

Children and Young People Select Committee
Children not in School (CNIS)
Scrutiny Review
Outline Scope

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Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? <p>This work aligns with the Council's priorities to ensure that all children have a bright future and a sense of belonging and giving children the best possible start in life, this is greater achieved when our children are educated and build connections within the borough. It aligns with the council vision to have a sustainable community where everyone belongs and is valued.</p> <p>The review supports Stockton on Tees Plan Priority One – The best start in life to achieve big ambitions and key move – Giving children and young people the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.</p> <p>This scrutiny review would also support delivery of the following design principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce inequality and prioritise prevention • put communities at the heart of everything we do • use data and intelligence to inform our decision 	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review? <p>Children not in school covers a range of scenarios where a child is not accessing a full-time education. The range of reasons a child may not be accessing a full-time education at a school is vast and covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reasons for absence from school including authorised absence, unauthorised absence • Pupils on reduced/part-time time tables • Pupils who are accessing Alternative Provision not in a registered school (whether arranged by the school or the local authority) 	

- Pupils receiving Home and Hospital Provision
- Pupils who are CME (Children Missing Education)
- Children who are EHE (Electively Home Educated)
- Children who have no school base and are EOTAS (Educated Other Than at School)
- Children who move into the borough and are waiting for a school place

Strengthened systems for Children Not in School has the potential to:

- improve attendance further
- improve pupil outcomes
- reduce associated anti-social and criminal activity
- reduce demands on community safety resources

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

- What are the scenarios where a child may be or become a CNIS? Why do parents choose to take their children out of school and what difficulties does this create?
- What risks and safeguarding issues arise from CNIS?
- What are the statutory requirements in relation to the different scenarios?
- Who has responsibility and oversight to ensure appropriate systems are in place and there are no gaps?
- What support is provided when a child is not in school?
- How well do partner agencies work together?
- What is the impact on the child of not attending school?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, schools, parents, other stakeholders, MPs, DfE, central Government.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

Five months:

Scope and Project Plan – 12 November 2025
 Evidence gathering – November 2025 – January 2026
 Draft Recommendations – 11 February 2026
 Final Report – 11 March 2026
 Submission to Cabinet – 16 April 2026

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

Education other than at School (EOTAS) Process
 Statutory Guidance
 Ofsted guidance on off rolling
 Data and trends (benchmarked regionally and nationally)

New information:

Views of parents (via established forums)
 Views of partner agencies (Early help, social care, health)
 Views of staff
 Records of monitoring
 Comparison with other local authority practice

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)	What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?
Council Officers	Introductory Presentations
Partner Agencies	Partner perspective – their involvement, breadth of work, what is working well, ideas for improvement
Parents	Reasons why children are not at school
School Support	Targeted offer to school and early intervention
How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)	
Committee meetings, feedback sought from established forums	
How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?	
As above.	
How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?	
The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics, including Disability.	
The Council is under a duty to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. • Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. • Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 	
The review will contribute towards meeting the Council's requirements under this Duty, particularly in relation to the outcomes for more vulnerable children.	
Completion of an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) will be integral to the Select Committee review.	
How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?	
<u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023:</u>	
All children and families get the best start in life.	
All people in Stockton-on-Tees live well and live longer.	
All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.	
Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying all scenarios where a child may be or become a CNIS. 	

- Ensuring a system or process is in place for each scenario thus minimising the time children are out of education
- Provide clarification around overall responsibility and oversight to ensure systems are in place and there are no gaps.
- Support for resource (if necessary)
- Assure accountability across teams and services and ensure the children of the Borough have access to the education they are entitled

Project Plan			
Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	October 2025	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	6 October 2025	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Scope and Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee Introductory Presentation	12 November 2025	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	N/A		
Obtaining Evidence	Introductory presentations (Claire Tiffany, Sharon Stevens)	12 November 2025	Select Committee
	Home and Hospital, Electively Home Educated, Children Missing from Education	17 December 2025	
	Educated Other Than at School, Alternative Provision	14 January 2026	
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	11 February 2026	Select Committee (Informal Session)
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	February 2026	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	20 February 2026	Select Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report by Select Committee	Approval of final report by CYP Select Committee	11 March 2026	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny	Consideration of report	19 May 2026	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	16 April 2026	Cabinet