

EDUCATION SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE – DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 This report outlines some of the work carried out by the Education Social Welfare Service in the Academic Year 2007/08. Its release was delayed because national and regional attendance data was not made available by the Department Of Children, Schools and Families [DCSF] until 26 February 2009.

1.1 The report identifies that school attendance fell slightly in Wirral primary schools from **94.73%** in 2006/07 to **94.68%** in 2007/08 **[-0.05%]**, in line with national trends, but improved markedly in Wirral secondary schools from **92.18%** in 2006/07 to **93.23%** in 2007/08 **[+1.05%]**. Special school attendance also improved considerably from **91.26%** in 2006/07 to **92.39%** in 2007/08 **[+1.13%]**.

1.2 The report outlines some of the achievements of the Service over the year including:

- Implementing the Persistent Absence Agenda. Pupils with attendance below 80% are defined as Persistently Absent [PA]. Wirral was one of the most improved Local Authorities in the country, reducing the proportion of Persistently Absent pupils in secondary schools from **7.1%** in 2006/07 to **4.9%** in 2007/08.
- Supporting multidisciplinary Area Teams.
- Improving the attendance and achievement of Children In Care as part of the Virtual School. The proportion of Children In Care who missed 25 days or more at school was reduced from **13.96%** [against a national figure of 13.0%] in 2006/07 to **9.35%** in 2007/08 [against a national figure of 11.9%].
- Raising awareness of the risks relating to Child Employment.
- Identifying and tracking children not receiving a suitable education.
- Working in partnership with Merseyside Police on Truancy Sweeps.
- Contributing to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
- Providing an outreach service to children out of school in partnership with the Youth Service through the Konnecta Bus Project.
- Supporting families at times of greatest need through the Pressure Point Support Project.

1.3 The report also seeks to analyse the effectiveness of the Service and gives details of Fixed Penalty Notices issued and parents prosecuted for failing to ensure their children attend school regularly.

2. BACKGROUND

2.0 The Education Social Welfare Service seeks to ensure that every child/young person receives the maximum benefit from the education opportunities provided by the Local Authority. The Service utilises a range of strategies and interventions, working in partnership with children and young people, parents and

families, school staff and other agencies to overcome barriers to education and achieve improved outcomes. The Service also collects, collates and analyses attendance data from schools and supports and challenges school staff in their efforts to improve attendance.

- 2.1 The Education Social Welfare Service works within a legal framework and is directly concerned to enable the Local Authority to discharge its legal obligations. Particularly, the Service is concerned to ensure that the various relevant Acts of Parliament are applied for the benefit of children fairly and equally. Relevant legislation includes Children's and Young Person's Act (1969), Education Acts (1981, 1996 and 2002), Children's Acts (1989 and 2004).
- 2.2 The Service provides a named Education Social Worker to support each school in improving attendance. The amount of time allocated to each school is dependent on need taking into account authorised and unauthorised absence, number of pupil sessions missed, proportion of Free School Meals, number of pupils with Special Educational Needs, and other relevant factors. Each school receives an annual audit on attendance and is supported in producing an Action Plan to improve attendance.
- 2.3 The Service is involved in a number of strategies which impact on school attendance. These include:
 - Engaging all schools in the Persistent Absence Agenda, which is a national strategy aimed at reducing the proportion of pupils whose level of school attendance falls below 80%.
 - Contributing to the Wirral's eleven multidisciplinary Area Teams, assisting in the delivery of the Team Around The Child Model [formerly known as the Child Concern Model] and ensuring school attendance remains a priority within developing services.
 - Managing the collection, collation, and analysis of school attendance data.
 - Coordinating Truancy Sweeps and liaising with Merseyside Police.
 - Contributing to the Antisocial Behaviour Team, Respect Panels, Anti-Social Behaviour Governance Group and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committee [MARAC].
 - Contributing to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and working with other agencies to ensure children are protected.
 - Improving the attendance of Children In Care and contributing to the Virtual School Staff Group.
 - Safeguarding children and young people against the dangers of illegal employment and raising awareness of the risks of child employment.
 - Identifying and tracking children not receiving a suitable education.
 - Contributing to the resolution of school exclusion issues.
 - Assisting in the assessment of children who may have special educational needs.
 - Contributing to the multidisciplinary Solutions Team to support the behaviour and attendance of pupils in our special schools with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties [SEBD].
 - Contributing to Wirral's Youth Offending Service in the assessment, support and supervision of young offenders and those at risk of offending.
 - Contributing to the Integrated Youth Support Strategy.
 - Contributing to the Department's five Every Child Matters Outcome Groups, particularly the Staying Safe and Enjoy and Achieve Groups.
 - Contributing to the monitoring of children who are educated at home.
 - Contributing to the Local Authority's work on bullying.

- Liasing with Wirral Magistrate's Courts, issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecuting parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- The Pressure Point Support Project which provides flexible early intervention to support children and families in need in some of Wirral's most deprived wards.
- The Konnecta Bus Project is operated in partnership with the Youth Service and a number of other partner agencies and provides outreach support to young people out of school, helping them to overcome barriers to education.

2.4 Although average attendance in Wirral primary schools fell slightly the DCSF's Public Service Agreement Target of reducing school absence levels by 8% of the 2002/03 figure by 2008 has been achieved both locally and nationally.

2.5 New targets for school attendance involve the concept of Persistent Absence which is discussed further in Section 7.

3. PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

3.0 Primary attendance fell both locally and nationally and this is believed to be because of an increase in levels of sickness during the year. Wirral's primary school attendance deteriorated slightly from **94.73%** in 2006/07 to **94.68%** in 2007/08 and remains marginally below the national average of **94.74%** [see **Table 6.1**]. By comparison with geographical neighbours Wirral's primary school attendance ranks as fourth of six, 0.28% behind the highest ranking authority of Sefton [see **Table 6.2**]. By comparison with statistical neighbours, Wirral's primary school attendance ranks tenth of eleven, 0.39% behind the highest ranking authority of Bury [see **Table 6.3**].

3.1 Analysis of primary school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:

- Dawpool Primary School had the highest attendance at **97.12%**.
- The four primary schools with most improved attendance by comparison with 2006/07 were Leasowe Primary [**+1.81%**], Portland Primary [**+1.64%**], St Peter's RC [Noctorum] [**+1.63%**], and Manor Primary [**+1.41%**].
- 41 primary schools had attendance above the national average of **94.74%**.
- 13 primary schools had attendance below 93% compared with 16 primary schools in 2006/07.
- Three primary schools had attendance below 92% compared with six schools in 2006/07.
- One primary school had attendance below 90%, as was the case in 2006/07 and this had improved attendance.

4. SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

4.0 Secondary school attendance improved from **92.18%** in 2006/07 to **93.23%** in 2007/08 and has moved significantly above the national average of **92.66%** [see **Table 6.1**]. By comparison with geographical neighbours this ranks as second of six behind only Sefton where secondary attendance was **93.24%** [see **Table 6.2**]. By comparison with statistical neighbours Wirral secondary school attendance ranks as fourth of eleven although only 0.29% behind highest ranking Darlington. The improvement in secondary school attendance is believed to be largely a consequence of the introduction of the Persistent Absence Agenda which is outlined in some detail in Section 7.

- 4.1 Analysis of secondary school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:
- Wirral Girls Grammar had the highest attendance at **96.13%** and five secondary schools had attendance of above 95%.
 - The three secondary schools with most improved attendance by comparison with 2006/07 were Wallasey High [**+3.93%**], Park High [**+2.07%**] and Rock Ferry High School [**+1.55%**].
 - 14 secondary schools had attendance above the national average of **92.66%**.
 - Nine secondary schools had attendance below 93% compared with fifteen schools in 2006/07.
 - Five secondary schools had attendance below 92% compared with eight schools in 2006/07.
 - One secondary school had attendance below 90% compared with three in 2006/07 and this had improved attendance.

5. SPECIAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

5.0 Special school attendance improved from **91.26%** in 2006/07 to **92.39%** in 2007/08. National and regional comparisons are not currently available. The improvement in special school attendance reflects much improved attendance in some of our schools for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties [SEBD]. It is believed the work of the multidisciplinary Solutions Team has contributed to this.

5.1 Analysis of special school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:

- Orrets Meadow had the highest attendance at **94.61%**.
- The two special schools with most improved attendance were Observatory School [**+10.43%**] and Kilgarth School [**+5.46%**].
- Five special schools had below 93% attendance compared with seven schools in 2006/07.
- Four special schools had below 92% attendance compared with five schools in 2006/07.
- Two special schools had below 90% attendance compared with three schools in 2006/07. One of these had improved attendance.

6. COMPARATIVE ATTENDANCE DATA

6.0 Comparisons are based on Census Returns and are still provisional for 2007/08.

Table 6.1: National Comparison

Primary Attendance	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	%	%	%	%	%	
Wirral	94.51	94.54	94.37	94.11	94.73	94.68
National	94.19	94.51	94.57	94.24	94.82	94.74
Secondary Attendance						
Wirral	92.24	92.24	92.45	92.11	92.18	93.23
National	91.72	91.95	92.18	92.08	92.14	92.66
Special Attendance						
Wirral	91.69	91.43	91.12	90.42	91.26	92.39

Table 6.2: Geographical Neighbour Comparison

Primary Attendance	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	%	%	%	%	%	
Sefton	94.32	94.46	94.65	94.21	94.87	94.96
St Helens	94.28	94.34	94.39	94.02	94.4	94.90
Halton	94.18	94.56	94.64	94.22	94.68	94.78
Wirral	94.51	94.54	94.37	94.11	94.73	94.68
Knowsley	93.55	93.63	93.77	93.55	93.94	93.99
Liverpool	93.4	93.6	93.77	93.49	93.97	93.94
Secondary Attendance						
Sefton	92.19	92.42	92.64	92.57	92.68	93.24
Wirral	92.24	92.24	92.45	92.11	92.18	93.23
Halton	89.95	89.79	90.48	90.63	91.9	92.46
St Helens	91.48	91.82	91.72	91.88	91.34	92.40
Liverpool	89.67	89.87	90.29	90.33	91.2	91.60
Knowsley	88.7	90.21	90.69	90.17	90.26	90.05

Table 6.3: Statistical Neighbour Comparison

Primary	2007/08	Secondary	2007/08
	%		%
Bury	95.07	Darlington	93.52
Lancashire	95.07	Bury	93.43
Stockton-on-Tees	95.02	Sefton	93.24
Telford & Wrekin	95.02	Wirral	93.23
Sefton	94.96	Lancashire	92.89
St Helens	94.90	Stockton-on-Tees	92.82
Darlington	94.80	Tameside	92.59
Halton	94.78	Halton	92.46
Tameside	94.75	St Helens	92.40
Wirral	94.68	Telford & Wrekin	92.31
Leeds	94.67	Leeds	91.66

7. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

7.0 In December 2006 the Department Of Children, Schools and Families introduced the concept of Persistent Absence [PA]. Pupils with below 80% attendance are defined as Persistently Absent. Secondary schools with more than 10% of their population within this category in the first two terms of 2005/06 were defined as Priority Schools for 2006/07. Wirral had eight such secondary schools.

7.1 Priority Schools were required to:

- Produce an individual action plan with each child whose attendance was below 80%. The action plan would include an attendance target and outline how they would improve attendance. It would be reviewed at least each half term [in practice schools reviewed them every 3 or 4 weeks].
- Report on the attendance of each pupil whose attendance drops below 80% to the Local Authority each half term and this information would be anonymised and passed on to the DCSF.
- Complete a self-assessment relating to systems for improving attendance and produce a short term school action plan and review these each half term.

- 7.2 The Education Social Welfare Service provided additional support to the eight secondary schools with a focus on strategic advice. We also facilitated half-termly Attendance Leaders Network Meetings with a focus on sharing good practice.
- 7.3 Seven of the eight schools showed a reduction in the number of pupils who were Persistently Absent during the year and five of these schools reduced the level of Persistent Absence to below 10%.
- 7.4 For 2007/08 the threshold for Persistent Absence [attendance below 80%] in defining Priority Secondary Schools was reduced from 10% to 9% of the pupils on roll, with a target of **5%** across secondary aged pupils by 2011. For 2007/08 there were seven secondary schools with PA above 9% in Wirral.
- 7.5 All seven schools showed a reduction in PA in the range 35% to 67% compared with baseline figures. In fact the DCSF judged us as among the most improved of the 55 Local Authorities taking part nationally. Overall PA in secondary schools was reduced from **7.1%** in 2006/07 to **4.9%** in 2007/08, over-achieving our target of **6.4%**.
- 7.6 The Service also worked in partnership with the Primary Behaviour Manager and the Education Psychology Service in setting up half-termly Attendance Leaders Network Meetings with a focus on sharing good practice for seven identified primary schools. All seven showed improved attendance.

8. MULTIDISCIPLINARY AREA TEAMS

- 8.0 The Every Child Matters Agenda and the Children's Act 2004 gave a strong focus to the following five outcomes for children and young people:
- Be healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic well-being
- 8.1 On Wirral this legislation also led to the formation of the Department of Children and Young People and the setting up of eleven multidisciplinary Area Teams which were set up across Wirral's 22 wards. Each Team contributes to one of the four districts.
- 8.2 The Teams were initially set up as Virtual Teams, meeting each fortnight with a view to eventual co-location. Each Team has a Social Worker, Family Support Worker, Education Psychologist, Education Social Worker, Extended Schools Coordinator, Connexions Personal Advisor, School Nurse, and Faith And Voluntary Sector Representative. A number of other agencies also link in to the Team.

- 8.3 The Education Social Welfare Service contributes to all eleven Area Teams with the amount of time given to each Team based on the needs of the schools within the area. This has assisted in raising awareness of the issue of school attendance amongst colleagues and in developing a multidisciplinary approach to improving attendance. Education Social Workers are fully trained and experienced in the use of the Team Around The Child Model.
- 8.4 The Service currently seconds two workers [1.5 posts] as Area Team Leaders and has also contributed to the Remodelling Social Work Pilot Programme in the Birkenhead/ Tranmere/ Rock Ferry Area where the Area Team is co-located with Social Care's Assessment Team.

9. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN IN CARE

- 9.0 The level of school attendance of Wirral's Children In Care [CIC] is monitored by the Department Of Health alongside a range of other comparative data in the annual OC2 return, which is submitted each November. The measure used is the proportion of Children In Care [Looked after for twelve months or more on 30 September] who have missed more than 25 days of education during the previous academic year. After a very disappointing outcome in 2006/07 when IT software problems disrupted our ability to track pupils closely and intervene early, the figure for 2007/08 is very much improved. A comparison with national data is given below:

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Wirral	16.4%	16.3%	13.85%	12.6%	13.96%	9.35%
National	12.4%	12.3%	12.6%	13.3%	13.0%	11.9%

- 9.1 This represents a considerable improvement and reflects the hard work of a number of people including foster carers, the Virtual School Staff Team, school staff, the CIC Attendance Officer, Children In Care Education Team, social workers, and of course the children themselves. Analysis of the absence codes used and underlying reasons for the poor attendance reveals the same factors identified in previous years. These include sickness, emotional and behavioural issues, mental health issues, disaffection, exclusions, and family problems. Each of these issues are addressed in the Virtual School Development Plan.
- 9.2 We believe the most powerful factor in improving the attendance of Children In Care in 2007/08 was the improvement in systems for tracking their attendance using a software product called ONE Attendance. Monthly meetings involving the Head Teacher of the Virtual School, the CIC Attendance Officer, and others were used to review the attendance of all Children In Care. If a pupil's attendance dropped below 90% we were able to review the details and intervene if necessary. The intervention might be as simple as a telephone call to set a date for a meeting following a pupil's exclusion or to arrange transport for a pupil who had moved to stay with his aunt or to ask for work to be sent home to a girl who had broken her leg. In many cases this early intervention was enough to ensure that the pupil's attendance did not drop below 87% [or 25 school days missed].

9.3 Other measures to improve the attendance of Children In Care include:

- The deployment of a CIC Home School Attendance Officer working with a caseload of up to 20 pupils. She has established close links with schools which have a high proportion of Looked After Children and has also been involved in setting up improved monitoring systems and support for pupils resident in Children’s Homes.
- Using a system of standard letters to carers of pupils with excellent and improved attendance and expressing concern when attendance drops below 90%. Also implementing a system of rewards and certificates for pupils with excellent and improved attendance.
- Ensuring the issue of attendance is highlighted in training to foster carers and designing and distributing a leaflet to support this. Also providing additional training to foster carers to enhance their skills in managing children’s emotional and behavioural difficulties through the Protective Behaviours Programme funded through the Children’s Fund.
- Continuing to develop excellent links with the Child And Adolescent Mental Health Service and adopting a multidisciplinary approach to meet the needs of Children In Care with emotional and behavioural utilising the support of Response, Learning Mentors, Education Social Workers, School Nurses and other agencies as appropriate.
- Reducing the number of exclusions by putting in place multidisciplinary meetings to devise and implement Action Plans for Children In Care whose behaviour in school is presenting behaviour management problems.
- Addressing the problems created by placement disruption by initiating a recruitment drive to increase the number of suitable foster carers on Wirral. It is envisaged that with more foster carers available we will be able to improve our matching of the needs of Children In Care including placing them near to where they already attend school.
- Education Social Welfare Service liaising with schools and other agencies to ensure the needs of Children In Care are prioritised [for example, for Learning Mentor support or for an alternative curriculum for pupils who have become disaffected].
- Implementing a Multidisciplinary Panel System to support and challenge Children In Care and carers when attendance does not improve following intervention.

9.4 Our target was to reduce the proportion of Children In Care who miss 25 days or more to 11% by September 2009 and having already achieved this we need to continue to work together to further improve the attendance and achievement of Children In Care.

10. CHILD EMPLOYMENT

	No of Permits Issued 06/07	No of Permits Issued 07/08	Yr on Yr % +/-	Comments
Work permits	287	223	-22.3%	Reduction in the number of employment permits issued reflects a greater focus on raising awareness of the issues in schools.

10.0 All young people of compulsory school age who work are required to have a work permit. It is the employer’s responsibility to obtain this from the Local Authority.

The table shows a reduction in the number of work permits issued by comparison with 2006/07. This reflects at least two factors. Firstly there has been a greater focus on working with schools to raise awareness of the risks involved in child employment both via Personal Social and Health Education and via leaflets for pupils, parents and staff. Secondly there has been significant growth in the monitoring of performances [see below].

- 10.1 In November 2007, the NNCEE lobbied parliament regarding the legislation covering child employment and entertainment and a new DVD was launched by the NNCEE and ITV. The DVD was introduced to the Local Authorities and regions in January 2008. The 15 minute DVD was made in conjunction with ITV to help raise awareness/support at local government level and to influence the need for change in the current legislation most of which was written in the 1960's and is still applicable in 2008. Contributors to the DVD included Sir Trevor McDonald, GMTV Presenters, William Roach and numerous cast members of Coronation Street and Emmerdale along with some young people who had suffered horrific injuries at work and a parent who son had died delivering newspapers.
- 10.2 A consultation took place in February 2008 in which LEAs and industry were asked about what improvements they wanted to see. The primary aim is to bring the legislation into the 21st Century and to improve consistency by LEAs in the interpretation of the existing regulations. This push by the NNCEE and industry including ITV, Stagecoach etc. resulted in the DCSF promising to update the guidance in 2009.

	Number Issued 06/07	Number Issued 07/08	Yr on Yr % +/-	Comments
Performance Licences	310	268	-13.5%	59 licences issued for broadcast performances inc TV/Film. 138 licences issued for modelling 71 licences issued for theatre performances
Exemptions from Licence	1201	2194	+83%	2194 children from Wirral performing but exempt from licence requirement. 50 Performances given over 48 days.
Body of Persons Performance Approval	15 applications 381 children	15 applications 516 children	+35%	516 children were involved in 15 productions (65 performances)
Chaperone/Matron Approval	25	21 With 15 pending.	+31%	18 chaperones/matrons have received Child Protection Training.

- 10.3 Depending on the circumstances, young people of school age performing in public, may require a licence to do so. This includes singing, dancing, acting, modelling, etc. particularly if the event is organised for profit. There have been significant increases in the numbers of children's performances and chaperones/matrons approved. Working in conjunction with local groups and performance venues we have been able to increase awareness of the issues of safeguarding children.

11. PUPILS MISSING FROM EDUCATION

11.0 The Service fulfils the Local Authority's responsibility to track pupils who are missing from education. When a pupil leaves a school their school file is usually transferred on to his or her next school. If a pupil leaves a school without the parents giving details of their next school, the school is required to upload the file onto the national Missing Pupil Database. The Service uses a number of methods to locate the child and to ensure they are receiving appropriate education. The Service also tracks pupils who move into Wirral from other areas. Data for the last three years is given in the table below.

YEAR	Missing Pupils From Wirral schools or Out of Area pupil found missing in Wirral	Missing Pupils who have re-entered education or who are being monitored into education	Missing Pupils not yet located (Destination School not established)
2005/2006	91	79	8 *
2006/2007	96	69	8*
2007/2008	59	53	6*

* In these cases tracking procedures are ongoing to establish the whereabouts of the missing pupils. We have some idea of the likely whereabouts of many of them e.g. moved to a new local address; moved out of area or abroad; or the new school has failed to notify the previous school of a new pupil joining their school, etc. For example, two children are believed to have returned to Poland and another to Ireland but addresses are as yet unknown. We have tracked pupils as far a field as Canada, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

- 11.1 The table above shows a reduced number of pupils missing from education. This may be partly due to an improved response from schools in tracking pupils who leave without needing to define them as missing.
- 11.2 The Missing Pupil Policy and Procedures were reissued to all schools in January 2007 incorporating a new checklist designed to assist schools in the referral process along with the revised procedures and referral form.
- 11.3 The procedure also applies to children who attend independent schools in the area as they could also become missing from education. All independent schools have been provided with a copy of the missing pupil procedures, resulting in several enquiries and referrals, which have resulted in our monitoring a number of pupils into other independent schools.
- 11.4 Information regarding Children Missing From Education is fed into Local Safeguarding Board systems on a quarterly basis.

12. TRUANCY SWEEPS

12.0 Although Truancy Sweeps are no longer a mandatory requirement, the ESW Service has continued to work in partnership with Merseyside Police utilising these as an effective means of getting the message across that children should be in school unless there is a very good reason. In line with DCSF guidance we have continued to develop our local arrangements as part of the fight against truancy and antisocial behaviour. Although the table below shows a reduction in the number of Truancy Sweeps from the previous year, the comparison is not like for like as some sweeps were half-days and others were full days. The sweeps have been increasingly focused on areas where young people have been seen truanting or there has been antisocial behaviour based on reports from police, the local community and other agencies.

12.1 <u>Outcomes</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Total number of sweeps	7	17	13
Total number of pupils stopped	116	215	129
Pupils accompanied by an adult	37	138	50
Total pupils stopped with valid reason	36	94	50
Primary pupils with valid reason	5	28	7
Secondary pupils with valid reason	31	66	43
Boys stopped with a valid reason	27	59	32
Girls stopped with a valid reason	9	35	18
Total pupils stopped without a valid reason	80	121	79
Primary pupils without valid reason	12	37	13
Secondary pupils without a valid reason	68	84	66
Boys stopped without a valid reason	55	64	49
Girls stopped without a valid reason	25	57	30

<u>Reasons Given</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Truancy	38	38	50
Shopping	2	5	1
Awaiting school transfer	3	1	0
Overslept	14	9	14
Ill (with parent)	12	34	18
Medical or dental appointment	0	34	19
Birthday	1	0	1
Late	2	0	0
No Uniform	2	0	0
Problem at school	1	2	1
Inset day or study leave	0	17	19
Excluded	0	6	2
School closed	0	5	2
Religious observance	0	1	0
Bereavement	0	2	2
No school place	0	1	1
Other valid reason	1	36	1
Other invalid reason	0	24	9

13. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM

- 13.0 Wirral Education Social Welfare Services second an Education Social Worker for 17.5 hours per week to the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The secondment continues to be beneficial to both parties through providing a direct information exchange link.
- 13.1 The secondment enables ESW representation at a number of multi-agency groups which usually meet monthly. These include:
- The Antisocial Behaviour Governance Group which reviews crime and anti-social behaviour statistics and can be used to target Truancy Sweeps and/or identify venues for the Konnecta Bus.
 - The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee which reviews cases involving Domestic Violence seeking to ensure victims and children are supported and safeguarded. Information is shared with those who need it. There were 446 such incidents last year.
 - Problem Solving Group Meetings consider how different agencies can work together to address and reduce antisocial behaviour in particular areas. We have successfully engaged a number of secondary schools in this process and again Truancy Sweeps and/or the Konnecta Bus may form part of the response.
 - Antisocial Behaviour Case Conferences discuss individual cases and may lead to the use of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or to an Antisocial Behaviour Order via court.
- 13.2 A very innovative part of this work has been the Respect Programme For Primary Schools Project which was nominated for a national Local Government Chronicle Award. The aim of the course is to promote children's understanding of the harm caused by antisocial behaviour and of the work done by the partner agencies. Various members of the Team and other agencies contribute to a six week course in schools. Last year eleven primary schools involving 560 pupils took part. The project gives an opportunity for the children to visit a magistrates court and has provided opportunities to enhance magistrates' and clerks' understanding of ESW procedures which sometimes lead to prosecutions. The children also benefited from a trip to Cheshire Lines to learn about the use of CCTV cameras and to work alongside Merseyrail and Arriva staff.

14. KONNECTA BUS

- 14.0 The Konnecta Bus Project is operated in collaboration with the Youth Service and a number of other partner agencies and provides outreach support to young people out of school, helping them to overcome barriers to education. Partner agencies include Brooke Advisory Service, Connexions, Maritime Housing, Pentra Training Services, PPS Impact Project, Regenda, Response, Wirral Housing Partnership, and Wirral Wardens. It began operating in September 2002. The project operates over the whole of the Wirral and visited all 22 wards during 2007/08. The total number of contacts made was 616 compared with 668 in 2006/07. This may reflect a period of staff sickness when the bus was used less.
- 14.1 The Konnecta Bus provides young people with an opportunity to discuss any issues or problems they are experiencing in a safe, welcoming, non-threatening environment. This enables them to access services and support. Feedback is given to school staff as appropriate. The Team have also worked with schools in

providing group work focusing on a number of issues including transition from primary to secondary school and improving attendance and punctuality.

- 14.2 Most contacts have been made with Year 10 [184] and Year 11 [141] pupils although there have also been significant contacts with Year 8 [60], Year 9 [79], Sixth Formers [97] and those not in education, employment or training [42]. Feedback from service users has been very positive. One young person commented: "I can get into school more now that my Year Head knows about my family problems".

15. PRESSURE POINT SUPPORT PROJECT

- 15.0 The Pressure Point Support Project is funded by the Children's Fund and provides flexible early intervention to support children and families in need in some of Wirral's most deprived wards. The project has been operating for more than five years. In 2007/08 the project supported 195 families from 45 different primary schools compared with 193 families the previous year. Since its inception in April 2003 the project has helped 788 families and 897 children. Although most referrals were from schools, referrals were also accepted from Social Care, Health Visitors, Child And Family Service, Community Paediatricians, School Nurses, Education Psychologists and other agencies. Self-referrals were also accepted.

- 15.1 Issues addressed included work on parenting skills, reducing risk-taking behaviour, managing aggressive or unacceptable behaviour, self-esteem, mental health, bereavement, relationships, bullying, transition to secondary school, and alcohol and drug misuse. The project worked in partnership with a wide range of agencies including Social Care, Child And Family Service, School Nurses, Housing Associations, Police, Wirral Autistic Society, Catholic Children's Society, Citizens Advice Bureau, Leonard Cheshire Homes, Victim Support, Youth Inclusion Support Programme, Multi-Cultural Centre and the Leapfrog Project. The fast, flexible and practical response was valued by service-users. Feedback from children, parents, and other agencies has been extremely positive.

- 15.2 Service users, Head Teachers and other professionals have been very complimentary about the service provided. One Head Teacher commented: "I hold the service in the highest regard. It provides an invaluable link in the support chain between school and families." Another Head Teacher said: "The teachers and myself are very impressed by the availability of the service, the response to referrals, and the type of work undertaken."

16. EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE

16.0 Referral statistics.

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Total Number of Referrals	1386	1410	1461
Primary	448 (32%)	478 (34%)	464 (32%)
Secondary	949 (68%)	932 (66%)	997 (68%)

16.1 Effectiveness of Intervention

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Number of cases where attendance improved	723 (52%)	755 (54%)	766 (52%)
Number of cases where attendance fell	292 (21%)	296 (21%)	203 (14%)
Number of cases where no change was effected [including insufficient attendance data collected].	371 (27%)	359 (25%)	492 (34%)

16.2 Prosecution Procedure Outcomes

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Number of cases where ESW visited home	1262	1302	1305
Number of cases involving Team Leader Interviews	391	377	361
Number of Prosecutions (including pending)	75	73	52

<u>Disposals</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Cases dealt with by courts	60	56	37
Number pending	15	17	15
Withdrawn	2	5	5
Conditional Discharge	12	8	1
Fines ranging from £25 - £400	43	35	31
Parenting Orders	2	2	0

16.3 The number of referrals to the Service has increased steadily over recent years and showed an 18.5% increase on the figure for 2003/04 of 1190. Around two thirds of our referrals come from secondary schools. Our intervention was successful in improving attendance in 52% of cases. 27.7% of cases involve Team Leader Interviews at which parents are asked to discuss the situation in detail and sign an Action Plan / Parenting Contract. Prosecution of parents is seen as a last resort and happens in less than 5% of the cases we deal with. The majority of prosecutions are dealt with by fines between £25 and £400. The Service believes Parenting Orders can be effective in some cases and is working with magistrates and clerks of court to convey this.

16.4 Cases which are prosecuted are routinely tracked for 12 months. Last year 63% of such cases showed an improvement in attendance with 29% showing a deterioration in the level of attendance.

17. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

17.0 In September 2007 new legislation came into force which required Local Authorities, schools and Police Authorities to work together to agree revisions to existing Fixed Penalty Notice Protocols. The ESW Service took the leading role in this process, consulting with primary and secondary Head Teachers, Merseyside Police, Local Authority colleagues and other stakeholders. The revised protocol was agreed by Cabinet in June 2008.

17.1 The protocol enables police and schools to refer requests for Fixed Penalty Notices to the ESW Service in specific circumstances. These are in relation to:

- Parents of pupils stopped by police in a public place during the first five days of any school exclusion.
- Parents of pupils repeatedly stopped by police on Truancy Sweeps.
- Parents of pupils who fail to cooperate with School Attendance Panels and Parenting Contracts.
- Parents of pupils taking unauthorised holidays during term time.

17.2 During 2007/08, 16 Warning Letters and 10 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued by the ESW Service compared with 21 Warning Letters and 18 Fixed Penalty Notices the previous year. It should be noted that the new protocol was only introduced in June 2008, however, and greater numbers of Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices are now being issued. The ESW Service sees this as a very useful strategy in improving attendance, particularly for its deterrent impact.

18. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS, LOCAL AGENDA 21, COMMUNITY SAFETY, PLANNING AND LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

19 BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none with this report.

20. RECOMMENDATION

20.0 That the committee accepts and approves this report.

HOWARD COOPER
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES