



Introduction & Methodology

Welburn Hall is a North Yorkshire County Council maintained special school, working with children and young people who have a wide range of special educational needs. The school offers a dynamic, innovative and highly individualised learning journey for pupils aged 8 to 19 years.

The current residential offer at Welburn Hall School is for young people aged 16-19, who are completing the college course at the school, and who have an assessed need for residential provision. Residential placement is available Monday – Friday (4 nights) during term times. North Yorkshire County Council wishes to change this to accommodate children and young people aged 8-19, who have communication and interaction needs and / or learning disability, where there is an assessed need for residential provision. Under the new proposals, residential provision would be extended to be available on a term time basis up to 38 weeks per year, including weekends.

Since 2017 the number of young people using the residential provision at Welburn Hall has been declining. It is forecast that this will make the current residential offer unviable for the school within the next 3 years. This would result in NYCC having **no** residential offer for children and young people with communication and interaction needs and / or learning disability.

The current residential offer at Welburn Hall School can result in children and young people who require residential placement *prior* to age 16, being placed in independent settings, which are often outside of county and away from their family / networks. Under the new proposals, pupils at Welburn Hall School who have an assessed need for residential placement will be able to consider this *at any age*, rather than for post-16 only as per the current system.

Young people moving onto the post-16 college course would attend as day pupils, unless there is an assessed need for residential placement – applied equally to all age groups. This does mean that young people currently approaching the post-16 transition, who have been expecting to move into residential placements under the current offer, may no longer be given the opportunity to do so.

In order to gain young people's views on the proposed changes, The NY Voice Team attended Welburn Hall School to speak to the pupils there. There were two groups of young people involved, of which all had self-selected to engage in the discussions. Welburn Hall School Staff were also present during group discussions, and played a vital role helping with the young people's understanding and communication where necessary.

The first group consisted of seven young people, aged 16-19 years old, who were boarding at the school under the current post-16 offer.

The second group was made up of four young people, aged 14-16 years old, on the cusp of post-16 transition – i.e the age group expecting to move into residential in the next 1-2 years, but who under the new proposals may now be unable to do so.

Discussions were fluid and informal, held in a relaxed atmosphere in a familiar and safe environment. The following pages provide a summary of what young people in each group told us during the engagement, with some direct quotes and narratives included in each section.

Student Consultation

November 2021

Post-16 Current Residential Students – What is it like boarding at Welburn Hall School?

“Here it’s just fun”

“If I didn’t come here I wouldn’t spend as much time with other people.”

“It is really brilliant here. Also if I have a problem I can just go up to the staff, speak to them and they will help me with it”

I really think it’s good to go boarding. It’s also changed my life. I made friends”

AMAZING!

Young People all spoke extremely highly of their experience of residential provision at Welburn, with a real focus on how much it has helped them socially.

“Before I came here I was just getting bullied every day. I stayed inside. This has changed my life.”

“You can be yourself”

“I have done two years here and I kid you not, I have absolutely enjoyed it”

“We do celebrations, like birthdays, Halloween and Christmas. We are putting all the decorations up now”

Student Consultation

November 2021

Post-16 Current Residential Students – How has boarding at Welburn helped you?

Young People had been helped hugely, and in a broad variety of ways, as a result of accessing the residential provision at Welburn Hall School.

“We do construction, animal care and catering. We do work experience as well and prepare for work”

“We don’t just learn life skills, we have to prove we can do things like cooking cleaning and that. We get credits and do paper work and we get awards and a certificate. We can get a diploma. The worst bit is doing the paperwork!”

“Boarding here is important because I get to learn life skills”

“I have improved my living skills”

“I’m better at communicating because I came here...most of the time”

“I think it is really important for me, to do the life skills”

“If we didn’t board here we wouldn’t learn those independent skills”

“It’s more exciting coming here, every time you go home you are feeling shattered but you want to come back and do it again. It’s helping my skills to become more independent”

Student Consultation

November 2021

Post-16 Current Residential Students – What do you think about the proposed changes?

“I’d be disappointed as I would have looked forward to making loads of new friends but then you can’t. I can’t really interact with many people out of college”

“People are going to feel disappointed and left out”

“We think they should keep it as it is.”

Young People generally considered the impact on those current day students on the cusp of post-16 transition, who would potentially not be able to access residential transition should the proposed changes go ahead. They thought the changes should not go ahead.

“They won’t learn how to keep their bedroom tidy and keeping things clean around you”

“You would miss out spending time with your friends and getting along with the staff and doing all the cool things that we do here”

“If they can’t come they will miss out on life skills, like cooking, cleaning, keeping your bedroom tidy...none of us would have learnt that if we hadn’t come here”



Student Consultation

November 2021

Approaching Post-16 Transition Students – What does boarding at Welburn mean to you?

“I want to get away from my brother because he’s annoying me at home. It is stressful at home”

“I was really looking forward to it”

“(I was looking forward to it because) Now after school I just sit on my Xbox and do nothing”

“My mum wanted me to board here”

All of the young people were very much looking forward to boarding at Welburn, which had clearly been their expectation under the current residential offer.

“I want to board here and my mum wants me to board here because it’s a good school”

“(I want to board at Welburn because) On a night I go on my phone, play a game, by myself. I play with my dog but it gets boring so I just get bored”



“My parents were looking for me to go to have the experience. Now I won’t be they will be annoyed. They were probably going to have a party when I left!”

Student Consultation

November 2021

Approaching Post-16 Transition Students – What do you think about the proposed changes?



In common with the Post-16 group, young people generally considered the personal impact of the changes – i.e them themselves potentially not being able to access the residential transition should the proposed changes go ahead. They also thought the changes should not go ahead.

"I feel really upset I can't come"

"I wanted to board here with my friends and I find it really hurtful that I can't now"

"It's not fair we may not be able to board"

"I don't like change, I was expecting something and then it changes I only see what the old version was"

"A lot of us don't like change"

"We all had a trial night as if we are going and now we are told we probably are not and that is really unfair"

"If I was in charge I would change it so it stays the same. It shouldn't change because it's not fair that my friends go, then I can't and I am disappointed"

"I want to tell them I don't want them to make the changes I want to come still. I am upset and find it really annoying"

Student Consultation

November 2021

Approaching Post-16 Transition Students – How would the proposed changes affect your life?

“I will miss out on all the activities that they do”

“We need to learn how to cook and look after yourself. I won’t properly learn those life skills now”

“I will miss out on experience by not coming”

“I will not find out what I need to do when I live on my own or nothing. I will not know what I need to do when I am by myself. I know some stuff but I need to know what it’s like to be without my parents”

Young People spoke about a range of things they would miss out on if they were unable to access the residential provision at Welburn. A clear theme within the group was the learning of life skills and experiences to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.



“I’m going to call my dad and have a week staying in his caravan on my own so I can learn those skills”

“I will miss out on respect”

“I find it not nice, because everyone else is boarding and having so much fun and I want to know what that is like. But if I don’t get to go I am going to be like, that is disappointing as I was looking forward to it, now my excitement is just going down, so my friends might be able to go and I am like, I wanted to go with my friends too. It’s not really that cool we may not be able to. It’s not really a nice change.”

“It kind of hurts. That damage they have done will be the worst thing to happen. It’s like ‘yes, I can’t wait, I am in college so I will finally be able to sleep in school’ then it it’s like ‘oh you can’t go anymore’, then that excitement for the whole summer holidays is just become nothing”