

Alternative Education Provision Additional Guidance: Monitoring and quality assurance of alternative provision placements made by schools

What is Good Alternative Provision?

Good alternative provision is that which appropriately meets the needs of pupils which required its use and enables them to achieve good educational attainment on par with their mainstream peers. All pupils must receive a good education, regardless of their circumstances or the settings in which they find themselves. Provision will differ from pupil to pupil, but there are some common elements that alternative provision should aim to achieve, including:

- good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools – particularly in English, maths and science (including IT) – with appropriate accreditation and qualifications;
- that the specific personal, social and academic needs of pupils are properly identified and met 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. (DfE 2013)

Alternative Provision can complement a part-time timetable to support a young person's entitlement to full-time education, but should not be a long-term plan and requires careful consideration at point of entry, transition back to school and also integration to next phase in education.

What schools should know?

- Responsibility for the alternative provision used rests with the school commissioning the placement. Commissioning schools should carefully consider what providers are available that can meet the needs of their pupils, including the quality and safety of the provision, costs and value for money.
- The school commissioning the placement should maintain on-going contact with the provider and pupil, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support.
- The school commissioning the placement should maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a pupil's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This should also include the pupil's own assessment of their placement.
- It is the commissioning school's responsibility to make arrangements for payments to providers.

Ofsted requires local authorities to report on children *not in receipt of full-time education in the usual way*. This includes the duty to monitor pupils placed by mainstream and special schools in off-site Alternative Provision. Full time education is generally accepted to be 18 - 25 hours a week in a maintained school.

Key points for consideration before commissioning Alternative Provision

- Has the pupil, parents and relevant teacher been spoken to before a decision about alternative provision has been made?
- What other considerations are there, such as transport arrangements?
- What does the pupil want, or need, to get out of the provision?
- How long should the provision be for?
- How will it fit with the pupil's mainstream curriculum?
- What will success look like at the end of the provision?
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve – particularly in the areas of attendance, attitude, attainment, behaviour and positive destination?

Schools are required to confirm to the LA that they are using arrangements in place via the agreed AP protocols to monitor and quality-assure any alternative provision placements made, including regular visits and welfare calls. **NB: The DBC AP directory is not an approved list of providers, instead it offers providers who have met our framework of minimum standards around the safety and legality of provisions, to ensure that only provision meeting these standards will be listed.**

Checklist of factors which schools should consider when deciding that an alternative provision is of a suitable quality and that appropriate and robust monitoring arrangements are in place:

Safeguarding

	Yes	No	Comment
Is each provision on the DBC AP framework? (This does not replace a school's duty to make its own checks regarding each Provision.)			
Is a recent ' Good ' or ' Outstanding ' Ofsted Report available where applicable?			
Is an institution which should be registered as an independent school (four or more students or one with a statement/EHC Plan on roll full time) registered and not operating illegally?			
	Yes	No	Comment
Which of the following checks were carried out prior to placement? (Note – if provider is on the AP Framework, checks greyed out have been completed by DBC where applicable to the AP)			
Staff and Volunteer Record – Single central record of qualifications, recruitment and vetting checks			
Insurance Certificates (see details below)			
Core Risk Assessments			
Admissions Policy and Procedures			
Attendance Policy and Procedures			
Health and Safety Policy			
Educational Visits and Outings Policy and Procedures			
Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy			
Data Protection Policy and Procedures			
Equality information and objectives (public sector equality duty)			
Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedures			
Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff			
Complaints Procedure Statement			
Other – specify			

Insurance

	Yes	No	Comment
Public Liability insurance			
Employer's Liability insurance			
Motor Vehicle Insurance			
Subcontractor Liability			

Quality of provision

The commissioned course meets the educational and SEMH needs of each pupil			
The premises are fit for purpose			
Health and safety arrangements are of an appropriate standard			
Teaching and learning is of a high standard			
Suitable resources and teaching materials are available			
Behaviour management is strong			
Attendance recording and reporting are robust			
Tracking and reporting on progress is robust			
Suitable accreditation and other outcomes are on offer			
Due attention is paid to reintegration or progression to post-16 pathways			

Supporting documentation in place

	Yes	No	Comment
DBC AP Framework and Protocols			
Education plan for each pupil or group of pupils			
Protocol for monitoring pupil progress and outcomes and quality of provision used			
Review calendar for monitoring pupil progress and outcomes and quality of provision			
Formal agreement from the parent(s) for the arrangement			
Effective communication protocol			
Other – specify			

Steps when an AP placement commissioned:

Once agreed that AP is an appropriate and necessary intervention, the school's AP lead will ensure the following takes place:

- A referral is made by the school in consultation with the family (subject to availability and viability at the placement).
- A face to face or telephone conversation between school and AP provider to plan the correct package of support for the individual. Families may also wish to be part of this.
- A welcome meeting at the provider attended by a school representative, the parent, the pupil and a representative from the AP. Dress code, lunch arrangements, travel arrangements, expectations, behaviour contracts, start and end date will be discussed and agreed at this meeting.

During the period of attending AP the following should take place:

- School, family and pupil to attend regular and timely review meetings (face to face or via an online platform such as Teams).
- AP to provide school with a weekly report.
- School to share weekly reports from AP with necessary professionals
- AP to provide attendance updates for each day the pupil is scheduled to attend.
- AP to ensure all safeguarding concerns are reported immediately to DSL.
- School to ensure any important updates regarding the pupil are passed on to the AP.
- AP to be invited to attend and feed into any professional meetings, progress meetings or other, in agreement with families.
- School lead to visit placement on agreed basis with AP.
- Parent/carer to support their child to attend and arrive on time.

Following the end of the placement the following should take place:

- Evaluation of the placement completed
- Careful re-integration plan in place for the pupil to return to full time school, produced in conjunction with key school staff, family and pupil.

Appendix 1: Recommended Levels of Insurance Cover (NB: PL, EL & MVI checked if on DBC AP Framework)

- Public Liability insurance for a minimum of five million pound sterling (£5,000,000) in respect of any one act or occurrence or series of acts or occurrences in any one year
- Employer's Liability insurance for a minimum of ten million pound sterling (£10,000,000) in respect of any one act or occurrence or series of acts or occurrences in any one year;
- The Service Provider and its Personnel shall have in place motor vehicle insurance commensurate with the potential liabilities of the Service Provider relating to the operation of vehicles used for the transport of Service User/s and their visitors
- Subcontractor Liability – the Service Provider shall ensure that the same levels of insurance are maintained for any sub-contracted Services;

The onus is on the Service Provider to ensure that its insurance policies are always adequate to cover eventualities pertaining to its business, but the school also holds a responsibility to pupils placed there.

Appendix 2: Relevant documentation

- Alternative Provision – Statutory guidance for local authorities - DfE January 2013 (Also applies to *governing bodies and head teachers; state schools; academies; PRUs; AP providers*)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268940/alternative_provision_statutory_guidance_pdf_version.pdf
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges - DfE September 2023
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1181955/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf
- Unregistered independent schools and out of school settings – DfE March 2018
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690495/La_Guidance_March_2018.pdf