

Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Interim Director - Education

| | |
|------------|--|
| Report to: | Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 17 January 2020 |
| Subject: | Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19 |

Summary:

This report collates data and commentary on groups of children who are identified as being at increased risk of missing education. It is the third report in this format and compares where possible, three years of data.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to note and comment on the Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19.

1. Background

The local authority has a duty under **Section 436A of the Education Act 1996** to have processes in place to identify children who are not receiving a full time suitable education. This report provides an update on the processes in place to capture this information and explains any trends where possible.

The definition 'Children missing out on education' is used in this report to encompass children who are out of any form of education i.e. not on a school roll and those not receiving the full time education that they are entitled to either through irregular attendance at school or by not receiving a suitable education elsewhere.

The following points are highlights of the activities and trends for the academic year 2018-19:

- The number of children being removed from school to be Electively Home Educated (EHE) continued to grow but at a slower rate than the previous year. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) report on EHE 2018/19 indicates that, based on the data received from 132 Local Authorities (LA), there has been a 5% decrease in the number of children being EHE. The biggest concern, however, remains those vulnerable children who are removed from school by parents who are unprepared,

unable or do not have the intention to educate their child at home. The changes in Lincolnshire's EHE process to reflect the new guidance published in April 2019, has resulted in a faster return to school under a School Attendance Order (SAO). Lincolnshire saw a significant rise in SAO's during the latter part of 2018/19 following the introduction of the new EHE process. The ADCS report indicated a 171% increase in SAO's being issued across the country and therefore Lincolnshire's practice is in line with the national picture.

- The process for reporting children missing education and following up notifications continues to improve with the introduction of the new data management system, Synergy. The capacity to follow up the notifications this year, however, has been stretched which has resulted in a decrease in children found, compared with previous years. With the on-going implementation of Synergy, increased staffing to monitor the Children Missing Education (CME) notifications and weekly CME reporting to line management, an improvement is expected.
- The use of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by schools as a tool for addressing irregular attendance continues to increase with more than 3000 FPN's being issued for 2018/19. The payment of FPN's has dropped slightly to 60% compared with 64% in the previous year, however with the introduction of the Single Justice Process which will see all non-payment of FPN's proceed to prosecution where potentially the parent could receive a significant fine, it is likely that the percentage of payment within 21 days will increase.
- The school persistent absence rate in Lincolnshire has increased in line with the national data. Lincolnshire's special schools have a higher rate of persistent and authorised absence compared with national data. In June 2019, all schools who had higher than national average for both unauthorised and persistent absence were given a written reminder of this comparison. It was recommended to maintained schools that they attended an attendance workshop and used the self- assessment audit tool to help improve the monitoring of their school absences. More than 200 schools came to a workshop in 2018/19 and have access to the self-assessment audit.
- The majority of schools are now using the reduced timetable reporting process and following the new guidance introduced in June 2019. The guidance states that the implementation of a reduced timetable should only be done with the consultation of the SEND, Pupil Re-integration Team (PRT) and the Social Worker if the child is known to these services. This has raised the awareness of the importance of monitoring the use of a reduced timetable to ensure the child is receiving the education they are entitled to.

2. Conclusion

The Committee is invited to note and comment on the Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19 attached at Appendix A.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Yes.

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

No impact.

4. Appendices

| | |
|---|---|
| These are listed below and attached at the back of the report | |
| Appendix A | Children Missing Out on Education Annual Report 2018/19 |

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Jill Chandar-Nair, who can be contacted on 07717 320089 or jill.chandar-nair@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

This page is intentionally left blank