



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Time and Date

2.00 pm on Thursday, 13th March, 2025
(Please note change of time)

Place

Diamond Room 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2025
 - b) Matters Arising
4. **SEND Strategy** (Pages 7 - 10)
Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education
5. **Section 19 Policy** (Pages 11 - 46)
Report of the Director of Children and Education
6. **Work Programme** (Pages 47 - 50)
Briefing Note of the Director of Law and Governance
7. **Any Other Business**
Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 5 March 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Tom Robinson Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Birdi, B Christopher, J Gardiner, Mrs S Hanson (Co-opted Member), Mr D Jackson (Co-opted Member), R Lancaster, S Nazir, E M Reeves, R Thay, CE Thomas (Chair), A Tucker and Mr G Vohra (Co-opted Member)

By invitation: Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Public Access

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Tom Robinson

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 13 February 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor CE Thomas (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor B Christopher
Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor R Thay
Councillor A Tucker

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson, David Jackson and Ghulam Vohra

Other Members: Councillor K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)
Councillor P Seaman (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

Others present: N Rock, Head of Stoke Park School

Employees (by Service Area):

Children's and Education S Sen (Director of Children's Services and Education),
R Sugars, A Whitrick

Apologies: Councillor R Lancaster

Public Business

64. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

65. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 16th of January 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record subject to the following amendment to Minute 60/24 headed, "Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Yearly Report".

The following change to be inserted, this replacing the reference to this issue in the earlier Minutes:

"The Chair outlined her views on the recent comments at Parliament concerning grooming gangs in Coventry and the steps the local authority had taken in preventing and combating child exploitation. This was challenged by a Member of the Board and noted."

66. **Coventry Education Performance**

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) considered a Briefing Note and a presentation of the Director of Children's Services and Education regarding the Coventry Education Performance.

The Briefing Note updated Members of the Board on Coventry's 2024 performance in the following areas:

- Trends in pupil numbers
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Phonics
- Key Stage (KS) 2
- Key Stage (KS) 4 (provisional)
- 16-19 attainment (provisional)
- Attendance and exclusions
- Difference in performance between males and females
- Performance of vulnerable groups

Officers highlighted the statistical information set out in section 4.4 of the report which stated:

- There had been an increase in pupil population over the last 5 years from 57,570 in 2020 to 61,566 in 2024 – 6.9% increase since 2020.
- The number of children eligible for free school meals had increased from 20.1% in 2020 to 28.2% in 2023 – an 8.1% increase over 5 years.
- There had been an increase of 5.9% in non-white British children between 2020 and 2024.
- The proportion of the pupil population receiving SEN support had also increased by 2,157 (2.6%) since 2020, and 726 (increase of 1%) more children on an EHCP.

In considering the Briefing Note and presentation, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- A national increase in number on free school meals and how this could be down to changes in Universal Credit.
- How SEND performance compared to national averages and the work being done to improve the service.
- That there was no data on Key Stage 3 performance as this was not assessed nationally, but progress made at KS3 was reflected in KS4 results.
- How schools and the Council were providing for the estimated 4000 new students in the city and how population growth and transience was affecting schools and different areas in different ways.
- Recognition of the good work supporting pupils with English as an additional language and the positive impact that additional languages can have on learning.
- How parents were encouraged to ensure their children were attending school.
- That the presented data didn't include home educated children, and further how legislative changes would impact home education providers.
- That independent schools were not included in the discussion and the data.

- The cause of exclusion numbers increasing in schools, particularly SEN schools.
- If mainstream and special schools could follow a model of sharing facilities and green spaces where geographically appropriate.
- How exclusions impacted children's grades and those of their classmates, and how exclusions were judged and implemented.

Members requested that the following information be circulated to them:

- Further information from SACRE on the numbers of children receiving religious education (if available).
- Data regarding the proportion of unaccompanied asylum seekers in receipt of free school meals.
- The Report of the Task and Finish Group on Autism.
- The One Strategic Plan Sufficiency Report from 2023-24.
- The new model for managing exclusions be added to the work programme for 25/26.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2):

- 1. Agrees to note the information in the report about the Coventry Education Performance.**
- 2. Agrees that a letter be sent to Natalie Rock, Head of Stoke Park School, and representatives of the other education partnerships, formally thanking them for their work, and noting the challenges faced and improvements made.**

67. Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) considered a Briefing Note of the Director of Children's Services and Education which provided information on the Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge outcomes and next steps.

Officers noted that in August 2022, Children's Services were rated as a 'Good' service by Ofsted and the Youth Justice Service were graded 'Outstanding' after an Inspection by HMI Probation in February 2023. Followed by a Joint Targeted Area Inspection focusing on Serious Youth Violence receiving a positive report in May 2024. The service had five Children's Homes, all rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in the last twelve months and an ambitious residential homes expansion programme to increase the number of Children's Homes further, with a further two due to open this year.

The Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge was held on 15-17 October 2024. Peer Challenges are delivered by experienced officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflects the requirements and focus of the Peer Challenge. The Team consisted of five Peers:

- Lead Peer – a former Chief Executive
- Social Care Peer – Director of Children and Families
- Finance Peer – Director of Resources (S151)
- Commissioning peer – Head of Commissioning

- Peer Challenge Manager – Local Government Association (LGA)

The Peer team were asked to focus on four key areas as agreed with the Council.

- Cost of placements
- Structure, capacity and opportunities through integration.
- Understanding and analysing costs, and incorporating best practice
- Use of organisational capacity, resources, and support

Officers briefed Members on how the LGA Peer Challenge Team had provided a series of recommendations, which would be developed into an action plan to embrace new ways of working and support more targeted early help work to meet needs at the earliest point in the system.

In considering the Briefing Note, the Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed matters as summarised below:

- Why some details were omitted, if there could be more specifics on changes, and further numbers, and whether this could be brought back to the Board on a more regular basis.
- Whether the proposals in the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill would change their approach and if so, how this would be reflected in any action planning.

RESOLVED that the Children’s and Young People Scrutiny Board (2):

- 1) Notes the information in the Briefing Note on the Children’s Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge.**
- 2) Requested that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board on the Progress on the Peer Review Action Plan.**

68. Work Programme

RESOLVED that the Children’s and Young People Scrutiny Board (2) notes the Work Programme 2024/25 and that:

- 1. The ‘Early Help’ item replaces the ‘Family Healthy Lifestyles’ item for the April 2025 meeting of the Board.**
- 2. Pending the Department for Education confirmation of funding, a report scheduled to be submitted to the Cabinet Member headed ‘Sufficiency – Early Years, Mainstream and SEND’ has been moved from the 13th of March 2025 meeting of the Board to a meeting of the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills in the next Municipal Year.**

69. Any Other Business

There were no items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 12.10 pm)



Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board 2

Date: Thursday 13th March 2025

Subject: SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy Refresh

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To report on the planned process that is underway, to coproduce a new Local Area SEND and AP strategy, which will reflect both the local and national context of increased demand and complexity of needs.
- 1.2 The joint strategy will have a clear focus on the Government's anticipated direction of travel, workforce capacity, sufficiency of specialist provision, joint commissioning and preparation for adulthood within a financially sustainable envelope. Most importantly, it will be coproduced with children, young people, their families and all partners.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the information provided to comment and/or raise questions
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

3 National Context

- 3.1 The current SEND statutory system was enacted in 2014. In 2019 an All Party parliamentary committee published its report, concluding that the system was not fit for purpose. In response the Government committed to a major review. Consultation on reform to the system began in March 2022, "SEND Review: right support, right place, right time" and a SEND and alternative provision improvement plan was published in March 2023.
- 3.2 In December 2024, the current Education Committee launched a new enquiry, focused on "finding solutions to the crisis in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision. [Education Committee solving the send crisis major inquiry](#)
- 3.3 It is evident therefore that system reform will take time. Within this context demand for support across the system, but particularly for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan; continues to grow significantly year on year both

nationally and locally. As a consequence the SEN system has become financially unsustainable and increased demand for both service and provision has created sufficiency challenges.

4 Local Context

- 4.1 The SEND and AP Partnership Board retains strategic oversight of demand growth across the City. Agencies work together to find solutions which require partnership and innovation. Examples include an integrated speech and language offer working with Speech and Language UK, the implementation of an integrated workforce strategy that targets training for school based staff (including both teaching assistants and teachers) and the development of specialist bases within mainstream schools (enhanced resource centres) supported by outreach from special schools.
- 4.2 In order to ensure that Coventry's local area SEND response is evidence based a [Coventry SEND & AP Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024](#), (JSNA) was co- led by public health. The JSNA underpins the evidence base for commissioning across the partnership. It also informs the partnership self-evaluation framework (SEF) and supporting action plan. The refreshed JSNA, took into account the 2021 census data. It evidences in detail the significant change in population growth and ethnicity, particularly within the child population. It is agreed that the JSNA will continue to be refreshed at two yearly intervals.
- 4.3 Coventry's Local Area revised SEND and AP Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) was co-produced with all partners, including children and families. It was approved by the SEND and AP Partnership Board at its meeting in June 2024 and subsequently the Health and Well-being Board. The SEF is reviewed annually in readiness for the next academic year. It is noted that the SEF mirrors the new SEND and AP Local Area Inspection framework and will be a key document to support the pending inspection.
- 4.4 The partnership has identified six key thematic areas within the SEF as priority focus areas for the current academic year 2024/25. Priorities 1 to 4 relate to demand growth and the post pandemic impact on children's development, priority 5 was identified by young people and families, priority 6 is retained, to secure a continuing spotlight on Coventry's exemplary development of supported internships, with the intent of ensuring the offer continues to grow at pace.
- 4.5 The action plan embraces the Government's direction of travel as set out in the [Government SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#) and targets the partnership ambition to continue to:
- expand capacity for early identification and intervention;
 - secure a skilled and confident workforce across the partnership with a clear focus on early years settings and schools;
 - expand the range of inclusive mainstream school provision;
 - deliver a sufficiency of local publicly funded specialist provision;
 - promote opportunities to expand the concept of an inclusive City which offers places to go and things to do;
 - deliver positive outcomes in adulthood including meaningful employment.

The six key thematic priorities drawn from the SEF, inform the joint local area SEND and AP action plan for the academic year 2024/25:

Priority 1.	School readiness - focus on child development in the pre-school years
Priority 2.	Workforce strategy
Priority 3.	Extending inclusive mainstream environments
Priority 4.	Sufficiency of local high quality publicly funded specialist placements
Priority 5.	Extending the Local Offer – promoting inclusive communities
Priority 6.	Expanding transition pathways into adulthood – focus supported internships

4.6 A strong focus has been placed on developing a workforce strategy, to support the capacity of mainstream schools to meet a growing level of special educational needs. This has been impactful and well received by schools and early years settings.

5 Review of Coventry Local Area SEND and AP Strategy

5.1 The current SEND and AP strategy: [Send Strategy-2019-to-2022-lifting-the-cloud-of-limitation](#) is under review, its development which will focus on coproduction, will be overseen by the Board alongside the finalisation of the supporting action plan

5.2 A partnership SEND Strategy workshop will be held on 11th March 2025 bringing a range of partners together to identify shared priorities. The work will be cascaded out to a range of stakeholder groups including children, young people and their families and education, health and care settings and services. The draft strategy is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2025. It will then be presented for approval.

6 Health Inequalities Impact

6.1 There is no impact on health inequalities for these recommendations. However the SEND and AP strategy and supporting action plan, will aim to have a direct and positive impact on improving life outcomes for all children and young people who have identified additional needs.

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Public report
Cabinet

**Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
Cabinet**

13 March 2025
18 March 2025

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor K Sandhu

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Children and Education

Ward(s) affected: All

Title: Supporting Children Who are Unable to Attend their Education Setting under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996

Is this a key decision? No

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive summary:

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on Coventry City Council (the Council) to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive a suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.' This applies to all such children who are resident in the area, whether they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.

This means that where a child cannot attend their educational setting because of a physical or mental health need, or due to an exclusion, or for any other legitimate reason, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable provision.

The legal duty applies to children of compulsory school age (5-16 years) who would normally attend schools, including academies; free schools; special schools; alternative provision and independent schools. The legal duty does not apply to children under compulsory school age or who will cease to be of compulsory school age within the next six weeks and does not have any relevant examinations to complete.

All local authorities should have a written, publicly accessible Policy Statement on their arrangements for complying with the Section 19 duty. The purpose of this new Policy is to ensure the Council has an integrated Policy under the Section 19 Duty (permanent exclusion, ill health and otherwise) that complies with legal duty.

The Policy (Appendix A) sets out the Council's approach to meeting the needs of children of compulsory school age for whom it has a legal responsibility to provide an education, but who for reasons relating to illness, exclusion from school or other reasons experience barriers to accessing a full and suitable education offer. This Policy will provide greater clarity to schools and parents/carers as to when the duty should apply, and confirmation regarding the Council's approach.

Prior to implementing provision under Section 19, the Council would expect schools to have fulfilled their legal obligations and followed statutory guidance, such as the graduated response set out in the SEND Code of Practice, and to have made reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010.

The Policy sets out the decision-making process which the Council will use to determine when it has a duty to make provision under Section 19, and the type of provision that the Council will make in order to comply with Section 19 duties.

This provision may include, but is not limited to:

- the Council advising and supporting schools to make reasonable adjustments where it considers that the child/young person could be appropriately supported to receive education and/or attend school,
- the Council securing Alternative Educational Provision.

Recommendations:

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) is recommended to consider the report and make any comments and/or recommendations to the Cabinet at their meeting on 18 March 2025

Cabinet is recommended to:-

- a) Consider any comments and/or recommendations received from the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
- b) Approve the Policy and approach for supporting children who are unable to attend their education setting under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Children and Education Services and the Director of Finance and Resources to oversee, monitor and implement the Policy.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 – Supporting Children who are unable to attend their education setting (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996) Policy.

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Equality Act 2010
- 'Alternative Provision' Statutory Guidance (2013)
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' Statutory Guidance (2015)
- SEND code of Practice (2015)
- 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' Statutory Guidance (2023)
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance' Guidance (2023)
- Out of School. Out of Sight LGSCO Focus Report (2023)
- 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance' (2024)
- 'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance (2024)
- 'Providing remote education' Guidance (2024)
- 'Arranging Alternative Provision (2025)

Other useful documents

[Extended School Non-Attendance Advisory Panel \(ESNAAP\) – Coventry City Council](#)

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes -Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) - 13th March 2025

Has it or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Supporting Children Who are Unable to Attend their Education Setting under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 In August 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced new statutory guidance for schools and LAs, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' the DfE also updated other relevant guidance documents including, the Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Guidance. This guidance sits under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, which places a duty on Local Authorities (LA) to 'Make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive a suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.' This applies to all such children who are resident in the area, whether they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.
- 1.2 All local authorities should have a written, publicly accessible Policy statement on their arrangements for complying with the Section 19 duty. The Council has had arrangements and process in place for delivering Section 19 duty including through the InspirED Service (formerly Hospital Education), but these arrangements are not currently included in an approved Policy. This Policy will, therefore:
 - provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of schools, the Council and other agencies (including financial).
 - ensure that all Children and Young People (CYP) have access to a suitable, full-time education which meets their individual needs
 - ensure, when a child of compulsory school age is unable to access their educational setting due to illness, exclusion or otherwise, the Council complies with its duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure suitable provision for them.
- 1.3 The Council seek to deliver their statutory duty of securing 6th day provision for children and young people who are excluded from school through the use of the Fair Access Protocol, Keys Intervention, Coventry Alternative Provision Academy and/or other registered Alternative Provision. The existing arrangements will continue and there is some further information below on work underway in the city to provide early intervention and support for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion.
- 1.4 Based on current information it is expected that the numbers of children unable to access educational provision due to illness or otherwise, where Section 19 duty applies, will be low. Notwithstanding, following the Covid 19 pandemic there has been an increase (nationally and locally) in the number of children and young people missing education, as evidenced through published school attendance information.
- 1.5 The Local Authority currently operate an advisory panel for children with extended non-attendance at school (ESNAAP). The purpose of the panel is to consider action taken by schools to support children and young people and, where appropriate, recommend additional support, either through the LA's in-house provider; InspirED

Pathways or another provider of alternative provision (AP) procured via the Coventry Alternative Provision framework.

- 1.6 Between September 23 and February 25 on average the panel received 15 referrals per month, and approximately 4 young people per month have received support from InspirED Pathways. In addition, in the current academic year a total of 23 children and young people were brought to the attention of the Local Authority as potentially requiring provision under Section 19. As of February, one has been identifying as meeting criteria for Section 19 and a further three cases are in the process of being decided.
- 1.7 As part of the SEND inspection framework in use from early 2023 there have been a series of thematic inspections focusing on alternative provision to consider whether the approach to commissioning and overseeing alternative provision arrangements for children and young people in the local authority area meets the duties as set in in section 19 of the Education Act 1996. The Thematic Review report was published in February 2024 and found that a lack of national standards and a lack of clarity on responsibilities for alternative provision commissioning and oversight is leading to inconsistent and ineffective practice. The DfE 2023 SEND and AP Improvement Plan proposes an integrated system to plan and commission support for children.
- 1.8 In Coventry there is a clear provider framework and an effective service that monitors and oversees alternative provision. Under the revised Policy, the Council can secure Section 19 provision from a wider range of providers, through Coventry's Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support, which is overseen by the Coventry Education Partnership.
- 1.9 The Coventry Education Partnership is made up of local organisations including the Local Authority and schools. It is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have access to high-quality education and the necessary support to thrive. The Partnership's vision is to equip young people with the skills, qualifications, knowledge, and experiences essential for their success in education and transition to adulthood.
- 1.10 The Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support enables young people to remain in mainstream education wherever possible. This model, overseen and supported by a multi-agency panel and independent chair, provides universal support as part of a broad and varied curriculum, targeted interventions, time-limited programmes and transitional support placements in alternative provision focused on reintegration into mainstream education or a suitable post-16 destination.
- 1.11 Underpinning this model will be a 'Belonging Strategy and Training Pathway for all schools across Coventry to operate within. Through this framework and belonging approach, the Partnership aims to improve opportunities for disadvantaged children and young, increasing their engagement and improving their academic, social, and emotional development; in turn resulting in reduced suspensions, exclusions, and persistent absence.
- 1.12 By ensuring the right support is in place at the right time, the Education Partnership is committed to reducing the number of students missing out on full-time education and

improving successful reintegration into mainstream settings after alternative provision interventions.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. A Section 19 Policy is required to ensure compliance with statutory duty.
- 2.2. The Council could have continued to operate current arrangements without a formal Policy, but this approach could leave the Council open to challenge (including legal) as there is a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of schools, the Council and other agencies, which in turn may impact on our ability to ensure the Council complies with its duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 regarding suitable provision.
- 2.3. It is therefore recommended that the Policy at Appendix 1 is adopted.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. Prior to implementation of the current arrangements (described above in Section 1), consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders, including parents, carers and young people; school leaders and professionals from across Education, Health and Care. The consultation identified three principal aims, which underpin the Council's work in this area:
 - Promoting wellbeing, happiness and an optimistic outlook for all
 - Offering compassionate, person-centred support to students whose attendance is beginning to fall
 - Nurturing the resilience of children and young people who are not attending school and helping them to re-engage with learning.
- 3.2. Outcomes from the consultation were published in 2021 and underpin current Council guidance to schools. The current Policy formalises these arrangements.
- 3.3. A Secondary Education Partnership Working Group have overseen the current Behaviour and Alternative Provision arrangements in place since September 24. This group continues to shape the work discussed in Section 1.
- 3.4. The implementation of the Section 19 Policy has been discussed at Education Partnership meetings in February 2025. The Education Service will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders in the city to implement the new arrangements.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. Once approved, the Council will implement the Policy and new arrangements from the 1st April 2025. As highlighted above, this will be done in partnership with relevant stakeholders in the city.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

Financial Implications

- 5.1. When the Council has determined that Section 19 applies, alternative provision for children with medical needs and children who have been permanently excluded is funded from the High Needs block within local authorities Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets.
- 5.2. However, where a child remains on the roll of their home school but requires a period of time in alternative provision due to their health needs, the local authority will seek to recover from the home school a proportionate amount of the school's funding associated with that child to support with funding the provision. This ensures that the funding follows the child. This arrangement would cease when the child is reintegrated back to their home school or are no longer on the roll of the home school.
- 5.3. Where a pupil leaves the roll of their home school due to permanent exclusion, or they leave the roll of a mainstream school for reasons other than a permanent exclusion resulting in them receiving education funded by the local authority, a mandatory funding adjustment is made. Details of these adjustments are set out in the 'Redetermination of budgets' section within the Schools Operational Guide, a link to which can be found [here](#).
- 5.4. As part of the annual consultation on High Needs Block funding with Schools Forum in March we will ask them to endorse the financial implications associated with this Policy. Further work will be carried out to review funding arrangements across all elements of alternative provision to ensure alignment.
- 5.5. All local authorities should have a written, publicly accessible Policy statement on their arrangements for complying with the Section 19 duty. This Policy is not proposing any savings. However, the intention is for it to provide more clarity and facilitate robust decision making, both from an educational and financial perspective. The financial implications will be managed within the overall High Needs budget setting / monitoring process, and the impact will be closely monitored post implementation.
- 5.6. Nationally and locally the High Needs block is an area of pressure due to increasing SEND demand, alongside increasing numbers of children absent from school due to permanent exclusions and other reasons. Coventry currently has a DSG surplus, but in line with national trends it is continuing to experience significant growth in the overall number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). It is therefore key that the Council monitors the overall High Needs position and manages resources effectively to ensure that it remains within funding allocations as far as is possible.

Legal Implications

- 5.7. In August 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced new statutory guidance for schools and LAs, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' the DfE also updated other relevant guidance documents including, the Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Guidance, so there was a requirement to review our approach.
- 5.8. As a result, all local authorities are required to have a written, publicly accessible Policy statement on their arrangements for complying with the Section 19 duty.

- 5.9. The Policy complies with this requirement provides and provides clarity that Section 19 referrals for children on roll at a school will be made via a statutory sickness return which schools now have to complete if a child has been absent for 15 days, either cumulatively or continuously in an academic year. Similarly, the Policy confirms the process for children not on a school roll, who to contact when Section 19 may apply.
- 5.10. The Policy sets out outcomes, which may include, but are not limited to:
- the Council advising and supporting schools to make reasonable adjustments where it considers that the child/young person could be appropriately supported to receive education and/or attend school,
 - the Council securing Alternative Educational Provision
- 5.11. The Policy clearly sets out that all provision under Section 19 will be regularly reviewed at a minimum level of every 6 weeks. The council will work with all parties to consider the appropriateness of the child returning to their host school wherever possible, with the child's best interests being at the heart of all decision making.
- 5.12. Outcomes for children and young people, the length of the support provided under Section 19 and spend will be closely monitored under the new Policy.

6. Other implications

How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

- 6.1. The Policy directly addressed the overarching vision of the One Coventry Plan to improve the lives of those who live and study here.
- 6.2. The Policy delivers against the priority of tackling inequalities within our communities; outcomes for children with extended non-attendance from school are known to be significantly lower than those for children with high attendance. Low attendance affects not just academic attainment but also the mental health of children and their families.
- 6.3. The Policy will also help to improve economic prosperity. This is because low attendance and the mental health needs that accompany it create challenges for parents to sustain employment. Supporting families earlier through Section 19 provision will reduce the likelihood of situations reaching this point.

How is risk being managed?

- 6.4. The implementation of a Policy and clarity of roles and responsibilities means there is a risk that there will be increased requests for support particularly in relation to illness and otherwise. This will be managed in line with the continuum of statutory guidance and legislation in relation to pupils absent from school, and particularly the recent statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance (2024).

What is the impact on the organisation?

- 6.5. The duties in relation to Section 19 will be delivered within existing staffing resource. The Education Management Restructure implemented in February 2025 amended existing posts and introduced a Lead for Children Absent from Education role which will be the Council's named officer for this area - a requirement of the statutory guidance. This role reports to the Head of Education Entitlement and Enrichment Services which has wider responsibility for Attendance, Children missing Education, Behaviour and Coventry Alternative Provision.

Equalities / EIA?

- 6.6. Legislation requires the council to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) on its functions; policies, strategies, plans and decisions. An EIA has been undertaken for the new Policy, which has identified that the Policy will have a positive impact for children aged 0-18, particularly those with a disability.
- 6.7. Further information will be gathered to confirm the impact of the Policy on race, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. The relationship between these characteristics and school-non-attendance is complex, however, it is anticipated that the Policy - which facilitates access to education - will have a positive impact for children and young people who have experienced difficulties attending school which relating to one of the above protected characteristics. A copy of the EIA is included at appendix 2.

6.8. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

None.

Implications for partner organisations?

- 6.9. The current arrangements for have a panel that is made up of professionals from:

- Coventry's SEND team,
- Attendance and Children Missing Education team,
- InspirED Pathways,
- Coventry Alternative Provision,
- the Education Psychology Service,
- Early Help and Health.

The panel currently meets once a month to discuss referrals and agree on the advice and guidance to be given to each school for their consideration.

The new Policy and arrangements will continue to have a panel approach and will continue to require support from the same colleagues and organisations.

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This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings



DRAFT Policy
Coventry City Council

Supporting Children who are unable to attend their education setting (Section 19 of the Education Act 1996) Policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Coventry City Council (the Council) is committed to ensuring that every child in Coventry has the opportunity to benefit from high quality, inclusive, accessible education, to enable them to thrive and fulfil their individual potential.
- 1.2. The Council is committed to working with schools, children and young people, health and social care partners, to ensure all children are able to regularly attend an appropriate education setting. All children and young people in Coventry deserve an education that enables them to flourish, now and into the future, reach their full potential and maximise their life chances as they move into adulthood.
- 1.3. The Council recognises that it has a shared responsibility with schools and partner agencies to successfully implement this policy and promote high quality integrated service provision to support positive outcomes for this cohort of children and young people (CYP).
- 1.4. This policy outlines the Council's legal duties under [Section 19 of the Education Act 1996](#), to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise may not for any period receive suitable education.
- 1.5. The term 'suitable education' is defined¹ as efficient education suitable to the child's age, ability, and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have.

¹ Section 19(6) Education Act 1996

- 1.6. The policy applies only for children who are ordinarily resident in Coventry and who are of compulsory school age whether on a school roll or not. It does not apply in the case of a child (a) who will cease to be of compulsory school age within the next six weeks, and (b) does not have any relevant public examinations to complete.
- 1.7. When it has been established that Section 19 provision is required, the Council will be responsible for providing this to children and young people who are ordinarily resident in Coventry.
- 1.8. This policy and process sets out the Council's approach to meeting the needs of children for whom it has a legal responsibility to provide education but who for reasons relating to illness, exclusion or otherwise experience barriers to accessing a full and suitable education offer within a school. The Council expects schools to have fulfilled their legal obligations and followed statutory guidance such as the graduated response, as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, and have made reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010.

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1. This policy has been written with due regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:
 - The Education Act 1996
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - 'Alternative Provision' Statutory Guidance (2013)
 - The Children and Families Act 2014
 - 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' Statutory Guidance (2015)
 - SEND code of Practice (2015)
 - 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' Statutory Guidance (2023)
 - Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance' Guidance (2023)
 - Out of School. Out of Sight LGSCO Focus Report (2023)
 - 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance' (2024)
 - 'Working together to improve school attendance' Guidance (2024)
 - 'Providing remote education' Guidance (2024)
 - 'Arranging Alternative Provision' (2025)

3. Aims of the policy

- 3.1 To provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of schools, the Council and other agencies.
- 3.2 To ensure that all CYP have access to a suitable², full-time education which meets their individual needs to enable them to thrive and fulfil their ambitions and aspirations.
- 3.3 To ensure, when a CYP of compulsory school age is unable to access their educational setting due to illness, exclusion or otherwise, the Council complies with its duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure suitable provision for them.

4. Defined Categories and Process

- 4.1 This section provides an overview of the Council's processes and offer for CYP who require a Section 19 response under the three identified categories:
 - Permanent exclusion
 - Ill Health
 - Otherwise
- 4.2 A decision will be communicated to the school and parents no more than five working days after a decision has been made by the Extended School Non-Attendance (ESNAP) panel (refer to Appendix 1 for further information on the process and panel). If the CYP has an Education & Healthcare Plan, then an annual review may be required.

Permanent Exclusion

- 4.1 If a CYP has been permanently excluded from school, the Council must arrange suitable education from the sixth day following the exclusion.

The headteacher/school is required to report permanent exclusions to the Council without delay, in-line with the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion [Statutory Guidance](#) and Coventry City Council (CCC) Exclusion Guidance. Schools are requested to notify the Council via exclusions@coventry.gov.uk

² "suitable education", in relation to a child or young person, means efficient education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have.

and their MIS system. If schools have any queries these should be sent to exclusions@coventry.gov.uk

- 4.2 If a CYP is unable to attend school due to a permanent exclusion, suitable education will be arranged by the Council within the statutory timescales. It is critical that the excluding school provides all relevant and appropriate information via the Pupil Passport to support the best possible placement and desired outcomes.
- 4.3 Following a permanent exclusion, the Council, working together with relevant education settings, the CYP's family, and wider agencies are responsible for enabling the child or young person to reintegrate back into a sustainable education place.
- 4.4 If the Council has offered a package of alternative education that it deems to be suitable for the CYP, it is not under a duty to provide a different package of education if the CYP or their family elects not to take up the provision.

III Health (physical and mental health)

- 4.5 The Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice 2015, and Supporting Pupils at Schools with Medical Conditions 2015 highlights schools' legal duty to support pupils with medical conditions through the delivery of reasonable adjustments and otherwise.
- 4.6 The Council undertakes Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs) as part of its Attendance Duties. These meetings:
 - help identify, discuss, agree and monitor action plans and joint approaches for severely absent pupils; and
 - discuss and agree approaches for persistently absent pupils where they have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome.
- 4.7 In most cases, schools will effectively support CYP using their own resources. However, in some situations, the Council may need to coordinate the support that a CYP requires. To help the Council determine when this is the case, schools should notify the Council using the Council's Online Sickness Absence Form (hyperlink to be added on publication of policy) when:

- A CYP is not accessing education, and
 - they have been absent for 15 days or more over the course of the same academic year, and
 - the reason for their absence is a single or series of linked medical conditions.
- 4.8 On receiving a notification, the Council will assess what support is required and reach a decision based on the DfE guidance (as outlined in section 2.1). The notification process is summarised in Appendix 1.
- 4.9 The Council will consider the individual circumstances of each CYP and take into account any evidence or advice when deciding whether separate arrangements should be made.
- 4.10 Where a CYP is attending school (albeit with periods of absence) the Council recognise that schools know children, families and their individual circumstances well, and will therefore use the information provided by the school as a basis for decision making.
- 4.11 Where a CYP has not attended school for an extended period, the Council will have regard to evidence available but may also seek information for example via assessments from professionals (such as Health and Social Care professionals, Early Help workers and Educational Psychologists) to inform decision making.
- 4.12 In all cases, it is important that the Council, school and family work together in the best interests of the child.
- 4.13 To ensure that children who are absent are supported effectively, the Council coordinates decision making and support through the Extended School Non-Attendance Panel (ESNAP). Terms of reference for the panel is included at Appendix 2. Outcomes from the ESNAP panel may include, but are not limited to:
- The Council advising and supporting schools to make reasonable adjustments if it considers that the CYP could be appropriately supported to attend school or an Alternative Provision.
 - The Council directly commissioning support through CAP Graduated Model of Support and/or securing other suitable education via the Council's education provision framework.

- 4.14 The Council also monitors attendance information provided electronically by schools and may use this as a basis for seeking further information from schools, to ensure that statutory duties are met.
- 4.15 Where a child is in hospital for an extended stay of more than five school days, or who have recurrent hospital admissions, the Council will ensure suitable education is in place to meet the education needs of the child through InspirEd Pathways (Hospital Education Provider).
- 4.16 Any Alternative Education Provision arranged should be considered as a time-limited intervention, with the expectation that it will support the CYP to reintegrate with education on the site of their host school at the earliest opportunity.

‘Otherwise’

- 4.17 Apart from illness and exclusion, there may be other reasons why a child cannot reasonably access their education provision. Consideration needs to be given to each case to determine if the Council’s duty under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to arrange suitable alternative education arises.
- 4.18 ‘Otherwise’ (as opposed to illness or exclusion) is intended to cover any other situation in which it is not reasonably possible or reasonably practical for a child to access and take advantage of any existing suitable schooling.
- 4.19 The Council will assess what support is required and reach a decision based on the DfE and associated guidance, set out at paragraph 2.1.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

The Council’s Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a named senior officer with responsibility for the provision of education for children and young people who are unable to attend school because of health needs. In Coventry, the named officer is the Lead for Children Absent from Education, and they can be contacted at attendance@Coventry.gov.uk.
- 5.2 The law does not define “full-time education” but where a CYP is under Section 19 provision, the education arranged by the Council should be equivalent to the education they would receive in a school. This may not mean

the same number of hours. If, for example, a child receives one-to-one tuition, the hours of face-to-face provision could be fewer as the education may be more intensive. Where full-time education would not be in a child's best interests for reasons relating to their physical or mental health, in line with s3AA Education Act 1996 and Arranging Alternative Provision Guidance 2025, local authorities must arrange part-time education on whatever basis they consider to be in the child's best interests.

- 5.3 Where a CYP receives provision under Section 19, this will be subject to regular meetings to review progress and need, with the intention for the CYP to reintegrate back into school or another suitable education provision.
- 5.4 The Council will facilitate effective liaison with all appropriate agencies and will ensure that there is minimum delay in starting appropriate support.

The school's responsibilities - In All Situations where the child remains on the school's roll

- 5.5 The school will retain safeguarding and school census responsibilities for all CYP for whom the Council arranges education provision as the sole or (main) dual registered provision. This includes exam entry responsibilities that fall under the remit of its Examinations Officer.
- 5.6 Where a CYP is eligible for free school meals the home school is responsible for ensuring that the entitlement is made available to that child, regardless of where learning is taking place. This is to be funded from the Free School Meal funding received from the Department for Education through a school's budget share.
- 5.7 If a school is not authorising an absence and/or believes that the attendance pathway might be needed, the school should approach their named Local Authority Attendance Officer for advice. These pupils should be discussed as part of the Targeting Support Meetings and schools should be following the School Attendance Matters process. <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/attendance-inclusion/attendance>.

The school's responsibilities – In the Case of Permanent Exclusion Only

- 5.8 The headteacher is required to report permanent exclusions to the Council without delay, in-line with the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Statutory

Guidance and CCC exclusion guidance. Schools are requested to notify the Council via exclusions@coventry.gov.uk and their MIS system. If schools have any queries these should be sent to exclusions@coventry.gov.uk.

The school's responsibilities - In the Case of Ill Health Only

- 5.9 In some circumstances schools may not be able to fully support a CYP without the assistance of other agencies. Schools must therefore ensure arrangements are in place to support pupils as set out in 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions' Statutory Guidance 2015, and the schools own Medical Needs policy.
- 5.10 Schools should:
- Make use of internal services and resources, for example pastoral support, SEND resources and School Counselling.
 - Consider whether additional support from other external partners would be appropriate and make referrals e.g.: Early Help, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (RISE), health partners, Educational Psychology, Social Emotional & Mental Health Service (SEMHL) and Alternative Provision.
 - Where external support is provided schools should work with these services to deliver any subsequent support and keep a record of all support provided on school systems.
- 5.11 Where possible, CYP's health needs should be managed by the home school so that they can continue to be educated there with support, and without the need for Council intervention. Home schools are well-placed and experienced in providing support to children who are absent from school for shorter periods because of illness. Where it becomes clear that the absence is likely to be longer, or the home school can no longer support the child's health needs and/or provide suitable education, the school should notify the Council for support with next steps.
- 5.12 Schools should publish a policy for supporting children with medical conditions. This should set out how they will support children with health needs and provide details of a named person who can be contacted by the Council and by parents/carers.
- 5.13 Schools should maintain regular communication with the CYP and their parents/carers to promote engagement and welfare, monitor progress and any

safeguarding concerns. Schools should also ensure that children and young people and their parents/carers successfully remain in touch through school newsletters, emails, and invitations to school events.

- 5.14 Schools are required to make a Sickness Absence Return to the Council if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness/ill health) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness, or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days (see Appendix 1).
- 5.15 All notifications should clearly show what support mechanisms the school has put in place to enable the CYP to remain in school e.g. robust universal and targeted provision evidence, Early Help, individual education plans.
- 5.16 A child unable to attend school because of health needs must not be removed from the school roll.

The school's Responsibilities - Otherwise

- 5.17 The 'Otherwise' category will be used for exceptional reasons only. In most cases, a child's situation will be captured adequately through one of the above categories. Given the likely complexities of individual cases, in the first instance, a conversation should take place between the school and their named Local Authority Attendance Officer to agree appropriate next steps under the School Attendance Matters process.

The role of the Parent/Carer

- 5.18 Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Parents / Carers should familiarise themselves with their school's attendance policy including notification for illness.
- 5.19 If a parent/carers has any concerns about their child's attendance at school (e.g. the child's health is having an impact on their learning), in the first instance the

parent/carer should contact their child's school to discuss how they could properly support their child to enable them to have full access to education.

- 5.20 Parents/carers hold key information and knowledge and have a crucial part to play in liaising with the school and other services. Parents/carers are expected to work with their child's school to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance and proactively engage with any support offered.
- 5.21 In exceptional circumstances, if a parent/carer feels their child is unable to attend school despite the parent/carer working hard with professionals to get the child into school, and they are still not reasonably able to attend, the parent/carer should contact the Lead for Children Absent from Education at attendance@coventry.gov.uk

6. Identification and Referrals

- 6.1 The school/setting is responsible for notifying the Council using the process and online form set out in Appendix 1 including the Council's Online Sickness Absence Form (hyperlink to be added on publication of policy).
- 6.2 Where a child is not on a school roll (including new to city) and not well enough to attend a school setting the parent/carer should contact the Council's Admissions Service in the first instance.
admissions@coventry.gov.uk

7. Reintegration and Review

- 7.1 All CYP where Section 19 provision is arranged by the Council will be reviewed a minimum of every six weeks.
- 7.2 At each review, the Council will consider the appropriateness of the CYP returning to their registered school. The Council will work with the relevant provider, parents/carers and registered school to ensure the best outcomes for the CYP.

8. How to comment or complain

- 8.1 If parents/carers are concerned about the support being provided for their child by their school, it is important that they engage with the school / setting and discuss their concerns. If this does not resolve the issue, they should

follow their school's complaints procedure which should be available on the school website.

- 8.2 Where Section 19 provision is arranged by the Council a parent/carer should contact the Lead for Children Absent from Education where they have concerns. If this does not resolve the issue, they may make a formal complaint via the Council's complaints procedure, which can be accessed at: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/contact-council/comments-compliments-complaints>

9. Funding Arrangements

- 9.1 When the Council has determined that Section 19 applies, alternative provision for children is funded from Coventry City Council's High Needs budget (within the Dedicated Schools Grant).
- 9.2 Where a child is on the roll of their home school but requires a period of time in alternative provision due to their health needs, the local authority will seek to recover from the home school a proportionate amount of the school's funding associated with that child to support with funding the provision. This ensures that the funding follows the child. This arrangement would cease when the child is reintegrated back to their home school or are no longer on the roll of the home school.
- 9.3 Where a pupil leaves the roll of their home school due to permanent exclusion, or they leave the roll of a mainstream school for reasons other than a permanent exclusion resulting in them receiving education funded by the local authority, a funding adjustment is made. The provisions act independently of whether a particular pupil has been on the census in the first place, and whether the school has received funding for them. Details of these adjustments are set out in the 'Redetermination of budgets' section within the Schools Operational Guide, a link to which can be found [here](#).

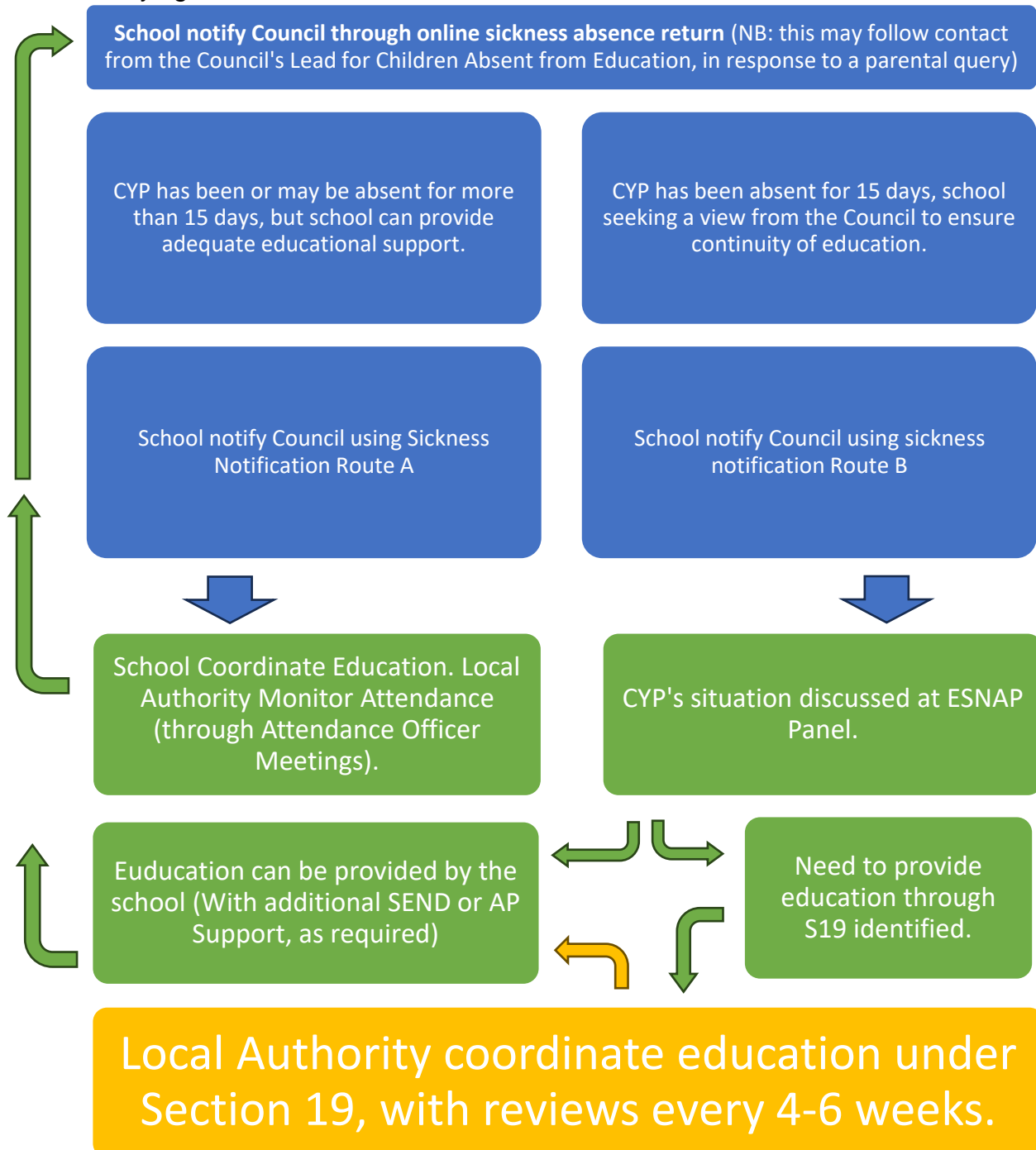
10. Review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or where major changes in legislation or policy requires it.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1

Notifying the Council of a sickness absence.



Appendix 2

Extended Non-Attendance at School Panel (ESNAP)

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the panel is to:

- Help the Local Authority to comply with its duty to monitor the attendance of children in the local area who have missed, or are at risk of missing, fifteen days of education.
- Advise schools on how to support children who have not attended for an extended time, drawing on resources from within Coventry's Local Offer.
- Identify when the Local Authority needs to coordinate educational provision for a young person under Section 19 Education Act 1996 and, in such cases, determine what this provision should be.

Membership

Membership currently comprises the following roles. Membership is reviewed annually

Lead for Children Absent from Education (<i>Chair</i>)
Principal Educational Psychologist (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)
Head Teacher, InspirEd (<i>Deputy Chair</i>)
Representatives from the NHS and allied third sector health services
EHC Plan Coordinator
Access to Education Officer
Representative from Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP)
Early Help Assessment Coordinator
Administrative Lead

Meeting Frequency and Administration

The panel will meet once a month. Dates for meeting will be published on the Council website at the beginning of each academic year.

Referrals to ESNAP must be received one week prior to the panel meeting data, in order to allow for triage and meeting preparation. Referrals should be made via the Council's online absence return form.

An agenda for each meeting will be circulated to panel members in advance of each meeting, this will include a summary of all cases to be discussed.

A summary of key discussion points and agreed actions will be added to the proforma during each meeting.

Meeting Structure

The ESNAP Panel is split into three parts, as summarised below.

Stage	Summary	Outcomes
Triage <i>Completed by the Attendance Team, one week prior to the panel meeting.</i>	All cases are reviewed to confirm that referral criteria have been met and evidence has been provided.	If referral criteria are met and suitable evidence has been provided, then the case is allocated a slot for discussion at the multi-agency panel. If evidence is missing, then this will be requested from the school. If referral criteria are not met, the case will be returned to the school.
Multi-Agency Panel <i>With representation from Education, Health and Care (see membership)</i>	Where cases meet referral criteria they will be discussed by the multi-agency panel, to ensure that resources from within the school and from the Local Offer have been fully utilised. This part of the meeting is also used to monitor the progress of cases currently accessing Section 19 Provision.	New cases Where the panel identify further resource from within the school or local offer, that could meet educational need, the school will be informed of this and responsibility for making educational provision will remain with them. Where the multi-agency panel identify a potential need for provision to be made under Section 19, the case will be progressed to the resource allocation part of the meeting. Existing Cases For existing cases, where the panel determine that provision no longer needs to be made in line with Section 19, the school will be advised of the provision that they need to make.
Resource Allocation	Where a potential need	Where a need for Section 19 provision is confirmed, this will be coordinated by the Local

<p><i>Lead for Attendance; Head Teacher (Inspired) and Principal Educational Psychologist</i></p>	<p>for Section 19 provision is identified, cases are reviewed to confirm the type of provision that is required and whether the LA has a role in securing it.</p>	<p>Authority's Lead for Attendance, who will liaise with the school following the meeting.</p> <p>The case will then be reviewed in future ESNAP panel meetings.</p>
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Title of EIA		Supporting Children who are unable to attend their education setting under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996
EIA Author	Name	James Gillum
	Position	Head of SEND
	Date of completion	24/02/25
Head of Service	Name	Rachael Sugars
	Position	Strategic Lead – Education
Cabinet Member	Name	Cllr Kindy Sandhu
	Portfolio	Education and Skills

PLEASE REFER TO [EIA GUIDANCE](#) FOR ADVICE ON COMPLETING THIS FORM

SECTION 1 – Context & Background

1.1 Please tick one of the following options:

This EIA is being carried out on:

- New policy / strategy
- New service
- Review of policy / strategy
- Review of service
- Commissioning
- Other project (*please give details*)

1.2 In summary, what is the background to this EIA?

In August 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) introduced new statutory guidance for schools and LAs, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' the DfE also updated other relevant guidance documents including, the Suspension and Permanent Exclusions Guidance.

This guidance sits under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996, which places a duty on Local Authorities (LA) to 'Make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive a suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.' This applies to all such children who are resident in the area, whether they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.

All local authorities should have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements for complying with the Section 19 duty. The Council has arrangements and process in place for delivering Section 19 duty, but these arrangements are not currently included in a Cabinet approved policy. This policy will, therefore:

provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of schools, the Council and other agencies (including financial).

ensure that all children and young people (CYP) have access to a suitable, full-time education which meets their individual needs to enable them to thrive and fulfil their ambitions and aspirations.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

ensure, when a child of compulsory school age is unable to access their educational setting due to illness, exclusion or otherwise, the Council complies with its duty under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure suitable provision for them.

1.3 List organisations and people who are involved in this area of work

The main stakeholders are:

- Children and young people (CYP)
- Parents/carers of statutory school age children and young people
- Schools
- Local Authority – Education, SEND, wider Children’s Services
- InspirED Pathways
- Alternative Provision Providers
- Health Partners

For the above question, please consider:

- Who is directly impacted by this decision
- Who is indirectly impacted...?
- Who is potentially impacted...?
- Whose help is needed to make the decision work?
- Who knows about the subject?
- Who will have an interest in the subject?

1.4 Who will be responsible for implementing the findings of this EIA?

Implementation of the policy and the findings of the EIA is the responsibility of the Strategic Lead for Education

SECTION 2 – Consideration of Impact

Refer to guidance note for more detailed advice on completing this section.

In order to ensure that we do not discriminate in the way our activities are designed, developed and delivered, we must look at our duty to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between two persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

To find out more about local data, please visit the below links:

[Facts about Coventry
Census 2021](#)

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#)

2.1 Baseline data and information

Please include a summary of data analysis below, using both your own service level management information and also drawing comparisons with local data where necessary. Where possible, compare your data to local data using: Facts about Coventry; Census 2021; JSNA.

The policy sets out the Council’s approach to meeting the needs of children of compulsory school age for whom it has a legal responsibility to provide an education, but who for reasons relating to illness, exclusion from school or other reasons experience barriers to accessing a full and suitable education offer.

This policy only relates to children and young people of statutory school age, i.e. children in the reception through to the end of Year 11.

The following provides information on the demographics of the pupil population and this cohort where information is available.

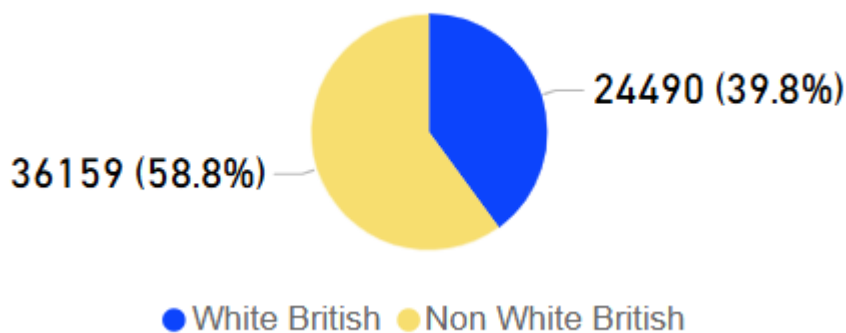
The January 2024 school census shows 34,056 children were enrolled in primary schools, 25,278 in secondary schools and 1,259 in special schools. Of those, 51% were male and 49% were female, 0% did not identify as male or female.

3.8% of this population had an EHC Plan and 16.7% were in receipt of school support for special educational needs.

The January 24 census shows 28.7% of this population were entitled to free school meals.

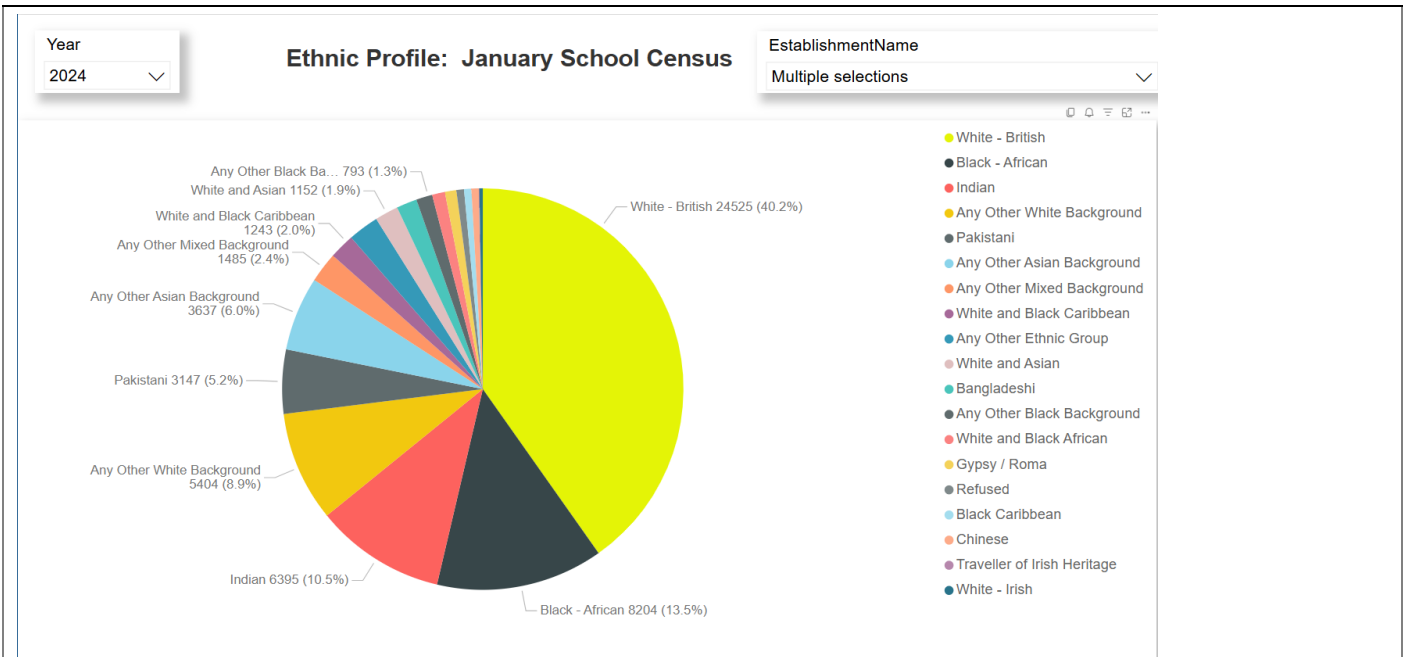
The composition of the population by ethnicity was as follows:

Ethnic Origin Summary (% White British)



Further broken down as follows:

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)



Children not attending school due to exclusion – we have the most information on this area. Information on exclusions is also collated by the DfE and published.

In the 23/24 academic year there were 117 permanent exclusions in Coventry. 31 were from primary schools, 84 from secondary schools and 2 from special schools.

Of those children who were excluded, 76% were male and 24% were female, 0% did not identify as male or female.

7.7% of children excluded had an EHC Plan and 52% were in receipt of school support for special educational needs.

60% of the children excluded had entitlement to free school meals, and 64% were in receipt of pupil premium.

The composition of children excluded by ethnicity was as follows:

Permanent Exclusions 2023/24

Ethnicity	Number of Students
BAFR - Black African	15
WEEU - White Eastern Euro'n	Less than 10
AIND - Indian	Less than 10
BCRB - Black Caribbean	Less than 10
MWAS - White and Asian	Less than 10
REFU - Refused	Less than 10
WBRI - White British	62
AOTH - Any Oth Asian b'ground	Less than 10
MOTH - Any Oth Mixed b'ground	Less than 10
APKN - Pakistani	Less than 10

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

WOTH - Any Oth White b'ground	Less than 10
MWBA - White and Black African	Less than 10
BOTH - Any Oth Black b'ground	Less than 10
ABAN - Bangladeshi	Less than 10
WENG - White English	Less than 10
BNGN - Black Nigerian	Less than 10
NOBT - Info not yet obtained	Less than 10
WROR - Roma	Less than 10
OOth - Any other Ethnic Group	Less than 10
MWBC - White & Black Caribbean	Less than 10
Total	117

Data source: Capita One

Data as at 21/02/2025

Children not attending school due to ill health

Children who are unable to attend school due to ill health are discussed at a panel meeting convened by the Council.

Between September 23 and February 25 on average the panel received 15 referrals per month, and approximately 4 young people per month have received support from InspirED Pathways.

On 21/02/2025, a total of 74 children and young people were in receipt of education through InspirED pathways either as their main school or subsidiary school. Please note that only 2 of these are under section 19 duty.

In the current academic year a further 23 children and young people were brought to the attention of the Local Authority as potentially requiring provision under Section 19. As of February, one has been identifying as meeting criteria for Section 19 and a further three cases are in the process of being decided.

Moving forward demographic data relating to the cohort will be collected and reviewed by the Panel.

SECTION 3 – Protected Groups

3.1 On the basis of evidence, complete the table below to show what the potential impact is for each of the protected groups.

- Positive impact (P),
- Negative impact (N)
- Both positive and negative impacts (PN)
- No impact (NI)

Protected Characteristic	Impact type P, N, PN, NI, UI	Nature of impact and any mitigations required
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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Age 0-18	P	<p>The exercise covers statutory school age within this age group. This is from age 5 in reception until the end of Year 11 (age 16). This policy is applied universally to this age group but it will only be relevant in certain circumstances.</p> <p>There are arrangements and process in relation to section 19 duty already in place but the introduction of a policy will provide greater clarity for all stakeholders.</p>
Age 19-64	P	The policy could have a positive impact for parents and guardians because it supports children and young people.
Age 65+	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented.
Disability	P	It is anticipated there will be positive impacts. If a child or young person has a disability that impacts upon their health and means they are unable to attend school for over and above 15 consecutive days this policy will support the provision of education.
Gender reassignment	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented.
Pregnancy and maternity	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented.
Race (Including: colour, nationality, citizenship ethnic or national origins)	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented. Specific work streams around behaviour and exclusions (which is one part of the policy) will monitor data and demographics and consider specific work in relation to disproportionality.
Religion and belief	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented
Sex	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented. Specific work streams around behaviour and exclusions (which is one part of the policy) will monitor data and demographics and consider specific work in relation to disproportionality.
Sexual orientation	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented
Care Experienced	NI	It is anticipated that there will be no impacts on individuals with this protected characteristic if this policy is implemented. The Virtual School headteacher is in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the Local Authority. This has been widened (non-statutory) to include children with a social worker including those in kinship care. The Virtual School would be involved for any children and young people in our care.

SECTION 4 – Health Inequalities

Consideration of impact - Health inequalities

4.1 Please tell us how the proposal you are submitting this EIA form will reduce health inequalities:

Please include which Marmot Principles this work covers.

Give every child the best start in life

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Enable all individuals to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

4.2 What information do you have to show you are going to reduce health inequalities?

Research undertaken in the UK over the past decade has found that extended non-attendance has a negative impact on children, young people and families and sustains health inequalities, across the areas of education and skills, income and employment, disability and gender and ethnicity. A clear policy and approach that supports re-integration, improved attendance, and sets out the Council's approach to meeting the needs of children of compulsory school age for whom Section 19 duty applies will support the reduction of health inequalities.

4.3 Who/which groups of people might face the biggest health inequalities for your work and why: What can be done to improve health equity for the groups of people you have identified?

Children who do not have access to education of some form will, by definition, be less able to develop their skills and reach their potential.

The impact of extended non-attendance on families can be significant, with parents sometimes needing to take time off paid employment to support their children during period of absence from school.

Extended non-attendance disproportionately affects children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and can be associated with mental ill health.

Whilst deeper analysis of demographic data is needed, we are aware that some groups are disproportionately represented amongst the cohort of children with low attendance at school.

Finally, children with FSM entitlement and / or in receipt of pupil premium are over represented in the exclusions data.

Work to support re-integration and improved attendance alongside clarity in relation to Section 19 duty, and a panel to oversee referrals will help to improve health inequality for the groups identified.

4.4 What can be done to improve health equity for the groups of people you have identified?

Continued work to support re-integration and improved education attendance alongside Implementation of policy and process.

The overarching aim of the policy is to provide education to children and young people who are not able to access school for reasons of exclusion or poor health. In addressing this aim, the policy will reduce health inequalities for those groups who are most affected by the issue of non-attendance; including those with special educational needs, disabilities and mental ill health.

The policy will also reduce the negative consequences of non-attendance on the development of education and skills for CYP and on income and access to work for families.

Finally, the policy will reduce inequalities for marginalised groups, such as CYP who have been excluded from school, by providing a pathway back into education.

SECTION 5 – Digital Inequalities

The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the uptake of digital services nationally, whereby people who are digitally enabled have better financial opportunities, can access new information and are better connected to others (Lloyds Consumer

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Digital Index, 2021). However, for those who are digitally excluded, the digital divide has grown during the last two years, and without intervention people will be left behind with poorer outcomes across employment, health and wellbeing, education and service access. Some people are more likely to be excluded including: older people, people from lower income households, unemployed people, people living in social housing, disabled people, school leavers before 16 with fewer educational qualifications, those living in rural areas, homeless people, or people who's first language is not English. ([NHS Digital](#))

If you need assistance in completing this section, please contact: [Laura Waller](#) (Digital Services & Inclusion Lead). More details and worked examples can be found on the [intranet](#).

5.1 Thinking of the main aims of your work area that this EIA is for; does your work area impact digital inequalities or exacerbate them?

Does your work assume service users have digital access and skills? Do outcomes vary across groups, for example digitally excluded people benefit the least compared to those who have digital skills and access? Consider what the unintended consequences of your work might be.

Schools will work alongside parents in relation to this policy. Notifications and referrals for exclusions or pupils with health needs will come from schools.

5.2 Where are the opportunities for your area to reduce digital exclusion inequalities and embed supports/interventions as part of your work?

If any digital inequalities are identified, how can you reduce these? For e.g. if a new service requires online registration you may work with partner organisations to improve digital skills and ensure equitable processes are available if someone is unable to access online.

NA

SECTION 6 – Next steps

6.1	Action Planning		
Inequality/Protected Characteristic	Planned Action	Owner	Timescale

6.2 How will you monitor and evaluate the effect of this work?

Demographic information for CYP who come to the extended non-attendance panel and /or are accessed as requiring provision under Section 19 will be gathered and analysed by the Education Leadership team. This will feed into future policy review and update as required.

SECTION 7 – Impact on Council Staff

7.1 Will this area of work potentially have an impact on Council staff? No

SECTION 8 – Completion Statement

As the appropriate Head of Service for this area, I confirm that the potential equality impact is as follows:

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- No impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Positive impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Negative impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- Both positive and negative impact has been identified for one or more protected groups
- The potential impact of this proposal on protected groups is not yet known

Before you submit this form - please save your progress and forward the email you receive with any questions to equality@coventry.gov.uk. The team will review your Equality Impact Assessment and provide you with feedback.

Only click submit if the Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed and you have been advised to by the equality team.

7.0 Approval

Name of Head of Service: Rachael Sugars, Strategic Lead - Education	Date approved by Head of Service: 24/02/25
Name of Director: Sukriti Sen	Date sent to Director: 24/02/25
Name of Lead Elected Member: Cllr Kindy Sandhu	Date sent to Councillor: 24/02/25

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Agenda Item 6

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2024-25

Last updated 5th March 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

11th July 24
Early Years Strategy
12th September 24 - cancelled
17th October 24
Family Valued and Reunification Project Child-friendly Cov
28th November 24
Cost of Children's Placements (Update Report) HAF Update Social Worker Recruitment and Retention
16th January 25
Safeguarding Board Annual Report Attendance – changes to statutory guidance
13th February 25
School Performance Children's LGA Peer Challenge
13th March 25 PM (moved from 27th March 25)
SEND Strategy Section 19 Policy
10th April 2025
Early Help Support for Care Leavers
Items for 2024-25
Youth Provision in Coventry Health and Wellbeing in Schools Family Health and Lifestyles Service – health inequalities
Items for 2025-26
Early Years Strategy Progress on Peer Review Action Plan Pilot to Reduce Exclusions
Items taken for information
Adoption Service Annual Reports – November Fostering Annual Report - November Education One Strategic Plan

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2024-25

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
11th July 24	Early Years Strategy	Following a report on the Early Years Strategy, Members requested a further item including progress on and more detail on the Saplings Programme, as well as strategies to support reading in the early years. To invite Chair of SB5	Rachael Sugars Cllr Sandhu
12th September 24 - cancelled			
17th October 24	Family Valued and Reunification Project	A progress and impact report	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
	Child-friendly Cov	A progress and impact report on the Child Friendly Coventry project	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
28th November 24	Cost of Children's Placements (Update Report)	At their meeting on 23 rd November 2023, Member requested an update item to report on progress in addressing the cost of placements	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	HAF Update	To consider progress on delivering the HAF programme	Adrian Coles Cllr Sandhu
	Social Worker Recruitment and Retention	A progress update following the previous item in November 2024 – to consider how the use of agency staff has been reduced. To also include work being done to reduce sickness and support the well-being of staff.	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
16th January 25	Safeguarding Board Annual Report		
	Attendance – changes to statutory guidance		
13th February 25	School Performance		
	Children's LGA Peer Challenge	To consider the recommendations from the LGA Peer Challenge on Children's Services	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
13th March 25 PM (moved from 27th March 25)	SEND Strategy	Following on from an item on 18 th April 2024 the Board requested an update to be circulated to the Board	Cllr Sandhu Jeannette Essex

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2024-25

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Section 19 Policy	How the Council will support the education of pupils out of school due to medical reasons	Rachael Sugars Cllr Sandhu
10th April 2025	Early Help	To include workforce plans and placements for apprenticeships etc	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	Support for Care Leavers	Following a question at SB4 an item was identified to look in more detail at the support offered to care leavers 18-25, including accommodation and the House Project	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen Matt Clayton
Items for 2024-25			
	Youth Provision in Coventry	How and where we work with outside partners (and specifically the third sector) to deliver it	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	Health and Wellbeing in Schools	To look at what is being done to promote health and wellbeing in schools and universities – including the school nursing service	
	Family Health and Lifestyles Service – health inequalities	To looking in more detail at how the service is tackling health inequalities and targeting services at those in need on a localised basis. School nurse provision.	Bill McCann, Angela Baker Cllr Caan
Items for 2025-26	Early Years Strategy	To come in 2025 and to include progress on actions requested on 17/7/24 re: oral and dental health	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	Progress on Peer Review Action Plan	As a follow up to the item received on 13 Feb 2025, Members requested a more detailed progress report	S Sen Cllr Seaman
	Pilot to Reduce Exclusions	To receive the evaluation report on the pilot programme to reduce exclusions	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
Items taken for information	Adoption Service Annual Reports – November	Annual report – including information about the diversity of the adoption panel and adopters as well as support to birth mothers after their children have been adopted	Cllr Seaman
	Fostering Annual Report - November	For Members to consider whether a full item is required	Cllr Seaman
	Education One Strategic Plan	To tie in with the Cabinet Report due in February. To provide previous report as background from 18/4/24	Rachael Sugars Cllr Sandhu

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart

