



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Thursday, 27th November, 2025

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 10)
 - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2025
 - b) Matters Arising
4. **Child Friendly Cov** (Pages 11 - 24)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education
5. **Children in Care Pledge** (Pages 25 - 34)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education
6. **Children Absent from Education** (Pages 35 - 94)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education
7. **Work Programme** (Pages 95 - 100)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator
8. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

Nil

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

Wednesday, 19 November 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, J Gardiner, Mrs S Hanson (Co-opted Member), Mr D Jackson (Co-opted Member), S Jobbar, L Kelly (Chair), M Mutton, S Nazir, E M Reeves, R Thay, A Tucker and Mr G Vohra (Co-opted Member)

By invitation: Councillors B Christopher (Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and P Seaman (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

Public Access

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Tom Robinson

Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 16 October 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor L Kelly (Chair)
Councillor B Christopher (by invitation)
Councillor S Gray
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor P Seaman (by invitation)
Councillor R Thay
Councillor A Tucker

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

Employees (by Service Area):

Education and Children M Clayton, S Sen, A Whitrick

Law and Governance G Holmes, C Taylor, A Veness

Apologies: Councillor J Birdi, J Gardiner and S Jobbar

Public Business

13. Declarations of Interests

The Board noted that Councillor A Tucker was a member of the Fostering Panel. As this was not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he remained in the meeting.

14. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th of September 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

15. Children's Services Annual Adoption Report 2024/2025

The Board considered a report of the Director of Children's and Education Services that provided an overview of the adoption activity and performance in 2024/25.

Officers explained that each local authority was required by regulation to publish an annual adoption report. The Annual Adoption Report (Appendix 1) provides an overview of adoption activity and performance for the year 2024-2025.

Coventry Children's Services delivered adoption services in partnership with the Regional Adoption Agency – Adoption Central England (ACE), which has been operational since 1st February 2018. This was in accordance with national policy

that all local authority adoption services were required to be part of a Regional Adoption Agency by 2020.

ACE provided a number of services as a local authority shared services arrangement hosted by Warwickshire County Council. Details of the services provided by ACE were included in the Annual report

In partnership with ACE the local authority planned to improve and develop its adoption practise in the following key areas:

- Continue to develop collaborative working across Children's Services for effective pre-birth, pre-proceedings and care proceedings to ensure timely permanence is achieved for all children.
- Continue to ensure fostering for adopt / early permanence is considered for every child where appropriate and a rationale for decision is recorded.
- Continue to collaborate with ACE on an operational and strategic level (via the ACE Executive board) regarding sufficiency challenges in ACE to minimise delay for children being matched with adoptive families.
- All social workers who are working with children who have a plan / potential plan of adoption will undertake permanency planning training offered by ACE to continue to promote good practice in this area.
- All social workers will undertake training on life story work, life story books offered by ACE to continue to promote good practice in this area.
- Coventry to have an established framework for assessing and supporting post adoption relationship maintenance between Adoptive families and Birth families.

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

- The service activity figures followed promising downward trends that were lower than both national and local levels. Despite this, the council would continue to focus on improving the service.
- How the council was focusing more on ensuring children received some form of direct contact with birth parents. This was the norm outside of the UK and in line with national attempts to increase this kind of contact where possible.
- How social media had made contact between birth parents and children outside of council instruction, this further encouraged the council to promote appropriate and supervised contact.
- That although the overall reduction in people willing to adopt may be in part due to a focus on increased contact between parents and children, a more significant factor was the cost-of-living crisis dis-encouraging potential adopters from taking on this additional financial burden.
- That when children are fostered, they are more likely to see their birth parents weekly but when adopted, this was more often a few times a year.
- Fostered children are still officially seen as in the council's care whereas adopted children are fully in their adoptive parents' care with minimal direct supervision.
- Children are usually adopted to parents outside their local authority to promote stability, although this is situation dependant and not mandatory.

- That although parents can decline to meet their birth children once adopted to different parents, this is rare.
- Research had shown that increased contact between children and their birth parents led to more positive long-term outcomes and improved their sense of identity.
- The age of the child impacts how contact with their birth parents is managed, furthermore, adopted children are given life story books to help them understand and explain their identity.
- Social workers stay assigned to the children throughout their life and are available even as adults to provide support.
- That all children are given life story work and social workers are trained to include it in their support.

Members requested that the following information be circulated to them:

- Explaining the decrease in ADM decisions that a child should be placed for adoption as reported by ACE between 2022 and 2025.
- Concerning the ethnicity of adopted children and how it impacts the time to place them.
- The numbers of children adopted from abroad.
- Detailing the Richard Rose and Joy Reece models with examples of them in practice.
- Be brought to the next annual report detailing life story work and how it impacts adopted children later in life.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Resolved to note the contents of the briefing note and report and had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.

16. **Children's Services Annual Fostering Report 2024/2025**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Children's and Education Services that provided an overview of the fostering activity and performance in 2024/25.

Officers explained how the foster care was subject to legislative and regulatory guidance through The Children Act 1989, The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the Fostering Services: National minimum standards 2011. They further explained how it was further regulated through the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations published in 2010 and the Assessment and Approval of Foster carers guidance 2013.

The regulatory framework for fostering set out the minimum standards expected to ensure that the care provided by foster carers was adequate to ensure that those children placed within fostering homes are well cared for and achieved good outcomes.

The requirement for fostering agencies to produce an annual report is primarily set out by Ofsted and governed by the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, specifically Regulation 35, along with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, particularly Standard 25.7.

The purpose of the annual report was to evaluate the effectiveness of the fostering service; to identify areas for improvement and development; to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements; to inform stakeholders, about the service outcomes and future plans. The review of the Fostering service activity and performance data was outlined in the Annual Fostering Service report attached.

The Fostering Service plan to improve and develop the following key areas in 2025/2026:

- Continue to drive the Fostering Excellence Project to enable increased capacity and resilience of internal mainstream fostering households
- Continue to develop recruitment of carers from a range of diverse backgrounds to more closely match the backgrounds of children in care
- Identify reasons for drop out between enquiry, expression of interest and approval, to improve conversion rate
- Finalising and launch Coventry's Kinship strategy and offer
- Continue to develop Kinship fostering in line with the Kinship strategy and our Kinship offer and aim to increase permanence through special guardianship arrangements
- Ongoing growth of the Next steps fostering scheme
- Relaunch parent and child and out of hours schemes
- Launch a short stay provision to support families in need to prevent children coming into care
- Continue to ensure foster carers are consulted about all changes that affect their role
- Widen mentoring offer for connected persons carers and offer to applicants during the assessment process
- Review support available to children of foster carers and newly approved foster carers during their induction period
- Embed DDP principles and continue to upskill all workforce caring for children

In considering the Briefing note and report, the Scrutiny Board asked questions, received responses and discussed a number of matters as summarised below.

- Evidence showed children in foster care often went on to become foster parents
- Foster carers are kept updated and in contact through online networks and mailing lists. There is also financial and practical support available to carers as allocated by an annual review.
- That the budget for fostering could lead to overspends and underspends in some areas during the same year as the budget was aspirational and planned for growth, although it could be later supplemented and adapted through additional support packages.
- The decrease in fostered children was due to more children remaining with their families as encouraged by the council but only when it is decided to have been appropriate and completely safe to do so.
- The fostering panel met weekly and undertook vital work in supporting carers and discussing how to improve the process of fostering.

- It took an average of 2 years from the start of assessment to becoming a foster carer. Work had started looking at reducing these timescales by using technology in a different way.
- That placement disruption was often related to childhood trauma. Turnover of supervising social workers was low which is important for consistency.
- That fosterers may choose to stop fostering as they age but the council had no age limit on fostering children.
- The council performs medical checks to ensure prospective carers are capable of caring for themselves and children.
- Fostering to adopting is rare but if requested, care is taken to consider its potential impact on the child.
- The council is actively recruiting new foster parents via community groups promoting fostering, links with faith groups, social media and street campaigns, they also specifically target areas where they know homes are more likely to have room to house foster children.
- There are various issues around matching children to families including size of sibling groups, room space within the house and concerns of conflict between fostered children and pre-existing children.
- That although the drop from 511 initial enquiries to only 20 households approved may seem disconcerting, initial enquiries were an online tick box with low commitment, the drop is when these are followed up on with greater commitment required and information regarding the requirements is explained.
- The council had a productive, robust and healthy working relationship with the judicial system that facilitates a quick and high performing fostering process.

Members requested that the following information be circulated to them:

- A link to the national campaign video promoting and explaining fostering.
- Explaining the reasons for the numbers of foster carers reducing significantly at each stage after initial contact.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Resolved to note the contents of the briefing note and report and had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.

17. Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge Progress Against the Recommendations

The Board considered a briefing note of the Director of Children and Education outlining the progress against the Local Government Association Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer Challenge Recommendations of October 2024.

Officers explained how corporate and political leaders in Coventry were passionate and committed to achieving the best for children. Over the past decade, Children's Services had been focused on improvement and there had been a political and corporate commitment to making the necessary resources and funding available to support the Children's Services journey.

In August 2022, Children's Services were rated as a 'Good' service by Ofsted. The service was anticipating a further inspection imminently. 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 seven Children's Homes, six homes had been inspected during 2025, of which five are rated as 'Good' by Ofsted and one rated 'requires improvement'. The ambitious residential homes expansion programme to increase the number of Children's Homes included a further two to open in 2026.

Building on the significant improvements within Children's Services, the integration of Children and Education on 1st April 2024 provided an opportunity and capacity to explore new ways of working. The integration had resulted in changes to the roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team and the external appointment of a new Director of Children's and Education Services appointed in August 2024.

The financial position remained a challenge for all local authorities; the One Coventry Transformation Plan set out how the Council will respond to the challenges and embrace new approaches and technology.

In October 2024, a Local Government Association Peer Challenge team were invited by the Council to review how Children's Services provide services to children and young people to identify potential opportunities to control and reduce costs and ensure efficiencies. Peer Challenges are improvement focused and are not an inspection.

The challenge was similar to one that the Council underwent in January 2024 and does not result in any grade. The Council was given positive feedback about the Corporate Peer Challenge and many great comments about the Council's work, highlighting some areas for improvement on how the council can work in the future. The Children's Services Resources and Efficiency Peer challenge provided a further opportunity to build on the excellent work and identify areas for improvement.

The report outlined the council's progress against their recommendations and what steps the council was taking to rectify any issues.

In considering the Briefing Note, the Scrutiny Board asked questions, received responses and discussed a number of matters as summarised below:

- That the council had undertaken wider work around improving the kinship support offered locally, assessing connecting and supporting foster carers including private fostering arrangements.
- That despite the small number of privately fostered children the council still had a duty to ensure they were getting the support and oversight they needed including six-weekly visits at minimum.
- That there is 24/7 phone call support for care leavers provided by Ask Jan a charity supported by the council that was staffed by trained councillors and also offering face to face counselling.

- That improvements in children's services were in some part due to a change in culture with a strong focus on continual improvement and the council would continue to focus on providing better and better services.

Members requested that in relation to 6.0 Progress against the Recommendations, Recommendation 3, officers were to check that the transformation plan has been Member endorsed.

The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Resolved to note the contents of the briefing note and had no further recommendations for the Cabinet Member.

18. **Work Programme**

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2025/26 be noted.

19. **Any Other Business**

There were no items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.30 am)

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To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 27th November 2025

Subject: Child Friendly Cov

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update the Children's and Education Scrutiny Board (2) on the progress of Child Friendly Cov

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Children's and Education Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
 - 1) Note the progress of Child Friendly Cov
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 Child Friendly Cov is our commitment as a city to make Coventry the best city in the UK for children, young people and their families to live and grow up in; a city where all children and young people: be and feel valued, be and feel safe, have opportunities, be and feel healthy, be and feel loved.
- 3.2 The addendum slides (Appendix 1) provide an update on activity which has taken place as part of Child Friendly Cov.

Appendix 1: Child Friendly Cov progress

Authors:

Hannah Bedford, Family Valued Programme Manager, Children's and Education Services
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Child Friendly Cov

November 2025



We believe children and young people in Coventry should always...

-  be and feel valued
-  be and feel safe
-  have opportunities
-  be and feel healthy
-  be and feel loved

What is Child Friendly Cov?

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Child Friendly Cov is a city-wide partnership approach with a shared ambition to make Coventry the best place in the UK for children, young people and families to grow up in and live. A city where all children and young people:



be & feel
valued



be & feel
safe



have
opportunities



be & feel
healthy



be & feel
loved

Partnership and Co-Production

- Central to Child Friendly Cov is **co-production**, with children and young people leading on what Child Friendly Cov should look like in **partnership** with professionals who work with children, young people and families.
- **Child Friendly Cov Champions** are a group of young people who shape the work of Child Friendly Cov. Their voice feeds into Steering Group and Stakeholder meetings.
- The **Child Friendly Cov Steering Group** is made up of professionals across the partnership and local businesses, who lead on key decisions in relation to the direction of Child Friendly Cov.
- Each **Child Friendly Cov pledge has two Co-Leads**, with representatives from the Council, partner agencies and local businesses, who co-ordinate activity taking place under their pledge.
- **Child Friendly Cov Stakeholder Events** take place each quarter, highlighting the work which has taken place under different pledges.

Child and Young Person Voice and Influence

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- **Pupil Parliament** is hosted annually by University of Warwick in partnership with the Participation Team. This year was the third Pupil Parliament with over 100 Year 5 and Year 6 pupils from 15 different schools. This year had sessions ran by young people, E.on, Positive Youth Foundation, Change Makers, as well as University of Warwick and the Participation Team.



- **A Conversation With ...** is part of our commitment to ensure young people have access to key decision makers and are able to influence change. These sessions are delivered in partnership with 'My Tomorrow' and have focussed on crime (with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Police Commander, Operational Lead for Youth Justice), and Council budgets (with Cllr Brown, Director of Children's and Education Services and Director of Communications).

Child and Young Person Voice and Influence – One Big Voice



We believe children
and young people in
Coventry should always...



be and feel
valued



be and feel
safe



have
opportunities



be and feel
healthy



be and feel
loved

Child and Young Person Voice and Influence – One Big Voice

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- The **One Big Voice** survey is offered to all schools in the city with a view to identifying the priorities for Child Friendly Cov for the preceding 2 years.
- This years' survey is due to 'go live' week commencing 24th November. This year an 'opt out' approach is being used rather than 'opt in' aiming to have more schools taking part and contributing as one big voice for children and young people across the city.
- The survey is completed bi-annually, the first survey identified safety as being the key priority and resulted in the Safe Spaces initiative.



Safe Spaces



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y7r6GG1oRQ>



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be and feel
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be and feel
safe



have
opportunities



be and feel
healthy



be and feel
loved

Safe Spaces

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- There are more than 40 safe spaces across the city, with further venues keen to become Safe Spaces.
- The Safe Spaces initiative has been commended within a SOCEX (Serious and Organised Crime Exchange) meeting for supporting to locate a vulnerable young person who was victim of exploitation.
- Safe Spaces was awarded the Local Commanders Special Award for Innovative Collaboration at the Local Policing Awards.
- Through the Safe Spaces initiative, McDonalds and CV Life staff have received specialist exploitation and missing awareness training delivered by colleagues from Horizon.
- Godiva Festival had a “pop-up” Safe Space this year.
- Walsall are in the process of launching Safe Spaces based on the Child Friendly Cov model.



Safe Spaces – Young Inspectors

- The Child Friendly Cov Champions have developed a Young Inspectors Programme for Safe Spaces (like mystery shoppers).
- Inspections have started to take place, using a range of scenarios to test the Safe Space response.
- These have resulted in some suggested improvements e.g. venues having more Safe Space window stickers, and Safe Space pin badges being developed so that trained staff members are easily identifiable.



No More Knives Tour

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- Child Friendly Cov supported the 'No More Knives Tour' alongside Hope Coventry, to come to four secondary schools in the city, helping to educate over 4000 young people around knife crime and carrying a knife.



be & feel
safe



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TdSzQ5ugSU>

**NO
MORE
KNIVES**

Child Friendly Cov Summer Fest

- Summer Fest took place in August 2025 at Coventry Saracens Rugby Club who provided the venue for free.
- The day offered a free event for families in the community and was planned in partnership with the Child Friendly Cov Champions
- There were a range of activities and stalls showcasing opportunities across the city i.e. Positive Youth Foundation, Family Hubs, the Job Shop.
- Over 250 people attended across the day.



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To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 27th November 2025

Subject: Children in Care Pledge

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update the Children's and Education Scrutiny Board (2) on progress made against the pledge for children in care and care leavers.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Children's and Education Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
- 1) Note the current progress made against the pledge for children in care and care leavers.
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 The Pledge for Children in Care and Care Leavers was co-designed with children and young people with care experience, reflecting what matters most to them. The pledge includes seven statements from children and young people, with a responding commitment (or pledge) from Coventry City Council as their corporate parents.
- 3.2 The seven statements and pledges are:
- 1) I want to feel safe and settled= We will work with you to ensure you feel safe and secure where you live
 - 2) I want to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy= We will support you to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy
 - 3) I want access to services I need. I want services to work together to help me= We will encourage services to work together so that you can access the help you need
 - 4) I want support and better access to education, training, and jobs= We will support you throughout your education/ training and help you prepare for employment
 - 5) I want to be happy and have fun. I want to have opportunities to go to places and try new things. I want to be treated the same as any other young person= All young people deserve to be happy and have fun, we will support you to try new opportunities and visit different places

- 6) I want me social worker to keep me informed. I want worker I can trust, who will answer my questions and sort stuff out for me. I want to be listened to, taken seriously and offered an advocate=All professionals supporting you, will keep you informed and have your best interest at heart. We will treat you with respect, actively listen to you, provide you with the necessary support and guidance you are entitled to, including an advocate when needed
- 7) I want to feel included. My individuality is important to me. I want to be able to explore and express my identity= We value your individuality, support you in expressing and exploring your identity, and ensure you feel included

3.3 The addendum slides (Appendix 1) provide an update against each of the pledge areas, highlighting examples of the work that has been undertaken to meet our commitments to our children and young people in care and leaving care.

Appendix 1: Pledge Progress

Authors:

Hannah Bedford, Family Valued Programme Manager, Children's and Education Services

Angela Whitrick, Strategic Lead, Corporate Parenting & Sufficiency, Children's and Education Services

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References:

<https://becomecharity.org.uk/content/uploads/2025/11/Good-practice-report-by-Become-2025.pdf>

<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/contentassets/0832b8d761aa49a6adb98cf4112b8cfd/expressions-of-self-report.pdf>



PLEDGE



We believe children
and young people in
Coventry should always...



be and feel
valued



be and feel
safe



have
opportunities



be and feel
healthy



be and feel
loved



I want to feel safe and settled



We will work with you to ensure you feel safe and secure where you live

- More children are living in kinship arrangements, and we have increased the number of internal children's homes and are focusing on Coventry young people living in Coventry homes where possible and safe to do so.
- <https://becomecharity.org.uk/content/uploads/2025/11/Good-practice-report-by-Become-2025.pdf>
- One of the wellbeing indicators identified through the 'Ask Me What Matters' Project focusses on children and young people's bedrooms, and social workers asking them specific questions about this
- The Bright Spots Survey told us that 100% of children aged 8-11 years old trusted their carers and had a trusted adult in their lives
- The House Project has supported over 60 young people to successfully move to independence- with no evictions to date
- Safe Spaces – through Child Friendly Cov
- Longterm care planning, matching and stability – including additional resources



I want to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy

We will support you to be physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy

- Ask Jan (Rees Foundation) is available for care experienced people providing access to comprehensive, practice advice and support. Including 24/7 phone line, live chat, email, and WhatsApp/SMS with a mental health professional providing in the moment support, as well as a counselling offer.
- Kooth Mental Health online support is available to all young people, with training available for carers and workers.
- We have a dedicated children in care CAMHS Team.
- The Operational HeCiC Group have a key focus on securing priority health appointments for care experienced young people, ensuring they have access to the health services they need without delay
- Children in care have an annual health assessment
- Carers support children to access a wide range of activities such as swimming, trampolining, football, rock climbing, access to gym & GoCV+ cards (as reported to CPB)



I want access to services I need. I want services to work together to help me

We will encourage services to work together so that you can access the help you need

- All children's health services across Coventry and Warwickshire are now unified under a single Children's Directorate within Health, enabling more coordinated and consistent support.
- Corporate Parenting Board and responsibilities = One Coventry.
- The Operational HeCiC Group meets quarterly, strengthening partnership working and ensuring health needs of care experienced young people are
- West Midland Violence Reduction Partnerships- Safe Spaces
- Continued review of commissioned services- based on feedback from children in care, care leavers & carers.
- A comprehensive Health Needs Assessment is being completed by Public Health, in consultation with children, young people, carers and social workers.
- Building on trauma informed practice and responses, multi agency support for reunification where possible.



I want support and better access to education, training, and jobs



We will support you throughout your education/ training and help you prepare for employment

- Virtual Schools champion education and Personal Education Plans are completed termly to meet individual needs
- Partnership with the Jobs Shop provides monthly sessions at the House Project to build employability and interview skills
- Increased apprenticeship opportunities through the Council and partners
- University bursaries
- Funding has been secured for EPIC Futures to provide business mentoring for self-employment opportunities for care experienced young people aged 16+
- Increased involvement in young people on interview panels, improving confidence and interview readiness
- Virtual School and Prospects provides support for work and further education ambitions





I want to be happy and have fun. I want to have opportunities to go to places and try new things. I want to be treated the same as any other young person



All young people deserve to be happy and have fun, we will support you to try new opportunities and visit different places

- Ask Me What Matters includes a question around current hobbies and interests, as well as activities that young people would like to try.
- Work continues with Coventry Youth Partnership to make youth offers accessible via the Families Portal
- Through Care FC established with weekly training and FA coaching qualifications
- Care 2 Dance
- Partnership between Coventry Music and Virtual School provides music and performance experiences through Band Together
- Support to carers with holidays and discount scheme for days out
- Plas Dol-y-Moch trips for groups of young people
- Evidence shared through CPB- first trip to the beach, London, Kinship carers trip



I want my social worker to keep me informed. I want workers I can trust, who will answer my questions and sort stuff out for me. I want to be listened to, taken seriously and offered an advocate



All professionals supporting you, will keep you informed and have your best interest at heart. We will treat you with respect, actively listen to you, provide you with the necessary support and guidance you are entitled to, including an advocate when needed

- Change of commissioned advocacy service to Coram Voice, who have delivered a presentation to the workforce to outline the advocacy offer and highlight advocacy is a statutory entitlement for children and young people in our care.
- The role of the Independent reviewing officer
- Both the Ask Me What Matters Project and All About Me focus on ensuring that children and young people's voice is clear. All About Me feeds into Children in Care Reviews, so children's views are clear in their plans.
- 'You said- We did'- Corporate Parenting Board.

COVENTRY



I want to feel included. My individuality is important to me. I want to be able to explore and express my identity



We will value your individuality, support you in expressing and exploring your identity, and ensure that you feel included

- The Participation Team is working with Coventry University to create resources that support young people's cultural needs being prioritised when children have to move home, supporting identity and belonging.
- <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/contentassets/0832b8d761aa49a6adb98cf4112b8cfd/expressions-of-self-report.pdf>
- All About Me ensures that Life Story Work is prioritised, identifying the relationships that are most important to young people and enables children to share 'who they are', their dreams and aspirations.
- Lifelong Links continues to be funded through the DfE, supporting young people's identity through the relationships that matter most to them.
- Creating peer support networks e.g. Little Voices, Voices of Care, House Project, Band together, Care 2 Dance,

To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 27 November 2025

Subject: Children Absent from Education

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) with an overview of the statutory requirements and approach taken in Coventry to children who are absent from education.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the slides attached at Appendix 1
- 2) Identify and agree any recommendations for the relevant Cabinet Member

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 A comprehensive slide deck at Appendix 1, highlights the following:

- Statutory Guidance
- Education Partnership Priorities 2025/26
- Definition of children absent from education
- Responsibilities and staffing
- Strategic Approach
- Attendance
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and Suspensions
- Behaviour Pathway
- Education other than at school (EOTAS)
- Elective Home Education (EHE)

- 3.2 Members are requested to consider the information provided, make comments and ask questions of officers and the Cabinet Member, as well as identify any further recommendations or actions.

Appendix 1: Children Absent from Education slides

Rachael Sugars – Strategic Lead Education rachael.sugars@coventry.gov.uk

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Children Absent from Education Scrutiny Board – November 2025

Rachael Sugars – Strategic Lead Education
Faye Parklen – Head of Education Entitlement & Enrichment



Introduction



Statutory Guidance

Working Together to Improve School Attendance – August 2024:

“The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.”

Local Authority Statutory Duties – Section 19 Education Act 1996

Local Authorities must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, due to exclusion, illness, or other reasons, cannot attend a mainstream or special school.

Children Missing Education - Education Act 1996:

- Try to identify children of compulsory school age not registered at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise
- make informal enquiries with parents whose children are not registered at school to establish what education is being provided if they do not already know.


The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007

- Local authorities must arrange suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils of compulsory school age.
- For a permanent exclusion, this education must start from the sixth school day after the exclusion.

Page 40 Education Partnership Priorities 2025/26

A shared vision...

All children and young people in Coventry deserve an education that enables them to flourish, now and into the future. As the Coventry Education Partnership, we are committed to ensuring all children and young people can reach their full potential and maximise their life chances as they move into adulthood.



Education Partnership Priorities 2025/26

2025-26
Belonging

School to School Improvement Collaboration... Inclusion Strategy...
Graduated Approach to Behaviour... Developing our People...
Primary Belonging and Alternative Provision...
...Evolving and Strengthening our Partnership

Long-term
Priorities

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Secure and deliver an ambitious and relevant curriculum that is designed to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life

Curriculum

Be ambitious for children and young people with SEND and effective in the provision that we make for them so that their educational outcomes improve across all key stages

Inclusion

Ensure early years provision is effective in providing children with successful foundations for learning

Early Years

Manage behaviour well so that schools and settings are calm, safe and supportive environments which children and young people want to attend and where they can learn and thrive

Behaviour

Ensure that each school and setting has clear strategies and processes for attendance, underpinned by high expectations, which results in improving attendance for all pupils


Attendance

Children and Young People (CYP) can miss education for a number of reasons

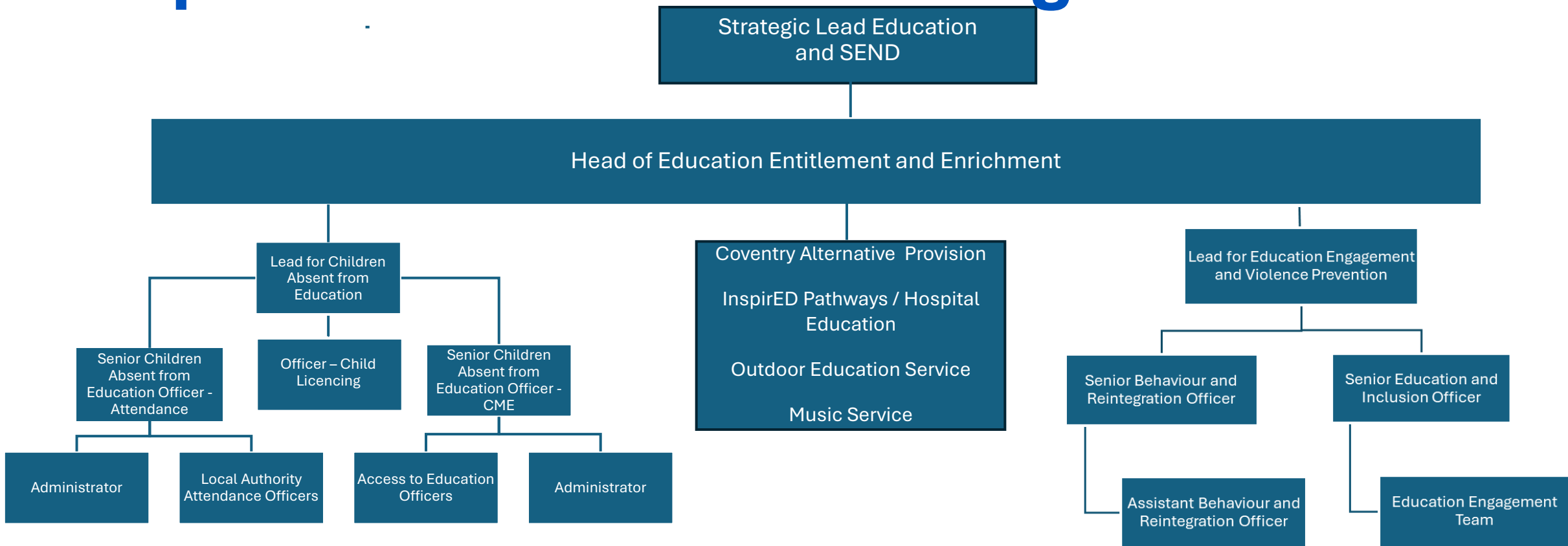
We define Children Absent from Education under 3 distinctive areas:

- Attendance
- Children Missing Education (including Special Educational Needs & Disability SEND)
- Permanent Exclusion / Suspensions

Other areas which don't meet the definition of absent from Education

- Education Other Than In School (EOTAS)
 - Elective Home Education (EHE)
- 

Children Absent from Education Responsibilities and Staffing

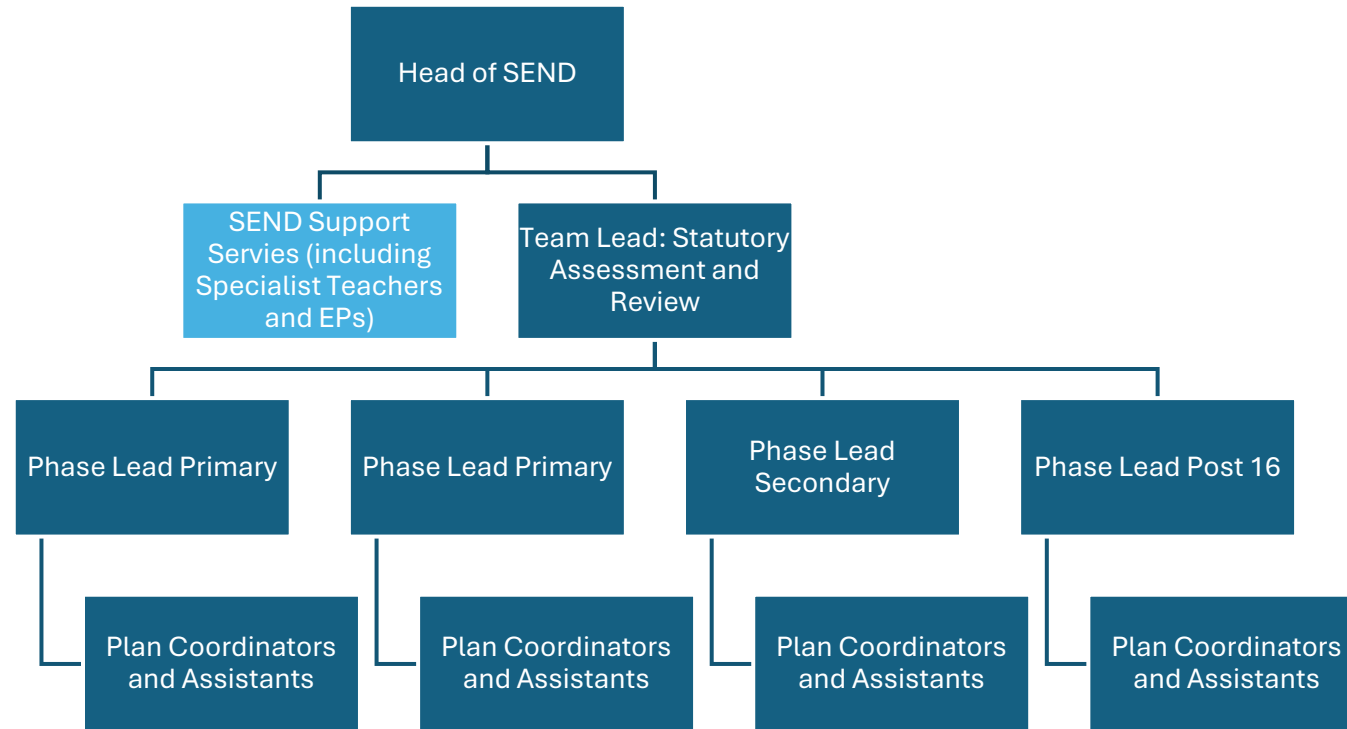


The **Children Absent from Education Team** are responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority (LA) meets its statutory duties with regards to School **Attendance, Children Missing Education.**

The **Education Engagement Team** are responsible for ensuring that the LA meets its statutory duties to provide **6th day education for permanently excluded pupils**, and for supporting schools, pupils, and families to maintain engagement and inclusion in education.

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Responsibilities and Staffing

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The SEND Team are responsible for ensuring that all children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan access suitable education.

Usually this means securing a suitable school place. However, there are some situations where education provision needs to be secured through alternative means. This may be due to:

- The CYP requiring Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS)
- The CYP requiring provision other than at school to be made for them whilst they await a placement at a school setting.

In both situations, the LA aim to help the CYP make a return to school as soon as they are able and closely monitor provision whilst a suitable school place is found.

Strategic approach: Attendance and Children Missing Education in Coventry:

- **Data-Driven Early Intervention**
 - Use new DfE attendance dashboards and live data to identify schools/cohorts at risk
 - Review and strengthen the graduated response for attendance
 - Monitor trends and evaluate (including deep dives)
- **Family-Centred Practice**
 - Embed attendance support within the Family First Partnership
 - Strengthen the Team Around the Family / School for coordinated early help
- **Collaborative Accountability**
 - Establish School Attendance Partnership Panels for locality-based decision-making and shared learning
 - Strengthen cross service and wider partnership working (incl. health)
- **Targeted Support for Vulnerable Groups**
 - A specific focus on SEND, children with social workers, and those in alternative provision or hospital education and on areas of disproportionality .
- **System Leadership and Capacity Building**
 - Provide training on attendance coding, escalation pathways, and expectations.
 - Establish Attendance Champions across schools and LA services to drive consistency and collaboration.

Strategic approach: reducing suspensions and exclusions in Coventry:

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- **Development of a City-Wide Belonging Strategy and a Graduated Support Approach**
 - Implement a city-wide strategy promoting *belonging, engagement, and wellbeing* as key levers to reduce exclusion
 - Embed relational and restorative practice across schools and services
 - Strengthen the Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support to ensure early targeted intervention, and consistent pathways
 - Align with Attendance Strategy to reinforce Team Around the Family/School
- **Data-Driven Early Intervention**
 - Monitor and review local, national and regional data to assess impact and share learning through the Partnership
- **Family-Centred Practice and Collaborative Approach**
 - Integrate behaviour and exclusion prevention within the Family First Partnership model
 - Strengthen the Team Around the Family/School approach to co-ordinate pastoral, SEND, and early help support
 - Enhance cross-service collaboration (education, social care, health, police and Youth Justice Service)
- **Targeted Support for Vulnerable Group**
 - Focus on pupils with SEND, social workers, and those in alternative provision or hospital education and on areas of disproportionality
- **System Leadership and Capacity Building**
 - Belonging and Inclusion Training Pathways for educational practitioners and specialist service teams
 - Inclusion Champions in schools and services to drive culture change

Attendance



Attendance: Responsibility of Local Authorities (LAs)

Page 48

- Take an active role in improving attendance: support schools in prioritising attendance and work with school leaders to set the culture
- Use data to understand attendance patterns across schools/areas, compare with others, and identify areas needing greater focus
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team and make available opportunities for schools to share effective practice
- For cohorts with lower attendance than peers: proactively use data to identify them, develop strategies to support them, and track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area-wide attendance barriers
- For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and those who are persistently /severely absent: hold regular conversations with schools, provide/referral access to services needed, and where support fails, consider legal interventions (including prosecution) as a last resort
- Appoint a Virtual School Head for attendance monitoring of Children in Care

Attendance: Responsibility of Schools

- Publish and maintain a clear attendance policy understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Build a whole-school culture that promotes good attendance.
- Accurately maintain admission/attendance registers with robust daily follow-up.
- Regularly monitor data to spot trends and priority pupils/cohorts.
- Appoint a senior leader to champion and drive attendance.
- ***For pupils at risk of persistent absence:*** identify early, work with families to understand and remove barriers.
- ***For persistently/severely absent pupils:*** provide targeted support, use formal options where needed, and work jointly with the LA and partners; escalate safeguarding concerns.

Attendance: Responsibility of Parents / Carers

Page 50

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open, except when a statutory reason applies
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- Wherever possible, book medical appointments around the school day
- Work with the school and/or LA to help understand their child's barriers to attendance; proactively engage with support offered
- When absence becomes persistent or severe, engage informal support (e.g., parenting contracts or voluntary early-help plans), and be clear about the potential for legal intervention if non-engagement persists



Attendance: Coventry Arrangements

Statutory:

- Track local attendance data
- Have a School Attendance Support Team
- Communication and advice to schools
- Targeting Support Meetings (once per term)
- Multi-disciplinary support for families
- Appointment of a Virtual School Head for monitoring of Children in Care
- Legal intervention
 - Attendance Contracts
 - Fixed Penalty Notices
 - School Attendance orders

Additional Traded Attendance Support Offer:

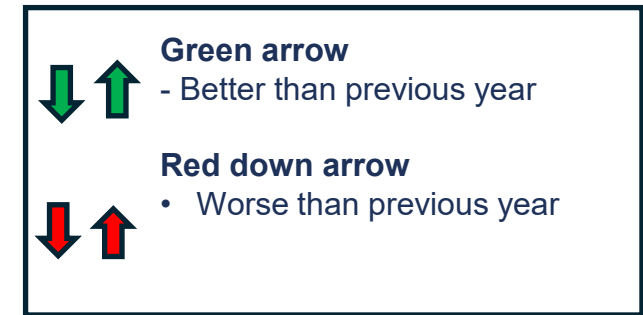
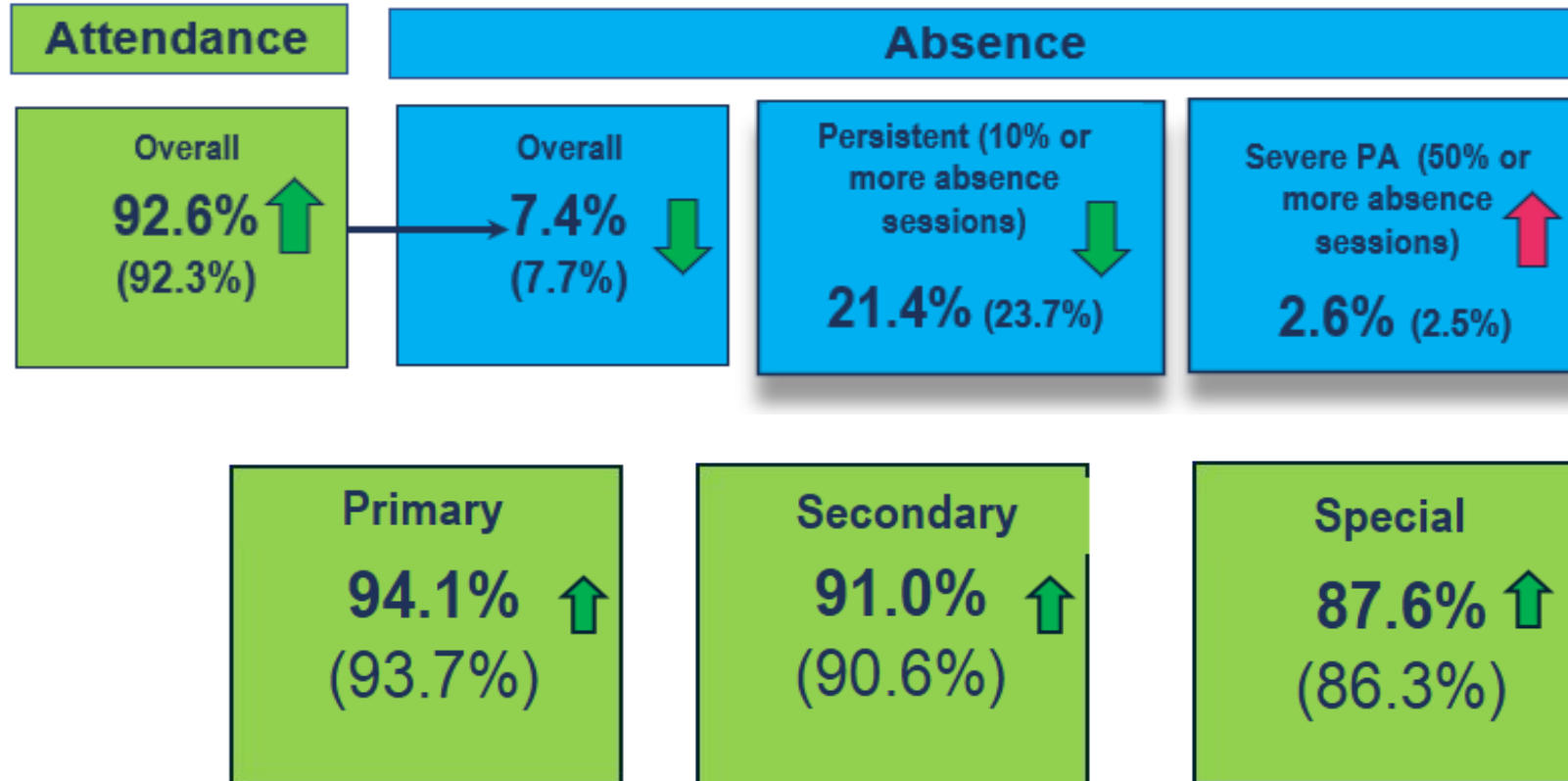
- LA Attendance Officers provide targeted attendance casework work with individual CYP and their families:
 - Maintaining contact over holiday periods
 - Working through and addressing barriers



Attendance: Education Performance Indicators 2023/24

Page 52
Published data

(Figures in brackets are numbers reported at previous year 2022/23) Full Year



School phase includes both **authorised** and **unauthorised absences**

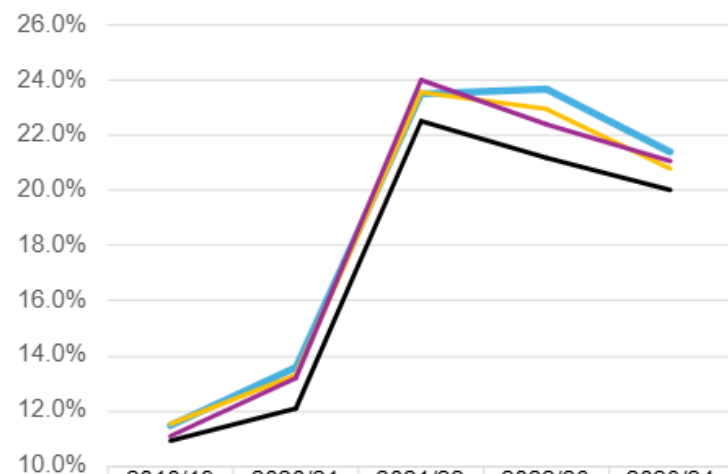
Attendance: 2023/24 Data Commentary

- Coventry's overall attendance improved across all phases following post-pandemic declines.
- Primary attendance (94.1%) was improved from previous year, but was below national (94.5%), statistical neighbours (94.3%) and region (94.2%)
- Secondary attendance (91.0%) was improved from previous year, matched the region, but was slightly below both statistical neighbours and national (91.1%)
- Special attendance (87.6%) was improved from the previous year, and above the region (87.3%), national and statistical neighbours (87.0%)
- Persistent Absence (21.4%) was improved from the previous year, but was higher than national (20.0%), regional (21.1%) and statistical neighbours (20.8%)
- Severe Absence (2.6%) was slightly worse than the previous year and was higher than national (2.3%), regional (2.4%) and statistical neighbours (2.1%). The gap narrowed in

Attendance: Absence Rates graphs

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Persistent Absence Rate

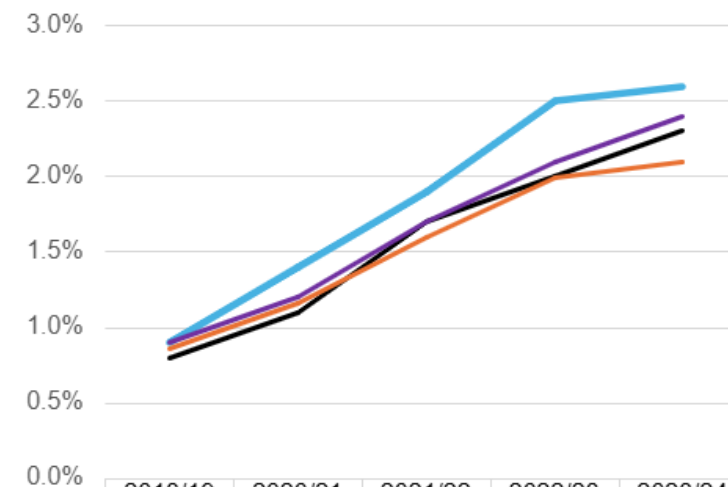


- Pre-COVID (18/19): Coventry higher than England and statistical neighbours

- Post-COVID :Rates broadly doubled in 21/22

- All comparators followed a similar trajectory with Coventry slightly higher than region, and higher than national and statistical neighbours

Severe Persistent Absence Rate



- Pre-COVID (18/19): Coventry slightly higher than England and the same as the region

- Post-COVID: Rates broadly doubled in 21/22

- All comparators followed an upward trajectory with Coventry above comparators (narrowed gap in 23/24)

Attendance: Absence Reason code analysis: 2023/24

The **7.4% Absence Rate** can be broken down into :

- **4.6%** Authorised which is 0.1ppts lower than national
- **2.8%** Unauthorised which is 0.3ppts higher than national

The attendance codes are nationally defined, and school's input / categorise this information


Top 3 reasons for Authorised Absence :

Illness (I)	2.4%
Exceptional Circumstances (C)	0.3%
Excluded (E)	0.1%

Top 3 reasons for Unauthorised Absence:

Other Unauthorised (O)	1.6%
Unagreed Holidays (G)	0.2%
Late after Registration (U)	0.1%

Attendance: Severe Absence

- Under Section 19 of the Education Act LAs have statutory duties in relation to extended absence
 - Policy reviewed and relaunched earlier in the year
 - In most cases, schools will effectively support pupils using their own resources
 - Sometimes the LA may need to coordinate the support that a pupil requires.
 - To fulfil this obligation, the LA operates a panel for CYP with extended school non-attendance (ESNAP).
- 

Attendance: Extended School Non-Attendance Panel (ESNAP)

- The purpose of the panel is to:
 - consider action taken by schools to support CYP
 - recommend additional school action required, including recommendations to alternative provision (AP) procured via the Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support and framework or,
 - Provide education or intervention through the LA delivered InspirED Pathways (includes Hospital Education Service)
- Extended Non-Attendance Panel: Referrals 2024/25
 - Total referrals: 138
 - Referrals into InspirED: 51
 - Requires further school action: 87

Children Missing Education (CME)



CME: Definition

- **Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who:**
 - are not registered pupils at a school*, and
 - are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (e.g. home education, Alternative Provision).

- * Can include CYP with an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan where:
 - new to Coventry and awaiting a place in a specialist school to be allocated
 - placement in a school has broken down or permanently excluded and they are awaiting a new school to be allocated
 - medically unfit to receive education



A Child or Young person (CYP) is considered CME when they...

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- are in the process of applying for a school place*
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown (10 days+)

* Can include CYP with an EHC Plan when awaiting a place in a special school to be allocated



A Child or Young Person (CYP) is NOT CME when they are...

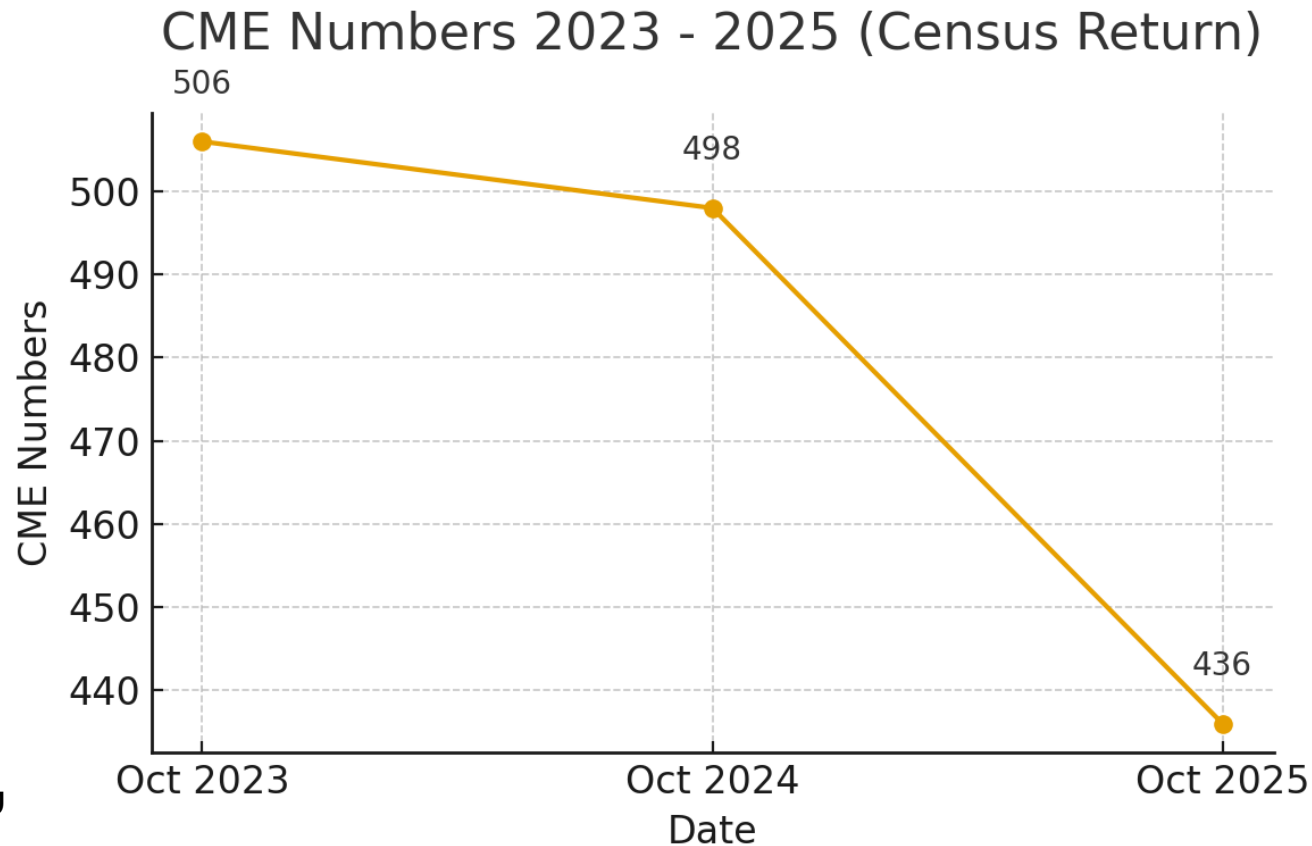
- on a school roll, even if persistently absent.
- home-educated and the LA has not assessed (or has deemed suitable) the provision.
- in alternative provision or hospital education (InspirED Pathways) judged suitable for their needs.
- has an EHC Plan and is considered as requiring Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

CME: Coventry Arrangements

- Coventry has clear, coordinated systems in place to identify, investigate, and secure education for every child missing education.
 - Dedicated Team
 - Single Route of Referral
 - Robust Case Tracking
 - Multi-Agency Enquiries
 - Swift Action to Secure Education
 - Safeguarding Centred Approach

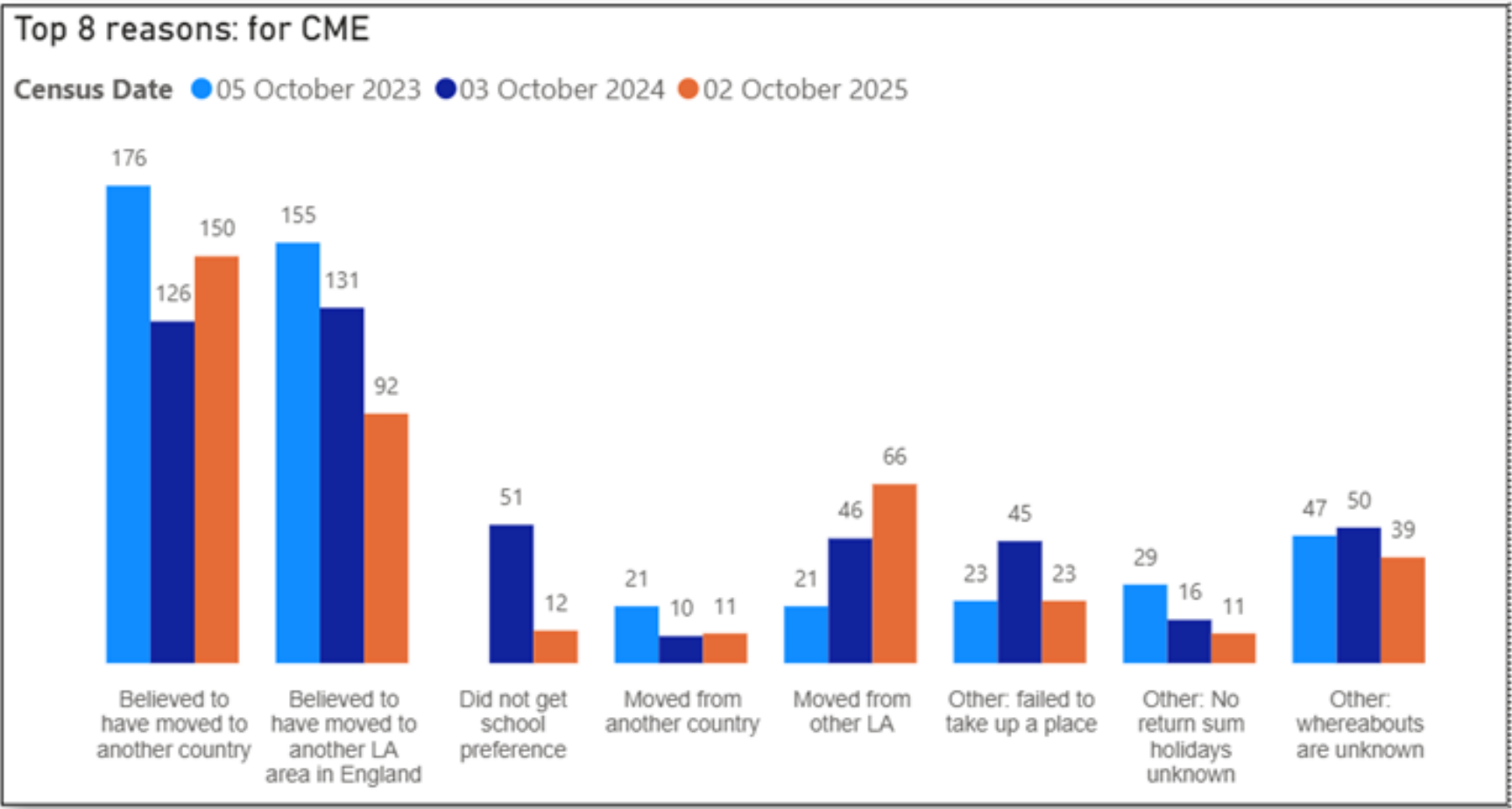


CME: Coventry Data: 2023 – 2025



- Data shows a small decline in open CME cases as of October Census return.
- Data fluctuates throughout the year.

CME: Coventry Main Reasons: 2023 - 2025



NB: This data is a subset of the total CME data, showing only the top 8 reasons for CME and will therefore not equate to the total CME numbers on the previous slide.
Data Source: MRI Education (CAPITA 1)

CME: Data Commentary: 2023 - 2025

- 2024/25: 63% Primary age pupils, 37% Secondary age pupils
- Overall data as at October census suggests limited movement over 3 years – data does fluctuate throughout the year
- Most common reasons are where families believed to have moved abroad or to another Local Authority
- “Failed to take up a place” and “no return after summer holidays” categories remain persistent
- “Whereabouts unknown” cases have reduced slightly, but continued monitoring is vital for safeguarding and compliance
- System changes to improve tracking and data quality of school refusers from September 2024
- Further revision of systems implemented from September 2025

CME with Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan: Local Arrangements and good practice

- The situation of each CYP awaiting a school place is different – the SEND Team work closely with families to identify the best route back into school
- This can include CYP 'newly arrived to city' with an EHC Plan
- Interim support is secured through the provision of tuition, usually delivered in the home, or in some cases a community venue
- The cases of all children awaiting a school place are closely monitored, to ensure safeguarding compliance, quality assure provision and identify suitable school provision as soon as possible



Permanent Exclusions (PEX) & Suspensions

PEX & Suspensions: Responsibility of Local Authorities (LAs)

- Must be notified of all permanent exclusions and suspensions
- For a permanent exclusion, arrange suitable full-time education from day 6
- For pupils with EHC Plans, review/reassess and secure an appropriate placement
- Arrange and administer Independent Review Panels for maintained schools — secure trained panel members, clerk, venue, and meet statutory timescales.
- Monitor permanent exclusion trends and support/challenge schools where practice is disproportionate; manage funding transfers after permanent exclusion.



PEX & Suspensions: Responsibility of Schools

- Should use permanent exclusion as a last resort, considering evidence, context, and whether other support could reasonably be used
- Must ensure the decision is lawful, reasonable, fair, and proportionate
- Provide and mark work for the first 5 school days of permanent exclusion and continued for longer suspensions.
- Notify parents, the governing board and the LA immediately, giving clear reasons and next steps.
- Work with the LA to transfer safeguarding information and support transition to new provision
- Governing bodies must meet within 15 school days to consider reinstatement, apply equality duties, and ensure correct processes and recording
- Arrange and administer Independent Review Panels (non-maintained schools).
- Must notify social worker of suspension or exclusion where appropriate

PEX & Suspensions: Responsibility of Parents

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- For the first 5 days, ensure the pupil is not in a public place in school hours, unless justified (from day 6 of a permanent exclusion should have returned to provision)
- Support the CYP to complete work and attend alternative provision once arranged
- Make representations and attend the governing body meeting as appropriate
- May request an Independent Review Panel within 15 school days (including a SEND expert if appropriate)
- May pursue Equality Act discrimination claims within 6 months.



PEX & Suspensions: Coventry's Arrangements

- **Support & Engagement**

- Early intervention and support to schools and pupils prior to and during permanent exclusion (PEX) decisions
- Guidance and advocacy for families navigating the PEX process

- **6th Day Provision**

- Aims to ensure all pupils receive education from day 6 of exclusion.
- Alternative Provision (AP) through LA-commissioned providers or outreach to the new allocated school
- Focus on character/personal development, belonging, reintegration, and continuity of learning

- **Outreach Teams:**

- Coventry AP Academy and The Keys provide coordinate transition with the receiving school
- Education Engagement, Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH), Educational Psychology

- **Reintegration into Mainstream**

- Following an In-Year Admission application, cases are referred to the Fair Access Panel for placement
- Ensuring every Coventry CYP gets a place within a Coventry School following a permanent exclusion

EHC Plan Pupils

- Managed by the SEND Team and Plan Coordinator to ensure provision meets individual needs

Children in Care

- Managed by the Virtual School Headteacher and Admissions Teams.

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion (PEX): Education Performance Indicators 2023/24

Suspensions



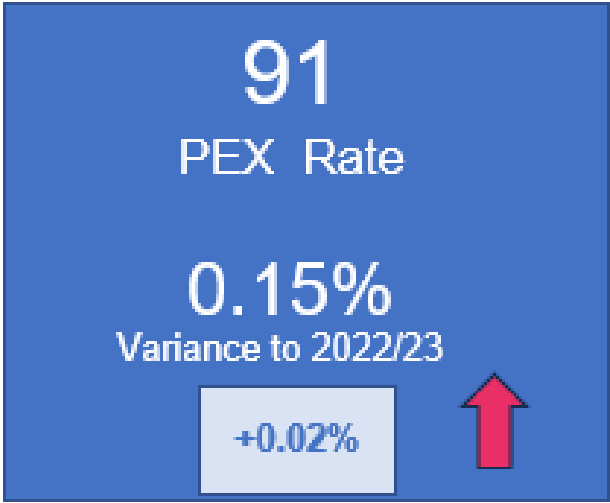
Green arrow

- Less Suspension/PEX than previous year

Red down arrow

- More Suspension/PEX than previous year

Exclusions (PEX)



2756 individual students received 1 or more suspension

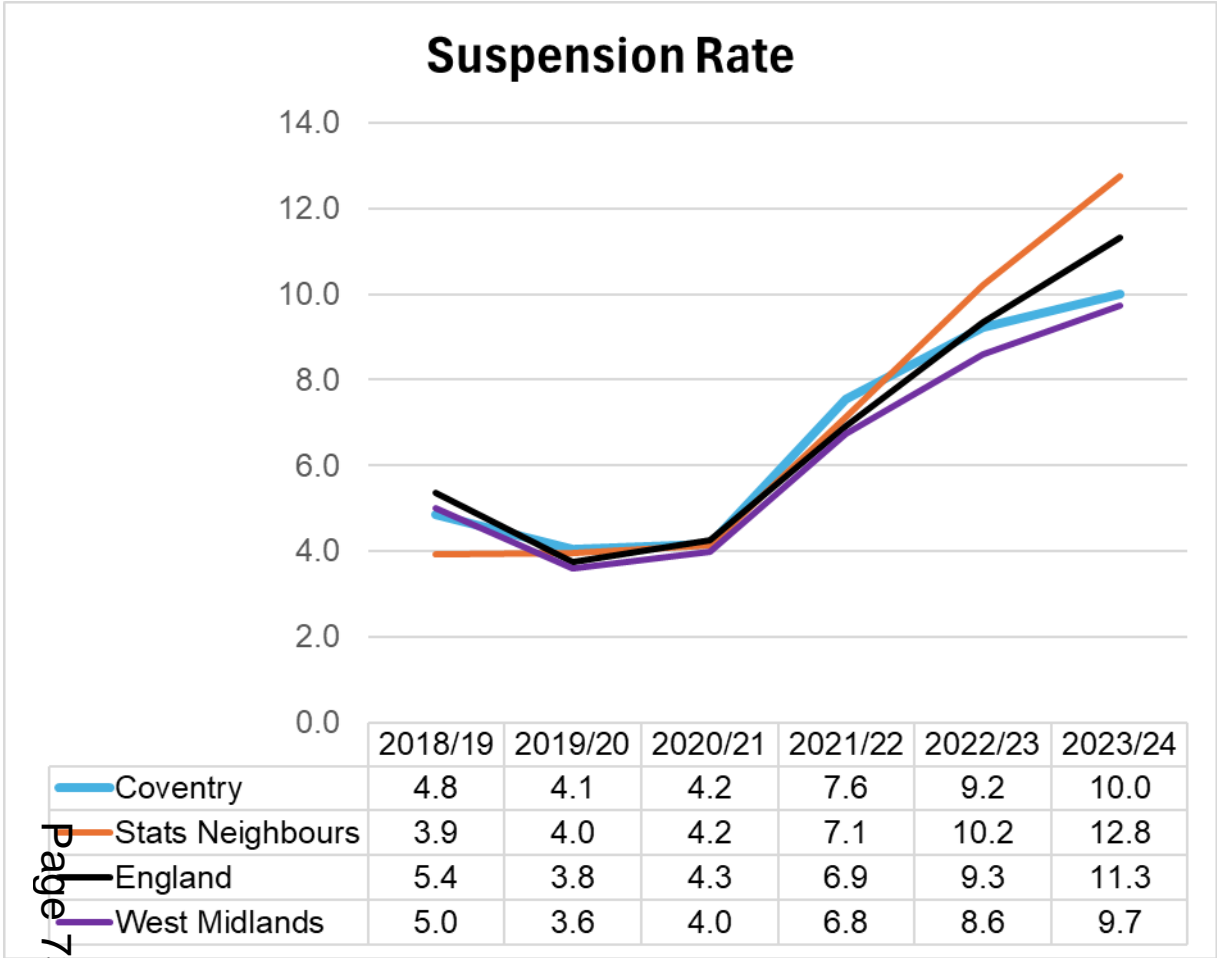
2023/24 Suspension Rate by Phase (previous year in brackets)

6,155 susp. count (61,298 students)	945 susp. count (34,056 students)	4,949 susp. count (25,983 students)	261 susp. count (1,259 students)
Overall 10.0% ↑ (9.2%)	Primary 2.7% ↑ (2.2%)	Secondary 19.0% ↑ (17.4%)	Special 20.7% ↓ (33.2%)

2023/24 PEX Rate by Phase (previous year in brackets)

91 students	21 students	69 students	1 student
Overall 0.15% ↑ (0.13%)	Primary 0.06% ↑ (0.02%)	Secondary 0.26% ↑ (0.20%)	Special 0.08% ↓ (0.66%)

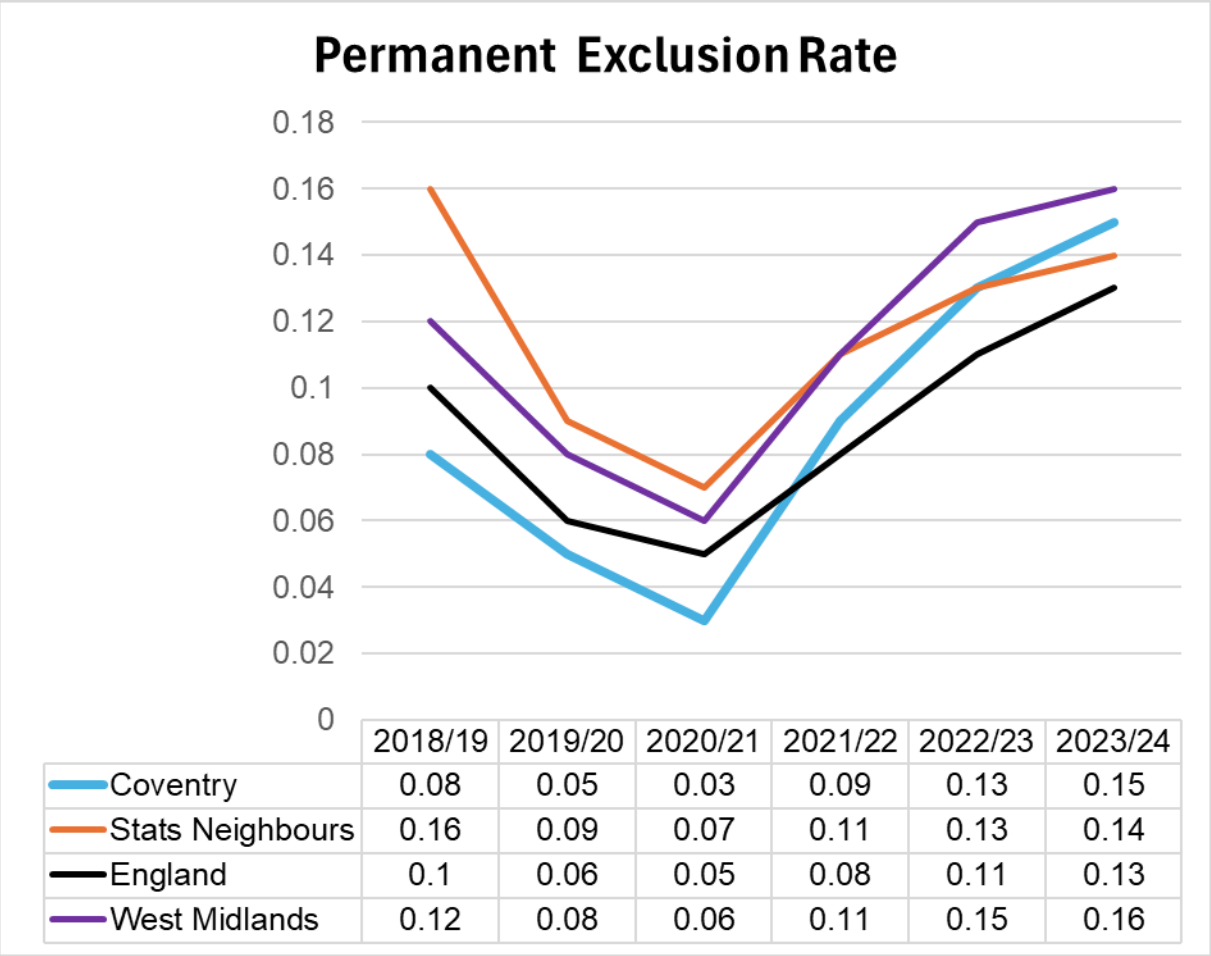
Suspensions: Rate Trends 2018/19 – 2023/24 (Pre Covid – Post Covid)



Suspension Rate (per 100 Pupils):

- Pre-COVID: Coventry was lower than national and region (18/19).
- Post-COVID: Rates broadly doubled in 21/22 and continued to increase but Coventry is below national & statistical neighbours but above region.

Permanent Exclusion: Rate Trends 2018/19 – 2023/24 (Pre Covid – Post Covid)



Permanent Exclusion Rate (per 100 pupils):

- Pre-COVID: Coventry was lower than national and region (18/19 and 19/20)
- Post-Covid: Rates increased in 21/22 and have broadly continued to increase. They are above national and statistical neighbours but below the region.

PEX & Suspensions: Data Commentary – 2023/24


- **Suspensions**

- Coventry's Suspension rate (10.0%) increased from 22/23 but was below national (11.3%) and statistical neighbours (12.8%)
- Coventry's suspension rate increased at a lower rate than national and statistical neighbours
- Persistent disruptive behaviour 51.1%, Physical assault against pupil 21%, Physical Assault against Adult 9.6%, Verbal abuse against adult 17.9%

- **Permanent Exclusions (PEX)**

- Coventry's Exclusion rate (0.15%) increased from 22/23 and was above national (0.13%) and statistical neighbours (0.14%) but was below the region (0.16%)
- Coventry's Exclusion rate increased at the same rate as national, but faster than region and statistical neighbours.
- Persistent disruptive behaviour 44.9%, Physical assault against pupil 28.1%, Physical assault against adult 23.6%, Verbal abuse against adult 15.7%. Offensive weapon 15.7%

Behaviour Pathway : New Approach

- 24/25 Academic Year was the pilot year for a new approach in Coventry to better support pupils before the point of Permanent Exclusion
 - Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Graduated Model of Support has been implemented (see next slide)
 - The capacity and diversity of Alternative Provision available through the CAP Framework was also expanded
 - A Multi-agency and trauma-informed approach underpins this work
- 

Graduated Model of Support:

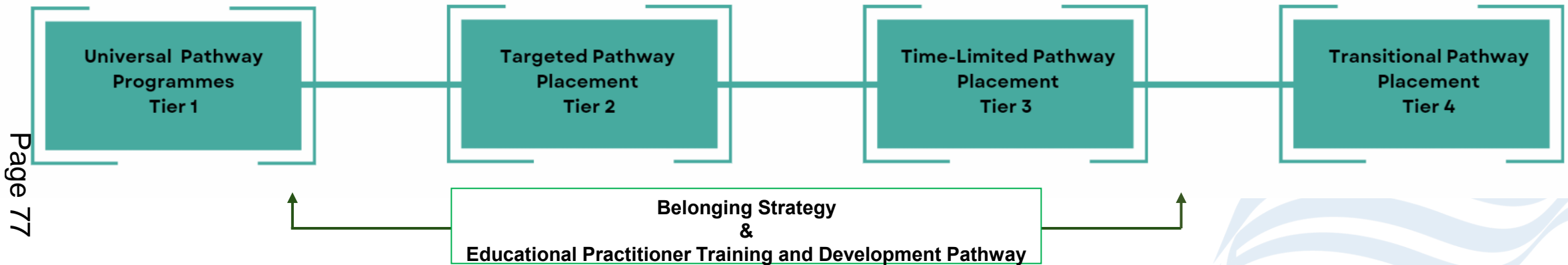
Coventry Alternative Provision Education Partnership Aim:

To equip children and young people with the vital skills, qualifications, knowledge and experiences which assist them to flourish through education and in their transition to adulthood.

Multi Agency Approach :

A graduated model to support **each young person to remain in Mainstream Education** wherever appropriate, through universal, targeted and specialist provisions that are suitable for the assessed need of the individual and which provide the right support, in the right place at the right time. This will be achieved through;

- **Universal support** as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- **Targeted support** placements.
- **Time-limited support** placements in an alternative provision setting.
- **Transitional support** return to mainstream or suitable Post-16 destination




Graduated Model of Supports aims to:

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All children and young people will:

- feel they belong within Coventry and specifically within the education system
- have access to educational provision and support which is appropriate to their needs and ambitions.
- have improved academic and enrichment opportunities and outcomes
- successfully reintegrate into mainstream or specialist settings after intervention

As result of the above there will be a:

- Reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions
 - Reduced numbers of student missing out on full time education
 - Reduction in persistent and severe absence
 - Reduced risk of children missing from education
- 

Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

EOTAS: Introduction

- For most CYP with an Education, Health & Care (EHC) Plan, being educated within a school or college and alongside their peers is the best way to ensure they learn independence, have equal opportunities and are well prepared for adulthood.
- However, for a very small number of children and young people with complex needs, it may not be possible for them to attend a mainstream or special school or college.
- EOTAS may be appropriate when:
 - pupils are unable to attend school due to **long-term illness** or **disability**
 - it **has not been possible to meet a pupil's needs within school**, even after adjustments have been made to meet their needs.
 - expectant mothers who cannot attend for **health and safety reasons**

EOTAS: What is it?

- Under a EOTAS arrangement, the pupil is not on the roll of formal educational setting and is educated elsewhere. This can be a tailored range of provision that can provide for their needs



EOTAS: Statutory Duties

- LAs follow national legislation when making decisions about providing Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS).
- There is a **high threshold** for Local Authorities to evidence before they can provide education through EOTAS as part of an EHCP.
- The legislative basis upon which Local Authorities can make provision for children through Education Otherwise than at School (EOTAS) is set out in **Section 61 of the Children and Families Act (2014)**. Which states that:

A local authority in England may arrange for any special educational provision that it has decided is necessary for a child or young person for whom it is responsible to be made otherwise than in a school or post-16 institution or a place at which relevant early years education is provided.

An authority may do so only if satisfied that it would be inappropriate for the provision to be made in a school or post-16 institution or at such a place.

*Before doing so, the **authority must consult the child's parent or the young person.***



EOTAS: Local Arrangements and good practice

- Where agreed EHC Plan Coordinators work with CYP, parents and carers to
 - ensure provision complies with Section F of the EHC Plan
 - identify providers and liaise with them to set up and monitor the provision
- Alternatively, a parent may request a personal budget* and be responsible for identifying and commissioning appropriate support (the LA will require evidence of the quality and suitability of provision)
- Regular contact is maintained through half-termly meetings to oversee and monitor the provision
- Where possible provision is secured through the **Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) Framework**, which is already quality assured and meets our standards.
- The EOTAS package will be reviewed formally once a year through the annual review
- In most cases, an EOTAS package will be a short-term solution which will aim to support a child or young person to move towards accessing an educational setting.

**if it is funded through personal budget to parents the first review will take place after 3 months and then annually*


Elective Home Education (EHE)



EHE: Legal Position

- **DfE Elective Home Education Departmental Guidance for Local Authorities - April 2019**
- Parents have a legal right to educate their child at home.
- The underpinning law of all casework for the Elective Home Education Coordinator is Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act which requires parents to provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs which the child may have either by regular attendance at school or **otherwise**.

EHE: Statutory Framework & Duties (LA)

- LA should engage constructively, offering advice and support
 - Maintain oversight of children who are EHE
 - Assess suitability of education where concerns exist.
 - Take proportionate steps to engage and offer support.
 - Act where education appears unsuitable
 - Use School Attendance Orders (SAOs) as a last resort.
 - Share safeguarding information appropriately
- 

EHE: Coventry's Approach

The LA discharges the role of an EHE Coordinator. This dedicated post is held by an experienced teacher

Coventry's EHE approach balances:

- Parental rights to home educate
- Children's rights to a suitable education
- LA duty to safeguard and ensure entitlement
- Through collaborative, proportionate, and respectful engagement

EHE: Coventry's Arrangements

- Dedicated EHE Coordinator.
- EHE Register managed within LA's internal education database.
- Schools required to notify LA via secure webform when pupils deregister.
- Initial contact: welcome letter, information booklet, and offer of visit.
- Visits are supportive – *not inspections*.
- Parents given access to advice, resources, and signposting:

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Learners:

- Collaboration with appropriate agencies.
- EHE may be deemed unsuitable if a child on a Child Protection Plan until risk is resolved.
- Children with a social worker and EHC Plan pupils monitored closely with relevant professionals.

Children with EHC Plans

- Parents may home educate, but LA retains responsibility to maintain the plan
- Statutory Assessment & Review Team (START) reviews & annual monitoring continue.
- LA ensures suitability and will intervene if education becomes unsuitable.

EHE: Coventry's Arrangements

Escalation and Enforcement

Where there is information to suggest that the CYP is not receiving a suitable or full-time education:


- Informal education and advice are always prioritised
- 15 day missing education notice issued if no evidence of suitable education
- School Attendance Order (SAO) issued as last resort after attempts to engage fail

Preventing Off-rolling

- Schools must not encourage EHE as an alternative to exclusion or attendance sanctions
- Attendance and School Improvement Teams monitor EHE trends by school
- Joint challenge where inappropriate patterns are identified



EHE: National versus local – Autumn 24 Census

- England LAs reported 111,700 children in elective home education (EHE) across the country. This was an increase of 21% from an estimated 92,000 in the previous autumn term.
 - The rate of EHE was 1.4% of the population of comparable ages (based on ONS for children aged 5 to 16 years).
 - Coventry reported 510 children in elective home education (EHE) in the city. This was an increase of 90 (21%) from an estimated 420 in the previous autumn term.
 - The rate of EHE was 0.9% of the city population of comparable ages (based on ONS for children aged 5 to 16 years).
 - Coventry had the lowest proportion of EHE in the WM region
- 

EHE Pupil Group and Reasons : Coventry

Elective Home Education: Aut 23 to Aut 24 by term - Gender, Year Group and Reason

WEST MIDLANDS CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Year & Time period

2024/25 - Autumn term

Local Authority

Coventry

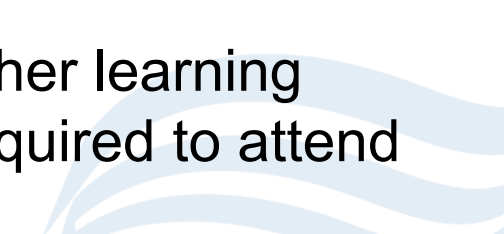
Gender	Number	% of Group
Male	240	47
Female	270	53
Total	510	100

Year Group	Number	% of Group
Year 11	80	16
Year 10	70	14
Year 9	70	13
Year 8	60	12
Year 4	40	8
Year 5	40	7
Year 6	40	8
Year 7	40	7
Year 1	30	0
Year 3	30	5
Year 2	20	0
Reception	0	0
Total	520	90

Reason	Number	% of Group
Philosophical	150	30
Mental health	110	22
Other	80	15
School dissatisfaction general	50	10
Did not get school preference	30	6
Difficulty accessing suitable school place	30	6
School dissatisfaction bullying	20	0
Lifestyle	10	0
School dissatisfaction send	10	0
Unknown	10	0
Health covid	0	0
No reason given	0	0
Permanent exclusion	0	0
Physical health	0	0
Religious	0	0
Risk of school exclusion	0	0
School suggestion	0	0
Total	500	89

Year group and reason data is rounded to the nearest 10. Reasons are defined nationally.

EHE: Children's Well-being & Schools Bill

- Compulsory Children Not in School registers in each local authority area.
 - A duty on local authorities to provide support to the parents of children on their registers.
 - Changes to the School Attendance Order (SAO) process to make it more efficient.
 - A requirement whereby parents of some children for whom there are existing safeguarding concerns or attend special schools will need local authority consent to home educate (and where children subject to some child protection processes are already being home educated, the local authority will be able to require them to attend school).
 - A requirement for local authorities to consider the home and other learning environments when determining whether children should be required to attend school.
- 

EOTAS and EHE: Further Actions

- Following the SEND & AP White Paper – implementation of EOTAS Policy (currently working to an internal position statement)
- Increase capacity within EHE team to support increased numbers
- Implement national changes when finalised (expect to include a new burdens assessment for Local Authorities)

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Agenda Item 7

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Last updated 18 November 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

10 July 2025
Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities Draft Work Programme 25-26
11 September 2025
Outdoor Education The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care
16 October 2025
Adoption Service Annual Reports Fostering Annual Report Progress on LGA Peer Review Action Plan
27 November 2025
Child-Friendly Cov Children in Care Pledge Children Absent from Education
22 January 2026 - Coombe
Safeguarding Annual Report Holiday Activities and Food Programme Site visit to Outdoor Education Service
26 February 2026
School Performance Data Annual Report SEND Strategy Update
26 March 2026
Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life Family First Partnership (Social Care Reform) Regional Placements
Meetings to be allocated
School Places Sufficiency Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer (25/26) Children's Front Door MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry Youth Provision in Coventry Health and Wellbeing in Schools Family Health and Lifestyles Service Behaviour Pathway Campaign on smart phones in school Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027 Family Valued and Reunification Project Breakfast Clubs Child Sexual Exploitation Families First Partnership Programme
Items taken for information
Site visit to Coombe Abbey Outdoor Education Centre

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

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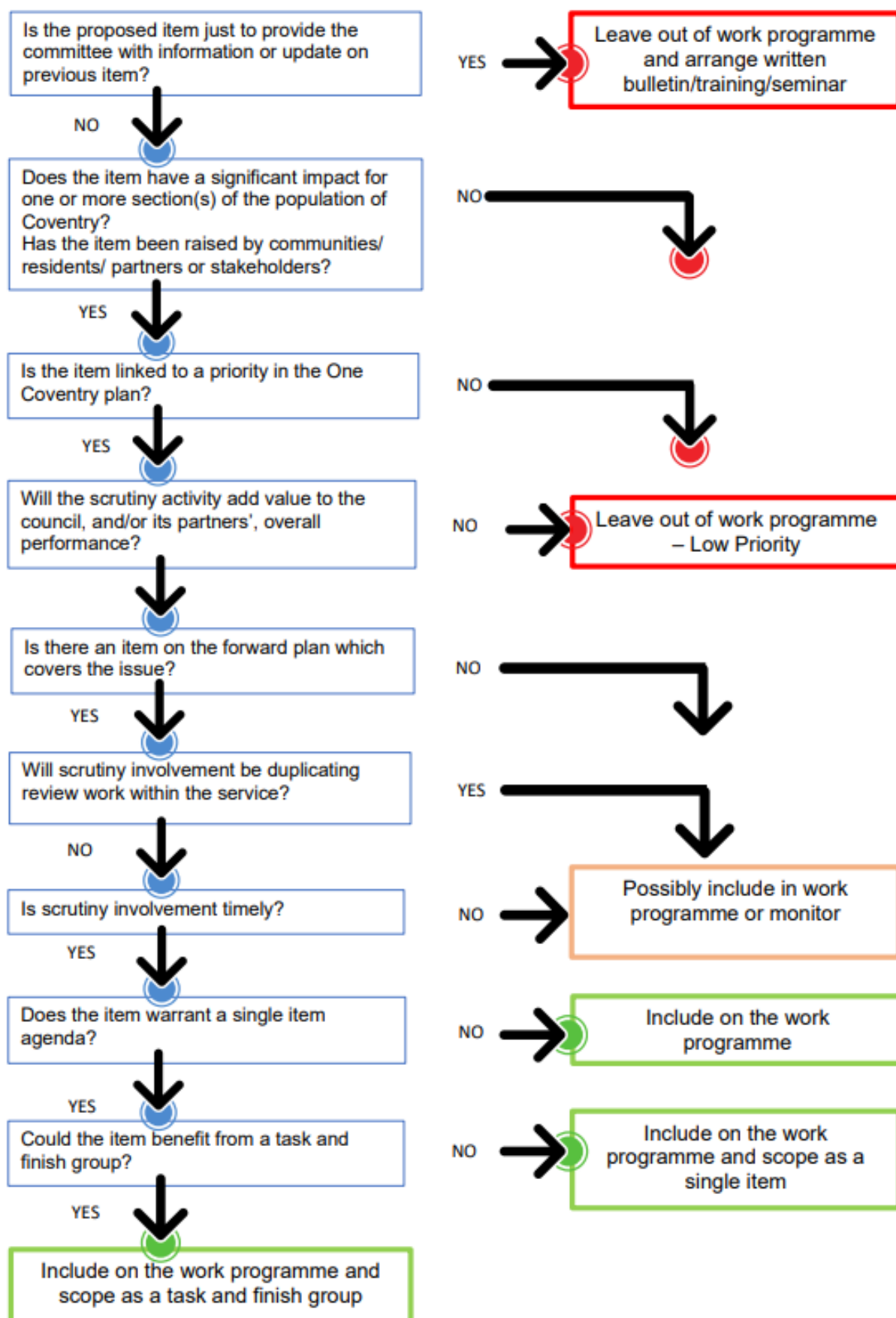
Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
10 July 2025	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	To invite Cllr Sandhu and Cllr Seaman to identify their priorities for the coming year, for Scruto to be able to identify future items and hold Cabinet Members to account	Cllr Sandhu Cllr Seaman
	Draft Work Programme 25-26	To consider the draft work programme and to identify any additional items or task and finish groups	Cllr Kelly G Holmes
11 September 2025	Outdoor Education	To cover the work being delivered on Outdoor Education, including the extended offer as well as plans for celebrating Dol Y Moch's anniversary.	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care	Looking at the complexities of homes for children, including placements, and the associated costs.	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
16 October 2025	Adoption Service Annual Reports	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 Matt Clayton
	Fostering Annual Report	To consider performance of the fostering service including support to foster carers from their perspective	Cllr Seaman A Whitrick
	Progress on LGA 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
27 November 2025	Child-Friendly Cov	Progress update on impact and recommendations made at the meeting on 17 th October 2024 BN CMCYP - Child Friendly Cov.docx	Matt Clayton Cllr Seaman
	Children in Care Pledge	Progress on the pledge for children in care and care leavers	Matt Clayton Cllr Seaman
	Children Absent from Education	To establish a T&F to look at this in more detail. Covering Elective Home Education, Child Missing Education, SEND without an appropriate place	Rachael Sugars, Cllr Sandhu
22 January 2026 - Coombe	Safeguarding Annual Report		Rebekah Eaves Cllr Seaman
	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	Update including progress on recommendation to Cabinet Members BN CM ES HAF Dec 24.docx	Adrian Coles Cllr Seaman

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Site visit to Outdoor Education Service	Following an item on 11 September, Members wanted to see first hand the in-city outdoor education offer	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
26 February 2026	School Performance Data Annual Report	An annual report on looking at performance and progress against national indicators	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars
	SEND Strategy Update	To consider the refreshed strategy following co-production with children and parents. To specifically look at SEND provision in mainstream schools – possibly to include Behaviour Strategy and alternative provision	Jeannette Essex Cllr Sandhu
26 March 2026	Early Years Strategy and Best Start in Life	To come in 2025 and to include progress on actions requested on 17/7/24 re: oral and dental health – links with Best Start in Life	R Sugars/J Moffat Cllr Sandhu and Cllr Seaman
	Family First Partnership (Social Care Reform)	Update on social reforms and the Council's response.	Cllr Seaman S Sen, C Heeley
	Regional Placements	Also to include progress on West Midlands Safer Centre	S Sen Cllr Seaman
Meetings to be allocated	School Places Sufficiency	Primary, Secondary and Special – to look in more detail at the delivery on the One Strategic Plan – refer to Scrucro for Cabinet Report.	
	Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer (25/26)		
	Children's Front Door	An aspect of the LGA Peer Review.	S Sen Cllr Seaman
	MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry	Looking at the impact of the new partnership threshold document in reducing inappropriate referrals into MASH, as well as diversion to Family Hubs.	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
	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 well-being in schools and universities – including the school nursing service	

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Family Health and Lifestyles Service	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. Also how the service is supporting Early Help BN CM CYP & PHSW - Early Help.docx	Bill McCann, Angela Baker Cllr Caan
	Behaviour Pathway	To include the Belonging Strategy, Coventry Alternative Provision and the evaluation report on the pilot programme to reduce exclusions. To include with February meeting item on SED.	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	Campaign on smart phones in school	Looking at the impact on behaviour, mental health and attention span	Cllr Sandhu
	Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027		
	Family Valued and Reunification Project	Pick up outstanding items from 24-25, cost of care proceedings, ethnicity, cost of different levels of intervention	
	Breakfast Clubs		
	Child Sexual Exploitation	Work of the Horizon Team – links with the police and health.	Cllr Seaman Chris Heeley
	Families First Partnership Programme		
Items taken for information	Site visit to Coombe Abbey Outdoor Education Centre		

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart



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