

## POLICY BRIEF

Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

16 February 2022



***The information within this Brief is correct at the time of approval for publication and contains relevant announcements made by Government and its departments and regulators.***

### **Consultations and Calls for Evidence**

#### 1. Consultation Outcome - [Reforming how local authority school improvement functions are funded](#)

In this consultation the DfE wanted to gather views current arrangements and about local authorities' school improvement functions and how they are funded.

Plymouth City Council responded to this consultation which closed on 26 November 2021.

#### 2. Consultation Outcome - [Children not in school](#)

The Department for Education's response to the children not in school consultation, which sought proposals on:

- a local authority register of children not attending school
- support for home-educating families

This consultation closed in June 2019. It was a follow-up to the consultation and call for evidence on elective home education held by DfE in 2018. The consultation response provides details on DfE's commitment to a form of local authority administered register for children not in school.

The consultation response outlines intentions to legislate at the earliest opportunity to implement a duty on:

- local authorities to:
  - keep a register of all children of compulsory age in their area who are not registered pupils at a state or independent school
  - provide support to home educating families
- parents of children to supply information to such a register
- proprietors of defined settings to supply information on relevant children.

These proposals form part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda and have been confirmed within the published white paper. Full Press release can be found [here](#).

#### 3. [School attendance: improving consistency of support](#)

The Department for Education have launched a new consultation on proposals to improve the consistency of school attendance. They are seeking views on the following measures:

- Requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools on attendance management and improvement.
- Guidance on the expectations of LA attendance services.
- A clearer more consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence.
- Bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state funded schools.

Consultation closes at 11.45pm on 28 February 2022.

#### 4. [Keeping children safe in education: proposed revisions 2022](#)

This consultation is seeking views on revisions to [Keeping children safe in education](#), the statutory guidance that sets out what schools and colleges should do, and the legal duties with which they must comply, to keep children safe.

Consultation closes at 11.59pm on 11 March 2022.

#### 5. [Revised behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusions guidance](#)

Open consultation - In response to the [Timpson review of school exclusions](#), the government committed to working with sector experts to publish clearer, more consistent guidance. The aim of this guidance is to support schools to:

- create positive behaviour cultures
- ensure suspensions and permanent exclusions are conducted in a lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair way

Consultation closes at 10pm on 31 March 2022.

Date of publication	Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
All relevant guidance relating to schools, early years and childcare providers, further education and colleges and Children's Social Care providers has been updated in line with the government's Plan B announcement on 19 January 2022.	
Published 17 November 2021	<p><a href="#">Government funds new tech in the fight against online child abuse</a></p> <p>The government will fund new innovative technology to help stop the spread of child sexual abuse material on end-to-end encrypted social media and online messaging platforms. The five projects - including tech companies in Edinburgh, Poole, St Albans and London - are the winners of the Safety Tech Challenge Fund, which aims to encourage the tech industry to find practical solutions to combat child sexual exploitation and abuse online, without impacting people's rights to privacy and data protection in their communications.</p> <p><b>Parliamentary update:</b> The government's forthcoming Online Safety Bill will transform how illegal and harmful online content is dealt with. It will place a new duty of care on social media and other online companies towards their UK users. The Draft Online Safety Bill has undergone legislative scrutiny and the <a href="#">Joint Committee</a> reported its findings on 14 December 2021.</p>
Published 19 November 2021	<p><a href="#">New rules to drive down cost of school uniform for families</a></p> <p>Schools will need to follow statutory guidance which requires them to make sure uniform is affordable for all. The Department for Education <a href="#">cost of school uniform guidance</a> means schools in England must ensure that school uniform costs are reasonable, and parents get the best value for money.</p>
Published 26 November	<p><a href="#">New measures to reduce pupil absence</a></p> <p>Government attendance advisors to start work helping local areas and school trusts put new plans in place to increase attendance. As part of the Education Secretary's commitment to make school attendance his top priority, new expert</p>

	<p>attendance advisers with decades of first-hand experience are to begin work to reduce pupil absence.</p> <p>They will work with local authorities and multi-academy trusts who have been identified as having potential to benefit from the support and who want to use the expertise of the advisers to help re-engage persistently absent pupils.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Government has launched a consultation in relation to addressing school absences – see link in consultation section above.</p> <p>The Secretary of State has signalled his intention for attendance to be a key component of his upcoming Schools White Paper and we welcome the DfE consultation on the proposals. Plymouth has not been identified as an area for concern, however attendance and inclusion are a high priority and recognised as a key area of LA improvement, although our attendance during the pandemic has been better than the national average.</p> <p>We have a clear vision of improving school attendance of all pupils with a particular focus on the attendance of vulnerable learners. Attendance and inclusion is recognised as key to the school improvement and inclusion is a key area for the city and as such is within the scope of the Inclusion Strategy Board and A Bright Futures Plan.</p> <p>The Inclusion Strategy Board monitor and interrogate local and national data, feedback from schools and intelligence from partner agencies to develop an LA wide strategy to reduce absence and monitor impact (including joining up with early help, children’s social care and other LA services). We will use data to pivot resources towards specific schools/cohorts/wards or pupil groups where the data suggests the most significant issues. Data sharing agreements with schools will enable the LA to collate anonymised aggregated information which will be fed into dashboard reports, allowing for key KPI’s to be generated at a school, MAT and city wide basis. This data will be used by education professionals to fulfil their duties to fully understand the challenges and issues facing the provision of education within Plymouth and ensure that any improvement plans are based on the most complete and up to date information. This data will support the development of traded and core services and facilitate targeted interventions by the LA.</p> <p>A data sharing agreement is now in place with secondary schools and the next phase will be for the same at primary phase.</p>
Published 11 January 2022	<p><a href="#"><u>School recovery strategies: year 1 findings</u></a></p> <p>Schools’ approaches to education recovery in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This report details the interim findings from a mixed methods study which aims to understand how primary and secondary schools in England have responded to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and what further support they need.</p>
Published 19 January 2022	<p><a href="#"><u>The Family Strategy, a new 10-year plan recognising the unique nature of military life and setting out bespoke support for service families has been published</u></a></p>

	<p>The strategy will deliver lasting, cultural change over the next decade as it brings together innovative policies on health and wellbeing, education and career support. The Family Strategy recognises the exceptional demands placed upon the UK Armed Forces and their families and focuses on health and wellbeing, learning and childcare, developing partners' careers alongside the serviceperson and career management sensitive to the needs of the family. It is based on recommendations made in a report by Andrew Selous MP titled 'Living in our Shoes: Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families' published last year.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> The new 10-year plan will seek to influence the work of Plymouth's Armed Forces Covenant, specifically in relation to the Young People and Families Theme Group. The group are currently reviewing their priority actions and Terms of Reference which will look to reflect the key points of the new Family Strategy.</p>												
<p>Published 24 January 2022</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>More support for schools and students as plan B comes to an end</u></a></p> <p>New multi-million-pound funding from NHS England will enable all schools to fully support the in-school vaccination programme, and air cleaning units will be provided in all classrooms and teaching spaces that need them, the Education Secretary has announced.</p> <p>The Department for Education is to distribute a total of £8 million in funding from NHS England to support secondary schools with the vitally important in-school vaccination programme for young people – hosting NHS vaccination teams and passing on materials about vaccination to further boost protection.</p> <p>This comes as over 50% of 12-15-year-olds – over 1.5 million people – have now had at least one dose of the vaccine. The government is also committing to deliver up to 9,000 air cleaning units to early years, schools and colleges across the country to improve ventilation in classrooms – up to 1,000 more than originally promised.</p> <p><b>12 – 15 yr Vaccinations Update:</b> 12 – 15yr old vaccination programme is managed by NHS England but the LA work closely with them to promote and ensure data accuracy. Latest figures show;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="411 1541 1321 1653"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">12 – 15 yr Vaccinations</th> <th colspan="2">16 – 17 yr Vaccinations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>31 Jan 2022</td> <td>1<sup>st</sup> dose – 57%</td> <td>31 Jan 2022</td> <td>1<sup>st</sup> dose – 72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2<sup>nd</sup> dose – 16%</td> <td></td> <td>2<sup>nd</sup> dose – 47%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>(Figures rounded to the nearest % point)</i></p>	12 – 15 yr Vaccinations		16 – 17 yr Vaccinations		31 Jan 2022	1 <sup>st</sup> dose – 57%	31 Jan 2022	1 <sup>st</sup> dose – 72%		2 <sup>nd</sup> dose – 16%		2 <sup>nd</sup> dose – 47%
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<p>Published 27 January 2022</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>94% of secondary schools provide free period products to students</u></a></p> <p>New data on the government's free period product scheme shows schools and colleges stepping up to make sure no student has to miss lessons because of their period. The data shows the value of products being ordered increased by almost a quarter (23%) in 2021 to £3.4 million compared with £2.8 million in 2020. The number of environmentally friendly or reusable products ordered increased from less than a third in 2020 (30%) to almost half (48%) of all products in 2021.</p>												

<p>Published 01 February 2022</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Government outlines ambitious plans to level up activities for young people</u></a> Government commits to National Youth Guarantee backed by £560 million funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Youth Investment Fund will deliver up to 300 new and refurbished youth facilities in the most deprived parts of England.</li> <li>• Funding will tackle youth group waiting lists and offer The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to all state secondary schools in England</li> <li>• National Citizen Service receives funding to ensure thousands more young people are 'world ready and work ready'</li> </ul> <p>This announcement is part of the Levelling Up White Paper and will ensure young people in the most deprived parts of England have access to thousands of new activities. Youth services across 45 Local Authorities and around 600 district wards in the most deprived parts of England will be eligible to apply for the £378 million Youth Investment Fund.</p>
<p>Published 01 February 2022</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Package to transform education and opportunities for most disadvantaged</u></a> Skills, schools and families at the heart of government plans to improve public services and level up left behind areas. 55 areas have been selected as Education Investment Areas in the Levelling Up White Paper.</p> <p>In these new 'Education Investment Areas', the Department for Education will offer retention payments to help schools keep the best teachers in the highest priority subjects. These areas will be prioritised as the location for new specialist sixth-form free schools where there is limited provision to ensure talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the highest standard of education this country offers.</p> <p>Schools in these areas that have been judged less than Good in successive Ofsted inspections could be moved into strong multi-academy trusts, to attract more support and the best teachers. This will be subject to a consultation in the spring.</p> <p>The paper will set a new national mission to ensure that 90% of children leaving primary school in England are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths by 2030. In 2019, just 65% of pupils met all 3 standards, with the proportion substantially varying across the country. Schools in the Education Investment Areas will also be given support to address wider issues.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Plymouth has been selected as one of the Education Investment Areas alongside its neighbouring Local Authority, Cornwall.</p>
<p>Published 01 February 2022</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Around 1 in 10 children starting school at risk of measles</u></a> A new campaign warns parents and guardians of the serious risk to children's health from measles, reminding people to ensure their children are protected by 2 doses of MMR vaccine.</p> <p>The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the NHS are calling on parents and guardians to ensure their children are up to date with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine, and all other routine childhood immunisations, as</p>

	<p>the latest data shows MMR vaccination uptake has dropped to the lowest level in a decade.</p> <p>Since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, in March 2020, there has been a significant drop in the numbers getting their children vaccinated against MMR and other childhood vaccines at the right time.</p> <p><b>Update:</b> Plymouth sits above the England and South West average for uptake of the MMR vaccine.</p>
<b>Ofsted Announcements</b>	
<p>Published 07 December 2021</p>	<p><a href="#">Ofsted Annual Report: We must do all we can to make sure this generation is not denied its opportunities</a></p> <p>The Chief Inspector's Annual Report says that nearly all children and learners have been affected by the pandemic, with long-term consequences unknown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good, well-structured, face-to-face education will help most children catch up</li> <li>• Daily routines, and the return of sport and extra-curricular activities, will improve children's mental and physical health</li> <li>• Those requiring specialist care and support must not be left wanting</li> <li>• Improvements that were in progress before the pandemic need to continue and other reforms must be taken forward urgently.</li> </ul>
<p>Published 13 January 2022</p>	<p><a href="#">Supported accommodation: Education Secretary's letter to Ofsted</a></p> <p>Letter from the Secretary of State for Education to Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, formally requesting Ofsted to register and inspect providers of supported accommodation for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17.</p> <p>On 13 December 2021 Amanda Spielman responded to the letter from the Secretary of State for Education that asked Ofsted to register and inspect providers of supported accommodation for young people.</p> <p>The Chief Inspector confirmed that Ofsted would develop and implement a new system of regulation and inspection for providers of supported accommodation for looked-after children and care leavers aged 16 and 17.</p>
<p>Published 19 January 2022</p>	<p><a href="#">Care leavers feel they left care too early. Ofsted finds</a></p> <p>The report, 'Ready or not: care leavers' views of preparing to leave care', brings to light the lack of choice many care leavers experienced: some felt they had to leave care 'whether they were ready or not'. Local authorities are required to prepare children for leaving care but this report finds that care leavers' experiences of this preparation have been varied, and many were unaware of the support they are entitled to.</p>

### ECSC Scrutiny updates from previous meeting

An update was requested from the previous meeting held on 17 November 2021, in respect of the following government announcement;

Care leavers and disadvantaged pupils to benefit from £126 million investment in new laptops and tablets

Care leavers, children with a social worker and children arriving from Afghanistan will receive devices to enable them to access education and support.

**Update:** Official government figures show that for Plymouth **2054** devices (laptops and tablets) and **143** routers have been delivered or dispatched to the Local Authority or directly to LA-maintained schools since the start of the scheme.

**The following information was circulated to committee members upon request after the 17 November meeting;**

Schools' views: benefits and obstacles to joining academy trusts

This research report presents the results of a survey designed to understand the experiences and perceptions of schools about multi-academy trusts (MATs).

This research was designed to answer 3 key research questions:

1. what are the experiences of schools or academies that have joined a MAT in the last couple of years?
2. why have maintained schools decided not to convert to join a MAT?
3. why have standalone academies not joined or formed a MAT?

It presents the difference between the experience of being within a MAT and perceptions of what being in a MAT would be like.