



Children and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee

6 September 2023

Report Title	Cabinet Response to the Scrutiny Review of Improving School Attendance
Cabinet Portfolio	Children and Young People
Cabinet Member	Councillor Nova Charlton
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All
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Borough Priorities	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities and neighborhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Young People's Task Group held a spotlight review into improving school attendance on the 3 November 2022. The report of the Task Group was formally agreed by CYPS Scrutiny on the 24 April 2023 and was submitted to Cabinet for responses as per the Council's constitution.

2. Recommendation for Decision

Childrens and Young People Services Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the Action Plan attached at Appendix 1b that sets out the recommendations from the Task Group into improving school attendance in St Helens.

3. Purpose of this report

- 3.1 This report provides Members with the Action Plan response to the recommendations of the Improving School Attendance Task Group, which had been agreed by this Committee.

4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 At the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop held on the 6 July 2022, it was agreed to hold a spotlight review in November 2022 to contribute to the wider work to improve school attendance in the borough.
- 4.2 The focus of the review was in response to overall absence rates in St Helens reported for the Autumn and Spring Term 2022/23 which were higher than regional and national averages.

5. Consideration of Alternatives

- 5.1 N/A

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Action Plan attached at Appendix 1b sets out the Cabinet response to the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Task Group into school attendance.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 No Equality Impact Assessment was carried out for the purpose of submitting the report to the Committee for approval and submission to Cabinet.

9. Social Value

- 9.1 Good school attendance is linked to improved educational outcomes which in turn provides young people with qualifications and skills to enable them to take advantage of local, regional and national employment opportunities.

10. Sustainability and Environment

- 10.1 N/A

11. Health and Wellbeing

- 11.1 Good school attendance contributes to improved physical health and wellbeing through participation in physical education. In addition, attendance at school enables access to pastoral support and a range of activities that provide social enrichment.

12. Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 It is the right of every child irrespective of age, gender, race, disability, or social background to have access to a fulfilling high-quality education.

13. Customer and Resident

- 13.1 It is proven that good school attendance raises aspirations and improved educational outcomes and reduces the risk of young people drifting into criminality, substance misuse and becoming victims of exploitation.

14. Asset and Property

- 14.1 N/A

15. Staffing and Human Resources

- 15.1 N/A

16. Risks

- 16.1 Absence from school contributes to low aspirations and poor educational outcomes. Young People who are persistently absent from school are less likely to have their physical and mental health needs met and are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviours.

17. Finance

- 17.1 Each year, the government allocates money for the local authority to distribute to all state funded mainstream schools including academies in the form of the Designated Schools Grant. It is estimated that as a result of non-school attendance a financial loss of approximately £250,000 a year can be attributed to lost school days.

18. Policy Framework Implications

- 18.1 N/A

19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities

19.1 Good educational outcomes are inextricably linked to school attendance and supports young people's access to further education and training and higher education enabling them to take advantage of employment opportunities at a local, regional, and national level.

20. Background Documents

21. Appendices

21.1 Appendix 1 – Cabinet Report

21.2 Appendix 1a – Scrutiny Review

21.3 Appendix 1b- Action Plan