

The Difference

Bringing the best in education to those who need it most

The Difference is creating a new generation of school leaders who are specialist in mental health and reducing exclusion from school

Our Challenge

Every day, 35 of the country's most vulnerable children are permanently excluded from school. These children are twice as likely to be in care, four times more likely to be living in poverty, and seven times more likely to suffer a mental health problem or have another special need.¹ Just 1% of excluded children leave school with the qualifications they need to access the workplace.² This minority of the school population goes on to make up the majority of the prison population.³

The predictable life trajectory for these vulnerable children is not simply an injustice, it is also economically unsustainable. Every year's cohort of permanently excluded pupils will go on to cost the state £2.1 billion in education, health, benefits and criminal justice costs. Yet more pupils are being excluded, year on year.⁴

The cost is also personal. These children are likely to struggle most in adulthood; likely to suffer mental health problems, to be long-term unemployed and to replicate a pattern of dysfunctional relationships with their own children.⁵



Our Solution

We want to change this story in three steps:

- 1. Connect exceptional teachers to schools for excluded children** – We select exceptional teachers and put them in a leadership position in an alternative provision, for excluded children. This will take the best in teaching to the children who need it most.
- 2. Develop expertise in the teaching profession** – We provide a multidisciplinary programme for our *Difference Teachers* alongside their two-year leadership post. Working at Master's level, our *Difference Leaders* help develop an evidence base for effective interventions to support disengaged and vulnerable children – particularly around mental health and safeguarding – to ensure improved attendance, literacy rates and positive post-16 destinations. This will raise the status, and the evidence base, for teaching the most complex learners.
- 3. Create a community of leaders to drive change** – We place our *Difference Leaders* back into mainstream schools, where they will lead on inclusion – cascading their knowledge in working preventatively, to support children *before* they are excluded. In this way, *The Difference* grows expertise across the teaching profession, upskilling schools to support children with mental ill health and other complex needs.



The Difference Story So Far

Founder Kiran started her career teaching in inner-city secondary schools, specialising in teacher training and improving literacy teaching across the curriculum. In April 2016, Kiran had left the classroom and was Head of Policy at the Social Mobility Commission when she had the idea for The Difference. By January 2017, Kiran had raised enough capital to fund a research paper to understand school exclusion further, and build a case for The Difference, with think tank IPPR.

Through ten months' research in 2017, The Difference became a movement supported by a range of classroom practitioners, schools and multi-academy trusts, and educational organisations. We won the [Teach First Innovation Award](#), following in the footsteps of Jamie's Farm, Institute for Teaching and Right to Succeed. We tested and developed our concept with advisers from those three organisations, as well as specialists working beyond education, including Frontline for children's social work, Unlocked Grads developing prison officers, and Place2Be supporting pupil mental health.

In October 2017 The Difference team published its [IPPR report](#) into school exclusions, with support from former Conservative Education Minister, Edward Timpson; former Labour Health Minister and government social mobility tsar Alan Milburn; and chair of the Education Policy Institute and former Schools Minister David Laws. The launch also announced the backing of The Difference by the two biggest multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the Alternative Provision sector: The Bridge AP (TBAP) and The Wellspring Trust; and three of the biggest national mainstream MATs in the UK: Oasis, Ark and Ormiston. The research received widespread media attention, including coverage in [The Economist](#), [Times](#) and [Guardian](#). It successfully raised awareness of exclusion in England, in the public and through internal influencing at the Department for Education. At the Conservative party conference, the [Secretary of State](#) signalled a new focus on exclusions and raising standards in Alternative Provision, and the [Education Select Committee](#) announced an inquiry into the issue, calling Difference founder Kiran Gill to give evidence in November 2017.

In December 2017, The Department for Education invited The Difference to bid for core funding for a four-year pilot, setting up in 2018/19 and placing our first cohort of Difference Leaders in Summer 2019. To begin making The Difference, we must now achieve the following objectives during our set-up year:

- Hire an expert curriculum team to research, design and pilot our evidence-led curriculum
- Hire an excellent core team to lead recruitment, placement and partnerships, supported by strong finance, HR and operations
- Attract and select the best 30 candidates to embark on this new career pathway
- Identify and confirm placement partnerships with 30 like-minded AP schools
- Finalise our specialist national professional qualification to accredit our programme
- Grow our coalition of philanthropists, business supporters and advocates, committed to making The Difference - raising £800,000 of match-funded and in-kind support.

Help us Make The Difference

Each new hire will report directly to the Chief Executive and will be supported by an experienced trustee on our Board, as well as peers in sister organisations Teach First, Frontline and Unlocked Grads. See our vacancies and make an application at www.the-difference.com For an informal and confidential discussion about the role prior to application, please contact:

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