

Children's Social Care O&S Committee

Date: 25 July Time: 10.00 am Venue: Committee Room 6

Attendance and Children Out of School

1. Introduction

All pupils have a right to full time education. There is no greater priority than to ensure that those pupils out of school are returned to full time education as quickly as possible. Our ambition is that all children have a school place, attend school regularly (our expectation is that a child's attendance rate is 90% or above) and that they reach their academic potential.

Our aim is to work together more collaboratively to promote the inclusion of vulnerable children including those within the Children's Trust. We are continuing to develop our shared understanding of the complex factors impacting on the improvement of educational outcomes in order to provide multi agency responses and solutions to these.

2. Background

School attendance

Attending school is the key to educational success. Our analysis is that as a City we need to improve. The table below highlights Birmingham's pupil absence benchmarked against the national average.

| | School Type | Overall Absence | Persistent Absence |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| England | State-funded primary | 4 | 8.3 |
| B'ham | State-funded primary | 4.4 | 10.4 |
| England | State-funded secondary | 5.4 | 13.5 |
| B'ham | State-funded secondary | 5.4 | 14.4 |
| England | Special | 9.7 | 28.5 |
| B'ham | Special | 11.5 | 32.8 |

Exclusions

The table below highlights Birmingham's three year trend for exclusions. Secondary School exclusions are falling but there is a slight increase at primary school level. There have been no exclusions of Children in Care since 2014.

| Yr | Three year trend | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Phase | 2014/15 Academic Year | 2015/16 Academic Year | 2016/17 Academic Year | 2017 / 2018 Academic Year at 31.05.18 |
| Secondary Permanent Exclusions | 189 | 176 | 185 | 111 (147)* |
| Primary Permanent Exclusions | 89 | 92 | 111 | 100 (86)* |
| Special Permanent Exclusions | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 (5)* |
| Total Permanent Exclusions | 285 | 274 | 303 | 217 (238)* |

- Increase in exclusions in primary schools in the city and nationally, putting additional strain on alternative provision. Particularly for physical violence against staff by primary school children who struggle to communicate reverting to physical means.
- Currently 17/18 decrease in children excluded from secondary school.



Exclusion data analysis

Main findings:

- Increasing trend in exclusions for primary schools
- Inequalities by gender and ethnicity
- 84% exclusions are male
- In 2016/17 there was a large increase in female exclusions

Next Steps

More in-depth analysis of the:

- Characteristics of schools with high level of exclusions
- Correlation for Free School Meals and SEND

Children Not in Full Time Education

Table below showing: Looked After Children data:

| Vulnerable Group | Total Cohort | No. in Group | Percentage of cohort |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| No School Place | 1274 | 16 | 1.26% |
| Under 25hrs | 1274 | 9 | 0.71% |
| NEET Not in Education, Employment or Training | 313 | 68 | 21.73% |

Context

The total Birmingham school population is approximately: 210,000 (primary and secondary). We are in the process of allocating a school place or taking legal action for those children who do not have a school place – a total of 152 children.

| | 0 -25 school days | 26 -50 school days | 51-100 school days | 101 and over school days | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|------------|
| Reception | 12 | 2 | 1 | 0 | |
| Year 1 | 18 | 1 | 6 | 0 | |
| Year 2 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 0 | |
| Year 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Year 4 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | |
| Year 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Year 6 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 0 | |
| Year 7 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 0 | |
| Year 8 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 0 | |
| Year 9 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 0 | |
| Year 10 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | |
| Year 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| TOTAL | 116 | 17 | 19 | 0 | 152 |

Other cohorts who are out of education include:

- Elective Home Education
- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller
- Asylum seekers

The current analysis of contributing factors for children out of education (these can be independent or interrelated) includes

1. Anxiety based
2. Medical
3. Family environment
4. ACES: Adverse Childhood Experiences (please see appendix 1)
5. Parents/carers are not confident/supportive of the education system

Actions

We are taking the following actions to improve the situation:

1. We have been working intensively with secondary school heads to promote inclusion positively alongside our equal opportunities work to protect and champion our children at risk. This has established new networks for schools and highlighted the need for full time attendance and proposed a new funding formula for devolved budgets so that schools have a greater ownership and accountability for reducing exclusions.
2. Work has commenced on engagement with primary schools to mirror the secondary model.
3. School Governors are actively challenging and revoking exclusions
4. We have been working jointly on an SEMH Pathfinder, which is a collaborative approach to working with children and families with multiple complex needs. There are currently 12 Pathfinder schools in Birmingham (SEMH special schools, Pupil Referral Unit – City of Birmingham School and Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Schools), working towards a new kind of intensive, relational support supported by a core team of multi-agency professionals. School posts are funded by educational establishments and aligned to the Pathfinder.
5. Children are actively referred to the Fair Access Process which has recently been revised to be more inclusive
6. Mentors talk to families and schools to coach the families and to apply challenge to the schools to take “challenging” children or children who have been out of the education for weeks.
7. We have instigated a phased process of return to education which starts with the Birmingham Online School
8. At any one time Birmingham’s Think Family programme is working with 2,000 families with multiple needs including poor school attendance.
9. We have employed three new members of staff to work specifically with schools, families and children to improve attendance/to ensure that children return to education.
10. Education, SENAR and the Children’s Trust are working more collaboratively than ever before to identify vulnerable children and young people. This includes those with undiagnosed special educational needs.
11. We have established Attendance and Children out of School Triage and Panel arrangements (Appendix 2) to find solutions for those where there are barriers to children attending school. The multi-agency panel is initially focused on Children subject to a Children In Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or open to the Youth Offending Service and is comprised of:

- Education Safeguarding
- Attendance Lead Officer
- Head of Service, Early Help and Family Support.
- Head of Service YOS
- Principal Officer SENAR

These arrangements commenced in June 2018 and seek to develop a holistic understanding of the barriers to attendance and identify the most appropriate actions and solutions where usual processes and protocols have been explored without success. There is an escalation process and a commitment to highlight any situations where 'systems' are failing children. We are jointly committed to robustly monitor and report on any situations where the 'system' is failing children.

Next Steps

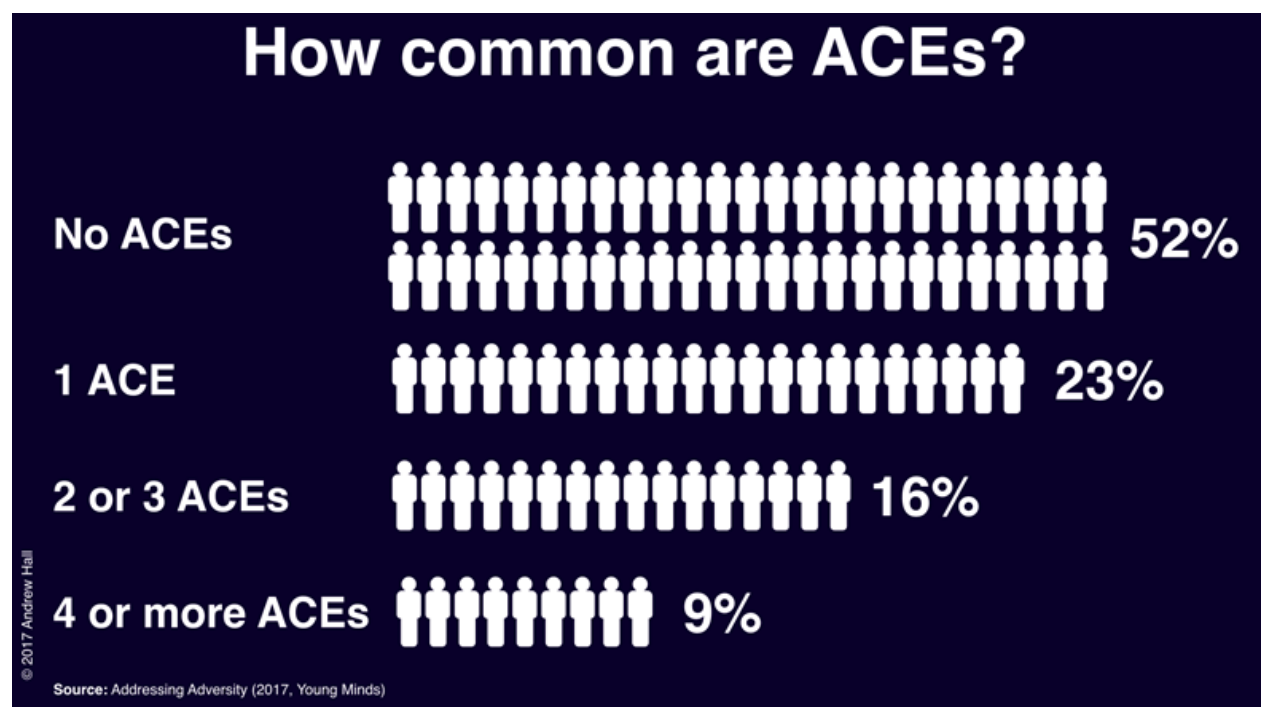
- There has been an improvement in secondary exclusions and there is now a focus on primary schools.
- We will monitor the managed moves that schools are making and challenge where necessary.
- We will continue to challenge the use of elective home education, by schools.
- The Birmingham Early Help and Safeguarding Partnership has agreed that improving school attendance will be our priority over the next 12 months. The Chairs of Primary and Secondary Forums are members with messages also promoted in Special School Forums.
- Data systems –there is an increased emphasis on sharing information and access to systems.
- All professionals working with vulnerable children to have a pathway into advice and support on education.
- There is a strong commitment to continue to raise our performance for children to national averages and then beyond.

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Appendix 1

ACES



Appendix 2

Triage and Panel process

