



Children's Services: Attendance Improvement Service

Current Service

The Attendance Improvement Service carries out the local authority's statutory response with regard to school attendance. The Local Authority has a legal duty to ensure that children are in the school system or receiving education otherwise and to enforce the law when required.

The statutory duties include:

- Instigating legal proceedings against parents/carers who have failed in their duty to ensure regular attendance at school of their child
- Issuing School Attendance Orders (SAO)
- Issuing penalty notices and making application to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).
- Child Employment; Children in Entertainment and Chaperone licensing; Tracking Children Missing in Education (CME)

Additionally the Attendance Improvement Service carry out the following functions which are non-statutory.

- Ensure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly and punctually:
- Monitor attendance through the regular inspection of registers, coding /procedures and liaison with school staff;
- Undertake individual case work with absent and/or poor attending pupils and their parents adopting a family solutions approach to address the underlying issues.
- Establish voluntary parenting contracts to improve a pupil's attendance, this forms part of the early intervention approach and helps to improving school attendance.
- Provide advice, support and challenge to schools to improve individual school's attendance levels. This includes guidance on policies and procedures, celebrating and raising awareness of school attendance to pupils, their parents and school staff and agreeing termly action plans and the monitoring of these actions.
- Each school has an allocated Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who works closely and assists the schools with the tasks listed above.
- The service also provides advice, guidance and training to schools, governors, partners across children services on all aspects of attendance including safeguarding aspects of non attendance such as Child Missing in Education statutory procedures, and the early identification, support and monitoring of vulnerable groups including Children Looked After.

The Proposal

Changes to national funding arrangements mean that funding the local authority used to receive for this service will now be given directly to schools. Schools will be

given the option to buy back a service from the local authority should they wish to do so. Services can be tailored to meet the needs of individual schools.

Early feedback from schools suggests they want to buy in preventative services for families to improve attendance, they are less interested in buying back support regarding data monitoring and policy development. The packages of support are being developed in partnership with schools to be implemented from April 2013.

This proposal means that the local authority attendance improvement service will be re-structured to deliver only the statutory responsibilities / requirements placed on the Local Authority in relation to securing school attendance. This is enforcement of school attendance and prosecution where necessary.

This proposal may affect the following stakeholders:

- Schools
- Parents
- Children and Young People
- Staff

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