A city wide multi agency strategy to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions

Updated February 2023

Contents

A. Purpose

1. This strategy sets out the case, and a proposed way forward, for a renewed collective effort on reducing time lost from school through non-attendance, exclusion or reduced timetables against the background of the learning loss that so many of our children and young people have experienced throughout the pandemic and unfortunately for some continue to do so.

2. The strategy **builds** on several years of work and a range of initiatives, many of which will continue to be delivered under this strategy. However, this strategy takes a **whole system strategic approach** to tackling school absence and exclusions, a major strand of which is around a whole school approach to **relational practice** building on previous work to support restorative practice in schools.

3. A central theme of the PEP education strategy is **inclusion** and this will be the case for this strategy - *creating an educational environment that is welcoming to all children and young people and not giving up on any child whatever their circumstances.* Inclusion is about ensuring that there is in place comprehensive Ordinarily Available Provision that meets the educational needs of the majority of children; that any additional needs are identified early, and support is put in place, as part of a graduated response, to avoid exclusion and enable children to make progress with their learning; and that children are able to attend their local mainstream school wherever possible

4. The strategy has strong links with the PEP Education Strategy (Priority 8) and the SEND and SEMH Strategies, focusing on improving inclusion for all children, but with a particular focus on the provision of education for children with SEND / additional needs and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people including children in need, looked after children, children at risk of or already being exploited and/or experiencing the criminal justice system, children receiving targeted early help and other children identified by schools as requiring additional support.

B. Rationale and why this matters

5. Relatively low levels of attendance and high levels of fixed term exclusions, particularly in secondary schools, have been a feature of the Portsmouth education landscape for a long time - these are not new findings. We remain concerned about the impact of low attendance and continuing high levels of fixed period exclusions on the life chances and wellbeing of individual children. Attainment outcomes at key stages 2 and 4 remain low in Portsmouth and Portsmouth is now one of a number of Priority Education Investment Areas to address this. We know that being in school consistently is crucial to children making progress and gaining the qualifications they need for success in their lives.

6. We also know that being out of school places children at significant risk in terms of criminal exploitation, involvement in criminal activities and other safeguarding risks. Children also miss out on support for special educational needs and mental health problems.

7. Where children are looked after, periods out of school or with poor attendance can threaten the stability of their placements, leading to more enforced changes for them

and harming their emotional wellbeing. Being fully part of their school community is essential to the sense of belonging and self-worth which is the right of all children. It is crucial to the developmental progression and social networks which will sustain them beyond their statutory school years.

8. The argument for **suspensions** is we believe generally weak based on the evidence available to us. For some children fixed term exclusions can work first time round. For the majority of children who receive more than one exclusion it quickly ceases to act as a deterrent to poor behaviour. Instead it becomes normalised by children as something they come to expect, and contributes to a vicious cycle of low self-esteem and expectations. For teachers who suffer from the impact of poor behaviour and lack of respect, the temporary exclusion of a child demonstrates that school leaders acknowledge the impact and also provides them with a short period of respite. It is also sometimes seen as the only equitable way to maintain clear consistent and expectations of good behaviour. However, the price paid by a minority of children for this approach is very high. There is moreover no evidence that the threat of exclusion is what keeps the behaviour of other children good.

9. In the case of **reduced timetables** for children, the reasons for such measures should be exceptional and limited, short term and require parental consent. A clear plan should be in place to support early transition back into full time education. Early Help Assessments should be considered for all cases. Reduced timetables that go well beyond six weeks rarely succeed in positive outcomes for the children concerned.

C. Background

10. Schools in Portsmouth have had to endure two extraordinary academic years in which the global Coronavirus pandemic has put significant pressure on school leaders, teachers and other staff. This has extended to early years settings and post 16 providers. They have all been faced with the immense challenges of providing Covid secure and safe environments when children and young people have been in school, developing and delivering remote learning options at speed to ensure learning can continue at home and supporting families practically and emotionally in a wide range of ways. Despite the full return to school the impact of Covid on school attendance continues.

11. Whilst many children have returned to school since the restrictions were eased in June 2021, early provisional data for attendance - and particularly persistent absence - for 2021-22 indicates a significant post-pandemic rise in school absence. It is likely that this will be found nationally and not just with the provisional Portsmouth data. A 'post-pandemic recovery' lens does need to be placed on how we now tackle a larger issue than we had before. The reasons for absence will have shifted over the past 2 years. For example, parents may be more concerned about the spread of infection and may be more inclined to keep children at home if they are showing signs of illness, or if they know there are illnesses in the community, whereas in previous times they may have sent children in to school.

12. There appears to be an increase in anxiety amongst parents and children linked to the pandemic and also wider societal issues, with more children and young people

experiencing poor mental health. Furthermore, attendance may not be seen as quite so important following periods of on-line, home learning.

13. There are still a significant number of children who are not regularly returning to school when they could be. We also know that some children have experienced fixed term exclusions from school over this course of time. We also know that a significant number of children are on reduced timetables, which whilst not subject to a formal fixed exclusion, are nevertheless not able to attend school full time.

14. It is clear from the studies which have been undertaken nationally, and from the evidence Portsmouth school leaders have shared, that the pandemic has had a significant impact on children's learning. Historically, we also know that children in Portsmouth have experienced, pre-pandemic, more lost school time than most other areas, including areas with as much or greater levels of social and economic deprivation than Portsmouth.

D. The evidence base and why change is needed (21/22 data to be added in March 23)

15. There are a number of key performance indicators around school attendance and exclusion which the DfE publishes for all upper tier Local Authority areas. The tables below outline the most <u>reliable</u> position (pre-pandemic) with regard to these key indicators, including our position against all 152 upper tier LA areas.

16. Exclusions data is also available for 2019/20 which paints a rather more positive picture but due to the impact of the pandemic the figures have to be treated with a high degree of caution. The DfE did not collect absence data for the Spring and Summer Terms 2020 due to the pandemic and there is therefore no full year 2019/20 absence data to provide comparisons with.

Overall absence primary	2018/19	2019/20
	4.1%	n/a
National rank	82nd	n/a
3 year trend	Steady	n/a
Comparators: for this measure, Portsmouth is 2nd highest compared to 11 most similar LA areas. Only Telford and Wrekin have better outcomes.		

Overall absence secondary	2018/19	2019/20
	6.7%	n/a
National rank	146th	n/a
3 year trend	worsening	n/a
Comparators: the only LA areas with worse performance are: Salford, Knowsley, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool.		

Persistent absence primary (% of pupils)	2018/19	2019/20
	8.7%	n/a
National rank	94th	n/a
3 year trend	worsening	n/a

Comparators: for this measure, Portsmouth is 2nd highest compared to 11 most similar LA areas. Only Telford and Wrekin have better outcomes.

Persistent absence secondary (% of pupils)	2018/19	2019/20
	17.9%	n/a
National rank	144th	n/a
3 year trend	worsening	n/a
Comparators: the only LA areas with worse performance are: Blackpool, Redcar and Cleveland, Salford, Knowsley, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough.		

Fixed term exclusions (suspensions) primary	2018/19	2019/20
	1.58%	1.1%
National rank	108th	100th
3 year trend	Improving	

Fixed term exclusions (suspensions) secondary	2018/19	2019/20
	17.94%	7.5%
National rank	134th	97th
3 year trend	Worsening (nearly quadrupled	

Permanent exclusions primary	2018/19	2019/20
	0.01%	0.02%
National rank	39th	104th
3 year trend	No change	

Permanent exclusions secondary	2018/19	2019/20
	0.15%	0.09%
National rank	47th	50th
3 year trend	Improving	

17. There are three other key measures of educational absence where robust and official national data is unavailable:

- Reduced (or part-time) timetables
- Severe absence - less than 50%
- Requests for elective home education (pupil de-registrations from school)

18. Local data is provided below for reduced timetables. The figures indicated that the number of pupils commencing a reduced timetable has increased but this also reflects a greater level of tracking and monitoring by the Local Authority

Reduced Timetables				
	Autumn Term 17/18	Autumn Term 18/19	Autumn Term 19/20	Autumn Term 20/21
Number of pupils commencing a reduced timetable	55	60	100	125

19. By the end of the Autumn term 2021 there were 360 **severely absent children** of which:

   o 156 have a social worker or Early Help worker as lead Professional with a relevant safeguarding/care or early help plan in place
   o 204 are without an LA Lead Professional. Many had school-led plans of differing types but the quality of these is unknown
   o 28 children had not been to school at all in the term
   o 67 children have EHCPs of which 31 were at Harbour, 4 at Cliffdale, 5 at Redwood Park and 6 at Mary Rose
   o 70 are under the age of 11 (NCY 6 and below). 290 are of secondary age

20. Portsmouth is not a wealthy city and there is a **correlation between deprivation and poor childhood outcomes**. To provide further context, three deprivation indicators are given below with the city's ranking compared to other local authority areas. The figures demonstrate that there are many other areas that have higher levels of deprivation than Portsmouth and yet are doing better when it comes to school attendance and rate of exclusions.

   • 97th of 152 in terms of % children in low income families (where 1st is low)
   • 127th of 152 for % of primary children eligible for Free School Meals
   • 119th of 152 for % of secondary children eligible for Free School Meals

E. Previous and current work in the city to improve school attendance and reduce exclusions

21. Over the past few years there have been a number of pieces of work aimed at, among other things, improving school attendance and reducing exclusions. Much of this work has been city wide and multi-agency, involving the council, education settings, health, the voluntary sector, etc. Details of these are summarised below:

   a) **High profile school attendance campaign** *'miss school miss out'* and the subsequent welcome back and return to school campaigns and associated resources for schools. The *miss school miss out* campaign is considered to be important and further consultation with parents is planned for a relaunch following a pause as a result of the pandemic.

b) **Work of the Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG)** - tracking and monitoring of school attendance and exclusions. The Group is now a sub-group of the PEP Removing Barriers to Inclusion Group.

c) **Implementation of the SEND Strategy**

d) **SEMH Partnership, Vision, Principles and Framework** - in 2018 we established regular meetings with partners to co-ordinate provision in school (school nurses. CAMHS, MABs, etc). We also agreed a Vision for SEMH Inclusion, a set of principles and outlined a 4 tier framework to structure our work around reducing demand for Alternative Provision, including reducing exclusions.

e) **Emotional Wellbeing Strategy** - in 2017 we rolled out the Strategy including a wide range of improvements to address a range of mental health issues impacting on children's inclusion and learning.

f) **PACE** - in 2018 we launched the **Turnaround Project** and more importantly in terms of driving inclusion - the PACE Training - with over 160 school professionals trained in the PACE model.

g) **Relational Practice in Schools** - since 2017, we have trained professionals across 30 schools in RP, set up the RP School Network and provided intensive whole school support to some schools in partnership with Portsmouth Mediation Service.

h) **Attachment Aware Schools** - schools have received training from the Virtual School.

i) **Near-to-School and Short Stay School** - have been developed as options to avoid long-term exclusions.

   Ordinarily Available Provision - in 2018 we published a shared OAP, refreshed in 2022, for the city including expectations of schools vis-à-vis SEMH support.

j) **Portsmouth Inclusion Education Quality Mark** (**PIE QM**) - In 2018 we launched the PIE QM to improve school leadership, culture and practice around inclusion - this is a self-assessment tool supported by peer moderation, in order to identify strengths and areas for development in relation to inclusive practice. This piece of work helped to identify training requirements for our workforce and has helped shape the plans proposed within the Priority Education Investment Area programme submitted to the DFE

k) **Elective Home Education (EHE) Protocol** - agreed by all schools in 2019. This has reduced demand for EHE pre-pandemic as well as resulting in only a small increase during the pandemic - in stark contrast to most other LAs in the South East who have witnessed significant increases in EHE. Now it appears that requests for EHE is rising and it is important to understand what is driving the increase.

l) **Reduced Timetables** - revised process and tracking by the LA of those children on reduced timetables that exceed 6 weeks and where there is no clear plan in place to ensure a transition to full time education.

m) **Team Around the School** - in 2019 the LA piloted two schools for joint work with leadership teams to improve SEMH and safeguarding practice, building on previous work.

n) **Inclusion Outreach Service** - in 2019 the LA launched the new outreach model, with a more flexible, multi-agency offer of support for schools where they have concerns about meeting children's additional needs. The outreach support is available to all mainstream schools, delivered by a range of professionals from a partnership of services including Multi-agency Behaviour Service (MABS), Solent Academies Trust, Children's Therapy Service, and experienced Outreach SENCOs from mainstream schools in the city.

o) **PCC traded services** including Attendance and Education Psychology.

p) **Identifying schools needing focussed support** - in 2019 we used data (and a new way to stratify schools) which identified 9 'very high' or 'high' excluding' schools and 10 medium excluding schools to work with

q) **Mental Health Support Teams** - in 2019 we commissioned (Wave 2) MHSTs with an additional (Wave 4) Team secured in 2020. All schools now have access to MHSTs

r) A task and finish group with e Virtual school land partners to investigate what we need to do to improve attendance for children we care for.

s) The "go to grow" Early Years campaign to promote consistent, regular attendance in nursery settings.

22. Since the pandemic started, more work and planning has taken place all of which have the potential to impact on school attendance and exclusions. These include:

a) **LA Education Link Co-ordinators** - during the pandemic, systems were established with schools to track vulnerable children and respond to a wide range of issues impacting on families as a result of the lockdown, including RAG-rated child level data on spreadsheets, LA Link Co-ordinators attached to schools and colleges and the Children's Hub. These systems have now been adjusted with a particular focus on children who are severe non-attenders, with attendance below 50%. The vulnerable children tracking team has now been established as a permanent team, with additional funding and recruitment to 3 dedicated Link Co-ordinator posts, due to the positive impact of this work. This being extended further to include Early Years and Post-16 providers.

b) **Guidance for schools** - updated school attendance guidance for schools was published in September 2021. It provided: guidance on a range of strategies to improve school attendance; graduated response flowchart and guidance; chronic non-attendance flow chart; and initiatives and local support available to schools to help improve school attendance.

c) **Studybugs** - using real-time attendance and exclusion data at child-level to reduce absence and exclusions. 60 of 61 schools have signed up to this.

d) **Family Support Plans** - a multi-agency working group has redesigned the Early Help Assessment to make it easier to use for schools to be lead professionals and do holistic family-based assessment to reduce exclusions/raise

e) **Review of in-school Alternative Provision (AP)** - the LA commissioned Delta Education Trust to review on site secondary AP (tier 3 of our model). The reviews were completed in Autumn 2021 and learning is being shared across the Lead Links network

f) **Tailoring MHSTs to meet local need** - extending the MHST offer, in addition to the CBT model to better focus on children with 'behavioural' challenges. Better alignment with MABS and a more sensible approach to whole school work in line with our principles and approaches.

g) **Termly LA School Resource Allocation Meetings** - ensuring the local authority support services are appropriately and proportionally allocated to schools supported by a termly review of all schools.

h) **Supporting neuro-diverse children in school** - Portsmouth has been successful in securing innovation funding from NHS England allowing us to work in partnership with schools across the city to transform support for children who have a level of neuro-diversity that is impacting on their engagement with and enjoyment of school. The programme will have 4 key areas of focus: training and development for the school; a programme of specific support for schools; development of our existing Parent Carer Forum to create a central hub from which small, local forums will be set up; and development of a digital platform that provides families, young people and practitioner's access to a range of resources and tools, up to date information and interactive functions, building on existing good practice such as the new Portsmouth ND Resource Pack.

23. All of the above is in addition to the significant efforts by every school in the city to increase attendance and reduce exclusions. It should also be noted that all of these initiatives build on a long standing set of very good arrangements in terms of the local authority's Inclusion Services (statutory and traded), the Multi Agency Behavioural Service (MABS) and wider health, early help and safeguarding services.

F. What collectively we need to do - positive success factors

24. We believe that there are a number of **positive success factors** which it is realistic for us as a Partnership to achieve, working together. They may seem obvious and we know they reflect many existing aspirations in schools, but we believe they are worth setting out here to underpin the work we want to take forward over the coming months and years:

a) **High quality external challenge and support for families who need it by services beyond school which work hand in hand with schools**, and which champion strongly the importance for children of full attendance and positive participation in school life. The LA is committed to continuous improvement in its targeted tier 3 and 4 services for families and are aiming to be judged "Outstanding" by Ofsted. A key part of this is the best possible joint work with schools to support attendance and good behaviour by children. The LA want to hear from schools when they fall short in this aspiration and recognise that there will probably always be a feeling in schools that more of this support is needed than the LA is able to provide. Investment by the LA has been consistent over recent years with a cross party commitment to continue to invest in targeted early help as well as statutory social care. Ofsted judge the quality of the support to be "Good" and peer scrutiny continues to be positive. With continuing feedback from schools we should be able to build on this foundation to keep improving the contribution which these services can make.

b) **A consistent approach to championing school attendance by all agencies including the NHS**. The LA and NHS partners are also committed to maintaining strong health visiting, school nursing and other NHS services which support families' understanding of the importance of education. The LA is working with the GP network to support GPs to challenge poor attendance at school. Any negligent behaviour by families, will be robustly challenged by the LA through the strong partnership networks and by colleagues in other parts of the NHS, particularly local commissioners of GPs.

c) **High quality early help support and challenge for vulnerable families by pastoral teams in schools**, using Family Support Plan. Across the country, schools provide early intervention support and challenge for families and Portsmouth schools are no exception. We know that pastoral capacity is stretched. We also know that the right conversation with a family, at the right time, including connecting families with other support in the city such as VCS organisations, housing and welfare support, can make a real difference. There will be an expectation that in the case of any child who is severely absent there should be a Family Support Plan in place.

d) **A consistent city-wide culture in schools of high expectations for all**, in which all children feel both challenged and supported to meet those expectations and where all children know that they belong. **Developing and maintaining an effective relational culture in schools with high behaviour expectations is** not a "soft approach to discipline". It is very challenging for both children and adults. We know from examples both elsewhere in the country and in Portsmouth, however, that such a culture can be created and maintained. Consistently championed it could reduce significantly the school absence, voluntary and enforced, which blights the lives of too many children in our city. A key strand of this strategy is to take forward a whole school approach to relational practice building on previous work to support restorative practice in schools. Details of this approach is set out in Section G.

e) **High quality, effective teaching of an appropriate and ambitious curriculum**. Planning to teach the knowledge and cultural capital that our children need in order

to access and understand the curriculum is vital to enable them to engage with education and go on to thrive in later life. We know that this is already the key aim of all schools in the city, as is the identification of barriers that some children face in school and within each subject discipline. It is important to underline its importance, however, in increasing attendance and reducing exclusion.

 f) **A rich extra-curricular offer, and expectation, for all children**. Many children in Portsmouth take full advantage of the enrichment opportunities schools offer, in sport, arts or other interest areas. Children who look forward to doing things they love want to come to school and are motivated when they are there.

G. Focus on severe absence

25. As referred to in section D and the snapshot of data from October 2021 we continue to have a relatively high number of children (309) who are severely absent from school, i.e. less than 50% attendance. And of these children, less than half have a named Lead Professional.

26. A key strand of this strategy will be to ensure all chronically absent children have a plan in place either through a Family Support or plans developed as a result of being open to tier 3 and 4 services, including an expectation of having a Lead Professional in place.

27. Partners will continue to share information with the Missing Exploited and Trafficked (MET) Group and Early Help, encouraging schools to complete a Family Support Plan and have a Lead Professional in place, working with Early Help and / or contacting MASH where school interventions and previous legal sanctions have failed.

28. The role of the LA Link Co-ordinators will be an important factor, working closely with schools to track and monitor chronically absent children and to make sure that appropriate plans are in place.

H. Focus on relational practice

29. The early work on Restorative Practice in schools from 2016 - 2019 had some notable successes, although most schools tended to focus on restorative practice with specific children and held the work in their pastoral and safeguarding functions.

30. Where schools have embraced relational practice as their school ethos and approach, attendance can improve and suspensions and exclusions reduce. Trafalgar School (part of Salterns Academy Trust), have exemplified what can be achieved by taking the whole-school approach (referred to **relational** rather than restorative practice). We also know from Hull and Leeds, where this whole-school approach has been adopted by the majority of schools in these areas, that exclusions have been markedly reduced as a result. See Appendix 2 for evidence of impact in other areas.

31. The Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) Strategic Board agreed that the city needs to take a whole-system strategic approach to tackling the very high levels of absence and exclusion in the city and Relational Practice in schools is now a major plank of the strategy to improve outcomes in these areas.

32. Relational Practice is not a silver bullet and there are other things we need to do as part of a strategy to reduce schools days lost as set out in this strategy and detailed in sections E and F. Curriculum flexibility for particular pupils being one amongst many others. Moreover, we know the things that count can't always be counted and we do expect to see a wide range of other major benefits from relational practice in schools including improved relationships, children feeling safer and happier at school, reduced anxiety etc. The direct and indirect impact on mental health and educational progress and attainment should not be underplayed. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to set an early expectation that relational practice in schools will make a very significant impact on:

- Days lost to exclusion
- School attendance, and in particular, reducing the proportion of children who are persistently and chronically absent
- Number of pupils on reduced timetables
- Demand for Alternative Provision

33. Schools have been invited to participate in **'Waves' of implementation** 11of our 61 schools have completed phase one of Wave One starting in 2021/22, with 17 more schools starting wave 2 in January 2023

34. Three key resources needed to roll out relational practice in our schools are in place:
- A commitment from Headteachers and their senior leadership teams, governing boards and Multi Academy Trusts to ensure a whole-school approach is adopted and followed through
- The Local Authority working in partnership with the Salterns Academy Trust who will lead this work on behalf of the Portsmouth Education Partnership facilitating school visits, school-to-school support and networking
- Support from external professionals providing bespoke packages of support for schools in each Wave

I. A shared mission

35. Back in the late 1990s, Portsmouth was the highest permanent excluding (now referred to as expulsions) local authority in England - 152nd out of 152. Within three years, we had moved to the top half of that table. 20 years later we remain in the top quartile. We have also made improvements in recent years in the levels of reduced timetables and elective home education.

36. Whilst suspension (were fixed term exclusions), part-time timetables and absence are more complex issues, history does suggest that radical improvement across the public service delivery system can be done at pace and be sustained. Under the auspices of the Portsmouth Education Partnership, and alongside partners in the police, NHS, parent representative bodies and the voluntary and community sector, we co-produce and jointly deliver a coherent, ambitious strategy to make a radical difference to levels of attendance and exclusions in the city. The success factors set out in section F reflect a view about some key elements, but we need to work together on a shared mission - with across the board commitment - to make that step change.

37. To do this, we believe that we should hold ourselves and each other to account in a restorative and relational *high support: high challenge* way. We should be prepared to do things differently, change the structures of accountability and planning, be unafraid to learn from what works and doesn't work locally, and be open to learning from other places and the evidence of what works nationally and internationally. Equally, we must not throw everything away - the long list of initiatives set out in section E includes some very good work, much of which has not had the chance fully to impact due to the pandemic. The city has an abundance of good thinkers, good developments and good practice from which to build. We see this mission as a joint leadership challenge, led by the PEP, but involving everyone with a role to play.

J. Governance, accountability and targets

38. The Portsmouth Education Partnership and SEND Board already have in place structures which can oversee and monitor this strategy in the shape of the Removing Barriers to Inclusion Group (RBIG) and the Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG) which reports into the RBIG.   Much of the current and planned work set out in section E sits within these groups. The implementation plan, below, shows where the governance for each strand of work lies, including monitoring detailed plans.

39. The Groups will be accountable to the PEP Strategic Board who will receive reports on a termly basis. For 22/23 the PEP Strategic Board has agreed that one of its four top priorities will be a focus on reducing exclusions and improving school attendance, so will therefore be committed to scrutinising, and supporting this work.

40. The success of this strategy will ultimately be measured by improvements in school attendance and a reduction in school suspensions, against the last set of reliable data from 2018/19.

41. A set of 3-year targets, following analysis of local, national and statistical neighbour performance, were set to achieve by the end of the 2023/24 academic year. The rationale for the targets was that for Primary phase (where we have historically stronger performance), Portsmouth should aim to be at or near the top of the statistical neighbour pack and that for Secondary phase we should be aiming for above statistical neighbour average. This would represent significant progress whilst at the same time being proportionate, ambitious and achievable.

42. Early provisional data for attendance - and particularly persistent absence - for 2021-22 seems to indicate a very significant post-pandemic rise in school absence. It is likely that this will be found nationally and not just with the provisional Portsmouth data. **In light of this the 23/24 targets set out below will need resetting.**

	2018/19 (pre-pandemic baseline)	2023/24 Target
Overall absence rate in primary	4.1	3.5
Overall absence rate in secondary	6.7	5.0
Persistent absence rate in primary	8.7	6.8
Persistent absence rate in secondary	17.9	13.5

Fixed term exclusions / suspensions in Primary	1.08	0.6
Fixed term exclusions / suspensions in Secondary	7.47	5.5
Reduction in the number of children on reduced timetables	125	70
Chronically absent children to have a Named lead Professional and a plan in place	44%	100%

43. In additional to the Local Authority level targets, the PEP expects MATS and schools to set and review aspirational targets to improve attendance and reduce exclusion at an individual school level. It is recommended that schools set targets that would place them in, at least, the top half of similar schools nationally, such as FFT and EEF.

Implementation plan 22/23

44. The 'post-pandemic recovery' lens does need to be placed on how we now tackle a larger issue than we had before. The reasons for absence will have shifted over the past 2 years as outlined in section C. In addition, we need to consider the new DfE Attendance Guidance

45. We will continue to adopt the approach of 'school attendance is everyone's business', turning the rhetoric into tangible reality

Actions / priorities	Monitored by:
1. Implementing **Relational Practice** across all Portsmouth schools	Relational Practice Steering Group - reporting into Removing Barriers to Inclusion (RBIG) Group Priority Area for RBIG
2. Engagement and **consultation with young people** on the reasons for school absence	Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG) - reporting into RBIG
3. Review effectiveness and impact of the campaign 'Miss School: Miss Out' **consulting with parents and carers** and implementing a post pandemic **Attendance campaign,**	Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG) - reporting into RBIG
4. **Making school attendance everyone's business** *Priority Education Investment Area: Priority 3.* Maximise the opportunities for learning through a continued focus on improving	Priority Area for RBIG

school **attendance** including reducing persistent absence and the use of suspensions and reduced timetables. Ensure the workforce understand and are able to tackle the barriers to attendance for individuals and groups of pupils, and implement bespoke approaches to removing those barriers	
5. In light of the new DfE Attendance Guidance: Consideration of how to recreate the functions of LA Education Welfare Officer role, which was cut in 2013 at the start of the period of LA austerity, to provide direct support and challenge to families in addition to the functions of Pastoral Staff in schools	Priority Area for RBIG
6.**Severe Non-Attendance** and the response of NHS services (GPs, school nursing, therapy services, CAMHS) in addressing school absence	Behaviour and Attendance Group (BAG) - reporting into RBIG
7.**Studybugs -** using real time data to support schools and inform strategy	BAG
8. Rolling out the **Family Support Plan**	PSCP
9. **Neurodiversity in Schools** and the ND profile for neurodiverse children	ND Steering Group Reporting into SEND Board
10. Review the continuum of **Alternative Provision**	Priority Area for RBIG, requiring its own governance structure. TBC
Business as Usual and Teams that contribute to this strategy	Monitored through business plans and line management arrangements
11.**Turnaround Project**	DELTA/THS Standing Item on the RBIG agenda
12.**Inclusion Outreach Service**	IOS steering group Standing Item on the RBIG agenda
13. **Elective Home Education**	School Attendance Team
14. **Reduced Timetables**	School Attendance Team

15. NEET Youth Prevention Strategy	Post 16 Commissioning Manager
16. LA Education Link Co-ordinators and introduction of **Severely Absent meetings**	Admissions, Exclusions and Reintegration Manager
17. Mental Health Support Teams and the linkage to wider mental health work in schools and beyond (MHST, My Happy Mind, Kooth etc)	PEP and Inclusion Manager

Appendix 2: Evidence of the Impact of Relational Practice in Other Local Authorities

Some evidence of outcomes and impact Relational Practice at whole system and culture change level in a multi-agency setting and across large local authorities.

Leeds Children's Services

"A unique investment and commitment to "Restorative Practices" is having a transformational impact on culture and professional practice across both social work and the Children's Partnership. This places children, young people and families at the heart of decisions that affect them" Ofsted Report - Leeds City Council, 2015

- Leeds looked after children figures down by 132
- Leeds child protection plans halved -1232 to 687
- Time spent in the social care system (from 34 weeks to 24 weeks) and average saving per family of £755

Leeds Children Service were rated by Ofsted as Good across the board with outstanding for leadership – Restorative practice was explicitly named in report 2015. Leeds was subsequently rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2018

LA wide data for Leeds on suspensions and permanent exclusions indicates a positive and sustained impact in these areas.

	18/19	19/20	National Rank	3 year trend
Primary Suspensions	0.95	0.63	41	Improving
Secondary Suspensions	11.94	7.21	85	Improving
Primary Exclusions	0	0	1	Maintaining
Secondary Exclusions	0.02	0.02	9	Improving

Examples of school level impact in Leeds

Carr Manor Secondary
Over a period of 3 years:
- Pupil attendance increased from 89.5% to 95%
- Attendance of pupils receiving FSM 84.5% to 94%
- Persistent Absence reduced from 12.5% to 6.8%
- Fixed Term Exclusion reduced from 165 a year to 14

Collingwood Primary School
Over a period of 18 months:
- Pupil attendance increased from 87.7% to 95%
- KS2 exclusion from class during lessons (average per week) - reduced from 60 to 1
- Racist Incidents (average per week) - reduced from 4 to 1

Endeavour High School
Over a period of 18 months
- Fixed term exclusion reduced from 272 to 151
- Incidents of verbal abuse reduced from 114 to 62
- Staff absence reduced from 1380 days to 517 days

Other area wide impact

Stockport Children Services

Whole system, whole family, partnership working underpinned by restorative practice across Stockport, contributing to £1.2m savings for looked after children

N E Lincolnshire

- The number of children on child protection plans down by 50%
- The number of child in need cases down by 18%

-