



# Learning on a Page: Children Missing from Education Audit (Dec 2024)

## Background

School Attendance is a significant national challenge since the Covid-19 Pandemic and the associated school closures. Attendance for both primary and secondary school children remains a concern nationally and this is the case in York too, particularly for students with additional vulnerabilities.

Children missing from education is a priority of the City of York Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CYSCP) for 2024/25. In June 2024, a multi-agency audit was undertaken to look at a sample of students with attendance below 20% or less (under one day a week). The focus of this audit was to:

- Understand what the barriers are for students to go into school
- Understand what (if any) other agencies are supporting students
- Understand how we can learn from one another to help young people get back into school

We know that outcomes for students improve when they are accessing education, an education that enables children to fulfil their potential. This is explained in further detail within the [Children and Young People's Plan](#) which sets out our ambitions and provides the city-wide strategic framework for all partners.

## What areas of good practice was highlighted in the audit?

- It was evident that there has been a great deal of multi-agency support offered to the young people and their families.
- The quality of Public Protection Notices (PPN's) which Police use to share concerns have improved to reflect children and young people's voice and their lived experiences.
- Operation Encompass is working well with schools and appropriate measures are being implemented where Domestic Abuse is indicated.
- There was a good example of a child engaging with a commissioned service (Drug and Alcohol provider) when the young person chose not to work with any other agency or service.

- For one young person who is reaching Adulthood, the school is working with Adult Services to continue to support the young person as they transition out of school.
- There was extensive evidence and examples of multi-agency work partnership working. One example included a school collecting children from their homes and taking them into school.
- Schools continue to work with the child, young person and their families to review the education offer, making new suggestions to encourage young people with low school attendance back into school.
- Within health, the GP records for all children who are on a child protection plan are recorded appropriately. For one child, there was appropriate liaison between the paediatrician at York Hospital and the GP. There was also evidence of the hospital policy 'Was Not Brought pathway' being followed.
- There was good evidence of sharing of information between all agencies.

## Key Learning Points

### Learning Point 1

Where a young person is being supported at Section 17 Child in Need (CiN), health records are not always flagged within GP and York Hospital ICT systems. It was highlighted during the audit that specialist health professionals who may know the child or young person best are not routinely invited to Team Around the Child or Family meeting or Child in Need (CiN) meetings. It is recommended for agencies to consider liaising with the child's GP to establish if there are any specialist health care professionals who should be involved with Team Around the Child and Family meetings/Child in Need meetings.

### Learning Point 2

For some of the children audited it is apparent that they expressed not to attend school but it is often not clear as to the reasons why. It is recommended for professionals to fully explore children's wishes and feelings to fully understand why children and young people do not want to attend school.

### Learning Point 3

Professionals working with families need to explore and establish what support networks the child has to ensure that everyone within their network is collectively working to support them and work collaboratively to find solutions for the children to re-engage with education.

## Learning Point 4

Where there is low school attendance the accumulative impact of trauma and a whole family approach is often not always considered holistically. Professionals should consider the whole family when working with a particular child or young person.

## Learning Point 5

All the young people audited, had some level of childhood trauma and or neurodiversity. Practitioners would benefit, from the opportunity to learn more about Trauma Informed Practice and seek appropriate training via their organisation.

## Learning Point 6

The audit identified that due to the complex nature of some of the parents needs e.g. mental health or physical health conditions, substance misuse, victim of Domestic Abuse that some of these children may be fulfilling a caring role for their parent and not wish to attend/unable to attend school for these reasons. Additionally changes to the significance of young carers has been strengthened within '[Working Together 2023](#)'. It is recommended for professionals to familiarise themselves with these changes to ensure that they know how to identify Young Carers. If professionals become aware of a Young Carer then they should engage with [York Carers Forum](#) who are able to provide additional support for these children and young people.

## Useful Tips for Professionals to Consider

- Is the issue of attendance linked to other things happening for a child, young person or their family.
- Professionals should consider whether there are other agencies who might be able to support a family child, young person or their family in a different way.
- Consider Early Help involvement to ensure that the right person at the right time is involved.
- Building relationships are key to working together to support the child and their family.
- Explore wider family networks to see what support they can offer.
- If we know that families can't access education or access support – we need to ensure we are curious enough to find out why that might be. Are we having the right conversations between the right people? How early are we having those conversations?

- How do we all work together around changing the culture around school attendance being ‘everybody’s business’?
- How are we working best with services to support children with additional needs and or disabilities?
- What do we already know what works for a child and young person to encourage them to attend school? How can we be flexible with this?
- Let’s celebrate our successes and share good practice across agencies and with the partnership?

## Useful resources and further reading

[City of York Council School Attendance webpage](#)

[Early Help Strategy](#)

[Early Help Webpage](#) on the Partnership website.

[York Carers Centre](#) support young people aged between 5 and 18 who are helping to look after someone at home.

[Young Carers](#) - Information in relation to Young Carers on the Partnership Website.

### Where do I go for further information?

Please visit the [CYSCP website](#) for up to date information and latest news.

Please also sign up to the [CYSCP Newsletter](#) and follow us on Twitter [@YorkSCP](#)

