

# Attendance for Children in Care

## Statistics and Interventions

Q. Think about the time when you weren't attending school regularly. How did your daily routine, energy levels, or motivation feel compared to now you are attending regularly?

I lacked energy because I was home schooled, so I was having loads of coffee, and it was too easy for me to choose not to do anything. Now I have a routine, I know what I'm doing every day, I know I have to be there, and it helps me to get up in the morning. My routine is really good and I feel healthier and it gives my days a feeling of purpose.

Describe how your mood or mental health felt during the time you were out of school. How does it feel now that you're attending more regularly?

I like school and I think it has had a positive impact on my mental health. I have more people to talk to at school and it is good to see people from different backgrounds and learn that everyone is different and has different coping mechanisms.

What did you miss most about school when you weren't going?

**Socialising**

How did your ability to learn or complete schoolwork change when you weren't attending school?

**I was home schooled, and It didn't work for me because I never did it, I think it was too easy for me to not do it.**

How confident did you feel about your schoolwork when you were absent compared to now?

**I barely did any and I think it was because I lacked confidence. Now, I feel fine and would pretty much be open to giving any lessons a go.**

How connected did you feel to your friends or classmates when you weren't in school? How does that compare to now?

I ended up going missing and I would meet up with a few mates in town, so I was connected to friends. I was in school at that placement but then got kicked out because I didn't turn up. Now, I turn up to school every day and I have friends.

Did you feel more isolated or more free when you weren't attending school?

Both really.

What do you want people at the conference to know?

School is so important to me and I wish I went sooner. I definitely needed time to find the right school, but when I started at Holton I realised that it was the right school for me and I got to meet lots of different people and it helped me feel more settled when I realised that lots of people have similar struggles to me.

## What is Persistent Absence?

90% attendance at the end of the year means a student has missed a total of a month out of school. Last year we had 32.7% of our students with attendance below 90%.

Students with attendance below 50% are known as having **“Severe Absence”** (11.7% of our cohort last year)



# Attendance Trends

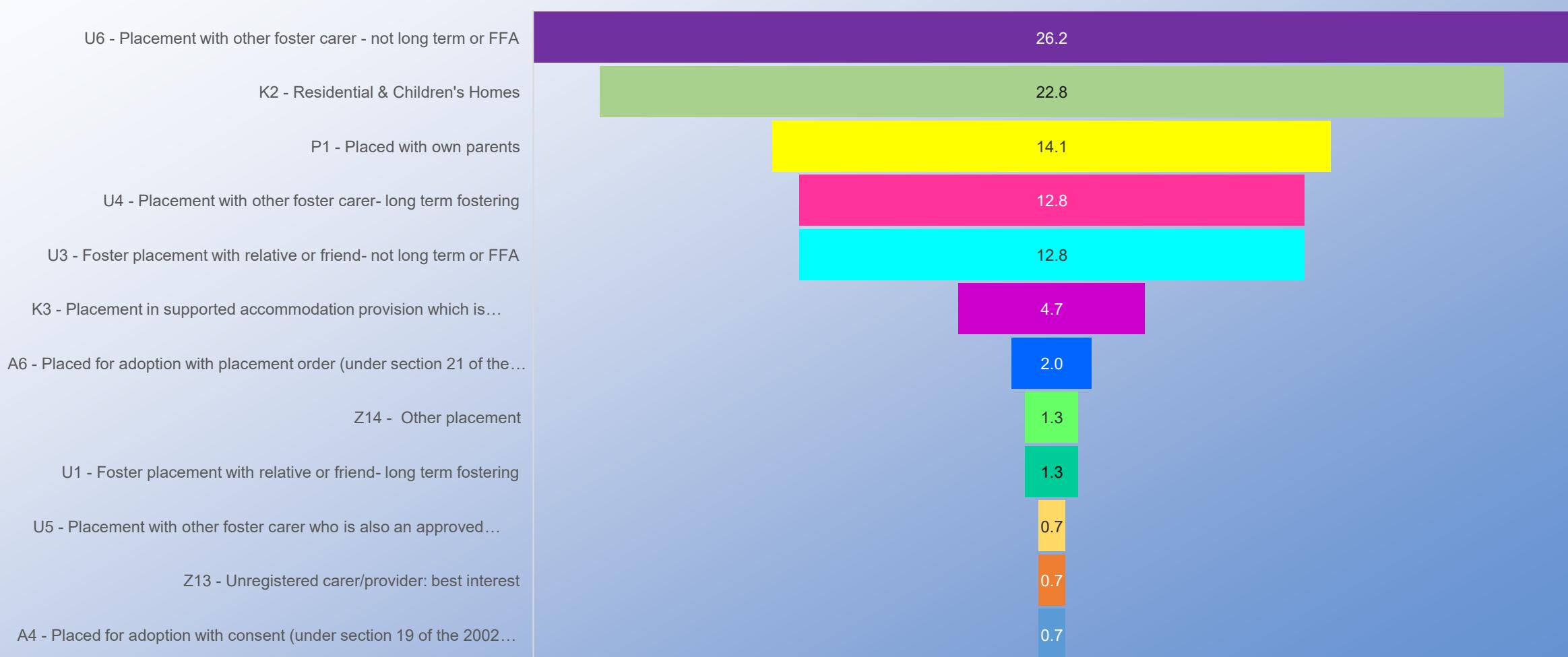


Comparison of Attendance from 2022/23 to 2024/25



# Attendance Trends

## Persistent absence by Placement Type



# Leading Causes of absence

## Illness

The leading cause of absence, most of these students will recover, and attendance will improve. (For some students we know health is an ongoing concern and we will adjust individual attendance expectations accordingly)

## Suspensions

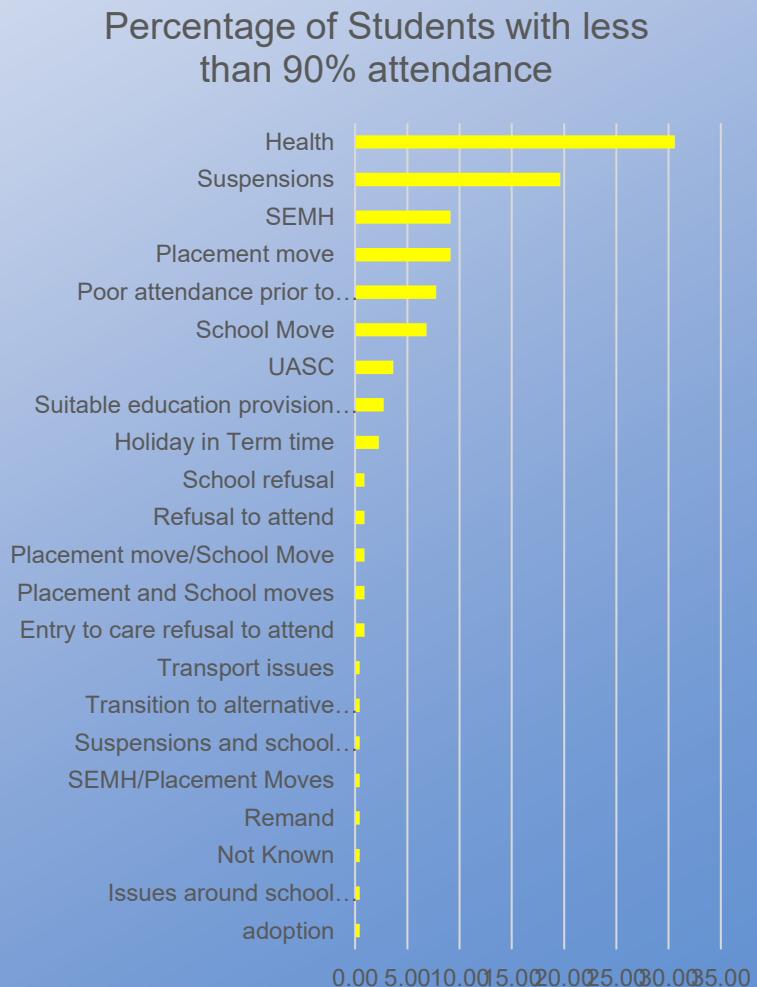
Our next highest category, we have investigated factors that help prevent/reduce suspensions and will talk about these shortly.

## Social and Emotional Factors/Placement Moves

Absence due to SEMH, shows the importance of mental health support for our young people and its role in improving education outcomes. Absences due to placement moves are often due to students being unable to attend school due to distance or disruption and can lead to a school move which also impacts on attendance (see graph)

## Poor Attendance Prior to Entry to Care

Students coming into care with an established pattern of low attendance can find it difficult to maintain regular high levels of attendance and may need additional support with this.



# Effective Strategies to Improve Attendance

## **Having a School Place**

Students who have had a placement move, or who do not have a school placement for other reasons will clearly have low attendance; having a school place quickly improves attendance for these students.

## **Transition Support Programs**

Transition support helps students adapt to new schools, reducing anxiety and improving attendance rates.

## **Attendance Rewards**

Providing rewards motivates students to attend regularly through positive reinforcement strategies.

## **Key Adult Support in School**

Members of staff that can offer emotional support, so students feel valued and able to take shared responsibility for their learning and attendance.

## **Bespoke Curriculum**

A tailored curriculum and timetable to meet individual needs.

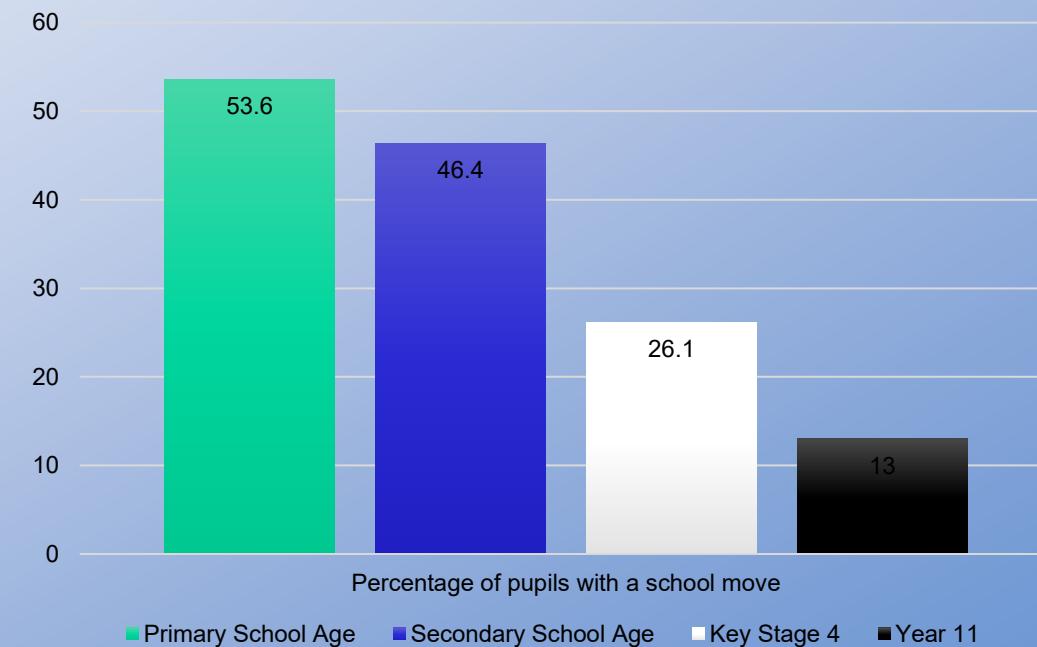


# School Moves

While the majority of school moves this academic year have been for primary school age children, over a quarter have been for students in Key Stage 4, during the GCSE curriculum and 13% have been for students in their final year of GCSE studies.

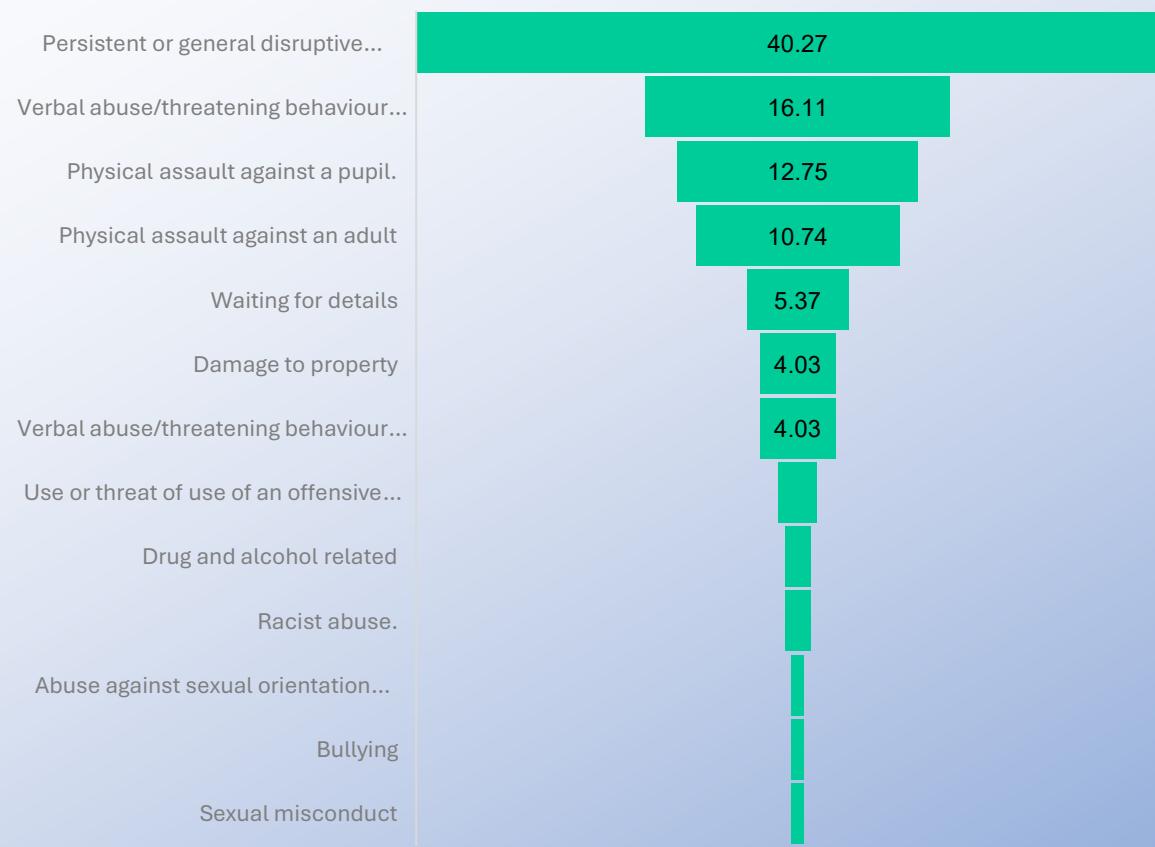
We know from the research data, that these students in Key Stage 4 are at risk of reducing their attainment at GCSE by 5 GCSE Grades.

**Percentage of Pupil with school moves by age category**



# Causes and Patterns of Student Suspensions

## Percentage of Suspensions by reason 2024-25



## Persistent or General Disruption

Over 40% of student suspensions. A broad category relating to long term and persistent disruption with the school, it covers a range of behaviours that a school are reporting seeing from an individual student occurring on a regular basis.

## Incidents of Abuse and Assault

The next 3 categories for suspensions are

- verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult
- physical assault against other pupils
- physical assault against adults in school.

# Strategies for Reducing Suspensions

## Key Adult Support

As with persistent absence. Having a key adult in school can help reduce the risk of students being suspended from school and support them successfully into school following suspensions. A key adult should be a consistent presence within school that the young person is able to build a positive relationship with and is able to offer emotional support and co-regulation.

## Alternative Educational Provision

Alternative learning settings can reduce suspension rates by catering to individual student needs flexibly while preparing students to return to mainstream schooling.

## Therapeutic Support

e.g. Play Therapy, Lego Therapy etc

## Part-Time Timetables

These should be monitored and be regularly reviewed with a plan to return to full time education.

