

Title of Report: **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Learning Mentors**

Report of: **Helen Fergusson, Strategic Director, Children's Social Care and Lifelong Learning**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Schools Forum with an update on the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Learning Mentor service so they can consider de-delegation for the financial year 2025-2026.

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 service is to promote pupils to attend well so they can progress academically, socially and emotionally. This is by offering intervention, strategies and cascade good practice to reduce the emotionally based barriers.
4. This can include but is not limited to:
 - Thrive intervention
 - Self-esteem work to help build confidence and resilience.
 - Transition support between phases; classes and back into school after a period of elective home education.
 - Reintroduction to school strategies to help pupils overcome fears and anxieties.
 - Emotional Literacy intervention to help a pupil express their feelings.
 - Signposting to other organizations/services that may be helpful to the pupil and family in consultation with schools.
 - Regular meetings between the EBSA Learning Mentor, pupils, parents and schools and a written report at the end of the support to summarize support and offer any additional advice.

5. The service is focused on those pupils that:

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 is usually for a 6-week period.

Not attending school and there is compelling evidence that this is due to emotionally based school avoidance supported by appropriate evidence. This support is for up to 6 weeks.

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 up to 4 weeks.

Full commitment is needed by the pupil, family and school when EBSA is allocated.

6. Allocation of an ESBA Learning Mentors continues to be via a school led referral to Education Inclusion Panel (EIP) which is multi-disciplinary panel that meets monthly.
7. 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 through Northeast Services to Schools. Last academic year 7 out of the 9 Secondary Academies bought into this service and River Tyne Academy. 7 out of the 18 Primary Academies also bought into the Service. This year the uptake has been reduced, and we currently have 2 secondary Academies and 1 primary Academy that have purchased the service.
8. We hypothesise that most pupils with emotionally based school avoidance may present as absent due to 'illness.'
9. Coupled with the change in the primary reason given by parents who chose to electively home educate as the mental health of their child or needs not being sufficiently well met, this illustrates a picture of some of our pupils struggling in ways that we may not have seen traditionally.
10. This is recognized 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 (update May 2024) and Public Health's Promoting children and young

11. people's mental health and wellbeing - A whole school or college approach (update Nov 2023)

2023-2024

12. 30 pupils were carried forward from 2022-2023 caseload.

There were a further 87 referrals made to Education Inclusion Panel for EBSA Learning Mentor Support in 2023-2024. 22 of these referrals were not appropriate. Of the 65 appropriate referrals 22 pupils (34%) were identified as having SEN and 5 pupils (8%) had an EHCP.

13. Appropriate cases referred 2023-2024

Reception	Year1	Year2	Year3	Year4	Year5	Year6
	1	1	5	3	6	6

Year 7	Year 8	Year9	Year 10	Year 11
11	12	8	9	3

12. EBSA cases closed at any point in 2023-2024 (87)

Attending school/improved attendance	Allocated H+H	Non-engagement	Other
41 (47%)	22 (25%)	14 (16%)	10 (11%)

Proposal

14. Based on the support provided to Gateshead schools the buyback values for schools will be set at £1.50 per pupil for primary schools (2024/25 £1.30) and £3.00 per pupil for secondary schools (£2.60 2024/25).

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that Schools Forum agrees the dedelegation and buyback proposals for the EBSA service for the financial year 2025/26 at £1.50 per pupil for primary schools and £3.00 per pupil for secondary schools.

For the following reason(s):

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

CONTACT: Julie McDowell

Ext. 8644

