



# Making Attendance Everyone's Business in Redcar & Cleveland

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The potential of the voluntary and community sector explored  
24<sup>th</sup> October 2024

# Why are we here?

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"Attendance is a problem in the country but it's acute in Redcar & Cleveland. It's an important issue to address because we want all our children and young people to have better life chances."

(Bill Suthers, Portfolio Lead for Children and Families )

A photograph of a modern meeting room with a high ceiling and exposed ductwork. A man in a dark shirt and glasses stands in the center, gesturing towards a group of people seated at round tables. The room has large windows with blue blinds and a blue wall in the background. The text "Who participated at this event?" is overlaid in a large, white, cursive font.

# Who participated at this event?

# Massive thanks to you.....

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To our 32 partners who attended from a range of specialist grassroots and VCSE organisations.

As a collective, people at this event are working with children, young people and families through arts and creative media, mentoring & coaching, sport, housing, community development, youth work, advice and guidance, therapeutic interventions, health and tailored personalised support.

And to those unable to join us this time there will be future events so we hope you will join us!

# Who else must we connect with?

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- Can we invite Prince's Trust, sports groups and cadet forces to future events?
- Other mental health or wellbeing focused charities and community organisations unable to attend this workshop.
- Anyone involved in the 'Big Local Legacy' beyond 2025
- Anyone who can share learning from the Troubled Families Programme
- Other individuals involved in the TS6 Together Board
- Organisations that would like to, or already, have an (external) alternative provision offer for schools
- Faith sector groups and organisations
- Community food provisions
- The National Lottery particularly after the launch of their new strategy / investment portfolio
- Advocacy charities / organisations
- People involved with the 'Young Futures' developments in the Borough

# Storytelling: relationships are key

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- 5 small groups told each other stories about children, young people and family members they support through their work.
- Some of these kids were currently struggling, or have previously, struggled with their attendance at school or college.
- We considered the circumstances and characteristics of each person in the stories - what their life was like day to day?
- We also thought more deeply about how support is offered and whether it meets the needs of those involved.
- We soon learned that seeing the whole person and not just 'the problem' is a golden thread for all approaches taken.
- We considered the ingredients required to form first a connection, and then, a deeper relationship of trust to impact behaviours.
- We thought about the different ways and types of support already in play amongst workshop participants.
- We discovered that relational approaches are key to helping all involved feel that change is possible for them

# Young people's circumstances

Understanding the circumstances of these children, young people and families is essential. People at the workshop described different people they have relationships with including these children and young people:

- Children with anxiety and poor or declining mental health, struggling with sleep.
- Children in the care system.
- Child carers.
- Home educated young people and / or children educated away from their community.
- Neurodiverse children or awaiting diagnosis / waiting list.
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).
- Young people that hadn't been to school for a long time and had been taught almost entirely by Zoom / online.

- Children where drugs are in the home / in parents' lives.
- Children with 'no boundaries' by age 11 / 12.
- Young people that had been suspended or excluded from school.
- Young people involved in alternative education and learning.
- Young people at work, volunteering or in a work placement .
- Young people struggling with transition from primary to secondary.
- Young people eligible for Free School Meals.
- Children that are part of traveller families.

# Family circumstances

**Families that were described as perhaps having lost trust in their school or the wider system / authority included**

- People on low incomes, are out of work or are in work poverty.
- May be a single parent or are parents with 3 or more children affected by the 2-child benefit cap.
- Families who have caring responsibilities i.e. adult and child carers, kinship care.
- Children who are in the care system, are neurodiverse, have Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).
- In families where parents had negative experiences of school - meaning negative attitudes can be shared at home and impact on children's perceptions.
- Poor mental health, post-natal depression are also compounding factors.
- 'The contagion of anxiety' and how this passes down the generations in a family.

More generally delegates were supporting family members that cannot afford food, have debt, have experienced relationship breakdown, are struggling with their mental health, cannot afford transport costs to get around and struggle if kids in the same family go to different or distant schools.

# What's getting in the way?

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"School doesn't fit all. Labels are given to children."

A lot of the comments were about what school is like and how there seems to be a lack of flexibility in schools to accommodate and meet individual CYP needs. Delegates would like schools to be more flexible and for policies to be more holistic and for meaningful (not just reasonable) adjustments.

"It's easier not to go to school."

- School behaviour policies were seen as being a part of the issue, but a more rounded conversation is needed for this
- Exclusions are felt not to be being used as a last resort in all cases - why is this happening in R&C?
- Some groups - SEN and FSM - were thought to be not fully included in approaches at schools
- Kids not allowed to the toilet; lack of playtime; break time being used as punishment; not being allowed to bring own food - fuels resentment
- Kids (and school staff) felt to have higher rates of fatigue, even burn-out by the end of the week and are more likely to withdraw on a Friday.
- Transport limitations can also contribute to kids being late for school.

"SEND >>> suspensions >>> exclusions >>> the cycle isn't being broken."

"We don't know if young people and families are engaging in communities after or out of school; or is everyone just online!"

# What's getting in the way?

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- More generally there has been an inability to recover or reset since COVID and all the attitudes and behaviours formed in that time.. Are bereavement policies good enough for example in schools?
- Parental attitudes affect children and with shorter generational gaps if there was distrust (in school / authority) before this can pass down in the family. Many more parents are home schooling their children since lockdown. Some parents and family members lack resources to challenge or feel unable to advocate for their child - there is an unequal power dynamic. One group felt that schools and the community sector should not be waiting for parents to take the initiative - we need a new approach 'with' them not doing things 'to' them. One school said that despite picking up the phone to speak with parents around attendance or their child's welfare they face barriers from those parents to engage.
- One group felt that community skills and sense of community belonging were lacking or lost that contributes to a behaviour of disconnecting....from school, society, services, the state.
- There's potential for more connection between schools & their local community sector to know what's there for young people.

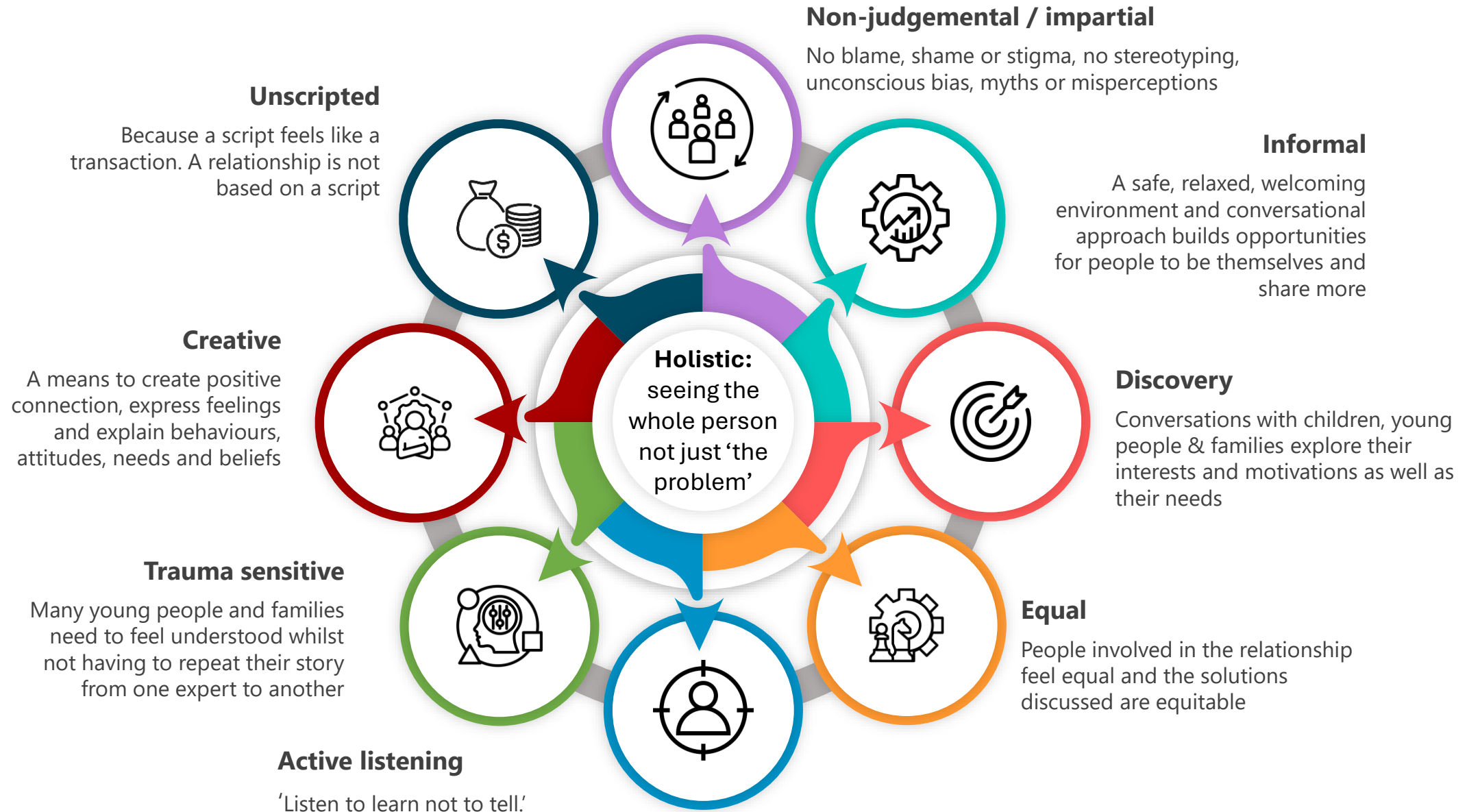
"There is anger in our community here."

"It is hard to have a community school."

"There's a lack of role models for our kids."

"As schools, we don't know what else is on offer to keep the kids engaged and off the streets."

# We feel the ingredients to build trusting relationships include....



# How are we working to support children and young people struggling with attendance?

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- 1:2:1 relationships where possible to build trust and understand individual circumstances and needs.
- Co-producing activities and programmes of work that is informed by lived experience - but not routine yet.
- Where possible, working with them in an informal setting using creative arts as a method of engagement.
- Providing advice, guidance, and support e.g. through a creative therapeutic approach, signposting to specialist services where required.
- Providing placement stability for children in the care system.
- One school said they focused on providing a safe place, 'rich enrichment' (e.g. trips) and good pastoral support.
- Using safe, welcoming spaces for educational purposes.
- Using creativity to support good mental health and wellbeing.
- Using sport (e.g. boxing) and local clubs to support attendance.
- Alternative education opportunities in the community.
- Encouraging the use of local youth clubs.
- One school has employed a Family Support Worker dedicated to reaching and supporting those children that have 0% attendance (severe absence). The caseload is 10 children. They also advocate for the parent e.g. helping them with housing applications or opening a bank account.

"We don't know if young people and families are engaging in communities after or out of school; or is everyone just online!"

"Different ways of learning."

"Connection."

"Let children be seen and heard."

"No judging."

"We want all children to come to school; want it to be a safe place as soon as they go through our doors; they see their friends."

# How are we working to support family members whose children are struggling with attendance?

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- Engagement happens in a variety of settings - it can look and feel very different depending on individual needs and preferences - duration, place/space used, frequency of conversations or casework.
- VCSE services listen to advice from parents and carers regards how best to engage with their child and consequently, activities and approaches are adapted to accommodate those needs. This tends to lead to good levels of engagement and the creation of trust between the families and organisations as they feel listened to.
- Local groups e.g. Loftus Group - encourages peer support.
- School parent group interventions.
- Post-natal depression support to parents (especially Mums) in the community.
- Impartial approach where the VCSE provides a counter argument (in a respectful non-judgmental way) against negativity and perceptions towards schools, with families and children. The focus has been on helping build confidence & resilience in these relationships.
- One group spoke about how they have found it helpful to include opportunities for families to engage with them alongside their usual activities. This has been achieved through whole family engagement activities within school settings, family hubs, community hubs and VCSE venues.
- Thrive at Five Parent Connectors are mapping what's out there, the parks, the green spaces and they are connecting with parents wherever they are or go e.g. supermarkets, South Bank Library.

"The home school cohort are becoming disillusioned."

"Lost the community skills."

"Lost a sense of community belonging."

"Creating relationships in a different way."

"We build knowledge and trust of the family."

# How are we working to support family members whose children are struggling with attendance?

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- Initiatives such as a Dad's group at local family hubs has seen fathers come together with their children, receive, advice, guidance and support from the team around things such as creative play and build additional support networks between one another.
- The HAF programme has created opportunities for VCSE organisations to work not only with the school but with the whole family. Examples include extending the food offer to the whole family, inviting parents and carers to join their children for a meal as part of the programme.
- Specific interventions for parents (self-selecting) e.g. to do a 6-week course focused on mindfulness; and the positive ripple effect this can have on their children.

"Why don't all schools have all the community sector and services information on hand at parents' evenings whilst they are waiting to see the teachers?"

"Our traveller families are some of the hardest to reach."

- 1:2:1 support is provided to families who have lost faith with schools. VCSEs described how they have acted as an advocate on their behalf, being careful not to take sides but by leaning on the trust they have developed they have been able to liaise between schools and families to benefit of positive outcomes for the child such as reintegration into school following suspension or periods of absence.
- One school described a range of things they were doing to increase parental engagement and support including:
  - Home visits.
  - Phone calls to the home.
  - Less written communication ('they won't read a 3-page letter') and more through video and social media.
  - Literacy programmes for parents that are accessible and affordable.
  - Fun nights and informal e.g. bingo night.
  - Support to parents via multi-agencies that the school has connected with to support them with issues such as mental health (MIND) and housing.

# Solutions???

- Whilst the Making Attendance Everyone's Business Project has spent considerable time with 350+ different individuals since January 2023 exploring the problems with making attendance everyone's business, lived experience stories and understanding the data about how big a challenge it is, we have also started to explore solutions.
- Some of the solutions have naturally formed into themes of approach (seen right), but we know there are many other ideas 'out there' that we can connect with, so this workshop invited further discussion about what does or might work; and what we can learn from any past attempts to address the complex issue of attendance.

Solution Topics just to prompt conversation if welcomed at your table

<p>Learn from the good practice 'out there' already and do more of that</p> <p>(e.g. the Attendance Hubs, ideas shared at the Attendance Network)</p>	<p>Learning from lived experience of CYP &amp; families that can inform solutions + effective parental / carer / family engagement and communication</p>	<p>Mentoring, coaching and peer support for CYP &amp; or family members</p>	<p>Targeted support for, communication and engagement with CYP, parents and families (e.g. joined up 'Team Around' ways of working)</p>
<p>Really good health interventions as so many health factors explain reasons for persistent and severe absence (food/nutrition, meal provision, mental health, advice)</p>	<p>Creativity, cultural and joyful activity for CYP and family members – partly to support more positive views and attitudes to engage with school / college / education</p>	<p>Safety-based work e.g. anti-bullying programmes, trusted adults / safeguarding so young people feel safe to attend school / college</p>	<p>Social and emotional learning activities – with CYP &amp; families but also for the wider system e. g. trauma informed and relationship-centred practices</p>

# Solutions already being considered

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Downloads available (free) from the Project website

- Attendance: Good practice solutions
- Lived experience, parental/carers engagement and communication solutions
- Mentoring, peer support and coaching solutions
- Targeted support and caseload management solutions
- Place Based Pilot Suggestions
- Health and attendance
- Creativity, cultural and joyful interventions
- Action plan - Strong emergent ideas

# Solutions: group 1 reflections

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What works well?

- Trusted adults for children that are not teaching staff. These are people that are emotionally available and can complement pastoral staff endeavours.
- Whole school trauma informed training (all staff). Divert existing money for trauma informed / attachment aware training ('invest to save').
- Interventions and preventative activity that improves attendance and has the effect of reducing (future) violence, crime and offending.
- Ask how parents wish to be communicated with and honour that communication.

"We need courage to invest to save; cost avoidance."

"System change, not system funding."

"It's a shame-based system and that shame shuts people down."

Future approach and ideas -what might work well

- Bidding funds into the system to add capacity..
- More coaches and mentoring.
- Work with PRU and in small caseloads of young people for those most affected e.g. boxing activities.
- High level agreement of RCBC behaviour and attendance targets need to be agreed and all to be involved.
- Establish governance and use the financial statistics in conversations about progress being made; and for example, how to tell the story of the **social harm** of absence or social harm avoided as we address it.
- Explore whether there is a disconnect between MAT leadership and their individual schools on this topic - expecting schools to do too much ('emails and referrals met at midnight').
- Multi agency approach with leadership support from government department(s).
- Explore ways of supporting young people involved in multiple home moves (has a major impact on those that become NEET, Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- All school communications to be no more than 1 page in length.
- Open conversation between education and voluntary and community sector (who can support)

# Solutions: group 2 reflections

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What do you know already works well to prevent or reduce persistent / severe absence in your community, perhaps you are already contributing to?

- Tackling poverty - Citizens Advice support linked to foodbanks and eco-shops
- Auto-enrolment of Free School Meals.
- Health - collective action to tackle wider determinants that affect health i.e. housing standards, raised awareness of referral pathways to specialist services/support i.e. Affordable Warmth.
- Immunisation programme.

What not  
to do.

Ignore what has  
been said to date  
and instead apply  
a top-down  
approach

"Insist on a 'one size fits all'  
solution - this doesn't work, it's  
the opposite to co-production,  
valuing lived experience and  
the development of collective  
action."

What do you think might work well?

- Universal breakfast clubs.
- Universal after school clubs with an emphasis on food - not just for the children but also invite parents and carers.
- Poverty proofing the school day/year.
- Uniform banks.
- Greater collaboration between VCSE services, health, and schools - Family link workers assigned to schools but embedded in community settings hosted by VCSE groups - co-production between schools, communities and most importantly, families/children.


# Solutions: group 3 reflections

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- Adapted communications - "not a letter".
- Role models.
- Targeted signposting.
- Training around the teacher (support for the teacher).
- Mentoring and coaching.

Future approach and ideas:

- Taking away the blame and shame.
- Co-production.
- Alternative intelligence.
- Learning what works and tailoring it ensuring that it is place-based.



"School doesn't work for all children, so we need more alternatives."

# Solutions: group 4 reflections

DON'T do 100% attendance awards in schools!"

What do you know already works well to prevent or reduce persistent / severe absence in your community, perhaps you are already contributing to?

- Specialist help, targeted youth support with a range of professionals, CYP & families together
- 'SHIFT'
- 'Community Parent' & 'Community Grandparent' – providing the support around the parent, listening
- Alternative education models that still retain contact in school (i.e. 4 days 'out' & 1 day in school)
- Strengths based working (that doesn't scare families off)

"Parental engagement is at the heart of the solution."

Combination of everything with someone co-ordinating at local level."

"Is there an option for a VCSE / community sector Team Around (the child / family / school) model?"

What do you think might work well?

- Evidence-based learning should be integral to all we do e.g. the Leeds model of early intervention / rapid response (i.e. educational psychologist straightaway) working alongside wider professionals within the early help model.
- What have we learned from the Troubled Families Programme?
- VCSE 'team around' model?
- Using STEAM (Science, Technology, Arts, Engineering and Maths) activity to engage children, young people and families in something they can enjoy together in communities
- Enterprise in the curriculum ( 3-minute segment learning)
- High level pastoral support connected with VCSE support.
- Area based support panels (as per Leeds & Harrogate examples).
- 'Everything...coordinated locally; connecting to services and VCSE.'

# Solutions: group 5 reflections

DON'T do 100% attendance awards in schools! They are not inclusive."

What do you know already works well to prevent or reduce persistent / severe absence in your community, perhaps you are already contributing to?

- The PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy) model for children
- Using the 5 Ways to Wellbeing in practice with children and families - to help de-escalate issues.
- 'Monkeys in Maths' - fun, exciting learning appealing to learner preference
- Mentorship and Peer Mentorship - *ideally in school at least 1 day per week for 1:2:1 unrushed contact*
- Peer support models in different settings - school, community, close to home.
- 'The work of the School Sports Partnership to make schools as active as possible e.g. we have a rock-climbing wall in one of the school corridors. CPD for teachers also available.

"All subjects can be taught creatively."

"Everyone needs a champion; an advocate."

"Headteachers in East Cleveland are now using Family Hubs to meet up together."

What do you think might work well?

- Are the 5 Ways to Wellbeing included in the new HealthStart school offer and is it embedded into teacher training?
- Connecting with the new ambitions around 'Young Futures' (Hubs) referenced in the government's manifesto (local work underway and opportunities to connect with his Project and the strengths of the VCSE sector)
- Alternative pathways to learning especially for children that are neurodiverse and struggle to fit in a neurotypical world / school environment
- Connecting more families with the Family Hubs and peer support available and raising awareness and understanding of the Family Hubs within each school, not just the early years setting and primary schools where the current activity is mostly focused.
- Services and VCSE sector being 'available' on parents' evenings

# How can we work well together in a place?

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- Richard Gerrard (Healthy Communities Co-Ordinator, Public Health South Tees) entertained and educated us at the same time by getting us to work with huge balls of knitting wool to help us appreciate the importance of connection in place- based working. And what it's like - what's missed if you're not connected in that local system.
- He spoke about the Greater Eston Healthy Communities Forum and how that was growing organically, 'without egos' and focused on the health and wellbeing of this community. These insights set the stage nicely for an interactive exercise called 'You're the Boss' .....

# Place based pilot – You're the Boss activity

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How would you design an ideal place based 'project' that brings different parts of the wider system together for the common goals we have to support 'good' attendance in Redcar & Cleveland now and in the future?

We framed this workshop with the problem statement and the suggested goals that have emerged from meeting over 350 people since January 2023 as part of the Making Attendance Everyone's Business Project.



# The Problem Statement

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## **Attendance isn't everyone's business....yet.**

Too many children are absent from school in Redcar & Cleveland limiting their education, welfare and life chances. The needs of those unable to attend well are often misunderstood or not known. Young people that are persistently or severely absent feel unheard and face barriers.

## **We need to help remove these barriers.**

The role of parents, carers and family members is significant too. Their skills, attitudes and circumstances influence attendance behaviours with fewer opportunities for parallel learning though family hubs and services have evolved. Relationships have broken down between some parents and schools.

We need to create environments where children want to go, where they feel safe, loved, content and motivated. **There need to be more reasons to attend than not.**

Tackling the causes of absence not just the symptoms is a shared ambition, but it's **difficult to do enough preventative and early intervention work**. This makes it hard to identify and support those at risk of persistent or severe absence.

The system we desire and imagine for children and young families in R&C struggling to attend well is imperfect. It is inconsistent and limited to meet all individual needs. It could be more modern and flexible. **The system needs to look different.**

***“There is an inconsistent attendance system where many needs are not being met.”***

## **Short-term goal to end 2026**

**We will seek to learn together how to prevent the risks, and reverse the levels, of persistent and severe absence by children and young people in Redcar and Cleveland by the end of 2026 compared to the prevailing situation in 2023.**

## **Medium term goal to 2030**

To upscale the effective aspects of the proposed 2024-2026 place-based pilot(s) to more communities across Redcar & Cleveland, systematically eliminating the barriers to persistent and severe absence through joint working. As a result of the pilot(s) an increasing number of children, young people and families have their individual needs met successfully and they feel resilient for the future.

## **Long term goal to 2040**

A system, and Borough, where it is exceptional for any child or young person to miss more than 10% of their education. Redcar & Cleveland is a place renowned for providing modern, flexible approaches that motivates, equips and supports children and their families to want to be at school college or other inspiring learning setting.

# Why explore a place-based pilot?

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- Because it could create trust at that local level - "would be the perfect way".
- It could help capture the evidence of impact (before any scaling up or transfer elsewhere in the Borough).
- Because people are part of their community, and the attendance 'problem' needs to be situated in this context.
- The pilot - if effective - could improve attendance, but possibly also reduce exclusions and support attainment.
- It could support longer term cultural change where 'more people fall in love with education'.
- A place-based pilot could be rooted in data (both to evidence need and to measure change over time).
- It could bring together the 'best' of what everyone in the system has to offer - more connected, less piecemeal.
- There was a strong consensus that a place-based pilot could work amongst the participants at this workshop. This event, along with the previous workshops has demonstrated that there is a. a need and b. an appetite for doing this as a collective of services from all sectors.

"Yes, this could work but...it would need adapting to each postcode or pilot location and we'd need to check what is going on to avoid people feeling bombarded or saturated."

# How long for?

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- Views amongst the 5 groups differed but were a mix of either 5-year or 10-year approaches.
- For it to be viewed as a pilot a 3-year, interim review / evaluation,, and presumption towards an additional 2 years was suggested. This would be described as a 5-year pilot unless it was clear very little progress was being made by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.
- One group felt that a period that allowed for a 'Test and learn' phase to be implemented and most importantly reviewed would be crucial to the success of the project developing any further. The group recommended that it would be helpful for the pilot to begin in the spring term, allowing for all planning and subsequent actions to be carried out and in place for the new academic year in September. The pilot would then have a full academic year where they could implement agreed strategies, reviewing at key milestones such as term breaks. At the end of the academic year a period should be allocated so that robust analysis could be completed.
- Another group wanted a 10-year vision with key phases or milestones "looking at transition points"
- One group felt the timeframe shouldn't be strictly defined, more an iterative process continuously progressing towards what 'we want to achieve'
- Whilst there were diverse views about the ideal length of time for any agreed place-based pilot, there was a strong consensus that a place-based pilot needed to be 5 years minimum to demonstrate the effectiveness of a system-wide approach, reducing costs and illustrating the positive outcomes that are possible, and the negative consequences avoided. In most models suggested, the pilot would have a period of conception and initial delivery with review and then progression. The pilot would need not only to alleviate prevailing persistent and severe absence but even more importantly in this group's view, secure the conditions for genuinely preventative work that reduces the risks of more young people becoming persistently or severely absent in the first place. It would likely be considered an 'invest to save' model.

"This is about long-term collective pledges by everyone in the system to make it work."

"Could the pilot be linked to a research bid; baselines captured at the start and reviewed so that the collation of credible evidence is captured and available for future funding bids?"

# Where and why?

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## Considerations....

- What is the data telling us?
- Where in the Borough is the greatest need, where are the areas that are experiencing the biggest socio-economic challenges?
- Where do we already have a strong presence re VCSE and examples of collective action?
- What is the 'stability' of the community?
- Smaller areas but could it be a comparative analysis?

## Suggestions

School-based but the stigma of school can be part of the issue so it's important to use other external community spaces and in those spaces provide activities / services thematically linked to the type of absence i.e. 'at risk', 'chronic absence', 'persistent' or 'severe absence'.

Has to be available evenings and weekends i.e. beyond the school gates and out of school hours for some target groups of young people and families.

Watch out for saturation levels / capacity within existing projects in the place and explore the use of space where less is currently happening

Secondary schools because absence %s are greater in this phase as part of the pilot to alleviate existing persistent / severe absence.

"Greater Eston perhaps. TS6 potential as lots of investment."

"Need multiple locations, one urban, rural and coastal."

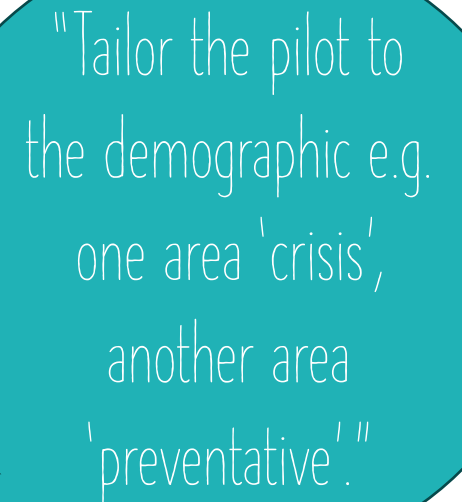
# Who might the pilot target to prevent / reduce persistent and severe absence?

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Different ideas emerged from the groups

- The pilot could focus on one or several groups of children or families who have similar sets of circumstances. Alternatively, it could focus on a geographical ward school or pupil age group(s) i.e. year 6 - year 7 transitions.
- To maximise impact, it should target those young people who show the start of absence; and their parents.
- A focus on young people that have SEN/ND (this suggestion stimulated by the slides shared at the start of the workshop highlighting how these young people are disproportionately persistently absent compared to their non-SEN/ND peers).
- Neurodiverse children and young people and their families.
- Young people who have already had multiple fixed term exclusions or have been excluded.
- School staff - support for teachers as part of the pilot where it doesn't displace other exiting effort.

In truth there was no convergence of ideas on this topic. A case was being made for many different young people and families to participate and benefit during a pilot period. Needs analysis, statistical analysis alongside lived experience would likely determine any specific targeting of young people and families with different approaches for: alleviation, prevention and early intervention. Situating the pilot in the context of the place where other investments are being made to support positive outcomes for young people and families was seen as vital too.



"Tailor the pilot to the demographic e.g. one area 'crisis', another area 'preventative'."

# *The importance of connection in a place based pilot*



# How could the pilot be organised to succeed?

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- System wide partnership involving CYP, families, schools, services, VCSE and specialist organisations - connected in the place.
- Shared goals, shared learning, understanding (by anyone delivering activities/interventions) and effective data sharing.
- Length of contract/commission/approach needs to be c5 years minimum - 'invest to save' model.
- Must identify a clear focus - focused/targeted support.
- Integration meetings to adapt a multi-agency/holistic approach - referring into other services and groups based on need
- Requires a precondition for schools in the place(s) to share practice and resources; and giving teachers more agency.
- Work across the education phases- the transition points (following the young person)
- Increase pastoral care and conditions for support in each school within the pilot area(s)
- Could build on what has been or is in the place already e.g. old education action zones, Big Local (legacy), 'cluster meetings' (schools)
- Use techniques that help de-escalate situations for young people at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Staff wellbeing for everyone involved; all practitioners to be trauma informed/aware; with wider relational centred practice competence.

"Each young person to have a person who cares."

"Collaborate, co-production, lived experience - aligned to central entity which brings everything together."

# What key activities would the pilot include?

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- Baseline attendance data / situation in the place(s) prior to the pilot commencing.
- Universal breakfast / clubs and after school clubs (a focus on food) offer extended to whole family after school.
- Family link workers assigned to schools but embedded in community settings hosted by VCSE groups - co-production between schools, communities and most importantly, families/children.
- Effective parental engagement and communication - seeing this improve during the lifetime of the pilot.
- Additional support for families who have children with SEN/ND outside of school and inside of school.
- 5 ways to wellbeing interventions including physical activity 'sport on a morning'
- Creativity rooted into the whole pilot - for children, young people, parents, school staff and system partners.
- Involve role models, mentoring and coaching interventions.
- Anxiety / mental health interventions to see improvement in young people and parents/family members.
- Non-financial investments too - e.g. pledges by schools and others in the local system that means adapting practices reaps dividends - flexibilities; adjustments that don't cost money.

Design principles: individualised; strengths-based; flexible; creative; designed to promote curiosity by participants (not a passive experience); indoor and outdoor; not just memory-based assessment but visual and auditory as well); give young people trust; make uniform comfortable; flexibility for SEN participants

# Next steps

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Please come and join the next event on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December at Inspire to Learn, Normanby Road

Read more about it and book your place through

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/making-attendance-everyones-business-partner-connection-event-tickets-1069153921159>

- If you think any parents or family members that you work with would welcome and benefit from a conversation in a mini focus group to discuss what it is that would make attendance less of a struggle for them and their child/ren please email:

[Rachel.Leonard@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Leonard@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)

Rachel is Principal Educational Psychologist for the Borough and has kindly agreed to support our work to understand how we can all achieve effective parental engagement and communication to support good attendance.

# Contacts

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Get more involved in the Project in 2025 by joining or possibly leading some of the thematic solutions groups we're starting to develop. You can check out all the emerging solutions here:

[www.skyblue.org.uk/attendance/solutions](http://www.skyblue.org.uk/attendance/solutions)

Contact Amanda or Alan with your ideas for taking practical things forward that will reduce the risk, and reverse levels of persistent and severe absence in Redcar & Cleveland in future.

**Amanda Olvanhill**

**Head of Post-16 Progression and Careers**

**Education Service**

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**Alan Graver**

**Making Attendance Everyone's Business Project  
Support (Skyblue)**

**Mobile: 0794 000 4560**

**[alan@skyblue.org.uk](mailto:alan@skyblue.org.uk)**