

## MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

### BREAKING THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Kiran Gill, with Harry Quilter-Pinner and Danny Swift | October 2017

Read online or download at:  
[www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference](http://www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference)

## 60-SECOND SUMMARY

**Nowhere is Britain's social mobility failure more obvious than in the example of school exclusion in England.**

Excluded children are the most vulnerable: twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and 10 times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems. Yet our education system is profoundly ill-equipped to break a cycle of disadvantage for these young people.

This problem is much bigger than previously recognised. As mental ill health in young people rises, and more children are subject to interaction with social care services each year, more vulnerable children spill into the alternative provision (AP) sector. Too often this path leads them straight from school exclusion to social exclusion. Excluded young people are more likely to be unemployed, develop severe mental health problems and go to prison.

The cost to society of failing excluded young people is staggering. It is an economic, as well as social imperative that action is taken to upskill the teaching workforce, improve outcomes for multiply disadvantaged pupils and to stem the tide of exclusions. IPPR is advocating a new programme – The Difference – to develop expertise in the teaching profession, connect exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children, and create a community of leaders to drive positive and lasting change throughout England's education system.

IPPR finds significant demand for such a programme. More than one in three teachers is interested in the proposed training and career development offered by The Difference. Networks of alternative provision schools have welcomed the programme and several of England's biggest mainstream multi-academy trusts have already expressed interest in recruiting specialist senior leaders through this pathway.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A new programme should be established, which develops expertise in the profession, connects exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children, and creates a community of leaders to drive increasing inclusion throughout our education system.

Leaders graduating from this new programme – The Difference – would be the catalyst for change throughout the school system, working to break the link between school exclusion and social exclusion.

**Research set out in our report points to four priorities for workforce development:**

- improving preventative support for young people with complex needs in mainstream schools
- improving the commissioning and oversight of alternative provision (AP) for excluded pupils
- increasing and then maintaining the supply of exceptional teachers and leaders into AP
- developing an understanding of 'what works' in improving trajectories for excluded young people.

## KEY FINDINGS

**This report reveals the cost to the state of failing our most vulnerable children at school.**

- Every 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. Yet more pupils are being excluded, year on year.

**New analysis reveals that official data is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the full extent of exclusion.**

- Despite only 6,685 reported permanent exclusions last year, 48,000 of the most vulnerable pupils were educated in the AP sector, which caters for excluded students. We reveal that still more pupils are not captured in any government data, yet are functionally excluded from mainstream school.

**We identify key factors in rising exclusion rates.**

- There are increasing numbers of children with complex needs – where mental ill health, unstable or unsafe family environments and learning needs combine. Yet a lack of workforce development in schools compounds the challenge students face. Half of school leaders say their teachers cannot recognise mental ill health, and three in four say they cannot refer effectively to external services.

**As more pupils are excluded close to their exams, the capacity of the staff who work with excluded students is diminishing.**

- New data analysis shows once a child is excluded, they are twice as likely to be taught by an unqualified teacher and twice as likely to have a supply teacher. Meanwhile, a leadership recruitment crisis in schools for excluded pupils has seen leader vacancies double between 2011 and 2016.

**Poor staffing can lead to dangerous environments in schools for excluded pupils, particularly in ‘cold spot’ regions.**

- A child excluded from school in the North East is around eight times more likely to attend an alternative provision rated ‘Inadequate’ by Ofsted. In some local authorities with the highest levels of exclusion, 100 per cent of pupils are in settings graded ‘Inadequate’.

**IPPR is calling for a new programme to develop specialist school leadership. Led by a dedicated charity named The Difference, this programme would be designed to address these problems by:**

- **recruiting exceptional early career teachers** with leadership experience
- **placing them in leadership positions in an AP school**, and upskilling them through a two-year bespoke programme of on-the-job training accredited at Master’s level
- **developing a route back to mainstream leadership**, through a careers programme which matches alumni with senior leadership vacancies leading inclusion
- **pioneering evidence-led practice** by using its own programme and partnership with existing research organisations to develop and disseminate a better understanding of ‘what works’ to support vulnerable and disengaged young people.

The progressive policy think tank

Citation: Gill K, Quilter-Pinner H and Swift D (2017) *Making The Difference: Breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion*, IPPR.[www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference](http://www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference)

Permission to share: This document is published under a creative commons licence: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 UK <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/uk/>

**Institute for Public Policy Research**

IPPR, 14 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6DF | [www.IPPR.org](http://www.IPPR.org) | [@IPPR](https://twitter.com/IPPR)

