nothing changed, but of those who identified a positive change, the main changes were:

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

The majority of pupils identified something had worked well for them in ALP. 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.

Similarly, 42% of pupils did not identify anything that they would change about ALP. 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.

Parent/carer experience

A survey of parents and carers of pupils in ALP was published in November 2020 to seek views on their experience of ALP. Response rate was low (8), with all pupils attending BHES, which as a distinct provision type makes wider comparisons difficult. Further engagement will be undertaken with parents and carers through the Statement of Action reference groups. However, the results of the survey are summarised below.

Most parent/carers thought that the ALP 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 ALP (50% agreed or strongly agreed, 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

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

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

In terms of areas where ALP 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

Attendance, attainment and progress

As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, much of the monitoring of externally commissioned ALP has been more remote than usual for the current school year, impacting on the quality of the outcomes data available.

Full-time providers of ALP are required to submit progress scores for each pupil across the school year, related to engagement and progress in learning (across core subjects – English, maths and science, and across other subjects), on a four-point scale. The average provider-submitted per pupil scores for 2019/20 were:

- Engagement – 2.8
- Progress in learning (core subjects) – 2.9
- Progress in learning (other subjects) – 3.0

A score of 3 demonstrates evidence of *limited* progress or engagement, and a score of 2 demonstrates *good* engagement (1=outstanding, 4=inadequate).

Overall attendance across the full-time ALP schools and PRUs (excluding BHES) for 2019/20 was 61%, which is similar to attendance rates from 2016/17 onwards (ranging between 59% and 62%).

In terms of attainment, 89% of year 11 pupils in full-time ALP achieved exam passes in English and maths in 2019/20. This is an outcome that has improved markedly in recent years, up from 75% in 2018/19 and 61% in 2017/18.

The data for providers of part-time ALP is more limited. A workbook recording pupil information, attendance and engagement is required annually of all providers, although for 2019/20 only 4 returned this completed. Of the 4, only 2 gave engagement scores per pupil, with a combined average per pupil score of 1.5. Whilst this is higher than full-time ALP engagement scores, the two part-time providers are activity-based programmes, which may by their nature garner higher levels of engagement. Attendance levels across the four part-time providers averaged on a per pupil basis at 71%, based on providers' workbook returns. Issues around data returns have been highlighted as areas for improvement under the new framework.

Post-16 outcomes

The pupil survey was sent out in July 2020 in order to give the most up-to-date leavers' information for year 11 pupils in terms of their post-16 pathway. Of the year 11 respondents in July 2020, 62% stated that they had a confirmed post-16 destination – of these 75% were further education, with 25% in an apprenticeship, supported internship or traineeship.

In terms of the wider school population, Bristol's Dec 2019-Feb 2020 data showed 15% of 16 and 17 year olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity was unknown (3.1% were known to be NEET).²⁶ Of those who were EET, 92% were in further education.

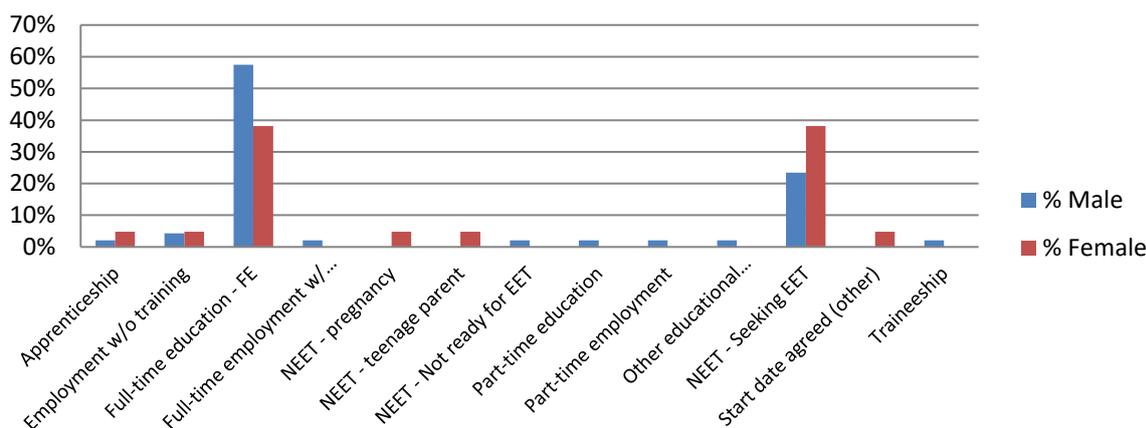
According to the ALP Hub records, of the year 11 pupils with a confirmed September 2020 destination, 87% of pupils were going to a City of Bristol College site, with the other pupils attending either Hartcliffe & Withywood Venturers (HWV) or Reflections hairdressing academy.

The most popular courses were construction, including carpentry and bricklaying (35% of places), hair and beauty (26%) and motor vehicle (17%). Given the specific circumstances of beginning the 2020/21 school year in COVID-19 restrictions, pupils with placements at Education 1st continued these for the first term of 2020/21.

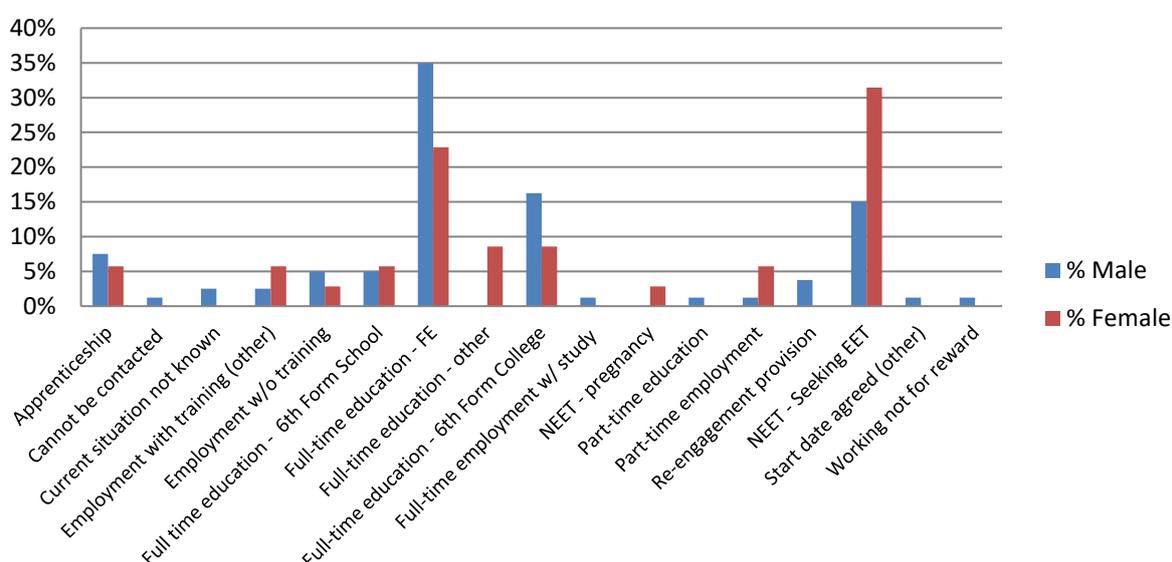
Some longitudinal analysis of post-16 outcomes for pupils leaving full-time ALP highlights differences in outcomes by gender. Looking at the 2016/17 and 2017/18 cohorts one year after leaving, there is a higher proportion of female pupils who are NEET seeking EET than male pupils, and a higher proportion of male-pupils in full-time FE:

²⁶ DfE, [NEET and participation: local authority figures](#), July 2020

Activity by Gender - 2016/17 Cohort - One Year Post ALP



Activity by Gender - 2017/18 Cohort - One Year Post ALP



However, after two years for the two cohort years, there is not as clear a pattern. Two years after the 2016/17 cohort left ALP, there is still a higher proportion of male participation than female participation, however for the 2017/18 cohort, female participation is higher after two years than male participation. Similarly, no clear pattern emerges looking at the cohorts in terms of their ethnicity.

In comparison to the wider post-16 population, the female participation rate in Bristol (March 2020) is higher than the male participation rate at age 16 (88% to 86%) and at age 17 (79% to 76%).

What this suggests is that there is potentially scope for improvement for the post-16 transition services, particularly for female pupils. When asked about post-16 transition support in the provider survey, the following transition services were highlighted as being provided:

Post-16 support	Percentage of providers
Transition plans	75%
Transition co-ordinator	44%

Careers advice/guidance	75%
Career days	25%
Support writing CVs	57%
Mentoring	82%
Interview support	75%
Links between ALP and local colleges:	
- College visits	57%
- Further education taster days	31%
- Offering courses in conjunction with FE colleges	19%
Ongoing post-16 support:	
- ALP staff keeping in touch when young people first move on to their post-16 option	56%
- ALP staff going to college or placement with the young person for first few days	31%
- ALP staff making links with counsellor/other support at college or placement	44%
- ALP staff providing an ongoing support network after the young person has left their ALP setting	50%