

SCHOOLS FORUM

Meeting date: 16th March 2022

From: Dan Barton, Assistant Director Education & Skills

GEOGRAPHIC INEQUITIES IN DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENT SPECIALIST PLACEMENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Across Cumbria, there are significant geographic differences in the number of young people placed within independent specialist placements (ISPs).
- 1.2 Children and young people are more likely to be placed within an ISP when living in Barrow and South Lakes.
- 1.3 ISPs are particularly costly for the Local Authority with Day Places costing an average of £58,429 and residential an average of £75,373 in 2021/22.
- 1.4 22% of the total Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block is spent on ISPs.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 There is currently an inequity in access to ISPs across Cumbria, with no available provision in the West of the County. Furthermore, a higher volume of requests in Barrow and South Lakes leads to an inequity in placements.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Schools Forum is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Consider how inclusive practice strategies can be developed by Schools Forum representatives in collaboration with the mainstream schools they represent to level out demand for ISPs and support students to remain in Cumbrian settings.

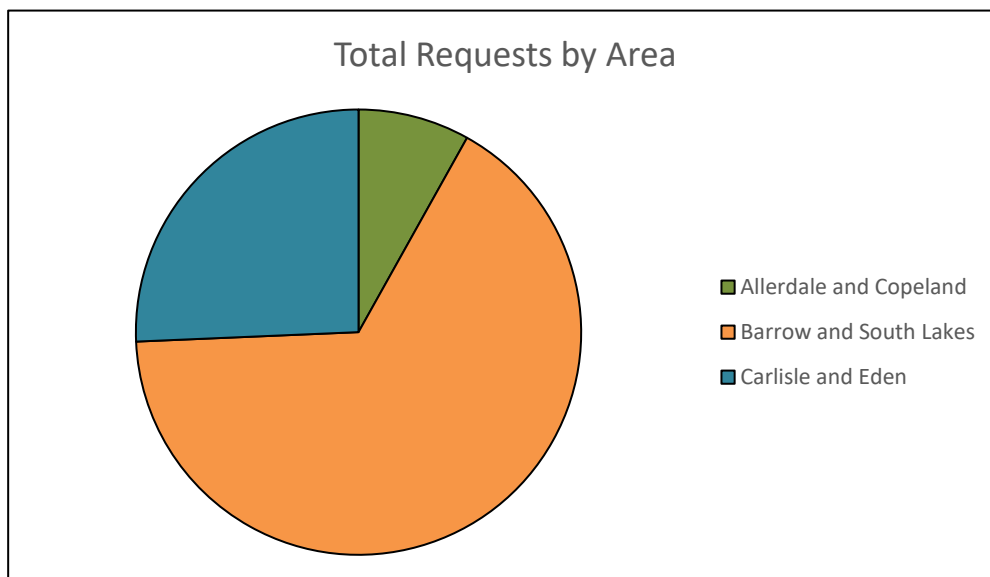
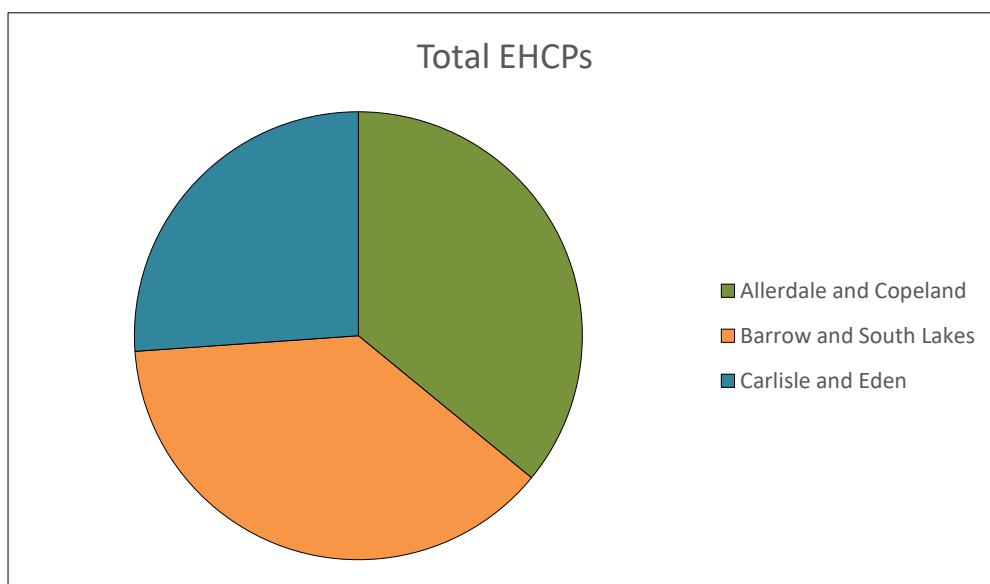
4.0 **BACKGROUND**

4.1 Since April 2021 192 pre-16 students have not had their needs met within mainstream, resourced, alternative or maintained special school provision during the year.

4.2 These placements are due to high level needs or complex and evolving needs not being able to be met by the current specialisms available within Cumbria.

4.3 We are currently seeing a higher volume of requests for ISPs from Barrow and South Lakes than other areas of the County. This number of requests cannot be explained by the higher levels of EHCPs alone.

4.4



Number of requests in the last 3 months

Allerdale and Copeland	Barrow and South Lakes	Carlisle and Eden
3	19	7

4.5 As of December 2021, there were 112 placements within Independent Day Settings and 50 placements in Independent Residential Settings, however with the high level of requests coming through the system this is expected to increase.

4.6 There are three settings within Carlisle and Eden and three within Barrow and South Lakes. There are no Independent Specialist settings in Allerdale and Copeland, potentially driving the lower number of requests.

4.7 The below table summarises the current pre-16 ISPs as of December 2021:

	Area	Number of Placements	Annual Cost £	Average cost per placement £
Independent Day	North Cumbria	31	1,230,461	39,692
	South Cumbria	40	2,794,424	69,861
	Lancashire	34	2,118,453	62,307
	Other Local Authorities	7	400,672	57,239
	Total	112	6,544,010	58,429
Independent Residential	North Cumbria	4	155,817	38,954
	South Cumbria	16	1,132,848	70,803
	Lancashire	12	1,164,790	97,066
	Other Local Authorities	18	1,315,214	73,067
	Total	50	3,768,668	75,373
Summary	North Cumbria	35	1,386,277	39,608
	South Cumbria	56	3,927,271	70,130
	Lancashire	46	3,283,243	71,375
	Other Local Authorities	25	1,715,887	68,635
	Total	162	10,312,678	63,659

4.8 There are currently 35 placements within North Cumbria and 56 placements within South Cumbria. Of the 112 day placements, 41 are in settings located outside of Cumbria. Of the 50 placements in Residential Settings, 30 are located outside of Cumbria.

4.9 It should also be noted that there are also currently 60 post-16 students in ISPs with a full year cost of £2,447,290 equating to an average cost per placement of £40,788.

4.10 The below table shows the number of pre-16 placements by student home location:

	Area	Number of Placements	Annual Cost £	Average cost per placement £
Independent Day	Allerdale & Copeland	19	942,833	49,623
	Barrow & South Lakes	65	4,423,925	68,060
	Carlisle & Eden	28	1,177,251	42,045
	Total	112	6,544,010	58,429
Independent Residential	Allerdale & Copeland	17	1,347,000	79,235
	Barrow & South Lakes	17	1,389,069	81,710
	Carlisle & Eden	15	976,951	65,130
	TBC	1	55,648	55,648
	Total	50	3,768,668	75,373
Summary	Allerdale & Copeland	36	2,289,833	63,606
	Barrow & South Lakes	82	5,812,994	70,890
	Carlisle & Eden	43	2,154,203	50,098
	TBC	1	55,648	55,648
	Total	162	10,312,678	63,659

4.11 The tables show that there is significant disparity between geographical areas and South Cumbrian families often look towards Lancashire for alternative arrangements. There are currently 46 placements within Lancashire and only 25 within other local authorities.

4.12 As an illustrative example, the cost of a child living in Kendal, attending a Specialist Day setting in Lancashire from Year 2 to Year 11 is as follows:

4.13

	Current Average Annual Cost	Lifetime Cost including estimated 3% inflation per year
Education	£62,307	£714,285
Travel	£23,370	£267,911
Total	£85,677	£982,196

4.14 These figures, corroborated by requests data, suggest that there are higher numbers of students within the south of the county that are not having their needs met in ordinarily available specialist provision.

4.15 Whilst children and young people's experience within an ISP is often a good one, a UK Government report highlighted that the experience is often focused on "at the expense of educational progress". It further noted that "some young people can be held back by a lack of ambition for what they can achieve. Preparation for adulthood can suffer because of this..." (Good intentions, good enough? UKGOV 2017).

4.16 Positive educational outcomes for inclusive practice have been evidenced within a variety of schooling systems. Most comprehensively in the American National Longitudinal Transition Study which examined the outcomes of 11,000 students with a range of disabilities and found that more time spent in a general education classroom was positively correlated with:

a) fewer absences from school,

b) fewer referrals for disruptive behaviour,

c) better outcomes after high school in the areas of employment and independent living (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2006).

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 The Schools Forum is asked to note this paper and consider potential inclusive practice strategies to level out demand for ISPs and support students to remain in Cumbrian settings.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Resource and value for money implications are considered throughout this paper. As noted above significant resources are being diverted away from Cumbrian settings to meet the needs of Cumbrian children/young people in out of county provision.

6.2 Whilst there will always be a need for specialist out of county provision, the data shows that there are higher levels of children being educated in the ISP sector in the South of the county compared to the North and at a greater cost. Understanding what is driving this and identifying strategies for reducing the number ISPs placements such as implementing more inclusive practice in mainstream schools should, in time, reduce the cost to the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block as well as improve pupil outcomes. At this stage it is not possible to quantify the impact of any such strategies.

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Appendices:

Good intentions, good enough?	UKGOV	2017
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/657418/Good_intentions_good_enough_-_a_review_of_residential_special_schools_and_colleges.pdf		
American National Longitudinal Transition Study	Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine	2006
https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED495660		