

## NAHT response to Edward Timpson's call for evidence on school exclusion practice in England

NAHT welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence for the review of school exclusion practice in England.

NAHT is the UK's largest professional association for school leaders. We represent more than 29,000 head teachers, executive heads, CEOs, deputy and assistant heads, vice principals and school business leaders. Our members work across: the early years; in primary, special and secondary schools; independent schools; sixth form and FE colleges; outdoor education centres; pupil referral units; social services establishments and other educational settings, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In addition to the representation, advice and training that we provide for existing senior leaders, we also support, develop and represent the senior leaders of the future, through NAHT Edge, the middle leadership section of our association. We use our voice at the highest levels of government to influence policy for the benefit of leaders and learners everywhere.

### The background – understanding a complex picture

The Department for Education's own published data sets out the landscape for policy makers.

Pupils receiving fixed term and permanent exclusion overwhelmingly sit within a matrix of disadvantaged families; Special Educational Needs and low prior attainment.<sup>1</sup> The more complex the needs of a pupil are, the more likely the risk of exclusion.

DfE holds detailed information about the characteristics of excluded pupils and the reasons for their exclusion. Briefly these data show:

- over half of all permanent and fixed period exclusions occur in Year 9 or above, and boys are over three times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion, and *almost* three times more likely to receive a fixed term exclusion, than girls
- pupils known to be eligible for, and claiming, free school meals are around **four times more likely** to receive a permanent or fixed period exclusion than those who are not eligible

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<sup>1</sup> Making the difference: Breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion, IPPR, October 2017

- pupils with identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) account for almost half of all permanent and fixed term exclusions: pupils with SEN are nearly **seven times more likely** to be permanently excluded; and pupils with an Education and Health Care plan (or Statement) are around **six times more likely to be excluded** for a fixed term period
- Gypsy/Roma and Traveller of Irish heritage pupils have the **highest rates** of both permanent and fixed term exclusion; while Black Caribbean pupils are over **three times more likely** to be excluded than the school population as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

DfE's data also shows that the number and rate of both fixed term and permanent exclusions are increasing. Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the most common reason for permanent and fixed term exclusion in state-funded schools. In Special schools physical violence against an adult accounts for about a third of permanent exclusions and a quarter of fixed term exclusions.<sup>3</sup>

NAHT regards exclusion as a legitimate, but limited, sanction for schools to use in response to very challenging behaviour, physical violence or repeated disruption of learning. School leaders have a duty to ensure that schools provide a safe environment in which all pupils have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Permanent exclusion should only ever be used as a matter of final resort, but there are circumstances where it is the only appropriate response to extreme pupil behaviour. The majority of schools have effective and proportionate behaviour management policies in place, alongside a range of strategies to support pupils at risk of exclusion.

However, as we explain below, schools are facing a range of intense and intersecting pressures that are contributing to the increase in the levels of exclusions. We set out below how the decline in school funding, and the similar decline in support from health and social care services to support our most challenging pupils, has impacted on schools at the very time when the curriculum is increasingly inaccessible for pupils with any level of SEND. We would urge the review to take a wide view on the flexibility of its remit in order to consider and make recommendations on the underlying and causal factors relevant to school exclusion.

## **Understanding the issues - context is critical**

NAHT is clear that a detailed understanding of the context within which schools currently operate is critical to formulating effective future policy on school exclusions. We therefore welcome this call for evidence; it is vital to 'get underneath' the issues

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<sup>2</sup> Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016, DfE, SFR 35/2017

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

that drive exclusions so that their root causes can be understood and effectively addressed.

School leaders and their staff are facing unprecedented pressures. The alarming funding shortages facing nine out of ten schools is accompanied by a full blown recruitment and retention crisis, driven by the unremitting workload created by unparalleled change across all school phases; year-on-year real terms pay cuts to the salaries of teachers and school leaders; and a broken teacher supply model which hemorrhages professionals at all points. A high-stakes, low-trust inspection system, coupled with a punitive model of accountability; severely limited opportunities for professional development; and the absence of accessible support from health and social care services are all relevant considerations for the review.

### **The impact of the ongoing school funding crisis**

Schools have experienced significant real terms cuts in funding since April 2015 as a result of significant cost pressures and the failure of school budgets to keep up with:

- Unfunded pay increases for teachers and support staff.
- Increases in employer costs for national insurance and Teachers' Pensions representing over 5.5%
- Cuts to the local authority Education Services Grant of £600 million that have shifted the burden onto schools.
- The new apprenticeship levy of 0.5% of payroll costs levied on the majority of schools.

Whilst initially, schools managed to cope by digging into reserves, since January 2017, the reality of the school funding crisis has really started to impact on schools. NAHT's latest [Breaking Point](#) report highlights the seriousness of the situation as:

- More than a fifth (21%) of respondents said that their budget for 2017/18 was in deficit; a 13 percentage point increase since 2015.
- More than four fifths (86%) of respondents have reduced the hours or numbers of teaching assistants to make their 2017/18 budget balance. This figure was 49% in 2015.
- Whilst more than a third (37%) of respondents said they have had to reduce the number or hours of teaching staff
- Almost three-quarters (71%) are expecting to have to set a deficit budget in the next financial year and almost four fifths (79%) are expecting a deficit budget for the following year 2019/20.

In July 2017, the wealth of independent evidence and the level of concern about the crisis, encouraged the DfE to accept that the current funding settlement is insufficient and to reprioritise funding to make an additional £1.3 billion available to schools for the two years from April 2018, including £140 million for high needs. Whilst the funding was welcomed as a step in the right direction, our assessment is that it continues to present a real terms cut of 8% to school budgets by 2020.

The types of cuts that schools have been having to make over the last three years have had a particularly difficult impact on their most challenging pupils: cuts to support and pastoral staff will undermine their ability to support pupils with more complex needs, at the same time as the resulting larger class sizes in secondary schools will bring greater challenges in tackling behaviour.

At the same time, in this year's Breaking Point report, when we asked which one factor was causing the greatest financial pressure on schools, 'additional needs of some children' was the biggest factor cited by 28% of respondents. Schools are dealing with more challenging needs in their pupils with fewer resources.

One of those resources that is key to managing behaviour in schools is that of middle and senior leaders. Faced with large deficits, school governing bodies are cutting core functions by reducing the size of school leadership teams; increasing teaching contact time for deputy and assistant head teachers

Our Balancing Act Survey<sup>4</sup> of deputy and assistant heads demonstrated that leadership time for deputy and assistant heads is coming under increasing pressure, as schools seek further budget savings. Since deputy and assistant Heads often lead on behaviour management and SEND, this reduces a school's capacity to deliver support for individual students; creates additional barriers when working through the lengthy processes required to secure support from the diminishing pool of health and social care services; and makes the delivery of whole-school strategies to support staff managing challenging behaviour all the more difficult. All too often schools are left without the required support, time and resources to provide effective additional support to pupils who require it.

### **The impact of cuts to health and social care support services**

Our preamble notes the characteristics of excluded pupils, as typically being disadvantaged, and / or having Special Educational Needs. Academic studies (such as those conducted by Professor Barry Carpenter and others<sup>5</sup>) also reveal that the complexity of pupils' needs has been greatly increased by the improved efficacy of

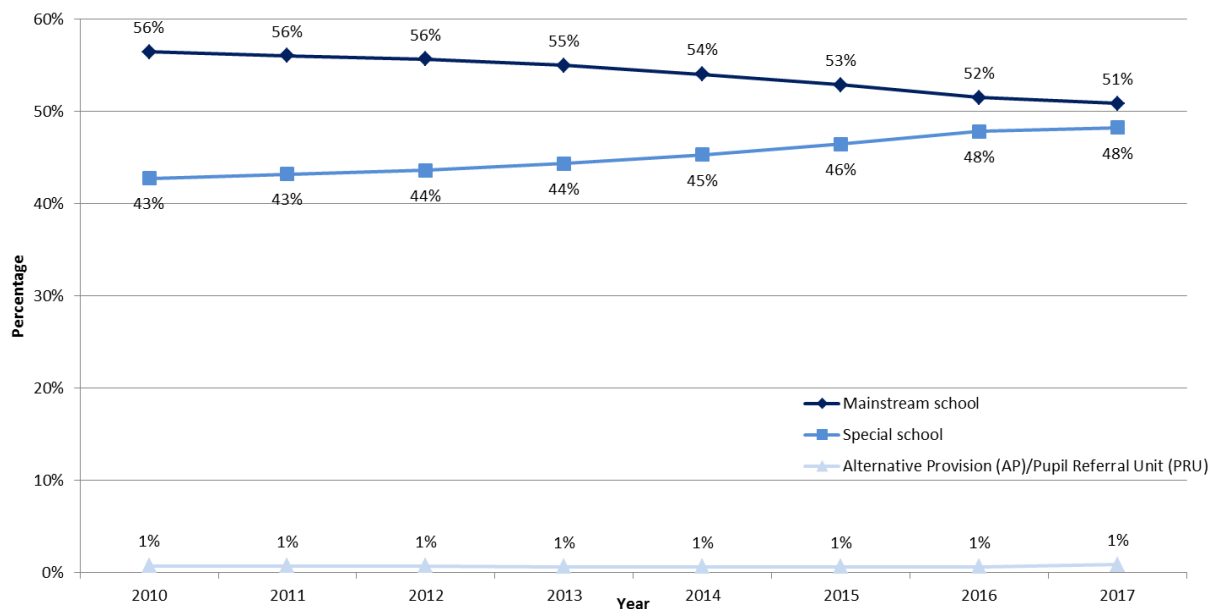
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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/leadership/report-reveals-the-balancing-act-between-teaching-and-leadership/>

medical science, which has positively impacted on the survival rates of pre-term babies. These children, many of whom would have previously been unlikely to live to school age, often exhibit more complex Special Needs, including, for example, different forms of autism that require a different ‘toolkit’ to that which has proved effective previously and requiring greater levels of specialist external support.

However, our members are facing a double whammy of cuts to education funding for mainstream pupils and those with SEND, as well as the impact of cuts to the health and social care services on which they desperately rely to support those pupils with SEND. If a school is to manage and support the learning of pupils with complex needs it needs the resources to do so. Meeting pupils’ health and social care needs are a fundamental aspect of that work, as education staff cannot work in isolation without specialist support. An analysis of DfE data would seem to bear out the hypothesis that schools are finding it more difficult to meet SEN pupils’ needs.

The table below<sup>6</sup> shows the decline in the proportion of pupils with SEN educated in mainstream schools, evidencing a significant shift away from the education of children and young people with EHC plans in mainstream schools. The data shows a 5 per cent fall in the number of pupils attending a mainstream school since 2010, and a corresponding 5 per cent increase in the number attending specialist provision.



Placement of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan in maintained and special schools and PRUs and AP provision (Source: DfE)

<sup>6</sup> DfE tables: SFR22/2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2017>

We believe that this reflects that the cuts to both school funding and the funding for associated health and social care support for pupils and schools makes it increasingly difficult for schools to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs. When this breaks down altogether, it can result in exclusion.

The inability to secure support is so serious that many schools commissioned their own in-house therapeutic services to fill the gap left by local authorities. However, the growing funding crisis means that they can no longer afford to pay for these services, making it much harder for mainstream schools to support pupils with additional needs, including those with SEND and those struggling with their mental health.

A strong example of this is in relation to speech and language therapy support for pupils – our members report that it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to access these services for pupils with developmental language disorders. Those pupils' frustration with their inability to communicate effectively can turn to behaviour problems, and we note reports from our members working in alternative provision that young people are found to have a DLD but have never accessed support – early intervention is key but becoming increasingly elusive.

NAHT is deeply concerned that there is currently insufficient capacity across the country to provide specialist support for pupils with mental health needs.

Current service provision of mental health treatment is reported to be patchy and highly variable in terms of access, availability and quality. Referrals to specialist mental health services have increased and while demand is increasing, mental health services have faced growing financial pressures. Pupils suffering from both diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health needs often manifest these in school through a wide range of behavioural issues, but the lack of adequate and accessible specialist support services means that schools increasingly find it difficult to meet pupils' needs. The impact of inaccessible or inadequate support services for schools is likely to be magnified for pupils with SEND who are disproportionately more likely to suffer from mental ill-health. Overall the difficulty in accessing these services reduces the ability of schools to effectively support and manage pupils, increasing the risk of exclusion.

NAHT members report that schools are struggling to access support for pupils with mental health needs; a survey of our members conducted in October 2017 found that 99.7% of respondents agreed that access to therapeutic support for children and young people with mental health needs must be improved.

In many areas there has been an increase in referral thresholds and even once a referral is accepted, young people frequently have to wait many months for treatment. There are potential dangers with waiting times targets and these must be guarded against. Raising thresholds can decrease waiting times as fewer children

meet them, but fewer children are seen. This gives false reassurance that children's needs are being met.

Many of our members report a system in crisis, where unsupported children and young people are at best struggling to learn and at worst at serious risk. When respondents were asked 'What might help to improve mental health support for pupils in your schools?' three of the top four responses focussed on the need for more provision and support from specialist mental health services.

These were to:

- Reduce thresholds for access to CAMHS and specialist mental health services (87.4%)
- Secure more support from specialist mental health services (85.5%)
- Increase the specialist mental health services provided locally (84.7%)

The report of the Education Select Committee, following their inquiry into the mental health and well-being of looked-after children, identified particular areas of concern with current provision and any proposals for improvement must address these. The Committee found that current methods of assessing children and young people's mental health and wellbeing as they enter care are inconsistent and too often fail to identify those in need of specialist care and support. Initial assessments are rarely completed by qualified mental health professionals with an appreciation of the varied and complex issues with which looked-after children may present. They also heard evidence that the inflexibility of CAMHS is failing looked-after children in too many areas and leaving vulnerable young people without support.

Alarming, NAHT is aware of anecdotal evidence indicating cases where exclusion has been as a lever of last resort in order to secure a proper assessment for pupils, all other means having failed. While clearly not desirable, this reveals the aridity of environment that many schools now operate within. NAHT believes that it is imperative that education, health and care sectors have the required resources, and work in partnership, to ensure that appropriate support is available and accessible to pupils that need them. The strong evidence is that early intervention is always more effective, and is likely to prevent both fixed and permanent exclusions.

Taking the North West as an example that is pretty typical: All the North West local authorities have now made their Educational Psychology services a traded service, meaning schools now have to buy them in. Historically, when a school had a challenging pupil, the first person they would refer to would be the EP and they would provide support for the staff in determining their understanding and knowledge and perhaps an amended timetable to help the school better manage the challenges. As access to EPs is now not only a budgetary issue, but also a capacity issues as there are fewer of them, this makes it more difficult to provide the right level of support for the young person and inevitably more likely they will be excluded.

One of our members running an independent school in the North West exemplifies the situation: *“Social Care and Health are frequently missing in terms of providing proactive and appropriate support for a challenging young person and their often overwhelmed family. The lack of access for schools to these services has also had a substantial impact upon exclusion rates. In schools such as my own, we have overcome this difficulty by employing our own therapy team which has had a massive impact upon our budget and is not something that any of our main stream colleagues (outside the independent sector) would be in a position to undertake. Five years ago we employed one therapist, one day a week; currently we employ six therapists, over eleven days per week. This includes two Art Psychotherapists, a Clinical Psychologist, a Speech and Language Therapists, a sensory trained Occupational Therapist and a Neuro-developmental Pathway Family Support Worker. Undoubtedly without employing this range of expertise for our pupils and families, as well as for developing staff knowledge and understanding, our exclusion rates would be significantly higher as the complexity and acuity of young person we are dealing with today is also much more extreme than it was five years ago. “*

### **The need for collaboration and mitigation of the unintended effects of the high-stakes, low-trust accountability system**

Since 2010 the education system has become increasingly fragmented. Many local authorities have made hugely significant reductions in their capacity to support those schools for which they retain responsibility. MAT structures vary greatly in both quality and effectiveness. Some provide strong support for their schools akin to that of a local authority, but many academies sit within very small chains or stand-alone. This fragmentation often makes school to school collaboration across the areas that serve local communities very problematic. In written evidence submitted to the House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry on Alternative Provision, NAHT was clear that there is a need to facilitate and promote effective local and regional collaboration to establish partnerships that provide a bridge for pupils between mainstream schools, alternative provision schools and Special schools; and across different school types and structures.

There is no single model for successful delivery. The structure and shape of alternative provision is often responsive to, and reflects, different local circumstances and needs. Across the country there are a range of highly effective and successful approaches to alternative provision, from single ‘hubs’ serving a handful of schools within a local area, to multi-academy trusts specialising in alternative provision that provide for pupils across a whole county.

The education system needs sufficient capacity, funding and expertise to retain those pupils that currently leave the roll of a mainstream state-funded school for an unclear destination, leading to low attainment. It must offer a range of short, medium and



long-term provision. Such provision should seek to re-engage students with mainstream education, but also recognise that this may not be possible or desirable in all circumstances, and that alternative models for the delivery of formal education will be required for those who are unable to access the curriculum within a mainstream setting.

The introduction to this submission sets out the importance of context when seeking to understand how exclusions come about, and how to prevent them in the future. Many excluded pupils have experienced child poverty and family problems, including parental mental ill health, abuse and neglect.<sup>7</sup> Many have low prior attainment and make poor educational progress, entrenching their overall levels of disadvantage. They are more likely to have Special Educational Needs, and many may also have diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health issues.

Stronger collaboration by schools across communities could create a continuum that would ensure that the needs of all pupils within a local area are met, so that local authorities, multi-academy trusts, federations, stand-alone academies and other collaborative partnerships are able to benefit all children of school age in a particular locality, through a sense of shared responsibility and endeavour. These partnerships need to be able to access sufficient resources to meet the needs of their pupils, and rely upon timely and easily accessible support from Health and Social Care professionals.

In the absence of this 'wrap-around' approach to delivery, permanent exclusion, or other forms of managed moves tend to occur in the later stages of pupils' secondary education, when the negative impact is highest. For example, Education Datalab's '*Who's left*' study<sup>8</sup> of pupil moves within the cohort of pupils that came to the end of their compulsory education in the academic year 2014/15 shows that 5,631 of the 7,496 pupils that moved to alternative provision between years 7 and 11, moved during year 10 or 11.

The *Who's left* findings also raise important questions about the unintended effects of the existing accountability system. Datalab's analysis for the 2014/15 cohort shows that almost 20,000 pupils left a mainstream secondary school, but were never subsequently recorded as being on the roll of any other state-funded institution. Their destinations include education at a private school, independent alternative provision, an independent special school, or in further education. Others will have been 'home-schooled', or may have attended unregistered education settings.<sup>9</sup>

Schools often feel that they lack the tools and wider support to deal with those few pupils who exhibit extraordinary behavioural challenges; and they can struggle to manage their impact on other pupils' learning. The competitive 'market oriented'

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://educationdatalab.org.uk/tag/whosleft/>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

school system also creates perverse incentives that limit the premium to be gained from wider collaboration. In combination with a highly competitive marketised system, where school performance is ranked through league tables, this can work against collaboration and partnership between schools, and the establishment of in and cross-school alternatives that might reduce the need for permanent exclusion and off-site provision.

## **The impact of recent changes to the curriculum**

Over the last few years there has been a raft of reforms to curriculum and assessment, across both primary and secondary settings.

At primary level, there has been the introduction of the new National Curriculum and the introduction of statutory assessments for grammar, punctuation and spelling, along with reading and maths. At secondary level, there has been (and continues to be) reforms to GCSEs, including revised subject content, a reduction in non-exam assessment and new grading scales, while at A Level there has been a move back to linear exams, and the de-coupling of AS and A-Level.

There is concern that these changes have resulted in a less accessible curriculum for those with even low level SEND in mainstream schools. In the latest State of Education report (2017),<sup>10</sup> 79% of school leaders stated that they feel that the current national curriculum requirements are not providing the best outcomes for all pupils in mainstream education; with nearly nine in 10 (88%) school leaders (across both phases) thinking that too much focus is placed on academic testing as a measure of pupils' success.

### Primary curriculum

In the State of Education report by The Key, 58% of school leaders reported that changes to the curriculum and school performance measures in primary schools over the past two years have had a negative impact on the progress of SEND pupils<sup>11</sup>.

Underlying many of the criticisms of the new assessment system is its inaccessibility for pupils with SEND. The focus on spelling and handwriting can disproportionately affect pupils with dyslexia or dyspraxia, and there has been criticism of the level of difficulty of the tests. A survey conducted by NAHT found that “an overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) reported that tests at KS2 were not appropriate for children with SEND, with 82% reporting the same issue at KS1” (PAC, 2017)

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<sup>10</sup> State of Education report (2017)

<sup>11</sup> State of Education report (2017)

The DfE's own data appears to support these concerns - in 2017, 18% of pupils with SEN reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics, compared with 70% of pupils with no identified SEN. This highlights **an attainment gap of 52 percentage points**.<sup>12</sup> In fact, pupils with SEN make less progress in all subjects compared with pupils with no identified SEN. The biggest gap in progress is seen in writing.<sup>13</sup>

Worryingly, it seems that this gap is actually worsening; as we've seen in 2017, 18% of pupils with SEN reached the expected standard in all of reading, writing and mathematics, compared with 70% of pupils with no identified SEN; an attainment gap of 52 percentage points. **However, in 2016 the attainment gap was 48 percentage points –four percentage points better**<sup>14</sup>

### Secondary curriculum

In the State of Education report by The Key, 48% of school leaders reported that changes to the curriculum and school performance measures in secondary schools over the past two years have had a negative impact on the progress of SEND pupils.<sup>15</sup>

Another survey<sup>16</sup>, found that **77% of respondents strongly agreed that the new GCSE curriculum will be less suitable for low-attaining students**. In both the written responses and interviews, lower-attaining, SEND, EAL and low-income students were all identified as less well placed to access the new curriculum.

The new GCSEs have been characterised by teachers as encompassing a “one size fits all” approach which makes it harder for teachers to respond to the diversity of students' needs and disadvantages students who are less able to perform well in written examinations.

The move away from coursework towards assessment by terminal examinations was seen as demoralising for students who struggle with exams, particularly lower-attaining, SEND and EAL students. Phrases such as **“setting students up to fail”** were frequently used by teachers in this context.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2017 (revised)

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2017 (revised)

<sup>15</sup> State of Education report (2017)

<sup>16</sup> A Curriculum for All? The effects of recent Key Stage 4 curriculum, assessment and accountability reforms on English secondary education

<sup>17</sup> A Curriculum for All? The effects of recent Key Stage 4 curriculum, assessment and accountability reforms on English secondary education

Some evidence of this occurring has been found in research commissioned by the DfE; **secondary school pupils with SEND have much higher levels of unhappiness regarding their school work and school.** <sup>18</sup>

While accountability measures have a negative impact on all pupils, many of them disproportionately affect disadvantaged and SEND pupils. One reason for this is that many of them struggle to reach age-related expectations, and therefore often spend more time being taught maths and English (and consequently miss out on some other subjects). In particular, teachers have reported concern about the impact on some pupils with special needs, who were “forced” into taking subjects that teachers considered to be at too high a level. This was done entirely as a response to accountability measures. <sup>19</sup>

In fact, the DfE’s own research appears to suggest that this is the case - in connection to the issue of outliers, it was commonly perceived by interview participants that the Progress 8 calculations did not allow for any contextual consideration/cohort variation (e.g. special needs, EAL, boys’ schools, sudden hospitalisation/serious illness, small schools). Concern was therefore raised about students taking more subjects than they previously would have done to ensure that ‘buckets are full’ (DfE, 2017).

NAHT’s opposition to the Ebacc targets as centred on the fact that it can lead to significant curriculum narrowing, making it harder for schools to design pathways that are suitable for those who do not fit the Ebacc ‘mould’ The lack of a broad range of alternative KS4 qualifications has had a significant detrimental effect on the attitude to school of a subgroup of students (SEND, children from significantly deprived backgrounds) who are particularly vulnerable to exclusion

Despite the data indicating a decrease in pupils with SEND attending maintained secondary schools, there were 392,955 approved access arrangements in the summer of 2017, **up 5% on 2015/16.**<sup>20</sup> There were 48,080 modified question papers produced in the summer 2017 exam series, **an increase of 26%** compared with 2016 (from 38,115)<sup>21</sup>.

This reflects the fact that the changes to the curriculum make it less accessible and less engaging to lower ability pupils, as well as those with SEND. Instead, we believe that it is critical for schools to support the outcomes pupils want for themselves.

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<sup>18</sup> The wellbeing of secondary school pupils with special educational needs

<sup>19</sup> Exam factories? The impact of accountability measures on children and young people

<sup>20</sup> Access Arrangements for GCSE and A Level - 2016 to 2017 academic year

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

When combined with effective careers advice, this can help to give a sense of purpose to those pupils with a less than positive previous experience of education.

We believe that considering the curriculum is critical in considering how to support children and young people vulnerable to exclusion – some will need a different curriculum tailored to their needs and allowing them to succeed rather than being forced into a direction that will disengage them and brand them as failures.

## **Conclusions – lessons from alternative provision schools**

NAHT believes that the issues described above present a significant challenge to policy makers. In our view it is not possible, or indeed helpful, to consider exclusion as a stand-alone problem. As demonstrated above, a range of complex drivers including funding shortages, the existing curriculum and accountability system, and the availability and accessibility of specialist health and social care support have a significant impact on rates of permanent and fixed term exclusion.

In its recent report, the IPPR summarised the situation succinctly ‘...*Excluded children are the most vulnerable... yet our education system is profoundly ill-equipped to break a cycle of disadvantage for these young people.*’<sup>22</sup> The latest headline destination data shows that only around half of pupils (57 per cent) moved from alternative provision to sustained education, employment and training.<sup>23</sup> IPPR estimates that each cohort of permanently excluded pupils ‘...*will go on to cost the state an extra £2.1 billion in education, health, benefits and criminal justice costs.*’<sup>24</sup>

NAHT believes the way forward is to remove the disincentives for schools to collaborate. The findings of our 2016 report *Collaboration: the school leaders’ journey*,<sup>25</sup> which examined different models of school collaboration (including multi academy trusts, statutory federations, co-operatives and other models), demonstrated that successful collaboration came from agreed goals and effective ways of working, rather than a focus on structural models.

The way forward is to facilitate the development of effective and appropriate partnerships for the communities that schools serve, so that collectively they take responsibility for the outcomes and well-being of all pupils. Too often provision for pupils at risk of exclusion is regarded as a separate element of educational provision for a specific group of pupils, in the same way that Special and Specialist schools are frequently ‘set aside’ from the mainstream. The truth is rather different. In order to change attitudes, and to focus on outcomes that promote the future life chances and the well-being of all pupils, NAHT believes that tackling exclusion should be seen as

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<sup>14 22</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-ks4-and-ks5-pupils-2016>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/organisational-structures/naht-publish-new-report-on-collaboration-between-schools/>

an element within an *education continuum* designed to serve the individual needs of pupils.

There is a need to support pupils using a range of different interventions. Some pupils may require support through high quality alternative provision at a point, or points, of their compulsory education allowing them to return wholly to mainstream education; others may need a 'mixed economy' of alternative provision and mainstream schooling; and a smaller group may be best accommodated solely within an alternative provision route. The broad continuum might include, for example, internal exclusion arrangements; outreach services from alternative provision to mainstream schools; placements for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion; part-time, short-term or dual role placements; or full time placement in an alternative provision setting. Clearly, schools working together across the local communities they serve can create this 'menu' of support, underpinned by high quality and easily accessible health and social care services

Fresh thinking is required about how schools are held to account, and who they are accountable to. Instead of setting schools in competition, or ring-fencing their collaboration within existing structures (such as MATs), there is a need for coherent provision across local areas, and in some cases regions. There's also a need to create and properly fund responsive local structures, so that health, therapeutic services and social care support are readily available and accessible to schools.