

Report of the Deputy Director to the meeting of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 01 November 2016.

Subject:

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Children Missing Education

Summary statement:

Under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to
"make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have."

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services



1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 all local authorities have a statutory responsibility to
“make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by ‘suitable education’ we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.”

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The statutory responsibility for children missing education is issued under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 and requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by ‘suitable education’ we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.”
- 2.2 This duty came into force in February 2007 and revised in February 2009.
- 2.3 Since early 2006 the Education Social Work Service (ESWS) has had in place procedures for managing Children Missing from Education. These procedures have been continually refined to meet the challenge of ensuring all children residing in Bradford are receiving a suitable education.
- 2.4 Children Missing Education referrals are managed by the Education Social Work Service and The New Communities and Traveller Service (NC&TS) who particularly support Central and Eastern European Families in accessing school places
- 2.5 Every Local Authority is required to have a ‘named person’ for Children Missing from Education. That position is currently held by the Principal Education Social Worker.
- 2.6 **Risks**
- Children not in education are at an increased risk of negative outcomes
 - More likely to become NEET
 - Increased vulnerability
 - At risk of neglect, abuse, forced marriage and radicalisation
- 2.7 **The Out of School Register**

In order to fulfil its statutory duty the ESWS has established the ‘Out of School Register’ where all *known* pupils missing from education are placed in one of four referral categories until they have been accessed to an appropriate education provision. This doesn’t capture any possible ‘unknown’ children in the district, this number maybe considerable, therefore the Out of School Register will not represent the whole picture for Bradford.



2.8 Referral Categories

Missing Children – pupils who have gone missing, with their families, from Bradford Schools. The ESWs has an established information sharing and gathering arrangements with Children’s Social Care, Health Services, Police, Housing and Welfare Benefits – these agencies are contacted by the Service to try and establish the child and families whereabouts. Since 2011 we have had access the Council’s Benefits system. This has been extremely useful in tracking and tracing families.

From January 2017 Bradford Council’s Department for Children’s Services will be part of phase two of a pilot with HMRC, whereby we will share information of children who are missing, **after all enquires have been exhausted**. HMRC will cross-reference the address details we hold of the individual family with those that they have in relation to their receipt of benefits. The first phase of this pilot was rolled out in Sheffield earlier this year, whereby over 40% of their missing family’s whereabouts were located.

If we have information that the family have moved to another Local Authority, the ‘named person’ for Children Missing Education in that authority is contacted.

Not on Roll – pupils who have been identified as living in Bradford but not on the roll of a school. These pupils are identified through a variety of sources including Health Services, Police, Children’s Social Care and Education Services

Removed from Roll – Pupils having failed to return following a period of Leave of Absence or Extended Leave of Absence. The Pupil Registration Regulations allow a school to remove a child from the school roll if they fail to return to school within 10 schools days of the agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence and there is no good reason for the non-return.

Other Local Authority referrals – there is an established network of Named Persons responsible for Children Missing from Education within every LA. The ESWs via this network regularly receive referrals from other LA’s informing them of pupils who have or may have moved into the Bradford area.

2.9 Procedures

Missing Children – There is an expectation that prior to referral, schools will make reasonable enquiries to try to establish the child and families’ whereabouts, visiting the last known address, trying all known telephone numbers, contacting family members within school etc.

On receipt of the referral the Education Social Work Service immediately contacts the Police, Health Services, Housing and Welfare Benefits in an attempt to gather information to establish the child’s whereabouts. The Children’s Social Care and Council benefits data systems are checked for information. If after 6 weeks we have still not been able to trace the family, these agencies are contacted again to see if



any new information regarding the family's whereabouts has come to light.

If there is information that a child and family have moved to another Local Authority, the named person for Children Missing Education in that authority is informed. We request that the receiving authority then carries out a 'safe and well' visit, and confirms with us that the family is in their area and request they take responsibility for the child and assist them to access an appropriate education provision.

If at the time the child and family go missing there exists safeguarding concerns Children's Social Care are contacted immediately and in person.

Any child we are unsuccessful in finding is posted on the S2S 'Lost Pupil Database', all schools and local authorities have access to this.

Not on Roll - Once identified, contact is made with the family and support and guidance is provided to assist the family find places at the most appropriate education provision.

Removed from Roll - The Education Social Work Service keep regular contact with the family or extended family to establish when the child is returning to Bradford. On their return support is given to find an appropriate school place

Other Local Authority Referrals – We are regularly contacted by other local authorities with information that a child may have moved into our area but the referring authority have no forwarding address in Bradford. In these cases our pupil database is checked to establish if they have been admitted to a Bradford school. If not they are then placed on the Out of School Register for 3 months and regular checks are carried out to establish if the child has been admitted to a Bradford School.

Referrals from other local authorities where a Bradford address is provided are treated as 'Not on Roll' cases

If at any time there is evidence to suggest that a child is at risk of significant harm, Children's Social Care are informed.

The Education Social Work Service also has an Education Social Worker based in the Children's Social Care Initial Assessment Team.

Information and guidance for schools is provide via Bradford Schools Online and the document 'Children Missing Education – Guidance for Schools'

2.10 Referral data

The tables below show the number of Children Missing Education referrals received by The ESWS and The New Community and Traveller Service over the last four academic years.



	Missi ng Child	Not on Roll	Removed from Roll	Other LA Referral	Total Referrals
2012-13	1028	1465	167	57	2717
2013-14	1183	1897	157	76	3313
2014-15	1234	1661	157	49	3101
2015-16	1145	1197	191	55	2588

The Out of School Register – 28 September 2016

The 'Out of School Register' is a 'live' database which changes on a daily basis as new referrals are received and where children have been found and placed in a school.

On 28 September 2016 a total of 541 Children Missing Education cases were open to the Education Social Work Service and the New Community and Traveller Service. September is always a particularly busy month for the ESW service dealing with a high volume of referrals. This is mainly due to this period following the long summer break, and families not returning to school after extended visits to their country of origin. The fact that a number of pupils entering year 7 may not have been allocated their first choice of secondary school may also contribute to an increase in September's figures, as there are still outstanding school appeals being dealt with. Those children may not have attended their allocated new school place during this period.

The table below show the number of open cases in each referral category

Children Missing Education - Referral Type	No of Open cases 28.09.16
Missing Child	286
Not on Roll-Bradford Resident	373
Other LA Referral	67
Removed from Roll following Extended Leave	20
Total Referrals	746

The tables below show the ethnicity of the 'Missing Child' and 'Not on Roll' referrals

Missing Child Cases by Ethnicity	No of Cases	% of Cohort
ABAN - Bangladeshi	7	2%
AIND - Indian	1	0%
AMPK - Mirpuri Pakistani	1	0%
AOPK - Other Pakistani	3	1%



AOTH - Any other Asian background	2	1%
APKN - Pakistani	23	8%
BAFR - Black African	3	1%
MOTH - Any other Mixed background*	2	1%
OOTH - Any other Ethnic Group*	11	4%
WBRI - White British	10	3%
WIRI - White Irish	2	1%
WOTH - Any other White background*	86	30%
WROG - Gypsy	2	1%
WROM - Gypsy/Roma	87	30%
WROO - Other Gypsy/Roma	3	1%
WROR - Roma	6	2%
Ethnicity not listed*	37	13%

Not on Roll Cases by Ethnicity	No of Cases	% of Cohort
ABAN - Bangladeshi	1	0%
AIND - Indian	1	0%
AMPK - Mirpuri Pakistani	6	2%
AOPK - Other Pakistani	17	5%
AOTH - Any other Asian background	3	1%
APKN - Pakistani	9	2%
BAFR - Black African	18	5%
BOTH - Any other Black background	2	1%
MOTH - Any other Mixed background*	4	1%
MWAS - White/Asian	4	1%
MWBA - White/Black African	3	1%
OOTH - Any other Ethnic Group	10	3%
WBRI - White British	15	4%
WEEU - White Eastern European	10	3%
WOTH - Any other White background*	36	10%
WROG - Gypsy	10	3%
WROM - Gypsy/Roma	48	13%
Ethnicity not listed*	176	47%

**based on surnames, majority of these children are from an EU migrant background*

What does the data tell us?

80% of 'Missing Child' referrals and 79% of 'Not on Roll' of the current live referrals are for children from a Central, Eastern and Western European background. It is known that there is high mobility among these families as they move both around the city and the country for reasons of housing and employment.



Strengths

- CME practice is well embedded within Bradford Schools
- Other agencies both within and outside of Children's Services are aware of the CME agenda and know how to refer a case to the ESWS and NCTS. For example, if a child presents at A&E at Bradford Royal Infirmary they are routinely asked which school they attend. If the child has no school then the child is referred to the ESWS
- Access to the Council Benefits system since 2011 has greatly assisted in tracing families.
- Yorkshire and Humberside Regional CME group meet three times per year to share good practice, discuss current issues and trends

2.11 Recent Developments

Establishment of the Multi Agency Education Safeguarding Team (MEST)

The MEST was established to accurately identify the numbers and details of children and young people "*Missing from Education*" (CME), those young people who are educated at home (EHE), and to identify the possibility of unregistered schools that are operating and coordinate the partnership response. The work of the MEST sets out to address three overarching themes:

- To identify and know the whereabouts of all children of school age
- To identify and know the whereabouts of all children missing from education
- To identify and know the whereabouts of all unregistered schools

Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to discharging the statutory duties that are placed on Local Authorities with regards to CME. The MEST aims to accurately identify the true figure and identities of the children who are missing. A process map for CME has now been created and all CME referrals are dealt with by the Education Social Work Service. There can be over 200 referrals received each month. Work of the MEST has been focused on RAG rating individual cases that are received, and draws together staff from Education Social Work Service, Elective Home Education, Diversity and Cohesion, Information Management, New Communities and Travellers Bradford Children's Safeguarding Board, Public Health, and West Yorkshire Police. Information is now shared between partners to enable proportionate, timely, effective and robust interventions that are undertaken in the interests of children.

The scope of the work of the MEST includes:

- Children not on a school roll and whose whereabouts are unknown
- Children who are on a school roll but whose attendance is of concern.
- Children in elective home education where the quality of their education and / or their welfare cannot be properly assessed.
- Children who are attending unregistered schools.



- Children who are on roll but have 50% or more of their sessions marked with a “B Code” (i.e.: Educated off-site)

The MEST is currently in consultation with HMRC and Sheffield LA with regards to the second phase of the CME benefits data sharing pilot. HMRC are very clear that this is part of their efforts to reduce the number of unlawful benefits claims. But the first phase of the pilot rolled out in Sheffield identified over 40% of their missing children. Between February 2015 and June 2016 Sheffield referred 1166 children and as a result of the data sharing pilot, 535 were found. We are expecting a similar success rate in Bradford as well as uncovering potential cases of trafficking and unlawful claims being made for children. Therefore the MEST feel it a worthwhile activity to be involved in.

On 1 September 2016 as part of National efforts to reduce children missing from education, new legislation was introduced which requires all schools including Private and Independent Schools to inform the Local Authority of any child they admit or remove from the school roll.

Childrens Services have set up a secure online pro-forma on Bradford Schools Online for schools to provide this information.

The online pro-forma also prompts schools to:

- Contact the previous school when admitting a child.
- Give details of the new destination school when a child is being removed from roll
- Make a Children Missing Education referral when a child is being removed from roll and the destination school is unknown or the families whereabouts is unknown

We are about to embark on a project in January with HMRC following a successful pilot in Sheffield where HMRC supported the Sheffield CME team to trace missing families.

We have developed links with the Immigration and Asylum Team regarding families assisted to return to their country of origin.

“Everyone is a CME Officer” - briefings are planned with police and council wardens in order to raise awareness about the what the signs of CME are, or the signs of an unregistered school to assist in the identification of children living in Bradford without an appropriate education provision.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None at this time.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL



None at this time.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

No issues at this time.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

No issues at this time.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive and note this report on matters relating to Children Missing Education.
- 7.2 That Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Team
- 7.2 That Overview and Scrutiny support the work we are doing in raising awareness of Children Missing Education among Council Wardens, the police and other council employees.

8. APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

