



# Halton Graduated Response to Emotional Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA) January 2023

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## Introduction

Following a series of multi-agency meetings, we have identified the need to implement a clear, graduated response in order to support and reintegrate those children who are not attending school due to emotional based school non-attendance (EBSNA).

Emotionally Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA) is a term used to describe children and young people (CYP) who experience challenges in attending school due to negative feelings (such as anxiety). EBSNA is commonly associated with emotional and physical distress, and a reluctance to attend school, which can lead to reduced attendance and further anxiety regarding school.

In order to respond proportionally, we have developed a 5 stage model which can be used to support children and their families. Below is a summary of each stage within the model. This will initially run as a pilot from **July 2022 until January 2023**.

As every case will be different and to avoid diagnostic overshadowing, EHCPs, CAMHS involvement or a formal diagnosis are not stipulated as 'expectations' within the model; while they may be a consequence for some children, they will not be a determining factor (for example, some may already have an EHCP, others may benefit from one, while for some it may not be necessary). However, mental health and SEND needs should be considered at each stage, if appropriate.

During this pilot, formal timescales have not been included regarding the length of time CYP will spend at each 'stage'. Instead, the impact of support and levels of need should be considered on a regular basis as part of a clearly structured 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle. It will be important to find an appropriate balance between not progressing to the next stage too quickly and yet not allowing behaviours to become normalised and engrained (and consequently harder to change).

It is also acknowledged that some children, who have already been absent from school for a significant period of time prior to the launch of the pilot, will already have accessed the suggested support within Stages 1 – 3 and may require an immediate Stage 4 referral.

## Summary of Stages

- Stage 1 – Early Help (At risk of EBSNA)
- Stage 2 – Low Level EBSNA
- Stage 3 – EBSNA – Multi Agency Support Plan
- Stage 4 – Intensive Support for EBSNA (incl. use of tuition centre and new EBSNA support service)
- Stage 5 – Unsuccessful Engagement

## Stage 1 – Early Help – At Risk of EBSNA

Stage 1 covers any child whose attendance is starting to be impacted upon by their mental health. They may be persistently absent or at risk of becoming PA. It needs to be considered if there are other contributing factors impacting on their attendance other than EBSNA.

Where significant risks of EBSNA are identified, it's really important to gather further information from the young person, parent and school staff involved with the young person and put into place strategies to support the young person as soon as possible.

Swift action can prevent EBSNA from becoming entrenched and result in much better outcomes. School should follow a thorough, child centred assess, plan, do and review cycle. Due to the complex nature of EBSNA no fixed 'assessment process' can be followed. However, in all cases it is essential that the views of the young person, the family and key school staff are gathered and listened to. When there is a difference of views it is often more helpful to focus on how the behaviour is occurring rather than why. This can then be reviewed and a support plan created and reviewed regularly with the child, parents / carers and other key adults.

## Services and Support Available at Stage 1

- **EP Service:** Schools may wish to prioritise EP service involvement for CYP presenting with stage 1 ESBA needs, through group or individual school consultation.
- **SEND:** Although the young person would not necessarily be known to the Assessment Coordinator could for the school, they could attend any meetings if it was felt beneficial
- **Behaviour Support Service:** Primary and Secondary Behaviour Support teachers to offer class observations with recommendations to minimise anxiety/challenges for the CYP. Family Liaison Officers support for pupil and parent- gain pupil/parent voice and feedback to school. The HBSS are also able to work collaboratively with school to coordinate a plan of actions for all involved.
- **Halton Mental Health Schools Team (currently working with 14 schools and commissioned for 45 Halton schools by the end of the year)**
  - **Whole School Approach (pre-Stage 1)** – Mental health promotion and improvement of mental health awareness as a school, add to existing school provision to support positive wellbeing and resilience e.g., attend assemblies, and, generalised staff training on mental health issues.
  - **Consultation Stage** – Initial advice on managing low level mental health concerns in school, identifying and sharing specific resources for staff and CYP, identify additional staff training, consideration of referral into MHST, and/or, signposting to other services including liaising with Halton CAMHS.
  - **Assessment stage** - Assessment of mental health factors possibly contributing to EBSNA.
  - **Intervention Stage** - Low intensity evidence-based Interventions delivered over 6-10 sessions for mild to moderate mental health issues. EMHPs also offer group interventions and one-off psychoeducation workshops. Interventions;

| Child-led interventions  | Parent-led interventions  |
|--|---|
| <b>Anxiety:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worry management (Aged 8yrs +)</li> <li>• Exposure therapy for phobias (Aged 8yrs +)</li> </ul> | <b>Anxiety:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-led worry management (Aged 5-12 years)</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Low mood/depression:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavioural activation (Aged 10-18 years)</li> </ul>                                | <b>Challenging behaviour:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-led intervention for behaviour (Aged 5-12 years)</li> </ul> |

### Other considerations at Stage 1:

- Base line assessment from school around what the barriers are to attending.
- If CYP has some young carer role (or emotional impact of cared for person's needs), ensure referral / registration with HCC Young Carers Service (consent required)
- School/TA/Mentor/Pastoral care to consider use of Pre-MAP or MAP to better identify holistic needs within the family (impact of the family as a system) which may be impacting on CYP's attendance
- Internal school support – mentor, school health
- Examining school attendance reports – any key indicators to poor attendance – prompt for school to have a meeting with child/parent.
- VIBE referral and consideration of other youth services
- Consider a referral into the Nurture Programme <https://halton.me/parenting-programme-referral/>
- For any pupil in Year 11 please highlight they are at this stage to the 14-19 Team through the Year 11 Vulnerable Group meetings.

### Stage 1 Assessment Tools

*There will also be the suggestion of some assessment tools which schools can use at this stage; the EP team are looking at developing these and will be added here once completed.*

### Stage 2 – Low Level EBSNA

Despite Stage 1 intervention and support, the child's attendance at school has continued to decline and they are now regularly absent from school due to EBSNA. This may be that attendance at school is very sporadic, minimal or not at all. The length of time between stage 1 and 2 is not defined, but will follow a series of assess, plan, do, review cycles.

At this stage, the plan continues as in Stage 1. If the EP service are not already aware of this CYP, schools are advised to prioritise the CYP for group or individual consultation.

This plan will consist of key information on how the child will be successfully supported and reintegrated back into school.

This will likely include things such as:

- The times the child will be in school each day;
- Lessons the child feels they can attend;
- Identified key adults who can offer 'meet/greet' / 'regular check-ins' with the child as well as support the pupil throughout the day (these should be adults the child has a trusting and key relationship with);
- Key pupils who can positively support the child;
- Identified strategies / interventions to support them; consideration of the child's 'push and pull' factors;
- The child's strengths and likes;
- Times of the day for relaxation / calming activities;
- The location of a 'safe space' for the child to go to if they feel anxious, overwhelmed or dysregulated and
- How time in school will be gradually increased.

Other barriers outside of the school day, such as travel arrangements, should also be considered.

## Return to school

When the child is ready to return to school, ensure all key adults are aware of their individualised support plan (which should be created with the child). Remember, these may be very small steps at first which can build up to the child entering the school building (e.g. child walking to the school gate; walking to the door of the school; entering reception/safe space within school, etc.) This process could be attempted with parents, or another suitable, identified adult.

## Services and Support available at Stage 2:

- **EP:** Schools should prioritise EP service involvement for CYP presenting with stage 2 ESBA needs, through group or individual school consultation.
- **SEND:** Assessment Coordinator for the school could attend any meetings
- **HBSS:** Family Liaison Officers to ascertain pupil/ parent concerns, and communicate to school.
- **HBSS:** Primary and Secondary Behaviour Teachers - liaise with teaching staff over pedagogy /school routine/other barriers etc. Provide staff with information regarding Mental Health signs and symptoms and signpost resources that may help.
- **HBSS:** Behaviour Support teachers- Offer school staff training on Mental Health Awareness.
- **EWO:** Once evidence of needs not being met by plan, consult with EWO
- Use of a Pre MAP and/or MAP as identified and coordinate support.
- **Locality Teams:** Advice & guidance from Locality Senior (partnership consultation)
- **Parenting and Nurture:** Parent referral to Nurture group / Teen Nurture (NB:WLT have recently piloted fortnightly twilight multi agency drop-in sessions for parent/carers of teens ('Living with Teens...')with view to repeat these sessions throughout the year– if so, parent could be signposted to these to access advice around strategies to try at home. Partners involved have included: Locality, Drug & Alcohol Youth Service, School Health, 14-19 service, Kooth, CAMHs, Complex Youths (Police re county lines). Teenagers have successfully attended these sessions **with** their parent, where they can be seen together or individually by the attending relevant agency(ies)) Email [parenting@halton.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@halton.gov.uk) for more details.
- **Wellbeing Support:** Counselling/emotional wellbeing support via school service/nightstop. Alongside referrals, the use of 1:1 direct work to explore CYP's wishes and feelings/ barriers to school attendance through locality
- **Victim Support:** Got Your Back referral if young person impacted by any kind of crime (reported or not).

It will be essential to ensure a consistent approach shared by school/family/ partners throughout any plan.

For any pupil in Year 11 please highlight they are at this stage to the 14-19 Team through the Year 11 Vulnerable Group meetings.

## Stage 3 – EBSNA - Multi Agency Support

A case would progress to stage 3, when a plan does not improve the child's attendance, despite regular reviews with the child, parents and other key adults.

At this point, other limiting factors must be considered which may be impacting upon the successful return to school.

A more formal 'multi agency' plan should now be considered, to expand upon the work attempted by the school within Stage 2. EP guidance should be sought at Stage 3, with strategies and advice implemented within the plan, which will feed into the next steps and action taken.

At Stage 3 the case should be brought to the attention of the EBSNA panel with a copy of the chronology and plan so that further actions and support can be considered. The panel will consist of EWO, EP, Safeguarding, Headteacher, Health and/or CAMHS, Senior Early Help, SEN and other relevant agencies. The panel will initially meet once every half term.

### Services and Support available at Stage 3

- **EP:** Schools should prioritise EP service involvement for CYP presenting with stage 3 ESBA needs, as part of a multi-agency approach.
- **SEND:** Assessment Coordinator to be part of the multi-agency plan as this would provide important information going forward should an application for an EHC assessment be requested for the young person
- **HBSS:** FSW's to liaise with other professionals involved and to keep abreast of wellbeing of the CYP. This could be through contact with parents, for example.
- **Working Together:** Consider presentation at 'Working Together Meeting' as 'stuck case' or invite Locality Senior to MAP Review to help identify any gaps/options for the existing support plan (enables allocation to EHFw if role identified)
- **Nurture:** Parent referral to Nurture Group/Teen Nurture Group (if not already completed)
- **Parent Support:** Parent & young person signposted to Living With Teens drop in (if running) – Refer parents onto Parenting Programme – Nurture/Triple P - email [parenting@halton.gov.uk](mailto:parenting@halton.gov.uk)
- **MAP:** If other meetings also in place, join up with the MAP meeting timeframes to prevent duplicate meetings:
  - EHFw to use range of direct 1:1 strategies to explore views, wishes & feelings, fears, barriers to school attendance. Direct work with CYP – identify what are the barriers to not attending school
  - Build on CYP's aspirations for the future, career ambitions, healthy relationships
  - Explore CYP's interests re locally accessible community positive activities
  - Ensure CYP's voice is heard throughout review and support plan / advocacy
  - Liaise and facilitate intro to/access to relevant alternative provision or placement
- **Drug and Alcohol:** If young person has problematic drug /alcohol use – referral to 1:1 D&A Youth Support Service
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** Emotional/well-being support for the YP – counselling provided by school
- For any pupil in Year 11 please highlight they are at this stage to the 14-19 Team through the Year 11 Vulnerable Group meetings.

### Stage 4 - Intensive support for EBSNA – Tuition Centre & EBSNA Service

If attendance continues to not improve following implementation and review of actions at stage 3, a referral can be made for intensive specialist support for EBSNA. Up to 16 students can access this support at any one time (but not all of these will be available for EBSNA, if other students are already accessing the tuition centre). Places can be requested through a submission to the EBSNA panel.



Support will be personalised but consist of support from a new commissioned service to work directly in the home and with the child. Education will be offered through the tuition centre. (Delivering work set and provided by the school). EP advice will be sought by the tuition centre at this time.

CYP remain on school roll and schools will be expected to remain in close contact with them, with regular visits by key staff and move towards a clear reintegration plan back into school during the placement. Placements will be between 6 to 12 weeks in length.

Services and Support available at Stage 4:

- **EP:** The EP service will provide an allocation of time to the tuition centre. This enables consultation to be sought for CYP attending, and enables the EP to contribute to a multi-agency plans.
- **Early Help:** MAP reviews – timely and reflective if meeting the needs and reducing risk. If Locality service not involved: invite Locality Snr to MAP Review to help identify any gaps/options for the existing support plan (enables allocation to EHFWS if role identified) If already open to Locality then continue as for stage 3 above and use Early Help Family Workers knowledge of the CYP to contribute to referrals such as CAMHS, EHCP etc
- **Tuition:** Tuition service to feed into MAP Review to ensure strategies' and messages to YP are shared, understood and echoed by partner services
- **HBSS:** Behaviour Support Service team involved with the reintegration stages when possible.
- For any pupil in Year 11 please highlight they are at this stage to the 14-19 Team through the Year 11 Vulnerable Group meetings.

## Referral Process for Stage 4 Placement

In order to gain a place at Stage 4, a referral should be made to the EBSNA panel. The panel will review all referrals and any supporting documentation on a half termly basis. Places will be allocated based upon the level of need identified and the previous support put in place by both the school and other supporting services.

Panel members will be both responsive and proactive – accepting referrals, offering guidance and support where gaps in previous actions are identified which result in a referral not being accepted at Stage 4.

Placements will not be held for non-engagers, who despite best efforts are not attending or showing any willingness to engage. These cases will proceed to Stage 5.

## Stage 4 Referral Form

Once agreed, the referral form will be available.

## Terms of Reference and Membership of EBSNA Panel

The initial membership for the EBSNA Panel is:

- Ben Holmes – Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
- Kate Moran – Education Psychologist
- Secondary School Principle – rotating membership agreed between principals
- Debbie Houghton – Lead Education Welfare Officer
- Joan Ward - Specialist Teacher - Woodview



- Children & Families Service rep c/o Janice Maddison (or will identify other named rep for TAF/EH/CSC)
- Helen Whittick (or nominated rep) - CAMHS (Mental Health)
- SEND Representative to be confirmed
- Health Representative to be confirmed

Once agreed, the Terms of Reference for the EBSNA Panel will be available.

## Stage 5 – Unsuccessful Engagement – Personalised, targeted plan

If Stage 4 is unsuccessful, the case will be discussed by the panel with all alternatives considered on a personalised plan based upon the circumstances.

- Review engagement with MAP and locality - What are the other options?

## Governance, Oversight and Impact

The graduated response to EBSNA was created through a multi-agency group of professionals, with the support of divisional managers and the operational director for Education, Inclusion and Provision.

This strategic group will maintain oversight and responsibility for the implementation of the strategy. They will receive reports from the EBSNA panel, commissioning and other services in order to evaluate the impact of the graduated response, identify patterns and trends which require exploration and agree upon any alterations required to the process.

This document will be reviewed following the conclusion of the pilot, if not sooner.