# Supporting Vulnerable Learners

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***Society should ensure that all children and young people receive the support they need in order to make a fulfilling transition to adulthood"***

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# 1. Three levels of support for vulnerable/pushed out learners

Bringing 'pushed out' learners into the main-stream structure

Innovating within the mainstream structure

Working outside of the mainstream structure

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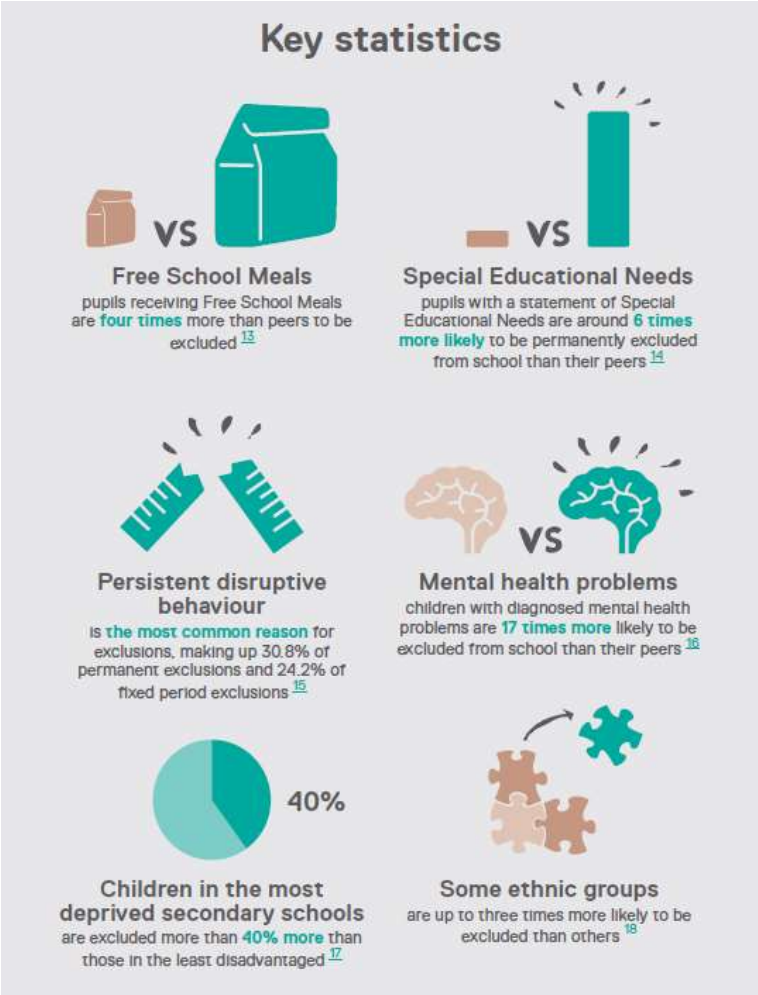
# 2. Who is pushed out?




| Exclusion Rates (%) | Boys | Girls | All |
|---|---|---|---|
| **White** | **0.13** | **0.04** | **0.09** |
| White British | 0.13 | 0.04 | 0.09 |
| Irish | 0.13 | 0.07 | 0.10 |
| Traveller of Irish heritage | 0.49 | 0.45 | 0.47 |
| Gypsy/ Roma | 0.79 | 0.16 | 0.48 |
| Any other White | 0.09 | 0.02 | 0.06 |
| **Mixed** | **0.20** | **0.05** | **0.12** |
| White and Black Caribbean | 0.36 | 0.08 | 0.22 |
| White and Black African | 0.13 | x | 0.08 |
| White and Asian | 0.09 | 0.03 | 0.06 |
| Any other Mixed | 0.17 | 0.04 | 0.11 |
| **Asian** | **0.06** | **0.01** | **0.03** |
| Indian | 0.02 | x | 0.01 |
| Pakistani | 0.10 | 0.01 | 0.05 |
| Bangladeshi | 0.05 | x | 0.03 |
| Any other Asian | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.03 |
| **Black** | **0.20** | **0.04** | **0.12** |
| Black Caribbean | 0.47 | 0.09 | 0.28 |
| Black African | 0.12 | 0.02 | 0.07 |
| Any other Black | 0.17 | 0.05 | 0.11 |
| **Chinese** | **x** | **0.00** | **x** |

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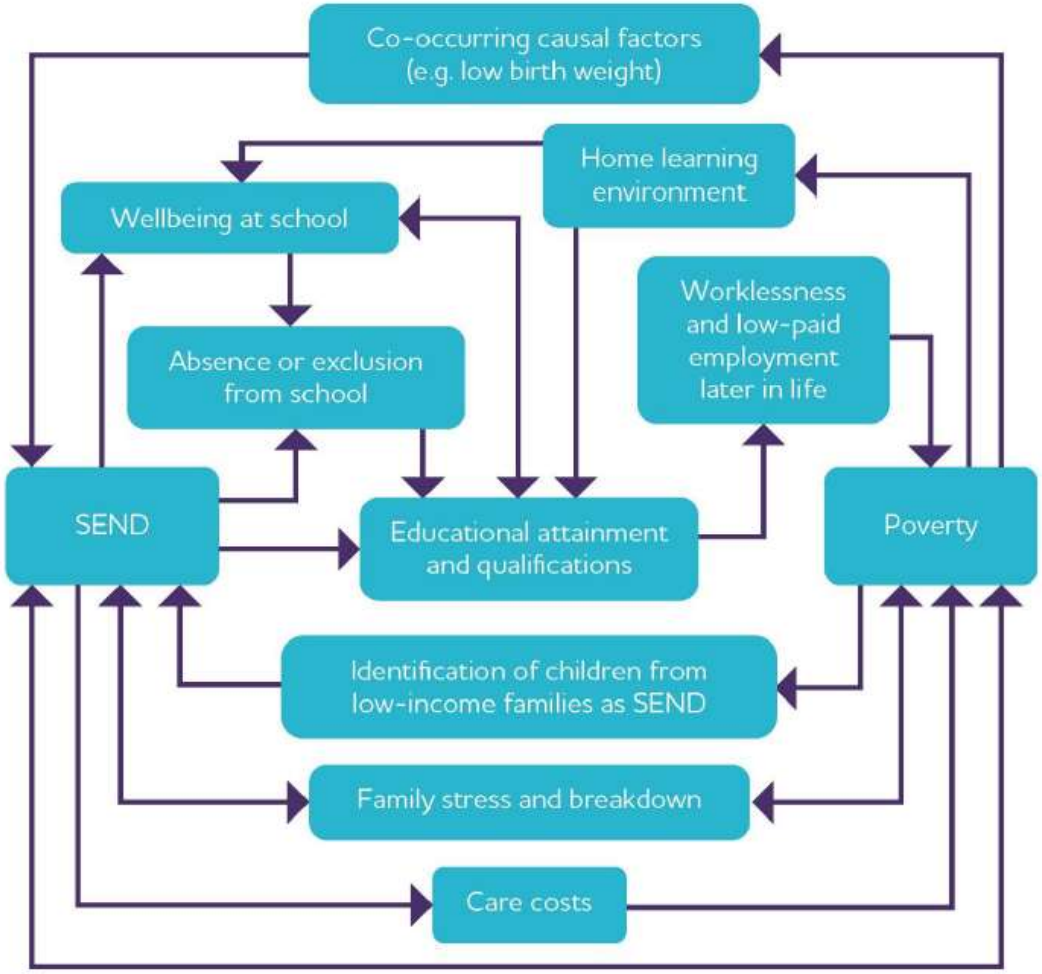
# 3. Why are they vulnerable?

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# 3. Why are they vulnerable?

## 1. A gap in basic needs:

*"If they don't have anywhere to sleep, if they don't have beds at home, if they don't have food… how can you expect them to achieve academically?" - Duza Stosic*

## 2. A gap in socialisation:

*"to be able to sit in a room quietly with other people and to be able to walk down corridors through a thousand other people" – Louise Thomas*

## 3. A gap in basic skills or specialist needs:

*"They're not learning because of their behaviour and then actually, come 16, for some reason we manage to get a cognitive assessment…and we discover they had severe dyslexia or they had a working memory of a tiny size." – Fiona McFarlane*

## 4. Institutional Practices:

*"Schools… are relatively large organisations, with large classes and they have to cater for the majority. - Anna Smee*

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# 4. Bringing vulnerable learners into the mainstream

- **Fair admissions**

*"This school is not for you. Your child would be happier elsewhere" - Academies Commission*

- **A safe and structured environment**

*"The schools are in chaos and you just ... all you're focusing on is the chaos in the school... What you've got to do is remove all of that. Once you remove the chaos then you can start to dig down as to why the behaviour is happening." - Peter Hughes*

- **Support that bridges the gap**

*"These parents are the ones who have the money to go for assessment…That's not a fair system, it's not equitable at all" - Julia Hunt*

- **The hook of success**

*"Hooks should be a way in to excellence across the board rather than an 'instead of' or 'opt-out'." – The Alternative Should Not be Inferior*

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# 5. Innovating within the mainstream

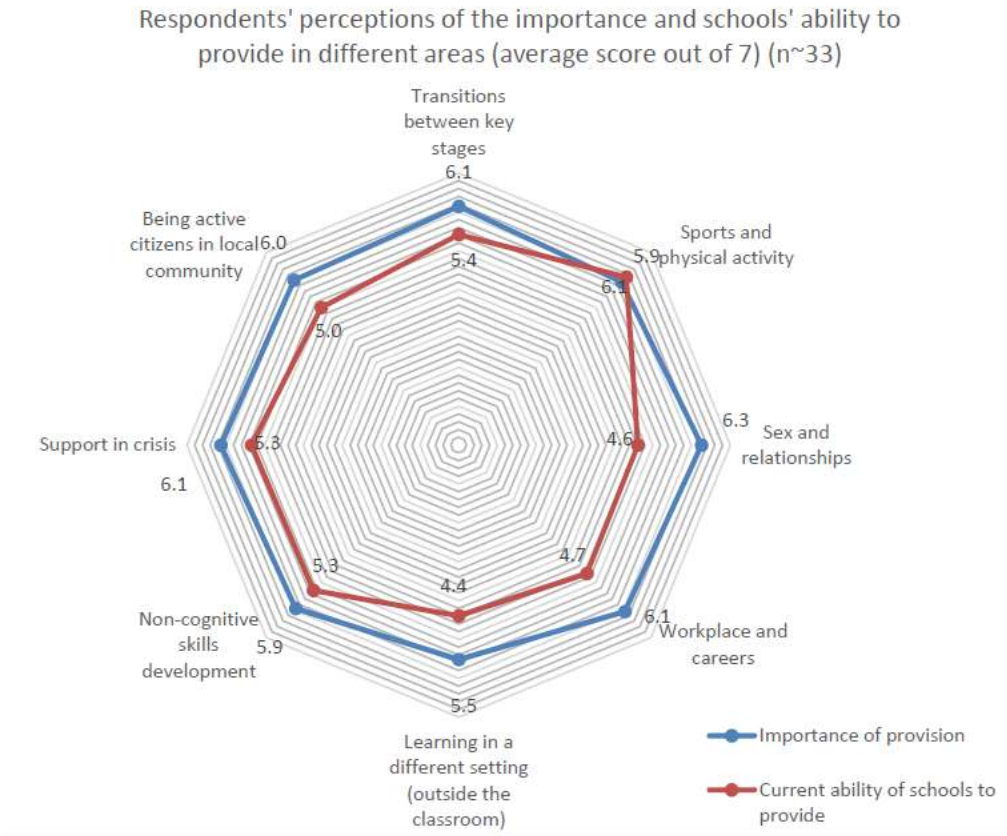
- **The resourcing trap…**

Unfortunately, sometimes you only access the resources you need in order to include, once you exclude!

- **Alternatives within the mainstream**

If you have an 'inclusion unit'/'behaviour unit' or similar, make sure this supports inclusion not exclusion. Consider too how you can use things like nurture groups and curriculum design to support inclusion rathe than tracking and separating pupils?

- **Partnerships**
  - Other service providers: e.g. Youth workers/youth clubs, charities etc.
  - Employers

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# 6. Working outside of the mainstream

- **Relationship to other school types/forms of provision**

*"It would be wonderful from an Alternative Provider perspective to not be the outsider from education but to be part of the solution… It would be wonderful to be commissioned to be part of a group of academies or a cluster of schools where we would be their preferred provider to enhance those young people that are not quite fitting within the jigsaw."*

*- Keith Griffiths*

- **Effective deployment**
  - **Quality control:** where you use alternative provision, stay responsible for quality and ensure pupils are getting a *better quality of support,* not just an *alternative*.
  - **Information flow:** ensure you have continuous and detailed flow of information between other providers and yourself so you know exactly what is going on for a pupil- this will help future reintegration and ensure you hold providers to account.
  - **Two-way traffic:** A move to alternative provision shouldn't be a one way street.

# 7. Summary

- **Tiers**
- **Barrier → Solution: Assess (don't just identify), act, review and tweak.**
- **Find schools doing this stuff well, visit and learn from them!**

**Further reading on…**

**The SEND system:**
*"Joining the Dots"* (with the Driver Youth Trust): http://lkm.li/JoinDots

**Pushed out Learners:**
*"The Alternative Should not be Inferior"* (with the Inclusion Trust): http://lkm.li/PushedOut

**Poverty and SEND:**
*"Special educational needs and their links to poverty"* (with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation): http://lkm.li/SENpov

**Working in Partnership:**
*A Partnership Worth Building?* (with London Youth): http://lkm.li/ClubPartnerships

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