

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT SERVICE

CASE STUDIES

Child A – secondary phase

- **Involvement Start Date and Primary Reason:** The involvement with Child A began on 23/02/2024, primarily due to attendance issues. Point of referral 31%. Current attendance is now 92.22% with no absence from school for 7 weeks.
- **Subject Information:** Child A is registered at a Secondary School in year 9.
- **Challenges in Engagement:** Engaging with Child A's mother proves challenging due to her reluctance to attend meetings and inconsistent communication.
- **Communication Logs:** Various communications between education welfare officers and Child A's family detail attempts to arrange meetings and address attendance issues.
- **Home Visit and Meeting Arrangements:** Efforts were made to conduct home visits and arrange meetings, often hindered by family circumstances such as the presence of Child A's brother who had additional needs.
- **Family Dynamics:** Child A's family dynamics, including her parents' separation and her brother, impact her attendance and well-being.
- **School and Home Issues:** Issues at home, such as poor living conditions and financial difficulties, as well as Child A's reluctance to attend school, are recurring themes.
- **Parental Concerns and Actions:** Both parents express concerns about Child A's well-being and attendance, leading to various actions such as involving tutors and setting up meetings with school officials.
- **Support and Interventions:** Interventions include arranging attendance-focused meetings, providing parenting support, and exploring respite care for the brother.

- **Attendance-Focused Meetings:** Initial Attendance Focused Meetings (AFM) were arranged to address Child A's attendance issues. These meetings involved both parents and school.
- **Home Visits:** Home visits were conducted to discuss actions from previous meetings and to provide support directly to the family.
- **Parenting Support:** One-on-one parenting support sessions were arranged for Child A's mother, to help her manage Child A's attendance and behaviour.
- **School Interventions:** Various school-based interventions were implemented, such as changing Child A's seating in science class, allowing her to wear ear buds in class, and providing access to the breakfast club and the Wellbeing hub.
- **Respite Care:** The possibility of respite care for Child A's brother, was explored to alleviate some of the family's stress.
- **Communication and Honesty:** Emphasis was placed on honest communication between parents and the school regarding the reasons for Child A's absences.
- **Summer Activities:** Plans were made for Child A to participate in summer activities, such as cycling to school and practicing bus routes with her brother.

- These interventions were designed to provide comprehensive support to Child A and her family, addressing both educational and personal challenges.
- **Professional Meetings and Updates:** Regular professional meetings are held to discuss Child A's situation, involving school staff and education welfare officers, to coordinate support efforts. The FEW has been consistent in offering parenting support, financial budgeting support and emotional support to the family.

Child B - Secondary phase

- **Involvement Initiation:** The involvement with the family of Child B began on March 16, 2023, due to concerns about school attendance. Point of referral 73%
- **Subject Information:** Child B is registered in Year 10 at a Southampton Secondary School.
- **Family and School Interactions:** Numerous communications between school representatives, the family, and medical professionals were documented, addressing various concerns and actions taken. For instance, there were discussions about the family's shop and how the children would sometimes accompany their parents to work. This was discussed with the Child Employment officer.
- **Medical Concerns:** Frequent medical issues were reported by the family, leading to consultations with healthcare providers to verify the legitimacy of these claims. The school and education welfare officers were concerned about the number of illnesses reported and the amount of time spent at the GP surgery. There were also concerns about Child B's appearance, including her looking unhappy, lack of motivation, and potentially being underweight. Attendance information shared with GP – the GP invited parent and Child B to a consultation. Confirmed to parent/Child B and professional network that her medical/illness would not prevent her from attending school on a regular basis.
- **Parental Engagement:** The parents frequently did not attend scheduled meetings, which complicated the intervention efforts. For example, the mother attended only two of the Fast Track meetings, while the father did not attend any.
- **Child's Perspective:** Child B appeared withdrawn and unhappy during interactions, raising concerns about her emotional well-being and the need for additional support. During a conversation with an education welfare officer, Child B rated her happiness at school as 7 out of 10 and at home as 8 out of 10. However, she was not forthcoming with information and seemed quiet and withdrawn.
- **Attendance Improvement:** By November 1, 2024, Child B's attendance had significantly improved to 100%, which was acknowledged as a significant improvement from the initial 73% at the point on SASS involvement.
- **Legal Considerations:** Due to prior attendance issues, legal proceedings were considered but were reconsidered after the notable improvement in attendance. The decision to close the case was discussed, and it was noted that no court papers had been submitted at that point and so it would be possible to do so.

- **Reward and Acknowledgment:** The significant improvement in attendance was outlined to the parents, and there were discussions about the school acknowledging and offering a reward to Child B.
- **Continued Monitoring:** The expectations of continued improvement were outlined, and it was emphasised that the improvement must be sustained for the service to withdraw.
- **Case Closure:** Once all actions were completed, the case was agreed to be closed and handed back to the school to support and review.

Child C – Year 5 Primary School pupil

- **Initial Involvement and Attendance Issues:** Child C's case began on February 15, 2023, due to concerns about his school attendance, which was initially at 66% and later dropped to 39% before improving to 93.75%.
- **Support and Communication:** Various professionals, including the School Attendance Support Service (SASS), social workers, and school staff, communicated frequently through emails, phone calls, and text messages to support Child C and his family.
- **Challenges and Strategies:** Child C faced challenges due to his autism, including fixation on routines and anxiety about school. Professionals suggested strategies like visual timetables, reward charts, and consistent routines to help Child C.
- **Parental Involvement:** Child C's mother was actively involved in the process, communicating with professionals, attending meetings, and implementing suggested strategies to improve Child C's attendance and well-being.
- **Professional Meetings and Reviews:** Regular meetings and reviews, including core group meetings and RCPCs, were held to discuss Child C's progress and plan further support. These meetings often involved multiple professionals and focused on various aspects of Child C's life.
- **School's Role:** Primary School played a significant role in supporting Child C, providing additional learning support, catch-up sessions, and maintaining regular communication with other professionals involved in Child C's case.
- **Health and Well-being:** Child C's health and well-being were also addressed, with referrals to CAMHS and other health services to manage his anxiety and other related issues. Professionals emphasised the importance of a healthy sleep routine and consistent attendance.
- **Positive Outcomes:** By October 2024, significant improvements were noted in Child C's attendance and overall well-being, leading to the closure of the case with SASS. Child C's mother expressed gratitude for the support received.