



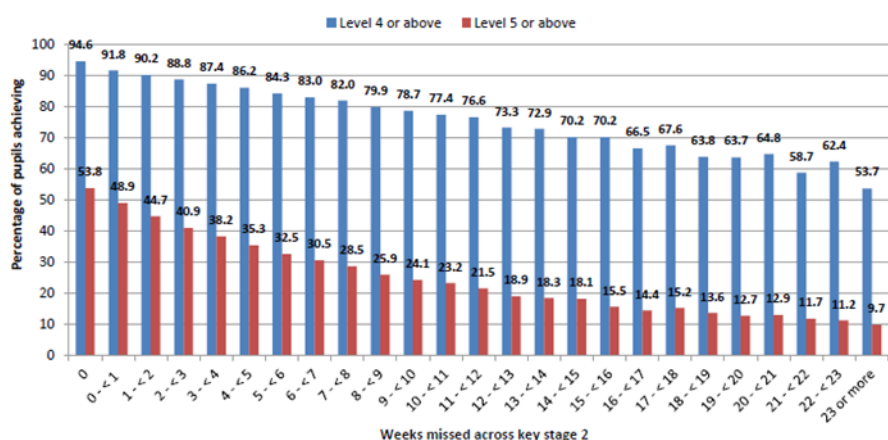
Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	8 March 2022
Reporting Officer:	Catherine Moseley – Head of Access Services
Subject:	UPDATE ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
Report Summary:	School attendance is essential to ensure our children and young people are able to recover their lost learning due to the pandemic. This report informs the Board of the work being done to support families, children and schools and sets out the priorities going forward. It also highlights the national school attendance initiatives.
Recommendations:	That the board notes the content of the report.
Corporate Plan:	The proposals contained within this report will support the theme of starting well, aspirations and hopes.
Policy Implications:	None currently but the reported DfE consultations may necessitate policy change in future.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer)	This report provides an update on attendance and related behaviour matters, there are no direct implications arising from a financial perspective.
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	The information set out in this report provides valuable information for education and the council generally to support the delivery of education and improved outcomes.
Risk Management:	Without a priority around attendance, there is a risk that our children and young people will not catch up on lost learning due to the pandemic.
Access to Information:	NON-CONFIDENTIAL
	This report does not contain information, which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.
Background Information:	The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Catherine Moseley, Head of Access Services
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	 e-mail: catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Education Secretary of State has committed to make school attendance his top priority; he has appointed expert attendance advisers to engage with stakeholders to make sure they are following best practice in improving attendance within their day-to-day work.
- 1.2 The link between attendance and attainment means more than ever. In February 2015, the DfE published a report '[The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4](#)'. The report showed clearly that as students miss more lessons in secondary schools, their attainment across a range of measure declines with a similar effect at KS2. This is even more important in our recovery phase.

4.2.2 Number of weeks missed due to overall absence

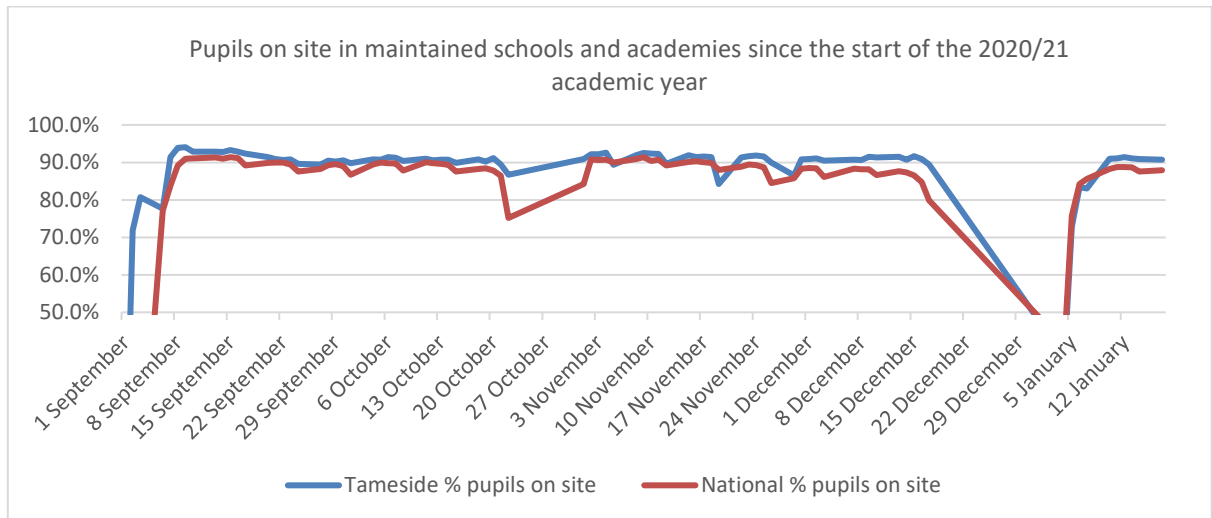
Figure 2: Percentage of pupils in state-funded mainstream schools achieving stated levels at the end of KS2 in 2013/14 academic year by the number of weeks missed due to overall absence across KS2



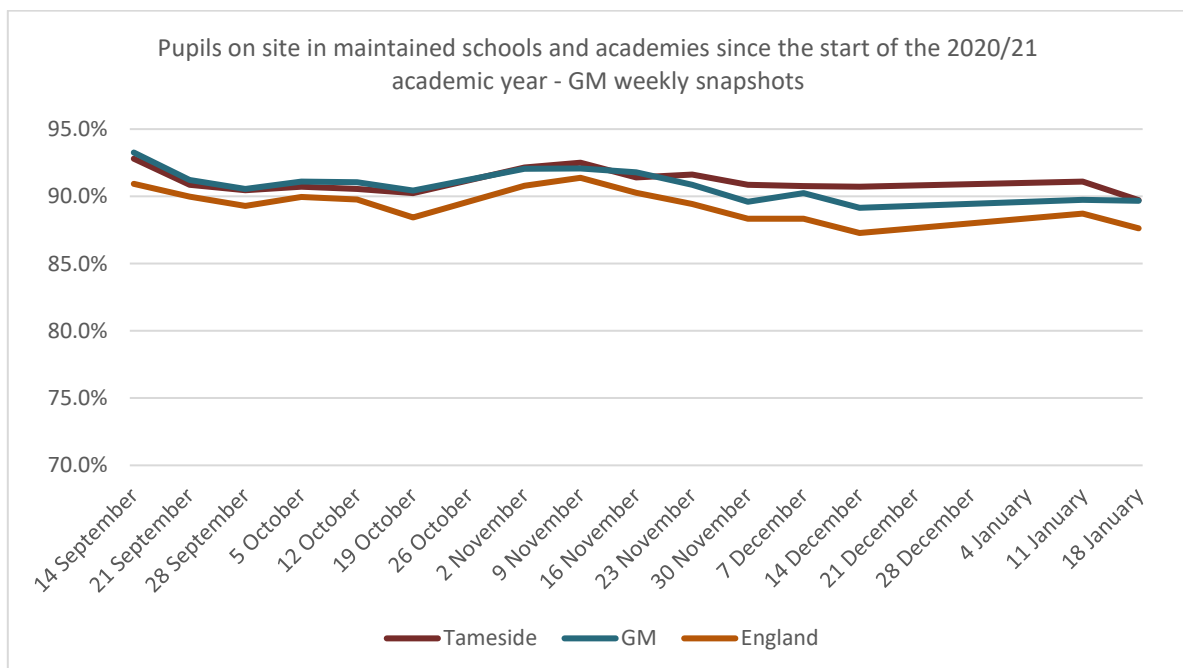
- 1.3 Attendance at school is critical to education recovery that is necessary due to the amount of in-school learning that pupils have missed during the pandemic. Put simply, children aren't able to recover their lost learning if they aren't in school. Attendance was a priority for Children's Services before the pandemic so it is even more of a priority as we come out of it.
- 1.4 Children in Tameside have always attended well and levels of absence in Tameside schools have been below national for several years. Although recent trends in attendance levels have been largely driven by COVID-19, persistent absence levels have increased to 13.14% nationally in autumn 2020 compared to 10.94% in 2019 (not including non – attendance in COVID-19 circumstances). In Tameside, those figures were 9.97% in autumn 2019 and 12.10% in autumn 2020.
- 1.5 Pupils are persistent absence if they miss 10% of sessions or more and 90% attendance equates to attending school four and a half days a week.
- 1.6 Initiatives to improve school attendance are made up of a number of factors, not just getting children into school but also ensuring the exclusions are kept to a minimum, that children missing education are tracked effectively and parents choosing to home educate their children are supported to offer suitable education.
- 1.7 Although Tameside has been doing better than the national averages for persistent absence, we have continued to work with our partner agencies ensuring best practice over the pandemic period and into the recovery phase.

2 ATTENDANCE IN TAMESIDE SCHOOLS

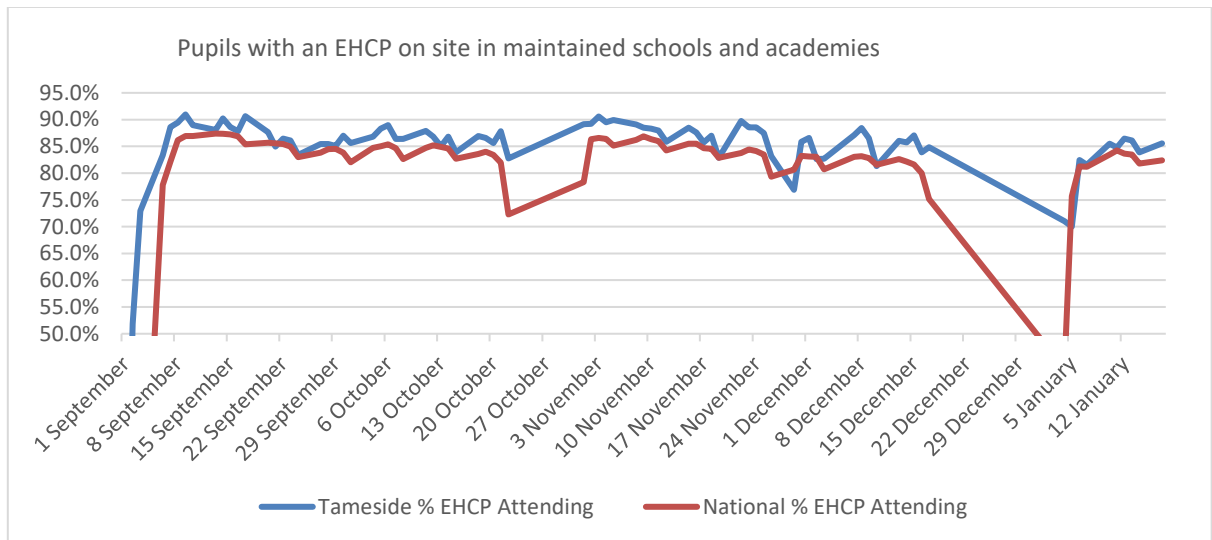
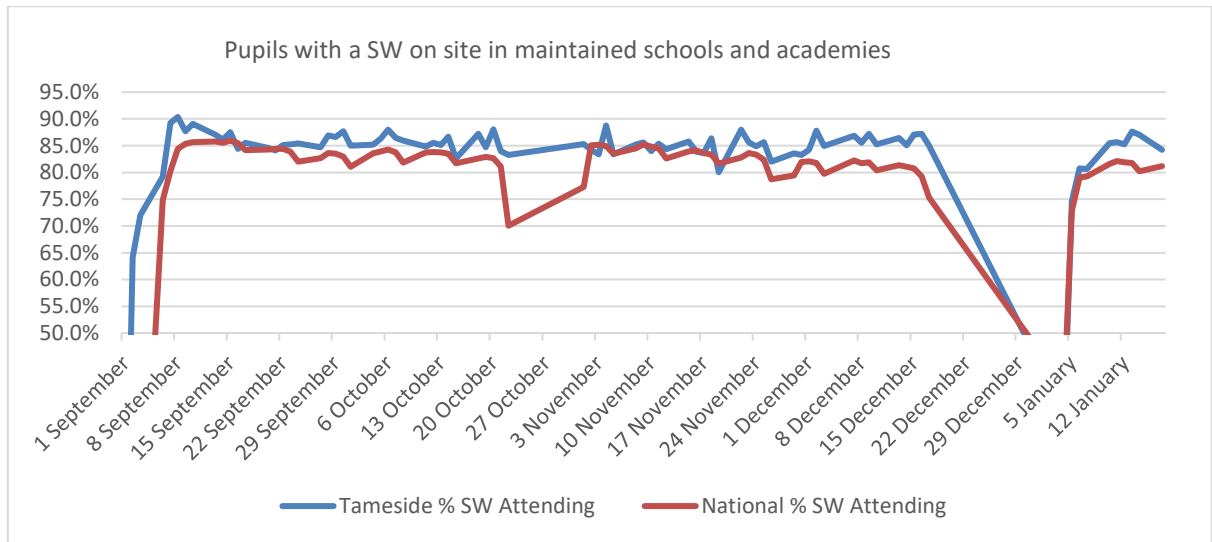
2.1 Attendance in Tameside has consistently been above the national average since the start of the 2021/22 academic year. The percentage of pupils on site in schools has consistently been around 91% despite significant numbers of pupils missing school due to COVID-19.



2.2 When compared to Greater Manchester, Tameside has been in line with or above the Greater Manchester average since the start of the academic year.



2.3 In terms of vulnerable pupils, the attendance of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and pupils with a social worker so far this academic year have consistently been above their corresponding national averages.



2.4 The data source for this is the DfE’s Educational Setting Status daily collection from schools. This data reflects the proportion of pupils ‘on site’ as opposed to in attendance. This data should be treated with caution due to varying daily response rates from schools. It is however, a valuable source of data.

2.5 School census data for 2020/21 academic year is now available which shows an increase in overall attendance of 0.34% (from 95.48% to 95.82%) compared to the 2018/19 academic year (the last full year data available). However, levels of persistent absence have increased particularly in special schools. This occurred due to high amounts of authorised absence amongst children with an EHCP during the 2021 lockdown in the spring term in line with DfE requirements.

Group/DfE	Phase	Number of enrolments				Overall absence				Persistent absence				Sessions missed due to COVID
		201617	201718	201819	202021	201617	201718	201819	202021	201617	201718	201819	202021	202021
England	Total	6899769	7015051	7105958	-	4.70	4.80	4.70	-	10.80	11.20	10.90	-	
Tameside	Total	32051	32331	32908	33576	4.59	4.76	4.52	4.18	10.44	10.72	9.92	10.23	22.9
England	State-funded primary	3909500	3968042	3985705	-	4.00	4.20	4.00	-	8.30	8.70	8.20	-	
Tameside	State-funded primary	18370	18400	18623	18534	4.02	4.11	3.82	3.14	8.68	8.60	7.69	6.51	20.1
England	State-funded secondary	2895975	2947462	3014063	-	5.40	5.50	5.50	-	13.50	13.90	13.70	-	
Tameside	State-funded secondary	13284	13505	13800	14448	5.29	5.55	5.32	5.15	12.36	13.13	12.26	13.48	27.4
England	Special	94294	99547	106190	-	9.70	10.20	10.10	-	28.50	29.60	28.80	-	
Tameside	Special	397	426	485	594	8.45	8.77	9.53	14.91	27.71	25.82	28.66	47.47	9.8

2.6 Despite attendance continuing to be a strength, nearly 30% of learning has been lost by pupils in Tameside due to COVID throughout the autumn and spring terms of 2020/21, with

primary school pupils missing more than a quarter of school and secondary schools missing more than a third of school.

Autumn & Spring 2020/21	% all sessions missed due to COVID
Tameside	29.8%
Tameside Primaries	25.7%
Tameside Secondary schools	36.2%
Tameside Special	10.4%

2.7 During the 2020/21 academic year there were approximately 2,749 cases of COVID-19 across the education sector with more than 47,300 instances of isolation amongst pupils, and 3,300 instances of isolation amongst staff.

	No. of settings	No. of cases of Covid-19	No. of instances of students isolating	No. of instances of staff isolating
Tameside total	152	2749	47361	3340
Primary	75	1229	24959	2155
Secondary	16	989	18437	201
Special	5	78	487	254
16 plus	2	172	737	92
Nursery - PVI	49	258	2654	595
Independent	2	9	21	7
PRU	1	12	27	23
N/A	2	2	39	13

3 ATTENDANCE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS IN SCHOOL YEAR 2021/22

3.1 Attendance has been a priority throughout the pandemic and continues to be so. The following is a snapshot of support for families, children and schools since September 2021:

- Planning and Communication – all Education Welfare Officers have acted as link officers talking to schools. This has allowed for deeper understanding of individual school issues.
- Ensuring immediate referrals to Early Help Service where schools have identified concerns about vulnerable pupils not attending.
- Back to School – Tameside Loves School campaign. Two campaigns ran over pandemic period and a digital campaign is scheduled for Spring term 2022. Reassurance posters were shared in public spaces; banners were placed in each town in the borough; local media campaign; compendium of age appropriate resources sent to schools.
- Guidance on good attendance practice for schools has been refreshed and reissued to all schools. Advice on supporting the education of pupils with medical conditions; children missing education; elective home education; the use of penalty notices and register codes have all been refreshed.
- Networking events to promote good attendance practice ran for all schools and partner agencies with around half of schools attending. Webinars, in person training and

prosecution drop ins have been made available to all schools. Attendance networking events established for all cluster areas.

- Annual register audits continued to take place to support good attendance practice and identify children who are potentially missing education; for example identifying those on part time timetables, absent through illness that haven't been referred through the medical policy; subject of unofficial exclusions and register coding compliance with coding legislation.
- Analysis of attendance data to better target support for schools and geographical clusters.
- Support for Youth Justice Service to support young people with school attendance issues by attending at education surgeries and the out of court panels.
- Children with medical conditions protocol updated and enhanced to better support schools and families. Four new case notifications received and supported.
- Focused work with Headteachers on identifying and tracking children stuck abroad in second lockdown.
- Frequent advice to all schools on attendance codes through the weekly email.
- Wellbeing for education return project established and linked to emotionally based school avoidance project.
- Tameside implemented Emotionally Based School Avoidance strategy with several partner agencies including early help teams; educational psychology services and CAMHS. There has been training for identified schools and school staff as part of the programme to help address issues for pupils and reintegrate them back into learning.
- Multi agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) attended to discuss high level domestic abuse cases to put safety plans in place for the victim. The education rep liaises with schools to ensure the conference has up to date information regarding the children. 67 pupils have been discussed since September 2021.
- Attendance at twice weekly early help panels sharing education information on pupils being supported. This enables good multi agency information sharing and ensures all agencies involved with the young person are aware of the plan.
- Attendance at monthly education surgery to support Youth Justice Service officers with cases where there are issues with education.
- Attendance at Out of Court Panels sharing education information on young people.
- Three families have arrived in Tameside from the Afghanistan re-settlement program and are being supported to secure school places. Once the pupils are allocated schools an Education Welfare Officer will work in school with the children and provide some family support. The support will continue for 12 months. Further families are expected to arrive in Spring term.

3.2 Work to support good attendance practices has been extensive over the pandemic period and continues to be a priority. There is, however, sometimes a need to follow statutory processes to their full extent.

3.3 In line with advice from the Department for Education, Tameside Council have reinstated issuing penalty notices following the suspension of these measures during the height of the pandemic. The uptake of using penalty notices has been slow as schools get more used to using enforcement, however we have seen a significant increase during the second half of the Autumn term:

3.4 Penalty Notice Warnings (a step in advance of issuing a penalty notice to which tells parents the extent of a child's absences and gives 15 school days to effect an improvement):

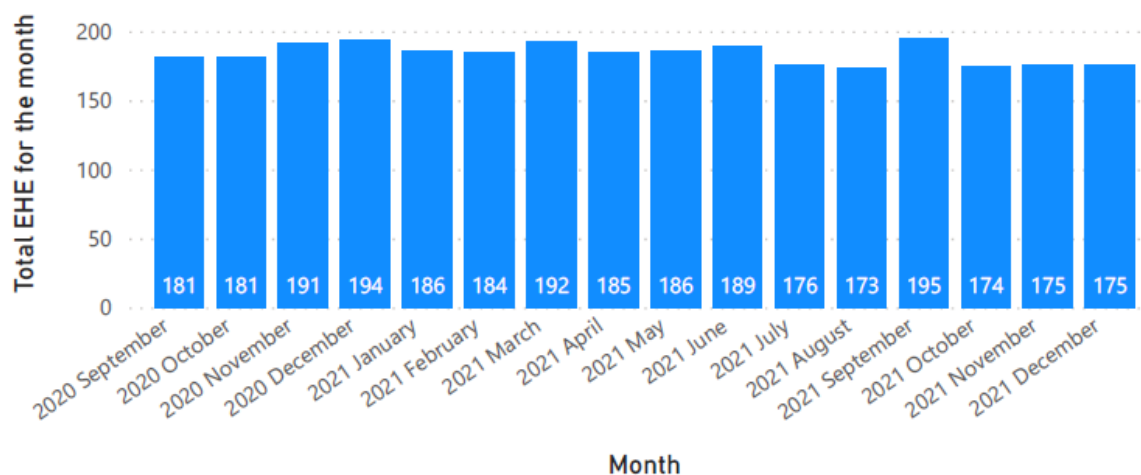
- 168 Issued
- 10 - No Further Action
- 14 - Taken to Penalty Notice
- 41 - Registration Requested, Monitoring period ended
- 103 – Still in monitoring period

- 3.5 Penalty Notices (a penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court, whilst still securing an improvement in the pupil's attendance):
- 197 Penalty Notices issued: 173 – for holidays and 24 from warnings
 - 152 were paid at £60
 - 7 were withdrawn
 - 31 have progressed to court as a result of non payment
- 3.6 The final step after a penalty notice is a prosecution. In the second half of the Autumn term;
- 4 Court hearings – All defendants convicted
 - 16 Single Justice Process (SJP) cases heard in court as a result on non -payment of penalty notices
 - 24 prosecutions being prepared for hearing
 - 5 trials being prepared following not guilty pleas being submitted by defendants.

4 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

- 4.1 Throughout COVID-19, we maintained communication with our Elective Home Educated families. Virtual visits or phone calls have taken place with pupils and parents and we are now increasing our face-to-face visits where it is safe to do so. To maintain links with families we have been sending out newsletters to home educator parents with information around admission dates, contact details for Education Welfare Officers, the Pupil Support Team and Special Educational Needs Team. We have included links to services or courses run by health to support with issues around mental health and additional needs; information on the vaccination programme and contact details for the school nursing team.
- 4.2 We have continued to attend core groups, child protection conferences or Children in Need meetings for families open to Children's Social Care. We continue to encourage schools to hold intervention meetings with parents if they are informed that they want to home educate their child. An intervention meeting involves school staff, parents, and pupils to ensure home education is the most appropriate course of action for the pupil.
- 4.3 The numbers of Electively Home Educated pupils have increased significantly since 2015/16 when there were 99 pupils. As of end of 2021 there were 175 home educated pupils. A peak of numbers was reached in September 2021 with a total of 195 pupils being home educated in the borough.
- 4.4 In September 2020, Tameside had the highest number of new home educated pupils in at least 5 years, 81 during the month. This significant increase was due to Coronavirus, with a mix of parents worrying about their children being in school but also concerns around their child's mental health. Some parents had enjoyed schooling their children through lockdown and decided to continue and withdrew them to electively home educate. Most local authorities have seen an upward and steady increase in elective home education numbers since the start of the pandemic.
- 4.5 Although the increase in numbers in Tameside has been significant, Tameside numbers remain amongst the lowest in the North West with a low rate of elective home educated pupils in Tameside is between 4.4 and 5.0 per 1,000

Total EHE for the month by Year and Month



- 4.6 Tameside's practice remains strong with intervention meetings encouraged with all new families to ascertain if EHE is the right choice for the pupil and family. There is timely contact with parents choosing to electively home educate to ensure support and welfare checks happen at the earliest opportunity. There are strong links with the MASH to ensure appropriate information is shared.
- 4.7 Primary elective home educated numbers are currently around 48% with 52% being of secondary age. The current gender balance is 48% boys & 52% girls. The total number of electively home educated pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is currently 6 (down from 7 at the end of 2020/21) and represents around 3% of the total cohort.
- 4.8 The number of children with historic involvement of Early Help or Children's Social Care increased significantly from 32% at the end of 2020/21 to 56% as of October 2021. As of end of December 2021, there were no children who were a Child In Need or at Child Protection status being home educated.
- 4.9 The elective home education process has been updated during the pandemic with joint training delivered by Children's Social Care and elective home education Officer to other professionals and we now have a named Officer in Children's Social Care so concerns can be escalated quickly and appropriately. Where a pupil has a social worker or is known to Children's Social Care, social workers are notified that a parental request for elective home education has been received. Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan who are home educated are appropriately supported through the SEND and Pupil Support Teams.

5 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

- 5.1 Every local authority has a legal duty to identify children missing education and get these children back into education. 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. Children missing education are at significant risk.
- 5.2 In the second half of the autumn term, the CME tracking officer opened 55 new cases and closed 17 cases. As of the end of December 2021, there were 156 open cases where children are actively being sought.
- 5.3 A programme of school audits are planned to review children missing education practices in schools. Two high schools and one primary school will be visited in the Spring term.

5.4 Robust procedures are in place to ensure that the whereabouts of all children are known. Where pupils are not attending regularly, schools are expected to follow their attendance procedures, including having regular contact with parents and carry out home visits where appropriate. Where families have moved house and no forwarding address is provided a children missing education referral should be submitted without delay to ensure that the pupil can be located. Schools are asked not to remove pupils from roll until advised to do so by CME tracking officer.

6 CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT PREVENT THEM ATTENDING SCHOOL

6.1 Where a pupil is unable to attend school for medical reasons, colleagues in the Education Welfare Service work alongside schools, health professionals and parents to provide an alternative provision which will meet a pupil's individual needs, including social and emotional needs and enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system.

6.2 Wherever possible the local authority would look at education provision being provided by school to ensure continuity for pupils. However, it is recognised that in some circumstances that is not possible and provision for such cases will be considered by a case management panel on an individual basis. The authority has a protocol on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions and all schools should have their own medical protocol for supporting pupils with medical needs.

6.3 In the second half of the Autumn term, new referrals have been received for 4 pupils. These have been assessed using the Children with Medical Conditions Protocol and Education Welfare Officers have supported schools to ensure appropriate provision is in place.

6.4 in line with the Protocol, two new cases were heard at medical panel. Panel members decided that there was no requirement for additional provision. One pupil returned to school and the provision at school was deemed adequate for the other pupil.

6.5 Two case were reviewed by the medical panel. Provision will continue to be offered by school, supported by colleagues in the Pupil Support Service and these cases will be reviewed again during the Spring term. There are a total of five open cases.

7 EXCLUSIONS

7.1 Children who are excluded from school on either a fixed term or permanent basis will not be attending learning for a period of time, which will inhibit their learning recovery progress. For a number of years, Tameside had high levels of permanent exclusions but these are now beginning to reduce.

Permanent Exclusions						
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
headcount	35563	36070	36326	36735	37090	37313
perm excl	79	78	97	64	51	43
perm excl rate	0.22	0.22	0.27	0.17	0.14	0.12

	Jan-17	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21
Pupils on roll at PRU	119	121	144	155	125
Pupils on roll in Tameside	36189	36447	36879	37090	37313
Rate of pupils in PRU	0.33	0.33	0.39	0.41	0.33
Rate of pupils in PRU in Tameside per 1,000	3.3	3.3	3.9	4.1	3.3

7.2 Though the number and rate of permanent exclusions continues to reduce, Tameside was:

- ranked 146th nationally in 2019/20 having been 131st in 2018/19,
- 22nd out of 23 North West local authorities having been 18th in 2018/19,
- 9th out of 10 Greater Manchester local authorities having been 8th in 2018/19, and
- 9th out of 11 statistical neighbours having been 5th in 2018/19.

7.3 The number of pupils in the Pupil Referral Service reduced during the 2020/21 academic year and further reduced in autumn term 2021 to 103.

7.4 The Pupil Referral Service has recently transformed its provision following a review undertaken with support of the secondary headteachers' group (TASH) which led to a clear strategy for centre and system improvement.

7.5 A new executive headteacher was appointed with secondary mainstream experience and a specific role around developing a more inclusive school system. A system transformation task group was established with key secondary headteacher membership led by Executive Head of Pupil Referral Service.

7.6 Standard operating procedures for exclusions was agreed with a high threshold for permanent exclusion, support was developed and a focus on planning for culture transformation leading to changes in practice. The funding structure has been updated making permanent exclusion much less attractive.

7.7 Tameside Pupil Referral Service's Secondary Outreach offer has been established in 14 of our 16 high schools. Since September 2021, there have been 89 referrals and none of these pupils have been permanently excluded.

7.8 The new service seems to be having a positive impact on the level of permanent exclusions in the borough with fewer exclusions in the Autumn term of 2021/22.

Autumn term	Primary PEx	Secondary PEx	Total
2019/20	4	29	33
2020/21	1	16	17
2021/22	2	28	30

8 FUTURE PLANS FOR ATTENDANCE

8.1 There is still much to do to support children, families and schools with good attendance practice. The following priorities have been identified:

- Further develop Tameside school attendance pathway and relaunch to ensure all schools are aware when developing individual school attendance policies
- Develop guidance on school attendance policies to be included in headteacher guidance with particular focus on attendance of vulnerable pupils

- Ensuring all schools have robust and current attendance policies and ensure schools receive feedback through register audits
- Ensure all schools have an active relationship with their attendance link officer and are aware of their area attendance network
- Develop a robust attendance data dashboard for all schools. Use live attendance data to inform the setting of attendance targets and to include targets for vulnerable pupils and reducing persistent absence
- Continuing to maintain a focus on improving attendance for vulnerable children and young people across Children's Services and partners
- Ensure on going social media campaign to promote school attendance to children and parents
- Responding to current national initiatives.

9 NATIONAL INITIATIVES - CHILDREN NOT IN SCHOOL

- 9.1 The government has recently published its response to the outcome of a consultation entitled 'Children Not in School' which ran from 2 April 2019 until 24 June 2019.
- 9.2 The proposals in the consultation have broadly been agreed by Government and Government intends to bring forward legislation to ensure that:
- Local authorities have a register of children who are being home educated (which will be subject of inspection)
 - Parents have to register with a local authority if they intend to home educate
 - Providers of support for home educators (illegal schools) have a duty to provide info on relevant children to local authorities
 - Local authorities to have a duty to provide support to home educators if requested
- 9.3 This will be the subject of legislation and the identification of additional resources for local authorities as this will create some new duties on Councils. These changes are welcomed by home education colleagues across England and have been called for over a number of years. Tameside currently has robust processes for supporting home educating families and will continue to do so alongside any new duties that the legislation creates.

10 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: IMPROVING THE CONSISTENCY OF APPROACH

- 10.1 The Department for Education has launched a consultation on school attendance and improving the consistency of support. It launched on 25 January and closes on 28 February.
- 10.2 The consultation seeks views on four proposals to build on existing work on attendance and improve consistency of attendance support for families through better, more targeted multiagency action for the pupils who need it most:
- Requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools on attendance management and improvement.
 - Introducing guidance on the expectations of local authority attendance services.
 - A clearer more consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence.
 - Bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state funded schools.
- 10.3 **School attendance policies**
The proposals are intended to address high levels of persistent absence in schools and close the attendance gaps between vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils and their peers. In order

to do this, the proposal is for a new duty for schools to publish attendance improvement plans.

- 10.4 The plans include mandating all schools to draft, publicise and regularly review policies on attendance management and improvement. Guidance will say documents have to include clear expectations of parents and pupils, have staff with responsibility for attendance, identify strategies for persistent absence reduction and have a clear escalation route for pupils not attending regularly including support and sanctions.
- 10.5 Trusts and maintained school governors will similarly face new duties on their role promoting good attendance, such as checking and offering strategies to do so, and providing training. Expectations will also include CEOs, trust boards and maintained governors alike holding school leaders to account, supporting and challenging them on attendance.
- 10.6 **Local authority services**
Whilst both schools and trusts have a crucial role in raising attendance for all pupils and have an additional protective role as the best placed 'service' to spot early patterns of poor attendance for persistent absentees, individual children's barriers to attendance often go far beyond the school gates.
- 10.7 Persistent absenteeism is almost always a symptom of wider problems in a child's life, and therefore the local authority and other local partners have a crucial role to play in ensuring all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- 10.8 As well as providing access to support services, local authorities have a range of legal powers at their disposal to utilise if support fails or is not engaged with.
- 10.9 The role of the local authority in school attendance has not always kept pace with changes in the school system in recent years, and different delivery models exist across local authorities in England. Approximately 13% of local authorities provide only statutory services without support, 44% provided a wider service on a traded basis if schools bought it in, and only 14% provide support and statutory work to all schools in their area without trading. Tameside currently provides statutory support as well as offering a traded service to our schools. The new proposal is intended to outline minimum standards for council oversight.
- 10.10 Such expectations are likely to include using the full range of legal powers, providing advice to all schools, taking a strategic view to prioritise areas most in need of support, regularly assembling schools, retaining attendance experts, and early support staff working intensively with families.
- 10.11 **The legal framework**
The Department for Education propose there to be more consistency and fairness on absence fines as there is inconsistent application of the current framework across local authorities. The Proposals set out plans for a new regulatory framework for the most commonly used sanction, fixed penalty notices, to improve consistency and fairness nationwide.
- 10.12 Individual local thresholds for sanctions will be replaced with national ones for when notices must be considered. These will include any spell of unauthorised leave of absence in term, a number of occurrences of lateness, and incidents of pupils being in public during school hours while excluded, with reasonable exceptions.
- 10.13 The rules will see councils required to coordinate with neighbouring councils and the police, and maximum numbers of penalties capped before prosecution has to be considered. Councils will still remain independent prosecutors and continue to decide which measures to take.

10.14 **Authorised absence in academies and other state funded schools**

The consultation states that current regulations detailing how leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances only apply to maintained schools.

10.15 Whilst many academies follow this regulation, it does not currently apply to schools that are not maintained by the local authority and are not special schools. Therefore, to further increase consistency for pupils and parents and ensure fairness across school types, the Department for Education proposes extending the current regulatory making power so that it also covers academies.

11 **REVISED BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS GUIDANCE**

11.1 The Department for Education is holding a consultation on proposed changes to the behaviour in schools guidance and the suspension and permanent exclusion guidance. The consultation will run from 3 February 2022 until 31 March 2022.

11.2 **Exclusion**

The proposed changes are:

- Headteachers being unable to end a suspension or permanent exclusion that has already begun (that is, where the pupil is no longer attending school).
- When headteachers suspend or permanently exclude a pupil they must, without delay, and no later than three days after their decision, notify parents. If a pupil has a social worker, or if a pupil is looked-after, the head teacher must, also without delay, and no later than three days after their decision, notify the social worker and/or Virtual School Head (VSH), as applicable.
- Revised guidance on the role of a social worker and Virtual School Head (VSH), during governing board meetings and independent review panel meetings.
- To amend the law to permit virtual remote meetings for governing boards and Independent Review Panels in any circumstance
- Revised guidance on managed moves as an initial intervention measure, what they are and how they should be used.
- Clarified guidance on the use of off-site direction as a short-term measure that can be used as part of a school's behaviour management strategy.
- Further clarification on the practice of involving pupils so that any excluded pupil is enabled and encouraged to participate at all stages of the suspension or permanent exclusion process, considering their age and ability to understand.
- Guidance that governing boards should carefully consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who have been permanently excluded to ensure the sanction is only used when necessary as a last resort.

11.3 **Behaviour in schools guidance**

The proposal is to adopt the rewritten Behaviour in Schools Guidance which aims to more effectively support schools to maintain high standards of behaviour and provide more practical advice for all school staff. The revised guidance is organised into four themes to support schools to address behaviour at all stages

11.4 **Creating and maintaining high standards of behaviour**

Section one looks at how to create and maintain high standards of behaviour, with a focus on developing a clear vision of what expected behaviour looks like and the strong leadership needed to implement this vision. It also addresses how all staff should explicitly teach and exemplify positive behaviour, to ensure pupils know what is expected of them and how to achieve it.

11.5 There is guidance on developing and communicating the behaviour policy and the role and expectations of school leaders, staff, pupils and parents to help create and maintain behaviour standards in schools. This includes a specific section on how pupils with special

educational needs and disabilities (SEND) should be supported to meet behavioural standards and the related duties of schools in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010.

- 11.6 The concept of a national minimum expectation of behaviour benchmarks behaviour expectations across schools in alignment with Ofsted's good grade description for behaviour and attitudes.
- 11.7 The guidance indicates how rewards and positive recognition should be applied consistently and clearly to reinforce the expectations and routines of the school's behaviour culture.
- 11.8 **After incidents of misbehaviour**
Section two sets out how schools should respond robustly to incidents of misbehaviour in order to deter further incidents, restore order and protect pupils from further disruption or harm. It provides guidance on how schools can use sanctions lawfully. It also outlines how sanctions should be applied in a fair and consistent manner and the relationship between sanctions and pupils with SEND. A small section signals how schools should support pupils following behavioural incidents and the pastoral support that may be required.
- 11.9 There is comprehensive advice on removal rooms, how they should be used where necessary and the difference between a removal room and separation spaces. There is also information on the governance of removal rooms and what schools should consider when removing pupils with SEND or who are otherwise vulnerable.
- 11.10 **Preventing recurrence of misbehaviour**
Section three looks at how schools can prevent the recurrence of misbehaviour and reduce the likelihood of suspension and permanent exclusion. Along with guidance on early intervention strategies that can help pupils better manage their behaviour, there is information on how schools can monitor and evaluate their behaviour policy. The section on in-school units (ISU) includes a definition, the aims of an ISU and what good governance of these units looks like.
- 11.11 **Responding to specific behavioural incidents**
Section four focuses on how schools should respond to specific behaviour incidents. It provides guidance to schools on their authority to respond to misbehaviour and their duties relating to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all pupils with clear reference to KCSIE guidance. It also includes advice on criminal behaviour and behaviour outside the school premises, building on the 2016 guidance.
- 11.12 The guidance covers how schools should respond to incidents of sexual violence and sexual harassment, including the importance of addressing inappropriate behaviour to prevent it leading to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children, in line with current safeguarding guidance. It also supports schools in addressing behaviour incidents which occur online. The guidance recognises headteachers' autonomy in setting a policy on mobile phones within their school. It outlines that any policy on mobile phones should take into account the need for phones to be used for reasons such as medical grounds or to enable children with SEND to access the curriculum.
- 11.13 These national initiatives and consultations signal clear intent by the government to focus on ensuring children are attending school regularly.

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Children's Services have a clear priority to focus on school attendance. The pandemic has made the need for that focus even more acute. Tameside has an excellent record in promoting good attendance and the impact of services and schools is clear with the top

quartile attendance data when compared to national data. However, despite this too many vulnerable children are absent from school too often. It is clear that there is still work to do to improve overall attendance and we will continue to work in a multi agency way to reduce persistent absence levels which have increased over the pandemic and close the gaps between vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people and their peers.

- 12.2 The Education Welfare Service has worked hard throughout the pandemic. The team has been an integral part of a multi-agency team that has provided support to schools via School liaison calls supporting individual families and pupils to access education during the COVID -19 pandemic.

13 RECOMMENDATION

- 13.1 As set out at the front of the report.