

22 September 2022

TITLE OF REPORT: **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Learning Mentors 2021/2022**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of School Forum the work of the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ESBA) Learning Mentors during academic year 2021/2022 and to consider the funding of this resource moving forward.

Background

2. Gateshead has seen an increasing number of children and young people who are unable to attend school due to EBSA. This is not just a mainstream school issue, as we also have children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) who are unable to attend their special school placement as well as children and young people who have been taken out of school to be electively home educated due to mental health/anxiety issues.
3. Given the complexity of the issue, it was previously agreed at School Forum to pilot a two new positions within Gateshead Council known as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (ESBA) Learning Mentors with one of these positions being funded from the high needs block and the 2nd being funded through schools until the 31st March 2022 in the first instance. This was extended until 31st March 2023 after discussion and agreement at School Forum in autumn term 2021. These posts are at Grade G (£34,725 to £37,925 including on costs, but the 2022/23 payaward). This does not include travel costs for the two posts. These posts are filled by a 0.8 and full time colleague. The latter of these posts is currently vacant due to the resignation of the previous post holder from 1st September 2022.
4. The work of the ESBA Learning Mentors continues to be allocated through a referral system to Education Inclusion Panel (EIP) which is multi-disciplinary. The referral categories are:
 1. Either children/young people currently not attending school or
 2. Those still attending school but there is declining rate of attendance
5. Both types of referral have to present an evidence base that clearly demonstrates ESBA. In referral type 1 the Panel also require evidence from an appropriate medical professional.
6. The EBSA Learning Mentors are line managed by the Education Support Service who oversee the management of EIP and the provision of tuition for children and young people unable to attend school due to medical reasons.

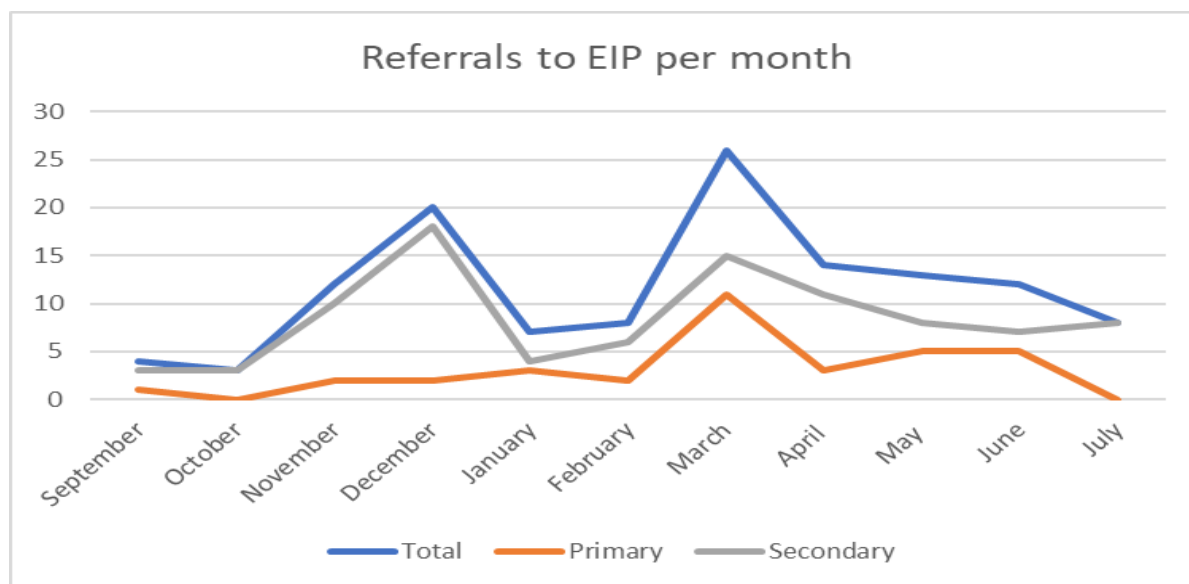
7. The benefits to schools of these two posts are:-

- Improved attendance as children/young people are supported more effectively back into a school setting or to improve their attendance
- Schools supported with strategies and interventions to help the children/young person transition back to school or improve their attendance

Education Inclusion Panel 2021/2022

8. This year a total of 127 cases were referred to the Education Inclusion Panel for consideration, compared to 79 cases in 2020/21.

Referrals per month



9. The above graph does not provide detailed information as to when concerns become evident, however, it does suggest an increase of concerns that coincide with end of term holidays.

Panel Outcomes

Total	Referral deemed appropriate	Tuition allocated	Alternative education provided	ESBA LMs	Declined referrals	Withdrawn referrals	RTA assessment placements
127	78	38	3	30	44	5	7

10. The 44 referral that were declined were either lack of evidence to support the medical element of the referral or a determination by panel that on the evidence presented, it could not be ascertained if the cases met the criteria as set out in pupils unable to attend to school due to health reasons. 5 referrals were withdrawn.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance Learning Mentors

11. 30 students were allocated an ESBA learning mentors in 2021/2022. These officers carry a case load of 15 pupils at any one time. 29 cases that were carried forward from academic year 2021/2022.

12. Of the all the cases that were active within academic year 2021/2022 the following applied:

Number of active cases 2021/2022	59
Number closed – pupil returned to school	21
Number closed – pupil did not engage Decision to close made by Education Inclusion Panel	8
Number closed – other than returned to school or pupil did not engage Decision to close made by Education Inclusion Panel	15
Number of cases carried forward to 2022/2023	15

13. This was during a period of continued long term staff absence within the very small ESBA Learning Mentor team.

Gender break down of active cases 2021/2022

Female: 31

Male: 28

Year group breakdown of active cases 2021/2022

Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Blank
1	4	9	8	13	6	6	10	2

Recommendations

14. That School Forum provides feedback from all schools and agrees to de-delegate for maintained mainstream schools for a ESBA Learning Mentor to support children/young people with EBSA.

15. Academies and schools that cannot de-delegate agreed to pay towards the cost of a ESBA Learning Mentor to support children/young people with EBSA.

For the following reason(s):

To ensure that all children and young people in Gateshead engage in an education that is suitable and appropriate to their age, aptitude and abilities.

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