

# The North of England Inclusion Conference

## Workshop D – National Research on Alternative Provision

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Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019  
**The Principal Hotel, York**

**#NEIC19**

# Isos Partnership

## The North of England Inclusion Conference

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What do we know about (effective) AP systems?

11 March 2019



# Context: Three reasons why this work was commissioned

Rising demand,  
pressure on provision  
and resources

- 82% of LAs reported **demand for AP** rising over 3 years.
- **Pupils placed in AP** have risen 29% (2012/13 to 2017/18; pupil numbers have only risen 7%).
- Rates of **secondary permanent exclusion** have risen year on year from 0.12 (2012/13) to 0.20 (2016/17).

Comparatively poorer  
outcomes for young  
people placed in AP

Pupils in AP are:

- **more likely to become NEET** (0.37 rate in AP, 0.05 in mainstream);
- **less likely to achieve good KS4 outcomes** (15% in AP achieved 9-4 grades in English & maths; 65% in mainstream schools).

The need to  
understand how local  
systems operate and  
what helps them to be  
effective

While local areas have explored new ways of organising local AP and inclusion support, there was previously little information that drew together information about these different models and could be used to consider what made for an effective local AP and inclusion system.

# The three themes we explored

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T1

## **The make-up of local provision**

How AP is organised and shaped within local areas

T2

## **How local alternative provision is used**

How local AP is used; how and by whom are decisions about its use are made

T3

## **The effectiveness of local AP systems**

What are the characteristics of an effective local AP and inclusion system?

# Key findings: Theme 1

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## The make-up of local provision

How AP is organised and shaped within local areas

- **A range of ways of arranging local AP** – state-funded vs. independent provision; inclusion services vs. places; interface with inclusion and SEND.
- **No single right model for arranging provision** – will depend on local strategic decisions and needs.
- **There is the need to be clear on the strategic purpose of AP locally** – pro-active work to foster inclusion or reactive provision at crisis-point?
- **AP should be thought about as a “system” that requires careful strategic planning and judicious use** – a shared strategic plan setting out the role of AP, support pathways, roles and responsibilities is crucial.



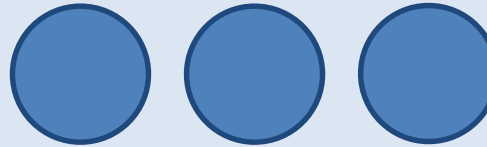
# The make-up of provision and places in local areas

*83% of LAs reported commissioning three quarters or more of the AP places funded from the High Needs Block in state-funded AP.*

**83%**

of LAs  
commissioned 75%  
or more of their AP  
places from state-  
funded AP

State-funded AP



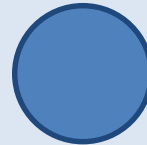
Ind. AP



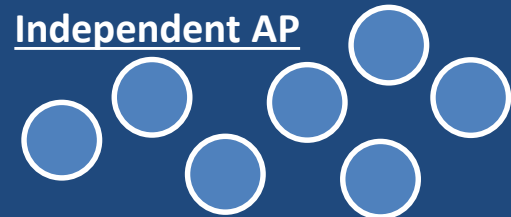
**17%**

... of LAs commissioned less  
than 75% from state-funded  
AP

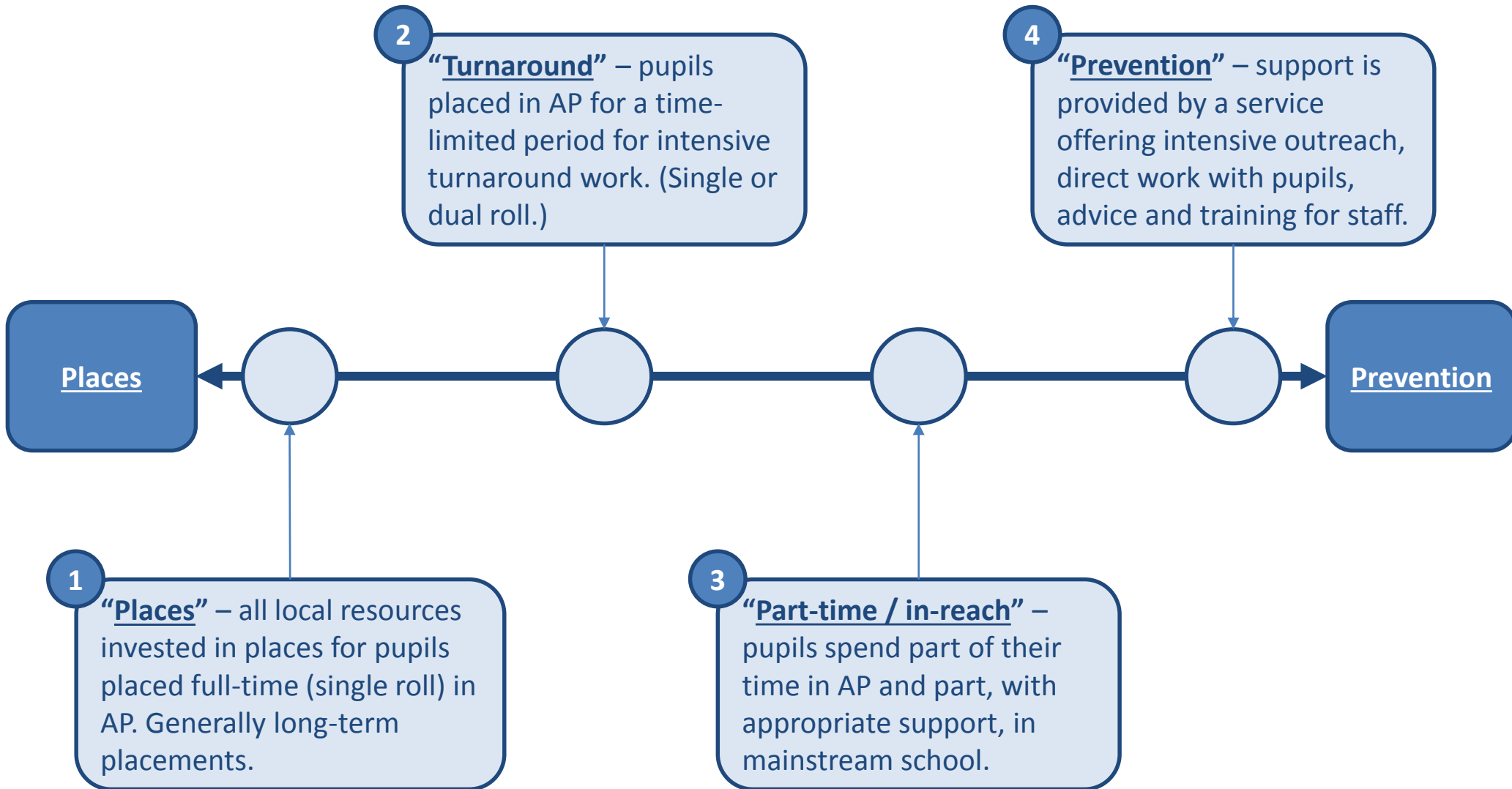
State-funded AP



Independent AP



# Key findings: Theme 1 – A spectrum of provision



# Key findings: Theme 2

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## How local alternative provision is used

T2

How local AP is used; how and by whom are decisions about its use are made

- **Decision-making responsibilities and funding sit in different places in different local areas** – centralised vs. devolved models.
- **The importance of individual and collective school responsibility** – to ensure equitable, effective use of AP and the best outcomes for pupils.
- **Even where there is a strong sense of individual and collective responsibility, LAs continue to play a crucial “key-working” role in local AP systems** – oversight of all children at risk / not in mainstream education, support and challenge, joining-up of agencies’ work.
- **The importance of partnership** – key roles to be played by mainstream schools, AP providers, the LA and other agencies.





# Key findings: Theme 2 – Responsibility-based models

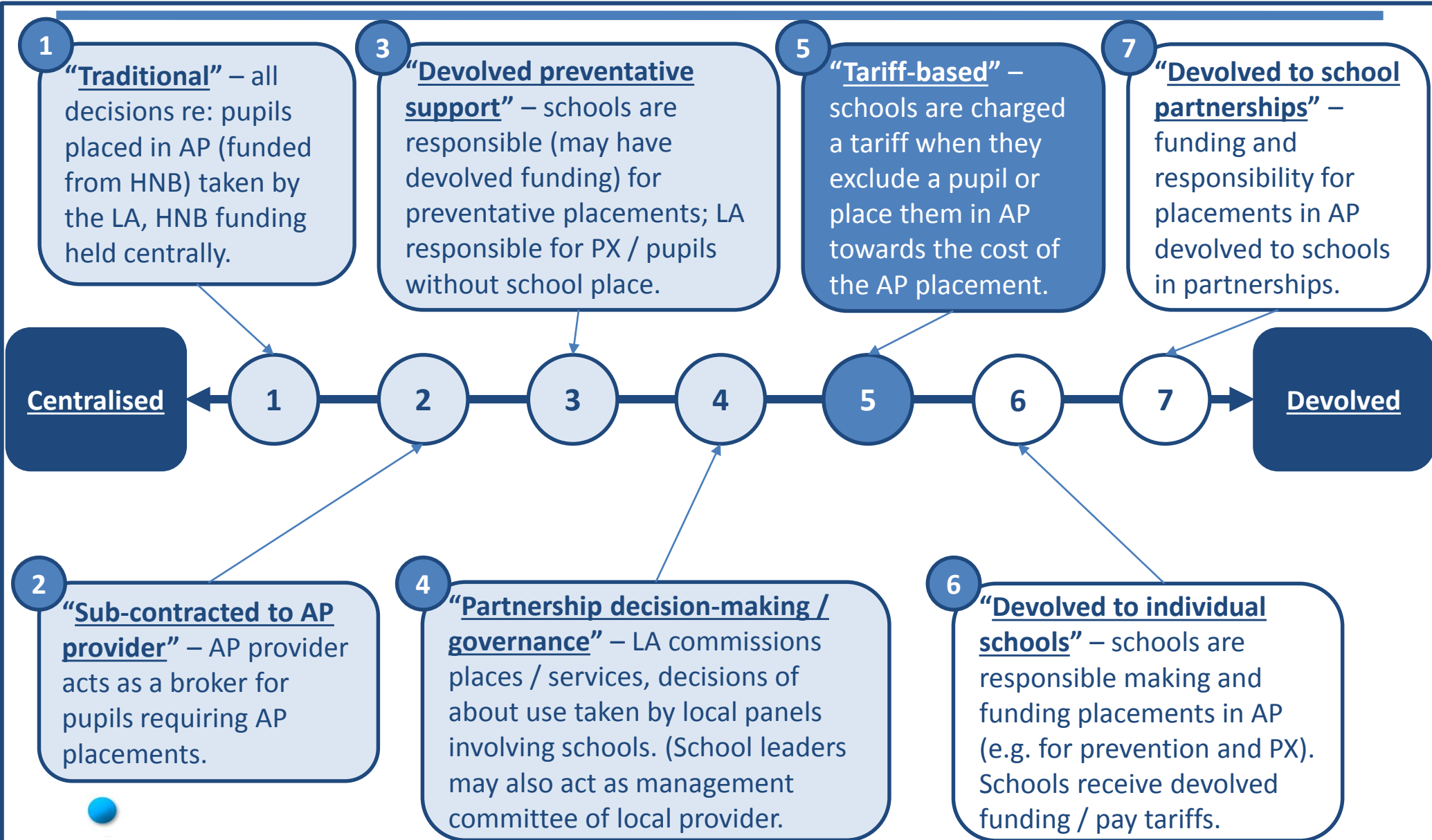
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**Devolved**

**Centralised**

**Tariff-based**

# Key findings: Theme 2 – A spectrum of responsibilities



# Impact of responsibility-based models

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Comparing local areas with devolved funding arrangements (as the most explicit responsibility-based model), we found that responsibility-based models ...

- Were more likely to say that AP was used for preventative reasons and less likely to say AP was used for pupils due mainly to permanent exclusion
- Had a higher proportion of pupils placed in AP returning to mainstream schools
- Had fewer secondary-age pupils placed in AP
- Had fewer permanent exclusions of secondary-age pupils
- Had fewer secondary-age pupils in elected home education
- Commissioned fewer places in state-funded AP
- Were more likely to say that their spending on AP was in line with what was budgeted



# Factors that contribute to and corrode school responsibility

## Contributing factors

- Moral purpose, commitment to serving the local area
- Clear, agreed inclusion framework

- Strong, collaborative leadership
- Stable leadership cadre (LA, schools)
- High trust between local leaders

- Clear understanding and collective ownership of high needs block, spend on AP, resource implications of strategic and placement decisions

- Regular data flows – visibility of all pupils not in mainstream education
- Processes built on fairness – ensure equitable access to and use of AP

- Coherent, joined-up offer of support – education, inclusion, early help etc.
- Flexible offer of support, responsive to pupils' and schools' support needs

### 1. Purpose and strategy

### 2. Leadership

### 3. Financial realism

### 4. Robust core processes

### 5. Driving action

## Corroding factors

- Isolationist attitudes – focus on what is good for individual schools
- Pupils in AP are “not my responsibility”

- Lack of strategic leadership capacity across inclusion and education
- High turnover of school / AP leaders
- New providers, without induction

- Commissioning and placement decisions driven by short-term need
- No understanding of AP resources
- Unequitable access to AP for schools

- Perception of unfairness – some schools less inclusive than others
- Little oversight of pupils not in full-time mainstream education

- Lack of core offer of preventative, capacity-building inclusion support
- No join-up across agencies (inclusion, school improvement, early help)

### Theme

### Key characteristics of the local AP system

1

#### The make-up of local provision

1. **Quantity** – will depend on strategic decisions about role of local AP and other inclusion support. It is crucial to have a clear strategic plan for inclusion, and clear roles for all AP providers. Equitable access to support across the local area is also vital.
2. **Range** – having the right range to (a) meet pupils' needs, and (b) provide appropriate support options and pathways (in-school, outreach, turnaround, long-term placements).
3. **Quality** – having a well-developed QA framework (covering safety, attendance, engagement, progress, progression, wellbeing), and building provider quality pro-actively.

2

#### How local AP is used

4. **Financial realism** – ensuring that there is collective understanding of local resources available for AP in order to inform strategic choices, trust and equitable access to support.
5. **Responsibilities** – (a) school-level responsibility for individual pupils placed in AP, their outcomes and destinations; (b) collective school responsibility for fair and equitable use of AP. Crucial oversight and QA role for LA. Join-up with SEND, early help is crucial.
6. **Strategic planning** – pro-active fostering of inclusion to meet needs and manage demand (not just finding placements). Tight, informed, responsive commissioning.

3

#### The effectiveness of the local AP system

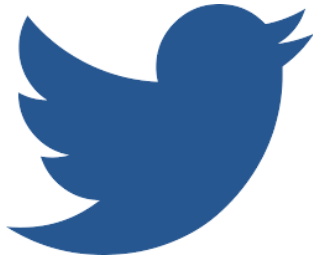
7. **Responsiveness** – ensuring AP providers are connected to the local system and see their role as responding to local needs, not defining and performing within their own niche.
8. **Outcomes** – the local system has collectively agreed systems and performance measures, aligned to strategic priorities, that enable AP providers to demonstrate impact.
9. **Funding** – funding is used flexibly to incentivise inclusion and support strategic priorities. Decisions are informed by financial considerations, and the overall impact on the high needs block is considered. Benchmarking is used to ensure value for money.

# To continue the discussion ...

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