



**Are we meeting their needs? Experiences and outcomes of children and young people with complex needs in residential special schools and colleges in the UK**

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# Lenahan Review I –Children in Specialist Health Care

This Review was triggered by a small number of individual cases. They focussed public and Ministerial attention on the care, support and treatment provided to the small group of children and young people with complex needs (and behaviour that challenges) involving mental health problems and learning disabilities and/ or autism.

Alistair Burt, the then Minister of State for Care and Support, asked for a Review to “take a strategic overview and recommend what practical action can be taken by Government Departments and partners at national level to make the system better able to co-ordinate care, support and treatment for children and young people with complex needs (and behaviour that challenges) involving mental health problems and learning disabilities and/ or autism.”



# Which children?

- Children and young people with both a learning disability and a mental health need
- Autism would be common , but not just Autism
- Children on the edge of or placed within in patient mental health units (but a note of the corresponding cohort in Residential Special Schools )
- In profile , most will be boys , most will be teenagers , 90%+ will have communication impairments and most will have significantly challenging behaviour



# Lessons to date



# Process and Limitations

- A fast review
- Not an individual case review
- Looking only at national initiatives
- Not an action plan , but a review
- Highlights the need for work in other areas , transition to adulthood and residential special schools for example



# Lessons from the process

- Lots of passionate , committed individuals who care deeply but are affected by ;
- A lack of a strategic vision for children
- A lack of accountability and coherence within the system
- No cross government ownership of the issue
- A domination of classifications, diagnoses , labels which effectively rule out support
- A strong professional agreement on a model of support , but one which is not commissioned



# Lessons from the process

- An issue about the commissioning footprint
- Patchy support for parents
- Austerity biting across all statutory and non statutory services
- Disagreements about workforce
- At tier 4 a lack of the right provision in the right place
- A financial system which incentivises crisis and disincentivises prevention
- Short sightedness about change



# Taking a children's rights approach

Understanding the basic denial of rights

Each of us asking ourselves some key questions ...  
would this be Ok for my child ?

But not getting lost in the world of parents

Using the tools in the systems to support our approaches

Taking accountability in each part of the system





# Response to the review

- Setting up of children and young people steering group for transforming care
- Headed by Independent Chair , Jane Ramsey
- Brings together NHSE, DH , DFE , Parents and key voluntary sector bodies
- Pulls together overlapping initiatives
- Goal is to cut the number of children admitted to hospital and to implement the Lenehan review recommendations.



# Progress to date

- Detailed understanding of data around individual children , reasons for admissions and regional differences
- Work with TCPs around identifying children's leads and children's issues
- Promoting alternative models of support eg;
  - ❑ therapeutic crisis interventions in Ealing
  - ❑ Early interventions on paving the way
  - ❑ Use of dynamic risk registers for children
- Understanding workforce challenges and bringing agencies together
- Building a cross government expectation of change
- But still 200 under 18s in hospitals



## Lenehan Review 2, Residential Special Schools and Colleges

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To look at the outcomes and experiences of children and young people in residential special schools and residential special colleges

To focus on the most complex but to take the wider picture

To take evidence from the widest variety of sources

To get a clear picture of how many , who , where

To look at models of care



# Why now

- A 20 year gap in attention
- A number of identified challenges
- And a need to recognise excellence
- A changing population ...levels of complexity
- A need for new models ?



## Context-understanding the numbers

- There are 334 residential schools and colleges.
- There are 4,874 children boarding in residential special schools
- There are 1,268 young people in specialist post 16 establishments ....a total of 6,146
- The costs range from £35,000 a year to £350,000 a years per pupil , the annual cost is approximately £500m
- 70%+ of the placements are of children with a label of ASD or SEMH , the difference in labelling isn't always clear



# Key Findings –Getting to school

- Looking at residential schools means looking at the whole system with significant numbers of children and young people placed because of mainstream failure
- Exclusions as an example ;
- Pupils with Autism 3 times more likely to be permanently excluded than children and young people with no SEND ,permanent exclusions increased by 36% between 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- Significant places pressures on the mainstream and day special systems, changes in education provision and lack of strategic place planning are also driving placements
- An exclusion from school and/or a collapse of a social care package often triggers placement request
- Families tend to battle to get placements with significant numbers of schools taking 100% of admissions on tribunal rulings



## Key Findings-in schools and colleges

- Most children have a positive experience with many telling us it's the first time they feel safe and accepted.
- The best schools and colleges are outward looking , a part of their community , work hard to maintain relationships with families and placing authorities , set high ambitions for their pupils and look at transitional planning from the outset
- There is often poor attention to educational outcomes which can be secondary to support , a huge variation between placements with similar cohorts
- There was variable practice in safeguarding and links with local agencies
- There was some very mixed messages about the teaching of children and young people with Autism ....and some very poor behavioural/therapeutic/mental health support for children on the Autism/SEMH axis
- There was very variable transition/preparing for adulthood outcomes



## Key Findings –looking at the system

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Working with endemic mistrust , understanding the impact on children and young people when the parties don't get on

Working with children who internalise failure

Understanding effective commissioning , changes in market management , meeting current need , rather than staff trained on past populations of children

Understanding current inspection regimes

A need to scrap the national minimum standards and replacing them with quality standards

Developing leadership and improvement services





## Government Response

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- To set up a National Leadership Board to take the recommendations forward
- To publish visiting guidance
- Delays due to changes in ministers but work underway
- Government leadership is important but lots the sector , itself , can lead on .
- The future of Autism is key.

