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| Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission 11th March 2024 Item 4 - Pupil Absence & Emotional Based School Avoidance | Item No 4 |
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Outline

Pupil absence and emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) was put forward for scrutiny as part of the consultation for the 2023/24 work programme. Rates of school absence have increased significantly since the pandemic for all measures including: authorised absence, unauthorised absence, persistent absence and severe absence. Furthermore, there is growing concern of the number of children who may be avoiding school for reasons connected to emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues.

In this context, the Commission agreed to assess local policy and practice in addressing school absence and supporting children and their families where EBSA may be a factor.

To support the scrutiny process members of the Commission have held a number of information gathering meetings ahead of today's meeting:

- a) An informal information gathering session with key staff from education, mental health and health services;
- b) A focus group with 9 parents whose children are or who have experienced EBSA (supported by Parent Carer Forum and Hackney Independent Carers Forum).

Confirmed attendees

- Jacquie Burke, Group Director Children & Education
- Paul Senior, Director of Education & Inclusion
- Katherine Cracknel, Head of Wellbeing & Education Safeguarding
- Nicky Palling, School Attendance Support Team
- Yvonne Wade, Head of SEND
- Sophie Mcelroy, Senior Programme Manager, CAMHS Alliance/Hackney Education
- Sarah Darcy, Strategic Lead for Children and Young People NHS North East London
- Dr Lesley French, Head of Clinical Help, Schools Division, Anna Freud Centre
- Mr Hall, Head Teacher at Cardinal Pole Secondary School
- Tim Linehan, Parent, Hackney Independent Parent Forum

Reports

- Joint report on school absence and EBSA- Hackney Education, CAMHS and NHS
- Anna Freud Centre
- HIP Parents and EBSA
- Commission Briefing Absence and EBSA (Data)

Session outline

- 19.05 Chair introduction: Cllr Sophie Conway (3min)
- 19.08 Local Policy & Practice (Hackney Education, CAMHS, NHS) (7-10m)
- 19.25 Anna Freud Centre (Dr Lesley French) (7-10 mins)
- 19.32 Local Secondary Heads
- Mr Hall, Cardinal Pole Secondary School (5-6 min)
 - Another secondary school (TBC) (5-6 min)
- 19.44 Hackney Independent Parent Forum (5-6 min)
- 19.50 Q & A - Discussion with Commission (45-50 min)
- 20.35 Chair Summary.