

SCRUTINY REPORT

MEETING: COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: 2/7/2025

SUBJECT: BURY ATTENDANCE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

REPORT FROM: JANET LLOYD, SCHOOL ATTENDANCE, EXCLUSIONS & COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICE MANAGER

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The DfE introduced the Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance in 2024 which the School Attendance Team rolled out to all schools. This changed the landscape and relationship between the local authority and schools.
- 1.2 New guidance for schools was created along with supporting documents, penalty notice information, leaflets, new ICT systems, school training, attendance forums and briefings were implemented.
- 1.3 To ensure that the guidance was having an impact and that 'attendance is everyone's responsibility', an Attendance Stakeholders Group was established in September 2025 which also included CME and EHE (children missing education and elective home education).
- 1.4 Our aim as the group was to create an Attendance Partnership Approach and Pledge to support school attendance across Bury Schools providing a golden thread throughout our organisation. The group will bring forward their expertise and knowledge from various backgrounds to support this work.
- 1.5 The group worked well together in agreeing how the Attendance Partnership Approach should look. Samples were taken from other Local Authority's that had produced their Attendance Strategies. It was agreed that we would not place any data into the document as this is outdated as soon as its written, nor would we quote from the DfE Guidance as we would be repeating the protocol.
- 1.6 The Attendance Partnership Approach has the student voice running throughout the document. We understand what our young people find the barriers to school attendance and how we can support them with this.

2.0 ISSUES

- 2.1 Identifying the relevant stakeholders and requesting the stakeholders to commit their time to the group.
- 2.2 Secondary schools despite being approached as a whole and individually are not willing to participate in the stakeholder group. There is one primary headteacher who is the representative for the primary schools and this is fed back into the BAPH (Bury Association for Primary Headteachers).

- 2.3 The Stakeholders have agreed to meet every month until we the Attendance Partnership Approach was created. The group felt it was essential for traction within the group.
- 2.4 Student voice surveys have been carried out in secondary schools across Bury to identify the barriers to non-school attendance. Themes have been identified from the results. Workshops have been created with the school attendance team and the youth service and in each school, around 64 students have attended the workshops over a 6 week period.
- 2.5 Schools are receiving the results back from the surveys and workshops to help them improve their school attendance. In some instances, it may be where students are stating they don't feel safe during lesson change over, as more staff are required on the school corridors. This is an easy fix for schools to create a safer and calmer environment. Schools will be able to relook at their working processes and listen to their students voices / concerns.
- 2.6 The results of the surveys and workshops have provided the stakeholders with subgroups to support school attendance:
- 2.6.1 Bullying
 - 2.6.2 Transport
 - 2.6.3 Periods
- The subgroups will unpick the issues the students have raised and look at support strategies that can be implemented to remove the barriers.
- 2.7 The powerful work around the student voice has been recognised by the DfE. Bury School Attendance Team have participated in creating a webinar which will be available on the DfE YouTube channel for all other local authorities to access. The work is being held up as a great example for other local authorities to follow.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The Pledge for all stakeholders will be arranged in the autumn term. A consideration around the date may be considered at the headteachers conference to engage the schools in the process where lack of engagement has previously been.

The Attendance Partnership Approach is waiting to go for printing before being circulated.

List of Background Papers:-

Bury Attendance Partnership Approach

Contact Details:-

Janet Lloyd, School Attendance, Exclusions & Community Education Service Manager

Executive Director sign off Date:_____

JET Meeting Date:_____