

REPORT TO SCHOOLS FORUM

DATE 7 December 2023

Item 5
TITLE OF REPORT: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Learning Mentors

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update on the background and service delivered by Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Learning Mentors so they can consider de-delegation for the financial year 2024-5.

Background

2. The Service consists of:
 - 1xEmotionally based School Avoidance Learning Mentor (FTE 1:0)
 - 1xEmotionally based School Avoidance Learning Mentor (FTE 0:8)
3. The core offer to pupils, families and schools is:
 - Self - esteem work to help build confidence and resilience of the pupil.
 - Transition support
 - Circle time
 - Introducing visual aids to support routines at home and at school.
 - Reintroduction to school strategies to help pupils overcome fears and anxieties.
 - Thrive intervention.
 - Emotional Literacy intervention to help a pupil express their feelings.
 - Signposting to other organisations that may be helpful to the pupil, family or school.

This offer targets those pupils that are:

In receipt of home and hospital tuition and transitioning back into their educational provision if it felt this would be in their best interests. This support is time limited for a period of up to 4 weeks.

Still attending school but attendance is a concern and there is compelling evidence that this is due to emotionally based school avoidance. This level of support may only include providing schools with advice, support and guidance to support the pupil to remain in their educational setting but may also include some 1:1 support. This can be for up to 12 weeks but is usually for a much shorter period. Again, full engagement from the pupil, family and school is expected.

Not attending school and there is compelling evidence that this is due to emotionally based school avoidance supported by appropriate medical evidence. This support is for up to 12 weeks and it is expected that there is full engagement from the pupil, family and school.

Allocation of an EBSA Learning Mentors continues to be via a school led referral to Education Inclusion Panel (EIP) which is multi-disciplinary Panel that meets monthly.

The core offer includes regular meetings between the EBSA Learning Mentor, pupils, parents and schools. This includes formal meetings at the start of any support, then at 6 and 12 weeks.

4. Funding for the Service is through de-delegation and is available to all mainstream maintained Primary schools and our one maintained Secondary. Academies can buy into the service. Currently 7 out of the 9 Secondary Academies buy into it as well as River Tyne Academy. 6 out of the 18 Primary Academies buy into the Service.
5. We hypothesise that most pupils with emotionally based school avoidance may present as absent due to 'illness.' Although a blunt tool the published DfE attendance census data (autumn term 2022-spring term 2023) indicates that this is the main reason for absence across Gateshead schools.
6. Coupled with the change in the primary reason given by parents who chose to electively home educate in 2022-2023 as the mental health of their child, this illustrates a picture of some of our pupils struggling in ways that we may not have seen traditionally.
7. This is recognised by government through the DfE publication of Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance effective practice examples (February 2023) as well as the updated guidance Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges (June 2021) the November 2022 link to Public Health's Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing - A whole school or college approach

September 2022-July 2023

8. 10. There were 55 appropriate referrals made to Education Inclusion Panel for EBSA Learning Mentor Support in 2022-2023. Added to the 15 pupil cases carried forward from the end of 2021-2022 gave a total of 70 pupil cases across the year.
9. EBSA active cases at any point in 2022/2023

Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6
	1	1	1	2	6	6

Year 7	Year 8	Year9	Year 10	Year 11
10	9	15	13	6

10. 12. EBSA cases closed at any point in 2022/2023

Attending school	Allocated tutor	Non-engagement	Other
17	9	1	2

11. The service was staffed by 0:8 member of staff between September 2022 and February 2023 due the second full time member of staff leaving post on 31st August 2022. This post remained vacant until the School Forum decision in early 2023 to continue to fund EBSA. A second, fulltime, member of staff was appointed in February 2023 and took up post in March 2023.

Proposal

12. Based on the support provided to Gateshead schools the buyback values for schools will be set at £1.30 per pupil for primary schools and £2.60 per pupil for secondary schools and increase of £0.10 per primary pupil and £0.20 per secondary pupil.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that Schools Forum ratifies the dedelegation and buyback proposals for the EBSA service for the financial year 2024/25 at £1.30 per pupil for primary schools and £2.60 per pupil for secondary schools.

For the following reason(s):

14. To enable the EBSA service provision to all schools that financially support the service.

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