APPENDIX 1
PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	**Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment**
Recommendation Lead:	**Sharon Stevens**

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). <u>Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.</u>

Recommendation 1:	Improve attendance.
Responsibility	Sharon Stevens
Date:	May 2025
Agreed Action:	**Research:** 1a Identify what attendance training is currently in place across teams in Education Inclusion and Achievement. 1b. Identify where the gaps are for local authority officers and school leaders 2. Appraise overall, persistent and severe absence data, patterns and trends will be identified **Communication:** 1a Split the Attendance Network Meetings into separate primary and secondary meetings. 1b. Publish a dossier of successful strategies gained from the Attendance Networks for school leaders 2. Refresh the Local Authority Attendance Strategy across all teams. 3. Attendance at Team meetings across the wider children's services to raise awareness of the support first as everyone business theme from "Working Together to Improve Attendance" *DfE Statutory Guidance August 2024* 4. Attendance Self Evaluation Toolkit Promotion at Education Matters, and Secondary Head Meeting. **Events:** 1. Attendance Network Promotion
Agreed Success Measure:	**Research:** • Establish what is successful and where there are weaknesses.

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	• Develop a bespoke training package for attendance leaders to work with families, children for a joined up approach • Identify schools with the strongest effective early intervention strategies **Communication:** • Relaunch Attendance Network Meetings to share successful school strategies to tackle absence • Schools who have not made significant gains in attendance trial strategies in the first instance • Attendance Strategy launched to schools, local authority teams and other agencies • Build strong relationships and work collaboratively embedding attendance is everyone's business • Challenge and support to use the Toolkit by colleagues across EIA to identify areas for focus and evaluate for impact. **Events:** • Maintain high level of school senior leader attendees, at separate primary and secondary Networks

Evidence of Progress: (January 2026)	**1. Annual Training for New Attendance Personnel**
	
	• Introduced an annual training session for all new school attendance staff.
	• First session delivered on 11 September 2025; now established as an annual event.
	• Purpose: Ensure staff are fully appraised of school-level expectations and LA referral routes.
	
	2. Targeted Support Following Locality Meetings
	
	• Half-termly Locality North and South meetings held to review live attendance data.
	• **Senior Case Worker Deployment:**
	   ○ Commenced September 2025.
	   ○ Two schools currently receiving fortnightly support, including parental engagement, home visits, calls, and letters.
	• **Focused Discussions:**
	   ○ Conducted with two additional schools in July 2025 and September 2025.
	
	3. Sharing Best Practice
	
	• Delivered a session at the Attendance Network January 2026.
	• Focus: Revised whole-school systems and practices in a secondary school that achieved improved attendance.

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4. Early Intervention Offer Rollout

- Implemented in partnership with TASS for Stockton secondary schools in November 2025.
- Aim: Provide proactive support to address attendance issues early

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Assessment of Progress: (include explanation if required) (January 2026)

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2 – On track
- Increased awareness and consistency in attendance management among new staff.
- Enhanced support for schools with persistent attendance challenges.
- Positive attendance trends across all phases.
- Improved collaboration and sharing of effective strategies within the network.
- Strengthened early intervention framework for secondary schools.

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Evidence of Impact: (January 2026)

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Attendance Data Analysis

- Two-term data shows improvements in attendance across all school phases.
- Detailed analysis to be included in the Vulnerable Groups Cabinet Report (Spring Term).

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Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved