

Making Attendance Everyone's Business in Redcar & Cleveland

Solutions Workshops

20th March 2024 and 8th May 2024

How we might approach a place-based pilot to make attendance everyone's business in Redcar & Cleveland combining a mix of interventions to help reduce the risk of, and reverse persistent and severe absence in the Borough



This Project is funded by Anglo American and managed by Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

To keep up to date on the Project and to access free and useful resources please visit

www.skyblue.org.uk/attendance

Making Attendance Everyone's Business in Redcar & Cleveland

Shaping the proposal for a Place Based Pilot



During 2023, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council convened 13 workshops engaging 104 different people across the local system to shape the UK's first [Theory of Change](#) linked to the challenge of addressing persistent and severe absence from school and college.

These workshops awakened more curiosity and knowledge about the ways in which attendance is something that many different people can or could contribute towards – across education and learning settings, the virtual school, public health, youth justice, serious violence and crime, social care, early help, family services and hubs, inclusion, welfare, attendance, the voluntary & community sector infrastructure and others.

Having spent time deeply thinking about the scale of the challenge ('the problem'), the goals and desired outcomes, people across these different settings have been enthusiastic to turn theory into practice and so for 2024 we have started to convene 'solutions workshops'.

One of the strongest supported ideas emerging towards the end of 2023 was the idea of creating the conditions for an effective place based pilot where all the learning and evidence of what works could be tested in an agreed geography to see what might be possible with concentrated effort and resourcing. Ultimately any such pilot – ideally a minimum of 2, preferably 3 years – would contribute to the prevention and reduction of PA and SA in that area and everyone would feel a part of making that possible.

In suggesting a place based pilot we recognise that there are merits and drawbacks of such an approach, and it will be important to give thought to why, where and who any such pilot would focus on based on the insight, data, evidence and lived experience that continues to be collected through the Project. There is no guarantee of course that if the pilot works well in one part of the Borough it will necessarily easily transfer or ‘lift and shift’ to another part of the Borough which is why learning through the experience is going to be so vital too.

One of the Project’s objectives is as follows: “To explore the potential for at least one place-based pilot in the R&C that could stretch every sinew and muscle we have across the local assets and the system to see what is possible to achieve by working in even more joined up ways.

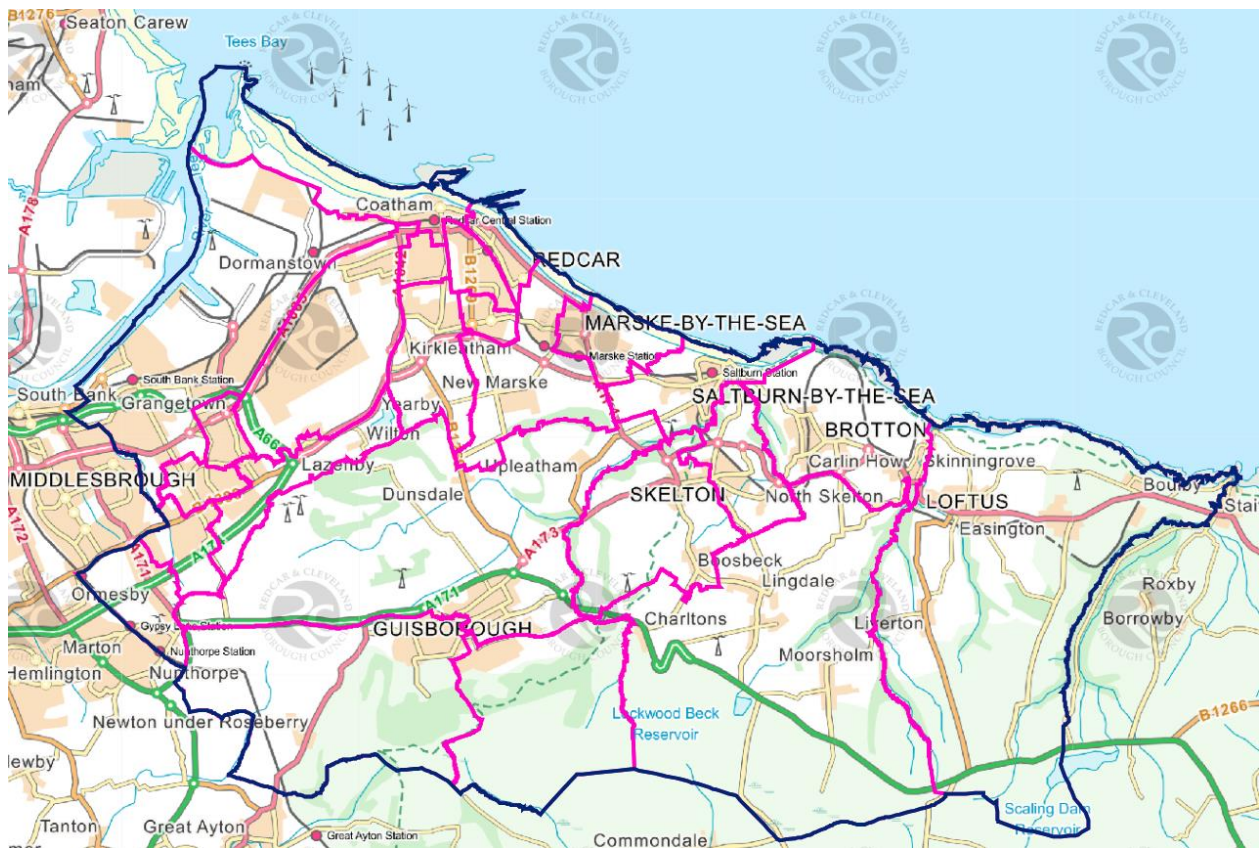
The call to action via RCBC (Project) communications in 2024: “If you have interest in this, we would like to hear from you whether to help us work out how to decide on where such a pilot could or should take place and what that might look like – or to express interest in contributing to any pilot itself should we secure appropriate funding and resources for that ambition. Can we see what is truly possible in a place when attendance is everyone’s business? What could that look and feel like for everyone involved?

At the time of writing this paper it should be made clear that no one has made any decision about the scope, location or focus of the suggested place based pilot, rather the Project Team have noticed that this idea has emerged naturally from previous workshops and feel that it is important to follow this up by collecting views and opinions about the best way to approach the idea.

No criteria have been drawn up; no fait accompli; no resource or action plan in place, just an expression of joint intent that this idea merits further energy.

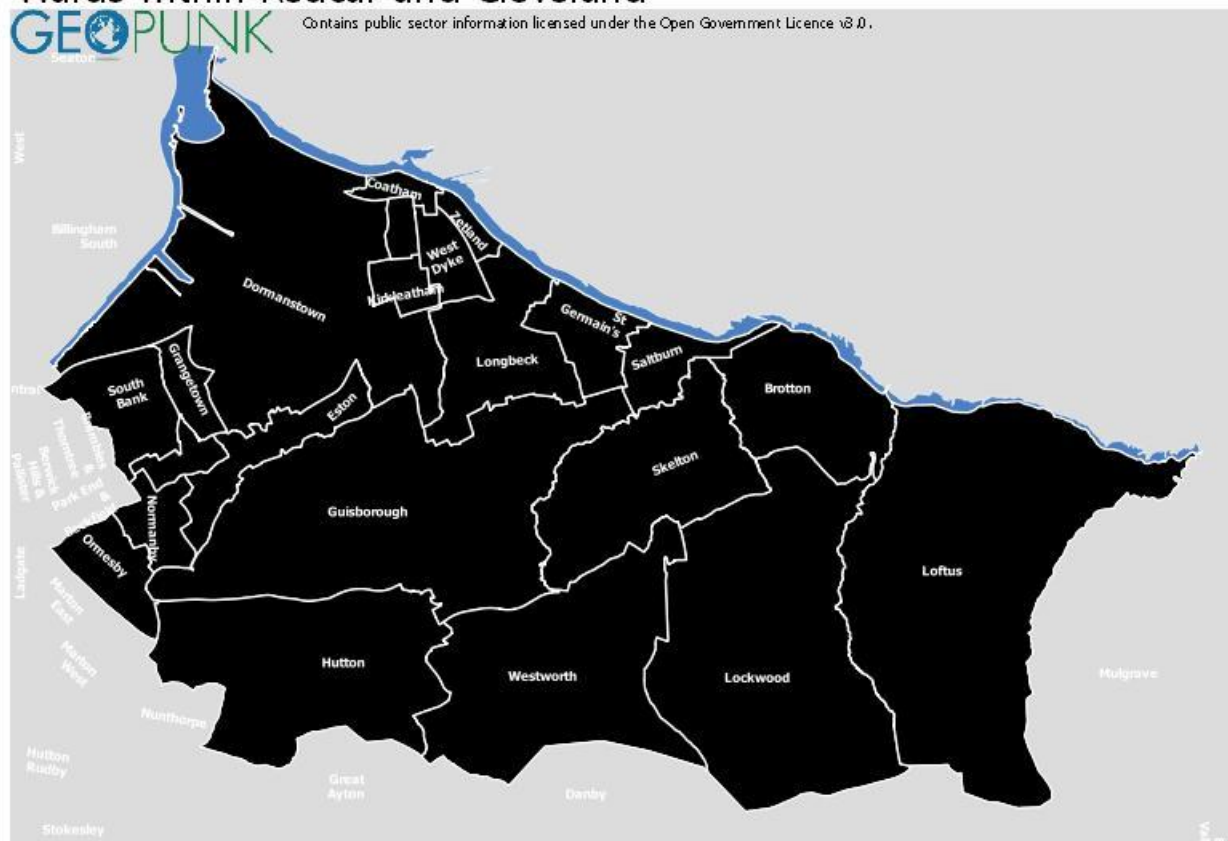
And so at the first of the series of planned solutions workshops hosted in March 2023 in Eston, c30 people gave their initial views about where any such pilot might work and why.

Five mini groups discussed the idea for 45 minutes in free flowing conversation and were each invited to share their thoughts back with the whole group to see if ideas were similar or different.



[ArcGIS Web Application](#)

Wards within Redcar and Cleveland



Initial suggestions and thinking....

Where	Why	Other comments
<p><i>"Where the steel towns were"</i></p> <p>Greater Eston</p> <p>Grangetown, Eston and the South Bank area</p>	<p>Looking at the data the highest levels of Severe Absence (SA) have been in these localities</p> <p>These places also 'linked' to highest level of domestic abuse, crime and other indices</p> <p>The new Thrive@Five Project focusing on Early Years interventions has a focus in these areas (and Dormanstown) providing an opportunity to understand attendance patterns formed at this early age and learn how to do early intervention and prevention activity</p> <p>In these areas there is good attendance at nursery and in primary schools 'that buck the trend' but opportunity to address PA/SA in the secondary schools</p> <p>There is family hub transformation in these localities and a strong voluntary and community sector with grassroots organisations in these areas</p> <p>There is multi-agency activity in these localities (including police, Youth Justice Service) with the potential for more joined up activity, working across 'system' boundaries and co-location</p> <p>The local community and lived experience in these areas have energy and strengths but also (in parts) lack the resources to connect with their aspirations e.g. with social mobility opportunities in the future (e.g. Tees Works)</p> <p>There is wider opportunity to connect with via the £20m Eston Town Deal which will look to see</p>	<p>The rationale would be to work in those areas with the highest levels of Severe Absence</p> <p>The rationale would be to work in areas where there are a disproportionate concentration of lower than average / negative outcomes not just attendance</p> <p>The rationale would be to maximise the Early Years project with its strong focus on parental engagement and build the system beyond the 0-5 age group to primary, secondary schools and post-16 in the localities – building protective factors before PA/SA dynamics occur</p> <p>There are two secondary schools in these localities that are also engaging in the Achieve Education Programme – the rationale therefore for selecting these areas is to build on and deepen that engagement with the secondary phase, and strengthening the attendance approach across the phases including transition points</p> <p>The rationale to work here therefore is around maximising the strengths of local assets and services to work around children, young people, families and each school / education setting. They provide important touchpoints with CYO / families that are at risk of or are already PA or SA and the trust they can build is a vital ingredient for any behaviour change expected in the pilot</p> <p>The rationale to work here therefore is because whilst the communities have strengths and aspirations they may disproportionately lack resources and opportunities to connect with things that CYP/families might value for the future – and to buy in to the need for good attendance by every child, families may need to feel connected to those future opportunities</p> <p>The rationale for Eston is that the pilot could connect with / complement / contribute towards wider place based investment linked to the Town Deal</p>

	the school system being open longer, with pre-school and after school and additional opportunities for people to be involved in extracurricular activities. "They will also want a school on their Board"	
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Where	Why	Other comments
East Cleveland	<p>There is a link to the 'Reimagining Redcar & Cleveland' systems change work looking at in work poverty and causal influences how to do early intervention and prevention activity</p> <p>The locality scores 'high' on the index of multiple deprivation across several domains but there is regeneration activity going on in the locality to address this There is familiarity within these communities and "historically you'd think people on those communities would access services in those communities."</p> <p>There are strong, trusted local community assets such as Loftus Community Centre and Loftus Youth Centre, the library and Skelton Family Hub offering the opportunity for putting in welcoming, accessible drop ins for children, young people & families with numerous services to cluster around them appropriately</p> <p>The secondary school is also said to be keen on pilots and their engagement would be important for any pilot selected here</p> <p>The Loftus Ward Councillor has reported a strong enthusiasm for doing some parent-peer based pilot activity based on experience of this Project and known local community needs</p>	<p>The groups suggested that there is a lack of services, opportunity, and the economy is different here compared to the West of the Borough so perhaps working in this area 'levels up' the opportunities</p> <p>Again, the potential to build on the ambitions to create opportunity and address some of the entrenched root causes that partly explain why some CYP/families become PA or SA The local insight suggests that the strong sense of community here is an asset, and any pilot would therefore hope to be able to communicate messages to whole families "as you have lots of families there for years / generations."</p> <p>To reach CYP / families that are persistently or severely absent means going 'where they are' which is therefore not always their school – local trusted community spaces, places and / or outreach services or hubs would provide opportunities for reaching them and building their trust and co-ordinating 'team around models' in a joined up way. A willing secondary school partner and feeder primaries would be important for the pilot too in this locality.</p> <p>There may be an immediate opportunity to lever in Big Local funding to support some pilot activity in Loftus / East Cleveland for 2024-2025 that could usefully catalyse parent peer support interventions as part of a wider</p>

		ambition to prevent and reduce PA & SA in the locality
Where	Why	Other comments
Guisborough	<p>HTs already beginning to work together. "Might not meet some of the <i>deprivation</i> criteria but could be a smaller scale pathfinder to do some trial learning before applying in a more complex situation."</p> <p>Quite self-contained providing something pragmatic for a place based project to build from</p>	<p>This would mean the pilot is likely to be working in a locality where there is a willingness of schools to be involved as they are already collaborating on other things</p> <p>Selecting this locality is "<i>choosing a project that is doable with motivation.</i>"</p>

Other reflections from participants that could inform a place based pilot(s)

In the identification of any place(s) for a pilot there ought to be consideration of:

- **Deprivation indices**
- **The actual levels of attendance at schools i.e. and working in area(s) where PA/SA rates were highest or at greatest risk of increasing in the next 2-3 years**
- **A holistic view of 'what's happening in places' not just the deficit-based data around attendance**
 - *"Do we go for a place that is most in need (most deprived / worst attendance rates) or 'somewhere in the middle'?"*
 - *"Do we do it on strengths or weakness approach?"*
 - *"Build on strong practice elsewhere."*
- **The essential requirement for any schools in the pilot area to be fully engaged**
 - *"You've got to have buy in from the school and not just lip service."*
 - *"Work in an area with schools that really need early intervention."*
 - *"Could we work in a way that engages 'school clusters' and work with those that buy in and say, 'yes we really want to do that'?"*
- **The wider investment landscape in places across the Borough**
 - *"Can it develop into a strategic conversation - this school will be getting money from here, then there are attendance hubs over there - instead of putting all our eggs in the same place?"*
 - *"We know there is opportunity for private sector investment to support 'big' outcomes for 1-2 things across the entire Borough, so how could this pilot support that ambition around outcomes for our children, young people and families? 'Attendance' in of itself as a topic might not be the correct framing to attract that wider investment so how do we think about this as well?"*

Next steps

1. The Project Team will continue to take views and opinions about the place based pilot idea into the summer as well as do some bespoke place based data analysis around attendance rates to further inform discussions. **Interested in the data?** Please see: [Data and intelligence \(skyblue.org.uk\)](https://skyblue.org.uk) and scroll down to the 'Spring 2024' presentation, slides 10 & 11 for ward data.
2. There was some appetite by people attending the 20th of March workshop to convene again to discuss this specific idea further. It would be important to include a much wider set of voices of course if any place based pilot is going to be 'owned' by that place – that community, the schools and nurseries therein and importantly the children, young people and families that will likely have the solutions for services and agencies to support and encourage. The Project Team will look to host either a further in-person workshop or online session accordingly; [as well as engage in conversations with the Healthy Communities Team and the Police to bring in their new local insights and rationale for working in different places in the Borough.](#)
3. Given the specific suggestion to explore the potential for working in Loftus by one of the workshop participants the Project team will also have a follow up conversation about that activity as we don't want the Project in any way to stifle energy and momentum to do something positive around preventing and reducing persistent and severe absence.
4. Given the connection made to 'Thrive@Five' the Project team will have further conversations to understand the planned activity in the selected localities for that Early Years intervention activity in case there are useful synergies particularly around models of parental support and engagement.
5. As any place based pilot might require additional resources the Project Team will have conversations with potential investors to understand their place based working rationale, preferences and intentions to complement the work looking at data and lived experience.

If meantime, you read this paper and would like to keep involved in this conversation or contribute ideas or data or experiences of having been involved in place based pilots before so we can learn from those lessons and cautionary tales please email Amanda.Olvanhill@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk and alan@skyblue.org.uk

