

CABINET- 26 November 2024

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

Item under consideration: Children Not in School

Recommendations:

1. Surrey County Council (SCC) establishes and delivers a clear and coherent policy in respect of its role in monitoring children not in school and driving increased attendance, and identifies standards of best practice, including Key Performance Indicators for Surrey – by March 2025.
2. SCC should take a leadership role and work with the various parties involved to drive the implementation of these standards and improved performance in Surrey.
3. SCC should deliver an investigation on the impact of outcomes/life chances for children who are not in school, including those (a) severely absent from school and (b) electively home educated – by comparison with their peers.
4. Children with SEND should be clearly identified in the severely absent cohort, and by March 2025, an action plan to remedy their high prevalence should be developed and read for delivery.

Cabinet Response:

1. **This recommendation relates to work that is already in place.** Whilst acknowledging that where children are absent from school the initial responsibility for monitoring is with the school, we have established a Service Manager role in Education and Lifelong Learning which has oversight for all categories of Children Not in School. The postholder works with Surrey Attendance Service to encourage attendance at school. It is acknowledged, however that for some children there are periods of time when they are not able to attend school, and their education needs are met by alternative provision. A dataset was presented to the Select Committee. Further work is already underway to develop key performance indicators by March 2025.
2. **This recommendation relates to work that is already in place.** As stated above the Service Manager for CNIS works with a range of partners to achieve the agreed key performance indicators. In relation to attendance, regular feedback and updates are provided to the multi-agency forum “Encouraging School Attendance” chaired by Director of Quality and Performance.
3. **We accept the recommendation in part.** In relation to children who are Severely Absent we will look at their destination data on a case-by-case basis and undertake dip-sample audits. We will look to consider 10% of the Year 11 cohort of 394 children and young people who were Severely Absent in Academic Year 23/24, from the total number across all year groups of 2,287. The results of this analysis will be shared with the Select Committee.
We are unable to implement the recommendation in relation to those who are EHE. In relation to EHE there is no obligation for parents to share achievement and destination data with the Local Authority. We will, however, add to the guidance for EHE Inclusion Officers to enquire regarding a child’s next step for post-16.
4. **This recommendation relates to work that is already underway.** We have the data both locally and nationally relating to children with an EHCP who are severely absent. This data is used to inform our actions to continue to improve

the attendance of children with SEND, which is currently better than the national and regional picture.

- Severely Absent pupils with an EHCP - Autumn/ Spring Term 2023/24 – DfE
- Surrey – 12.3%, Southeast – 13.2%, National – 12.5%

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

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