

Education Welfare Service.

1. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) undertakes the Local Authority's statutory duty to ensure children registered at our schools attend on a regular basis (as per sections 437 – 447 of the 1996 Education act and subsequent amendments). Education Welfare Officers are allocated to schools that trade with the service, and will undertake to improve individual pupil attendance through casework. Where this is unsuccessful, cases are progressed to consideration of enforcement actions in order to persuade parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. This includes the issuing of penalty notices and court action.
2. EWS offers schools advice and guidance in relation to legislation and best practice to improve overall school attendance and to improve the attendance of individual pupils. EWS undertakes missing pupil, non-starter and non-returner enquiries and provides guidance in relation to deleting pupils from registers. EWS manages the formal enforcement process in cases where attendance fails to improve. This service is offered to all Haringey schools whether trading or not.
3. Specifically, EWS conducts 'missing child' enquiries prior to deletion from registers; investigates reasons for absence and undertakes agreed actions accordingly; undertakes safeguarding home visits in relation to children missing from school; and home visits to investigate reasons for absence and works with schools to offer preventative early help casework. Additionally, EWS will provide information, advice and guidance in relation to deletions from registers in order to remain compliant with legislation; provide information, advice and guidance in relation to use of register codes in order to remain compliant with legislation; provide support and advice in relation to school strategies to address specific periods of absence; attend professionals' meetings (including child protection conferences) as and when required; work to improve whole school attendance, including: participation at whole school assemblies and parents evenings; 'late gate' checks to address punctuality problems; parent induction presentations for nursery and reception years and early intervention attendance clinics. EWS also offers whole school data analysis and action planning with periodic reviews; supporting schools to implement whole school attendance and absence policies and procedures; training sessions for specific attendance staff, whole-school training and support training for governors and pre-Ofsted support.

EWS Impact on improvements in attendance:

4. School attendance in England has improved in recent years, and this is mirrored in the attendance of Haringey's schools. The most recent DfE pupil absence data:

Autumn and Spring terms 2011-2012:
Primary schools nationally: 95.0% attendance
Secondary schools nationally: 94.3% attendance

5. Attendance has improved to:

Autumn and Spring terms 2015-2016:
Primary schools nationally: 95.6% attendance
Secondary schools nationally: 95.0% attendance

6. Compared with the most recent data for Haringey:

Autumn and Spring terms 2014-2015:
Haringey primary schools: 95.7%
Haringey secondary schools: 95.0%

Potential consequence if Schools Forum chose not to de-delegate EWS funding:

7. Reduced funding for the service would necessarily result in experienced EWOs leaving the council, which would result in a loss of expertise and experience, and would necessarily reduce the amount and range of work undertaken by the remaining EWOs on behalf of schools. This would have an impact on individual pupil attendance, as EWS focus would have to be on fulfilling the LA's statutory duties rather than on casework and support to individual families. This would have a knock-on impact on whole school attendance levels, in addition to a negative impact on the LA's ability to safeguard vulnerable children.