

Title of paper:	Education Welfare Service - School Attendance Report		
Report to:	Children’s Partnership Board		
Date:	15 th June 2015		
Relevant Director:	Pat & Sarah Fielding	Wards affected: All Wards	
Contact Officer(s) and contact details:	Nick Lee – Head of Service Karen McAndrew – Education Welfare Service		
Other officers who have provided input:			
Relevant Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) priority or priorities:			
Safeguarding and supporting children and families:		Children, young people and families will benefit from early and effective support and protection to empower them to overcome difficulties and provide a safe environment in which to thrive.	
Promoting the health and wellbeing of babies, children, young people:		From pregnancy and throughout life, babies, children, young people and families will be healthier, more emotionally resilient and better able to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing	
Supporting achievement and academic attainment:		All children and young people will leave school with the best skills and qualifications they can achieve and will be ready for independence, work or further learning	✓
Empowering Families to be strong and achieve economic wellbeing:		More families will be empowered and able to deal with family issues and child poverty will be significantly reduced	
Summary of issues (including benefits to customers/service users):			
To present an update of school attendance in Nottingham showing current attendance data, a summary of the Education Welfare Service and how the service links with the Children’s Partnership			
Recommendations:			
1	To celebrate the success of Nottingham City pupil attendance improvement		
2	To recognise the functions and development of the Education Welfare Service		
3	To demonstrate the links between the EWS and the Children’s Partnership		

1. BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS

School attendance is improving in our City. Official statistics from the Department for Education for the Autumn 2014 term show that absence has dramatically reduced over the last five years. In fact, from 2013 to 2014, we were the most improved local authority in the country.

The headline figures for our City are:

- The number of children missing lessons has fallen from 5.2% in Autumn Term 2013 to 4.6% in Autumn Term 2014.
- Authorised absence in Nottingham has fallen from 3.5% in Autumn 2013 to 3.2% in Autumn 2014
- Unauthorised absence has fallen from 1.8% to 1.4% over the same period
- Overall absence in the autumn term has fallen over the last five years in Nottingham, from 8.1% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2014

Nottingham is now ranked 109th nationally for attendance out of 152 local authorities – up from 150th in 2013.

Education Welfare Service (EWS) – Attendance Improvement Service (Sept. 2015)

The EWS, previously integrated into the targeted teams has now returned to a service in its own right. The team of Education Welfare Officers is based at the North MALT office in Bestwood. Additionally the team have transferred from Family Community Teams (as was) to Access and Learning in the Schools Directorate. This firmly integrates the EWS with Education colleagues streamlining practice with Children Missing Education, Pupils Without a School Place, Elective Home Education and the wider services within the directorate. The EWS are currently involved in the Nottingham City Council Attendance Improvement Campaign and the zero tolerance approach to school absence. Operationally the EWS have a focus on enforcement.

The number of penalty notices issued on behalf of school and the number of prosecutions have risen since 2011.

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number of Penalty Notices issued to parents	149	357	726	665 to date
Prosecutions for Non-school attendance	161	194	257	163 to date

This does not mean however that the service has cut links with Early Help and Extensive and Specialist Services, and with the Children's Partnership. The focus on attendance improvement and improved outcomes for children and families can be illustrated as:

Education Welfare Officers - All of the EWOs are fully trained practitioners who undertake assessments as an integral part of their role using the signs of safety model in line with the Family Support Strategy and Pathway.

Early Intervention

The EWS actively encourage schools to refer pupils at 10% unauthorised absence (before they reach the 15% persistent absence threshold) tackling the absence earlier avoiding PA

Priority Families

Attendance being a key indicator of PF the EWS is an integral part of the programme. Accredited Practitioners are able to refer directly to the EWS (whether the pupil is at a school or academy) to support their ongoing support and challenge role. All EWOs are trained PF practitioners and have well established links with Family Intervention Project

Children & Families Direct

C & F Direct field calls from the check and challenge initiative (soon to be rebranded as pupil safe/pupil watch)

Looked After Children

A new initiative has been introduced to analyse the children looked after attendance data, and to challenge any poor or irregular school attendance.

Safeguarding

The EWS have strong working links with safeguarding colleagues as part of a multi-agency plan and/or making direct referrals should safeguarding concerns arise.

Police

EWOs are eyes and ears on the ground, front line workers undertaking unannounced home visits have regular contact with the Police and links with projects such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, and Forced Marriage etc. The EWS have a key role with the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference as the conduit between schools and domestic violence.

Health

The EWS work closely with School Nurses, Health Visitors etc. and have communications with Paediatricians and GPs.

Legal Services

The EWS have very strong links with legal services that support developing legal interventions. Increasing prosecutions has resulted in a wide range of disposals at court such as Education Supervision Orders, Parenting Orders and School Attendance Orders. (It's not just about fining parents!)

Schools and Academies

Links with schools and academies has increased during this academic year, almost all have signed up to Nottingham City Council Common Attendance Protocol, the team are established within a group of School Attendance Officers which includes schools and academies working together to improve attendance.

2. RISKS

(Risk to the CYPP, risk involved in undertaking the activity and risk involved in not undertaking the activity)

The risk involved in not continuing with the Education Welfare Service is that the continued improvement in school attendance will not continue but will deteriorate especially in the light of the persistent absence threshold being reduced from 15% to 10% absence. Further risk will be the facility to support our schools and academies with the issue of penalty notices for unauthorised absence, persistent lateness to school, leave of absence in term time and excluded pupils being seen in a public place during the period of their exclusion.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The functions of the EWS are within current budget

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications as the team undertake statutory functions

5. CLIENT GROUP

(Groups of children, young people or carers who are being discussed in the report)

Parents/carers and school age pupils who may or may not be registered at a school

6. IMPACT ON EQUALITIES ISSUES

(A brief description on how many minority groups are being engaged in the proposal and how their needs are being met: This section includes traveller and refugee families. The themes of the Shadow Boards – children and young people; parents and carers; equalities issues and the voluntary and community sector should be considered here.

The EWS strive to ensure all school aged children and young people in Nottingham City have access to an appropriate education and are committed to supporting their parents and carers.

7. OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES AFFECTED

(Briefly state which of the CYPP priorities will be addressed)

Supporting achievement and academic outcomes by ensuring children and young people attend school regularly.

8. CONTACT DETAILS

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