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**UPDATE ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS IN DARLINGTON**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update committee members about school attendance and exclusion levels within Darlington for the last academic year.

**Information and Analysis**

Attendance

2. The information in this report is based on figures submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for the Academic Year up to and including the 25 May 2007, with the exception of Eastbourne Comprehensive School, which only submitted figures up until Easter; and on the first provisional statistical release showing comparisons across all local authorities. The table in **Appendix 1** shows our performance compared to our statistical neighbours using this provisional information.
3. This table shows that Darlington's position against our statistical neighbours is very much improved compared to last year. For all schools absence Darlington was 135 out of 150 for the Autumn Term whilst for the Spring Term we moved to 50 out of 150. For secondary absences for the Autumn Term we were 137th and for the Spring Term we were 80th.
4. Table 1 shows that for all schools, the improvement in our absence is better than the national figure and better than all of our statistical neighbours as well as for the government NorthEast Region. Table 2 shows the same picture for secondary absence with Darlington showing the most improved secondary absence rate.
5. Attendance in Darlington for all schools shows an improvement over the previous year, with absence being reduced by 1.4%. Secondary absence has reduced by 1.7% and Primary by 1.2%. When the information for the first half of the summer term for Eastbourne School has been incorporated into the total figure then we will be able to report the final figure for Darlington.
6. Of the 30-primary/junior/infant schools in Darlington, 28 reduced their absence with one staying the same and one increasing their absence. We have one school in the primary phase that is 20% outside of its expected range based on free school meals. However, only 16 schools in the primary phase met the absence target that they set themselves. There is an ongoing project to analyse the performance at Year 1 to identify whether or not there are issues around what factors contribute to absences in the foundation stage and within early years.
7. Analysis of the attainment performance at KS1 and KS2 SATS shows that approximately 20% of our children did not attain the national average of Level 2b and above for KS1 and Level 4 and above for KS2. Further analysis shows that approximately 46% of these children had an attendance of less than 95%, between 17-23% of them had an attendance of less than 90% whilst approximately 7% had an attendance of less than 80%, with some

children attending less than 70% of the time.

8. Local Authority Officers are working closely with each other across teams so that all attendance information is shared. This will enable Lead Officers from the School Improvement and Development Division to challenge schools on their actions when they undertake their regular termly meetings.
9. For secondary schools 6 out of the 7 schools improved their absence rates, although only three schools met their individual targets.

**Table to show secondary performance compared to 05/06**

School	Actual 05/06	Target 07/08	Actual 06/07
Carmel	5.3%	6.1%	4.0%
Branksome	10.2%	9%	9.6%
Eastbourne*	19.4%	13%	16.6%
Haughton	13.3%	8%	10.6%
Hummersknott	7.4%	6.5%	8.2%
Hurworth	7.2%	6%	5.6%
Longfield	8.5%	7%	7.0%

\* figures for Eastbourne are for the first two terms only

10. Government targets for absence were to reduce absence by 8% by 2008 from the baseline of 2002/03. For Darlington this meant:

Overall absence of 7.69% in 02/03 to reduce to 6.79% in 07/08.

This translates as a trajectory of:

	06/07	07/08
Secondary	8.62	8.39
Primary	5.44	5.29
Combined	6.98	6.79

On top of these targets, the authority has agreed through the LAA stretch targets:

	06/07	07/08	08/09
Secondary	8.46	8.13	7.8
Primary	5.37	5.13	4.9

Our performance to date shows:

Secondary 8.4%  
 Primary 5.2%  
 Combined 6.7%

This indicates that we are on trajectory to meet the DCSF targets and that we are inside the stretch target for 06/07.

#### Persistent Absence Schools

11. As reported previously, we have three schools designated by the DCSF as persistent absence schools. Early analysis of their individual information for the last academic year shows that they have a reduction in the number of persistent absentees of between 29 and 31%. This is an indication of how hard the schools are working with the Authority in trying to change the patterns of attendance behaviour for some of these young people.

12. This year the Local Authority is placing equal emphasis on persistent absentees in primary phase with officers working with Headteachers to develop Action Plans around individual pupils to improve their attendance.
13. The Local Authority continues to use those sanctions that are available to them in order to improve school attendance.

	<b>Penalty Notices</b>	<b>Fast track prosecutions</b>	<b>Truancy Sweeps</b>
05/06	27	26	178(7)*
06/07	161	52	176(6)*

\*Number of actual truancy sweeps in brackets

#### 14. **Looked After Children**

The attendance of our Looked After Children continues to be monitored on a daily basis by Welfare Call. Day to day reports on the children's absence from school are received by both the Looked After Co-ordinator for Education and the individual social workers; this means that prompt action can be taken to offer support where it is needed.

	In Authority		Out of Authority	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
05/06	95.3%	83.9%	95.3%	86.5%
06/07	95.2%	91%	97%	95%

#### Exclusions

15. Exclusions are very high in the Authority, with 47 permanent exclusions for the whole of the academic year. There were no permanent exclusions in the primary phase. **Appendix 2** shows the number of exclusions from each school.
16. As the information shows there has been an improvement in the number of days lost to fixed term exclusion, although the number of pupils who have been excluded shows an increase, which varies between 1% and 30% of a school's population. Two schools have made significant reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions through the use of their Inclusion Unit, which is used as an alternative to exclusion.
17. With the new ruling requiring schools to make provision for all pupils excluded for six days or more coming into force on 1 September, all schools had to partner with at least one other school in order to support one another on issues of behaviour and persistent absentees. These partnerships in the secondary phase are as follows:

Branksome/Carmel/Hummersknott  
 Longfield/Haughton  
 Hurworth /Hurworth Primary  
 Eastbourne Church of England Academy/Pupil Referral Unit

As reported in June the Schools Forum is facilitating this work through additional funding.

18. The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) has a new Management Committee from the beginning of this academic year. This Committee is made up of the seven secondary heads with representations from the local authority, parents and staff from the PRU. This will enable

the PRU and the secondary schools to work more closely to try and develop better ways to support the schools in tackling some of the problems of their challenging pupils, and to develop positive alternatives to permanent exclusion.

### **Legal Implications**

19. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

20. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. Improved attendance and increased provision for excluded pupils should contribute to reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

21. There has been a decrease in our absence rates at both secondary and primary level for the last academic year, and our position nationally and in comparison to our statistical neighbours has also improved. The Local Authority continues to use all sanctions available to them to try and improve on the level of absence across the town. Local Authority Officers continue to challenge schools over their individual levels of absence. More work is being undertaken with regard to persistent absentees both at the secondary and primary phases, as well as ongoing work into attendance within the early years.
22. Exclusions are still a cause for concern across the secondary phase although some schools are showing that certain strategies work for them. We will ensure that best practice is shared across all schools.

### **Recommendation**

23. Committee members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**Murray Rose**  
**Director of Children's Services**

### **Background Papers**

PLASC data 2006/2007  
DCSF unofficial first statistical release figures  
Minutes from LLL Scrutiny June 2007

Anita Hamer Extension 2891

## Appendix 1

	All schools Absence Rates									Difference between 05/06 and Spr 07
	2005-06			2006-07 (Autumn)			2006-07 (Spring)			
	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	
Stockton	6.04	0.67	6.71	5.06	0.69	5.75	5.51	0.95	6.46	-0.25
North Tyneside	5.80	0.62	6.42	4.93	0.85	5.78	5.53	0.96	6.49	0.07
Bury	5.75	0.44	6.19	5.00	0.57	5.57	5.67	0.63	6.30	0.11
Rotherham	5.90	1.36	7.26	4.98	1.30	6.28	5.90	1.43	7.33	0.07
Calderdale	5.75	0.65	6.40	4.91	0.66	5.57	5.57	0.77	6.34	-0.06
York	5.44	0.72	6.16	4.76	0.75	5.51	5.72	0.85	6.57	0.41
Torbay	6.52	1.04	7.56	5.65	1.38	7.03	7.38	1.37	8.75	1.19
Barnsley	5.45	1.33	6.78	4.68	1.46	6.14	5.71	1.24	6.95	0.17
Medway	5.88	0.79	6.67	4.69	0.85	5.54	5.75	0.98	6.73	0.06
North Lincolnshire	5.74	0.61	6.35	5.02	0.66	5.68	5.89	0.85	6.74	0.39
Northumberland	6.36	0.48	6.84	5.74	0.52	6.26	6.40	0.55	6.95	0.11
Gateshead	6.12	0.56	6.68	5.47	0.61	6.08	5.89	0.82	6.71	0.03
Newcastle	7.03	0.79	7.82	6.22	0.87	7.09	7.02	1.20	8.22	0.40
South Tyneside	6.60	0.47	7.07	3.27	0.45	3.72	3.76	0.48	4.24	-2.83
Sunderland	6.57	0.62	7.19	5.67	0.72	6.39	5.86	0.83	6.69	-0.50
Hartlepool	5.66	0.68	6.34	5.13	0.67	5.80	5.81	0.92	6.73	0.39
Middlesbrough	6.94	0.78	7.72	5.89	1.00	6.89	6.14	1.09	7.23	-0.49
Redcar & Cleveland	6.33	0.78	7.11	5.45	0.79	6.24	5.99	0.94	6.93	-0.18
Durham	6.36	0.44	6.80	5.67	0.49	6.16	6.10	0.60	6.70	-0.10
Stat. Neighbour average	<b>6.12</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>6.65</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>5.89</b>	<b>5.86</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>6.87</b>	<b>0.22</b>
GONE average	<b>6.35</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>6.97</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>6.01</b>	<b>5.82</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>6.67</b>	<b>-0.30</b>
Darlington	<b>6.70</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>7.94</b>	<b>5.79</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>6.87</b>	<b>5.59</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>-1.17</b>

Secondary schools Absence Rates										
	2005-06			2006-07 (Autumn)			2006-07 (Spring)			Difference between 05/06 and Spr 07
	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	
Stockton	6.79	1.02	7.81	5.68	1.05	6.73	6.10	1.51	7.61	-0.20
North Tyneside	6.63	1.03	7.66	5.51	1.43	6.94	6.24	1.68	7.92	0.26
Bury	6.57	0.68	7.25	5.85	0.86	6.71	6.35	0.91	7.26	0.01
Rotherham	6.70	2.07	8.77	5.87	1.89	7.76	6.95	2.13	9.08	0.31
Calderdale	6.74	1.05	7.79	6.15	1.06	7.21	6.68	1.21	7.89	0.10
York	6.15	1.13	7.28	5.97	1.12	7.09	6.73	1.31	8.04	0.76
Torbay	7.26	1.85	9.11	6.46	2.46	8.92	8.31	2.43	10.74	1.63
Barnsley	5.76	1.99	7.75	5.35	2.00	7.35	6.28	1.88	8.16	0.41
Medway	6.50	1.26	7.76	5.30	1.35	6.65	6.25	1.50	7.75	-0.01
North Lincolnshire	6.42	0.92	7.34	5.90	1.10	7.00	7.00	1.45	8.45	1.11
Northumberland	6.81	0.60	7.41	6.30	0.66	6.96	7.07	0.70	7.77	0.36
Gateshead	7.17	0.99	8.16	6.38	1.03	7.41	6.75	1.42	8.17	0.01
Newcastle	8.50	1.15	9.65	7.54	1.31	8.85	8.32	1.80	10.12	0.47
South Tyneside	7.83	0.73	8.56	6.78	0.94	7.72	7.61	0.97	8.58	0.02
Sunderland	7.45	0.98	8.43	6.64	1.18	7.82	6.76	1.40	8.16	-0.27
Hartlepool	6.27	0.87	7.14	5.90	0.90	6.80	6.21	1.36	7.57	0.43
Middlesbrough	8.82	1.30	10.12	7.66	1.79	9.45	7.84	1.92	9.76	-0.36
Redcar & Cleveland	7.12	1.23	8.35	6.33	1.15	7.48	7.09	1.45	8.54	0.19
Durham	7.07	0.77	7.84	6.61	0.85	7.46	6.94	1.04	7.98	0.14
<b>Stat. Neighbour average</b>	<b>6.55</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>7.85</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>1.43</b>	<b>7.24</b>	<b>6.69</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>8.29</b>	<b>0.44</b>
<b>GONE average</b>	<b>7.31</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>8.28</b>	<b>6.48</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>7.60</b>	<b>6.99</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>8.38</b>	<b>0.10</b>
<b>Darlington</b>	<b>7.67</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>9.90</b>	<b>7.01</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>8.98</b>	<b>6.28</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>8.39</b>	<b>-1.51</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>6.70</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>7.92</b>	<b>5.92</b>	<b>1.35</b>	<b>7.27</b>	<b>6.77</b>	<b>1.61</b>	<b>8.38</b>	<b>0.46</b>

## Appendix 2

### 2006/07 Permanent and Fixed Term Exclusions

School	No of Permanent Exclusions			No of Fixed Term Exclusion Events			No of Days lost through FTE			No of pupils with Fixed Term Exclusions			% of pupil population with FTE		
	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
<b>Branksome</b>	8	2	3	138	161	153	550	438	773.5	66	73	69	8.99	9.55	8.70%
<b>Carmel</b>	0	0	3	11	20	49	38	77	222	10	16	28	1.11	1.78	3.10%
<b>Eastbourne</b>	9	19	15	573	557	247	1956.5	2620	1446.5	187	205	139	30.25	27.59	18.02%
<b>Haughton</b>	12	3	2	358	139	121	869.5	487	411.5	134	84	87	15.00	9.35	9.68%
<b>Hummersknott</b>	11	7	6	282	245	191	716	676.5	489.5	125	84	89	10.21	6.85	7.21%
<b>Hurworth</b>	3	6	2	209	198	113	726.5	854	585.5	103	94	71	15.65	14.57	11.14%
<b>Longfield</b>	4	7	1	66	193	126	206	638.5	324.5	40	87	64	4.41	9.6	7.04%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1637</b>	<b>1513</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>5062.5</b>	<b>5791</b>	<b>4253</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>10.84</b>	<b>10.58</b>	<b>8.90%</b>