Terms of Reference

1.   Name of Group

Attendance and Children Out of School Panel Process.

2.   Context

2.1   All pupils have a right to full time education. There is no greater priority than to ensure that those pupils out of school are returned to full time education as quickly as possible. It is therefore important particularly in terms of safeguarding, accessing education and health, that there is a process of monitoring and supporting these pupils to ensure that they are receiving an appropriate education.

2.2   There are outcomes in relation to the Think Family agenda that specifically relate to attendance and successful engagement in education that need to be adhered to.

2.3   Our ambition is all children attend school regularly and our expectation is that a child's attendance rate is 90% or above of available sessions over the last three terms, excluding authorised absences (ie unauthorised absence is below 10%. Or where a child's attendance was below 50% of available sessions excluding authorised absence (over 3 terms) at start of intervention, it has increased by at least 40% over the last three terms and is now over 50%.

2.4   The Panel will seek to develop a holistic understanding of the barriers to attendance. This will help enable a more considered approach to the support needed, to enable successful re-engagement. The Panel will take a whole family approach to discussions, and consider pupil and parental preferences, in order to find the solution to educational engagement.

3.   Aim and Purpose of Group

3.1   To Introduce a Triage process and Panel discussion where a Key Worker is struggling to resolve a barrier to a young person successfully accessing education.

3.2   To bring together a multi-agency Panel meeting designed to discuss complex cases of children not successfully engaging in education.

3.3   To identify the most appropriate course of action, and provide solutions where usual processes and protocols have been fully explored without success.

3.4   Ensure a clear robust escalation process where children are not accessing an appropriate education.

3.5   To ensure no young people slip through the net. If there is a concern a young person has been / will be without an education for 6 weeks or more then the case can be brought to Panel.

3.6 To give the Childrens Trust staff the confidence and conviction to pursue the correct course of action.

3.7 To highlight any situations where 'the systems' are failing young people and report accordingly to ensure this is addressed.

4. Membership of the Group

4.1 The group requires representation from the following Partners.

- Head of Service Children Out of School, BCC
- Lead Attendance Officer, BCC
- Admissions & Appeals Representative
- Fair Access Team Representative
- SENAR Representative
- Sustaining Inclusion Lead
- Early Help and Family Support Representative
- YOS Representative
- Social Work Representative

4.2 Minute taker to document and record decisions of the group

4.3 Relevant Team Manager / Representative to present the cases at Panel. (Presenters)

5. Roles & Responsibilities of Members

5.1 Expectation of the Presenting Managers

- The Relevant Manager (Presenter) will ensure the Education Panel Referral form has been completed and is sent to the email inbox. This should be sent in a minimum 10 working days in advance of the Panel meeting.

- That all the current processes and protocols have been previously attempted to secure successful educational engagement. As part of the triage process the Pupil Attendance Advisors will determine if the case is suitable for Panel, or whether further action needs to be undertaken before escalation to Panel.

5.2 Expectation of Panel Members

- Members will ensure their agency is represented at this forum. If they cannot attend they will identify another representative who can agree action on their behalf.

- Members will be prepared to accept referrals to their Service for cases presented at Panel.

- Members will take forward any concerns or gaps identified in the systems, to influence change.

6.   Format of Meetings

6.1   In advance of the Panel a Triage process will take place of all referrals. Those Referrals that meet the following criteria will then be escalated to the Panel:

- Children for whom the named practitioner has exhausted all other avenues to resolve barriers to education.
- Children who have been out of education for more than 6 weeks.

6.2   There will also be an opportunity for the agencies to provide an update on any changes to procedures or new protocols that may impact on placing young people.

6.3   The action points will be recorded and progress tracked. If still no positive outcome, the case can be presented a second time to see if any other course of action should now be taken.

7.   Meeting Arrangements and Frequency

7.1   Meetings will be planned in once every half term however these will only convene when sufficient cases are put forward.

7.2   The Admin support will co-ordinate the meetings, update the tracker sheet and arrange the timings for the Presenters of the cases.

8.   Reporting and Accountability

8.1   Any Actions agreed in response to the cases raised will be monitored. The Admin support will follow up with the Presenter on the progress, and record the outcomes accordingly on the Tracker sheet.

8.2   Each Panel member is accountable to ensure their agency fulfils any agreed actions and accepts their responsibility of ensuring a young person is provided with a suitable offer of education.

9.   Constraints and Escalation Process

9.1   The Panel may suggest possible solutions or routes to explore, however it cannot guarantee that any recommendation or suggested course of action will be accepted. A case may be presented a second time to explore alternative solutions or to determine how this should be escalated, if an agency or school are not fulfilling their obligations.

10.   Review Arrangements

10.1   This forum will ensure on-going reflective practice to ensure it is fit for purpose.

10.2   Time will be given at each meeting to assess the impact and effectiveness of this group. This reflection will be part of the on-going evaluation process.