

NALDIC response to Commissioning Alternative Provision

Q1- We are particularly concerned at the lack of specific guidance with reference to pupils with English as an Additional Language. Through our work with LEAs and schools we are aware that this group of pupils (and particularly Year 10 and 11 recent arrivals from overseas) are significantly over represented in alternative provision. Many schools are reluctant to enrol such pupils and responsibility for provision often falls to the LEA. The arrangements made for assessment and alternative provision are often inadequate and poorly monitored. For example there are frequent instances of these young people being provided with a much reduced curriculum offer and denied access to GCSE exam courses. Given these concerns, we would wish to see a much stronger statement on entitlement to provision for EAL learners and guidance on minimum standards of assessment and commissioning to ensure that central admission authorities involve EAL and first language expertise in the referrals and commissioning process to ensure access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

Q3. The minimum standards should include a specific requirement to consult with young people concerning decisions made regarding their placement and courses of study. This requirement should include the provision of interpretation and translation if required

The minimum standards should also emphasise the tailoring of response to individual needs as a minimum requirement of any referral

3.2 should read 'In addition, LEAs should satisfy themselves that their EOTAS provision meets all pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum which supports their learning and continuing education, enabling them to progress and achieve.

The Guidance to LEAs should make specific reference to pupils with EAL and should include the following points

'EAL learners, in common with other learners are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets their needs, including their language learning needs. Care should be taken that language learning needs do not compromise learners entitlement to mainstream educational provision nor their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Decisions concerning appropriate provision for an EAL learner should respond to their individual learning needs (including their language learning needs) and should be informed by:

- a thorough assessment of their educational history (including their previous curriculum experience), first language skills and abilities and current learning needs involving EAL and first language professionals
- a thorough assessment of their English as an additional language learning needs involving EAL professionals
- consultation with the young person regarding their placement and courses of study including the provision of interpretation and translated information at the point of application and assessment, and information on entitlement and access to advocacy support.

Q4. 4.1.3 should read 'Articulates local approaches to prevent children becoming disaffected, provision for EAL learners or those requiring to access Alternative Provision for other reasons.

LEA monitoring of attendance and attainment should be both rigorous and frequent enough to allow for the inclusion of mobile/transient groups experience of provision

Q9. These key principles relating to good practice are applicable to all types of learners. However as noted earlier, many LEAs would benefit from additional guidance in relation to good practice in the referral and placement of EAL learners which the current guidance does not provide. This is serious omission given the overrepresentation of EAL learners in alternative provision.

Q10. Data analysis should include the following pupil characteristics

- first language,
- date of entry to the UK education system
- whether the student is learning EAL

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