

Bradford Children's Services

Education Social Work Service

Support for Attendance and Welfare

Traded Services

**Menu of Support Options
2014-2015**

Mission Statement

It is the aim of the Education Social Work Service to provide a high quality service to schools that is:

- Able to engage with families who are often the most vulnerable and may have had difficult experiences with authority.
- Able to undertake quick but thorough assessments of both referred children and their families.
- Capable of not only improving attendance but also try to ensure that the child and the family have any unmet needs met by referral to and negotiation with other agencies.
- Able to work with schools to ensure that they have policies, procedures and practices in place regarding attendance that reflect best practice and increase the capacity of schools to manage attendance without recourse to external referral.
- Able to provide well designed and evaluated work in schools that has been shown to have positive outcomes.

We can deliver because:

- We have many experienced practitioners with good engagement, interviewing, assessment and planning skills.
- We have well defined and effective processes and procedures for engaging with those families that are hard to reach.
- We have staff with many years of experience not only in working with schools and families regarding attendance but also with experience in the delivery of a range of interventions such as parenting programmes, anti- bullying and behaviour work, bereavement counselling etc.

Service Delivery

- The Education Social Work Service will provide to all LA maintained Schools, free of charge, a weekly allocation of time based upon the number of pupils on roll and average absence under its universal service provision.
- In addition LA Schools, Academies and Free Schools can purchase packages of additional support to improve the attendance of individual or groups of pupils.
- The Education Social Work Service is a well established and successful service. It has very experienced and well trained staff many of whom have social work or similar qualifications. All staff have regular supervision and have immediate access to an experienced manager.
- The Service can also offer consultative support to all settings and management support for school based Attendance Officers, Parental Involvement Workers etc.

Benefits to your school

- We provide a professional service to schools, families and children reducing the barriers to accessing learning for all children of compulsory school age.
- We will provide support to schools from a highly committed professional staff - including qualified social workers.
- We will provide continuous professional development to our staff to ensure a properly trained and suitably qualified workforce.

What You Can Expect

- The ESWS will negotiate a service level agreement with you to agree the best use of your allocated time and/or additional support time. This will be tailored to the school's specific needs and be based on what is known to work best in practice.
- All work will be well planned and evaluated. For the more complex or difficult cases the worker has access to an agreed assessment, planning, intervention and review process with management support. This can where necessary facilitate inter-agency work. Also it can lead to legal penalties where no progress is made although this is only occasionally necessary.
- All Education Social Workers and Education Welfare Officers receive monthly supervision from their Line Manager in order to review progress on individual cases, also ensuring interventions are carried out in a timely manner.
- We will support your school to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

The following menu describes the range of support the Education Social Work Service can offer your school.

Neil Hellewell
Principal Education Social Worker

Menu of Support Options 2014/15

1. Individual Case Work Support - Direct work with Young People and Families

Delivered by Education Social Workers and Education Welfare Officers .

The Education Social Worker (ESW)/Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will work directly with families where high rates of unauthorised absence have been identified by the school and where attempts to improve or resolve the situation have previously been unsuccessful.

The Education Social Work Service is skilled in engaging with the most 'hard to reach' and challenging families.

- Your ESW/EWO will undertake a comprehensive assessment with the family and where appropriate, the young person to identify barriers to attendance and learning.
- Following the assessment a clear plan detailing the expectations of the family, the school and the ESW/EWO will be produced and shared with all involved. The ESWS worker will try to ensure parents/carers and pupils access to appropriate help and support for any difficulties impacting on attendance.
- The plan to improve the child's attendance will be regularly reviewed. This process can lead to legal sanctions but in majority of cases this will not be necessary as an improvement is likely to be achieved.
- All cases will be supervised by ESWS managers to ensure interventions are timely and that work is not allowed to drift.
- It is the aim of the ESWS to bring about sustainable improvement in pupils' attendance and when closing a case the ESWS worker will discuss with the school how to maintain improved attendance.

The number of cases that your ESW/EWO can undertake will be dependant upon the number of hours of support allocated/purchased by the school. This will be agreed in the Service Level Agreement and will include:

- Consultation with the school on appropriate cases.
- Completing assessments with the parents/carers and where appropriate, the child.
- Travel time both to the school and to undertake home visits.
- Administration time for preparing assessments, plans and reviews and letter writing.
- Liaison with and referral to other agencies where necessary eg Children's Social Care.
- Accessing ESWS management advice and support.
- Where agreed, appropriate preparation for prosecution proceedings or undertaking a CAF.
- Regular and quality feedback to the school.

2. Whole School Support for Attendance

The Education Social Work Service can deliver a wide range of projects to improve the attendance of pupils. These include:-

- **Nudge Letter Initiatives** – see appendix 1.
- **Attendance Panel Project** - meeting with parents of pupils with poor attendance and the use of legal interventions where appropriate – see appendix 2.

- Late Gates/Punctuality initiatives – targeting parents and pupils who regularly arrive late to school.
- **Attendance Challenge Project** – weekly meetings with identified pupils to improve attendance– see appendix 3.
- ‘Attendance’ Assemblies for both parents and pupils.
- Being available to attend open evenings, training sessions, INSET days, review days, etc.

This list is by no means exhaustive and bespoke support for improving attendance in your school can be designed.

3. Management Support to school employed Attendance Officers/Pastoral Support Workers etc.

Delivered by Education Social Work Service Managers, Education Welfare Officers, Education Social Workers.

- Ongoing training via Education Social Work Service Training Days, access to LA training courses.
- Monthly supervision (in school).
- Case management support.- Reviewing, advising and supporting the staff member to work with individual pupils and their families to improve attendance.
- Support and guidance to instigate a prosecution for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Support to analyse school attendance data and attendance strategies in order to target interventions.
- Support to develop a school policy on ‘Leave of Absence’ in term time and the use of penalty notice fines.
- Access to Education Social Work Service management support/advice.
- Access to ESW systems and appropriate access to cases files.

4. School based Counselling/Coaching for Children and Young People

This project is aimed at those children/young people who may be in need of individual support due to:-

- Bullying.
- Bereavement.
- Relationship issues (including sexuality).
- Self esteem/confidence building.
- Sleep problems.
- Family issues.
- School based issues.

Although aimed at individuals there may be groups of pupils for which this intervention may be appropriate.

Emotional issues might be presenting through poor attendance or behavioural difficulties, withdrawn behaviour, relationship problems with staff or pupils or simply a child/young person seeking help. By working with the pupil it is intended to help with the underlying difficulties and improve the pupil’s ability to access education and achieve.

Any case can be discussed but this intervention may not be appropriate for children/young people who have severe anxiety or mental health issues requiring medical intervention or referral to CAMHS, are Looked After or on a Child Protection Plan and/or are already receiving intensive one-to-one support. If a safeguarding concern or mental health issues arise during our involvement, appropriate referrals will be made.

Referral may be appropriate where a “Child in Need Plan” or similar identifies that a child/young person would benefit from extra individual support.

See Appendix 4 for the project outline and details of activities undertaken.

5. Consultative

Delivered by Education Social Work Service Managers:

- Attendance policy development, review and recommendations.
- Attendance improvement plan.
- Target setting.
- Regular meetings with school Attendance Leads to review and monitor action plans.
- Whole school and specific staff group training.
- Offering advice, guidance and support in preparation for OFSTED Inspections and being available for consultation during the inspections.
- Providing quality data and analysis identifying specific target areas for future consideration.

Costs

Universal Service Provision is free to LA maintained Schools and allocated based on a formula that takes into account, number of pupils on roll, 3 years average absence, levels of PA and schools in category where school attendance has been identified as an issue. The type and level of support will be negotiated with the school.

Traded Services Support for Attendance

1. Individual Case Work Support

One Full day per Week Support (6 hours), Term Time Only – 38 Weeks - £10,640 per year - minimum term of contract 1 academic year.

All Year round support can also be provided

2. Whole School Support for Attendance

One Full day per Week Support (6 hours), Term Time Only – 38 Weeks - £10,640 per year - minimum term of contract 1 academic year.

All year round support can also be provided.

Schools may opt to purchase a bespoke package that includes ‘individual case work support’ and ‘whole school support for attendance’.

3. Management Support to school employed Attendance Officers/Pastoral Support Workers etc.

£1800 per year – equates to 1 hour support per week, term time only.

4. School based Counselling/Coaching for Children and Young People

£750 - Approximately 16 hours work per case (this includes preparation, direct contact with the child and family, assessment and feedback). A reduced rate can be negotiated if the service is required to work with more than one child.

5. Consultative support

£140 per half day.

All costs are subject to VAT where applicable.

Contact Us

To discuss **Traded Services Support for Attendance**, contact either

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Appendix 1

Nudge Letter Initiative - Project details

Purpose of the Project

This project arose from the persistent absence agenda when schools had large number of pupils with under 85% attendance and needed at least short term improvements in attendance.

It works most effectively in the attendance range 75% to 90%.where previous interventions have been limited due to resources.

The aim is to encourage parents to give attendance a greater priority.

The most effective letters have been found to be those that seek to engage with parents/carers rather than threatening legal action.

This letter does effectively improve attendance for the majority of those pupils involved in the project. It allows the school and agencies to then focus on those children presenting the most difficulties.

Nudge letters are often a precursor to projects involving attendance panel meetings with parents.

Activities

The school and ESW/EWO identify pupils for the project based on past and current attendance.

The ESW/EWO prepares and sends out the letters to the parents of identified pupils.

A written evaluation of the project is provided to the school after 6 weeks.

Further interventions are planned with the school for those pupils whose attendance has not improved.

Evaluations

Example one - Nudge Letter Project February/March 2014.

A primary school had identified that their efforts were not improving the attendance of 8 pupils. A nudge letter was sent and the pupils' attendance monitored for a 6 week period. The results were as follows:

- All 8 pupils improved.
- The average overall attendance figures for the year for this cohort improved from an average of 78% attendance to 82% attendance.
- The improvement for the 6 weekly attendance figures prior to intervention compared to the 6 weekly attendance figures during the monitoring period was from 76% to 91%. This gave a substantial average improvement in attendance of 15% per pupil.
- The pupil who made the most progress improved from 63% attendance for the 6 week prior to intervention to 93% for the 6 week intervention period.

- Only one pupil failed to achieve over 85% in the monitoring period although this pupil did show some improvement. Further work was undertaken with this child and family.

There is evidence that improvement in attendance is sustained for at least 6 weeks following the end of similar projects.

Appendix 2

Attendance Panel Project

Purpose of the Project

- To engage directly with parents of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and where previous informal contact with the family has failed to improve attendance.
- The purpose of the panel meeting is to make the parents aware of the school's concerns and the impact on learning and achievement.
- The panel will adopt a solution focused approach, engaging the parent (and child where appropriate) in a plan to improve attendance.
- The plan will identify issues, possible solutions and responsibilities of the parent, child, school and ESWS.
- The parent will be made aware of possible consequences should attendance not improve.

Thematic panels – schools in the past have targeted parents whose children regularly miss one or two days per week and parents claim they are too ill to attend (trivial illness) and involved the School Nurse on the panel.

Activities

The ESWS worker will:

- meet with school to identify appropriate pupils, and organise dates and invites for the initial panel meetings and subsequent reviews.
- The school and ESW/EWO will identify the appropriate members of the attendance panel. We would recommend a member of the schools senior management team or year head, the schools attendance officer and the ESW/EWO.
- The ESW/EWO will write to parents inviting them to the panel meeting.
- In the meeting seek to engage with the parents identify any issues impacting on attendance and put clear plans in place to facilitate improvement.
- Seek to improve the level of engagement with parent/carers have with school so that the school can continue to work with the parents/carer to sustain improved attendance.
- Where parents fail to attend the panel meeting, if appropriate the ESW/EWO will conduct a home visit.

Attendance following the panel meeting will be monitored by the school and follow up activities will be agreed with the ESW/EWO. These could include:

- Further meetings with the parents in school or at their home.
- The use of legal sanctions.

In order to be effective the school needs to be committed to providing staff to both the meetings and to resource any agreed plans where appropriate.

Quality control and Evaluation

Our staff have training in and considerable experience of, conducting panel meetings, undertaking assessments and engaging parents with constructive plans. They are closely supervised and all work is closely evaluated.

Appendix 3

'Attendance Challenge' Programme – (Secondary Schools only)

Purpose of the Project

To raise the attendance of identified pupils through weekly meetings with the pupil and the ESW/EWO.

Activities

- The project runs over a 6/7 week half term period.
- The school and ESW/EWO identify pupils for the project based on past and current attendance.
- The ESW/EWO, with the permission of parents, holds a short 1:1 meeting with the pupil on a weekly basis.
- Meeting times are negotiated with the school in order that the child is not regularly missing specific lessons.
- Improvement or lack of improvement in attendance is reviewed each week.
- The ESW/EWO acts as an advocate on behalf of the pupil between the child and school or the child and home where barriers to attendance are identified.
- Appropriate rewards are given at the end of the project for those pupils who have improved.
- Appropriate and agreed follow ups are made with parents where attendance does not improve.

Quality Control and Evaluation

Attendance Challenge projects will be subject to close supervision by ESWS managers and qualitative feedback and evaluation will be provided at the end of each project.

Appendix 4

School based Counselling/Coaching for Children and Young People

Purpose of the Project

This project is aimed at pupils or groups of pupils where emotional issues are impacting of behaviour and attendance in school.

Activities

- Initially the identified child/young person would be assessed by.
- Discussions with the school.
- Interviewing parent/carers and the child young/person.
- Discussions with external agencies if appropriate.
- Where appropriate we will use a recognised national assessment tool such as the “Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire”.

Following the assessment there are 6 individual sessions with the child and a final meeting with parents. By agreement, sessions could be continued if necessary.

The sessions with the child/young person would be confidential and excluding safeguarding concerns. Any information shared would be with the agreement of the child.

However the intention would be to give regular feedback to the school including detailed feedback at the end of our involvement with the child/young person’s permission.

The methods used to engage and work with the child/young person would arise from their identified needs, this could include:

- Use of specific packs such as “Kidskills”, “Steps of Responsibility” and “Black Chalk” material.
- Identifying issues with the child/young person and agreeing targets using a solution focused approach.
- Offering a skilled, experienced and sympathetic adult who is not a parent or a teacher with whom the child/young person can share concerns.
- Other specific methods of working related to relationships, behavioural problems or self esteem as needed.

Quality Control & Evaluation

All staff delivering this project will be regularly supervised by experienced supervisors to provide case management and support.

Evaluation will be undertaken using assessment tools such as: “The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire”; self anchored rating scales and the child/young person’s views. Evaluation may also include feedback to the child from the school and/or parents regarding improved behaviour, attendance, etc.