

School Attendance and Inclusion

**Report of John Pearce, Corporate Director Children and
Young People's Services**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of school attendance and inclusion in the County Durham.
- 2 The report covers the national and local context and policy, published data and collaborative working.

Executive Summary

- 3 School attendance and inclusion are key national and local priorities. Published data to the end of the spring term 2022/2023 and provisional data to the end of the autumn term 2023/24 shows that County Durham is in line with regional and statistical neighbours.
- 4 In May 2022, the Department for Education published 'Working together to Improve Attendance Guidance which included key roles and responsibilities for schools and Local Authorities. The Council have been proactive around implementation locally and have built strong local alliances and partnerships that are taking forward key work strands.
- 5 The Council have built stronger underpinning tools such as provisional data dashboards and business intelligence applications. The greater data visualisation has provided more focus and greater transparency on trends, direction of travel, benchmarking and performance and has provided a platform for overlays with wider service information.

Recommendation

- 6 Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to school attendance and inclusion, and the proactive, collaborative actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

Context

- 7 The council is a large organisation providing a broad range of services, and our operating environment can at times be challenging. However, we continue to show strong performance across our key outcomes.
- 8 Demand for statutory attendance and inclusion services remains high and the composition of needs and interventions are increasingly complicated.

Useful documents

- [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) (May 2022).
- [Pupil absence in Schools in England](#): autumn 2022 and spring 2024.
- Modernising school attendance and admissions registers and setting national thresholds for legal intervention: [Government consultation response](#) (August 2023).
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement: [Guidance for maintained schools](#), academies, and pupil referral units in England (September 2023).

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None currently.

Finance

None.

Consultation

In June 2022, the Department launched a consultation seeking views on proposals to modernise the regulatory system for recording information in school attendance and admission registers, sharing data from registers and on thresholds to be included in the proposed national framework for the use of fixed penalty notices. The Government published a response to the consultation in August 2023.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance management processes.

Climate Change

No additional considerations.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

The service works closely with anti-social behaviour teams, youth offending teams and are part of serious violence strategic group and more widely.

Staffing

There are no proposed changes to staffing.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

None to report.

Procurement

Not applicable.