

# TACKLING THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CRISIS

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

## The problem

- There is a crisis in school attendance. In the past eight years, absence rates have increased by 57%.
- Children on free school meals, young carers, and those on an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) have the poorest attendance.
- Poor attendance has a deleterious impact on children's life chances which also has significant downstream costs and burdens on public services and the economy.

## What you can do at a local level

- Develop **early identification systems** in local schools to identify barriers and facilitators to help support those most at risk.
- Develop **local inclusive school practices** through individually tailored support, keeping close links with families, adopting curricula which engage, and providing enrichment activities in the community.
- Target tailored **approaches to individual, family, and local contexts** by recognising and addressing the range of factors leading to non-attendance.
- Promote consistent school attendance through **trauma-informed approaches**, mentoring, and family outreach, ensuring that interventions address both emotional wellbeing and practical barriers to engagement.
- Build **ward-level partnerships between education, healthcare, and social services** to support the needs of individuals and families.

## Evidence-based insights

Persistently absent children have a nearly **4x** increased risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET).

In 2020, approximately **250,000** children were missing from education.

## Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

### Barriers to Education Project

An evidence-based toolkit that includes preventative and reactive ways to support school absence in neurodivergent populations. Through their co-production process, they have developed a framework which identifies six key foundations to reduce educational barriers.

### The EWO Project

A project which promotes effective multi-agency working between services and families to provide better support which meets the needs of children with attendance difficulties. Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) are guided by statutory guidance on school attendance which advocates for a 'support first' approach.

### Bradford SAFE Taskforce

Introduced evidence-based interventions in line with the Youth Endowment Fund's latest guidance across 18 schools in Bradford to improve attendance, behaviour, and engagement with education.

### North Birkenhead Cradle to Career Attendance Pilot

A response to low attendance and unmet need in the Wirral, piloting small panels to discuss key problems and identify pupils with unmet needs within schools. Any identified problems were met with small-scale interventions and solutions.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

**Please share this guide and start a discussion in your organisation about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.**