

Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Accountability hearings](#) – 2 July 2019, HC 341

Tuesday 2 July 2019

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Members present: Ian Mearns (Chair); Lucy Allan; Ben Bradley; James Frith; Emma Hardy; Thelma Walker; Mr William Wragg.

Questions 2478-2522

Witnesses

[I](#): Edward Timpson CBE, Chair, Timpson review of school exclusion.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Edward Timpson CBE, Chair, Timpson review of school exclusion.

Q2478 Chair: Good morning and thank you for joining us. Welcome to the bridge of the Starship Enterprise—the newly set out Committee Room 6—for the Education Select Committee. This morning we have with us Mr Edward Timpson, and we will talk to Mr Timpson about his recent review of special educational needs and exclusions in particular.

Unusually, the Government published their response to your review on the day the review was published. How soon before that was the review ready to be published?

Edward Timpson: As you know, the review process began about 14 months ago, going back to the original request. It was an evolving process, and I was very keen to make sure that there was sufficient time to address every aspect of the terms of reference. Even when you are at the point where you think you have pretty much got where you believe the review needs to be, there is a level of refinement, but the review was ostensibly ready in its current form a matter of maybe six weeks or so before publication. Of course, you then have the fact checking, the proofreading, the printing and all of that. It is an iterative process; it is not simply that I deliver a review and then a response follows.

Q2479 Chair: So you don't think the Government have set a dangerous precedent for themselves in having a same-day response to an inquiry of this nature?

Edward Timpson: It is very commendable, and it provides some illustration of what I believe to be a strong determination to follow up the recommendations with proper vigour and speed—reasonable speed against what the recommendations have set out. Whether it is a dangerous precedent will probably depend on whether you are in government or opposition, but I think it is a reflection of the fact that it is possible. From my point of view, I think it helps those who are now grappling with the issues that the review has thrown up to understand how the Government will implement that in practice. I've handed over the baby and it's now their job to bring it up.

Q2480 Thelma Walker: Good morning, Mr Timpson, and thank you very much for your report and the work you put into it. We have heard concerns that a school's ethos or policies—for example, zero tolerance or a very narrow curriculum—may increase exclusion levels. How should we balance the headteacher's authority with a clear central steer from the Government about what is and is not acceptable grounds for exclusion?

Edward Timpson: This gets to the heart of what the review was trying to unpick. If you look at the principles that I set out at the start of the review, they try to set some of the standards that we would expect from

all schools. That does not mean that they all have to do exactly the same thing.

The variables we saw were essentially threefold. One was around policy and how it was set up by the school. Another was place, because not every area is exactly the same. You will know from your individual constituencies that there are different challenges, and schools have to try to match those. There is also practice and what it actually means for teachers on the ground and children on the receiving end.

The review showed that there is a lot of variation within those three parameters. Some of that was expected, but even allowing for local context there was still too much variation. Part of that, which you will hear again and again from teachers, is about them wanting to understand more about how they tackle difficult behaviour.

Q2481 Thelma Walker: How could the Government give that steer? How would you like to see them act to give that consistency?

Edward Timpson: One of the ways they can act is the recommendation around providing schools with better insight, understanding and training into behaviour management. There is a £10 million fund that I know has already been set up. There is work in train. I hope that is going to incorporate a whole range of views around how you manage behaviour. Just from my background and having been Children's Minister, I am particularly concerned about children who come from a very difficult start in life, where they may find it difficult to form attachments, where there may be aspects of a school's behaviour policy, which, although they have to comply with it, they will find it much harder to do on a day-to-day basis than other children. It is with those ones in particular that schools need more support, which includes them not doing it on their own and thinking about a more multi-disciplinary approach. There is some really interesting work and an innovative programme the What Works Centre for Children and Social Care is doing with putting a social worker back into school. That used to happen quite a lot in the old days; we see it less now. Other schools where they have got real issues around gangs and exploitation within their community have police officers working in school and in and around the gate. There are ways you can tailor the support management to a school but schools need more help to understand what really works.

Q2482 Thelma Walker: Would you say part of that help is adequate funding?

Edward Timpson: Part of that help is making sure they are able to have the capacity to know what works and when to intervene more successfully. We know that 78% of children who are permanently excluded either have a special educational need, or are what is called a child in need, or they are eligible for free school meals. We know who they are. A lot of funding is channelled in their direction through the pupil premium, for example, but we know the pressure that may come on around the high needs budget and the necessity to try and resolve that.

Q2483 Thelma Walker: Can I ask about the voice of the parent in this as well? Very often, you have talked about families from a deprived background.



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What about the parents themselves not knowing their rights? How would you see parents being enabled to prevent further exclusions within the school?

Edward Timpson: Again, we have to remember that parents are not a homogenous group. Within that, there is a whole range of relationships that they have with schools, some more confident than others. We came across parents who had had a bad experience at school themselves. They find it difficult, therefore, to reach out and work with the school. Going back to 2013-14, when I did the reforms to special educational needs, one of the things that was apparent was that, for those parents who were furthest away from school, either because of their own difficulties or their lack of a relationship with their school, they are the ones least likely to access support. When it comes to exclusions, particularly around where a child is at risk of exclusion or going through an exclusions process, one of the recommendations is through the practice improvement fund but also around looking at how the new appeals process is working to try and reach out to those parents who are furthest away from support. We tried to do that with the special educational needs reforms through the independent supporters, which went directly, and worked with them as a bridge to school. That is a good model that could be replicated for this wider group.

Q2484 **Thelma Walker:** Are you confident the Government are going to listen to your recommendations on this?

Edward Timpson: I was appointed to do the review. I was not suddenly picked randomly. I hope it was based on my work in Government and my understanding of the children who are more prone to exclusion and the credibility that, I hope, comes with it. Through this process, I have had a number of conversations with the Secretary of State and Ministers explaining some of the findings that were coming out and where my recommendations were going. None of us can predict what is going to happen over the next few months, but I have no doubt that the Secretary of State is very exercised by this. I knew him before he became Secretary of State and this is an area of great interest to him. Although I cannot these days pull the levers within the Department, I am as confident as I can be that the work I have done has been taken very seriously and has already enlisted a number of actions and commitments over the summer and into the autumn to make these recommendations come to life.

Emma Hardy: I just wanted to squeeze in a quick question. It was really welcoming to hear you talking about different children and even a different approach with behaviour. During your investigation, did you look at the work around ACEs—the adverse childhood experiences? What were your thoughts on ACEs and how they can be used to inform behaviour policies?

Edward Timpson: You have hit on one of my passions, which I touched on briefly before, which is recognising that while they are not always an excuse for why children find it difficult to conform within a school environment, it is better that we understand the root causes so that our response can help break that cycle of poor behaviour. For children who



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have had adverse experiences in their childhood—some level of abuse or neglect—and may, like many of the children we looked after, have ended up in the care system, that is not something that disappears lightly. I know that from many of the schools I went to and other practitioners working in and around schools.

We need that greater level of understanding of what that is, how it manifests itself and the behaviours you may see happen as a result. A sudden outburst of anger, for instance, may be not because they are trying to make life hard for everyone else in the classroom; it is essentially a cry for help. That is an example. Violence in the classroom and physical assaults are not acceptable. We look at the numbers in that regard, which have been going up, and we need strong safeguards within school and outside school. However, if we are to stop a lot of this behaviour repeating itself, it is no good just giving that child a succession of fixed-period exclusions without putting in place some of the remedial work or therapy that may be required to break what for them has been a lifelong struggle.

Q2485 Emma Hardy: I completely welcome that and think you are absolutely right. Just one follow-up question: how did those conversations on acknowledging that different children require different behaviour approaches go down with the Department for Education?

Edward Timpson: Again, if you look at the principles I set out at the start of the review, they incorporate the idea that every child needs to have the support they require to achieve their educational potential and the recent Ofsted changes are moving much more in that direction. I have been banging on about attachment and trauma training ever since I first came to Parliament in 2008, so I have been able to sow the seeds of that in the Department and across Government during that time. Although there are people who have a different level of understanding of its importance, I am confident that, with the recommendations having been accepted, that work will be taken forward.

The Government have also done work on the Children in Need review, which also highlights this. So they found it for themselves. I am not a lone voice. Although there are those who will put less credence on it—I am not talking about those in government, but generally there are different views about it with people saying, “Well, it’s just emerging evidence”—I have seen enough of it first hand to know that you can give teachers and those working in schools a little bit of insight and that can go a long way.

Q2486 Chair: In answer to the initial question, you mentioned the 2014 Act, on which this Committee did pre-legislative scrutiny. At the time, a number of us suggested—as did the report that we produced—that it would have significant resource implications. In the aftermath of that Bill becoming an Act and your time in Government, we are writing a report. What are your reflections on the implementation of the Act?

Edward Timpson: First of all, I am obviously not as close as when I was going through the process of taking it through Parliament, but I am aware of how it is playing out in different parts of the country. In the positive



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column, first of all, the Act and the philosophy it put in place has stood up to scrutiny. I think people can see that moving towards a birth-to-25 system, very much centred around the child and the family, and bringing education, health and care closer together through co-production, joint commissioning and so on, is absolutely the way forward. That has started to reap rewards in some areas more than others. There are still some stumbling blocks along the way. Health remains a player that is sometimes not the easiest to—

Chair: It is not that agreeable.

Edward Timpson: It is not the easiest to bring close to what was envisaged in the Act. When it comes to funding, we are seeing the pressure predominantly around the high needs block.

In terms of the drivers, there are the numbers and the greater complexity of cases, which speaks to me about why we are not doing more earlier. That leads to the capacity of schools themselves to identify and work within the school, or within some expertise and specialisms that they can bring into the school, to help ameliorate something that could otherwise escalate into an education, health and care plan.

The increase in the age range from nought to 25—it is still the right thing to do—has clearly put more demands on the financial envelope that is available. The inspections, which I brought in, of local areas and their special educational needs provision have surfaced issues that have probably been there for quite a long time, but now there are less places to hide. That has also established the need for smarter and more targeted funding for the areas where there is deficiency.

Overall, as I say in my report, we cannot escape the fact that the high needs block—as it is known—needs to be increased to meet this extra demand. I know, having spoken to the Secretary of State and heard some of the comments he has made publicly, that he is very alive to that. My plea, whenever the spending review happens, even if it is a one-year roll-over, is that because this is a real priority area there needs to be a serious commitment to ensuring that we don't unravel a lot of the good things that have happened through the reforms.

Q2487 **Chair:** One of the big indicators of the resourcing issue is the number of special needs tribunal meetings that determine in favour of the parent. I think in excess of 85% are now determined in favour of the parents application to appeal against the decision on the original drafting of the plan. That in itself is a significant indicator that there is a problem, in that an awful lot of plans seem to be drafted with the resources in mind, as opposed to the needs of the individual child.

Edward Timpson: If that is the case—forgive me, my fingertips are not as close to the edges of the pages on this—then the plea that I have just made has even more resonance. The last thing we want—this is one of the purposes of the reforms—is for parents to go through the rigmarole and often exhaustive process of an appeal, where the local authority often



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decides to drop the case at the door of the tribunal. That has wasted a lot of money, but it has also prevented work being done to try to improve the life of that child, who is sometimes lost in that process.

There were some pilots extended into bringing the education, health and social care tribunals together, to make it a single system rather than one where parallel appeals were often going on. Clearly, there is still work to do in that regard, but I am afraid that is someone else's responsibility at the moment—it is no longer mine.

Q2488 Ben Bradley: It is quite helpful that you are speaking about funding, because that brings me to where I want to go. In the report you did not touch too much on how much funding is an issue with exclusions and AP in particular. In the report you said, "government must ensure that approaches are sustainable by addressing...the current pressures on schools and...budgets." But that is kind of as far as it went. I wonder how much you think funding is driving exclusions and off-rolling. How relevant is it in terms of schools being able to cope with things like SEND and challenging behaviour, in particular? If it is a big issue, as you seem to suggest—I agree—that special needs in particular need that extra financial support, why didn't it feature so much in the report?

Edward Timpson: If you go back to the terms of reference, it is quite specific what I was being asked to do. There were some elements of the report that extended beyond the terms of reference, which was one of the reasons that it took longer than originally envisaged. I acknowledge, as you have just read out, the need to look at where the money is in the system.

Some of the recommendations, such as the high needs budget, are not just about saying that there is a sufficiency issue, but also asking where is the money around exclusions being used. Is it being used as effectively as it could? What I didn't find were areas where, for instance, the per-pupil funding was lower than an equivalent local authority and that directly affected the level of exclusions.

One area where there was clearly room for a rethink is the fact that, once you exclude a child, the costs of that comparative to work that could have been done earlier to prevent the need to exclude in the first place would potentially be a much better use of what are very valuable resources.

That is why there are recommendations around improving alternative provision, which include a call for more capital funding into the facilities, and also how the expertise of an alternative provision can be brought closer into mainstream school, and that schools themselves control more of the funding around the commissioning of AP, to build that relationship between the two.

I wasn't in a position to say, "You need to put £X more into the school system to improve the response to the use of exclusion." It is not, as I say, as direct a relationship as that would suggest, as the policy, place and practice that I touched on before.



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The demands on schools, as we know, and the funding available to them are a source of constant consideration. What the review has tried to do is build on what we know works well that provides the best value for money and is most likely to break the cycle that often helps ratchet up the need, and therefore the cost, of the current exclusion process, in some parts of the country.

Q2489 Ben Bradley: I am putting words in colleagues' mouths but I think we probably all agree, as we have discussed in this Committee before, on that need to frontload the funding into earlier interventions and support. I was looking through the paperwork for the figures, which I have seen in there somewhere, that are in the region of a quarter of a million pounds for every excluded child, which is far more than the cost of that intervention, so that is very welcome.

From that perspective, what conversations have you had with the Department about the impact of its overall funding? Exactly as you have just said, how much have you been able to influence through the report or those conversations where that money actually goes?

Edward Timpson: If you read the Government response, you will see the commitment around alternative provision and the capital required to improve the facilities within that. There is the commitment to the practice improvement fund, which as I said needs to be of sufficient reach and longevity to achieve the various objectives that were set out within it, and the areas of practice that were particularly identified through the review process that needed the greatest improvement would probably have the greatest impact.

That is looking, for instance, in school exclusion units at transition points, the relationships and working with parents and carers. Those, as we know from the fieldwork carried out, were most likely to help shift the dial for the children who were most at risk of exclusion.

Q2490 Ben Bradley: You mentioned the practice improvement fund. Could you explain that to me a little bit? I read it as being about commissioning and delivery of good practice. You described it there a little bit more as a best-practice sharing scheme. One of the things that has frustrated me since I have been on this Committee and meeting all the various chairs of boards and quangos and all the other things that we commission is how much of that funding is spent in extra pots and extra things around the place when, actually, a lot of the time, going through the list of proposals—things like nurture groups and inclusion units and whatever—I feel that putting that funding into core schools budgets to enable them to deliver what works for them flexibly might be a better route. Can you explain the premise of the practitioner improvement fund a little bit more?

Edward Timpson: Just as a starter into that, the point I made about devolving funding around alternative provision to schools is exactly around the same principle that you have just articulated in that, for me, I would rather see it be a bottom-up rather than top-down approach. The review also found that that goes back to how you formulate a practice



improvement fund that is built around what we know works. Again, this would be for the Government to decide. Central to that is, rather than schools doing it individually, schools taking a sense of collective responsibility across their area where there may not be those relationships embedded as well as they could have been in the past, and using that collective knowledge to work out—if we were to look at, for instance, transition from primary to secondary—“Who is doing it in our area? What is the impact that that is having? Is that something that we can use the fund to try and put training into other schools, or to build some summer programmes between schools?” Rather than it happening just within the island of the school, it starts to spread the tentacles of the good practice. That is where the local forum idea comes from within the review, and actually bringing schools together to come up with the solutions—I am in no doubt that they are there, and the fund is really just trying to draw those out and allow others to learn from the best.

Q2491 James Frith: Good morning, Mr Timpson. First of all, I thank you for a brilliant piece of work. I think the report itself is sincere, extensive and exact and I think it is a mark of the work and the commitment that you have given to it, not just in the report but in your time before as a Minister. I would like just to focus on the principle and practice. It is easy for a Government to adopt in principle but a lot harder to see actions in practice. From your position what would you determine to be the easiest to adopt in practice, and then the hardest, or perhaps even the most important, if you were to scale your recommendations accordingly on priority?

Edward Timpson: Obviously, I love all 30 recommendations. It is like choosing between my four children. I can't say one is better than the other, but in terms of prioritising, one of the things I was clear about when I was doing this report was that it had to be rooted in reality and pragmatism. I have seen well-intentioned reports in the past where it is high on moral tone but low on actual delivery and the likelihood that anything will happen off the back of that. That was always playing out as I was devising these recommendations.

For instance, around 50,000 children are in alternative provision. Ostensibly, they—not all of them—have been through some form of exclusion, either through the official channels or through informal or managed moves or off-site directions, or other routes to alternative provision. It is this group of children who, not just over the last three years but for many years before, have been the ones who have had the worst outcomes, and who have struggled to make a positive impact on their own lives let alone on society more generally.

For me, it is about turning around the role of AP. That it is the gold standard within our education system and it works much more closely with mainstream. If we can turn them into facilities that actually you would want—you would pay for your children to go there—and they then become an agent of change for children, rather than a place where they end up when things have gone wrong, then I think you can help resolve a lot of

the issues and the fallout from where things haven't gone right for them within mainstream schools.

Regarding those recommendations about alternative provision, the fact is that the Government have already started that work, and I think I say in the report that they now need to be bolder about where that work goes. For me, that is probably the area that I would want to see being pushed as hard as possible, while recognising that it is not only the Department for Education but other Government Departments—whether that is the Home Office, local government, the Ministry of Justice or elsewhere—that this work benefits. I believe that those recommendations about AP are pivotal to what the review is trying to achieve.

As for the hardest challenge, obviously it is always around culture: how do you change attitudes, mindsets and people's buy-in, as in, "What's in it for me? I don't really get this. What's wrong with what we're doing already?" That change will only come through the cumulative effect of all the recommendations, which is why it is hard to differentiate them.

However, if any of the recommendations are going to help that shift in behaviour, it will be the one about accountability. If it was straightforward to do, it would probably have been done already. Nevertheless, I think that just the knowledge it is there will give a strong push in the system towards recognising that there are ways of dealing with these children that may well lead to exclusion, but that does not mean exclusion from education.

James Frith: Quite right.

Q2492 **Chair:** Sorry, James. In your report, you mentioned racial disparity in exclusions, and some people have criticised your report because of the fact that you mention it but do not make any specific recommendations about it. Is that something you would like to pursue further, or do you think there should be a separate inquiry on that issue?

Edward Timpson: I have addressed it in the review. We did a lot of—

Q2493 **Chair:** But you didn't make any specific recommendations on it.

Edward Timpson: Well, I did actually—the extension of the diversity hubs and the tracking of all pupils, particularly around their characteristics, so that where a local area sees a developing trend in a particular group of children from a particular ethnic background, it is much more alive to it. Part of this is working with the community and understanding why some of the exclusions are happening.

In the practice improvement fund, there is also information about how you improve the inclusivity of those children who are from ethnic groups that are more likely to be excluded, because you will see within the regression analysis we did that it is less for some groups and more for others. For instance, if you are Bangladeshi, you are less likely to be excluded against the average, whereas if you are black Caribbean you are more likely to be excluded against the average. There are recommendations on that.



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My other answer to that question, and going back to the question from James, is that the totality of the recommendations should benefit all children because this is about changing the mindset and approach towards the issue of behaviour, and the impact that it has on an individual child as well as the impact it has on the whole school—we have to keep recognising that. We must have safe environments in which all children can learn without disruption. However, there are also the implications for that child. Whatever background they are from, it should not be a route to failure.

Q2494 Chair: You do not think that we need a separate inquiry into racial disparity in school exclusions?

Edward Timpson: I was asked to address it in my review and I have done what I think is the right piece of work. I have made some recommendations, which I believe will help with that issue. However, if others feel that there is more that needs to be addressed, then I am sure they will pursue it.

Q2495 James Frith: Is it fair to say, Edward, that the original premise of this report was based on the quite well-meaning instinct of a new Prime Minister around the racial disparity audit? Also, is it fair to say that the review was guilty of mission creep by having a lot of other things put into it and referred to? Was it your experience in writing the review that it suddenly became a lot broader around exclusions, particularly with the concentration on SEND and the off-rolling alternative provision? I ask that question because it strikes me that this review was born of the racial disparity audit commitment but it became something else over time.

Edward Timpson: I followed the terms of reference set out in the review. I think there was an inevitability that, once you start talking about school exclusions, whatever angle you are approaching it from, these issues would come to the fore. As we went through the review, there were some issues that arose that I simply could not ignore—for instance, off-rolling and some of the work on alternative provision that I have spoken about.

Yes, that was the inception of the review. The terms of reference took in a wider look at different characteristics and how they played out within the exclusions process, but this was also too good an opportunity to miss to try to look at this across the piece and ensure that we were capturing all children, which would then benefit each child who may, in the current system, be falling short of their potential.

Q2496 James Frith: The Act in 2014, in my interpretation, gave the children with special educational needs access to mainstream education, or the premise that they would be kept within mainstream education wherever possible, but that has not been widely embraced by the school system. Local authorities, through the circumstances they are in, are duty bound but hand-tied in terms of capacity and resources. If you revisited that—clearly, you were involved in what I would call the well-meaning intent of the legislation that has then not been completed and finished by this Government in implementation—what would you do differently to ensure



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that we were not in a state where EHCP numbers are on the up and parents are increasingly attracted toward EHCPs because of a failure in SEND provision in schools?

Edward Timpson: You need to improve the SEND offer in mainstream schools. That may seem quite simple, but if you are going to try to improve diagnosis and the ability to keep children in mainstream school where possible, that is where you have to concentrate your efforts. In the same breath, as I said before, there is the growing demand on the system. We can debate the different reasons for that: is it because we are getting better at identifying? Is it because schools are finding it harder and harder to cope and therefore are moving toward a statutory process? There is a lot more pressure on special schools and places.

There needs to be a more intensive focus on how we build the capacity within schools, which often lack confidence, particularly on SEMH. Going back to exclusion, that is the category that children are, I think, about 3.8 times more likely to be excluded through. There is still a debate in the system about whether that is down to behaviour or to an underlying condition, and the over-diagnosis. You can get into a tautological process if you are not careful. Be that as it may, what still lies at the heart of it is understanding what lies behind what is happening, and the best time to do that is early and in main school.

Q2497 **James Frith:** On the diagnosis point, we have taken evidence in this inquiry and a number of local authorities have given figures that confirm that 20% of those who applied for EHCP were declined at application stage. My interpretation of the Act is that that is an unlawful act. Is that how you would interpret it?

Edward Timpson: I would need to know what the circumstances are.

Q2498 **James Frith:** But does the Act not give these entitlements to apply for EHCP that say that at application stage, you will be assessed? The difference of course is in the conclusion of the assessment; but arriving at reception for triage or treatment, you don't get turned away, you are assessed and either turned away or treated. We have seen really large local authorities come to us and say quite honestly and openly, "We're turning 20% of ours away" or discouraging or turning away 20% of those who apply. In my interpretation of the good intention of the Act, that is unlawful, isn't it?

Edward Timpson: The whole intention of the Act was to try and get away from this horse-trading around what should or shouldn't happen; to have a graduated approach at the earliest possible stage, where you start to work with a family, identify what the issues are and think about what sort of support may need to be put into place—is there a diagnosis that needs to be made? To bring health in, to help co-produce any sort of report which would help define that, and follow that up with an assessment, if necessary, around any statutory plan that is needed. Parents don't want those battles.

James Frith: No, quite.



Edward Timpson: Similarly, local authorities want to be able to offer what the legislation requires. I don't know exactly what the circumstances are in your own local area, but there things that are not working as well as they should. I try to see the good in everybody, and I think people are just struggling. For me, that is where that additional support will go furthest, in making sure that, in those early stages of engagement between parents, schools and local authorities, it gets off on the right footing, where they are trying to find solutions, rather than find reasons not to do things or to find problems. It won't be right in every case, and people will make judgments that people will want to question. That is why you have to have an appeals process. For me, the most central aspect of making a good system is one where, right from the outset, people are thinking, "What are we trying to achieve here? Where is this going?"—rather than just trying to manage it.

I completely get the pressures on local authorities. They are trying to retain staff, trying to keep the expertise available to them. There is a lot of specialism around special educational needs, as the name would suggest, and they do not always have that at their fingertips. What we don't want is some of those battles from the past just being refought.

Q2499 **James Frith:** On a technical point around schools, you are calling the Government to make schools accountable for pupils they exclude. In your view, what should that system look like?

Edward Timpson: I am sure you will be aware that the Government are consulting on it in the autumn. They have made that commitment. As I alluded to earlier, if this was straightforward it would probably have been done already. It was in the 2016 White Paper, "Educational excellence everywhere". Some pilots were done from 2010 onwards looking at that, which were really positive about the impact on schools and the responsibility that they took on for children who had been excluded from their school. Clearly, there has to be a baseline around educational outcomes. It would be strange if there was not part of that within the accountability measure. There is then a question about how long that commitment lasts. Is it for the period that they are out of mainstream school before they come back in? That makes sense, but you probably then want a period after that as well. I am also interested in the idea that if you take a child on the roll who has come from alternative provision or been excluded from another mainstream school, should there be some mirroring arrangement that would help you take on that responsibility?

The whole point of having a consultation is that it has to be schools, alternative providers, local authorities, who need to input their views on this. For my part—I know we have tried this before through contextual value added—but particularly for those children whose progress we know is not always wholly measurable through academic performance, I would be interested in ways of trying to understand what progression a school has managed to engender during a period that they have been outside of mainstream. Attendance would be an obvious one. That is an area where it would be good to see some reflection of that softer side of progression,

which is actually just as valuable to whether they are going to go on a different path in their life once they eventually leave education.

Q2500 Chair: Would you like to see a similar sort of incentivisation for schools to take back, or to take in, otherwise off-rolled pupils as well?

Edward Timpson: Yes. I think this is about making sure that there are not unintended consequences, and we address that in the review. One of them is to make sure there is something in it for schools.

First of all, it should be their sense that "Actually, I want to do best by this child." I saw some amazing schools where that is their philosophy, and that is often despite the current accountability measures rather than because of them. We want to be able to encourage that, but that is the whole idea of bringing the school system together and bringing alternative provision and mainstream schools into a closer relationship, so they get that shared sense of what is possible rather than a child just being passed around the system.

Q2501 Chair: It would be lovely if every school in this system had an altruistic attitude towards all of their children, rather than thinking about the interests of the institution as a school.

Edward Timpson: It's tough, right? Running a school is hard, and there are lots of competing interests. Parents are more demanding than they have been, rightly so; they are trying to maintain their staff; and the pastoral side is becoming increasingly relevant in dealing with a lot of the issues that we are talking about. Again, I saw some excellent examples of that playing out extremely well in schools that have placed a lot of value on that, helping improve what happens in the classroom and the ability of all children to learn, but it is not easy. What the review has demonstrated is that it is possible, and not just as an exception to the rule but as the rule.

Q2502 Emma Hardy: Before I move on to the questions I was going to ask, I am quite excited by the fact that you have talked about measuring the softer side of progression, because it is something I feel quite passionately about. Having been an infant teacher, you know that not everything is about academic progress: sometimes it is the child who is a selective mute who then chooses one day to join in the classroom discussion, or the child who can never share or line up next to the other children without lashing out who suddenly is able to do that.

Those are huge milestones, but there is no way of recording them on the school's current accountability system. It is not credited to the school, or the intensive work that has gone into making a child who felt excluded from the whole of the class part of the class community, or a child who used to have anger problems able sometimes to just hold it back instead of lashing out and hurting others. If you share this—if you see it as as important as I do—do you not think that we should also be looking at the accountability measures that we have in school, and asking why, if these are the things that matter to us as a society, they are not the things that we judge?



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Edward Timpson: I think the new Ofsted framework is moving in that direction; it is looking at the progress of every child and the quality of the education, and that is an indicator of the issue that you are clearly passionate about. It provides a greater prospect that, for any litmus test done on a school, that will provide a bit more of the colour that comes out as to how we judge the school.

From my point of view, I would be surprised if the consultation undertaken by the Government into what this accountability would look like is not part of what people will want to propose to try to understand better what impact a school has had on a child. As I said, we know that 78% of them have a special education need or have a free school meal, as well as some of the other characteristics that were pulled out from the review.

I think there is some wind in those sails, but it is really important that it is done in a way that has credibility right across the system, because some will be very sceptical about that. There are potentially some unintended consequences attached to it, which in the past have played out. In terms of the principle, I have articulated my view and I am sure it is shared not just by you and me but by others. If it is going to materialise into something that can cement itself in the accountability system, it has to be measurable in a way that every school feels confident that it will make them do more of the right thing, and not just be some sort of window dressing.

Q2503 **Emma Hardy:** I am going to push you a bit further on that. I am sure that you acknowledge that the current accountability system has unintended negative consequences, as the children we are talking about are unable to demonstrate the social and emotional progress that so many of them have made. Schools do incredible work with those children, but if they do not match it with the academic grades, they will be deemed as failures.

Do you not feel that when the Government draw up their league tables, they need quite urgently to look at what they are counting as the measures of success? Ofsted is doing what it does, but I am talking about the Department for Education and the data it collects. Perhaps one of the things it could look at is the original stepping stones from the foundation profile, which included steps towards sharing, working together and collaboration.

Edward Timpson: I am concerned about the children who are excluded from school.

Emma Hardy: Many of those children will be.

Edward Timpson: And the accountability of schools for those children who, for whatever reason, have been excluded. If you want to extrapolate that for the whole school population, that is another question and another piece of work. Perhaps I am more forthright in my view of how we make sure that schools that exclude are properly held to account and take responsibility because children who are excluded are least likely to be able to demonstrate most of their progress through a simple academic

achievement measure, but that still has to form part of any accountability system.

Q2504 **Emma Hardy:** My opinion is that the weighting on that is wrong, but I will park that for the moment. I support your idea of pupils having a right to return once they have decided to home educate, and that they should be able to have that right to return. I would like you to elaborate a bit on how you think that could work.

Edward Timpson: This came out of a lot of the evidence that we gathered through the call for evidence and a lot of the visits that we did and direct conversations that we had with parents, teachers and others in the education system. It has also been played out more widely around the issue of home education and the concern that there are more children being moved into home education not necessarily always for the right reasons.

We saw and heard credible evidence throughout the review of instances where parents were actively encouraged to take them home and teach them there rather than have their child excluded, with letters setting that out. I think the Committee may have seen that. That opened up concern about how much parents understood what they were taking on and what they could have done to find a different solution. Rather than it being a dramatic shift from in school to out of school, and that being it—you are off the roll and that is the end of the relationship with the school—we need to provide an opportunity for them to see whether it works.

A lot of people now have both parents working. Childcare can be expensive. They also need to have the capacity themselves, depending on the age of the child—most children who are excluded are going through GCSEs—to provide that wholesale tuition. I have a child going through GCSEs at the moment. It is hard work, and mine is at school. As a parent, it is quite a responsibility. A parent should have an opportunity to reflect on that, and the opportunity to say, “Actually, I don’t think this is going to work, and we would like our child to go back to school.” They would need to come up with an arrangement to do that. It also provides the local authority with an opportunity to make some reasonable inquiries about how that educational set-up is. One thing that we cannot do without is that equal opportunity to education.

There is also the issue of what the alternatives are. Okay, maybe the child can’t go back to the same school they were at before, but rather than being educated at home, is there another school that would be better suited to them? Is this a child who we maybe need to gradually move back into education in a different setting? The idea of the right to return is to provide some of that breathing space to think about these issues before making it a permanent situation, but also to elevate it so that there is more transparency around what is happening.

This is not, as some people have interpreted it, about a child who has been excluded and a parent being able to say they have a right to get them back in the school. This is a case where an agreement has been



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created but subsequently the parents have thought, "This is not going to work"—not necessarily just for them, but for the child.

Q2505 **Chair:** To follow up on that, we had the Children's Commissioner here a couple of weeks ago. She threw a number out there. She thought that about 80% of youngsters who were being home educated, having been off-rolled, weren't getting any meaningful education at all.

Edward Timpson: I don't know. That is not something that I looked at. The whole point of this recommendation is to recognise that there is a risk that children who have been moved into home education, in the circumstance that I have described, may not be set up to get the good-quality education that they need.

Q2506 **Chair:** I just need to clarify, because we have been in this position before. There are many parents out there who electively home educate their children and are entirely capable of doing so. We are not disparaging them. This is in the circumstances where children have been off-rolled by schools; I think the Children's Commissioner was saying that about 80% of youngsters weren't receiving any effective education whatsoever.

Edward Timpson: As I say, I can't qualify that. I think the recommendation that I have made does help the parents as much as it helps the school, but most of all it helps the child.

Q2507 **Emma Hardy:** Last one. You warned that tackling off-rolling could lead to an increase in formal exclusions. What do you think the Government need to do to avoid that? How confident are you that the Department is taking that seriously?

Edward Timpson: I don't think it is necessarily to avoid it. I think it is just a logical conclusion from the fact that, if you currently have children whose school is struggling to cope with their behaviour and they may have already had a number of fixed-period exclusions, and they end up being off-rolled, which we know is not legal, it is essentially bypassing the formal process for exclusion. If we are to seriously tackle off-rolling, there has been a clear message coming out, whether that is from the Department for Education or Ofsted. Now action is following—a number of Ofsted inspections have uncovered it, which has consequences for the schools in question, but you have to remember that only a very, very small number have gone through that. It is likely that, if we formalise those cases where currently there is off-rolling, hopefully most of those will not end up being exclusions because of the recognition that the school should be putting in other interventions to prevent the need its use, but logically we cannot remove the possibility that by putting all off-rolling above the table, that may lead—in the short term, at least—to an increase in formal exclusions.

I do not have a problem with that if they are being done for the right reasons. I would rather that there is a formal process. Remember, if there is off-rolling, they do not have a chance to appeal and they lose all those rights. Whereas if there is a formal process, parents can make their case. It also means that, when it comes to the scrutiny of a school, whether by



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Ofsted or through data collected by the Department, it will be much clearer what is going on. Ultimately, for me it means that there is a better understanding within that school and across that local area of what is happening to children. Because there are still too many children who, particularly between years 10 and 11, go off the roll and no one knows where they are.

Q2508 Chair: Thank you very much. How much of the exclusions problem is to do with lack of capacity within schools to do effective early intervention as well as lack of capacity in the alternative provision system to help and assist in the whole process?

Edward Timpson: It is definitely a factor. Again, we saw a whole spectrum of approaches by schools about how to build up their capacity, knowledge and ability to respond to issues around behaviour, whether that was in-school units, working with parents more directly, involving them in the work they are doing with children, some of the support they bring into the school, having a multidisciplinary team, or greater emphasis on the pastoral side. However, of course, all of that is about the prioritisation of the resources they have and some schools obviously struggle in that regard.

There is also, in some areas, an under-utilisation of alternative provision in helping support mainstream schools. For example, we went to what I think is called an education centre in Watford, where they work directly with secondary schools and primary schools in the area. They bring children who are finding it difficult in a mainstream school to their centre to provide the more tailored support that they need to get back on track. They also work directly in mainstream schools and put their staff in there to help work alongside school staff where there are issues emerging. I think there is greater capacity for those types of arrangements to grow within the school system. It has tended to be schools over here and AP over there, but where it works well AP is pretty much in the centre, with schools working around it and with it, seeing it not as a last resort for when things have gone wrong. In some cases, it should be a first resort. If things are starting to emerge, they should think, "Let's talk to our local alternative provision provider and see whether they have some solutions that we don't have."

Q2509 Chair: There is obviously a lack of capacity within alternative provision—we find that all over the country. Are you disappointed that the Government have not committed to extra capital AP funding or any sort of resources to invest in practice improvement?

Edward Timpson: I am working on the basis that they have committed to resources, because they have accepted my recommendations.

Q2510 Chair: The 2014 Act had a whole range of good intentions, but in the five years since then, those intentions have not been matched by the resourcing needed to put them into practice. I wonder whether there is an analogy with your recommendations.



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Edward Timpson: Obviously I hope not. The work I have done directly with the Secretary of State and with Ministers has been about how we turn this into something meaningful. I go back to the earlier question about which of the recommendations will have the greatest impact in terms of priority. If alternative provision can become a catalyst for overall school improvement around difficult behaviour and the use or otherwise of exclusion, that will be an investment more than worth making, both in terms of capital and because AP struggles with recruitment of staff and with people's perception of its status, as I talk about in the review.

Yes, there is work to be done and the Government need to commit to it, which includes those funding commitments, but that work has already started. It is not as if the Government are saying, "We'll get back to you in a couple of years' time."

Q2511 **Chair:** With that in mind, are the Government—or are you—thinking about revisiting your review in two years' time, say, to see how it is getting on?

Edward Timpson: In his letter to thank me profusely for my review, the Secretary of State said that there would be a review of progress a year on and regularly after that. I am sure that this Committee will want to hold them to that.

James Frith: On the model of schools, let us take a typical number of schools, with secondary schools particularly in mind. Do you think there should be increasing amounts of discrete alternative provision in all mainstream schools, or should some schools be identified as best suited, strongest and most able to take on mainstream school alternative provision?

At the heart of it, there is a tension around stigma, but also of resources. There were schools at the headteachers' roundtable in my constituency last week that were ready to take on some specialist provision, get additional funding for it and focus on it—and they were by no means up against it in terms of academic performance either. I guess the question is whether we need universality, or whether we need to spot specialisms within mainstream schools.

Edward Timpson: I think there is room for both. In the same way that we have special schools, there will always be a need in very specialised cases for alternative provision that offers what mainstream provision cannot. I do think there is more room and—this is something we picked up during the review—a much greater appetite in mainstream schools to have their own on-site AP-type provision than had been assumed. I know there are some bids for schools to help to bring that about in terms of the capital required.

I would want a sort of mixed economy where, rather than having a binary system of mainstream over here and AP over there, we had much more integration. That may mean sharing sites or having more AP-style provision available within mainstream, but in terms of the new commissioning arrangements, it may also mean schools starting to come



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together and build up their own AP provision that meets the identified needs of their local population. That is what is behind this principle of having complete data on the tracking of children of school age in your area, so you can work out, across the piece, what it is that we need. We see this with children in care and understanding the need for residential provision, and the specialism within that. We are not great at coming together and looking at joint commissioning arrangements that reflect what we need within our system to meet the different demands from the general to the special, because we have parcelled our country up into lots of little parts.

Q2512 Mr Wragg: Good morning Edward. It's good to see you. I just want to touch on the issue of the transition from primary school to secondary school, looking at one of the recommendations in particular. Just as a broad question, how well do you think that transition is generally managed?

Edward Timpson: I think it is very mixed. Again, I think I cite examples in the review where we saw good practice or, at least, strenuous efforts to try and address the issue. Again, some of it is in some ways, in terms of the practice, exactly what you would expect to see—year 5s and year 6s spending a week in the secondary school that they are going to to be acclimatised to understand the different environment. It is a big change from a small, nurturing primary school to what can be a very large, quite imposing secondary school, where you are moving from room to room throughout the day and you have got people who effectively are adults, or appear like adults, at the top end of the school. For those children who, again, the review was particularly interested in, they find transition harder than any. If you are a child on the autistic spectrum, the environment you are in is very important and, if you then move somewhere where you lose that, the disorientation can be quite spectacular, and not in a good way. Lots of schools are trying hard but, again, this is another area where more communication between schools about building programmes within their area will help.

Q2513 Mr Wragg: On the environmental differences between a secondary school and a primary school, can measures be taken to mitigate that change for particular children or do you think there is a risk that some children are being set up to fail within that system?

Edward Timpson: I think there are different ways to mitigate that risk. It is very stark. On page 71 of my review, a graph shows the uplift in exclusions from year 6. It just keeps climbing up until year 10 and then just at the end, it just slightly drops away once the exams are over. We know that that is a crucial moment in a child's education and we need to make sure that, whatever that transition is, it is set up in a way that is likely to see them succeed rather than fail, as you say.

For me, at the heart of it is relationships and giving pupils a chance to build a relationship with the school that they are going to in advance. One school leader we spoke to said they started it in year 2—the idea and the introduction. I don't think you can completely mitigate the risk but there



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are a lot more measures. That is why it is part of the practice improvement fund to help put it in place—not just at that transition but also the transition into primary. In the last three years, we have seen a doubling of the number of five-year-olds being excluded, albeit from a very low base. That is another transition point we need to think about along with the transition into post-16 education.

Mr Wragg: On the practice improvement fund you mentioned and a number of recommendations contained within the review that the fund could cover, you mention internal inclusion units and also the proactive use of AP as an early intervention. From your experience and the evidence that you have gathered, is one better than the other? They cannot be as complementary because they are the opposite, aren't they?

Edward Timpson: Well, it goes to what works in a school. What is right for one school will not necessarily be right for another. When we saw examples of each case, it made a positive difference to the trajectory that a child went on both from what they were on before and what happened afterward, so it is not a menu of which is the best choice. There are options available to schools, which at their heart have the same principle, which is working, intervening and supporting earlier so that the more drastic and more expensive provision whose outcomes do not necessarily accord with that investment are not required on such a regular basis.

Q2514 **Mr Wragg:** Finally, you mentioned people's perceptions of alternative provision. Do you think that that problem leads to a higher rate of permanent exclusion than would be otherwise the case if it was embraced properly as a positive experience? Notwithstanding all of the issues to do with capacity, do you think that, if the perception of AP was improved, the rate of exclusion would decline?

Edward Timpson: In terms of the direct causation, it is hard to make a definitive statement, but there is no doubt in my mind that the repositioning of alternative provision is seen as something different that works directly with mainstream schools and gets more involved earlier in a child's education, and is also seen as a level of specialist and professional support that can enhance the ability of a mainstream school as well as the alternative provision setting to respond more effectively to whatever issues arise in a child's life. That is why it is a recommendation in the review. There are some parallels with how we view special schools. People think that that is where they are needed. It is a place that is anything other than geared up specifically for those children to do better, and that is what AP should be, and is in many cases, but the perception is still very much as it was described to me by someone in the review as the "underbelly" of our education system.

Lucy Allan: Edward, it is a pleasure to be able to pay tribute to you in person for all the work that you have done, including from when you were an MP and particularly a Children's Minister. I always pay tribute to you in *Hansard*, so it is nice to have you here in person.

Edward Timpson: That is very kind. Thank you.



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Q2515 Lucy Allan: I want to extend a little further the points made by William on transition and look at post-16 transition. We heard during evidence given to our inquiry that this was incredibly difficult for young people to do. The usually move into an FE environment that would be fairly huge relative to where they had been previously, and also with having potentially underachieved at GCSE because of some of the challenges they might have faced during their journey. All of this is about enabling the most disadvantaged young people to achieve their full potential. What can we do differently to enable those young people transitioning from alternative provision into FE to maximise their potential? At the moment, from what we have heard, that is not happening. They drop out and do not succeed in that transition.

Edward Timpson: I think the traditional model of FE can support some of those children, but there is still a paucity of some of the more refined and specialised provision for those who are transitioning out of school into post-16 when they have been in alternative provision. When I was Children's Minister, I went to one or two places that were essentially a through school. That is not right for every child, but they work particularly hard on the 16-to-19 age group in the school I visited, and that provided some of them with continuity of support—the relationships that I spoke about earlier. There is recognition in Government that is an underdeveloped area. A number of years ago, the requirement for all children to remain in some form of education or training up to the age of 18 was introduced. It has shone the light a lot more on what that offer is, both generally and for the children we are talking about. We know that is another vulnerable point in their lives, and where the crossroads could go either way. There is definitely scope for more to be done post-16 to address that ending of AP or that type of environment too early, when even a couple more years would help ensure that the work that has been done will continue. Three of the projects from the alternative provision innovation fund that the Government set up are in this space, which we have not seen before. For me, that shows acceptance of the need to develop more of what is required. Having said that, a greater understanding of that need would be a helpful next step off the back of my review.

Q2516 Lucy Allan: What about imposing a duty on local authorities to continue AP beyond 16?

Edward Timpson: From memory, they already have a duty to continue the provision of access to education and training, which is not specific to AP.

Q2517 Lucy Allan: I think what they have said is that there is a very varied landscape, and we therefore do not need to have a specific alternative provision for young people in that age group, because there is so much else on offer. From what you have been saying, there is growing awareness that there is a need for something. I was just wondering whether it is something that we would need to impose a duty on local authorities to deliver.



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Edward Timpson: I would want to know more about what local authorities think they are providing, and about what we can scope out and identify as the need. The next step would be—be it through the innovation fund or through some of the recommendations in the review—to bring the local education community much closer together and try to work out and track who our pupils are, what their needs are and where their destinations are. Have we got a handle on that? Is it the right mix, which includes alternative post-16 provision as much as pre-16?

Lucy Allan: Thank you very much.

Q2518 Chair: You have mentioned what is happening in localities quite a lot throughout your evidence this morning. I had a meeting with my local authority education service first thing yesterday morning. The landscape outside the local authority has changed quite dramatically in the last eight or nine years, with the rise of academies, free schools and so on. In many cases, the local authority is still trying to pull things together, particularly when it comes to vulnerable children who are being excluded or off-rolled. Local authorities have lost a huge amount of capacity to deliver on that. Is there something that needs to be done urgently?

Edward Timpson: One of the things that became apparent—it is one of those aspects of the review that I was pretty sure I knew the answer to, but I needed to get it clarified—is that changes in the education landscape left local authorities with some uncertainty about their role. As you correctly identified, the commonality that still exists is around disadvantaged children, vulnerable children, special educational needs children, children in care and children on the edge of care. We know that group is more likely to be involved in the exclusions process than any other children are. For me, the local authority were the obvious candidate to try to pull that together and have the overview—being able to know where pupils are in their area—and support schools where they can. It is not asking them to do any more than they are doing, but I think it provides some clarity for them, and also for schools, as to what they are there for. That may mean that, with the greater sense of purpose, they are in a better position to explain, “This is what we need to do it.” Some areas are looking at whether they do that on their own or in a more regional capacity, but the cost implications, if it is done well—they may find that what they have provides the platform to do this, but in time, the support that they are able to offer schools is the area where they may need extra support.

Q2519 Ben Bradley: I am very lucky in my part of the world, as Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, to have some very good post-16 AP. I am thinking of Portland College specialist SEND provision and the Independent Training College; there is more employability for those young people who did not get the qualifications at 16. But there is a massive lack of capacity, which has been touched on, and a real variety, in terms of cost, between public and private providers and all of that. I wonder what, in your experience, that looks like across the country. Is there a real variety? As we have seen in so many areas, across different inquiries, different local authorities have made very different decisions and priorities in this kind



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of area. Is there any continuity of post-16 AP or that kind of provision, or is it massively varied?

Edward Timpson: It is very varied. Not all of that is at the behest of the local authority. Sometimes it is about how the school system has shifted and where the demand is. You mentioned Mansfield; it sounds like there is quite a lot of activity in that area. But in others it is less prominent, and in some areas there is an issue about them being able to provide, first of all, the capacity that the population needs, but also the range of provision. I think the co-ordination of that is another area where schools and colleges—I know they try hard, but they could learn a lot more from each other about what the right make-up is. Often, there is a fall-back on the traditional models. I think there is scope for a lot more innovation. The T-level is coming in soon; I think that is going to provide a vehicle for our rethinking some of that—the way we pull all that provision together—while recognising that for some children, even that is not the route that they are going to be able to go down. If we are going to insist, as we rightly do, that they stay in education and training, the work that is being done in AP for the groups of children we are talking about is—well, a lot of that is untapped and, post 16, some of that experience and knowledge could, I think, shift up so that some of the decisions about what local provision is are much cuter about what is needed.

Q2520 **Ben Bradley:** There is certainly a lot going on locally, and it is much needed, given that we have massively high, comparatively, incidences of SEND and all the behavioural issues and social challenges that we have been discussing all the way through. It makes me wonder. There are those places—this is still true in Mansfield, because we do not have the capacity within those systems to deal with everybody—where FE colleges, mainstream colleges, are asked more and more to find support from their existing budgets, whether it is for pupils with SEN—obviously, if they go over 18, that is not funded—or others, for Government EHC plans. There are also educational behavioural challenges and disadvantage, so you see SEN funding or AP support within a college that comes from a disadvantage fund or that takes away from pupils trying to achieve basic educational standards, for example. We have not specifically provided for that. Do you think there needs to be, as Lucy touched on, a statutory duty for an authority that says, “You must provide x”, or do we need another way of providing that support within colleges? One way or another, it seems as though there is an obvious gap.

Edward Timpson: At the moment, the Government have a consultation out on the way that SEN and AP are funded, which does not look specifically at the overall amount—that is for the spending review, from what I can ascertain. It does, however, start to open up a lot of the questions that you have just raised around how we are pulling this funding together so that we are creating the right mix of opportunities in that post-16 world.

A little bit like the question around whether we should have AP units on site in mainstream schools or whether we should have inclusion units, it is the same for FE. There is scope for more specialism integrated within FE,



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but I think there will always be a need for something that sits outside of that, which FE may want to look at, as some do, commissioning themselves. Again, it is about their capacity to do that. I do not think there is a universality to it.

Going back to being pragmatic about these things, would a duty actually make things better? For me, there is an initial need to establish whether FE is going to be able to provide a greater variety of targeted support within its own institutions or through commissioning it elsewhere, and whether that is something that can happen, as I have suggested in the review, with the type of support that is suggested, or whether there needs to be a greater look at the accountability that sits behind that.

Q2521 Chair: Throughout your evidence this morning, Edward, you have suggested that resources are in the pipeline. That was not explicit in the Government's response—the same-day service response—to your inquiry. Do you know something that we do not in terms of where the Government are coming from in terms of funding?

Edward Timpson: Sadly, I do not have any cast-iron guarantees. We are all waiting to see what happens over the next few months, in any event. What I do know, however, is that they are not—these are people I know—empty promises. For me, when we can eventually concentrate more rigorously on the domestic agenda, I would suggest that this is an area that is ripe for addressing some of the fractures that we have in our society and our ability to respond to the most pressing issues, which include those we are leaving behind while many of us continue to move forward.

Q2522 Chair: If you could put an earworm into the head of the two candidates to become Prime Minister to make sure that they did one thing, what would it be?

Edward Timpson: Implement my review in full. Recognise what it is that makes a difference. Sometimes, it is funding. Other times, it is actually what you say and what you portray as being at the heart of a fair and just society. At the root of that is always education. Successive Governments have recognised that—the Labour Government and the coalition Government—so it is not a new phenomenon. There is lots to be proud of in the raising of educational standards. The mission that I will always have, and that I hope will be shared by whoever is leading the country in the next few months, is that we do not ever leave anyone behind, particularly when their background means that, unless we help them, they will be defined by failure rather than success.

Chair: Thank you very much. From a personal perspective, I thank you for your review and for the work that you did, and I particularly thank you for coming to give evidence to us this morning.