

BRIEFING PAPER FOR IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION

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| 1. | Date of meeting: | Tuesday 23rd January 2018 |
| 2. | Title: | Children Missing Education Scorecard development |
| 3. | Directorate: | Children and Young People Services |

1. Background

The Local Authority has responsibility to ensure that Children Missing from Education (CME) are identified, reported and tracked, so that suitable educational providers can be found.

The term CME refers to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable alternative education. A suitable education can be approved alternative provision or appropriate Elected Home Education.

Section 436A of the Education Act requires that local authorities make arrangements to establish the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty does not apply to children who are registered at a school and who are not attending regularly; this is addressed via attendance monitoring and Persistent Absence (PA) Work.

The Early Help Service has a responsibility to ensure that protocols are adhered to when a child is known to have left Rotherham and a destination school cannot be tracked. The CME Lead and CME officer as well as Early Help Attendance leads have a responsibility to support schools with the identification of children missing in education.

Rotherham's Early Help Offer was launched in January 2016. This followed a restructure in October 2015 when a new management team was established and a number of separate services and professional disciplines were brought together to form integrated, multi-disciplinary, Early Help Locality Teams.

A key element of the service integration has been to refocus the work of the Education Welfare Service to enable a more collaborative and inclusive approach to issues such as poor attendance, exclusion, Persistent Absence (PA) and Children Missing from Education (CME) rather than focusing on single issues such as attendance.

The integration of Education Welfare into the locality Early Help Team ensures that children and families are assessed holistically where there is evidence of additional need which illustrates a culture change for practitioners and partners.

2. Key Issues

Until recently, the CME data had gaps and required work to ensure that consistent processes and data inputting were in place across the different systems used to capture CME information.

This has led to the redesign of the reporting function and the development of a new CME Performance Scorecard. One of the key changes to CME reporting is to include predominant issues captured for new children identified as CME so that a better

understanding of potential vulnerability can be established, alongside a focus on the outcomes for children that were reported as CME.

In Quarter 3 (See CME Performance Scorecard) there were 97 children classified as 'new' CME referrals which highlights a reduction when compared with the previous quarter (61 children). This was anticipated as Quarter 2 generally has high numbers of CME because some children can fail to return to their allocated school place after the summer break and this creates an increase in referrals.

Of the newly identified cases of CME, 72.% of children were from the Central area of Rotherham. There were an additional 105 cases that remained open from previous reporting periods, bringing the active caseload to 202 at the end of Quarter 3.

NB: Cases of CME need to remain open until the child is found or until all enquiries have been exhausted and this can mean that cases remain open for extended periods.

The Central locality of Rotherham has consistently higher rates of CME and this is largely due to the mobile and transient nature of families living in the area from Eastern Europe and is associated with travelling back and forth from, the country of origin to the UK.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Controlling Migration Fund has enabled extra resource to assist with key issues that affect the wellbeing of children and their progression in education, such as CME and these workers will spend a considerable amount to their time in local schools in the central locality.

In addition, the fund is facilitating the recruitment of two Community Navigators who will be a shared resource between the Council and the voluntary sector and will offer intensive outreach and detached work to 'find' families that are newly migrant and/or arranging to leave the UK. The Community Navigators will offer support, guidance and link the families to the appropriate services.

This Controlling Migration Fund additional resource will further support the existing work around CME to enable better communication within communities, to raise awareness of the disruption that transience can create for children's educational progress, attendance and outcomes.

3. Key actions and relevant timelines

Following the integration of Education Welfare and CME into the Early Help Offer, detailed work has taken place to enable a 'fit for purpose' performance scorecard and improved management oversight and action.

Mapping CME to schools and capturing rigorous ethnicity data is another important change, as historically this was not done and is an important consideration when aping trends and understanding prevalence.

4. Recommendations to Improving Lives Select Commission

That the content of this briefing is noted.

5. Name and contact details

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