

Scrutiny Commission September 2019

HLT response to the Children
Commissioner's report - Hackney led
activity to address off rolling issues.

Introduction

There has been an increased focus, rightly, on children missing mainstream education over the past two years. This has been a focus nationally and locally: the reports and information below are from national sources.

The Children's Commissioner published a report in February 2019 – 'Skipping School: Invisible Children' <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/skipping-school-invisible-children/>

The Schools Adjudicator reported that the total number of children local authorities said were being electively home educated was 52,770 children across all 152 local authorities on 29 March 2018. An Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) survey in autumn 2018 found that across the 106 councils which completed the survey, around 40,000 children were being home educated. That suggests around 58,000 children were being home educated across England as a whole. The precise figures are unknown because parents do not have to register children who are home-educated, hence councils use various other sources to estimate the numbers.

ADCS found that the number of children known by councils to be home educated was 27% higher than in 2017. This is not an anomaly: the figure has risen by about 20% in each of the last five years and has doubled since 2013/14.

Over the past eighteen months OFSTED has been raising concerns about "off-rolling". This term was not well defined and had previously been used to describe any movement away from a main stream school.

Definition of Off rolling

While there is no legal definition of off-rolling, Ofsted use the following definition:

*Off-rolling is the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without using a permanent exclusion, **when the removal is primarily in the best interests of the school, rather than the best interests of the pupil.***

This includes exerting pressure in some form on a parent to remove their child from the school roll.

While it may not always be unlawful, Ofsted believes off-rolling is never acceptable.

What does and does not constitute off-rolling

There are many reasons pupils leave school. They might move house, leave the country, or move to another, closer school when a place becomes available. Of course, none of these things is off-rolling.

Other pupils might leave to be home educated. Again, where this is a parent's clear choice, without pressure from the school, it is not off-rolling.

Dual-registering a pupil with another school such as an alternative provider is also not off-rolling. This is because the pupil has not left the roll of their school. The statutory guidance on alternative provision makes it clear that pupils should be dual-registered if they are attending AP. Alternative provision can be a positive move for some young people.

'Managed moves' from one school to another as an alternative to exclusion can sometimes be effective in breaking the cycle of poor pupil behaviour. If these moves are used in pupils' best interests, with the agreement of everyone involved within the statutory guidance, then again, this is not off-rolling.

Some pupils are permanently excluded. But as long as headteachers have followed the relevant legislation and statutory guidance, this is not off-rolling. Schools must be able to exclude pupils where necessary, and we support schools using exclusions as part of their behaviour policy and as a last resort.

Some schools, sadly, pressure families to take their children out of school to avoid an exclusion – many parents simply do not want a permanent exclusion on their child's record. This is a clear example of off-rolling and is never acceptable, as the [statutory guidance](#) on exclusions makes clear. Exclusions rightly go through a robust process to make sure that they are justified. Avoiding this is not fair to pupils or parents.

Ofsted's role

Before an inspection, Ofsted's analysts give the lead inspector information about whether or not a school has exceptional levels of pupils leaving the school in years 10 and 11. Of course, this doesn't always mean that off-rolling is happening. But it makes sure that inspectors explore this possibility during the inspection.

Inspectors will ask leaders about who has left and why. Are there any patterns in the groups who leave? How do they support pupils from these groups who are still in the school? For example, if most of the pupils who left have special educational needs and/or disabilities, how does the school cater for this group? Have they reviewed their provision and improved it if necessary?

If a school uses managed moves, inspectors may ask to see evidence of how these meet the statutory guidance. Again, if these moves are happening during years 10 and 11, inspectors will look closely at whether this decision is in the best interests of the pupils in question.

As recent, high-profile inspections have shown, off-rolling is not a clear cut issue, and inspectors will need to gather evidence on inspection to see what is really happening.

Children's Commissioner report

The Children's Commissioner report made a number of recommendations including :

- i) A home education register
- ii) Strengthened measures to tackle off rolling
- iii) Advice and support for children and families
- iv) Greater oversight of children
- v) Decisive action against unregistered schools

1. A Home Education Register

Parents electively home educate for a number of reasons including:

- Parental educational philosophy
- Parenting philosophy
- Pupil anxiety needs not met
- Pupil socialisation difficulties not met
- Pupil learning needs not met
- Pupil medical needs not met
- Parental concerns about quality of schools in the area
- Parents awaiting vacancy in school of choice
- Parents withdrawing to avoid potential exclusion

Hackney Learning Trust maintains a register of all those families who elect to educate their children at home. However, this can never be a complete picture as there is no mandatory expectation currently placed upon parents to register with their Local Authority.

Current known data (May 2019) is as follows:-

Main cohort:

- 164 Females
- 144 Males
- SEND: 22 children identified
- EHCP: 14 had been registered in current academic year
- Irish Travellers: 32

Orthodox Jewish children:

- 140 Registered (all Male).

Voluntary registration schemes are not effective in ensuring that all children who are being educated at home are known to the respective local authority. Mandatory registration would greatly assist the local authority in establishing a true picture of exactly how many children in the area are being educated at home. It would also assist in enabling the local authority offer of support and guidance to be available to all EHE parents, and to support the LA functions in situations where it appears that no satisfactory educational provision is being made.

"Birmingham Serious Case Review 2010-
http://northumberlandscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/kyhra_ishaq_scr.pdf

12.6.11 It is difficult to comprehend how Local Authorities, within the current home education legislative provision, can effectively address a child's right to education, when all of the current rights appear to be conferred on parents. Home educated children are not subject to any independent inspection processes. There appears to be an apparent failure within the current system to address the lack of power to enable Local Authorities to effectively fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The current provision appears to take no cognisance of the child's wishes, feelings or welfare and therefore presents as a direct contradiction to the aspirations of the Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters, Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Working Together 2006 or indeed the UN convention on the rights of the child"

Underpinning the requirement for mandatory registration, we would encourage the DfE to consider the resourcing issue for Local Authorities who will be required to manage additional responsibilities to co-ordinate if all children are required to be registered. Given that the current guidance to parents does not impose a specific registration requirement, the numbers of children additionally identified within each LA by a mandatory registration requirement is unknown and cannot be predicted. This must be supported by adequate resourcing if it is to have the desired effect.

It is our professional view that such a register should specify whether children are attending an educational setting (other than their own home) during school hours. HLT remains very concerned about the use of unregistered settings to deliver a child's education. Attendance at such settings causes significant concern in terms of safeguarding arrangements, suitability of provision, health and safety and DBS for education providers.

There are likely to be issues in obtaining information from unregistered settings mostly as the LA would have no statutory authority to enter, inspect the register and assess the provision provided (this is the role of Ofsted). Mandatory registration is likely to assist with this and making it a legal requirement for unregistered settings to provide the LA with a copy of the admission register on request.

It is important that such a register should include flexi-schooled children (ie those who are educated at home or elsewhere for some of the week during school hours but are also on the admission register of a state-funded or registered independent school). All children who live in the borough should be included on the registration scheme in particular those who are of compulsory school age, however with the advent of the 0-25 education for children, it would be more appropriate to include all children.

See Appendix A for more information about what should be in a register

2. Strengthened measures to tackle off rolling

We are recommending strong and regular analysis by governors – as well as a check in from HLT via the SIP programme.

Governing bodies should receive a termly report of pupils moving off the roll of the school and those in internal exclusion or dual registered on AP. This recommendation will be rolled out to all Hackney governing bodies for use from Sept 2019. In addition HLT will visit schools for a specific review meeting where movement of pupils is above 4% between Year 10 and Year 11. This happened in 2018-19 for the first time, providing useful advice for schools and scrutiny of figures (see attached letter Sept 2018 – Appendix B).

The following tables summarise some of the Hackney data sent to the Children’s Commissioner in December 2018.

Highest number of children moving to elective home education per school

2017/18 Hackney Secondary Schools	
Maintained School	8
VA School	7
Academy/Free	6
Maintained school	6
Academy/Free	6
Academy/Free	4
Academy/Free	4

Analysis of types of schools in data sent to Children’s Commissioner

Comparator	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of academies with EHE moves	6	4	9
Number of maintained schools with EHE moves	18	20	15
Total number of EHE moves in academies	8	8	27
Total number of EHE moves in maintained schools	27	36	41
% of schools with EHE cases that were academies	25	17	38
% of schools with EHE cases that were maintained schools	75	83	63
% of total reported EHE cases in academies	23	18	40
% of total reported EHE cases in maintained schools	77	82	60

HLT has issued guidance to schools in Hackney (including maintained, academies, free schools and independent registered schools) to provide clarity and definition about ‘joint reasonable enquiries’, in response to the amended Pupils Registration Regulations with effect from September 2016 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/contents/made>.

It is important to note that this is now a statutory requirement about pupil movement placed upon all schools. All Schools **must** comply with these new legislative expectations and consider the most effective means by which to share information in order to do so.

From September 2016, HLT requires the following from all schools:-

- All schools – including Academy / Independent / Free – are required to inform the LA when they are about to remove a pupil’s name from the admissions register.
- Schools also have to inform the LA within 5 days of registering new pupils (including at reception and the start of year 7, for independent schools only)
- For a pupil who has not returned after 10 days, the amended regulations require the school and LA to make those enquiries collaboratively, not separately. Schools should ensure that they consult with HLT before any decisions are made to de-register a child without a clear destination having been established and agreed. The Pupils Registration Regulations as below is now amended to make reference to ‘jointly making reasonable enquiries’

The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register—

8. (1) (f) *in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that —*

(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

8. (1) (h) *that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —*

(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

Since the introduction of the amended Pupil Registration Regulations in September 2016, Hackney schools have been notified and supplied with guidance on the following occasions:-

- 26th September 2016 – Letter from Interim Director, HLT guidance and schools lists (B2B and non B2B)
- 26th September 2016 - Leadership Update, as above
- 9th December 2016 – Leadership Update, reminding Head teachers and Principals of new requirements.
- 4th January 2017 – Individual letters from Interim Director to all Academy Principals / Non B2B schools – expressing preference for use of B2B but also attaching spreadsheet.

Non-compliance with the new legislation is of significant concern.

Guidance, as referenced above, has been previously sent to all Hackney Schools during the 2016/17 and the 2018-19 academic year, explaining the rationale for change, and that this is a significant safeguarding issue. Given this, it is now essential that there is a clear definition of what joint reasonable enquiries would look like, and who needs to be involved. It must be noted that the expectation to make such enquiries is the responsibility of 'the Local Authority', not just HLT services – this must be interpreted as all relevant services that are involved in working with schools on issues relating to admissions, registration and de-registration.

3. Advice and Support for Children and Families

Hackney Learning Trust continues to provide advice and support for all families and learners in Hackney, through its operational services and also through advice and guidance provided on the HLT web pages and within the Local Offer –

<http://www.learningtrust.co.uk/content/elective-home-education>

www.hackneylocaloffer.co.uk www.learningtrust.co.uk www.hackneyservicesforschools.co.uk

HLT supports the view that is shared in the Children Commissioners report, in that School behaviour policies should acknowledge that poor behaviour may be linked to additional needs, such as SEND, and ensure that children with additional needs receive appropriate support, rather than exclusion or feeling that they cannot form part of the school community.

The Children Commissioners report recommends that children who are withdrawn from school should be entitled to re-register with the same school without going through the usual admissions procedures. Local authorities should have the power to direct an academy school to admit a child who is being home educated and wants a school place. HLT supports this view and currently, children who have been deregistered on written instruction from parent who subsequently approach HLT to seek re-admission to a school, will be considered at the In Year Fair Access Panel wherein a decision will be made to direct that child back to their previous school (unless there is sound reason not to do so which can be clearly evidenced and discussed by IYFAP)

The CC report also recommends that within three days of a decision being taken for a child to be withdrawn from school to be home educated, the local authority should visit the child and family to provide advice and support on alternative options, including other schools the child could attend. Local authorities should provide information at this point so that parents are aware of what they are taking on, including their responsibility to meet exam costs, and offer help negotiating entry to another school if desired. HLT seeks to achieve similar results in working with schools and parents – where deemed appropriate – to identify a ‘cooling off period’ wherein some work may be attempted to try to re-establish a link with the school and to overcome barriers, especially in situations where the professional view is that a move to EHE may not be in that particular child’s best interest and is as a result of issues such as parental conflict with school etc.

However, we also hold the view that the timescales recommended at this point in the CC report (within 3 days of decision) are unrealistic without consideration of enhanced levels of resourcing. We believe that most Local Authorities would hold a similar view in this regard

Additionally, we support the view that when inspecting schools with high levels of pupil movement, Ofsted should explore if there is any link between their behaviour policies and off-rolling. If particular behaviour policies are consistently a feature of schools found to be off-rolling, Ofsted should provide the evidence to the sector to enable schools to modify their policies.

4. Greater Oversight of Children

The Children Commissioners report recommends that Council education officers should visit each child being home educated at least once per term to assess the suitability of their education and their welfare, and that where there are concerns over a child’s welfare, they should be spoken to without parents present.

HLT supports this recommendation as a key safeguarding measure and has expressed such a view in previous surveys and evidence gathering. However, as stated in the CC report, this would require consideration of appropriate resourcing in order to achieve this and especially in the light of the current EHE cohort known to HLT.

Officers are clear that there should be specific duties to comply, and that for any parent who refuses to do so, School Attendance Orders (section 437 Education Act 1996) or Education Supervision Orders (Section 36 Children’s Act 1989) should be pursued at the earliest opportunity and in the interests of the child rather than the parent.

Linked to mandatory registration, parents should be encouraged or expected to engage with the Local Authority in a meaningful way and if failing to do so, legal sanctions may be effective if they are underpinned by mandatory registration. If parents are refusing to register with the LA, then the LA is unable to adequately assess whether suitable education is being provided and as such, a School Attendance Order should be issued.

In addition, we remain very concerned that there remains no definition in statute law for:-

- Efficient education
- Full time education
- Suitable education - a lack of ‘suitable’ education could also warrant s31 Children Act Threshold to be met.

This is particularly important if there is an element of assessment to determine what education is suitable (or not). Therefore, we would suggest that there needs to be a framework of some sort to determine this and HLT officers stated such within the DfE Call for Evidence 2018.

Whilst the concept of full-time education might differ between education settings, there should be a minimum number of hours per day that could be classed for full time education for primary and secondary age children.

Additionally, we remain concerned about situations where pupils are only receiving a religious education and therefore, they are not being provided with an education which could enable them to function as an independent citizen, particularly outside the community in which they are brought up, if they so wish. The lack of regulation around elective home education therefore allows some parents to side step their full legal responsibility in ensuring that their child receives an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The voice of the child should be at the centre of all discussions and be given greater status and recognition. Currently, all the rights are conferred on parents and the voice of the child appears silent. We feel that LAs should have stronger powers to intervene, or at least explore when they have concerns that EHE is not providing an efficient and suitable education which provides for the academic needs of the child but also their social and emotional development.

5. Decisive action against Unregistered Schools

Council officers and political leaders in Hackney have worked for a number of years to try to make progress on unregistered educational settings in the borough. These efforts have been hindered by inadequate legislation on unregistered educational settings, as well as a lack of cooperation and engagement from the proprietors of unregistered educational settings in the borough regarding safeguarding assurance, details of children and young people attending such settings during the recognised school day, and the requirement to register with the Department for Education.

Relevant agencies in Hackney, including Hackney Learning Trust, the Council's Children and Families Service and Planning Enforcement team, and London Fire Brigade have been working together to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to unregistered educational settings and to share relevant information. The Council has also been working with the Department for Education and Ofsted to share information, in line with its statutory duties, on identified unregistered educational settings. Joint visits to settings have taken place where appropriate. Information has also been shared with the Council's Designated Officer (formerly known as the Local Authority Designated Officer, or LADO) where relevant. This role manages allegations against people who work with children, whether paid, unpaid or volunteers.

Although there has been close collaboration across local agencies, due to the limitations in current legislation it is very difficult for local authorities and other agencies to check to ensure that children in unregistered educational settings are safe. Current legislation also fails to ensure that the local authority can ascertain which children are attending unregistered educational settings to enable discussions with parents and carers about their legal responsibility to ensure their children receive an appropriate education.

Efforts to engage with the Orthodox Jewish community to provide reassurance on the safeguarding of children and young people in unregistered educational settings have previously been unsuccessful. It is hoped that the focus on this issue through the Scrutiny Commission's report (2017/18) and recommendations will lead to renewed collaboration and communication with the community on unregistered educational settings.

Following the investigation undertaken by the LBH Scrutiny Commission in 2017 /18, Officers within HLT and CYPS have developed a UES strategy. The strategy builds on the significant work undertaken by a range of partners on this topic and clearly sets out Hackney Council's approach to unregistered educational settings in the borough.

This strategy applies to all unregistered educational settings in Hackney operated by any community group or organisation. It is recognised that currently most of these settings are within Hackney's Orthodox Jewish community.

At present, the powers of a local authority to intervene in an unregistered educational setting are limited. A key part of this strategy will be lobbying DfE to make legislative changes, whilst continuing to work closely with partner agencies and developing our relationship with local communities to convince them of benefits of registration.

Our Vision is for all educational settings in Hackney to be registered, and have clear safeguarding processes in place that are open to external validation, in line with other settings in the borough. The Council recognises the importance of collaboration and co-production with community groups in the borough and will work together to

ensure that all children in Hackney receive appropriate educational opportunities in safe and suitable environments to support them to have the best possible start in life and to learn the skills to support them in their successful transition to adulthood within a modern Britain.

The Council will encourage and advise settings to progress towards registration.

The Council is proud of the borough’s cultural diversity and recognises and respects the traditions of all Hackney residents. This will always be balanced with the Council’s priority to ensure the safety of all children in the borough. The Council, therefore, will continue to encourage unregistered educational settings to engage with the Department for Education to register as schools, whilst lobbying the government to introduce a clear regulatory framework within which unregistered educational settings can operate.

In the meantime, the Council will work with community groups and settings to develop and implement recognised safeguarding processes within unregistered institutions, for example Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff, and safeguarding audits through City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (in line with processes that other schools and settings that children attend adhere to). Parents choose to send their children to these settings and should be confident that they will be safe. The safeguarding guidance for parents and carers will help provide a level of assurance about the safety of children in these settings. This is part of the wider Council approach to engaging with Hackney’s Orthodox Jewish community and co-production of safeguarding and engagement processes with the community.

The Council will continue to follow its legal duties to liaise with Ofsted and the Department for Education regarding unregistered educational settings. The Council will continue to call for greater clarity from the government so that we can fulfil these responsibilities.

Outlined below are the expected benefits of the registration of educational settings in Hackney. These are included to support transparency in the Council’s approach to encouraging unregistered educational settings to register as schools. The overarching aim is to ensure children and young people who attend any setting in Hackney are safe and receiving an appropriate education.

To do this, the Council will continue to encourage unregistered educational settings to register as schools to:

- Operate legally as education establishments
- Be open to independent external validation, for example through inspections by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) or Ofsted
- Be clear about expectations regarding safeguarding
- Ensure the curriculum taught conforms to agreed standards which will support with raising educational outcomes for children and young people
- Ensure educational settings share information with the local authority about the number of pupils and pupil destinations (in line with other schools in the borough) to allow for improved planning, safeguarding and support for children
- Ensure schools and settings in any community meet national safeguarding standards and processes that other schools comply with (for example as outlined in the statutory guidance documents - *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*)

6. Analysis of Hackney EHE figures within Children Commissioner report

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/CCO-Skipping-School-Technical-Appendix-February-2019.pdf>

It is noted that in addition to Hackney only one other London LA – Newham – submitted data

Local Authority	EHE rate per 1,000 pupils 2015/16	EHE rate per 1,000 pupils 2016/17	EHE rate per 1,000 pupils 2017/18	Percentage Change: 15/16 to 16/17	Percentage Change: 16/17 to 17/18	Percentage Change: 15/16 to 17/18
Hackney	1.45	1.79	2.78	24%	55%	92%

Newham	0.75	1.15	1.91	53%	66%	155%
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- *As in the table earlier in the document the 2017-18 figures refer to 68 children in total in Hackney.*
- The trend over time and makes clear that the growth in EHE referrals in the national sample accelerated considerably after 2016/17
- The EHE referral rate is higher among secondary schools than among primary schools across the sample of 11 LAs. However, rates have been increasing for both – and between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the rate increased faster among primary schools than among secondary schools
- The EHE referral rate is higher in the sample among academies than among LA maintained schools, however rates have increased for both types of school. Most recently, between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the EHE referral rate increased more quickly in LA-maintained schools (by 49%) than in academies (by 25%).
- The charts also show that EHE referral rates per 1,000 pupils are much higher in pupil referral units (PRUs) across the 11 LAs in this dataset. The rate has also increased very sharply since 2015/16. However, these figures are based on a small number of referrals across a very small cohort of pupils in the 11 LAs: 17 referrals among 471 pupils in 2017/18. By comparison, across the same LAs there were 303,000 pupils in LA maintained schools and 322,000 in academies in 2017/18. The PRU figures may be volatile and difficult to generalise from, in the absence of data from more LAs across more years.

Appendix A

In terms of what the register should contain about each child and its parents, we would suggest that any register would list the following as a minimum; (Please note HLT has implemented an EHE De-registration form since 2016 which has to be completed by school, health or CSC if a child become EHE, the form details the information below and has been extremely useful for monitoring purposes).

- Name of child
- Dob / age
- UPN
- Name, address and contact details of each parent
- Child's last school (if applicable)
- Whether educated at home for part or all of time
- Settings currently attended other than home
- Reason for decision to educate at home
- Details of any tutors that have been engaged
- Ethnic background
- SEN
- Child known to be CIN/CP or other agencies involved with child
- Exclusion P/T or PEX
- Attendance while on roll at school
- Siblings

As well as fully supporting the introduction of a register, we believe that the DfE should prescribe a national format for a register. We would encourage that the DfE introduce legislation to implement a nationally agreed format and data set and but must be underpinned by a mandatory expectation on registration otherwise data and information sharing cannot provide a true and full picture of the profile of EHE within each LA.

Appendix B

15th October 2018

Dear Headteacher and Chair of Governors,

Exclusions and off rolling

I hope this first half term of the academic year has gone very well for you, your team and all your pupils. I am writing to you about some of our most vulnerable young people. These are pupils who are permanently excluded or who leave schools to move to other settings because their needs cannot be met in their initial school. You will be aware that Hackney has higher than national average rates of exclusion in secondary schools, and one of the highest amongst London boroughs.

Headteachers have, individually and collectively, made very significant efforts to ensure that the young people who start at their schools successfully stay in their schools wherever possible. I am pleased that a number of schools have recently reduced exclusion rates through a range of positive strategies.

There is a range of reasons for children leaving their first secondary school, including families moving home and/or work, a preferred curriculum at another setting and a diagnosed need which is better met in a specialist setting. Sometimes a breakdown in relationships leads to an in-year application, a managed move, a move to elective home education or a permanent exclusion. It is the latter group I am concerned about: where the young person has struggled to cope with being in a school in some way. You will know that, while these are a small proportion of our pupils, they can be significantly challenging. In some cases, they find their life chances significantly diminished by the changes. The move can also be traumatic for their family, although how this is managed and communicated can do much to mitigate the impact.

I know you and your teams are doing a great deal of pre-emptive work to engage and support young people in your school to avoid them moving into this group. Thank you for this focus.

At Hackney Learning Trust we have set up a "Reducing Exclusions action group" to take forward preventative and supportive work in this area: some of the strategies involve central support, some are

about sharing best practice across our schools. This group will report to a board on which we would welcome headteacher or governor representation: if you are interested and able to be involved please do let me know by emailing me by end Thursday 18th October. Membership of the board will involve a half termly meeting during the rest of this academic year. If there is significant interest we may also hold a one off event during 2019 to disseminate learning and best practice.

Hackney Council also has the Children and Young People Scrutiny Group (which is led by the councillors) examining provision for young people excluded from schools. These meetings are held in public and colleagues are most welcome to attend. Do contact Thao Ngo at thao.ngo@learningtrust.co.uk if you would like to do so, and she will forward the schedule of meetings.

As you know, there is increased interest from OFSTED about "off-rolling"*: this has been in several media stories. Inspectors are being supplied with school data about historical changes in KS4 rolls for schools so that, if there are significant numbers, they can ascertain the reasons for pupils being taken off roll.

There will be very good reasons for some pupils moving off roll during KS4 but it is important that the moves provide positive next steps for the pupils involved. It is good practice for governors to be aware of the proportion of pupils for whom this has happened and their destinations.

I, or my secondary school adviser colleagues, will be meeting with headteachers where the percentage decrease in rolls from Year 10 to Year 11 has been more than 5% during either of the last two years so that we can understand the reasons for the change and the destinations of those young people. We will be in touch separately about this.

One of the supporting structures to keeping young people in mainstream education is the In Year Fair Access Panel (IYFAP). This works very well in the great majority of cases. Hackney Learning Trust, in collaboration with secondary headteachers, are reviewing how to make it work optimally and Chris Brown, current chair of the Secondary Headteachers' meetings, has requested any suggestions or concerns are sent to him by 24th November in advance of the subsequent meeting.

Meanwhile I would like to thank you for your continued work leading your schools in educating our young people. Please do let me know if you have any queries or suggestions.

Your sincerely,

Annie Gammon
Director of Education

*There is a description of off rolling and possible reasons for this in the useful report from the House of Commons "Forgotten Children: Alternative Provision and the Scandal of Ever Increasing Exclusions"
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/342/342.pdf>