

Exclusions and Suspensions Deep Dive

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1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. The numbers of children being permanently excluded or suspended from schools in Plymouth has increased. The most vulnerable children are overrepresented within the data set. Evidence suggests that excluded children have poorer outcomes and that exclusions have a detrimental effect on their life chances. It places children at a higher risk of becoming not engaged in education, employment or training post 16 and/or a victim or perpetrator of crime.
- 1.2. The ambition of Plymouth's 'Bright Future' plan is for all our children to live full and happy lives. The plan recognises the importance of the local area partnership working together to ensure that children are supported by a system which works seamlessly to spot difficulties early, responds quickly and effectively, and makes sure that help is there for as long as it is needed.
- 1.3. The learning from this paper is being used across the local area partnership to plan and deliver collaborative, evidenced based approaches, which prevent exclusion and support our collective ambition for children.

2.0. Permanent exclusions and suspensions

- 2.1. There has been a significant rise in the rate of permanent exclusion and suspensions across schools in Plymouth. In academic year 2022/23 the rate of permanent exclusion in Plymouth was 0.22%; this was higher than the regional (0.13%) and national (0.11%) benchmarks. In academic year 2023/24 the rate of permanent exclusion in Plymouth increased to 0.3% (appendix 1). The increasing trend is reflected nationally however, permanent exclusions in Plymouth are rising at a faster rate than national and regional benchmarks.
- 2.2. In academic year 2022/23 the rate of suspensions in Plymouth was 13.2%, this was higher than regional (11.7%) and national (9.3%) benchmarks. In academic year 2023/24 the rate of suspension in Plymouth increased to 18.7% (appendix 2). Whilst the increasing trend is reflected nationally; suspensions in Plymouth are rising at a faster rate than national and regional benchmarks.

3.0. Permanent exclusion and suspensions in Plymouth

- 3.1. In the academic year 2023/24, 114 children were permanently excluded from Plymouth schools. This is an increase of 26.31% (30) from 2022/23; and 47.36% (53) in 2021/22 (appendix 3). In 2019-2020 and 2020/21 there was a reduction in the rate of permanent exclusion which was reflected nationally in response to the pandemic. Following the pandemic, the rates of permanent exclusion in Plymouth have risen significantly year on year.

- 3.2.** In the academic year 2023/24, 1998 children received one or more suspension. This is an increase of 9.96% (185) when compared to 2022/23; and 21.52% (430) in 2021/22. Whilst the rate of the number of children being suspended has started to fall, the number of suspensions being issued has increased significantly; this means that suspensions are being used as a sanction more frequently. In 2023/24 there were 7285 suspensions in Plymouth (Appendix 4); this accounted for 11300.5 days of lost learning which impacts on rates of attendance in school.
- 3.3.** Plymouth City Council is leading schools to develop inclusive practice and approaches to create the conditions for success and inclusion in schools. This is being achieved through a combination of System Change Projects which include priority 3 of the SEND Improvement Strategy, the Place Based Working Group and Plymouth City Council system leadership projects. Priority area 3 of the SEND Improvement Strategy is focused on eliminating permanent exclusions for children with an Education, Health and Care plan and Strand 1 of the 'place-based' plan focuses on developing a 'belonging framework' so that parents and children feel an increasing sense of being welcome and included in their school communities.
- 4.0. What we are doing well**
- 4.1.** We are confident that our arrangements for the oversight and monitoring of education for permanently excluded children is effective.
- 4.2.** We are confident in our commissioning arrangements and ensure that children receive an education from day 6 of their permanent exclusion. Any child placed in unregistered provision is assigned a local authority caseworker who is the named point of contact for the child, family and professional team. The caseworker is assigned until the child is on the roll and attending a registered school. Risk management measures are in place to ensure oversight from the Director of Education and Director of Children's Services.
- 4.3.** We have embedded arrangements for supporting children who have been permanently excluded to return to school as quickly as possible. The Fair Access Panel meets on a monthly basis, all permanently excluded children are allocated a school place to set the medium to long term plan for the child. This plan is developed in partnership with the child and their family.
- 4.4.** All parents of permanently excluded children are supported to complete an in-year application for a new mainstream school. This supports the medium to long term trajectory and plan for the child. Any permanently excluded child who does not need an interim alternative provision is placed at a new mainstream school from day six of their permanent exclusion.
- 4.5.** When the LA are informed that a child has been permanently excluded or that a school is considering a permanent exclusion, the head teacher is contacted to discuss the decision. In 2023/24 this resulted in the prevention of 43 permanent exclusions.

- 4.6.** If a child has an Education Health and Care Plan, the 0-25 SEND Team are notified of the permanent exclusion. The 0-25 SEND Team work with the school and the family to try and avoid a permanent exclusion and to secure appropriate provision for the child.
- 4.7.** Since the introduction of a new escalation procedure for primary children who are permanently excluded; all permanent exclusions have been withdrawn by the Headteacher. Plymouth City Council has worked with the school and the family to find an alternative placement.
- 4.8.** Monthly performance and practice meetings ensure robust oversight and reporting to Directors and Heads of Service against Key Performance Indicators. This informs strategic planning and the development of practice standards across Children's Services.
- 4.9.** Monthly risk management has been introduced to enable the Director of Children's Service to have oversight of any permanently excluded child who is without suitable day 6 provision.
- 4.10.** Weekly meetings are held with ACE Schol Plymouth to ensure that day 6 admission arrangements have been made for each permanently excluded child. Children are tracked and monitored in partnership with ACE to ensure that there is a clear forward plan for each child.
- 4.11.** All schools are encouraged to contact the LA should they believe a child is at risk of permanent exclusion. Daily triage meetings take place with schools to support them to explore all avenues to ensure that any permanent exclusion is avoided. Whenever a triage meeting concerns a child with specific vulnerabilities, information is shared with the professional team around the child to ensure the right support, at the right time. Last year 43 permanent exclusions were prevented by working in this way.

5.0. Pupil characteristics

- 5.1.** 114 children were permanently excluded from Plymouth schools in 2023/24. The permanently excluded cohort is split at 68.42% (78) male and 31.58% (36) female (appendix 3). 1998 children were suspended from a Plymouth school in 2023/24. Of the cohort 756 (37.84%) were female. 1242 (62.16%) were male (appendix 4).
- 5.1.1.** The top three reasons for females to be permanently excluded were:
- Persistent disruptive behaviour (11)
 - Physical assault against a child or adult (10)
 - Drugs and alcohol related (less than 10)
- 5.1.2.** The top three reasons for males to be permanently excluded were:
- Physical assault against child or adult (25)
 - Persistent disruptive behaviour (23)
 - Drug and alcohol related (11)
 - Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult (11)
- 5.2.** Of the 114 children who were permanently excluded:
- 59 (51.75%) were eligible for Free School Meals.

- 59 (51.75%) were eligible for Pupil Premium.
- 56 (49.12%) have received one or more suspensions.
- 24 (21.05%) attended more than two secondary schools.
- 20 (17.54%) attended more than two primary schools.
- 45 (39.47%) had one or more episodes of part time timetable.
- 23 (20.18%) had one or more episodes of elective home education.
- 13 (11.40%) had one or more Child Missing Education episode.
- 56 (49.12%) require SEN Support.
- Less than 10 have an Education health and Care Plan.
- 93 (81.58%) were known to Children Social Care in the last 6 years.
- 68 (59.65%) have had more than one episode of Child In Need.
- 14 (12.28%) are currently on a Child Protection Plan.
- 11 (9.65%) have had more than one episode of Child Protection.
- Less than 10 are currently on a Child in Need Plan.
- 62 (54.39%) were persistently absent from school.
- 25 (21.93%) were severely absent from school.

5.3. Of the 1998 children who received a suspension:

- 995 (49.8%) were eligible for Pupil Premium.
- 994 (49.75%) were eligible for Free School Meals.
- 1432 (71.67%) have received more than one suspension.
- 1148 (57.46%) were persistently absent from school.
- 299 (14.96%) were severely absent from school.
- 71 (3.55%) had one or more Child Missing Education episode.
- 780 (39.04%) have been registered at more than one primary school.
- 516 (25.83%) have been registered at more than one secondary school.
- 382 (19.12%) had one or more episodes of part time timetable.
- 191 (9.56%) had one or more episodes of elective home education.
- 790 (39.54%) SEN Support
- 237 (11.86%) have an Education Health and Care Plan.
- 1104 (55.25%) were known to Children Social Care in the last 6 years.
- 1076 (53.85%) have had more than one episode of Child In Need.
- 358 (17.92%) have had more than one episode of Child Protection.
- 89 (4.45%) are currently on a Child in Need Plan.
- 57 (2.85%) are currently on a Child Protection Plan.

6.0. Ethnicity

- 6.1.** 99 (85.96%) of permanently excluded children identify as white British or white English. Based on the current data set there are no emerging themes in respect of Black and Minority Ethnic cohort.
- 6.2.** 1738 (86.99%) of the children suspended from school identify as white British or white English. Based on the current data set there are no emerging themes in respect of the Black and Minority Ethnic cohort.

7.0. Permanent exclusion and suspensions by year group

- 7.1.** In Plymouth, children who are suspended or permanently excluded from school are likely to have special educational needs and/or a disability; have been known to Children's Social Care; live in a neighbourhood or locality with high levels of deprivation and had multiple suspensions.
- 7.2.** In 2023/24 the highest rates of permanent exclusions from primary schools were in years one, two and four (three permanent exclusions across each of the year groups) (Appendix 5). Children from black and minority ethnic groups are overrepresented within the data set and represent three (21.23%) of the primary aged children who were permanently excluded. Physical violence is named as the reason for the permanent exclusion in 8 (57.14%) of the cases.

7.2.1. Of the 14 primary aged children who were permanently excluded:

- Less than 10 are from a Black and Minority Ethnic Group.
- 10 (71.43%) are eligible for Pupil Premium.
- 10 (71.43%) are eligible for Free School Meals.

- Eight (57.14%) live in the north locality.

- 12 (85.71%) had two or more suspensions.
- Less than 10 were permanently excluded for physical assault against an adult.
- Less than 10 were permanently excluded for persistent disruptive behaviour.
- Less than 10 were permanently excluded for physical assault against a pupil.
- Less than 10 were permanently excluded for verbal abuse/threatening an adult.

- Less than 10 had been on a reduced timetable.

- Ten (71.43%) require Special Educational Needs Support.
- Less than 10 have an Education Health and Care Plan.

- 11 (78.56%) were known to Children's Social Care in the last six years.
- Less than 10 have had two or more episodes of child in need.
- Less than 10 are currently on a child protection plan (sexual abuse).
- Less than 10 are currently on a child in need plan.
- Less than 10 have had two episodes of child protection.

7.3. In 2023/24 the highest rates of suspension from primary school were in Key Stage 2 (appendix 6) where the likelihood of a child being suspended increased year on year.

7.3.1. Of the 296 children who were suspended from a Plymouth primary school:

- 118 (39.86%) live in the west locality.
- 78 (26.35%) live in the north locality.
- 26 (8.78%) live in the east locality.
- 56 (18.92%) live in the south locality.

- 180 (60.81%) are eligible for pupil premium.
- 178 (60.14%) are eligible for free school meals.

- 190 (64.19%) have been suspended twice or more.
- 129 (43.53%) have been on a part time timetable.

- 162 (54.73%) require Special Educational Needs support.
- 86 (29.05%) have an Education Health and Care Plan.

- 150 (50.68%) have been known to Children's Social Care within the last 6 years.
- 124 (41.89%) have had two or more episodes of child in need.
- 20 (6.76%) have had two or more episodes of child protection.
- 20 (6.76%) are currently on a child in need plan.
- 14 (4.73%) children are currently on a child protection plan.

7.4. Plymouth City Council has developed robust procedures to prevent primary permanent exclusions. The Director for Education and Director of Children's Services are notified using a 'Need to Know' escalation procedure. Since its implementation in the summer term 2024 there have been no primary permanent exclusions.

7.5. Strand 4 of the 'place-based' plan for the 2024/25 academic year is the development of an early language acquisition project across the city. The aim of this work, based in the primary phase, will be to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs to develop their communication skills. The intended outcome will be a reduction in the number of children at risk of permanent exclusion, subject to part-time timetables and suspension as a result of improving children's ability to understand and communicate their feelings to key adults.

7.6. Once children leave primary school and transition into year 7 the likelihood of a child being permanently excluded increases significantly. The risk continues to increase as children move through the year groups at secondary school and peaks in year 10 (appendix 5). In 2023/24 the highest rates of permanent exclusions from secondary schools were in years 8 (22), 9 (25) and 10 (30). Of the secondary aged cohort of children who were permanently excluded in 2023/24 the top three reasons for permanent exclusions were persistent disruptive behaviour (30), drug and alcohol related (19) and physical assault against a pupil (16).

7.6.1. Of the 100 children who were permanently excluded from secondary school:

- 39 (39%) live in the west locality.
- 31 (31%) live in the north locality.
- Eight (8%) live in the east locality.
- 15 (15%) live in the south locality.

- 49 (49%) are eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- 49 (49%) are eligible for Free School Meals.
- Less than 10 were from a Black or Minority Ethnic group.

- 24 (24%) have attended three or more secondary schools.
- 16 (16%) have attended more three or more primary schools.

- 81 (81%) have had two or more suspensions.
- Less than 10 have been permanently excluded twice.

- 23 (23%) have had one or more episode of elective home education.
- 31 (31%) have had one or more episode of part time timetable.

- Less than 10 have an Education Health and Care Plan
- 46 (46%) require Special Educational Needs support.

- 82 (82%) have been known to Children's Social Care within the last 6 years.
- 62 (62%) have had two or more episodes of child in need.
- 10 (10%) have had two or more episodes of child protection.
- Less than 10 children are currently on a child in need plan.
- 13 (13%) children are currently on a child protection plan.
- Less than 10 children were previously a child in care.
- Less than 10 children are currently recorded as being a child in care.

7.7. In addition to the risk of permanent exclusion, the risk of suspension increases significantly when a child transitions into year 7. In 2023/24 the highest rates of suspension from secondary schools were in years 8 (340), 9 (412) and 10 (410) (Appendix 6). Of the 1702 secondary aged children who were suspended in 2023/24:

- 566 (33.25%) live in the west locality.
- 466 (27.38%) live in the north locality.
- 256 (15.04%) live in the east locality.
- 289 (16.98%) live in the south locality.

- 775 (45.53%) are eligible for the Pupil Premium.
- 766 (45.01%) are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 74 (4.35%) were from a Black or Minority Ethnic group.

- 216 (12.69%) have attended more three or more primary schools.
- 114 (6.70%) have attended three or more secondary schools.

- 184 (10.81%) have had one or more episode of elective home education.
- 253 (14.86%) have had one or more episode of part time timetable.
- 1242 (72.97%) have had two or more suspensions.

- 628 (36.9%) require Special Educational Needs support.
- 151 (8.87%) have an Education Health and Care Plan

- 954 (56.05%) have been known to Children's Social Care within the last 6 years.
- 710 (41.72%) have had two or more episodes of child in need.
- 107 (6.29%) have had two or more episodes of child protection.
- 69 (4.05%) children are currently on a child in need plan.
- 13 (0.76 %) children are currently on a child protection plan.

7.8. The Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) resource has been co-produced with families and partners across education, health and social care. It includes information and resources to support schools in their work with a specific chapter on collaborating with families. The resource clearly identifies what schools must do support all children and young people. The universal provision described in the OAP is the offer created by schools to ensure they are inclusive by design and consistently work to reduce as many barriers as possible. This clearly allows schools and professionals to then identify where a child is making progress with a consistent universal offer and where extra targeted provision will need be given in a mainstream environment. Evaluation taken from the OAP launch in June 2024 saw 83% of attendees agreeing that the resource will have a positive impact on their inclusive approaches. The remaining 18% agreed maybe, with some time to digest the information available. The impact of the OAP will be evaluated through applications for targeted funding; feedback from the educational psychology services and specialist teachers via their termly consultations; parent surveys and the reduction of numbers of children being suspended and permanently excluded.

7.9. The Education Psychology Service has started a pilot project to prevent exclusions. The pilot will launch in the Autumn Term 2024. The impact of the pilot will be evaluated, and the learning rolled out to schools in the city.

7.10. A new Vulnerable Pupils Panel has been set up with schools and multi-agency partners across the local area. The panel is based on learning and best practice from Sutton Borough Council. The panel is a partnership between education, health, police and Children's Social Care, providing early help and prevention to support children, removing barriers to their access and engagement with education. The panel will feed into the strategic review of alternative provision and report to the Plymouth Education Board.

- 7.11. Termly training for multi-agency professionals is being rolled in November 2024 to support professional development across the local area. The training will raise the profile of the suspensions and exclusions. The purpose of the training is to promote early help and intervention from multi-agency partners so that preventing exclusions becomes everyone's business.
- 7.12. Schools are increasingly inviting the School's Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead to their Governor Discipline Committee. The Schools Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead has identified a training need for governing bodies to enable them to undertake their duties effectively and provide the right level of scrutiny to a headteacher's exclusion decisions. Training started in September 2024.
- 7.13. An internal review is being undertaken to consider the impact of inclusion in relation to reducing suspensions and exclusions. The review will make recommendations for improvement, supporting service improvements.

8.0. Children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

- 8.1. Of the cohort of children in the city who were permanently excluded, less than 10 have an EHCP. Of the EHCP cohort, less than 10 were male. A number of the children received five or more suspensions prior to being permanently excluded. Less than 10 of the children have had one or more episodes of Child in Need; Less than 10 children have had one or more episodes of Child Protection.
- 8.2. Of the secondary aged children with EHCPs who were permanently excluded from mainstream secondary schools, 60% were excluded from the same school.
- 8.3. In every case of a primary aged child (with or without an EHCP) who is permanently excluded, the Director of Children's Services and Director for Education is notified, and information shared with action taken to prevent the permanent exclusion. A decision is then made regarding next steps to prevent permanent exclusion. Since its implementation there have been no primary aged children permanently excluded.
- 8.4. In every case of a child with an EHCP being permanently excluded the 0-25 SEND Team action as casework and work with the school to prevent the permanent exclusion. The 0-25 SEND Team are recruiting an Officer to attend termly meetings with secondary schools to discuss children with EHCP's who are causing a concern. This will improve early identification and access to early help for children at risk of permanent exclusion.

9.0 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support

- 9.1. The Local Area SEND Inspection Report reflects the concern that too many children in school either do not have their needs identified or met in schools. This reflects the trend that we see with regards to children on SEN Support being permanently excluded or suspended. 237 (11.86%) of the children who were suspended in 2023/24 have an EHCP; 790 (39.54%) require SEN Support. 56 (49.12%) of the children who were permanently excluded require SEN Support in school.

- 9.2.** In undertaking this deep dive exercise, it has not been possible to conduct an analysis of SEN area of need. Action to improve rapid data access through the strategic review of CAPITA will support our proactive approach to preventing exclusions.
- 9.3.** The Graduated Approach to Inclusion Framework supports teachers and school leaders in identifying, assessing, and recording the needs of children and young people requiring additional or special educational provision. The framework is designed to support the identification, planning, and recording of appropriate support and provides guidance to help review progress for children with special educational needs.

10.0. Reasons for permanent exclusion and suspension

- 10.1.** Persistent disruptive behaviour remains the prevalent reason for permanent exclusion (appendix 7). This is reflected nationally and locally. Over the last three academic years combined citywide data (which includes special primary and mainstream schools) has consistently identified the following as the city's top three reasons for exclusion and suspensions:
- Persistent disruptive behaviour
 - Verbal abuse/threatening an adult
 - Physical assault against a pupil.
- 10.2.** Exclusions and suspensions are recorded against reason codes which are set by the Department for Education. The Serious Violence Duty places a duty on councils and local services to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. In undertaking our duty, analysis of exclusions and suspensions for violence identify a rise in the numbers of exclusions and suspensions for behaviour which is related to violence. These include physical assault against a pupil, physical assault against an adult and use of or threat of an offensive weapon/prohibited item (appendix 8). There has been a 9.5% increase in exclusions and suspensions for physical assaults against pupils since 2021/22, a 49.09% increase for behaviour relating to a physical assault against an adult and 114.66% increase in exclusions and suspensions for the use of or threat of a weapon/prohibited item.
- 10.3.** In response to the increase in violent behaviour in schools a Practice Learning event is being held with schools and multi-agency partners in November 2024. The event is a collaboration with the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The learning from the thematic learning from the event will be shared with across the partnership and will inform the development of citywide practice.
- 10.4.** In academic year 2023/24 there was a 99.11% (156) rise in exclusions and suspensions for drug and alcohol related behaviour (appendix 9). Headteachers identified the Vaping of Substances controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (VScMDA) as an area of growing concern within their schools and a key driver for exclusions and suspensions. This was actioned as a key line of enquiry by the Schools Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead in partnership with the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

- 10.5.** The Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Team began to collect the data specifically relating to VScMDA on 1st December 2023. Between that date and the end of the academic year 15 children were permanently excluded between for VScMDA. Of the 15 children, two children were reinstated by the governing body of the school and one permanent exclusion was rescinded. This means that there were 12 permanent exclusions specifically for drug and alcohol related activity, including VScMDA between 1st December 2023 and the end of the academic year 2024.
- 10.6.** Following the rise in permanent exclusions and suspensions for vaping and supplying illegal substances in schools, Plymouth City Council Public Health (PCCPH), has created an offer for schools to prevent the permanent exclusion of pupils engaging in the vaping of illegal substances. The approach includes universal, targeted and specialist support for children ranging from whole school assemblies and group work, more specialist 1:1 support through SHARP. Schools have been receptive to this offer and are increasingly reporting pupils' engagement with the package.
- 10.7.** Whilst it is too early to quantify the number of permanent exclusions that have been avoided by using this package, the uptake of this service is increasing. Since the implementation of the project in April 2024 there have been no permanent exclusions for VScMDA as the reason.
- 11.0. Numbers of suspensions**
- 11.1.** Trend analysis shows significant increases in the numbers of children receiving three or more suspensions (Appendix 10). In 2023/24 1168 children were identified as having received three or more suspensions throughout their time in education. This represents an increase of 60.44% or 560 children when compared to the previous academic year. In 2023/24 there was a high prevalence of children who had received more than ten suspensions during their statutory education with one child having received 71 suspensions (Appendix 11).
- 11.2.** Of the 1168 children with three or more suspensions in 2023/24, 296 were in the primary phase of education and 1699 in the secondary phase (appendix 12). The trend analysis shows that the number of children in year 7 with three or more suspensions jumped by 175 (265%) when compared to children in year 6. The numbers of children with three or more suspensions continues to increase throughout secondary school.
- 11.3.** Of the 296 primary aged children with three or more suspensions:
- 71 (23.98%) require SEN Support.
 - 58 (19.59%) have an EHCP.
 - 77 (26.01%) were known to Children's Social Care in the previous six-year period.
 - 77 (26.01%) have had one or more episodes of Child in Need.
 - 37 (12.5%) have had one or more episodes of Child Protection.
 - 13 (4.39%) are currently on a Child in Need Plan.
 - Less than 10 are currently on a Child Protection Plan.

- 11.4.** Of the primary aged cohort with three or more suspensions in 2023/24, 66 (22.29%) were in year 6. Urgent action is being taken to contact their new secondary schools in order to coordinate Team Around the Child/School meetings in order to provide early help and prevent the increased risk of suspension and permanent exclusion.
- 11.5.** Of the 1026 secondary aged children with three or more suspensions:
- 435 (42.39%) require SEN Support.
 - 128 (12.47%) have an EHCP.
 - 682 (66.47%) were known to Children's Social Care in the previous six-years.
 - 663 (64.61%) have had one or more episodes of Child in Need.
 - 224 (21.83%) have had one or more episodes of Child Protection.
 - 56 (5.45%) are currently on a Child in Need Plan.
 - 35 (3.41%) are currently on a Child Protection Plan.
- 11.6.** The secondary trend clearly shows that not only does the risk of children being suspended increase in secondary schools so do the risks in respect of safeguarding and child protection. The Place Based Working Group has implemented and continue to develop a citywide approach to share information and improve support for children at key transition points through the early years into primary and primary into secondary transition portals. All schools have engaged with this process meaning that many more children have their needs identified at entry to primary or secondary school
- 11.7.** The 50 children with the highest rates of suspension come from 8 schools within the city. Each of the schools have been contacted by the Schools Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead to ensure that there are robust plans of support in place to further suspensions and reduce the risk of a permanent exclusion.
- 11.8.** The Head of Service for SEND and the Education Psychology Service have been notified of all children with an EHCP, who are in need of SEN support and who have three or more suspensions. This will inform planning consultation meetings across the Autumn Term and casework by the 0-25 SEND Team. Providing early help and support for the cohort of children in order to prevent further escalation.
- 11.9.** Strand 4 of the place-based plan for the 2024/25 academic year is the development of a Pre-16 Vocational Offer to support children in secondary schools to be able to access provision which matches and meets their needs and aspirations. This offer will mean that a greater number of children at Key Stage 4 will be able to spend part of their week at school studying core subjects and part of their week at City College Plymouth undertaking a vocational route.
- 11.10.** The Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Task and Finish Group is developing support for children who are moving into post 16. The purpose is to reduce the numbers of vulnerable children not in education, employment or training.

- 11.11.** The prevalence of special education needs and disabilities within the excluded and suspended cohort of children has been prioritised by the Inclusion Steering Group of the SEND Strategic Board. Case studies of children with EHCPs who have been permanently excluded have been shared with the group and will inform planning and action to improve inclusion and outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 11.12.** In partnership with families and schools, a reducing exclusions toolkit is being developed by the Schools Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead and will be rolled out in the Autumn Term 2024.
- 12.0. Permanent exclusions by school and multi-academy trust**
- 12.1.** There are a number of schools in Plymouth who are overrepresented in the rates of children permanently excluded. These schools also have high suspension and pupil mobility rates.
- 12.2.** Despite there being schools in the city with disproportionately high numbers and rates of permanent exclusion, if we use the 2022/23 national and regional benchmark of 0.4%, 12 of 19 secondary schools in Plymouth sit above the baseline and are cause for concern.
- 12.3** Of the 11 multi-academy trusts in the city, some are overrepresented with disproportionately high numbers and rates of permanent exclusion sitting above the regional and national comparators.
- 12.4.** Plymouth City Council's Headteacher briefing in March 2024 shared the permanent exclusion data with school leaders. As a result, more schools are working with the local authority in respect of children who are at significant risk of permanent exclusion. This collaborative approach has resulted in the prevention of approximately 25 primary permanent exclusions and 18 permanent exclusions in the secondary phase.
- 12.5.** The Director for Education holds Inclusion Meetings with multi academy trusts to identify and analyse strengths and areas for improvement. This informs the strategic planning of inclusive approaches and best practice across the city.
- 12.6.** Strand 1 of the place-based plan for the 2024/25 academic year is the development of a 'Belonging Framework' to shape further the way that schools and partners work meaningfully with children and their families to embed a sense of being welcome and part of the school community.
- 12.7.** Plymouth City Council has collaborated with special schools within the city to develop an outreach offer of support for mainstream schools. This was launched in September 2024, the outreach offer provides specialist advice and support to professionals in mainstream schools so that they can be equipped to meet the needs of complex children and/or cohorts within their school.

13.0. Permanent exclusion by neighbourhood and locality

13.1. The correlation between deprivation, permanent exclusions and suspensions is strong with the majority of children from localities and neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation (Appendix 13, and 14).

13.2. Each school has an allocated Access and Attendance Officer and an Early Help Link Officer. Access and Attendance Officers are working in small teams across each locality, contacting schools on a fortnightly basis to discuss any child who is at risk of being persistently absent, severely absent or missing out on education, this includes children at risk of exclusion. In addition, termly meetings are being held jointly between Early Help and Attendance Support Teams, the 0-25 SEND Team will join the meetings at secondary schools. Working across education and Children's Social Care will ensure effective joint planning and support for individual children.

14.0. Next steps

14.1. Case studies in respect of children permanently excluded for violence and those with an Education Health and Care Plan are being presented to the multi-agency Inclusion Steering Group of the Special Educational Needs Strategic Board. This will lead to the development of an early help framework for key groups in order to support schools, target key groups and prevent children being permanently excluded.

14.2. Team Around the Child/School meetings are being coordinated with teams across Children's Services to support planning and early help for year 7 children with three or more suspensions. The learning from the early help approach will be shared with the Inclusion Steering Group.

14.3. The Place Based Education Group are developing a Three Tier Alternative Provision Strategy, Pre-16 vocational offer and belonging framework; delivering a coordinated and systematic approach to support children to remain in or return to mainstream education.

14.4. The Place Based Working Group will evaluate the effectiveness of the enhanced transitions project in preventing suspensions and permanent exclusions in order to build on areas of best practice.

14.5. A practice review group for multi-agency partners to come together and identify common themes and areas of learning in respect of permanently excluded children will be held in November 2024. The findings will be reported to the Quality Assurance Delivery Group of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Plymouth Education Board.

14.6. The Education Participation and Skills Team has set up a task and finish group to develop a professional development offer for schools, Children's Social Care and multi-agency partners across the local area. The offer is being developed using learning and best practice from other local authorities and delivery will begin in term two 2024, running 6 times per year.

- 14.7.** The impact of our approach to reducing permanent exclusions and suspensions is reported monthly at Practice and Performance meetings where the effectiveness of our plans is measured against Key Performance Indicators.
- 14.8.** The Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Approach to Inclusion resources is being embedded across the city. The impact will be evaluated through the Special Education Needs and Disabilities steering groups.
- 14.9.** The Reducing Exclusion Project will be delivered and evaluated with learning shared in terms 3 and 4 (Spring Term) 2025.
- 14.10.** The impact of the Vulnerable Pupils Panel in preventing permanent exclusions will be evaluated through the Plymouth Education Board.
- 14.11.** The impact of the Anti-Vaping Project on preventing permanent exclusions for behaviour related to VScMDA will be evaluated and reported to the Plymouth Education Board.
- 14.12.** Learning from Serious Case Reviews of Children in Care who are permanently excluded will be embedded within the training to schools and multi-agency professionals across the local area. It will also be used in the development of practice standards across Children's Social Care and Education, Participation and Skills.
- 14.13.** The Special Schools Outreach Project will be evaluated through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategic Group.
- 14.14.** The actions from this paper will be embedded in the exclusions and suspensions team plan held by Education Participation and Skills. This paper will be presented to the Plymouth Education Board in September 2024 and the Education and Social Care Scrutiny Committee in October 2024.

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Date: 02 October 2024

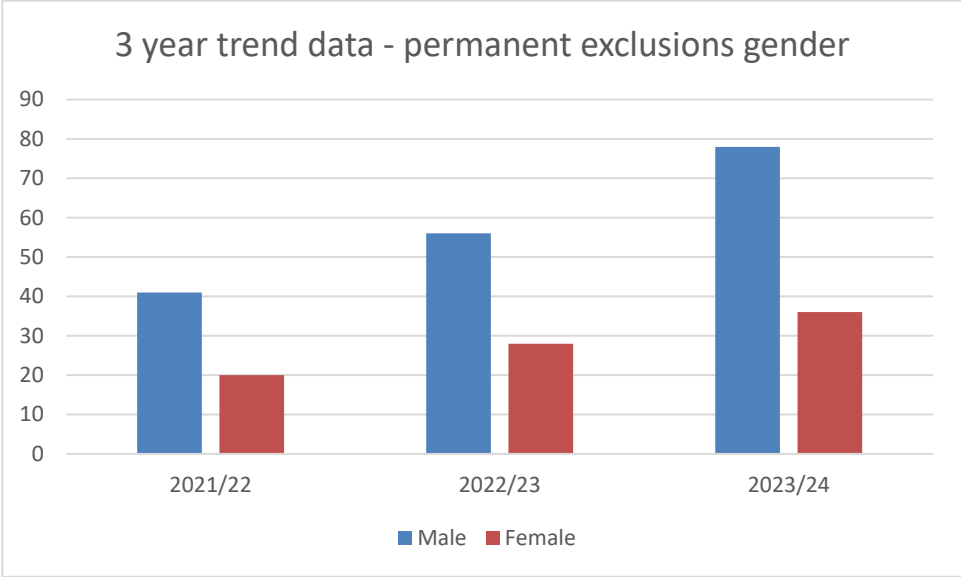
Appendix I – Plymouth permanent exclusion comparative data national and regional benchmarks.

Permanent Exclusions Academic Year	England		South West		Plymouth	
	Total PEX	Rate	Total PEX	Rate	Total PEX	Rate
2019/20	5057	0.06	556	0.07	43	0.11
2020/21	3928	0.04	391	0.05	37	0.09
2021/22	6497	0.08	682	0.09	45	0.12
2022/23	9376	0.11	1002	0.13	84	0.22
2023/24	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	114	0.3

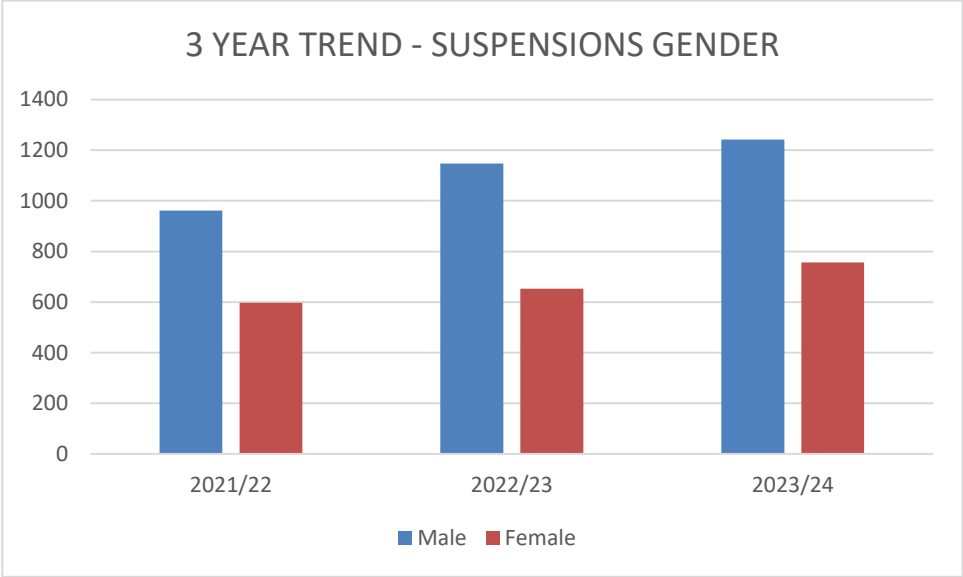
Appendix 2 – Plymouth suspensions comparative data national and regional benchmarks

Suspensions	England		South West		Plymouth	
	Total suspensions	Rate	Total suspensions	Rate	Total suspensions	Rate
2019/20	310,528	3.8	34,820	4.6	1,644	4.2
2020/21	352,470	4.3	41,517	5.5	2,618	6.7
2021/22	578,280	6.9	62,318	8.1	3,939	10.1
2022/23	786,961	9.3	90,257	11.7	5,163	13.2
2023/24	NYA	NYA	NYA	NYA	7,285	18.7

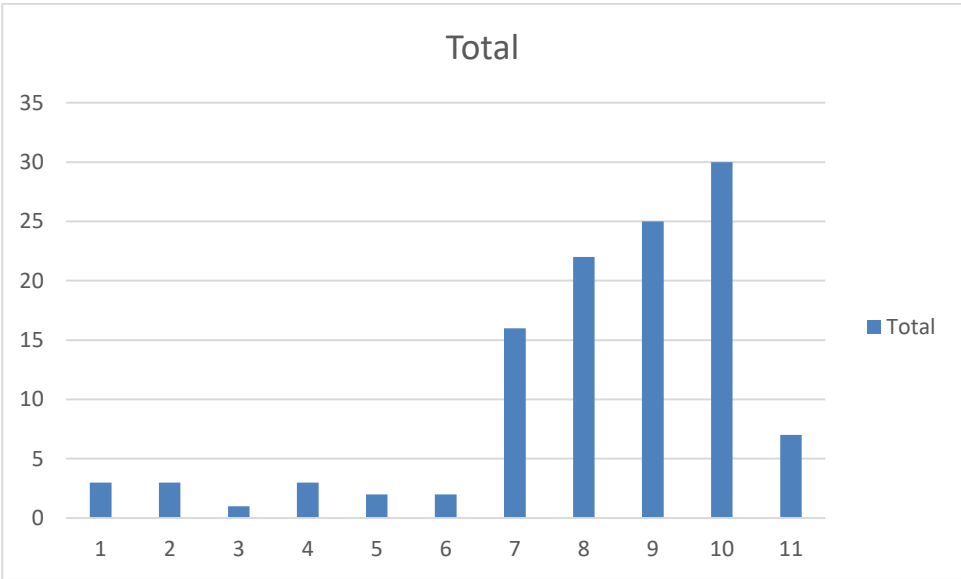
Appendix 3 – Permanent exclusion three year trend data - gender



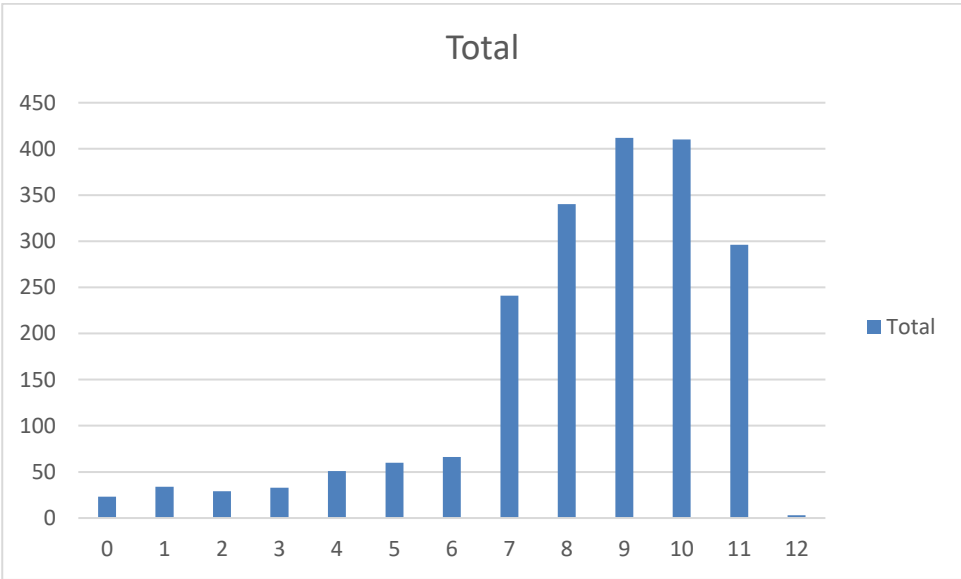
Appendix 4 – Suspensions trend data, gender



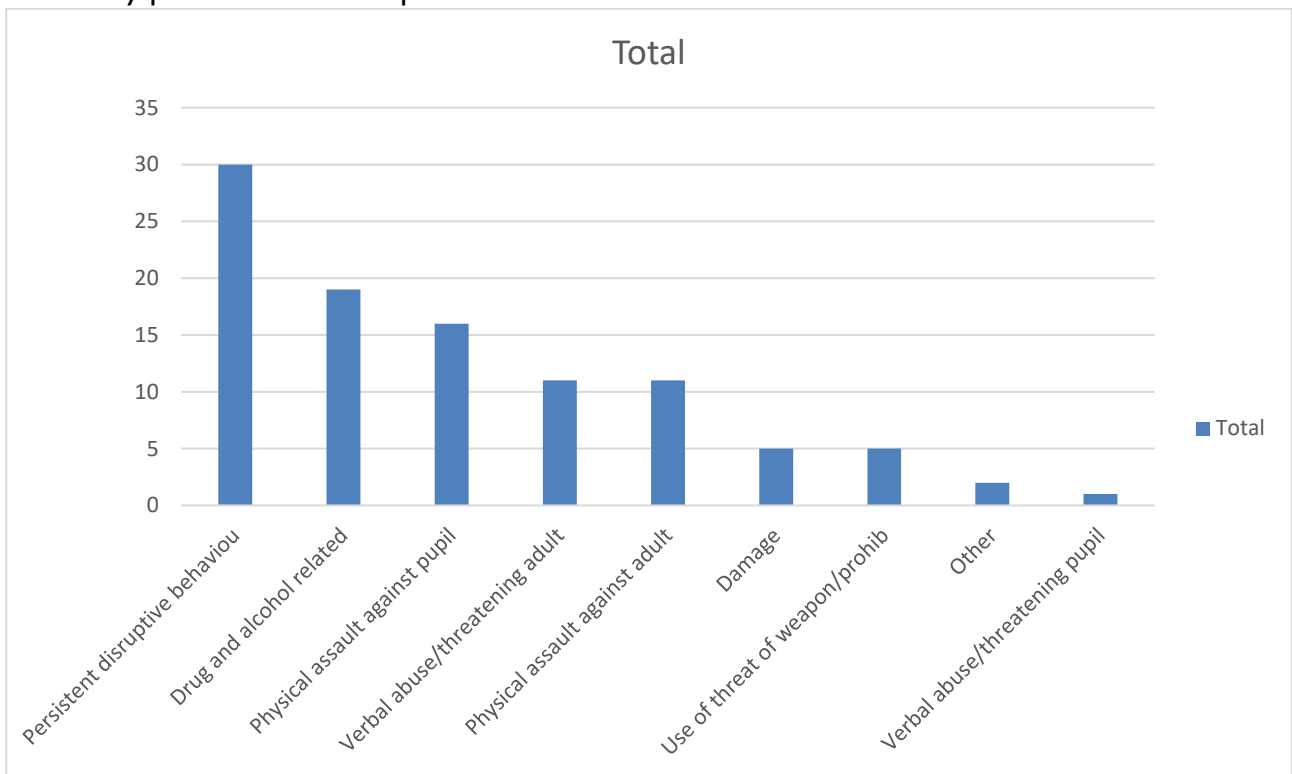
Appendix 5 – Permanent exclusion by year group



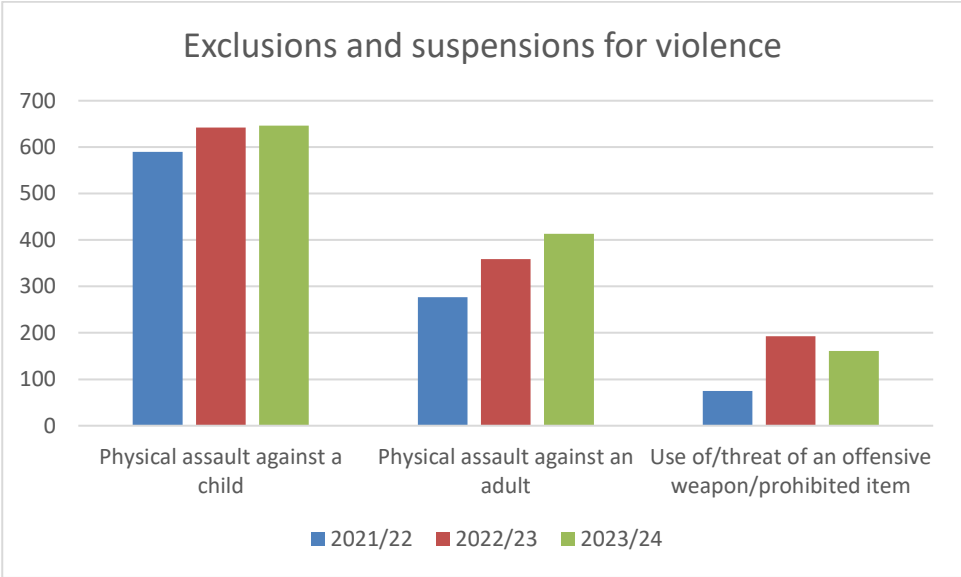
Appendix 6 – Suspension by year group



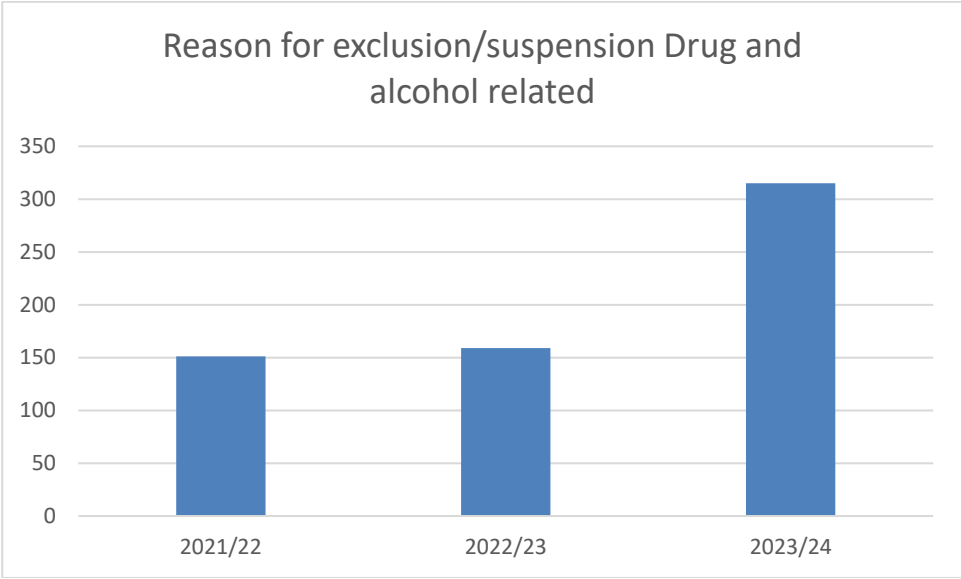
Appendix 7
Secondary phase – reason for permanent exclusion



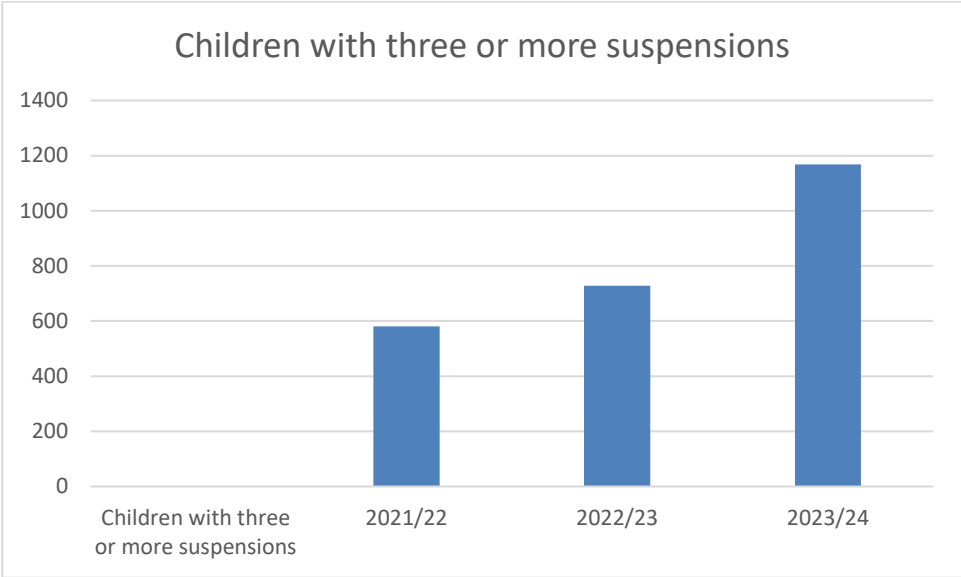
Appendix 8 – Exclusions and suspensions for violence



Appendix 9 - Drug and alcohol related exclusions and suspensions



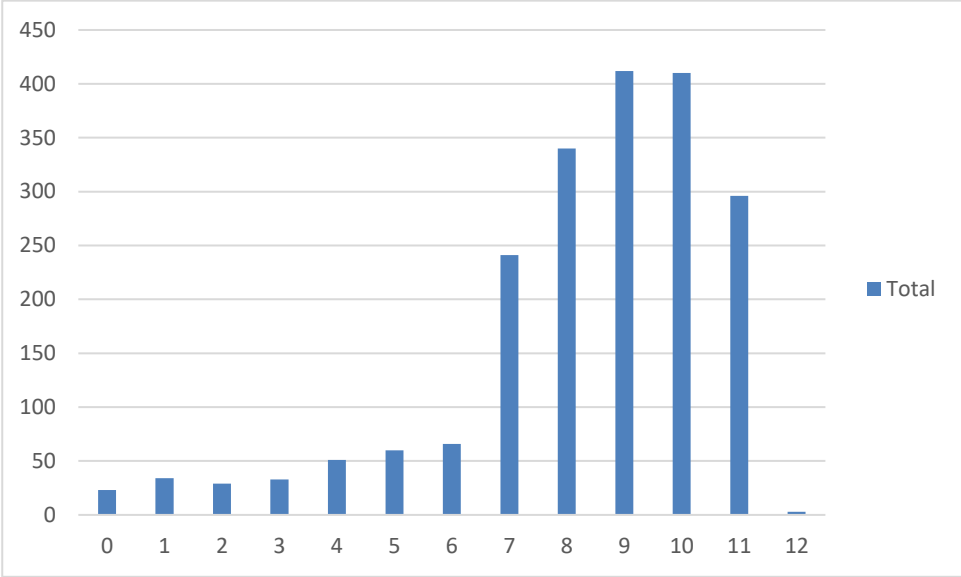
Appendix 10 – Children with 3 or more suspensions



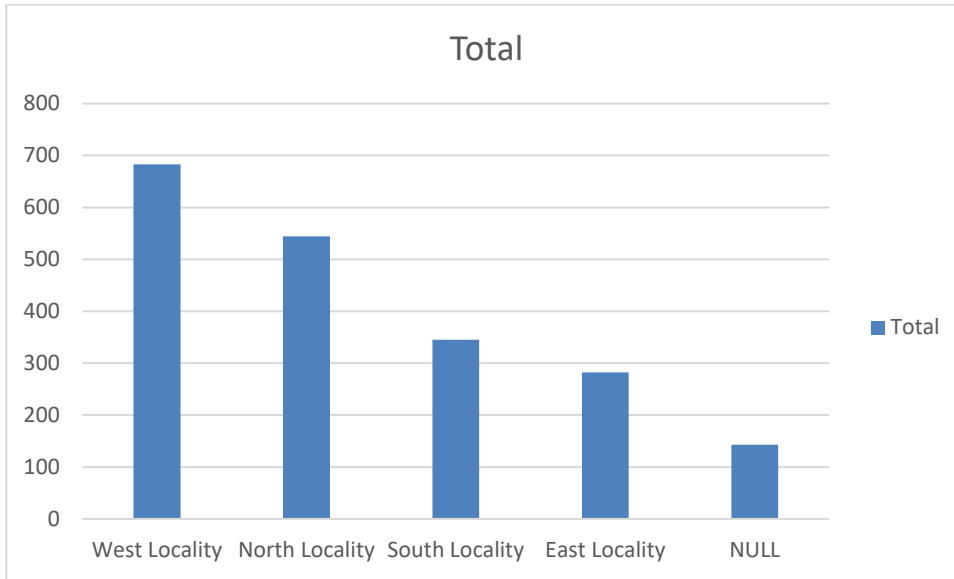
Appendix II – Children with multiple suspensions

Number of children	Number of suspensions
410	3 to 5
315	6 to 10
174	11 to 15
101	16 to 20
72	21 to 25
41	26 to 30
25	31 to 35
10	36 to 40
10	41 to 45
<10	46 to 50
<10	51 to 55
<10	56 to 60
<10	61
<10	71

Appendix 12 – Three or more suspensions by year group

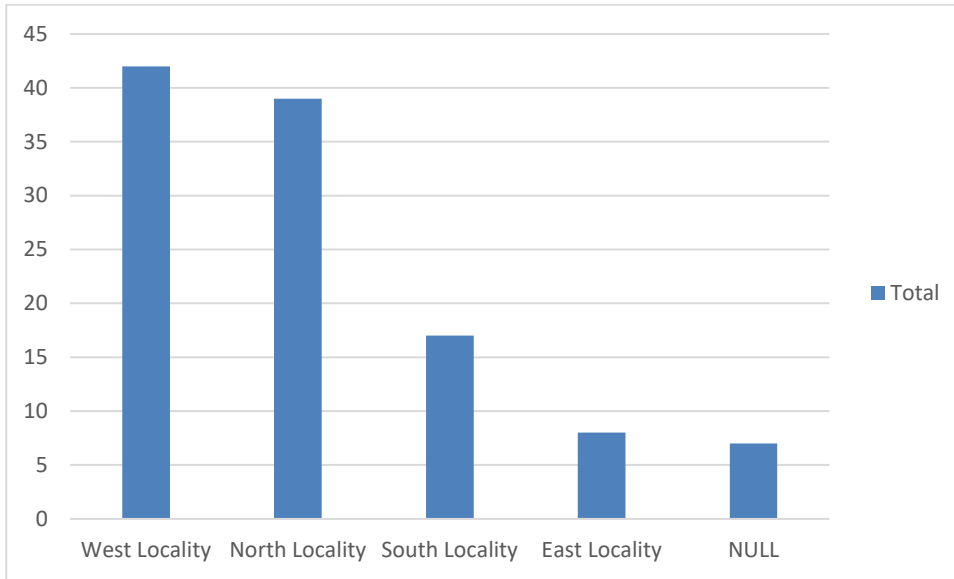


Appendix 13 – Suspensions by locality



* Within the data set there are children with a null return for locality. For many this is due to an out of area home address. The addresses of all the children are known. For some Plymouth children their home locality is not reflected in the data set. Action is being taken to address the anomaly.

Appendix I4– Permanent exclusions by locality



*Within the data set there are children with a nil return for locality. The addresses of the children are known. Their locality was not reflected in the data set. Action is being taken to address the anomaly.

