

Children Missing Education: Experiences of Implementing the DfES Guidelines

Steve Griggs, Ros Payne and Sunita Bhabra
Creative Research

Research Report

No 797

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1 Management Summary

1.1 Background and Research Method

- The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) set itself a target in 2002 of ensuring by 2005 that systems were in place in each local authority to identify and track children missing education or at risk of doing so. Local authorities were then required (via the Identification, Referral and Tracking guidance issued in August 2003) to name an individual responsible for receiving details of children found missing from education, and for brokering support for them through the most appropriate agencies.
- The *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* document (December 2004) reiterated the Government's expectation that "by December 2005 every local authority should have systematic arrangements in place to identify children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them, drawing on the non-statutory guidance issued in July 2004".
- To help local authorities fulfil this task, the DfES issued non-statutory guidance (*Identifying and maintaining contact with Children Missing, or at risk of going missing, from Education*) in July 2004. This non-statutory guidance sets out a practical model of process steps to help local authorities implement such systems and was developed in consultation with local authorities.
- The non-statutory guidance includes a 'self evaluation checklist' to help local authorities monitor their progress in five areas, based on 22 process steps. The five areas are:
 - Strategic management and leadership
 - Networks and points of contact
 - Information systems
 - Provision brokering services
 - Effective pupil tracking systems.
- The evidence required for each step to be considered 'achieved' is also described. An example is given over the page.

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Process Step	Evidence Requirement
Does the LA have a written policy concerning children missing education?	<p>The policy itself which should be shared with and understood by at least Health, Education, Social Care, Police and Housing. The document(s) containing the policy should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the current position of the Authority ▪ evidence about the scale and nature of any CME problem ▪ ways of tackling it in a multi-agency approach ▪ arrangements for monitoring

- Other degrees of implementation than ‘achieved’ are also described comprising ‘embedded’¹, ‘working towards’ and ‘not started’. In addition, a further classification of ‘partly achieved’² was introduced during the research.
- The Guidelines are currently non-statutory; however the intention is that from 2007 there will be a statutory duty on all Local Authorities in England and Wales to have CME systems and procedures in place. With this in mind, a two stage research project was commissioned to enable the DfES to ascertain what progress has been made to date, to assess how effective the guidelines have been in helping Local Authorities develop systems and procedures, and to make recommendations for developing and improving the current guidelines based on the experiences of Local Authorities.
- The first stage of the research was a quantitative telephone audit with those leading on Children Missing Education. All 149 English Local Authorities were approached and 129 participated in the audit (a response rate of 87%). Nine Authorities demonstrating different degrees of implementation were then followed up in more in-depth, face-to-face interviews to explore issues arising in the telephone interviews. A broader cross-section of stakeholders was involved in this qualitative stage and 56 such interviews were conducted across the nine Local Authorities.

1.2 Progress to Date

- At the time the telephone audit was completed (early March 2006), all 129 Authorities that took part had made a start on putting systems and procedures in place. With one exception (a small Authority where the number of Children Missing Education cases was said to be small), all were at least working towards implementing all 22 process steps. A fairly typical scenario was for an

¹ The definition of ‘embedded’ that was applied in the research was that a process step had to have been in place for at least six months and to have been reviewed since it was introduced (even if no change was required).

² A process step was classified as being ‘partly achieved’ if some part had been achieved or was being worked towards but another part had not been achieved and there were no plans to implement it in the future.

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Authority to have some process steps embedded (typically processes that were already in place before the Children Missing Education guidelines were produced), to have achieved some other steps which either had not been in place for six months or had not yet been subject to a review, and to be working towards implementing the remaining steps. The extent to which each of the individual process steps had been achieved is summarised in Table 1.

- The progress of individual Local Authorities was scored in order to have a basis on which to select the nine Authorities for the second research stage. On each process step, a maximum score of 3 was assigned if the step had been 'embedded', with 2 for 'achieved' (or 'partly achieved') steps and 1 for 'working towards' steps. Given that a maximum score of 66 was possible, it was heartening to find that about a third of the sample obtained a score of 44 or more and well over three-quarters obtained a score of at least 33.
- Clearly, Local Authorities were more likely to have achieved certain process steps than others and many of these are those over which they have a greater degree of control such as having a named contact for receiving information about Children Missing Education (94%), defining the responsibilities of this person (86%), having an identified officer as database administrator for School 2 School (s2s) (83%) and encouraging schools to use this system (78%).
- There were three process steps that were least likely to have been achieved and similar explanations for their non-implementation were given by numerous leads on Children Missing Education. The first is the existence of a written policy which for many was still in draft form awaiting final approval (17%); the second is the regular monitoring of the numbers of children missing education (27%) which many found was not carried out by elected Members; the third is monitoring the pace at which children move into provision (16%), the absence of which was often attributed to the challenge of getting children accepted by an education provider.
- The attitude of the Children Missing Education leads and many of the stakeholders was very positive; they welcomed attention on this area and there was a marked lack of defensiveness about what they had managed to achieve to date.
- Irrespective of how far Local Authorities had got with implementation, many acknowledged that they were still at the early stages of bedding in their policy, procedures and practices. They were still very much working on ensuring that external stakeholders were familiar with, and involved in, the policy and processes and indeed, this lack of awareness and knowledge was borne out by many of the interviews with such stakeholders.

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Table 1: Summary of individual process steps showing the percentage of Local Authorities that had achieved each

A. Strategic Management & Leadership		% achieved
A 1.	Does the LA have a written policy concerning children missing education?	17
A 2.	Has the LA identified the ways that children become “missing” in their authority and put in place procedures designed to close gaps?	44
A 3.	Is there regular monitoring of the processes/ numbers by Senior Management and Elected Members?	27
B. Networks & Points of Contact		
B 1.	Has the LA identified the key stakeholders to provide information about children/young people without educational provision in your area?	68
B 2.	Has the LA provided and publicised notification routes for all key stakeholders?	42
B 3.	Does the LA have a named contact point to receive details about children missing education?	94
B 4.	Are there clear responsibilities for this role or those to whom the duties are delegated?	86
C. Information Systems		
C 1.	Does the LA maintain a database of children not currently in education?	58
C 2.	If so does the database include fields such as: Date child/young person notified; Date form of provision determined; Date accessed provision?	54
C 3.	Does the LA monitor the numbers of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education?	63
C 4.	Does the LA have processes in place to monitor the educational status of children in recognised vulnerable groups?	61
C 5.	Are there clear access rules and procedures to ensure fair/safe data processing?	60
D. Provision Brokering Services		
D 1.	Does the LA have clear processes for securing the support of other agencies where it is needed e.g. for welfare reasons.	46
D 2.	Does the LA have an agreed process for securing educational provision for children once found?	48
D 3.	Does the LA monitor the pace they move into provision?	16
D 4.	Does the LA have the information systems in place to allow access to up to date information concerning availability of school places and availability of places with alternative providers?	58
E. Effective Pupil Tracking Systems		
E 1.	Does the LA keep a record of children who have left educational providers (school and alternative provision) without a known destination?	42
E 2.	Does the LA follow up children at regular intervals until they are registered with a new provider?	54
E 3.	Does the LA have an agreed system with schools concerning children leaving provision?	59
E 4.	Does the LA support and encourage schools to transfer files via s2s?	78
E 5.	Does the LA have an identified officer as database administrator for s2s with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database?	83
E 6.	Does the LA upload to and download from the Lost Pupil Database?	46

1.3 Effectiveness of the Guidelines

- The response to the guidelines in nearly all cases was very positive and most Children Missing Education leads said they had found them helpful in developing their own policies. The guidelines were seen as providing a coherent structure and framework in which to develop the required systems and processes. The flow chart was seen as a useful summary of the key steps and the inclusion of case studies and examples of what other Authorities are doing was thought helpful. Indeed, a few Local Authorities that were less advanced in putting into place their policies and systems and were less familiar with the guidelines, found the process steps as described in the structured interview very useful as a prompt, to the extent that some asked to be sent the questionnaire as a new checklist!
- In a similar vein, nearly everyone interviewed in the second stage of research was in favour of the move to a statutory requirement on the grounds that identifying and addressing the needs of Children Missing Education can only be done effectively if it is a statutory duty. The feeling was that this should result in a common national framework with the same broadly similar practices and procedures in place to ensure a degree of conformity and consistency across all Local Authorities. This, in turn, would make it easier for all involved to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- At the same time, during both stages of research, respondents identified various issues and concerns arising from their experiences of trying to apply the Children Missing Education guidelines which they would like to see addressed in any future changes. These are summarised at 1.4.
- Underlying many of the issues was the question of resource, or, more accurately, a perceived lack of resource. This included staffing levels within Local Authorities and stakeholder organisations (many claimed to be understaffed with existing staff often having to take on responsibility for several different areas), insufficient resource to develop the necessary IT and databases, a lack of funding for the types of support mechanisms that educational providers believe they need in order to work with 'difficult' cases, and insufficient alternative provision for those who need it.
- A number of respondents in Local Authorities and other stakeholders expressed the view that the problem of inadequate resourcing could undermine their ability to deliver the Children Missing Education agenda. For some, the fact that Children Missing Education may become a statutory duty made this a more pressing concern.

1.4 Developing the Guidelines

- Some of the issues that respondents raised when asked about improving the guidelines may not fall within the remit of Children Missing Education as currently applied or may be associated with it but require a broader approach to tackle them. Most were first raised by respondents during the telephone audit in the discussion around the process steps and then followed up in the depth interviews with Local Authorities and a broader cross-section of stakeholders; others were raised during this latter qualitative stage. The

issues have, where possible, been grouped according to the five areas of the guidelines.

1.4.1 *Strategic Management and Leadership*

Perceived Exclusion of Independent Schools and Elective Home Educated Children

- A considerable number of respondents in both stages of the research identified what they considered to be major omissions in the parties involved in Children Missing Education, namely independent schools and elective home educated children. The fact that these groups of children were not seen as being covered in the guidelines not only gave rise to concerns about Children Missing Education but also in relation to the Every Child Matters agenda and child safety in particular.

Defining Children Missing Education

- During both stages of the research it was evident that there was some confusion about exactly which categories of children fall under the umbrella of Children Missing Education. While the guidelines clearly state that it covers “all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more)”, there was a debate among some stakeholders as to whether it does or should cover children who are at risk of missing education or those who are known to the Authority and on a school roll but not attending. The guidelines **do** require Local Authorities to identify and monitor the educational status of children in ‘at risk’ groups, so to this extent this category is included. Moreover, those on roll but not attending are generally considered to constitute a high at risk group.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that different stakeholders may interpret the term Children Missing Education in different ways. For example, for schools, there is a tendency to assume the term applies primarily to non-attendeers as these are the children they will be dealing with each day who are effectively missing out on their education. Other stakeholders, such as the Police or Social Services, may interpret the term as referring to ‘missing children’ (a high priority category) rather than children ‘missing education’ (a lower priority group in their eyes).

1.4.2 *Networks and Points of Contact*

Building Relationships with Stakeholders

- It was notable that although the majority of Authorities claimed they had identified all of their stakeholders, the lists of stakeholders that we received often contained only, or mainly, other departments within the Local Authority and relatively few external stakeholders. Moreover, it was clear from some of the interviews that the external stakeholders who were involved were those where there were existing relationships, rather than new stakeholders who had been identified and brought on board. This was despite the fact that many

Children Missing Education leads expressed concerns that they might still not be identifying many of the children missing education in their area.

- Moreover, some of the key stakeholder organisations that are highlighted in the self evaluation checklist as organisations with whom the policy should be shared (in particular, Housing, Police and Health) were either not included on the stakeholder lists or were listed as ‘secondary’ stakeholders (as opposed to ‘main’), sometimes with no named point of contact. Indeed, we found it difficult to find stakeholders to interview in some of these organisations.

Sharing of Information

- A frequently raised issue was the question of data protection and what information stakeholders can and should be expected to share. Respondents felt that ‘data protection’ was sometimes used as a smoke screen by certain individuals but, more generally, staff in many stakeholder organisations were simply unsure as to what information they could share and under what circumstances. The net result very often was that people took the ‘safe’ option and did not share the information. Stakeholders were looking to the DfES for guidance on this matter.
- In addition to local agencies, several respondents commented that it would be very helpful if national agencies were willing to share information with them about children who may be missing education. The two agencies mentioned in particular were the Benefits Agency and Immigration. It was not clear whether respondents had approached these agencies and been rebuffed or simply assumed the agencies would not be willing to share information with Local Authorities.

1.4.3 *Information Systems*

Databases

- The research showed that while there are moves towards greater sharing of databases, and, in some cases, plans to create a single, central database, the current situation is that individual agency databases are often either not shared at all or are not fully shared. It was apparent from different stakeholders within the same Local Authority that they may well all be tracking and monitoring many of the same children for different purposes. While most Children Missing Education leads thought that developing a single database was the ideal, they recognised that it also had major resource implications and for some, was unlikely to be a high priority in their Local Authority.

1.4.4 *Provision Brokering Services*

Authority to Bring on Board the Support Services

- One of the evidence requirements set out in the self evaluation checklist states that “*Documented procedures for securing the support of other services should be known, understood and agreed by relevant staff both in the Authority and those in the relevant support services. Any CME case tracked through the system that requires such support should reflect the documented*

procedure". Some Children Missing Education leads felt unable to comment on whether they had achieved this when it came to the staff of 'relevant support services' as this was outside of their control. Indeed, a widely expressed concern, particularly in the context of Children Missing Education becoming a statutory duty on Local Authorities, was that they were expected by the DfES to take the lead and to co-ordinate the policy. This involved the co-operation of a number of different stakeholder organisations over which they did not have the necessary authority. The strengthening of the requirements and their role in coordinating them was something many Children Missing Education leads felt should be addressed.

Relationships Between Stakeholders and Schools

- During both stages of this research it was apparent that there are tensions between many stakeholders, including the Local Authority and schools, especially in respect to providing places for the more 'difficult' cases, such as EAL (English as an Additional Language) children, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) including BESD (Behavioural, Emotional and Socially Difficulties)³ and children with a history of truanting and/or being excluded. This reflects the fact that in many instances Local Authorities find it very difficult to place these types of cases and the schools are often seen as putting up major barriers. The schools, on the other hand, often reported that there may be good reasons why they may refuse to accept such referrals or why it can take a very long time before a place is taken up. Some of the schools had clearly developed a range of support mechanisms to help them meet the needs of these children but the levels of resource required and the funding of this (especially whether the money follows the child) were significant issues.
- Such tensions have been exacerbated by a strong perception among many Children Missing Education leads and other stakeholders (including senior Education Department staff) that certain types of school (voluntary aided, foundation, city academies) are not bound in the same way as other state schools by the Local Authority admissions procedures⁴. As a result, such schools often refuse to accept these difficult cases. The other state schools feel they are then expected to take more than their fair share of such cases which many of them resent. 'Hard to place' panels were seen by some respondents as the way forward but only if all schools agree to participate and to accept their quota of pupils. Many Children Missing Education leads and stakeholders wanted the legislation to cover this.

³ Throughout the report we have used the term BESD although it should be noted that this was not the term used by respondents who spoke of either 'EBD' or 'EBSD'. Legally children with BESD have special educational needs - BESD is one of the four areas of SEN identified in the SEN Code of Practice (2001). During the course of the interviews the terms 'EBSD' and 'EBD' were widely used by respondents. In some cases, it appeared to be used as a short hand for 'more difficult children' whether or not the children had been identified as having special educational needs.

⁴ This is not to say such schools are felt not to be bound at all by admissions procedures but they are felt to have considerably greater freedom to accept or reject children.

- There was a perception that, for many schools, performance tables take precedence over inclusivity. One head felt there was a case for excluding the results of certain BESD children when league tables are produced in much the same way that certain EAL (English as an Additional Language) students' results are excluded.

Quality of Provision

- The current guidelines require Local Authorities to have agreed processes in place to secure educational provision for Children Missing Education cases and to monitor the pace at which such cases move into the provision. Some respondents pointed out that while such monitoring systems are needed, of equal importance is the quality of the provision. In addition to the issues around schools, many stakeholders spoke about a lack of alternative provision and in general, a number of Children Missing Education leads and stakeholders felt the guidelines need to be extended to address this question of the standard of provision.

1.4.5 *Effective Pupil Tracking Systems*

School to School (s2s)

- There is a requirement that Common Transfer Files (CTFs) are transferred via a secure electronic method and s2s has been set up by the DfES to provide such a facility. Although there is no requirement for schools to use s2s, Local Authorities should encourage them to do so. The research demonstrated that use of s2s is patchy both within (some schools are using it, others are not) and between (while many Authorities are promoting it, others are not) Local Authorities. It seemed that schools were more likely to use s2s to upload the details of children going off roll but are less likely to use it to download the CTFs of children coming on roll.
- Some respondents felt that s2s would be more effective if there was a requirement on all Local Authorities and schools to use it and, in the case of schools, there was a requirement to both upload and download CTFs because even if the downloaded CTFs were not used, the original school would be aware that the child had taken up a place at another school.

1.5 **Conclusions**

- There is evidence of much progress in establishing the systems and procedures that will enable Local Authorities to identify and maintain contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education, and strong support for this becoming a statutory duty in order to increase the effectiveness of the policy. The current Good Practice Guide is also playing a useful role in helping Local Authorities put the systems into place.
- While the Guide is, just as it says, guidance for Local Authorities, many of those who were actively using the self-evaluation progress checklist assumed that the process steps were set down as goals to be achieved; the use of 'should' in the evidence requirements and the very specific nature of these requirements seemed in part to explain this. This sense of obligation,

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combined with the possible move to the requirements becoming statutory, led a number to feel that they wanted to have more authority to put the steps into place particularly when dealing with external stakeholders.

- Moreover, given the perceived status of the guidelines, it was perhaps not surprising that many respondents felt they should be even more comprehensive and acknowledge some of the wider issues they are facing on the ground. These questions and issues suggest that there may be a case either to review and possibly broaden the scope of the guidelines or at least, clarify the situation and communicate the rationale behind the approach taken. To summarise, consideration could be given to:
 - removing, clearly making optional or communicating the importance of, certain evidence requirements. For example, the monitoring of the number of Children Missing Education by elected Members which very few Local Authorities are achieving or even seeking to achieve or, the encouragement by Local Authorities of schools to use s2s
 - reviewing or clarifying the definition of Children Missing Education since a number of interpretations are being applied by different Local Authorities and stakeholders, in particular with respect to those at risk of missing education
 - reviewing or clarifying the situation with respect to the inclusion or otherwise of independent schools and elective home educated children
 - including in the guidelines something about the role to be played by all state schools in providing places for 'difficult' cases, the issue of funding for these places and associated support mechanisms, and the impact on performance tables
 - reviewing the range of main stakeholders suggested in the guidelines (possibly bringing new agencies into the picture such as the Benefits Agency and Immigration) as well as discussing ways of engaging different stakeholders
 - providing guidance to stakeholders about the sharing of information, in particular with respect to identifying children missing education
 - including something about the issue of securing quality provision and moving children missing education into it.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

- After a series of events that led up to the murder of Victoria Climbié in February 2000, a major investigation took place that unveiled various points in Victoria's short life where key agencies could have intervened and prevented her untimely death. Lord Laming, Chair of the Independent Statutory Inquiry, starkly summed up the case:

I remind you that in the ten months Victoria was alive in this country she was known to no fewer than four Social Services Departments, three Housing Departments and two specialist Police Child Protection Teams. Furthermore she was admitted to two different hospitals because of suspicions she was being deliberately harmed and she was referred to a specialist Child and Family Centre managed by the NSPCC.

[Lord Laming, speech at the National Social Services Conference 2003: <http://www.adss.org.uk/events/2003/laming.shtml>]

- He went on to say:

I reject entirely the notion that social services are the "lead agency" in promoting the proper development of a child. The GP in the clinic, the Health Visitor in the home, the teacher in school, the police officer on the beat, the staff in Accident and Emergency unit.and many more, are each in the lead when they identify a child which may be in a situation which gives rise to a concern. Social Services, and through them others, must break free from the notion that they pick up whatever other services cannot do or do not want to handle. A child in need no more belongs to Social Services than it does to the other services. [Ibid]

- He ended with questions around an Ofsted finding that 10,000 children were missing from education:

Where were they? How many were from your authority? Can anyone believe that not even being on a school roll, and therefore denied the opportunity of an education, is likely to aid the development of each of these young people into a fully rounded citizen? I very much doubt it. [Ibid]

- As a result of the Climbié inquiry, a requirement for greater multi-agency working was placed on all agencies working with children. It was agreed that agencies should have systems, procedures and practices in place to ensure the safeguarding of all children. As a result a number of policies were introduced to help agencies achieve this. They each came under the Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda.

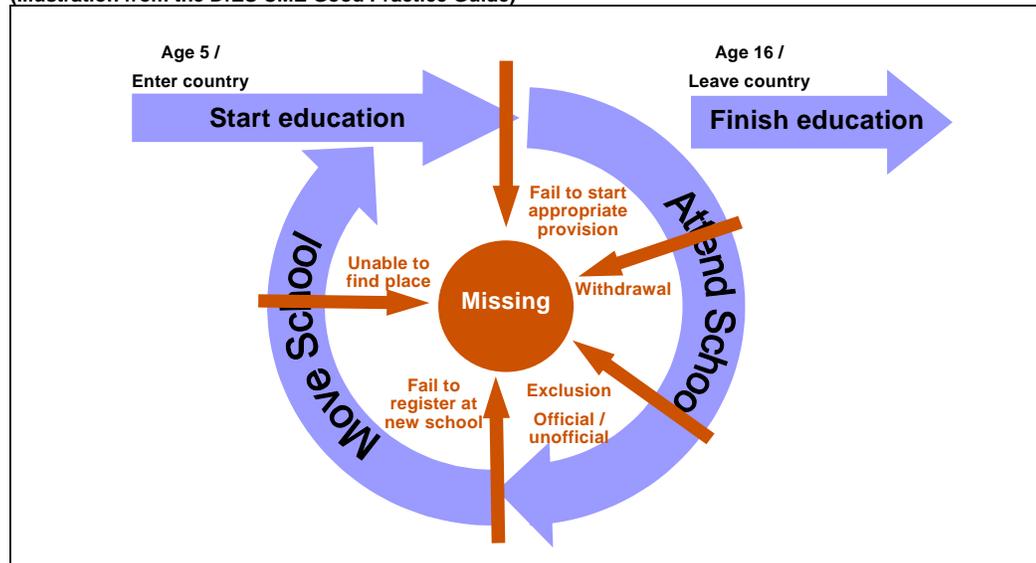
- To tackle the children missing from education aspect, the DfES, in 2002, set all Local Authorities in England a target of having in place, by the end of 2005, robust multi-agency systems and procedures that would deal with identifying and tracking children missing from education. To help Local Authorities meet this target the DfES issued a set of Good Practice guidelines which were developed based on discussions with Local Authorities.
- The DfES named Local Authorities as the agency to lead on Children Missing Education. This responsibility entails having in place clear definitions of Children Missing Education, ways of identifying these children, clear notification routes for other agencies (internal and external) who may pick up a child out of education, ways of identifying suitable provision and ways of monitoring and tracking the educational status of the child until their needs are met.
- Currently, the requirements placed on all 149 Local Authorities in England are non-statutory. However, it is anticipated that a statutory duty will be placed on all Local Authorities in 2007 to have definite systems and procedures in place so that any child of statutory education age, who is 'missing' from the education system is identified and suitable provision is arranged. The DfES commissioned Creative Research to assess the effectiveness of the guidelines and ascertain the degree to and ease with which Local Authorities have implemented them.

2.2 When do Children Go Missing from Education?

- The DfES Good Practice Guide refers to children missing from education as

“Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).”
- Children can go missing from education for a number of reasons. There are three key stages in a child's 'educational life' where this can happen (see Figure 1):
 - **at the outset:** some children fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the system
 - **while attending school:** having started, some children cease to attend due to exclusion (e.g. illegal unofficial exclusions), withdrawal or irregular school attendance
 - **while moving between schools:** some children fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new Local Authority).

Figure 1: Primary Reasons that Children Go Missing from Education
(Illustration from the DfES CME Good Practice Guide)



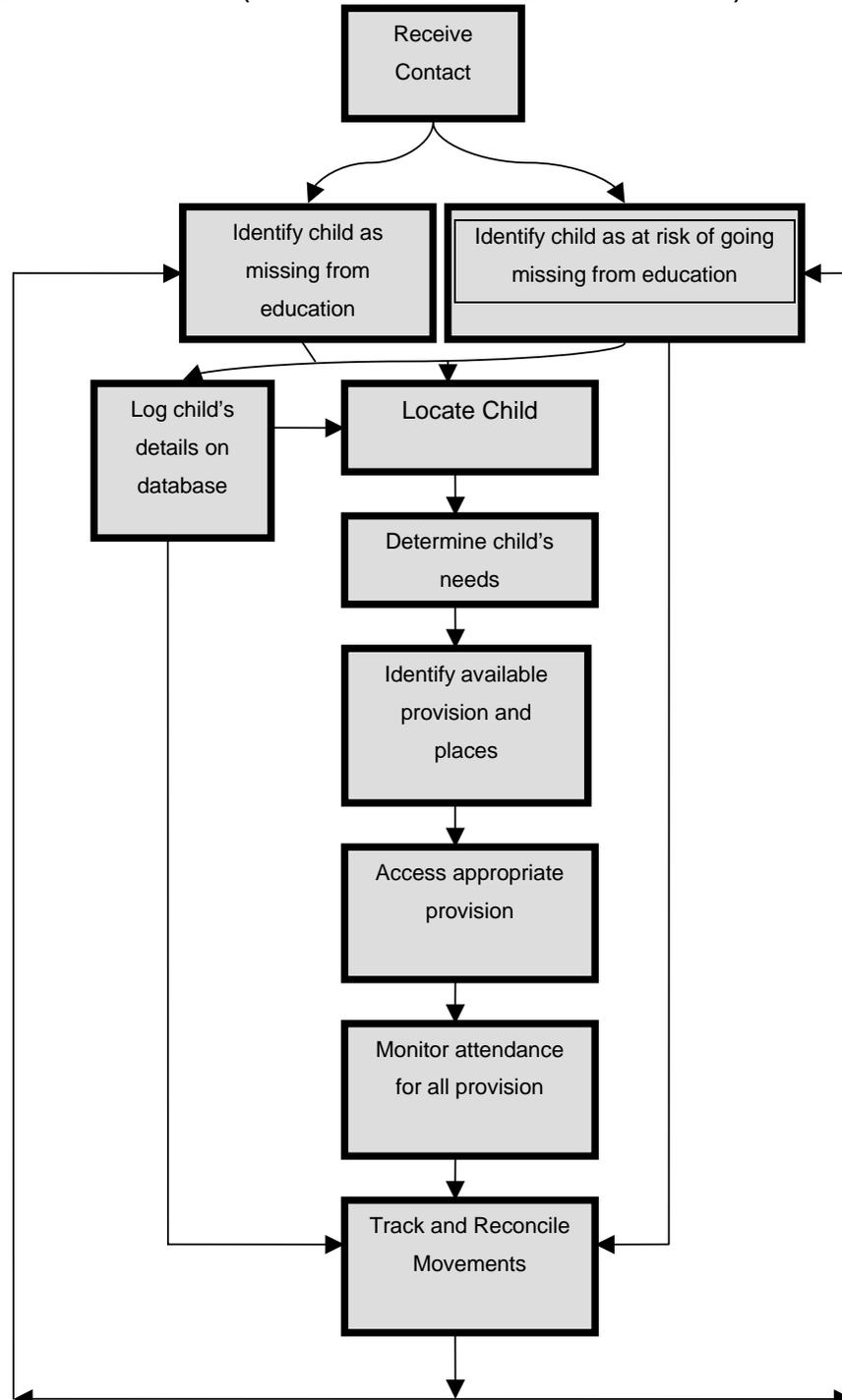
2.3 Categories of Children who can Go Missing from Education

- As well as the various **points** at which children can go missing from education, the DfES documented the various **categories** of children that can go missing from the education system. These included:
 - children living in high mobility families (including Traveller children)
 - children who are taken on extended holidays by their family (particularly a concern in Local Authorities with high minority ethnic populations)
 - children out of education due to long term illness
 - children out of education because they are looking after unwell family members
 - children who have been withdrawn or excluded from school
 - persistent truants
 - children who move across local authority borders.
- Whatever the reason for children missing education, it was noted that overall, there were little or no systematic processes in place to help identify these children or to ensure that they are re-engaged with appropriate provision. Hence the aim of the Good Practice Guide was to help Local Authorities achieve this.

2.4 How to Identify Children Missing from Education

- To help Local Authorities in tackling Children Missing from Education, the DfES highlighted the stages of the process involved in identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of missing education. The diagram overleaf shows the 'model process' (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Model Process (Illustration from the DfES CME Good Practice Guide)



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- To successfully identify and address the issue of children missing or at risk of missing education, the DfES further highlighted five key areas of work *'necessary to achieve a robust system to identify and maintain contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education'*. These five key areas of work are:
 - strategic management and leadership
 - networks and points of contact
 - information systems
 - provision brokering services
 - effective pupil tracking systems.

- Across these five areas, 22 process steps were identified in the guidelines and these were brought together in a self-evaluation checklist designed to assist Local Authorities to assess their progress with implementation. A copy of the Progress Checklist is provided in the appendix.

3 Research Method

3.1 Aims and Objectives

- The overarching aim of the research was to assist the DfES in determining how far the overall target of having in place *'robust systems and procedures to identify and track children missing from education'* has been met and to identify opportunities for developing and improving the current guidelines based on the experiences of Local Authorities.
- The specific research objectives were:
 - **to conduct an audit** of Local Authorities in England to learn about their current understanding of and provision in the area of Children Missing Education
 - in particular, the audit was to assess the extent to which each Local Authority has implemented the process steps laid down in the DfES Good Practice Guide: Progress Checklist covering the five key areas of the model process
 - **to explore in greater depth** the systems and procedures currently in place in a small representative sample of Local Authorities, along with the views of a range of internal and external stakeholders
 - in addition to exploring any issues arising from the audit, this more in-depth investigation considered:
 - how effective the DfES guidance has been
 - views on the guidelines, including gaps and areas for improvement.

3.2 Methodology

- The research was conducted in two stages. The first was a quantitative telephone audit of Local Authorities in England. The second involved a mix of depths, paired depths and mini group interviews in nine Local Authorities, sampled from those who took part in the first stage of the research.

3.2.1 Telephone Audit of Local Authorities

- The DfES provided the research team with a database of named Children Missing Education contacts⁵ within each Local Authority. All 149 Local Authorities were invited to take part and almost nine out of ten agreed to do so (87%, n=129). Reasons for non-participation were because the Authority was still deciding what to do about Children Missing Education, or because the person we needed to interview was unavailable during the fieldwork period. Given that all Local Authorities were moving towards Children's Services, with the restructuring due to be in place by 1st April 2006, some felt they were too busy to participate. In most cases, no more than four calls were made to contacts to achieve participation.
- A standardised questionnaire was designed to capture information on how far Local Authorities had got in implementing the guidelines. This questionnaire (which can be found in the appendix at 6.2) was based on the progress checklist included in the DfES Good Practice Guide. The checklist sets out a list of 22 process steps along with the evidence required for each step to be considered 'achieved'. The process steps and evidence requirements were incorporated into the questionnaire and based on their answers to these questions, the progress a Local Authority had made in implementing each step was assessed and then classified as one of the following:
 - not started
 - working towards
 - partly achieved⁶
 - achieved
 - embedded.
- The telephone interviews were conducted by a team of nine experienced researchers in order to ensure that the interviewers could use their initiative and discretion to probe for evidence that each process step was either being worked towards, achieved or embedded. This meant that although the interview was highly structured, there was some discussion of the issues associated with implementing the guidelines and those that arose on a number of occasions were taken forward to the qualitative stage.

⁵ In some cases this named person was not necessarily the person who was leading Children Missing Education for the Authority. Some were filling in vacant posts or were responsible for Children Missing Education until the Local Authority was clearer on their position. Where appropriate, interviews were conducted with another member of the Children Missing Education team who was better placed to comment on the progress that had been made. However, for the sake of consistency we refer to the respondent who participated in the telephone audit as the Children Missing Education lead (CME lead).

⁶ This category was subsequently added during the course of the analysis to allow for the situation where some process steps or evidence requirements were not being worked towards or achieved; see footnote 2.

- The quantitative data analysis was carried out using SNAP⁷. Each researcher classified the Local Authority in terms of the progress it had made in implementing the 22 process steps. Using a set of logical procedures, the software also arrived at a classification. This was compared with the researchers' definitions and where mismatches occurred, a senior researcher went back through the data to resolve the mismatch. This ensured a high degree of consistency in terms of how Local Authorities were classified.
- The telephone audit was conducted between 6th February and 10th March 2006. On average, telephone interviews lasted between 30 minutes and an hour depending on the length of discussion around the process steps.

3.2.2 *Qualitative Interviews in Nine Local Authorities*

- The purpose of the qualitative stage was to add context to the findings from the first stage of the research. It set out to explore further the issues that arose in those interviews that had implications for implementation, to explore how Local Authorities worked with a range of stakeholders, and to discuss how, if at all, the guidelines could be developed and improved. This stage should not be seen as a series of case studies because the number of interviews in each Authority was small and the sample structure varied from one Authority to another.
- Nine Local Authorities were sampled for this second stage, one from each region. Selection was also made on the basis of how far Local Authorities had implemented the guidelines to date. Each Local Authority was classified as 'high', 'medium' or 'low' based on their scores from the telephone audit.
- The aim was to sample three authorities from each band, however, when Authorities in the 'low' score band were approached, it was discovered that some of them had not yet started involving stakeholders. The decision was then taken to include in the sample another Local Authority from the 'high' band. The final sample by band and region is displayed in Table 1.

Table 2: Qualitative Sample by Region and Band

	South			Midlands			North		
	South East	London	South West	East	East Midlands	West Midlands	Yorks & H'side	North East	North West
Low	✓				✓				
Medium			✓					✓	✓
High		✓		✓		✓	✓		

- In addition to the CME leads, a range of stakeholders were included in order to explore their views and involvement in the Children Missing Education systems and procedures. During the telephone audit, Children Missing Education leads were asked to complete a 'Stakeholder form'⁸. This asked for

⁷ SNAP is an analysis package developed specifically for the market research industry.

⁸ A copy of the Stakeholder form can be found in Appendix 6.3.

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the contact details of those agencies who were frequently or infrequently involved in the Children Missing Education systems and procedures and the stage at which they were involved.

- The aim was to talk to between five and six people in each Local Authority. In total, 56 respondents participated in the interviews. In all nine Local Authorities, the Children Missing Education lead who had taken part in the telephone audit was interviewed face to face.
- In seven of the nine Local Authorities, secondary school head teachers or deputies were included; schools had not been part of the original intended sample of stakeholders but feedback from the telephone audit suggested that there were significant issues relating to schools and it was felt important to understand their perspective.
- The other stakeholders included representatives from Youth Offending Teams, Police, Health, Connexions, Sure Start, data tracking and school attendance officers, and representatives from specialist services in the Local Authorities such as looked after children workers, Traveller teams and parent partnerships. Table 3 shows the range of respondents we spoke to during the qualitative stage and Table 4 shows the number of respondents interviewed in each region.
- Seven of the nine experienced researchers who were involved in the quantitative interviews were also involved in the second stage of the project. The interviews were conducted using a discussion guide that was developed largely around the findings from and issues arising in the telephone interviews. The purpose of the guide was to provide a flexible template for the interviews which all researchers would use to ensure consistency, but which also allowed variation to explore areas that were more relevant to individual stakeholders. A copy of the discussion guides can be found in the appendices (see 6.4). A tailored version of the discussion guide was used with respondents in secondary schools (also at 6.4).
- All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full and the analysis was carried out based on the transcripts. The qualitative research was carried out between 13th and 31st March 2006.

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Table 3: Roles of Respondents interviewed in the Qualitative Research

Stakeholder	Number	Stakeholder	Number
Children Missing Education Leads	9	Traveller Children Teams	2
Secondary Schools	7	Alternative education provider	1
Connexions	6	Exclusion Team	1
Database administrator	5	Non-Attendance officer	1
Youth Offending Team	5	Extended Curriculum Team	1
Education Welfare Officer	5	Sure Start	1
Children Missing Education team members	2	Support Organisation for Parents with Children with Special Needs	1
Police	2	Homeless services	1
Inclusion Officers	2	LAC Teams	1
Health	2	SEN/Home Education	1

Table 4: Number of Respondents interviewed in the Qualitative Research by Region and Band

	South			Midlands			North		
	South East	London	South West	East	East Midlands	West Midlands	Yorks & H'side	North East	North West
Low	5				8				
Medium			7					5	6
High		5		6		5	9		

4 Telephone Audit

4.1 Introduction

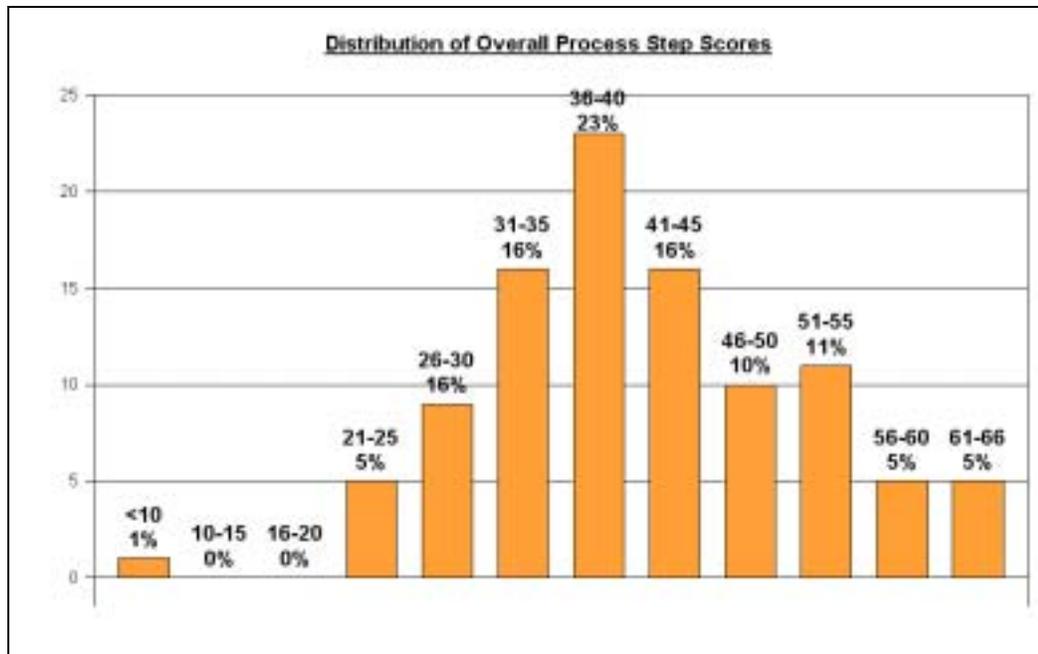
- In this section we report on the findings from the telephone audit. As mentioned in the introduction, the DfES Good Practice Guide includes a self-evaluation progress checklist on which the telephone audit was based. This sets out 22 'process steps' which were developed based on discussions with Local Authorities.
- The process steps fall into five broad areas which are summarised overleaf in Table 5 (the complete progress checklist can be found in the Appendix; see Section 6.1). There were five levels against which each process step was assessed. Each level was allocated a score as follows:
 - **process step not met:** no measures have yet been taken to implement this process step – those who had not met the process step scored 0
 - **working towards the process step:** initial discussions have taken place and work has begun in implementing the process step – those who were still working towards the process step scored 1
 - **partly achieved:** this relates to those instances where a Local Authority have fulfilled some of the requirements for a particular process step and have no plans to fulfil the outstanding requirements⁹ - those who had partly achieved the process step also scored 1
 - **process step has been achieved:** the Local Authority can provide evidence to show this process step has been implemented - those who had achieved the process step scored 2
 - **process step is fully embedded:** the Local Authority can demonstrate that the policy/processes/systems have been in place for at least six months and have been reviewed since being introduced (even if no changes were made as a result of the review) - those who had embedded the process step scored 3.
- The DfES self-evaluation progress checklist sets out a number of evidence requirements that an Authority should meet in order for each process step to be considered achieved. These requirements were built into the questionnaire and used by the researchers to decide how to classify a response. A strict

⁹ For example, a requirement for achieving process step A1 is for the written policy to be shared with five key agencies. Where a Local Authority is still in the process of doing this (and intends sharing the policy with the five agencies), it would be scored as 'working towards' the process step. Where a Local Authority has already shared the written policy with four of the five agencies but has no plans to share it with the fifth agency, it would have been scored as 'partly achieved'.

scoring procedure was adopted whereby an Authority had to demonstrate it met **all** the requirements before it was classified as having achieved the process step.

- On some issues, respondents were unable to answer a specific question because it was dealt with by someone else (often in a different department). Where possible, the researchers endeavoured to contact these people but it was not always possible. Where a Local Authority had met or was working towards all the other requirements, the process step was classified as 'embedded', 'achieved' or 'working towards' even if 'don't know' responses were recorded to some questions¹⁰.
- An overall score was calculated for each Local Authority ranging between 0 and 66. A Local Authority scoring zero would not have made a start on implementing any of the process steps; a Local Authority scoring 66 would have met and embedded all 22 process steps.
- Figure 3 shows the distribution of scores for the 129 Local Authorities that took part in the telephone audit. The figure shows that all Local Authorities had made a start on implementing the guidelines (no Local Authority scored zero); indeed, all except one Authority scored 22 or above. Over a third of the sample (37%) obtained a score of 44 or more and well over three-quarters (79%) obtained a score of at least 33.

Figure 3: Distribution of Overall Process Step Scores



¹⁰ This means some of the percentages in the text and charts may add up to more than 100%.

Table 5: 22 Process Steps Grouped by 5 Key Areas of Work

Section A: Strategic Management and Leadership

- A1: Does the Local Authority have a specific policy concerning Children Missing Education?
- A2: Has the Local Authority identified the ways that children become 'missing' and put procedures in place to close the gaps?
- A3: Is there regular monitoring by Senior Managers and Elected Members?

Section B: Networks and Points of Contact

- B1: Has the Local Authority identified the key stakeholders to provide information about Children Missing Education?
- B2: Has the Local Authority provided and publicised notification routes for all key stakeholders?
- B3: Does the Local Authority have a named contact point to receive Children Missing Education details?
- B4: Are there clear rules and responsibilities for this role or to those who the duties are delegated?

Section C: Information Systems

- C1: Does the Local Authority maintain a database of children not currently in education?
- C2: Does the database capture key dates?
- C3: Does the Local Authority monitor the numbers of children who are not receiving an education?
- C4: Does the Local Authority have processes in place to monitor the educational status of children in vulnerable groups?
- C5: Are there clear access rules and procedures to ensure fair/safe data processing?

Section D: Provision Brokering Services

- D1: Does the Local Authority have clear processes for securing the support of other agencies where needed?
- D2: Does the Local Authority monitor the numbers of children who are not receiving an education?
- D3: Does the Local Authority monitor the pace children move into a provision?
- D4: Does the Local Authority have access to update information concerning the availability of school places and places with alternative suppliers?

Section E: Effective Pupil Tracking Systems

- E1: Does the Local Authority keep a record of children who leave education without a known destination?
- E2: Does the Local Authority follow up children regularly until they register with a new supplier?
- E3: Does the Local Authority have an agreed system with schools concerning children leaving a provision?
- E4: Does the Local Authority support and encourage schools to transfer files via s2s?
- E5: Does the Local Authority have an identified officer as database administrator for s2s with responsibility for the LPD?
- E6: Does the Local Authority upload to and download from the LPD?

- In the rest of this section we report on the findings for each of the individual process steps.

4.2 Strategic Management and Leadership

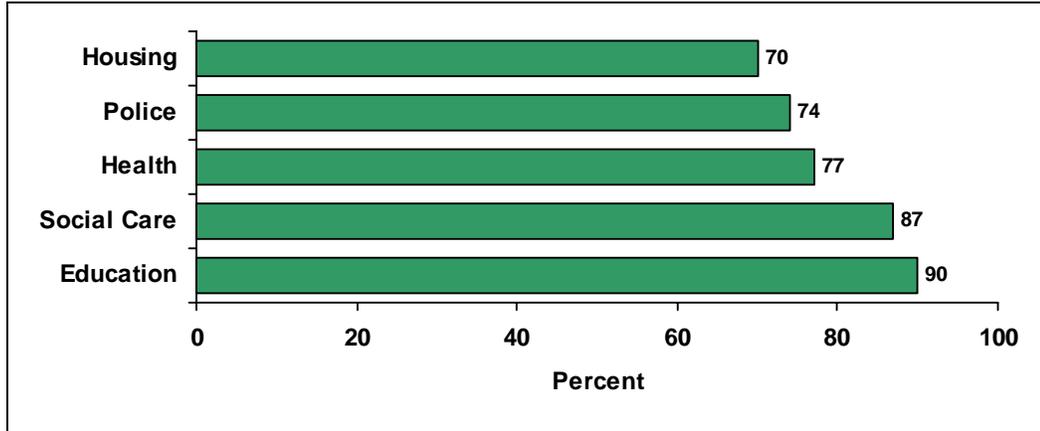
- The first three process steps come under the heading of Strategic Management and Leadership. They look at whether the Local Authority has a specific written policy concerning Children Missing Education, whether they have carried out an analysis of their local situation to see how children can go missing from education, and whether the numbers of Children Missing Education are regularly monitored by senior management and Elected Members. The extent to which these three process steps were found to have been implemented are summarised below.

4.2.1 *Does the Local Authority have a Specific Policy Concerning Children Missing Education?*

- There are three strands to the evidence required to meet this process step; having a written policy, sharing it with certain key stakeholders, and ensuring that the policy covers particular areas. The scores on each of these were then combined to give a total score for this process step.
- Taking the first of these, the most common scenario found in the interviews was that historically, Local Authorities had various policies in place that covered aspects of Children Missing Education and many were working or had worked on pulling these aspects together to create one specific Children Missing Education policy.
- Four out of ten Authorities (39%) had a written policy in place and most of the remainder (57%) were working towards this. A number had a draft policy that was in the process of being finalised.
- With respect to the second, Figure 4 shows that in almost all Local Authorities, the written policy had been shared or was going to be shared with Education (90%) and Social Care (87%). Indeed, in many cases, representatives from Education and Social Care had either jointly written the policy or one had taken the lead with input from the other. Three-quarters had also shared or planned to share the policy with Health (77%) while a slightly smaller proportion (74%) had, or planned to, share it with the Police. Housing was the agency with which the policy was least likely to have been shared (70%).

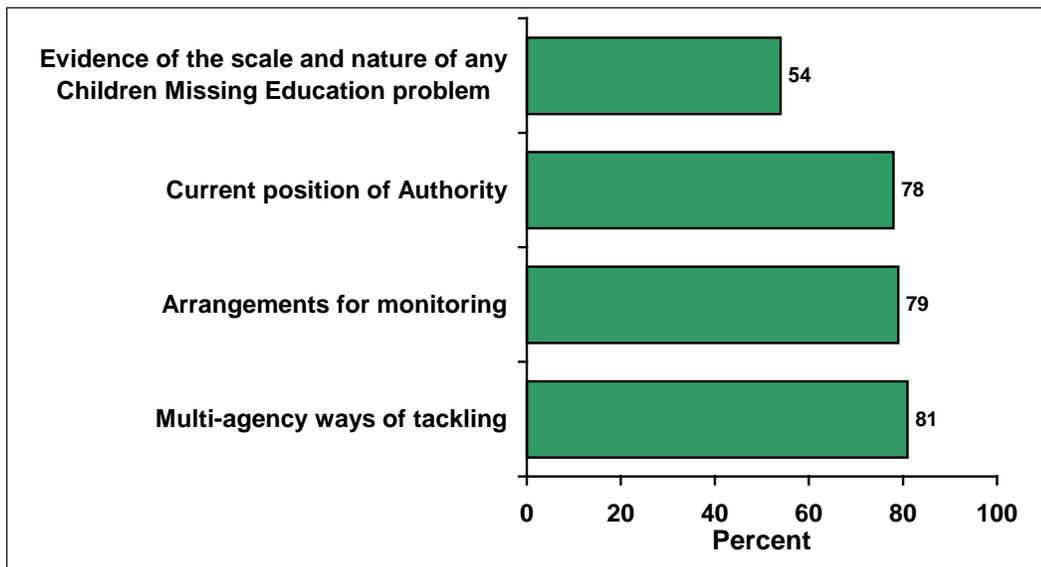
Evidence Requirement
<p>The policy itself which should be shared with and understood by at least Health, Education, Social Care, Police and Housing. The document(s) containing the policy should contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the current position of the Authority ▪ evidence about the scale and nature of any CME problem ▪ ways of tackling it in a multi-agency approach ▪ arrangements for monitoring

Figure 4: Agencies with whom the Children Missing Education policy had been or will be shared



- Regarding the third area, the majority of policies had, or would have, sections on the current position of the Authority (78%), the arrangements for monitoring (79%) and using a multi-agency approach (81%). Policies were less likely to include a section on the scale and nature of any Children Missing Education problem (54%). This is summarised in Figure 5.

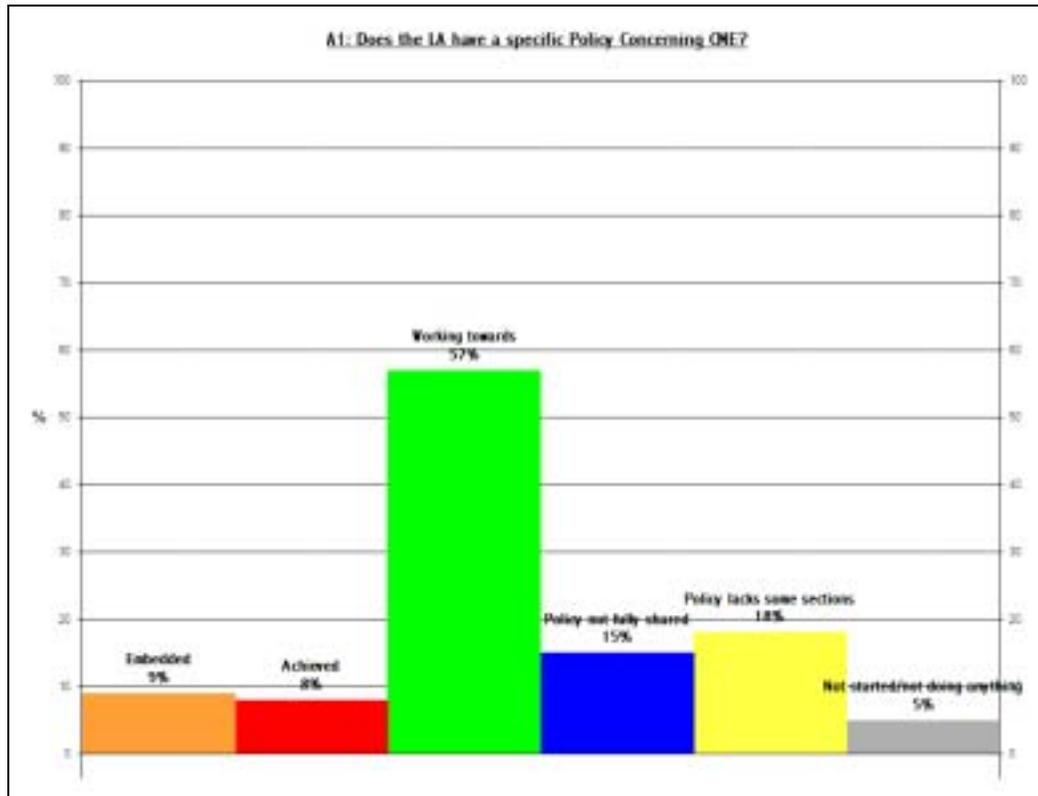
Figure 5: Sections included or to be included in the Policy Document



- Based on the degree to which Authorities had met all the evidence requirements, just under a fifth (17%, n= 21) had either achieved this process step or embedded it while 57% (n=73) were still working towards it. This information is displayed in Figure 6 over the page (the figures sum to over 100% because the categories 'working towards', 'policy not fully shared' and 'policy lack some sections' are not mutually exclusive).
- This shows that around one in five Local Authorities (22%, n=29) had partly achieved this process step either because their policy had not been fully shared with the five key agencies as set out in the Good Practice Guide and/or because their final written policy lacked certain sections.

- While one in twenty Local Authorities (5%, n=6) had not made a start on producing a written policy specific to CME, this did not necessarily mean that there were no procedures in place.

Figure 6: Does the Local Authority have a specific policy concerning Children Missing Education?



4.2.2 *Has the Local Authority Identified the Ways that Children Become ‘Missing from Education’ and Put Procedures in Place to Close the Gaps?*

- The next process step, under Strategic Management and Leadership, focuses on the extent to which Local Authorities have identified the different ways that children can go missing from education in their area and their response to the matter.

Evidence Requirement
There should be documentary evidence from studies of children missing education detailing the ways children go missing. There should be an analysis report of the local situation, and an identification of which ways are most relevant locally.

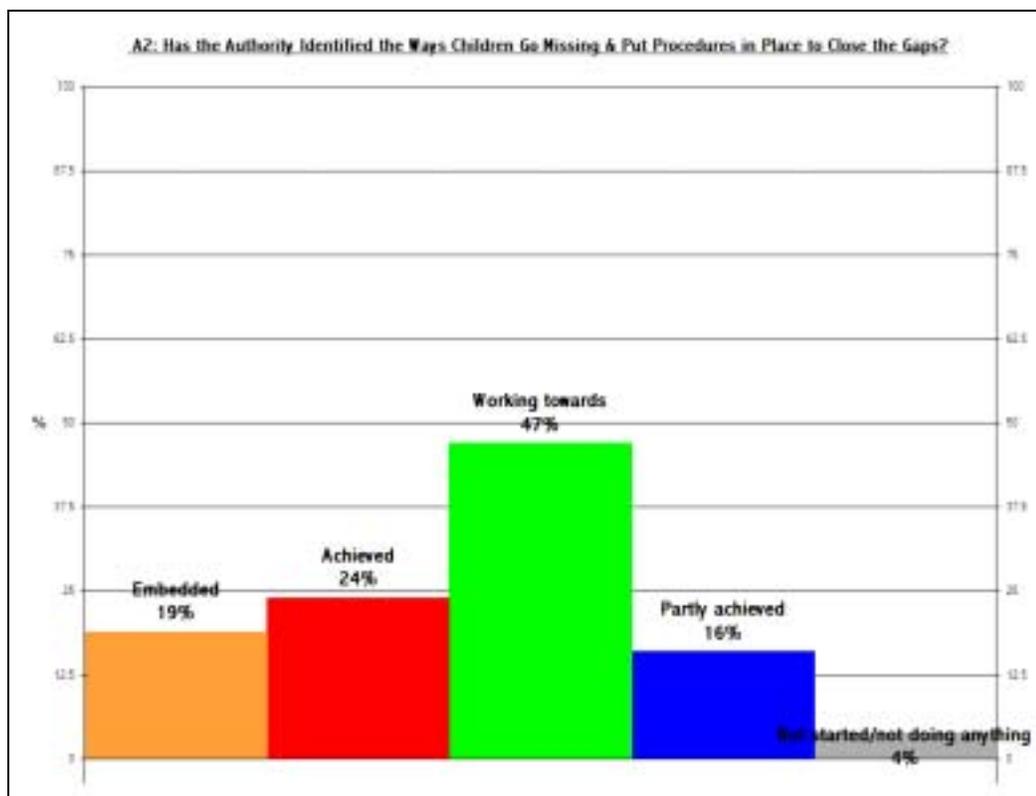
- Seven out of ten (72%) Authorities had documented the different ways in which children can go missing from education while more than half (57%) had carried out an analysis of their local situation to identify which ways were most relevant to this. A similar proportion (56%) had put procedures in place to close any gaps while most of the remainder (34%) were working on this.
- As shown in Figure 7, taken together, this meant that a quarter (24%, n=31) had achieved and a further fifth (19%, n=25) had fully met and embedded this process step. Almost half (47%, n=60) of the Local Authorities were still

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working towards this step. One in eight (16%, n=20) had partly achieved it, that is, they had made progress in one area but not in another. For example, they may have identified the ways in which children can go missing but not carried out an analysis of their local situation, or vice versa. Around one in twenty (4%, n=5) had not started implementing this process step.

- A number of Children Missing Education leads raised issues around defining 'Children Missing Education'. They identified three broad categories of Children Missing Education
 1. Those on a school roll but not attending (a group that was regarded as relatively easy to identify but not necessarily a group that are 'missing' as such)
 2. Those that are not on a school roll but the Local Authority are aware of them
 3. Those who are really 'missing' i.e. those who are not only missing from education but who are also not known to any agencies.
- The third group was of greatest concern to Local Authorities and it was felt that there was little guidance on how to systematically identify those falling within it. We return to this issue later (see 5.3.4).

Figure 7: Extent to which Local Authorities had identified the ways in which Children could go Missing from Education



4.2.3

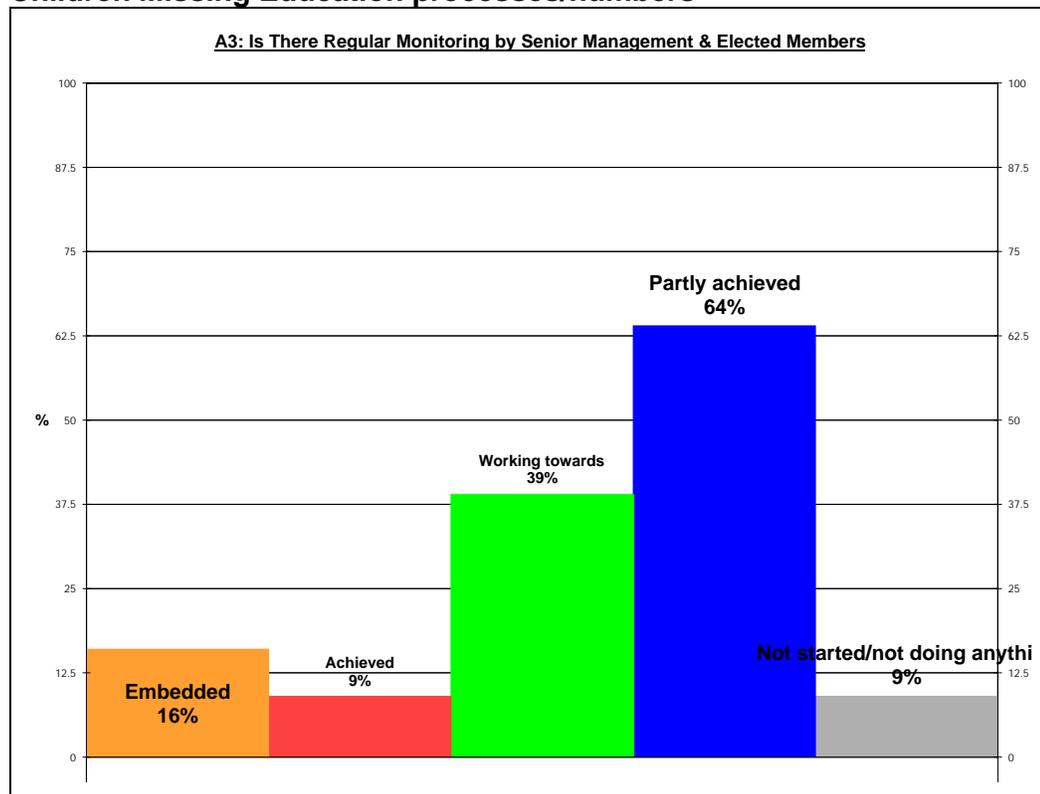
Is There Regular Monitoring of the processes/numbers by Senior Management and Elected Members?

- The final process step under the umbrella of Strategic Management and Leadership looks at the involvement of senior managers and elected Members and the extent to which they monitor the number of Children Missing Education cases.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide copies of records, or the ready ability to produce regular records from January 2006 onwards. 'Regular' is termly.

- Six out of ten Children Missing Education leads reported that monitoring was carried out by senior management but only a quarter (28%) said that elected Members were involved on a regular basis. Half (49%) said the information on processes/numbers could be readily produced while a further one in six (16%) said they could produce the information but that this was a time consuming process. Two-thirds (67%) said that monitoring was being done on at least a termly basis; in fact, in most cases (57%), it was more frequent than this.

Figure 8: Extent to which senior managers and elected Members monitor Children Missing Education processes/numbers



- Overall, a quarter of the Authorities (25%, n=32) had achieved this process step, including 16% (n=20) who had it embedded. Around two-thirds (64%, n=83) of the Local Authorities had partly achieved it. In most cases the Local Authorities reported regular monitoring by senior management but not elected Members. Two-fifths (39%, n=50) were still working towards this process step

while one in ten (9%, n=11) Local Authorities had not made a start¹¹. See Figure 8.

4.2.4 *Summary*

- In terms of the first three, Strategic Management and Leadership, process steps, most Local Authorities had either written a specific Children Missing Education policy that met all the evidence requirements (17%) or were working towards this (57%). Most Local Authorities were still agreeing the ways that children could go missing from education in their local area and there were some issues around what actually identifies a child who is missing education and therefore who the Local Authorities should be focusing on.
- Generally, the main area of weakness amongst the first three process steps was regular monitoring of the numbers of Children Missing Education cases by senior management and elected Members. Most reported regular monitoring by senior management but the story for elected Members was very different. Indeed, many leads reported that there were no immediate plans to involve elected Members in this. Some even questioned the value of this if done regularly. It was more likely, they felt, that elected Members would learn about them if, as usually happens, they are covered in annual reports that Members are more likely to read.

4.3 **Networks and Points of Contact**

- The next four process steps focus on the extent to which Local Authorities have addressed the issue of networks and points of contact. The four steps consider whether they have identified the key stakeholders with whom they should be working to tackle Children Missing Education, whether they have agreed notification routes for these stakeholders – that is, instructions for what stakeholders are to do if they are aware of a child not in education in the area, whether the Local Authority has a named person who is responsible for receiving all Children Missing Education enquiries, and whether the role and responsibilities of this person are clear. The findings are as follows.

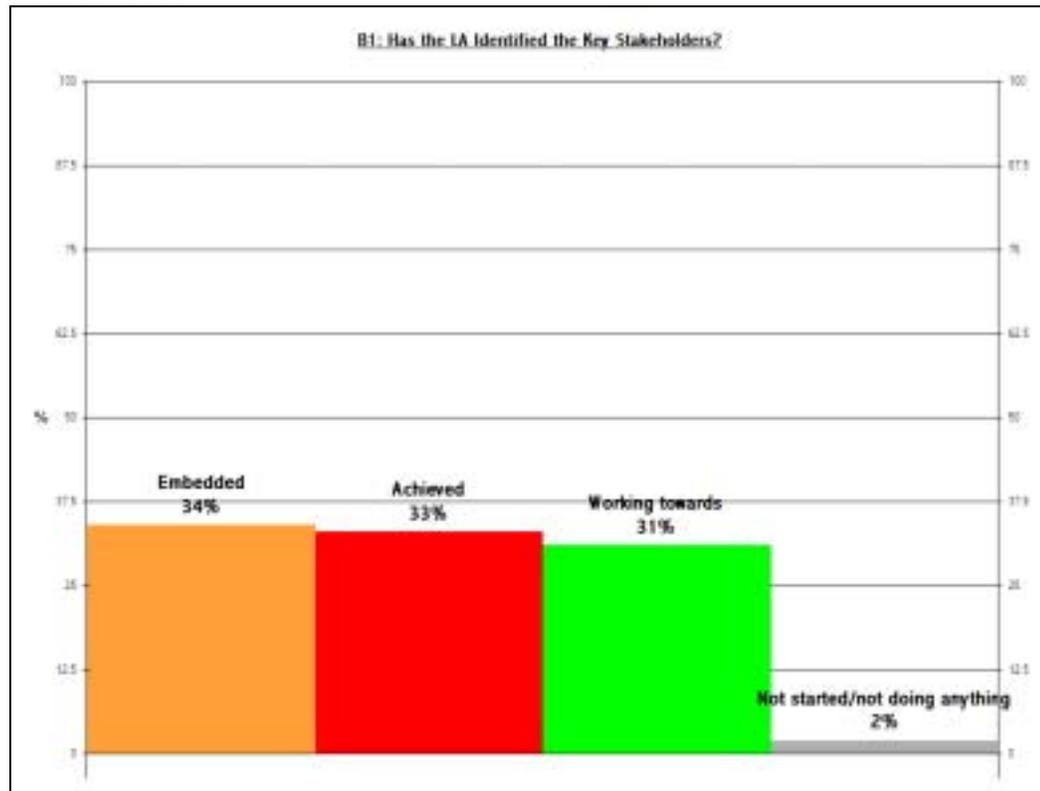
¹¹ The percentages sum to over 100% because the Local Authority could be working towards some elements of the process step and not have any plans to implement other elements. For example, if an Authority was working towards regular monitoring by senior management but had no plans for Members to be involved they would be classified as both 'working towards' and 'partly achieved'.

4.3.1 *Has the Local Authority Identified the Key Stakeholders to Provide Information about Children/Young People Without Educational Provision in Your Area?*

- The first process step under Networks and Points of Contact explores the extent to which Local Authorities have identified the key stakeholders with whom they are to share information about Children Missing Education.
- Two out of three (67%, n=86) Local Authorities reported they had identified all of their key stakeholders; half of these had this embedded. Three out of ten (31%, n=40) had identified some of their key stakeholders. Given that not all Local Authorities had shared their policy with all key stakeholders, this finding was not surprising. This finding is presented in Figure 9.
- During the telephone audit some respondents mentioned that it was easier to involve certain key stakeholders than others. For example, some mentioned that Health and Housing were more difficult to bring on board than the Police, Education and Social Care. The main explanations for this were issues around data protection and the disparate nature of the infrastructure for Health (for example, Primary Care Trusts, General Practitioners, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Accident & Emergency, etc).

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence listing other agencies in their area who the CME named individual has spoken to, referred children to and/or given details, plus receiving details of missing children from other agencies and the general public.

Figure 9: Extent to which Local Authorities have identified their key stakeholders



- Furthermore, respondents identified two key agencies that were considered to be missing from the guidance, namely the Benefits Agency and Immigration. The general view was that for Local Authorities to ensure that they have covered all ways in which children can go missing from education, they need to be able to cross reference with any agency that has information on families. For example, It was felt that most families who have children who are not attending school or not known to the Local Authority would still claim benefits (where applicable) and hence, if Local Authorities could identify the families who were claiming, they could correlate this information with their own. Similarly, in areas with high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, respondents felt that Immigration services could be more proactive in informing the Authorities of families that were dispersed to their area.

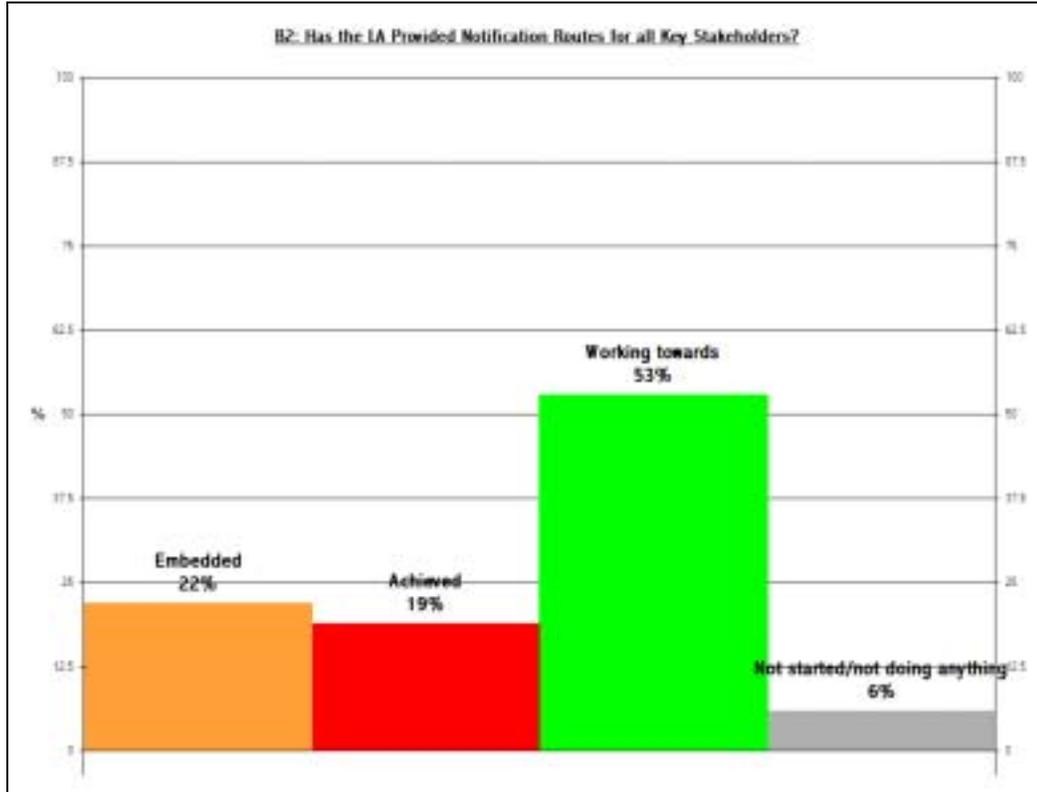
4.3.2 *Has the Local Authority Provided and Publicised Notification Routes for all Key Stakeholders?*

- The next process step is concerned with the extent to which Local Authorities have provided and publicised notification routes for key stakeholders, that is, the extent to which key stakeholders would know what to do in the event of a Child Missing Education case coming to their attention. These findings are presented in Figure 10.

Evidence Requirement
Documents showing notification routes, and evidence of the dissemination of this information should be available. Dissemination should be by: mail outs, website, leaflets etc. Essentially if a number of likely important stakeholders are approached they should be able to say how they notify the Authority.

- Just over two-fifths (41%, n=52) had achieved or embedded this process step. Slightly more than half of the Local Authorities (53%, n=69) were still working towards it and one in sixteen (6%, n=8) had not made a start. Again, given the fact that many Local Authorities were still in the process of identifying all of their stakeholders and deciding on the appropriate referral routes to pick up children missing from education, this finding was not surprising.

Figure 10: Extent to which Local Authorities have publicised notification routes for stakeholders



4.3.3

Does the Local Authority Have a Named Contact Point to Receive Details about Children Missing Education?

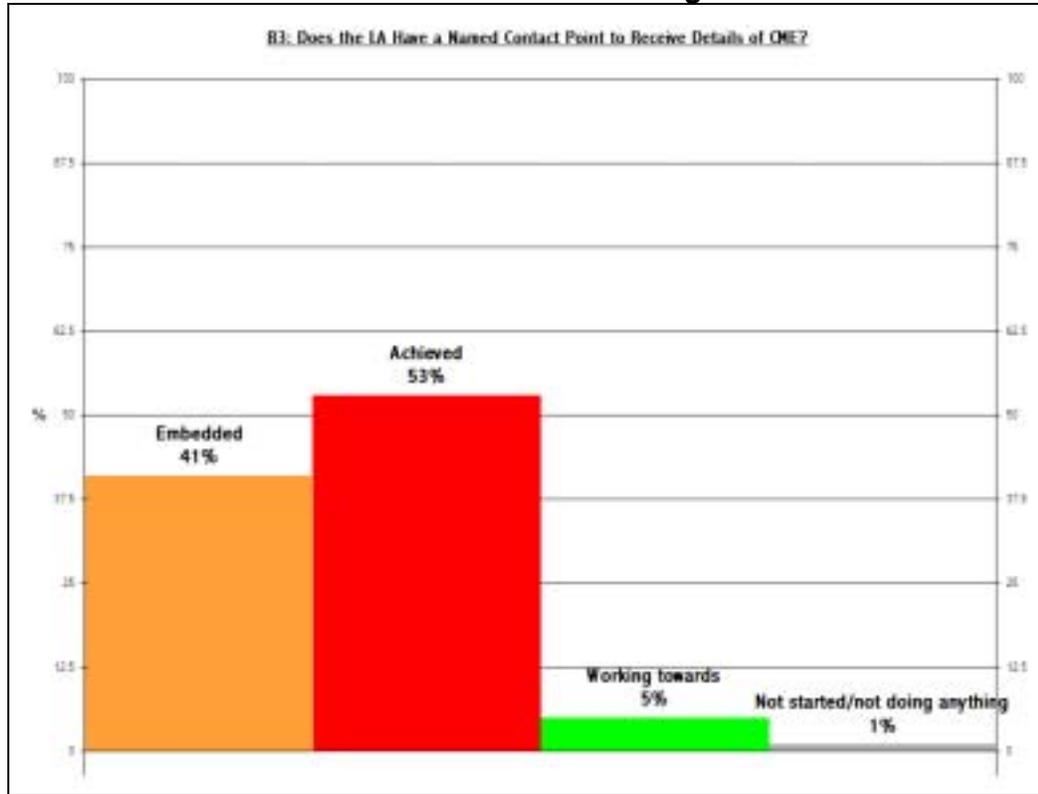
- Almost all Local Authorities had met this process step. Just over a half had achieved it (53%, n=68) and two-fifths had embedded it (41%, n=53). One in twenty was still working towards this process step (5%, n=7) and one Local Authority had not started (see Figure 11).

Evidence Requirement
If contacted, the Authority should be able to give the name of a person or persons with the responsibility for receiving information on Children Missing Education.

- During the telephone audit, a number of respondents said that the duties they carried out as the lead on Children Missing Education were in 'addition' to their other responsibilities. This was particularly the case where the named lead was also a principal or senior Education Welfare Officer. Most reported that they had 'fallen into' the role of CME lead. This had happened because they were either responsible for a related area or because they had championed the issue within their Local Authority. Some respondents mentioned having received training in the role whilst others had not.
- A large number of Children Missing Education leads felt that, as Children Missing Education was a high priority area for the Government, it should be given more prominence within their Local Authority. Although it was not necessarily felt that the role of the CME lead required a dedicated full-time post, it was felt that for the role to be effective, it needed to have greater

momentum and authority, especially in terms of publicising the notification routes amongst stakeholders.

Figure 11: Extent to which Local Authorities have identified a named contact to receive details about children missing education



4.3.4 Are There Clear Responsibilities for this Role or Those to Whom Duties are Delegated?

- As well as having a named person in post, the guidance stipulates that the named lead should be readily contactable, able to provide information on their role and responsibilities, and able to refer on appropriately where an enquiry falls outside of their remit. Table 6 shows the responses to the relevant questions.

Evidence Requirement
The CME lead should be readily contactable, and be able to provide, without difficulty information on their role and the limits of their responsibility and if they are not responsible they should know who is.

Table 6: Responsibilities of the Children Missing Education lead

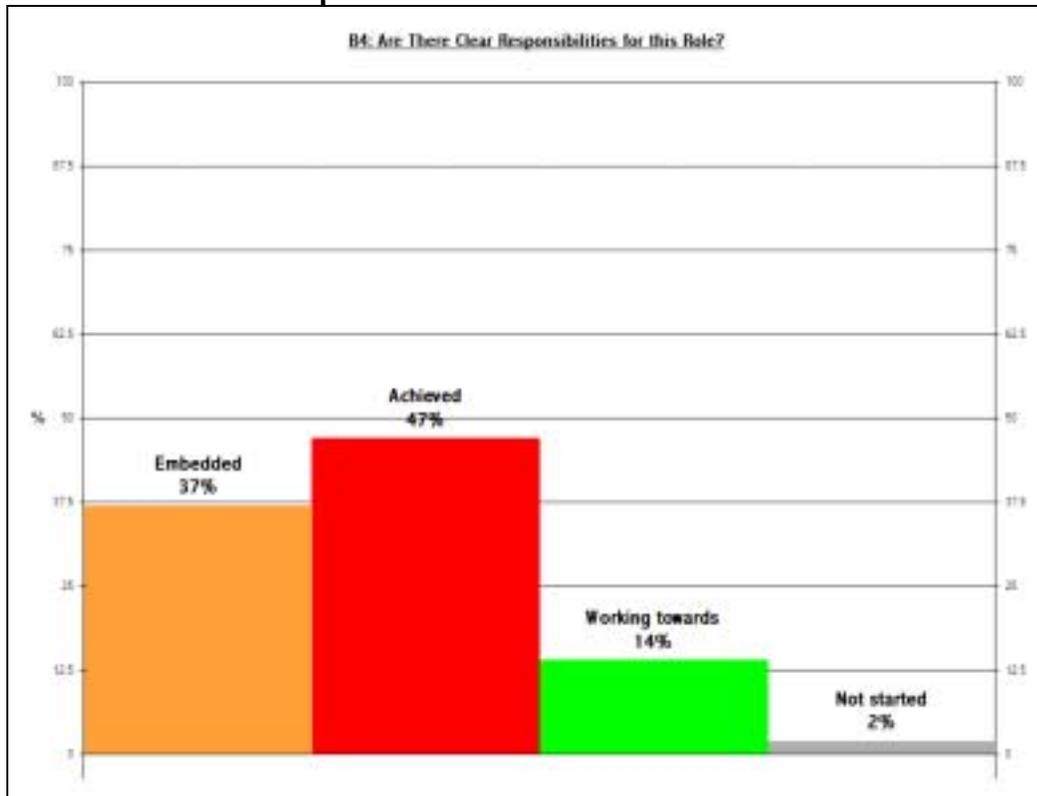
	Percentage	Number
Readily contactable	92	119
Able to provide information about their role and limits of their responsibility	86	111
Where not responsible, able to refer enquiry to a person that is	89	115

Base = All 129 Local Authorities

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- As the table shows, a very high number of Local Authorities had a named Children Missing Education lead who was contactable, able to provide information on their responsibility and refer enquiries that did not fall under their remit to others who were more appropriate¹².
- Overall, over a third (37%, n=48) of the Local Authorities had embedded this process step. Around half (47%, n=61) had achieved it and one in seven were still working towards it (14%, n=18). Most of those in this last group were Local Authorities that had a 'temporary' named lead in post but were working towards either firming up the post or recruiting a dedicated Children Missing Education lead. Two Local Authorities (2%) had made no progress in implementing this process step. This information is presented in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Extent to which Children Missing Education leads were aware of their duties and responsibilities



¹² To ascertain the types of duties that may have fallen outside of the Children Missing Education leads' remit, they were asked what types of enquiries they referred on. Most mentioned cases such as Special Educational Needs (SEN) or those with complex health needs; in other words, enquiries that required the input of specialist professionals. Nevertheless, most said that it was important for all Children Missing Education cases to pass through them.

4.3.5 *Summary*

- Many Local Authorities reported they had identified all of their key stakeholders and most of the rest had identified some. Most were still at the early stages of publishing and publicising notification routes for stakeholders although a fair number had achieved and embedded this. Almost all Local Authorities had met the process step of having a named person to whom information about Children Missing Education should be passed. Most said that the named person was readily contactable, able to state the nature of their roles and responsibilities, and able to appropriately refer enquiries outside of their remit to those who could handle them. However, there was an issue with the amount of time certain Children Missing Education leads were spending on effectively fulfilling their duties. Most mentioned that the role was in ‘addition’ to their other responsibilities and to have greater impact, more time needed to be dedicated to it. They particularly wanted more time to build relationships with stakeholders because, as the qualitative research revealed, there was a feeling that there is a difference between having a list of stakeholders and actively working with them (see. 5.4.1).

4.4 **Information Systems**

- To effectively track, monitor and coordinate the appropriate provision for Children Missing Education, the Good Practice Guide suggests that Local Authorities should introduce and maintain good information systems. This includes a specific Children Missing Education database that records key dates, such as the date the child was brought to the Authority’s attention, the child’s educational needs, the identification of appropriate provision and the date that provision was actually accessed.

4.4.1 *Does the Local Authority Maintain a Database of Children Not Currently in Education?*

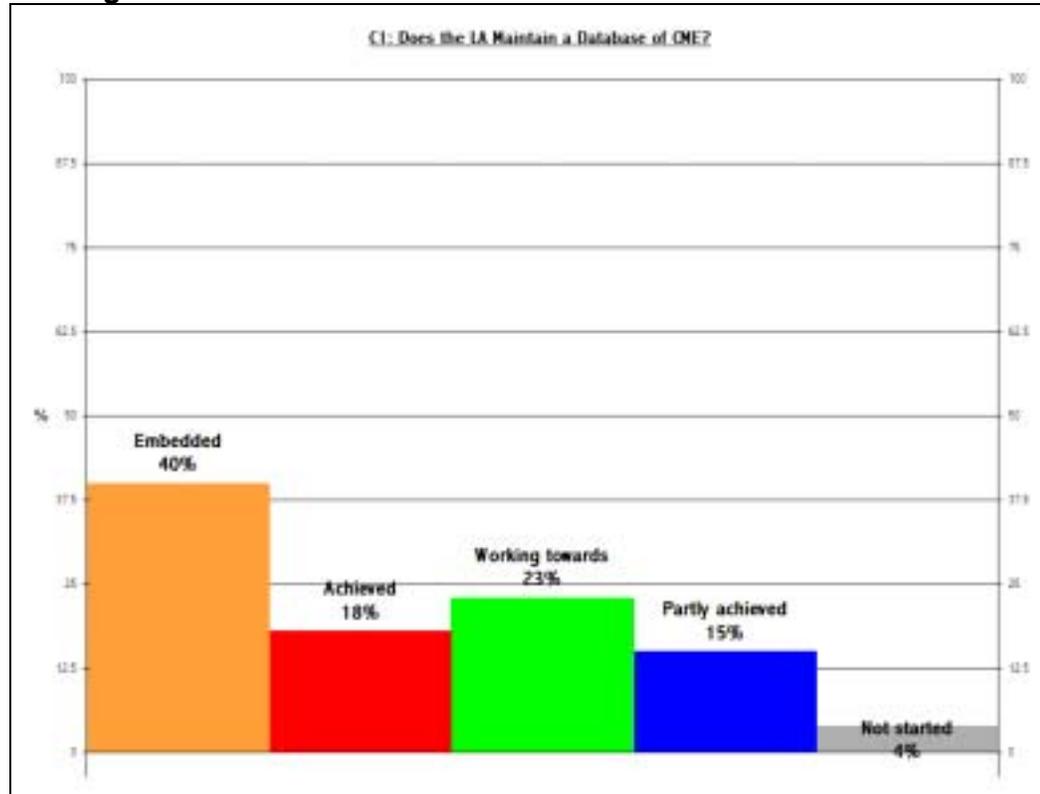
- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether their Authority maintained a database of children not currently in education. Around three-quarters said they did (73%), and about a quarter were working towards this (23%). Seven out of ten (71%,) said they could provide accurate numbers of children out of education and two out of three (66%) said the numbers they could provide were no more than a month old.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old), together with a description of how these figures are collected and calculated.

- Overall, two-fifths (40%, n=52) of the Local Authorities had embedded this process step and a fifth (18%, n=23) had achieved it. A quarter (23%, n=30) were still working towards it and 15% (n=19) had partly achieved it. These were Authorities with databases that either did not provide accurate data or the data was more than a month old. They were not currently working to remedy this state of affairs. This information is provided in Figure 13.
- It was clear from respondents that the nature and the quality of the databases varied considerably. Some had a single database while others had multiple

databases from which they extracted the information. Some had a dedicated database while others were part of a larger database (such as EMS – Extended Management System). Moreover, some acknowledged that their database was not always accurate, reliable or up to date. Many wanted a single, integrated database but said they were frustrated by a lack of resource.

Figure 13: Extent to which Local Authorities were maintaining a Children Missing Education database



4.4.2 Does the Database Capture Key Dates?

- The next process step focuses specifically on whether the database(s) captures or will capture key dates. Table 7, overleaf, summarises the results.
- The table shows that almost three-quarters (74%) said their database captured (or would capture) the date on which the Local Authority was first notified about the Child Missing Education case. Three-fifths (62%) also logged details of the date an appropriate form of provision was determined and a similar proportion recorded the date that provision was actually accessed (providing it was accessed). This finding suggests that Local Authorities were better at recording the date when they were notified about a Children Missing Education case than they were at recording subsequent actions.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide information on any case within the database and show the dates of notification, identification of appropriate provision and of actual access to that provision.

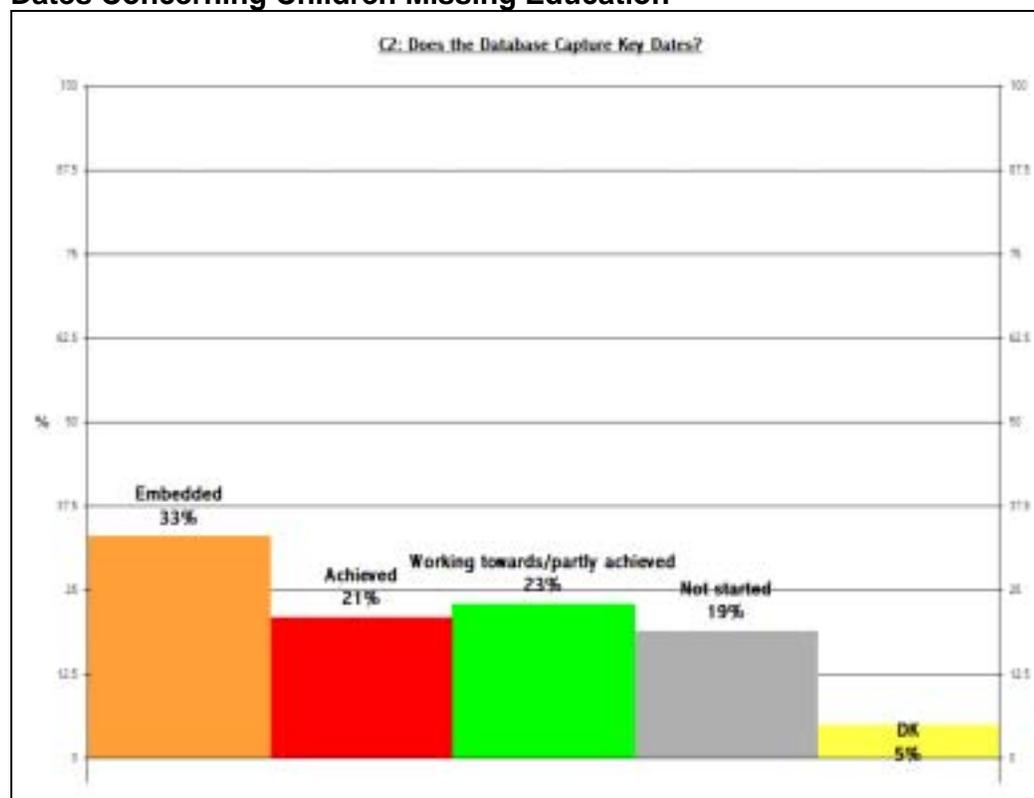
Table 7: Details of Key Dates

	Percentage	Number
The date the Local Authority was notified about the child	74	96
The date the appropriate form of provision was determined	62	80
The date the provision was accessed	62	80
None of these	15	19
Currently don't have a database/not working on developing one	4	5
Don't know	5	6

Base = All 129 Local Authorities

- Based on the evidence requirements, a third of the Local Authorities (32%, n=44) had embedded this process step and a fifth (21%, n=27) had achieved it. Just under a quarter (23%, n=30) were still working towards it and one in five (19%, n=22) had not made a start. This information is presented in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Extent to Which the Local Authority Database Captures Key Dates Concerning Children Missing Education



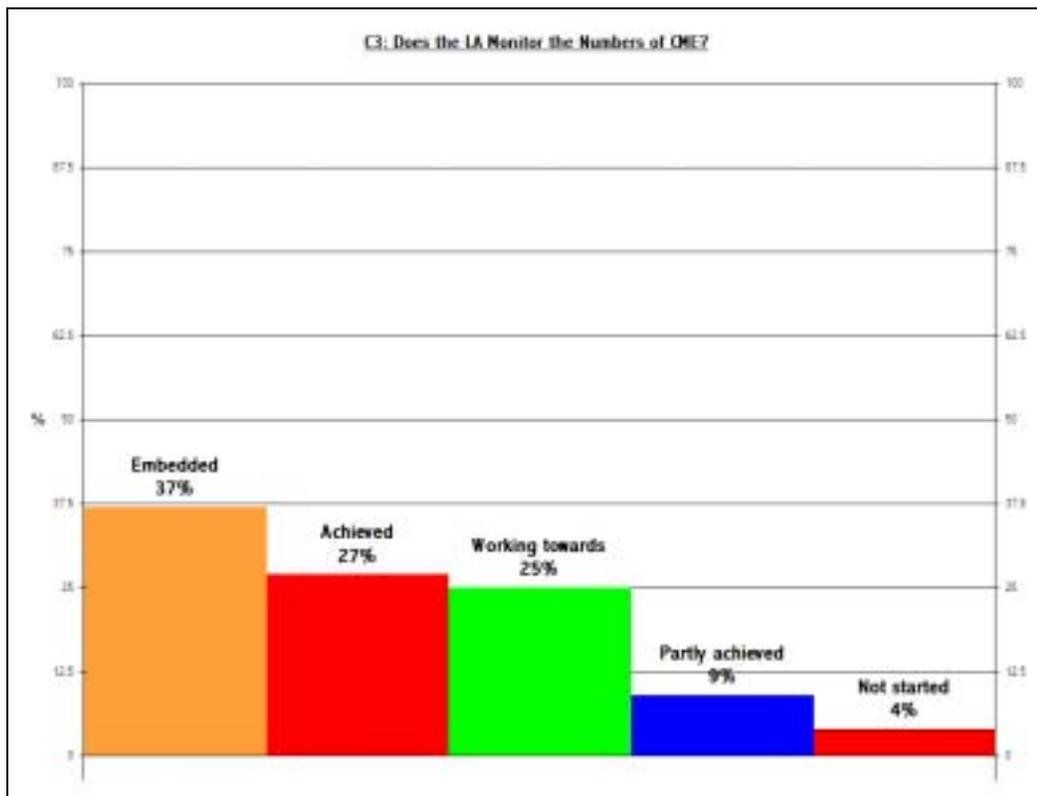
4.4.3 *Does the Local Authority Monitor the Numbers of Children/Young People who are Not Receiving an Education?*

- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether their Local Authority monitors the numbers of children who are not receiving an education.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence that regular updates on the number of CME are sent to senior responsible officers within the organisation.

- Three out of four said that they did so (74%). However, only 62% said they sent regular updates to senior Children Missing Education officers as suggested by the guidelines
- Overall, just under two-fifths (37%, n=48) had embedded this process step and slightly more than a quarter (27%, n=32) had achieved it, a total of 64%. A quarter (25%, n=32) were still working towards it while one in ten (9%, n=11) had partly achieved it (numbers were monitored but updates were not being sent to senior managers). A small proportion (4%, n=5) had not met this process step. This information is presented in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Extent to which the Local Authority monitors the numbers of Children Missing Education

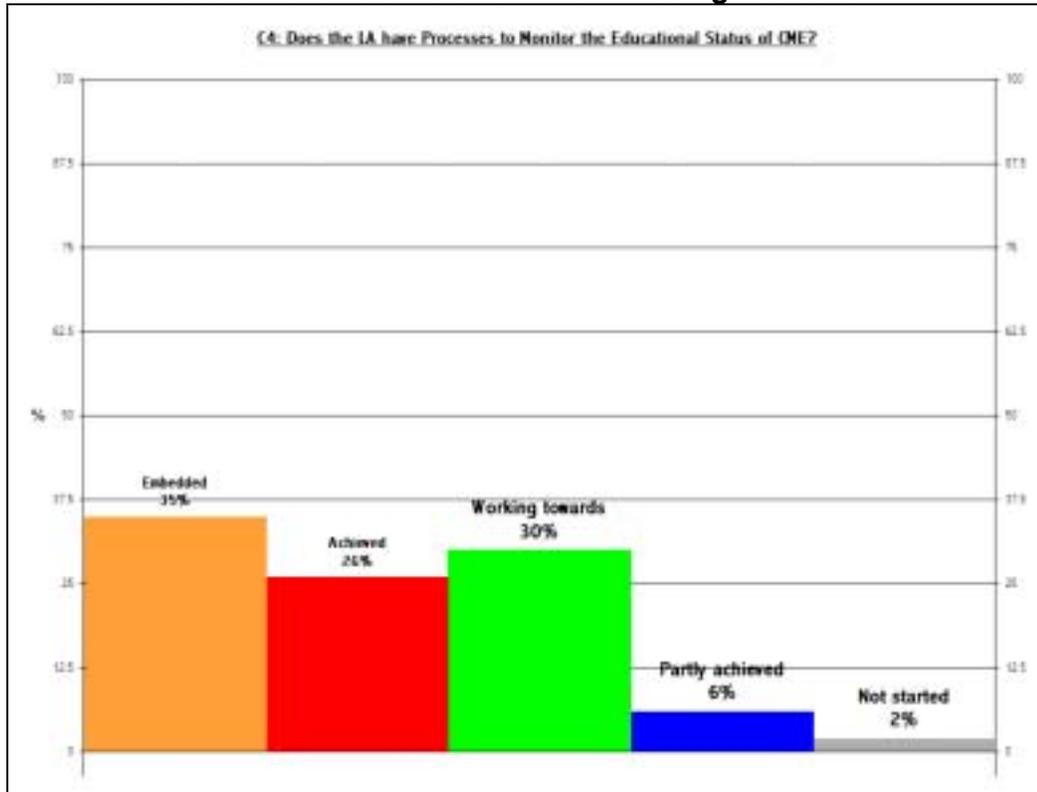


4.4.4 *Does the Local Authority have Processes in Place to Monitor the Educational Status of Children in Recognised Vulnerable Groups?*

- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether their Local Authority had systems in place to identify vulnerable children, as in those at risk of missing education, in their area. Seven out of ten (72%) said they did and a quarter (24%) were working towards this.
- They were also asked whether they had a system in place for monitoring the educational status of such vulnerable groups. Around seven out of ten (69%) said they did and just over a quarter (26%) were working towards this.
- Furthermore, the Local Authorities were asked whether the method for identifying and monitoring vulnerable children was reliant on more than one data source. Three-quarters (74%) said that it was, while a fifth (19%) were still working towards agreeing the best method for identifying and monitoring vulnerable groups of children.
- An Authority had to have met all three of these requirements for this process step to be achieved overall. The results are given in Figure 16.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of the mechanisms by which they identify children in recognised vulnerable groups in their area. There should also be documents detailing how the educational status of these groups is monitored. Ideally the monitoring should be robust, in that it should rely on more than one source of data to establish the situation regarding children in recognised vulnerable groups in their area.

Figure 16: Extent to which Local Authorities had processes in place to monitor the educational status of Children Missing Education



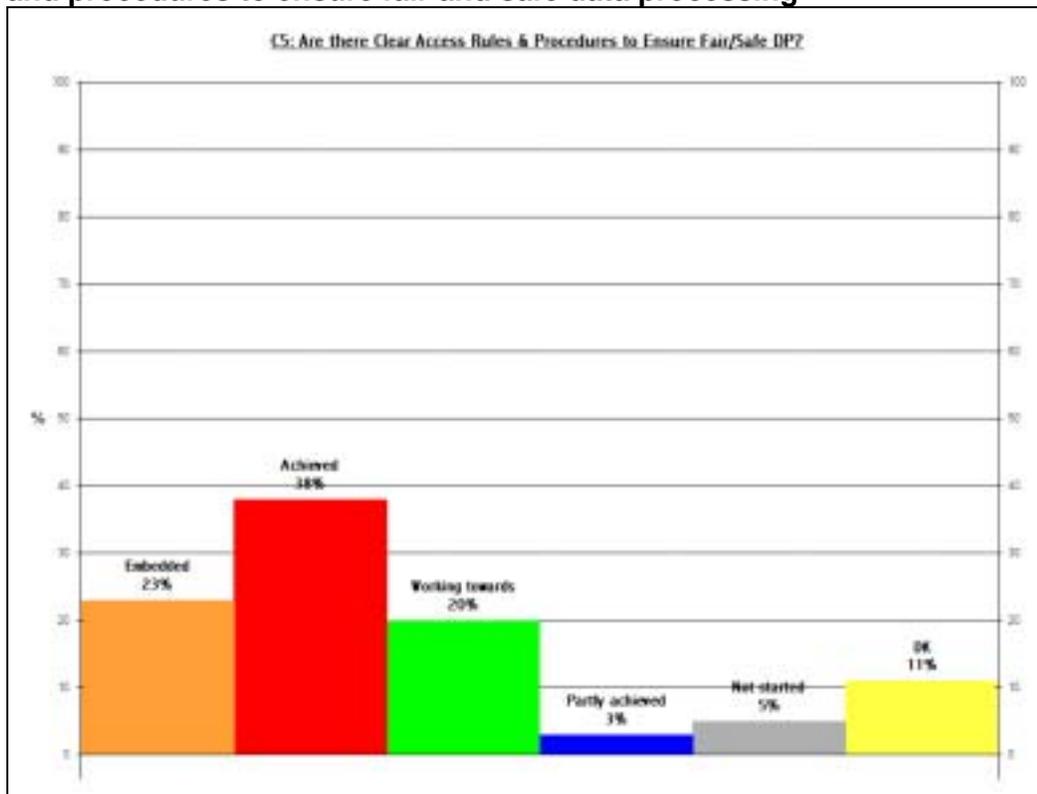
- As shown above, one in three (61%, n=79) Local Authorities had achieved or embedded this process step. One in sixteen had partly achieved it (6%, n=8), three out of ten (30%, n=39) were still working towards it and a very small number (2%, n=3) had not yet made a start.

4.4.5 *Are there Clear Access Rules and Procedures to Ensure Fair and Safe Data Processing?*

- Seven out of ten (71%) Authorities said that they had clear access rules and procedures in place to ensure fair and safe data processing whilst slightly fewer (63%) said these were known by relevant staff.
- Almost a quarter (23%, n=30) had embedded this process step and around two-fifths (38%, n=49) had achieved it. A fifth (20%, n=26) were still working towards it, one in twenty (5%, n=7) had not made a start and about a tenth (11%, n=14) were unable to say. This information is presented in Figure 17.

Evidence Requirement
Rules and procedures should be known and understood by any member of staff in the Authority who is likely to have to deal with CME data. Any case drawn at random should show the implementation of these processes if tracked through to support receipt. This knowledge should be consistent with written down and agreed procedures.

Figure 17: Extent to which Local Authorities operate clear access rules and procedures to ensure fair and safe data processing



- It should be noted that this process step was open to interpretation. Some respondents spoke about access rules that were specific to the Children Missing Education data such as passwords, restricted access or the ability to

modify data. However, others only spoke about general data and child protection principles that would apply to any Local Authority employee. It is possible that the number achieving this process step is therefore an overstatement. Having said this, the nine Local Authorities that took part in the qualitative stage confirmed that they all had access rules in place (see 5.5.1).

4.4.6 *Summary*

- Almost all the Local Authorities had developed or were in the process of developing sound information systems for recording Children Missing Education cases. A number had a dedicated Children Missing Education database and others were working towards developing an integrated system¹³. However, there were a few areas of weakness. Most notable was that one in five Local Authorities had not met the process step of capturing key dates such as the date a child missing education case was notified to the Local Authority or the date the provision was determined or accessed. Various explanations were offered for this including a lack of resources, not having a full-time Children Missing Education lead or not operating a central Children Missing Education database. It also became clear during the qualitative stage that there can be difficulties in getting a child who has been missing education accepted by schools (see 5.6.2).
- Almost all Local Authorities reported having clear access rules and procedures to ensure fair and safe data processing, although these may not be specific to Children Missing Education data. These largely included Local Authorities adhering to their own data protection policies, password protection and named person access.

4.5 **Provision Brokering Services**

- The fourth key area covered by the Guide focuses on provision brokering services under which there are four process steps. These are concerned with the extent to which the Local Authority
 - has introduced clear processes for securing the support of other agencies where needed
 - has an agreed process for securing suitable educational provision for a child out of education, once found
 - monitors the pace at which children out of education move into provision
 - has information systems in place to allow access to up to date information on the availability of school places and places with alternative suppliers.

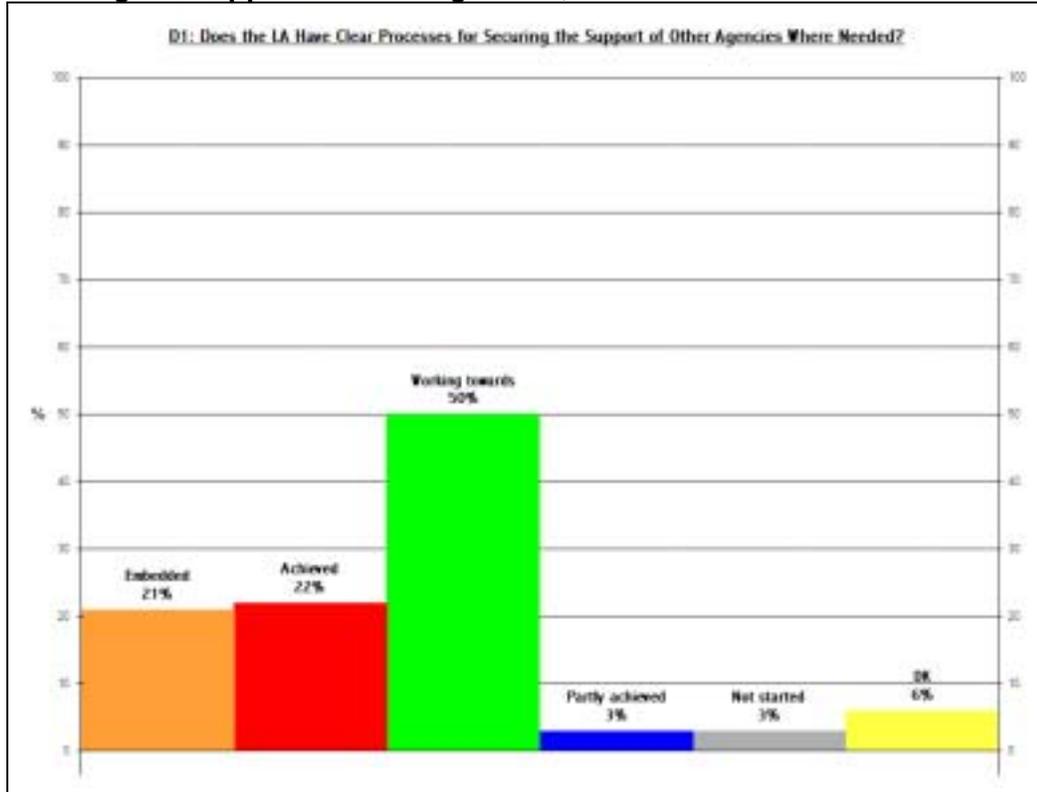
¹³ The qualitative stage identified a further issue, namely the fact that each stakeholder organisation tends to have their own database which in many cases is not compatible with the Children Missing Education database (See Section 5.5.1).

4.5.1 *Does the Local Authority have Clear Processes for Securing the Support of Other Agencies Where Needed?*

- Three-fifths (62%) of Children Missing Education leads said that they did have clear processes for securing the support of other agencies where needed and just over a third (36%) were still working towards this.
- Local Authorities were further asked whether these procedures were known, understood and agreed by relevant staff in the Authority and those in other agencies. Three-fifths (62%) said the procedures were known and understood by staff in the Authority and a third (33%) were working towards putting this in place. In terms of staff in the other agencies, nearly half (47%) said the procedures were understood by them and two-fifths (43%) were still working towards this. This finding shows that Local Authorities still had some way to go in ensuring that members of staff in external agencies were aware of the Children Missing Education procedures and processes. This was confirmed in the qualitative stage (see 5.4.1).
- To have achieved this process step, Local Authorities were required to be 'confident' that any Children Missing Education case tracked through their system that required support from internal or external agencies would follow their agreed procedures. Six out of ten (60%) of the Local Authorities were confident that the agreed procedures would be followed. Three out of ten (31%) said they were working towards achieving this.
- Overall, based on these results, a fifth (21%, n=27) had embedded the process step and a similar proportion (22%, n=29) had achieved it. Half (50%, n=65) were still working towards it, while a small number had either partly achieved it (3%, n=4) or not started to implement it (3%, n=4). A small number (6%, n=8) felt unable to comment on at least some aspect. This information is presented in Figure 18.

Evidence Requirement
Documented procedures for securing the support of other services should be known, understood and agreed by relevant staff both in the Authority and those in the relevant support services. Any CME case tracked through the system that requires such support should reflect the documented procedure.

Figure 18: Extent to which Local Authorities have clear processes for securing the support of other agencies, where needed



4.5.2 *Does the Local Authority have Clear Processes for Securing Educational Provision for Children Once Found?*

- To ascertain the extent to which this process step had been achieved, Children Missing Education leads were asked whether their Local Authority had an agreed process for securing provision and whether these procedures were known and understood by relevant staff in the Authority and within other agencies.

Evidence Requirement
Documented procedures for attempting to secure appropriate provision should be known, understood and agreed by relevant staff and followed regularly, so that any CME case tracked reflects those procedures in principle and shows records of any failures to secure provision.

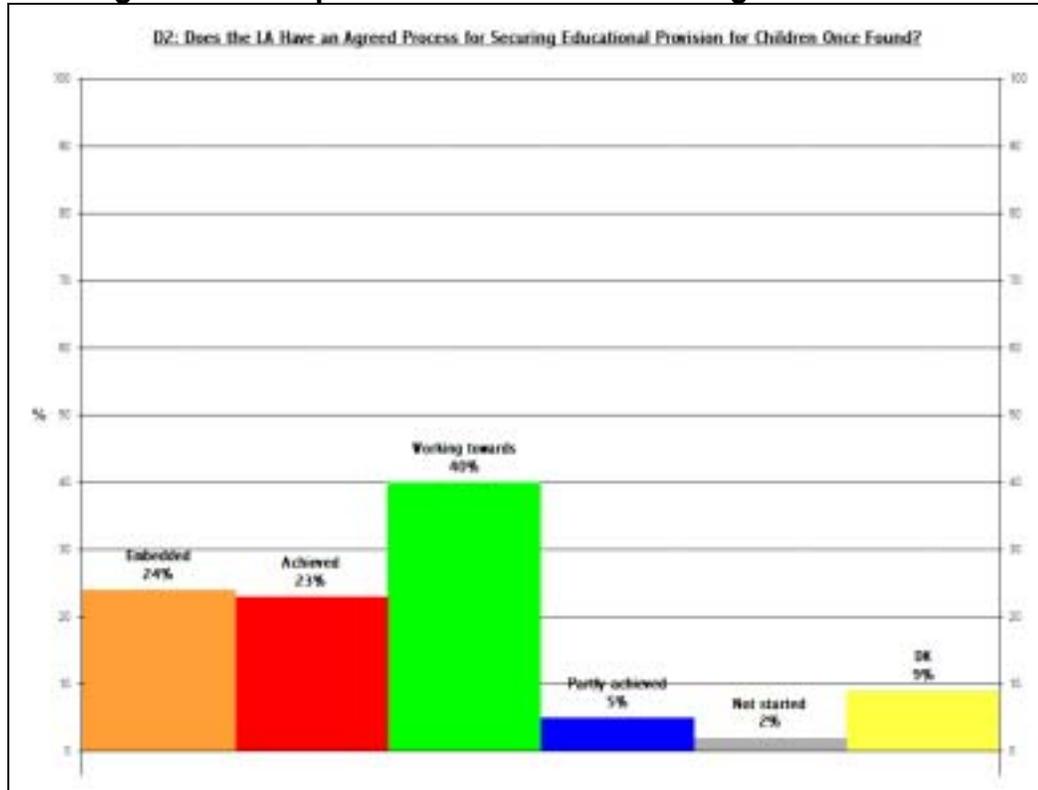
- Three-quarters (75%) said they did have an agreed process in place for securing suitable provision and just over a fifth (22%) said they were still working towards this. Seven out of ten (73%) said the procedures were known and understood by relevant staff in the Authority and a fifth (22%) were working towards this. Half (50%) said the procedures were known, understood and agreed by relevant staff in other agencies, whilst a third (36%) were still working towards this.
- Finally, respondents were asked whether they felt 'confident' that any Children Missing Education case tracked through their system that required the support of relevant staff from internal or external agencies would follow the agreed

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procedures. Six out of ten (61%) answered positively; three out of ten (30%) said they were still working towards this.

- Taking all the evidence requirements, a quarter of the Local Authorities had embedded this process step (24%, n=31). Just under a quarter (23%, n=30) had achieved it and one in twenty (5%, n=6) had partly achieved it. Two-fifths (40%, n=51) were still working towards it and three Local Authorities had not started. The results are presented in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Extent to which Local Authorities have an agreed process for securing educational provision for Children Missing Education



4.5.3 Does the Local Authority Monitor the Pace at Which Children Missing Education Move into Provision?

- The next process step focuses on whether the Local Authority monitors the time taken between identifying a child who is missing education and their accessing provision.
- Just over half (57%) said they did monitor the pace whilst a fifth (21%) were currently developing systems to do this. A fifth (19%) said they did not monitor the pace and had no plans to do so.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence that gives regular updates on, for example, the mean, mode and range of time taken to access provision are sent to senior responsible officers within the organisation.

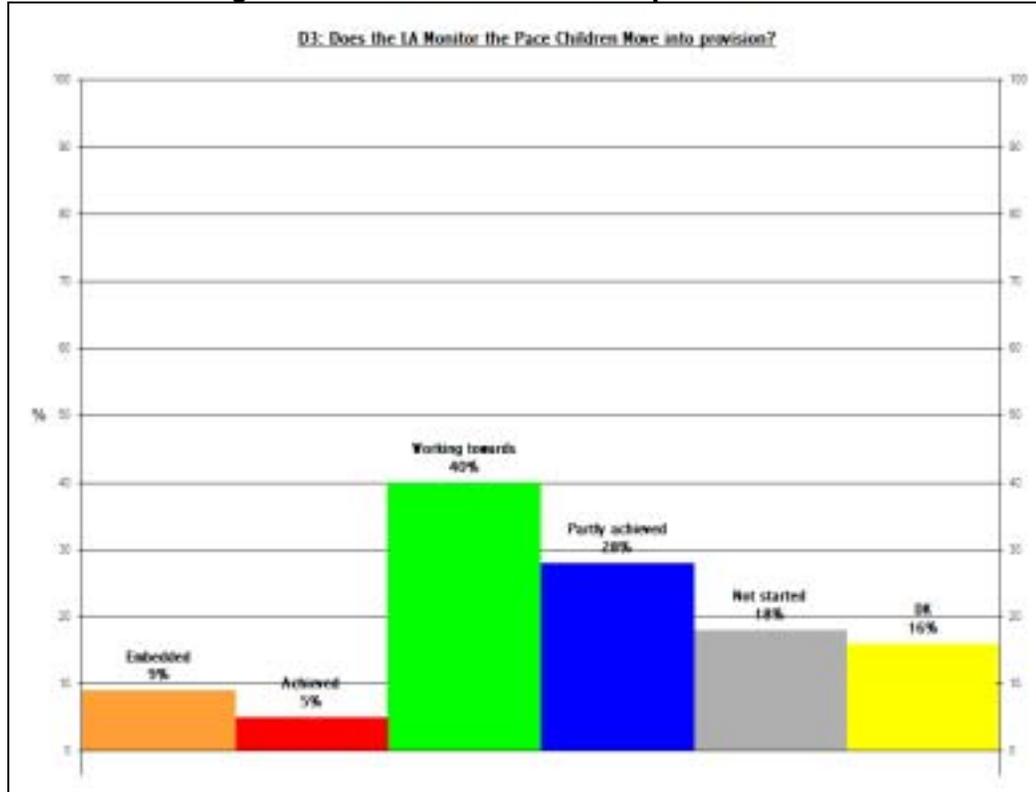
- Respondents were asked whether the monitoring entailed the collection of statistics such as the mean, mode and range of the time taken to access provision. This was followed by questions on whether the statistics were sent

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to senior officers, updated regularly and whether the information was stored as part of a main database on Children Missing Education.

- Many Children Missing Education leads said that the monitoring in their Local Authority did **not** entail the collection of statistics (36%), while only a quarter said it did (24%) and a similar proportion were working towards (22%) this. One possible explanation for this finding could be due to the small number of Children Missing Education cases that come to the attention of some Authorities.
- An issue raised by a large number of Children Missing Education leads was the difficulty of obtaining the agreement of some secondary schools to accept children who were missing education. These issues are considered in greater detail at 5.6.
- Although the majority of Authorities were not collecting statistics, half (50%) reported sending information about the pace at which cases move into provision to senior responsible officers. One in six (16%) was working towards this while a quarter (25%) said they did not send the information to senior officers.
- Just over half (55%) said that the information was updated on a regular basis; one in five (19%) were working towards this while a similar proportion were not (22%).
- A third (35%) said the information was recorded as part of the main Children Missing Education database and a fifth (22%) were working towards this. Three out of ten (29%) said that the monitoring information was not stored as part of a main database.
- Overall, based on the evidence requirements, one in ten (9%, n=12) Local Authorities had embedded this process step and one in twenty (5%, n=7) had achieved it. Three out of ten (28%, n=36) had partly achieved it and two-fifths (40%, n=55) were working towards it. Just under a fifth (18%, n=23) had not started implementing the process step and around one in six (16%, n=21) did not know whether the pace was monitored. This information is displayed in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Extent to which Local Authorities monitor the pace at which Children Missing Education cases move into provision



4.5.4 Does the Local Authority have Access to Up to Date Information Concerning the Availability of School Places and Places with Alternative Suppliers?

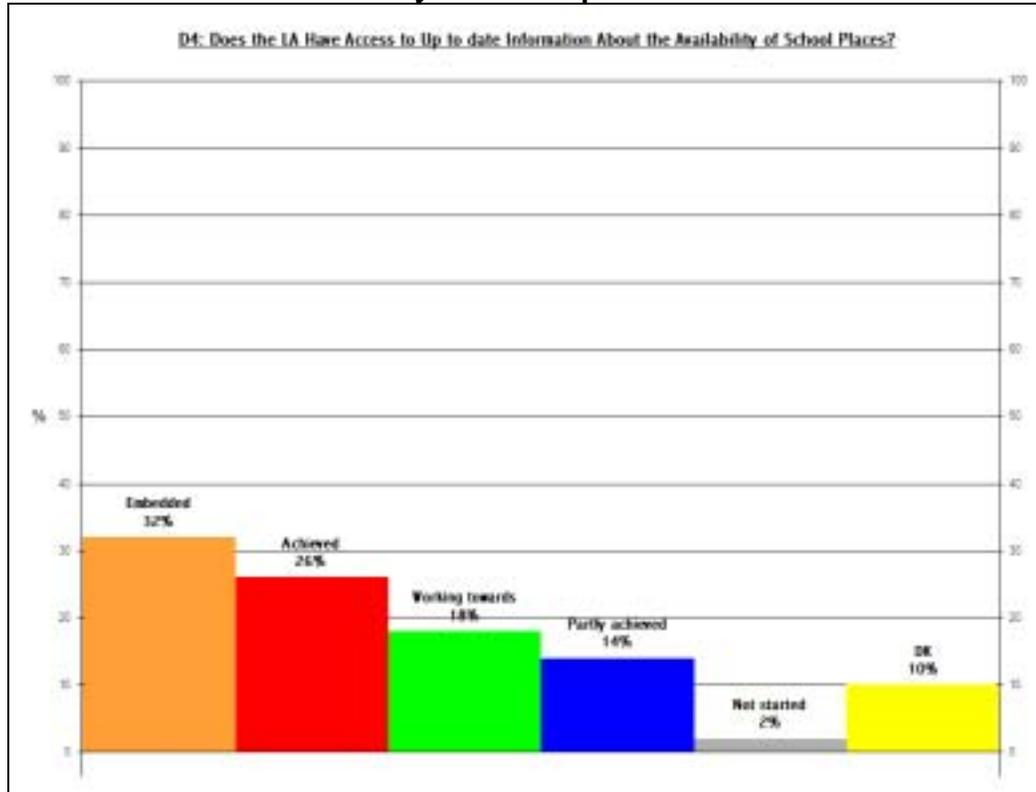
- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether the Local Authority had systems in place that provide information concerning the availability of places in schools and with alternative providers, and whether this information is kept up to date (that is, no more than a month old).

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old) on the number of places available, broken down by at least statutory and alternative provision. A description of how these figures are collected and calculated should be available.

- Most Local Authorities (88%) said they had such information systems in place and 6% were working towards this. Seven out of ten (71%) said they had information on the availability of places with alternative providers and one in eight was working towards this (13%).
- Three-quarters (77%) said that the information they had on the number of places was no more than a month old.
- Overall, a third (32%, n=41) of Local Authorities had embedded this process step. A quarter (26%, n=34) had achieved it and one in seven (14%, n=18) had partly achieved it. Partial achievers often lacked a system for accessing up to date information on alternative provision and many felt this was unnecessary

as they were able to find out what was available very easily. Just under a fifth (18%, n=23) were working towards the process step and three Local Authorities had not made a start. This information is presented in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Extent to which Local Authorities have access to up to date information on the availability of school places



4.5.5 Summary

- Most Local Authorities had made some progress on the four process steps under Provision Brokering Services. Most had made headway in securing the support of other agencies and many worked closely with the departments that held information on the availability of places in school and with alternative providers.
- However, there were some issues in this area. Even though there were systems in place, some Children Missing Education leads felt that some secondary schools were reluctant to report their availability of school places for fear that they would be directed to take children with challenging or complex needs. These difficulties seemed to be one of the main reasons that most Authorities had not achieved the process step of monitoring the pace at which children move into provision. Some Local Authorities also reported not having enough alternative providers so that their options for meeting the needs of those who required this was limited. These issues are covered in greater detail later (see 5.6).

4.6 Effective Pupil Tracking Systems

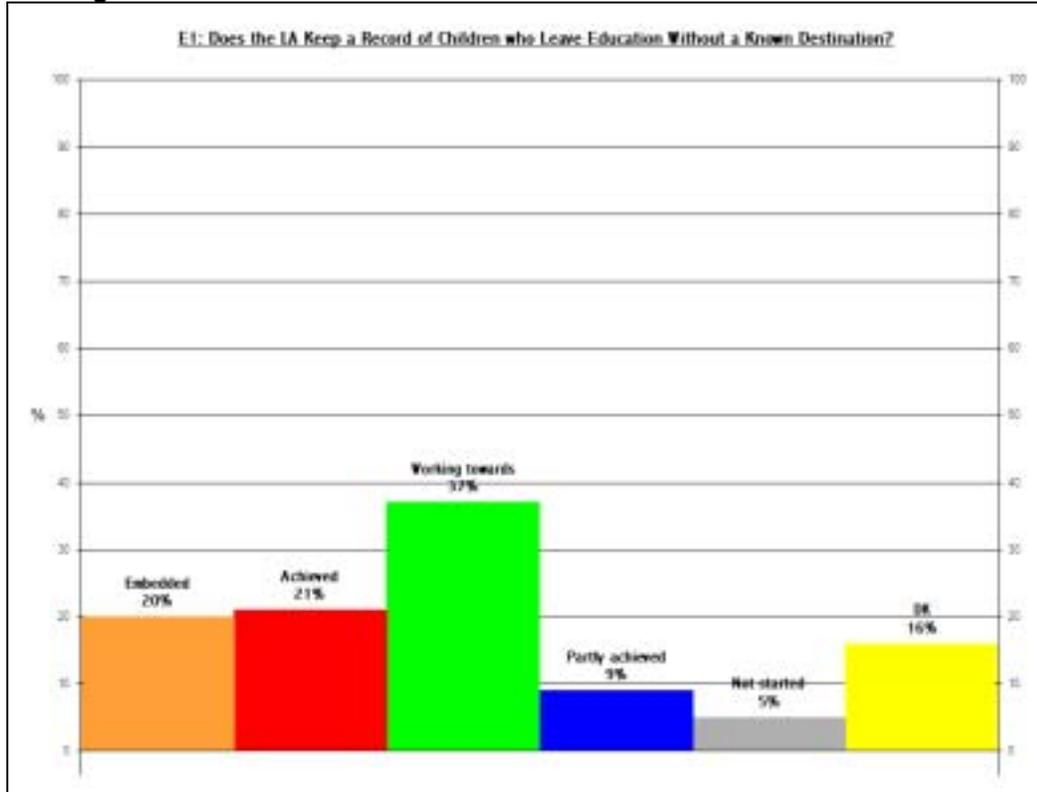
- The final set of process steps falls under the heading of Effective Pupil Tracking Systems. These process steps cover the extent to which Local Authorities track children identified as missing education.

4.6.1 *Does the Local Authority Keep a Record of Children Who Leave Education Without a Known Destination?*

- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether the Local Authority could provide accurate and verifiable data on the number of children who have left education without a known destination and whether this figure includes children who have left a school and those who have left an alternative supplier. They were also asked whether these figures were kept up to date, (that is, no more than a month old).

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old) on the number children who have left education without a known destination. A description of how these figures are collected and calculated should be available.
- Just over half (56%) said their Local Authority could provide accurate and verifiable figures on the numbers of children who have left education without a known destination. A third (32%) were working towards this. However, many pointed out that the timeliness of this information was largely dependent upon the providers.
- Half (52%) said their figures included those children who had left a place at a school or with an alternative supplier. Just over a quarter (27%) were working towards this. Half (51%) said that their information on the availability of places was up to date and just over a quarter (26%) were working towards this.
- In terms of meeting the overall process step, a fifth (20%, n=26) had embedded it and a similar proportion had achieved it (21%, n=27). One in ten (9%, n=12) Local Authorities had partly achieved it and just under two-fifths (37%, n=48) were still working towards it. One in twenty (5%, n=7) had not made a start. One in six (16%, n=20) were unable to comment on all or some of the evidence required. This information is presented in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Extent to which Local Authorities keep a record of children leaving education without a known destination

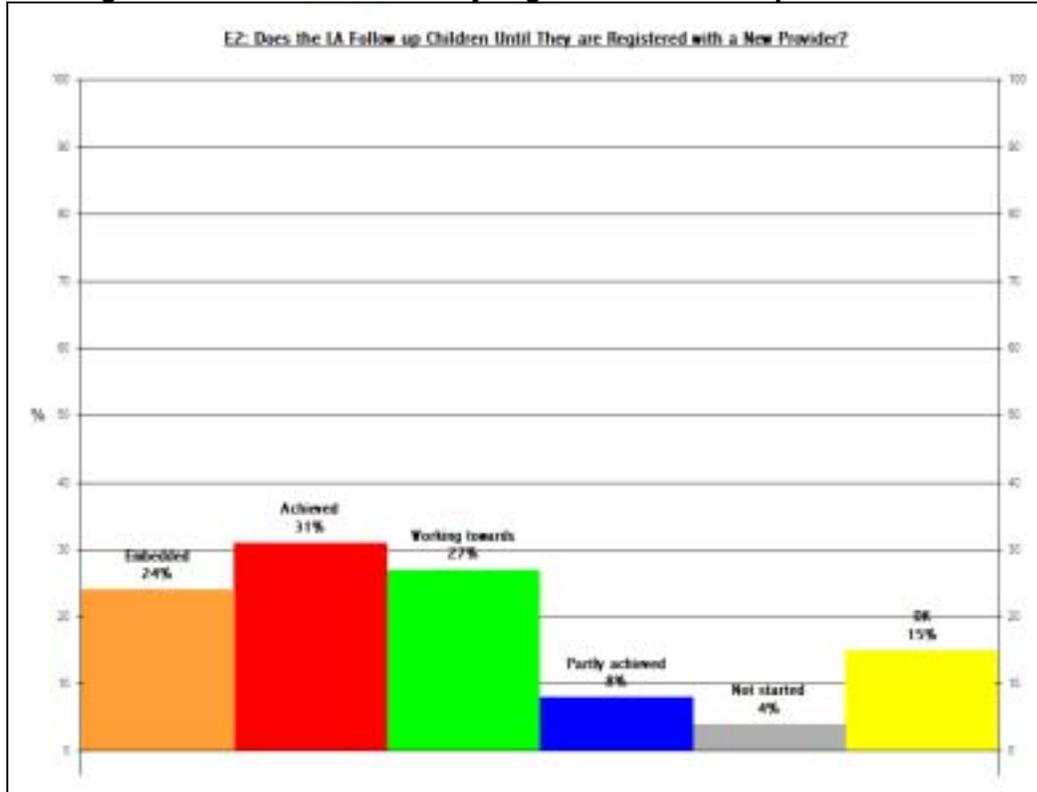


4.6.2 Does the Local Authority Follow Up Children Regularly Until They Register With a New Supplier?

- Seven out of ten (71%) Local Authorities reported following up children until they had registered with a new supplier and a fifth (20%) were working towards this. In most cases (76%), the Local Authority had a named person who was responsible for the follow-up work and one in seven (14%) were working towards this. Three-fifths (61%) of the Children Missing Education leads said that cases were followed up at least once a month until the child was registered with a new provider. Around one in six (17%) Local Authorities were working towards this.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of follow up procedures, together with a named contact for whoever is responsible for follow up work. Any case tracked should show evidence of regular (at least monthly) follow up contact until the case is registered with a new provider or the Local Authority CME Named Individual.
- Overall, a quarter (24%, n=31) of the Local Authorities had embedded this process step and three out of ten (31%, n=40) Local Authorities had achieved it. Around one in ten (8%, n=10) had partly achieved it and a quarter (27%, n=30) were still working towards it. One in twenty (4%, n=5) Local Authorities had not started implementing it and around one in eight (15%, n=17) did not know whether Children Missing Education cases were followed up until they had registered with a new provider. This information is shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Extent to which Local Authorities follow up a Children Missing Education case until they register with a new provider



4.6.3 Does the Local Authority Have an Agreed System with Schools Concerning Children Leaving Provision?

- The next process step focuses on the extent to which the Local Authority has an agreed system with schools concerning children leaving provision.
- A high proportion of Local Authorities, four out of five (82%), said that they did have an agreement with schools about what should happen if a child of statutory school age leaves provision. One in six (16%) Local Authorities were working towards this.

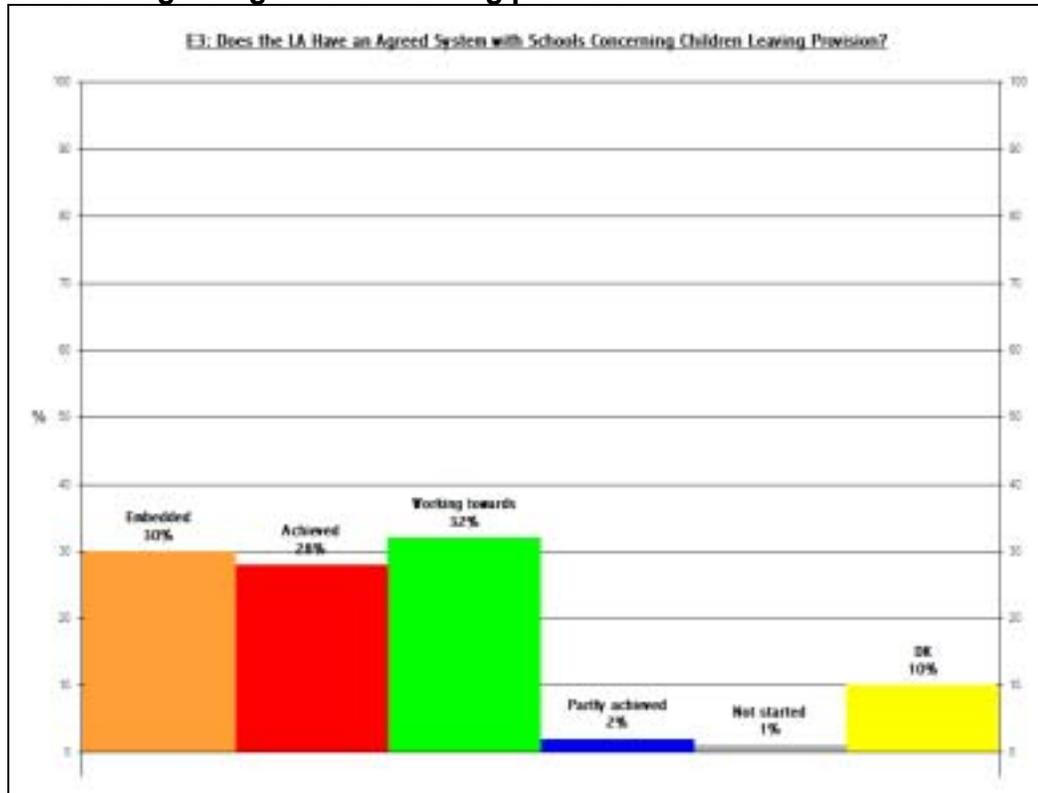
Evidence Requirement
Documentary evidence should be available describing the process for children leaving provision. There should be evidence that this process has been agreed to by all school authorities in the area, and that contact with staff responsible for implementing these procedures should show knowledge consistent with an understanding of the process. Any case tracked upon leaving provision should show evidence reflecting the appropriate following of the process.

- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether the process had been agreed by all schools in the Local Authority. Around seven out of ten (71%) said it had and a fifth (19%) were working towards this.
- Respondents were also asked whether the staff responsible for implementing these procedures were familiar with the system. Three-fifths (63%) said that they were and three out of ten (28%) said they still working towards this.

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- Overall, three out of ten (30%, n=39) Local Authorities had embedded this process step and a similar proportion had achieved it (28%, n=36). Three Local Authorities had partly achieved it and just under a third (32%, n=41) were still working towards it. One Local Authority had not made a start on this process step. One in ten (10%, n=13) Children Missing Education leads were unsure whether their Local Authority had agreements with schools regarding children leaving provision. These results can be seen in Figure 24.

Figure 24: Extent to which Local Authorities have arrangements with schools regarding children leaving provision



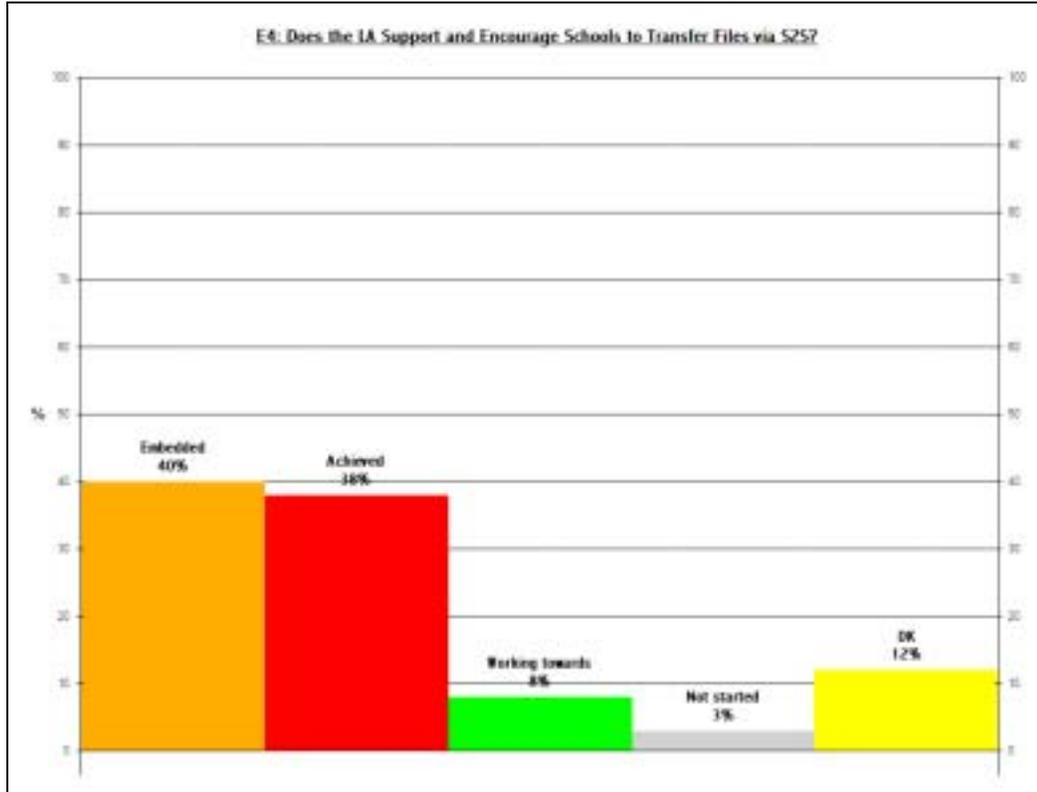
- Several respondents wished to point out that, having an agreed system in place was no guarantee that it was working efficiently. They commented on the difficulty of ensuring that all schools kept to the system and regularly provided the Authority with up to date information.

4.6.4 *Does the Local Authority Support and Encourage Schools to Transfer Files Via School2School?*

- In June 2002, the DfES introduced a secure transfer site called School2School (s2s). The site was set up to enable schools in England to log the details of children who were removed from a school roll and awaiting other provision.
- Children Missing Education leads were asked whether the Local Authority supported and encouraged schools to transfer files via s2s. Three-quarters (77%) said they did and around one in ten (8%) said that systems to do this were currently being developed. In most cases, the support and encouragement were provided in the form of a manual and/or face to face training. However, there were some issues with this. The main issue that emerged was the high turnover of school staff in administrative positions which meant that the learning from the training had often been lost and commonly resulted in either s2s not being used or not being used properly. A handful of Local Authorities mentioned that they did not encourage schools to use s2s because they had received complaints about the system crashing or there were problems with it not recognising passwords.
- Overall, two-fifths (40%, n=51) had embedded this process step and a similar proportion had achieved it (39%, n=49). Around one in ten (8%, n=10) Local Authorities were working towards it and a small number (3%, n=4) had not started. A further one in eight (12%, n=15) respondents said they did not know if their Local Authority supported and encouraged schools to transfer files via s2s. This information is presented in Figure 25.

Evidence Requirement
The Authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of support given to all schools, and of appropriate encouragement of all schools in the use of the S2S system. Relevant staff in any school selected at random in the Authority should be able to show that they are at least aware of the system. Ideally, where they are not currently using it, they should be able to show evidence of support from the Authority to do so. This support should comprise at least the provision of relevant and appropriate materials on how to access the system.

Figure 25: Extent to which Local Authorities support and encourage schools to transfer files via School2School

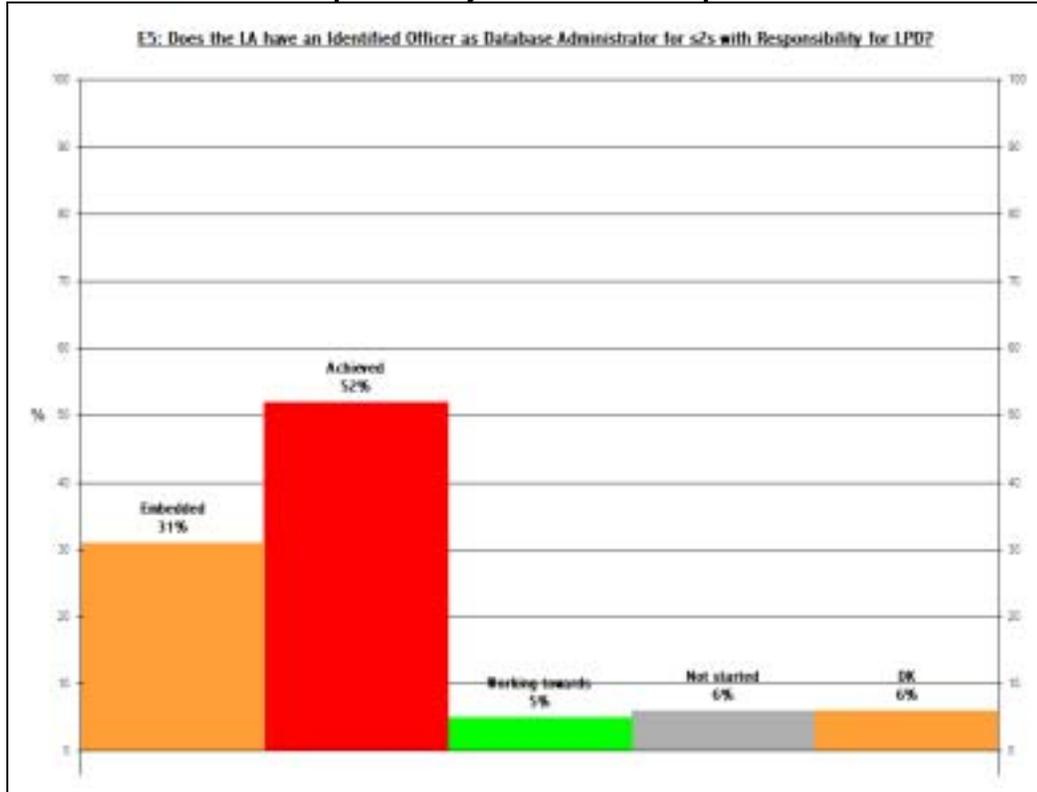


4.6.5 *Does the Local Authority have an Identified Officer as Database Administrator for s2s with Responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database?*

- Four out of five (83%, n=107) said they did have an identified officer for s2s with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database. This was made up of a third (31%, n=40) who had embedded this process step and just over a half (52%, n=67) who had achieved it. One in twenty (5%, n=) said they were currently developing systems for this and a similar number (6%, n=) said they were not. This finding is presented in Figure 26.

Evidence Requirement
If contacted, the Authority should be able to give the name of a person or persons with the responsibility for administering the S2S Lost Pupil Database.

Figure 26: Extent to which Local Authorities have an identified database officer for S2S with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database

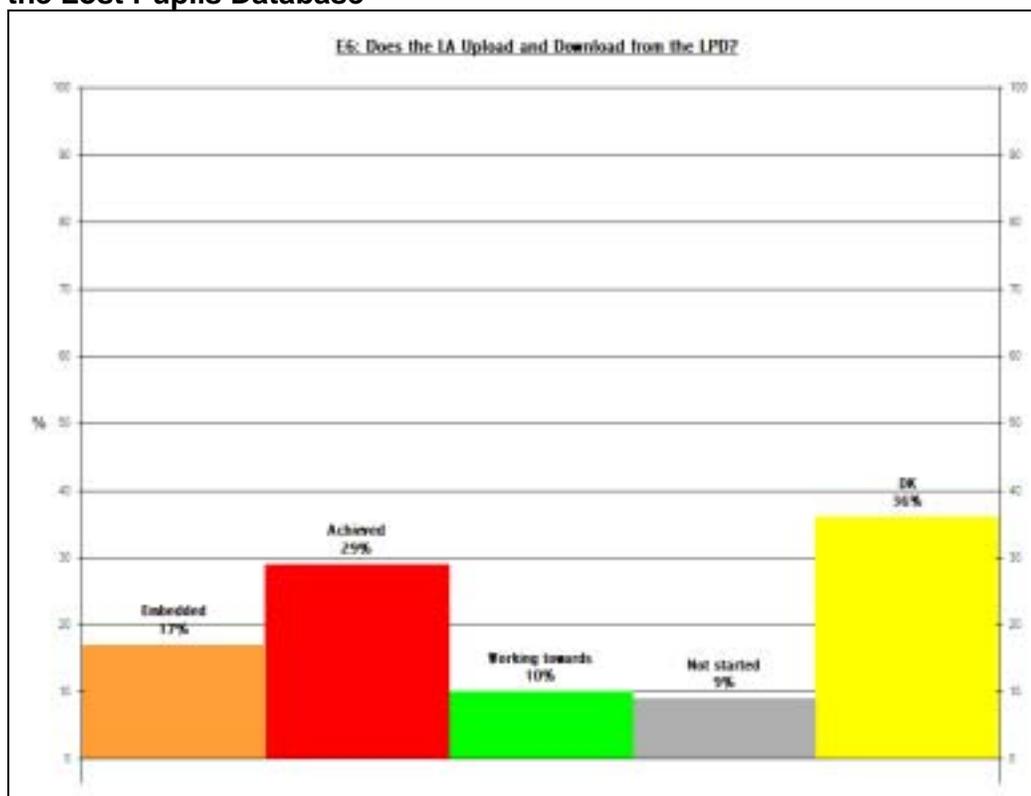


4.6.6 *Does the Local Authority Upload to and Download from the Lost Pupil Database?*

- The final process step covered whether the Local Authority uploaded and downloaded from the Lost Pupil Database on a monthly basis.
- Just under half (46%, n=59) said they did, including one in six (17%, n=22) Local Authorities that had embedded this process step and 29% (n=37) that had achieved it. One in ten (10%, n=13) said they were in the process of developing systems to do this and a similar proportion (9%, n=11) had not started. However, over a third (36%, n=) of the CME leads said they did not know whether the information officer uploaded and downloaded from the Lost Pupil Database on a monthly basis. This information is displayed in Figure 27.

Evidence Requirement
If contacted, the Children Missing Education lead should be able to provide documentary evidence of regular (at least monthly) uploads and downloads to the Lost Pupil Database. This evidence could comprise upload and download reports for each session.

Figure 27: Extent to which Local Authorities upload and download from the Lost Pupils Database



4.6.7 Summary

- In the main, most Local Authorities reported having systems in place to effectively track children who had been identified as missing education and following them up until they had registered with a new provider. However, many readily admitted that having systems in place did not necessarily mean the systems were always working as this relied on the efforts of other organisations, and Authorities did not have control over these.

4.7 Difficulties, Omissions and Improvements

- At the end of the interview, respondents were asked whether they had experienced any particular difficulties implementing the guidelines, whether they felt there were any gaps or omissions and whether they thought any improvements or changes were needed.
- Four out of ten (39%) reported difficulties, a third (34%) felt there were possible gaps and four out of ten (40%) felt improvements or changes were needed.
- The types of issues being raised were noted and incorporated into the discussion guides for the depth interviews. These included, amongst other things, issues involving resource, information sharing, the definition of Children Missing Education and issues relating to home educated children. By far the most frequently mentioned theme was to do with schools. It was for

this reason that it was agreed that representatives of schools should be included in the sample for the qualitative stage.

4.8 Summary of Findings from Telephone Audit

- Overall, all Local Authorities had made some progress in addressing the issue of Children Missing Education and most were still working towards meeting many of the process steps. Table 1 (page 4) summarises the extent to which Local Authorities had achieved the process.
- As mentioned at the beginning of this section, an overall score was calculated for each Authority. None of the Local Authorities that took part in the audit had achieved a score of zero and two had succeeded in achieving a score of 66 (all process steps achieved and embedded). Most were somewhere in the middle with about a third of the sample obtaining a score of 44 or more and well over three-quarters obtaining a score of at least 33.
- In order to sample for the qualitative stage, the distribution of scores across the 129 Local Authorities was examined. These scores were then aggregated to provide three broad bands, each consisting of roughly equal numbers of Authorities. The three bands were as follows:
 - Low – those who scored between 0 and 35 in terms of their overall implementation of the guidelines
 - Medium – those who scored between 36 and 44 in terms of their overall implementation of the guidelines
 - High – those who scored between 45 and 66 in terms of their overall implementation of the guidelines.

This information is presented in Figure 28 below.

Figure 28: Overall Process Step Scores in Three Bands



4.9 Area Level Statistics

- To help build a profile of each of the Local Authorities some area level statistics were compiled from various existing data sources. These are discussed below.

4.9.1 Data from the 2004 English Indices of Deprivation

- These data are held by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and provide a 'measure' of deprivation at the local area level. The indices of deprivation are made up seven domains:
 1. Income deprivation
 2. Employment deprivation
 3. Health deprivation and disability
 4. Education, skills and training deprivation
 5. Barriers to housing and services
 6. Living environment deprivation
 7. Crime

- Each domain is made up of a number of **indicators** or sub-domains. The score on each indicator contributes to an overall score for the domain and the combined scores for the seven domains give an **overall measure of deprivation**. We used the overall measure in our analysis.

4.9.2 *School Level Statistics*

- In addition to building a profile of the Local Authority areas, the research also looked at the characteristics of schools within those areas. From existing DfES data, the following statistics were scrutinised:
 - number of pupils on the school roll in the Local Authority
 - number of unauthorised absences (truancy rates) as a percentage of the school population
 - number of permanent exclusions as a percentage of the school population.
- On each of these four measures (overall measure of deprivation plus the above three), the 129 Authorities were divided into three roughly equal bands:
 - high
 - medium
 - low.
- The overall scores each Authority had been assigned across the 22 process steps were then cross-tabulated against each of these measures to see if there was a correlation between them; for example, whether those areas with the **highest** deprivation scores had made most progress in their implementation of the CME guidelines. As a result of this exercise, two statistically significant findings emerged.
- Local Authorities that fell within the low band in terms of their implementation of the DfES guidelines, were statistically significantly more likely to fall within the low band on the indices of deprivation and to be areas with low truancy rates. In short, those Local Authorities that were at the very early stages of implementing the guidelines were Authorities in areas of lowest deprivation and where truancy rates also tended to be lowest. This could suggest that implementing the guidelines was not seen as such a high priority for Local Authorities in more affluent areas with low rates of truancy.

5 The In-depth Follow-Up

5.1 Introduction

- This section reports on the qualitative stage of the research. The response to the guidelines in nearly all cases was very positive and most Children Missing Education leads said they had found them helpful in developing their own policies. The guidelines were seen as providing a coherent structure and framework in which to develop the required systems and processes. The flow chart was seen as a useful summary of the key steps and the inclusion of case studies and examples of what other Authorities are doing was thought helpful.
- While CME leads were familiar with the guidelines and the process steps, many of the other respondents interviewed during the qualitative research were not. The interviews therefore focused on respondents' experiences of dealing with children missing education or at risk of doing so. Stakeholders often confirmed and expanded upon the information previously elicited from the CME leads about the parts of the process with which they were involved. CME leads and stakeholders also spoke about some of their concerns and this section of the report concentrates on these since they highlight either areas where the guidelines may need developing, or perceptions (and, possibly, misunderstandings) which could be addressed through appropriate communications. Some of the issues that respondents raised when asked about improving the guidelines may not fall within the remit of Children Missing Education as currently applied or may be associated with it but require a broader approach to tackle them. This focus on such issues should not detract from the overall positive response to the guidelines or the fact that most Authorities had made considerable headway in implementing them.
- This section begins with a short section (5.2) on awareness of the Children Missing Education policy and guidelines within the nine Local Authorities. It then considers how those Authorities have responded to the guidelines and the issues that have arisen for them in trying to implement the process steps in the five work areas (5.3-5.7). Finally (5.8), some general issues were raised that were felt by Children Missing Education leads and stakeholders to underpin their ability to fulfil the requirements.

5.2 Awareness of Children Missing Education Policies

- With the exception of the CME leads, there was little awareness of the DfES Good Practice Guide amongst stakeholders. Given that the Local Authority was the lead agency and had been responsible for implementing the guidelines, this is not surprising. Amongst the nine Local Authorities, the named CME leads had largely, if not completely, been responsible for writing and finalising the Children Missing Education policy.
- During the telephone audit, most reported that they were pulling together policies that were already in place which tackled aspects of Children Missing Education and filling in the gaps. A similar story emerged in the Authorities that took part in this stage of the research

“And what I’ve been doing as part of that is actually going round talking to various stakeholders about what gaps there are and what procedures there are in place already, because you know if there are things already and they’re working then... They need to be written into the policy as they are and what I discovered was a number of gaps as I was going around talking to people... Some of which I’ve been able to fill as I’ve gone along.” (CME lead, Low¹⁴)

- Levels of awareness of the Authority’s Children Missing Education policy and the related procedures and protocols varied considerably. It was greatest among internal stakeholders and strategic managers, and lowest (sometimes non-existent) among external stakeholders and front-line staff. The following typical response is from a stakeholder who was aware of a Children Missing Education policy in the Local Authority but had not actually read it

“I’ve worked with children where we’ve tried to get them into school or follow them through, but I haven’t actually seen the guidance. I am aware that they’ve written something on children missing education.” (Connexions, High)

- Indeed, some stakeholders were unaware that anything had changed at all and others, while aware, were sometimes confused by some of the terms

“What I find hard about it is what they actually mean by that term, because it can cover – one reason I think is that I think it means children whose parents don’t send them, move from area to area and don’t get on any roll. But I think it can be wider than that in that it’s children who, for one reason or another, are on a school roll and aren’t attending. Or who don’t attend a lot or who want to keep moving school because the parents keep moving school to avoid facing issues. And I think that is a much wider term. And I’m not sure in my own mind exactly what the guidance means when they say ‘Children Missing Education’.” (School, High)

5.3 Strategic Management and Leadership

5.3.1 Definition of Children Missing or At Risk of Missing Education

- The DfES definition of Children Missing Education is as follows:

“Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).”

¹⁴ All attributions denote the type of respondent and overall score band reflecting the extent to which the process steps in the guidance had been implemented.

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- During the course of the research however, it became apparent that different definitions of Children Missing Education were being used. Three different categories of children were commonly identified, namely
 - those who are **not known** to the Local Authority
 - those who are known to the Local Authority but are **not on a school roll**
 - those who are known to the Local Authority, are on a school roll but are **not attending**.
- There was some debate and disagreement about whether all three categories came under the definition of Children Missing Education. Some Authorities included non-attenders in their definition, for example

“Well it’s a pretty flexible definition. It’s those students who for one reason or another are not coming into school, have disappeared, have not come in for prolonged periods of time, students who are not coming, are coming in irregularly, students who are off for vast periods of time because the parents can’t get them into school.” (CME lead, Low)
- while others did not

“Well for us, our definition is quite simply if that child is not on the school roll then it is a CME case. But if the child is on a school roll but they’re not attending then it’s an attendance issue, then it won’t come to the CME Panel.” (CME lead, High)
- Authorities may not have listed the vulnerable or at risk groups in their policies and there was a call for greater guidance from the DfES on this. One Authority that had attempted to define the at risk group, had done so at the request of head teachers who had asked for greater guidance on this matter

“And then appendix 3 is Children at Risk of Missing Education and this is a list, it’s not an exhaustive list, but it’s a list that could include and as you can see young people who have committed offences, children living in women’s refuges, looked after children, gypsy traveller background, teenager mothers and so on, so the list is there. We put that list out because Head Teachers particularly wanted us to identify children who were at risk of missing education so that it could help them to decide whether to refer or not. But as I’ve said to Head Teachers, that’s not exhaustive, they may find other children who are missing education.” (CME Lead, High)
- The confusion with different definitions of Children Missing Education was also evident amongst stakeholders. This was in part a consequence of where the stakeholder fitted into the overall process and also a function of the remit of their organisation. For example, schools would only be involved if a child was on their school roll but not attending

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“I’m only aware of kids that are on my roll so I see it as kids who are missing to me. With regard to those guidelines, I couldn’t tell you what the definition is.” (School, High)

- While some agencies, such as Connexions, met and dealt with a broad cross-section of children, others such as Youth Offending Teams, worked with a much narrower sub-set of children. Their focus was therefore more narrowly defined.
- Some agencies might consider child safety a major concern but feel that children’s education is a lesser priority – in other words, they focus on the ‘missing children’ aspect rather than the ‘children missing education’

“I think there is some confusion around, is a child missing a safe-guarding issue or a Police issue or an Education issue, or is there a different way of looking at it? I think that there’s a whole range of indicators that people are trying to unpick.” (Children’s Health, High)

- Some stakeholders may perceive that they have only a limited support role for a proportion of Children Missing Education cases

“As far as we’re concerned, I would say as far as attendance, school attendance, Education and Welfare have the lead and we support them most of the time. School isn’t our biggest responsibility. We do it to support Education Welfare and we work when we do our truancy sweeps, we work in teams of one Police Officer and one Education Welfare Officer and they work together. Obviously under Section 16. 2 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, we have the power to remove truants back to a designated place or the school from which they came. But I think, to be honest, the follow-up work we leave to Education Welfare Service so we actually help them in their truancy sweeps, for our own reasons as well, but the follow-up, I don’t think it’s the Police’s job to do the follow-up on why they’re not actually attending school etc. etc.” (Police, Low)

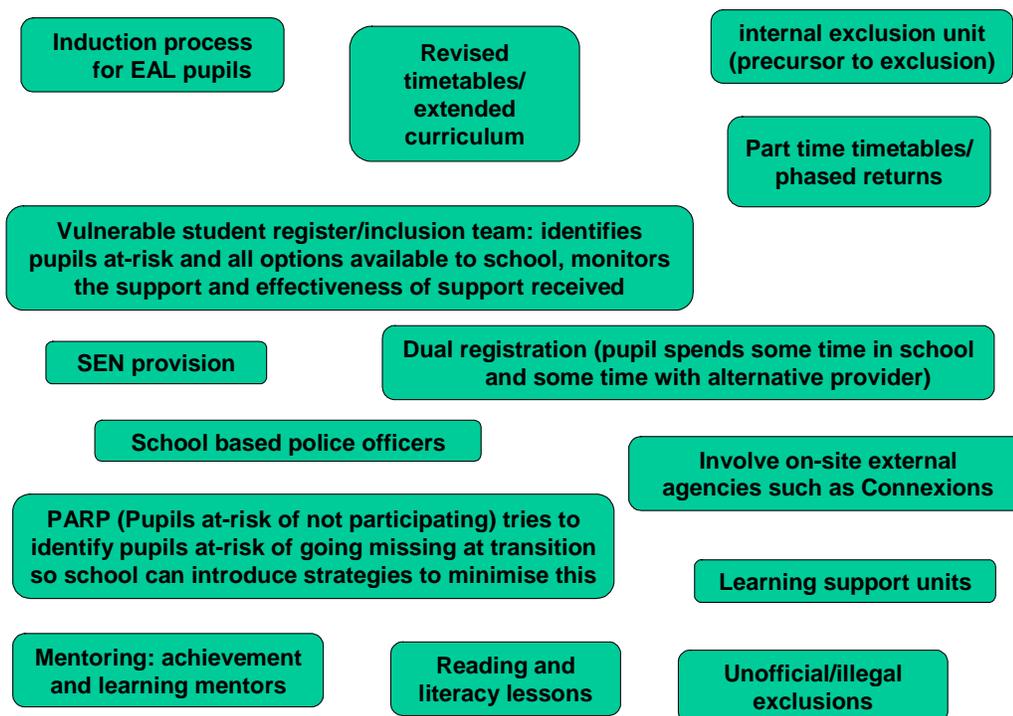
- Therefore, one of the issues that Local Authorities have to contend with is the extent to which a child missing from education is a priority for external agencies and therefore the effort they will put into the multi-agency working.
- The DfES definition clearly states that a Child Missing Education is one who has been out of educational provision for a substantial period of time (four weeks). However, some respondents picked up that this possibly contradicted the standards set out in the Every Child Matters paper where a child out of education for a day or even a lesson could represent a child safety issue. Others spoke about the need for every child to receive a certain number of hours of education a week¹⁵.

¹⁵ There is a recommended number of hours which depends on age and key stage, from 21 hours at KS1 to 25 hours at KS4, Year 11.

5.3.2 Categories of Children Missing Education

- During the course of the interviews many different categories of children were identified as being more likely to miss education, some of which are listed in Figure 29.

Figure 29: Categories of Children Missing Education or at Risk of Doing So



- Not only was it felt that there are many ways or reasons why children may miss education, but these categories are not always straightforward or mutually exclusive. There are often multiple factors behind why a child is missing education. Furthermore, some groups of children require far more time and intensive support both from staff within the Local Authority and those in external agencies. It was suggested that this complexity had not been adequately covered or acknowledged in the Good Practice Guide.

5.3.3 Categories of Children Missing Education Not Addressed in the Current Guidelines; Independent Schools and Home Educated Children

- Numerous respondents at both stages of the research, highlighted what they considered to be two significant gaps in the current guidelines in terms of categories of children missing or at risk of missing education, namely, the independent sector and children being educated at home.
- One of the key gaps spontaneously mentioned during both the telephone audit and qualitative stage were independent schools. For many Local Authorities, this was an area of great concern since the Local Authority, as the

lead agency, had no powers by which they could ensure that children excluded from or leaving independent schools were brought to their attention.

- Children who were educated at home were also of concern to Local Authorities and certain other agencies. Parents who had withdrawn their children from school in order to home educate them would be known to the Authority and the necessary checks and procedures could be put in place. However, where children had always been home educated and had never been on a school roll, these children would never be brought to the Local Authority's attention and this was seen as a possible contravention of the Every Child Matters Agenda as well as a Children Missing Education issue. One Local Authority estimated that 50 percent of the children educated at home in their Authority had never been on a school roll. Another spoke of a child that was only brought to their attention due to a child protection enquiry

“We discovered a young person a few weeks ago that had been home educated for five years and nobody knew about them and it came through because of a child protection enquiry.” (CME lead, Mid)

- Some respondents felt that there were contradictory messages coming from Government in terms of the legislation surrounding Elective Home Education and Every Child Matters/Children Missing Education. For example, parents can refuse access to a child and some go out of their way to ensure the Authorities never get to see their child. It was suggested that some Traveller families use the Elective Home Education regulations as a way of avoiding contact with Educational Welfare Officers. There is also an issue when such a family relocates from one Authority to another because there is no system in place to bring this to the receiving Authority's attention. Some respondents expressed concerns that schools were sometimes encouraging the parents of 'difficult' children to opt for home education on the grounds that if the child stayed in school, (s)he was likely to end up being excluded and hence harder to place in another school.
- Respondents were of the opinion that the guidelines should be extended to cover both these groups of children.

5.3.4 *Identifying Children Who Are Missing Education*

- The respondents in the qualitative research described a range of methods by which Children Missing Education were identified. Some were dependent upon the historical route of Education Welfare Officers picking up children not in education whilst others were reliant on various stakeholders for this information. Examples included Special Educational Needs Teams, Looked After Children Teams, Traveller Teams and Truancy trawls and sweeps.
- Some Local Authorities had gone to great lengths to ensure that any child out of education in their area would be identified. In one Authority, they worked closely with Health services to identify all children who were old enough to start in Reception. In another Authority, local shopkeepers were encouraged to refuse to serve any children who were out of school and a hotline had been set up to allow members of the public to report such cases

“Other than those professional agencies, one of our key ways of identifying children is through members of the public. We’ve mentioned our truancy trawls, we also have a truancy hotline so that anybody who feels children are out of school, they can ring the number that links to our ESWs and somebody will try and investigate. So we do get a lot of calls from members of the public, partly because some people are public spirited but mainly because these kids are causing a nuisance in the area. Any children out of school that don’t have a pass, a lot of, you’ll see the stickers on a lot of shops in the town centre, so they’ve all signed up to an agreement where they won’t serve children who don’t have a pass. So one thing we’ve discussed, probably not for a year now but when we were putting the policy together was ways of advertising this to develop the truancy hotline. We do feel that members of the public out there are an untapped resource to help us identify these children.” (CME lead, Low)

- However, it was still felt that, regardless of the strategies being used, some children may not be picked up. One lead elaborated

“You won’t know that they’re there and we find a lot, what I call accidentally, so our Welfare Officers find a lot just by virtue of the fact that they find them on the streets or they’re sat on somebody’s couch and they start asking them questions. So it’s a little bit ad hoc but I’m not sure how we could get round that, to be honest”. (CME lead, High)

- Indeed, there were certain groups of children who were felt to be consistently hard to identify. Examples included young offenders, those in temporary accommodation and Traveller children. Even when these groups were found, it was another task for Local Authorities to get them reengaged in education.

5.4 Networks and Points of Contact

5.4.1 Identifying Stakeholder and Building Relationships

- One of the aims of the guidelines is to ensure that all the ways in which children may miss education are identified through having clear processes and procedures that are shared and used by all agencies that deal, or come into contact, with children who may be missing education or are at risk of doing so.
- The telephone audit showed that a large number of Local Authorities had achieved the process step of identifying their key stakeholders. To help select the sample for the qualitative stage, Children Missing Education leads were asked to complete a stakeholder form and provide contact details of those who are involved in tackling Children Missing Education in the Authority. 122 respondents agreed to this but, in the event, only one in five (n=26) completed and returned this form. The majority of these provided named contact details of internal stakeholders with whom they worked frequently. Most had identified a range of external agencies as stakeholders that were occasionally involved but very few had provided a named contact within these

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organisations. In a number of cases, there was little evidence that the policy had been shared with named contacts within some of the key agencies such as Housing, Health and Police.

- Although Local Authorities may have achieved the process step of identifying their key stakeholders and sharing their policy, it was difficult for them to ensure that the policy had been fully read and understood or that it had been disseminated to other key personnel within stakeholder organisations.
- Amongst the sample there was a range of ways in which Local Authorities had involved agencies and stakeholders in tackling the issue of children missing education. Some were very advanced and had, for example, set up Children Missing Education panels. These entailed monthly or bi-monthly meetings with key stakeholders at which children missing education (mainly those not on a school roll) were discussed. These meetings tended to be outcome based; that is, the prime aim was to discuss each Child Missing Education case, establish the child's needs, identify suitable provision and make steps to ensure that it was accessed.
- Other Local Authorities had added Children Missing Education on to the agenda of other multi-agency meetings, such as 'hard to place pupil' panels, 'vulnerable pupil' panels and 'locality' panels

"The other thing is, we have locality meetings attended by our Education Social Workers, Housing and other community based agencies, so that if somebody is causing a nuisance in the area they are raised at those meetings. That's with Housing, so if somebody is not in school and is causing a disturbance in the area or kicking a football against somebody's window all day long, they are raised at those meetings and our Education Social Worker will sometimes feed back to us and sometimes say this kid is out of school and actually they deal with it themselves. Occasionally, those children get on to our (at risk of missing education) list. So those are some of the safety nets for children who could be missing from education." (CME lead, Low)

- Overall, multi-agency working was seen as critical to the success of tackling Children Missing Education but for most, this was still an outcome that they were striving to achieve. The main problem, as they saw it, was bringing the schools and external agencies on board. For most, the issue came down to time and having the resources to build strong relationships with stakeholders. Even Local Authorities that boasted of successful multi-agency panels commented on the amount of energy and input that had been invested in getting them off the ground; again, the very concept of Children Missing Education was difficult for all concerned to understand

"It's taking time even from where we were two years ago to where we are now. We've got a lot of support internally and we're starting to get support from external agencies. When we first started two years ago everyone was saying, 'Missing Children, what do you mean? Where have they gone? Why are

they missing?’ But people were getting confused with the definition of Missing. Did it mean children that have run away from home? Did it mean children that were non-attending, did it mean children of parents that have run off with kids? And that was one of the biggest problems, trying to identify and define in our own minds what we meant as a Missing Child. We are getting a lot more support now.” (CME lead, High)

- Multi-agency working seemed to be more effective in those Local Authorities where specific systems and protocols had been put in place and where nominated individuals from various agencies were involved. One Local Authority in our sample seemed to be further ahead than others, simply because multi-agency was central to the way in which the Local Authority operated

“I think in [name of Local Authority] we’ve been lucky that we’ve always been part of what’s called a Child and Family Service. I mean I’ve only been here for a couple of years, but I think the set-up is really good because we are co-located with other professionals right across the county in six main office spaces so we work alongside Social Workers, specialist Social Workers, Health, Education Welfare and so on. So I think that’s always been a very strong thing for us the multi-agency work. We work very closely with the Youth Offending Team. We have regular meetings where we exchange information and we talk about cases as well that need attention, including those pupils who are missing education. So I think that’s a big strength as well. We work very closely with Connexions; we have similar meetings with Connexions on a regular basis to exchange information and talk about cases.” (CME lead, High)

- Within the qualitative sample, this approach was an exception. In most Local Authorities, the effectiveness of multi-agency working was described as being largely reliant on existing personal relationships. A common picture that was painted was that if someone knew someone in another agency whom they could contact, then things often went well but if they contacted a different individual within the same organisation, there was no guarantee they would get the same response. This could create problems in organisations where there was a high staff turnover because the next time they contacted that organisation, the person they dealt with previously might well have moved on. Moreover, there was also the potential danger that more informed or appropriate individuals were not becoming involved simply because these individuals had not been identified via social networks.

5.4.2 *Sharing of Information*

- One of the key barriers to effective multi-agency working identified by Children Missing Education leads was the reluctance of some organisations and/or individuals to share information. This was often justified on the grounds of data protection rules and regulations

“And then they quote data protection at you. Particularly, yes, from Social Services Departments, if there’s a query with the family and the family are in a fluid state. I mean, obviously I know about Data Protection but to me if it’s in the best interests of that individual to share some of that history, or some of the ideas, or background history of that individual, then it should be done. I mean certainly one specific specialist school has hidden behind the Data Protection Act many times.” (CME lead, High)

- Another situation in which multi-agency working sometimes broke down was where certain organisations and/or individuals felt unable to act outside what they perceived to be the bounds of their remit. The following example was given

“Now we have students in this school who need YOT input but unless they commit an offence, you can’t get YOT input. So we’ll just stand back and let this child go down that route and make a mistake to the point where we have to get them arrested or whatever then we can get the help we need. What a lot of tosh! It’s this thing about there is not enough intervention work. We do our own intervention programmes but there are times when you need somebody with a little bit more expertise than we have.” (School, High)

- A number of respondents felt that the DfES should issue guidance to external agencies on when they can and cannot share information and the nature of the information they can share.

5.4.3 *Assignment of Authority and Responsibilities*

- In addition to information sharing issues, many CME leads argued that the DfES should issue firmer guidance to agencies about the role of Local Authorities in leading on Children Missing Education because they felt that while they had been given this role by the Government, they lacked the power and authority to follow it through. As one lead put it

“I think the DfES has very little understanding of what it’s like day to day. You know, people think that the LEA has all this power. It doesn’t have any power at all. That’s the thing, it’s the teeth you know, we can go and bark... but we’ve got no teeth!” (CME lead, Low)

- The responsibilities of other agencies also needed spelling out according to some

“I would like to see some really clear guidance from the DfES to schools. ‘If you are placing youngsters off-site, this is what you should be doing.’ We have got good relationships with most of our schools but for some schools, ‘it’s out of sight, out of mind’. I think they need to be clear about what their responsibilities are.” (CME lead, Mid)

5.5 Information Systems

5.5.1 Databases

- The telephone audit revealed that although many Local Authorities had a Children Missing Education database in place, the nature and quality of these varied and in many cases, the information was not held on a single database. The interviews with various stakeholders revealed that the situation is even more complex and variable as different stakeholders also had their own databases which were, in the main, designed to serve their own purposes. For example, Youth Offending Teams may record all their case file information on a system known as YIOS while Looked After Children's Teams may have their own Looked After Children's database. It was felt quite likely that many of the same cases were being tracked by several different agencies resulting in considerable duplication of effort and resource.
- Each of these unique systems may record brief details on the child's educational status. However, extracting information from various databases, each with its own access rules and procedures, often proved time consuming. Those without dedicated Children Missing Education teams and staff were often dependent on other departments for providing and collating the information. This could take time (in at least one case, up to three months) and even once the information had been compiled, it may be neither accurate nor entirely reliable.
- Many CME leads and stakeholders spoke of the need for a centralised Children Missing Education database and this was generally recognised as the ideal. Issues of compatibility, data protection, resourcing and staffing implications were put forward as reasons why this had not happened

"I think it's a very good idea, there are a lot of issues, not just for missing children. I know that there are lots of issues with data sharing, but these can be worked out, and the principle of having something where a child can be tracked and people know who they are and where they are, and critically, who is responsible for the care of that child at any one time is vitally important. There are too many systems working at the moment. Children shouldn't be allowed to disappear." (Police, Mid)

"Somebody has to take charge of data sharing urgently, somebody somewhere has to decide who is the organisation that has the school file, the whole file! Now we have multi-agency meetings where we verbally share information, which is great, but essentially, you should be able to access the whole story on any child, and this protocol must be across the other agencies. It's great to think that we all have information, but we don't really if we're not sharing it." (School, High)

- Many of the Education departments within Local Authorities were using EMS. Data about Children Missing Education cases was sometimes held as a sub-section of EMS or as a stand-alone database. EMS was popular for a number of reasons, including the possibility of adding and modifying modules. For

example, one Children Missing Education team member explained the extent to which EMS had evolved over time in their Authority, how it was a system that they were largely dependent upon and towards which they were moving other agencies

“That’s one of the things we’re trying to promote now. I mean, for a long while we’ve had the EMS system in our office. It’s been here 10 years now, we’ve always had the EMS system in one form or another. But it’s only in the past two years really that other teams have, even though we’ve had the funding and we’ve had the willingness to bring other teams on board with it... Our psychologist team are now using it, which is great for them. They’re using the Child Support module which allows them to track when they’re going out to a school, when they’re assessing a child. In addition to that, the Educational Social Workers, our Learning Support Behaviour teams are all linked into the Child Support module which means that you’re able to gain a snapshot of which services are involved with which child. But the beauty of that also is that we can also trace which children aren’t in a school because what we have done is we’ve created a separate base called Awaiting Placements. So that hopefully, all children are on EMS, regardless of whether they’re in a school or not, so we’re trying to prevent children from basically falling through the net really.” (EWS, Mid)

- Another Authority (the same one that had always adopted a Child and Family approach) was also well advanced in its use of EMS. For example, it captured details of key stakeholders and contacts as part of EMS so that this information is widely available

“We store information provided by the Police and the Health Authority about their linking of people with schools on EMS. So on EMS we’ve got a record of who the Neighbourhood Beat Manager is, who the School Doctor is, who the School Nurse is, who the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is from Victims Support. So we try again, to capture all this information in one place so that everyone knows where to go to look for it.” (CME lead, High)

- It was also working towards linking SIMS (Schools Information Management System) with EMS so that it could obtain automatic daily updates of children joining and leaving each school. It was also piloting a new Attendance Module which will provide automatic daily records and has facilities for carrying out automated ‘sweeps’ of attendance records to flag up any problems. This will relieve EWOs of this task leaving them free to concentrate on following up such cases
- In other Authorities where EMS was being used, the information was not shared as widely, for example, access might be restricted to internal stakeholders.
- Regardless of the means of recording and extracting information on children missing education, there were a number of other issues that Local Authorities

had to contend with. These included both human error and technical issues. For example, a key concern was the number of duplicate entries as a result of data entry errors or families being inconsistent in the spelling of their names. This was most likely to happen where English was a second or other language

“You know, you get the parent misspelling a name, or using a middle name as their first name, or getting the age wrong or whatever, bearing in mind that some of these families, the parents are not well educated themselves and go back to Shakespearean England where there’s no standardised spelling system. So therefore, you get lots of duplicates in the system and that causes us quite a lot of problems.” (CME lead, High)

- The telephone audit had indicated that the process step relating to access rules and data processing may be overstated as some respondents interpreted the guidelines very broadly. However, based on the qualitative research, it appeared that there were various security measures in place such as restricted access, password protection and timed access.

5.6 Provision Brokering Services

5.6.1 *Identifying the Needs of Children Missing Education and Securing the Support of Other Agencies to Meet Them*

- The point was made on several occasions that in identifying the needs of children that are missing education, a different group of agencies usually become involved. While Housing, Health, Police, Social Care and Education may work together to identify and locate children who are missing education, there was little that these combined agencies could do to identify and meet the educational needs of the children. Thus, identifying and meeting the needs of these children was largely a role for Education and other internal agencies. One of the major players at this stage was seen to be the schools, however, securing their support was highlighted as a key challenge for Local Authorities.
- Meeting the needs (as opposed to identifying them) of children missing education was widely perceived as a gap in the DfES guidelines. A number of respondents felt that the guidelines focused on identifying Children Missing Education but did not place sufficient emphasis on the outcome or the quality of the provision determined for them. As one said

“They are in provision, but how appropriate is it? Is it enough to just know that they are in provision?” (Connexions, High)

- A number of issues were identified as contributing to the difficulty of identifying and meeting the needs of certain Children Missing Education cases. These included the following:
 - placing children of secondary school age is far more difficult than placing primary school children, and placing **older** secondary school children, such as Year 11s, was a particular

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dilemma. For example, at what point is it too late to place these children e.g. six weeks before the end of the academic year?

- professionals can only identify and address the needs of Children Missing Education cases if they have as full a picture as possible of a young person; respondents pointed out that information is often incomplete or lacking, for example, case files often go astray when a young person has moved around a lot
- where pupils and/or their parents are not motivated, they may not turn up for meetings and this delays and frustrates the process
- some categories of Children Missing Education cases present challenges in terms of the assessment of their educational needs, especially those groups that are very mobile (such as Travellers and seasonal workers) as they often do not remain in one place long enough for the assessment to be completed
- there is often both a shortage of places in, and a shortage of suppliers of, external provision
- placing excluded children, especially those excluded from schools perceived by respondents not to be fully under Local Authority admissions control, created difficulties in some Local Authorities. Other schools might be unwilling to take such cases because the excluding schools are perceived to be reluctant to take their share of 'difficult' children
- in the case of children with Special Educational Needs, the statementing process can take a long time and it was felt that some pupils who should be statemented are not. Moreover, those with statements may not have had annual reviews. These were felt to be largely resource issues
- even where children have been statemented, SEN continues to present a particular challenge due to the range of special needs and the perceived lack of support mechanisms including, where appropriate, special schools.

Relationships Between Stakeholders and Schools

- There was a clear polarisation and tension between Local Authorities and most other stakeholders on the one hand, and schools on the other, in most of the discussions relating to identifying and meeting children's needs, as well as identifying and accessing provision. Many stakeholders felt frustrated when it came to meeting the needs of Children Missing Education and typically, they

perceived the schools as being ‘the problem’¹⁶. What follows is just one of many similar quotes

“That is one of the frustrations of where we are at the moment. We’re getting, I’m not saying we’re perfect, we’re getting better at identifying the children. It’s another issue to actually make the appropriate provision for them and that’s where we are at the moment. We had an unusual situation last year where, when you asked the question, are some children on the list for a long time, some of them are on for a very long time because although we had a clear view of where the children should go, it happened to be one particular secondary school in [Name of Local Authority], because there was only one secondary school with vacancies. The Head, with the support of his governors, was refusing to act on our directions so even when we were saying, ‘you’re directed to take this pupil’ they were refusing to. Your colleagues from the DfES became involved and, you know it took a long, long time to move that. It still hasn’t moved fully, has it, other than the head teacher concerned has now moved to another job. So that might help.” (CME lead, Low)

- The fact that certain types of school were perceived to have greater control over their admissions than others was a major issue. Foundation and vocational schools and City Academies were seen as having greater autonomy to decide who to accept and who not to and to be reluctant to take their fair share of ‘difficult’ cases. This was a cause of some resentment among other schools.
- The frustration was felt on both sides; from the school's perspective, there was felt to be little point in taking on a difficult case unless they had the necessary support mechanisms in place

“Quite often I go into those meetings, I’ve got one this week actually, I often go into those meetings not quite knowing what the score is with the child. I don’t often think, and I did actually say that, when they went out to consultation [on the] proposed protocol, I actually made the point that I was fed up of attending meetings where I wasn’t certain about the profile, the academic and psychological and social profile of the student. I mean I’m not saying I would make judgements based ... but if you know a child has got emotional and behavioural problems, in particular, then it’s nice to have, be furnished with that information before you start thinking about reintegration.” (School, Low)

¹⁶ It was for this reason that after completing the telephone audit we recommended that some schools should be included in the qualitative sample in order that we could include their perspective on these issues. The tensions were evident, to a greater or lesser degree, in every Local Authority we visited. In the most extreme situation, the schools that were said to be directly under the control of the Local Authority admissions procedures were refusing to have any dealings with the Authority because they were so cross at what they perceived to be an unfair situation – they felt they were being asked to take all ‘hard to place’ children while three City Academies were refusing to take any.

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- In fact, schools described the considerable lengths that they felt they went to to cater for the needs of 'difficult' children using a mix of on- and off-site provision. It was explained that schools have a duty to produce a Pastoral Support Plan for all pupils designated 'at. Schools are required to manage such students in school and inside the National Curriculum between Years 7 and 9. From Year 10 they can consider alternative curricula and alternative providers. For very severe cases, schools may start this process during Year 9.
- Some of the ways in which schools might go about meeting the needs of 'difficult cases' are summarised in Figures 31 and 32. Figure 31 describes some of the provision that may be offered **within a school**. Figure 32 illustrates some examples of **out of school** provision.

Figure 30: Examples of Meeting Needs In-school

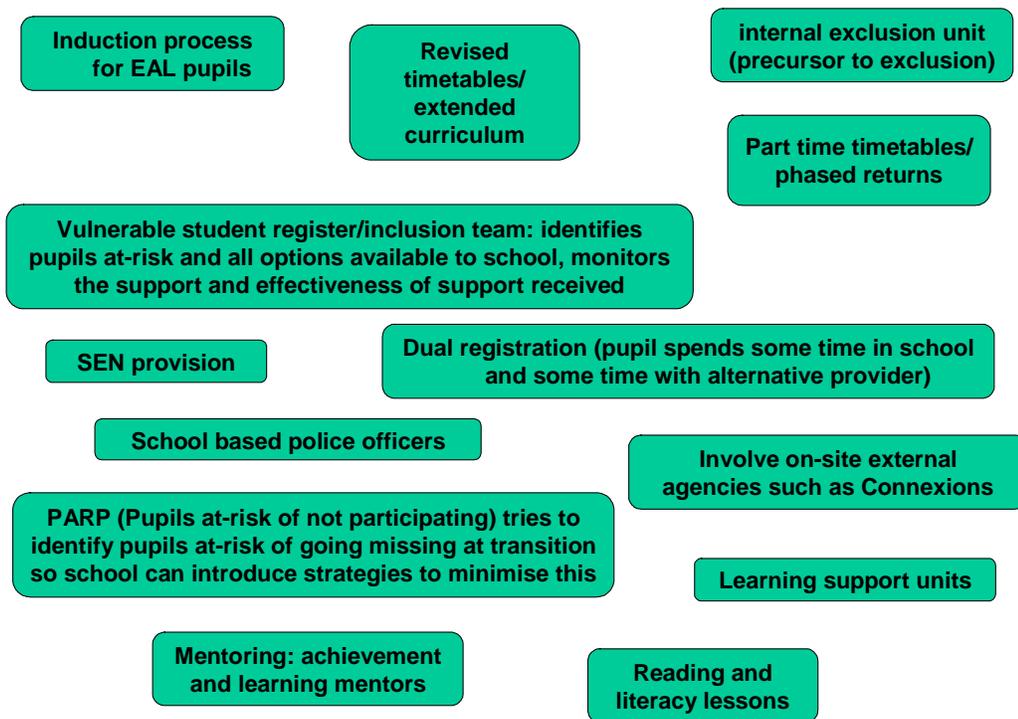
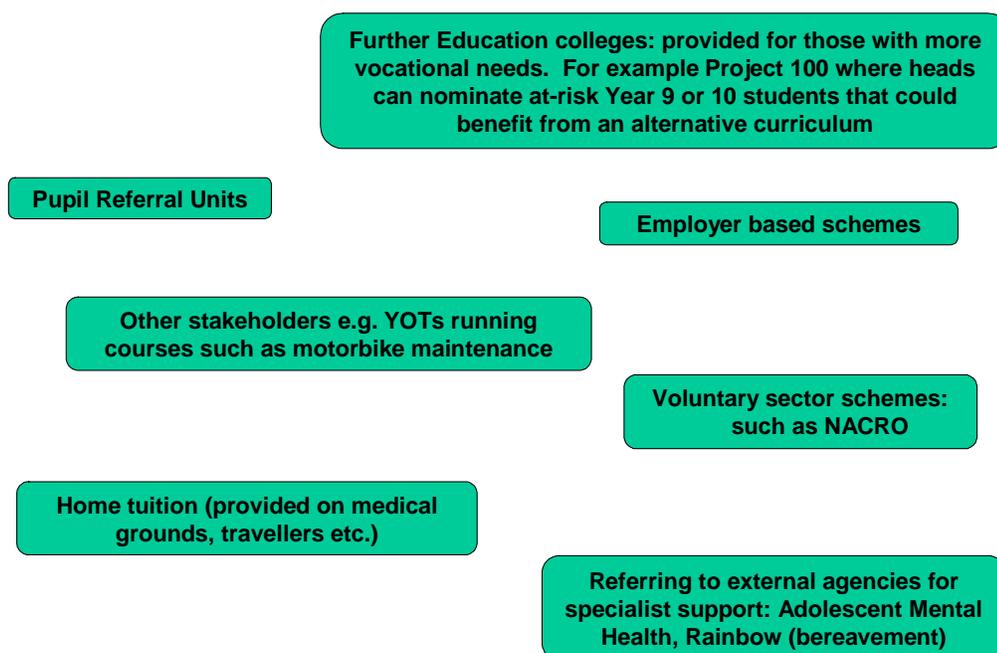


Figure 31: Examples of Meeting Needs Out of School



- However, schools also pointed out that when all else fails (or for more extreme behaviours), the school needs to have a cut-off point, in other words, exclusion.

5.6.2 *Moving a Children Missing Education into Provision*

- All respondents recognised the importance of getting a child (back) into education as quickly as possible because the longer a child was out of education, the harder it became to (re)integrate them.
- Despite this good intention, most acknowledged that they experienced problems especially when dealing with more 'difficult' cases.
- As already noted, almost all the interviewees identified problems with a lack of suitable alternative provision. These were particularly in evidence where children had complex needs such as SEN, including BESD and/or a history of non-attendance.
- Although some Local Authorities had a shortage of school places, for many, identifying provision was less of a challenge than obtaining agreement from schools to accept pupils and for them to start within the guideline twenty school days. Many respondents felt that it took far longer than this and, once again, tended to lay the blame for this on schools. One Local Authority's response to this was to consider introducing a name and shame scheme identifying those schools that consistently took a long time to admit pupils¹⁷.

¹⁷ At the time of the interview, this was still being considered.

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“The process of identifying children who are either missing or at risk of going missing, it’s a relatively easy part of the process and we feel that we do that fairly well now. But the second bit of the process is having identified those children, what are you going to do about them? That’s the bit we’re finding difficult. We’re finding it easy in some areas, such as special education needs because we have a good relationship with our special schools. We’re finding it very difficult to place some children who are out of school, back into the system because of reluctance on the part of head teachers to admit potentially difficult children. We’ve been in the situation in [Local Authority], last year, even where we’ve directed schools to... head teachers are digging their heels in and saying, ‘no’. So it’s not as easy as it looks, having identified the child, identified a school with a place, directed that school to take them and in some cases, they’re still not going in because heads are digging their heels in.” (CME lead, Mid)

“The relatively easy bit is compiling the [list of] kids out of school. The next bit is what are we going to do about it ... it’s the frustration.” (CME lead, Mid)

- It was sometimes considered that parents could also create delays; examples included parents who were not motivated to get their child into education and who went out of their way to frustrate the process. One respondent spoke about difficulties with parents even where the Local Authority had obtained an Attendance Order from a Court; the parent still refused to comply and the Local Authority had to start the process from scratch. He commented that it would be better if they could have referred the original Order back to the Court but (apparently) this was not possible. It was reported that problems could also arise when parents do not agree with the place their child has been allocated and wish to appeal, for example, where their child has Special Educational Needs and the parents want access to a special school even though the statement says a mainstream school place is the most appropriate form of provision.
- Over and above these issues, many stakeholders felt that the reason why it was difficult for Children Missing Education to obtain the provision that had been nominated for them was once again largely down to the schools. Examples that were described included:
 - schools are not always open about the availability of places
 - schools may refuse to take a pupil even though (s)he has been allocated a place and legally the school should take the child; it can take weeks or months to resolve such cases during which time the child will almost certainly be missing education
 - even when a school has accepted a child, it often takes far too long for the place to be taken up; some respondents commented that the children never take up a place within the guideline twenty days

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“I] you’re talking about primary schools, there’s not usually a problem. Talking about secondary schools it would depend on the history of the child as to how easy it is to get the schools to do what they should be doing. I’ll give you an example of a really, really bad one, and that was a looked after child, who had been excluded from school. Another school was identified, there were places and it took us from the time that admissions said, ‘this pupil is coming to your school’ to the time he walked through the door was six months and he had to go for three separate meetings at the school before they let him through the door.” (CME lead, Low)

- where a pupil is accessing alternative provision and this comes to an end or does not work out, it was understood that the pupil should (apparently) again become the responsibility of the school; some stakeholders felt that the school often did not take steps to reengage the pupil.
- It was acknowledged by some of the schools that they can be reluctant to take difficult cases and, when they do take them, it can take a long time before the pupil takes up the place. However, the schools felt there were several good reasons why this might happen.
- Many of the cases they are asked to accept have complex needs that require complex support mechanisms. BESD pupils, in particular, represent real challenges; they can disrupt the teaching of other pupils and they can be threatening to pupils and staff alike. From the school’s point of view, they need to have the required support in place before they accept such a case; otherwise, it was felt that this was likely to lead to further problems for both the child and the school. Moreover, it was felt that the types of support required tended to be resource intensive and therefore expensive to deliver. This could create a dilemma because those schools that had made an effort and developed such mechanisms tended to be allotted more than their fair share of such cases while other schools could claim that they lacked the support structures.
- Schools felt that delays often occurred because the school needed to carry out a thorough needs assessment in order to ensure they had identified all of the issues and had the required support mechanisms in place. They reported that the information is often missing or incomplete and this can result in a school accepting a pupil only to subsequently discover (s)he has far more complex needs than the school was led to believe.
- The impact of such cases on a school’s position in the performance league tables was acknowledged to be a major barrier and especially so when schools were asked to take children in their GCSE years

“We have had people who have approached the school in year 11, yes, for GCSEs. We’ve put them on, and the difficulties - there are exam boards and usually people are moving round – they’ve got no coursework, no books to bring with them, staff are then saying, ‘Well, what am I meant to do with them? They’ve

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not done this, that and the other.’ People will come with all sorts of promises, ‘Oh I’ll catch up, I’ll catch up,’ but in reality, they don’t.” (School, High)

- One head pointed out that the exam results of certain English as an Additional Language students may be excluded from the school’s performance figures. She felt there was a case for excluding the results of some of the students with more serious Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties in the same way.
- Funding (or, more accurately, a perceived lack of funding) was a further issue for schools, especially as much of the support they needed to offer was expensive to provide. Some referred to a Pupil Support Allowance that schools used to receive but this had now been withdrawn and schools had to seek funding from elsewhere. Those schools with a high proportion of children without English as their first language commented there was insufficient funding for EAL pupils. For example, in one school, 68 different languages were spoken and the school often had a pressing need for interpreters; however there was no money available to pay for these. Respondents also spoke about problems relating to who has, and holds onto, any funding. A common cause of problems (and one that could result in delays) was gaining agreement among those concerned with a case about who is going to fund the support. There was a call from some respondents for a system whereby the funds always follow the student.
- Finally, it was suggested that each school needs to achieve an overall balance in the profile of its pupils and if a school takes on too many ‘difficult’ cases, this can upset this balance to the detriment of all concerned

“It’s difficult to classify when you’re getting all these different approaches from different sources. How challenging is challenging? How difficult to place is difficult to place? It would be better if there was a more coordinated approach. Each time they’re coming with one individual child and saying, ‘surely you can take on roll one individual child?’ But from our point of view, it’s the collective weight of numbers. In a year of 105 pupils, if you take 10 pupils with significant challenges, it can completely change the ethos, the way that year group works, it can be very unsettling.” (School, Low)

- In an attempt to address some of these issues, some Local Authorities have started putting in place ‘hard to place’ panels. Although Local Authorities should have introduced these by September 2005, it was clear that not all had them up and running. Respondents in one Authority where a panel was in operation acknowledged that it was beginning to have a positive impact with ‘hard to place’ cases being shared out more equally between schools.
- While welcoming the move to such panels, many stakeholders felt that they would only work if all schools within a Local Authority agreed to participate and accept their quota of children. Once again, there were concerns relating to schools that were perceived to have their own admissions procedures. In one Local Authority where the ‘hard to place’ panel was in operation, a

Foundation school had declined to participate; the other schools considered this unfair and so the Authority tried to circumvent the school's refusal by using Direction Procedures to ensure the school was allotted its quota of hard to place cases. However, when this was done, the school referred the matter to the Secretary of State and both parties were awaiting a decision at the time of the research.¹⁸

- So, while stakeholders were in favour of 'hard to place' panels, they felt there should be statutory regulations that required **all** schools to participate and to accept their quota of children.
- Ensuring that provision has been accessed was, some Local Authorities felt, an issue in itself because of a lack of resources – they did not always have sufficient staff to follow up all cases in a timely fashion.

5.7 Effective Pupil Tracking Systems

- A number of issues emerged in relation to this part of the guidelines.

5.7.1 Tracking Attendance

- While schools were perceived by some stakeholders to be 'juggling their attendance figures' to meet attendance targets, the schools were often confident that the range of systems they had in place produced an accurate picture.
- Schools are required to take the register at the start of each morning and once during each afternoon session; some schools are moving to electronic registers and some are taking the register at every lesson. As noted above, there is the potential for this data to be automatically uploaded to EMS and for this to trigger alerts which would remove the need for EWOs to carry out register trawls. At least one of the Authorities was piloting this approach.
- Both teachers and EWOs reported problems with staff using codes incorrectly or inconsistently when taking the register. In one school they had some twenty or more codes, many of which bore very little intuitive relationship to the attendance category being recorded. Some of the EWOs suggested there was a case for a single set of nationally agreed codes.
- Some schools were using first day calling and one school reported that this had proven very effective in driving up attendance and punctuality; when the

¹⁸ The Children Missing Education lead in this Authority believes there is a gap in the current legislation regarding referrals. Apparently there is nothing set out which says what should happen to children while such matters are being referred and, as this can take several weeks, the child in question could be missing education until the matter is resolved. In this case, he has told the school that they must take the child until the Secretary of State comes to a decision even though there is nothing in the legislation that gives him this authority. The school has, it seems, reluctantly accepted this. He also points out that the legislation does not cover what should happen in the event that the Secretary of State decides in favour of the school. He feels he has taken the case as far as he can, he has issued Directions and if the school are told they do not have to take the child, he feels he has no options left to him.

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staff member responsible had been off sick, attendance figures fell significantly.

- Where a child was persistently late or absent, follow-ups were made by phone and/or letter and, if matters did not improve, by meeting with the parents and child. If this did not resolve the problem, the case was likely to be referred to the relevant EWO.
- Other measures used to improve attendance and punctuality included:
 - the award of certificates to pupils who achieve 100% attendance and/or punctuality and to the best improvers
 - automatic detention if a child is late twice without good reason
 - weekly feedback to each form tutor and form with comparative data so they can see how their form is performing relative to others, the idea being to generate a sense of competition
 - the communication of his/her own attendance and punctuality figures to each pupil, together with targets
 - half termly analyses of attendance and punctuality with letters sent to the parents of all children falling below a certain threshold
 - an invitation to the parents of the top five 'offenders' to a meeting at the school to discuss reasons for non-attendance and how it can be improved
 - truancy sweeps.
- Tracking the attendance of pupils with external service providers presented a problem for some respondents. Pupils who are dual registered may not be present at either provider when the register is taken and colleges may not be geared up to record attendance systematically in the way schools are. It may be difficult for EWOs and others to contact individual lecturers as they may have commitments elsewhere. It was felt that as a consequence, it was possible for absences to go unnoticed or not to be acted upon.
- One external provider said he was required to send a monthly attendance report to the school or referring body and the parents of all the children he deals with, mainly children who had been excluded from school or who were at risk of exclusion. He felt that sending reports to the parents was largely a wasted exercise because they usually were not interested and even schools were not especially motivated to follow up these difficult cases. Yet this reporting process took up a considerable amount of time and resource. He would prefer there to be a central body to which he and other providers could report attendance figures; this body would then coordinate the whole process and ensure, where there were attendance issues, that these were followed up and dealt with.

5.7.2 School to School (s2s)

- When a child moves from one school to another, there is a requirement that Common Transfer Files (CTFs) should be transferred by a secure electronic method. To this end, the DfES has set up school2school (s2s), and Local Authorities have been tasked with promoting its use within their schools.
- The telephone audit highlighted some issues around s2s which were explored further in the qualitative research. This confirmed that some Local Authorities were not encouraging schools to use s2s and that some schools were not using it even when they were encouraged to do so. In some cases, Local Authorities felt they lacked the resources needed to train staff in schools especially where there was a high turnover of such staff. Some respondents also felt that s2s could be off-putting for anyone who was not fairly computer literate

“I have looked at it today, just as a matter of interest, and to me, unless you’re computer literate, I think it’s very cumbersome. I can see it being very, very good as long as every single school uses that. I can see the point of it, but I can see it being very cumbersome because if we’re talking about children missing education, that generally is to do with the pastoral side. And the pastoral side aren’t necessarily the people who are using this, all this data, and doing the s2s for transfer of data and that side of it.” (CME lead, High)

- While schools may upload information to s2s when a child leaves, some admitted that they did not necessarily download information when a child arrives. Some felt the system may therefore overestimate the number of missing children.
- It was suggested by a number of respondents that s2s would be much more effective if all schools and Local Authorities used it and if there was a requirement on schools, not only to upload the details of children going off roll, but on receiving a new pupil, to request a CTF, whether or not they needed it. In this way, the original school would know if the child had been registered with a new provider.
- When a child leaves a school without a known receiving school, schools and EWOs are expected to track and monitor them until they are registered with a new provider. It was reported that in areas where there are high mobility rates, this can create resource problems and may mean that only known at risk cases are tracked. There may also be problems tracking pupils where there has been a change of name (for example, following a marriage, adoption etc) and where there is incorrect data (for example where different or incorrect spellings are used, middle names are used on some records but not others).
- Tracking a child can be more difficult where the family has moved from one Local Authority to another, especially where families move abroad or to Scotland where there are different procedures and protocols. When this was explored in some of the interviews, it was found that Authorities dealt with the situation in different ways. For example, some Authorities had reciprocal

arrangements in place whereby EWOs in the receiving Authority would pick up and track children and report back to the originating Authority; other Authorities had refused to put such arrangements in place. Some of the CME leads said they would often telephone or email their equivalent in another Authority to alert them to cases they suspected had moved to that Authority (this might be as well as or instead of using s2s). However, one Local Authority in our sample felt this was inappropriate for security and data protection reasons and would only accept and respond to enquiries via s2s.

- Another cross-border issue raised by some respondents arose when an Authority experienced a sudden influx of families. In one case, an Authority in the north of the country, the Housing department had been running a campaign to encourage people to move to the area. This had met with some success but had also created problems in terms of finding school places for the children concerned, partly because the Education department only heard about it after the families had relocated. The CME lead felt greater advance warning was needed of families who were planning to relocate.
- Another Local Authority had seen the number of private care homes increase from two or three to over thirty in a very short period due to local economics and house prices. Many of the children being placed in these homes were coming from other Authorities and included looked after children for whom foster homes could not be found in the originating Authority. The receiving Authority was expected to provide school places for these children but, at least in some instances, the funding was retained by the originating Authority.
- Schools are not supposed to remove a pupil from their roll until they hear from the receiving school or from the EWO that the child is registered with another supplier but as this can take a long time (for the reasons outlined above), it was reported that schools often remove a pupil before they should.

5.8 General Issues

- This last sub-section looks at the general issues that were brought up as being relevant to the ability of Children Missing Education leads and stakeholders to implement the guidelines.

5.8.1 Resourcing

- The issue of resources was raised in this research by many respondents. CME leads explained that for them to successfully implement the guidelines and forge the relationships required to tackle the issues, they needed more resources. These resources included funding of a central database and a position dedicated to the CME role (albeit not necessarily a full-time post) to take the practices and procedures of Children Missing Education forward. One CME lead had a very clear idea of the role that the new staff member needed to fulfil

“I could see initially that person would have a very key role in going out to the partners and other agencies, saying, ‘this is who I am and this is what we do and this is how you can help us’. I can also see in a year’s time, when people have either forgotten

or have moved or have been reorganised ... it would be important for that person to go out again and say, 'I'm still here'...but it's very important that that person is proactive in liaising with key agencies to make sure, not just on one occasion but at regular intervals, those agencies, as staff and personnel change, are aware of what the system is and that there is somebody in our department who has that key role. It's that bit we haven't moved on to yet. Although I would say the present team are doing a lot of that already but not to the degree the policy expects or we would like to be." (CME lead, Mid)

- Educational Welfare was another area where resource issues were brought up in relation to their focusing on at risk children because of a lack of time to track all children who leave a school without a known place especially in Authorities with high levels of pupil mobility. Some EWOs felt the need for them to cover several schools within their Authority resulted in a very heavy workload; it was reported that it only needs one EWO to be off sick for a period of time for a large backlog of work to build up.
- Social Services were consistently identified by CME leads and other stakeholders as an agency where a lack of resource was felt to be a major limiting factor. The perception of many respondents was that levels of morale among Social Services staff were low, there was a high turnover of staff and it was proving very difficult to recruit new staff. As a consequence, the threshold set by some Social Services departments in terms of which cases they took on was felt to be set so high that it could prove very difficult to get them involved with Children Missing Education cases.
- As noted earlier, the issue of resources was also flagged up by schools who said that for them to take children with complex needs, they needed to be able offer an appropriate package of support. This tended to be resource intensive, often involving a degree of one to one support, and schools needed to find ways of funding this. Without an appropriate package, schools felt that they could be enrolling 'difficult' children to the detriment of, not only other pupils, but also the admitted child, as the chances were that (s)he would end up in a downward spiral resulting eventually in exclusion.

5.8.2 *Nature of the Local Authority*

- There was a tendency for some Local Authorities to consider themselves unique with respect to the way in which they operated or the population they served. Indeed, there were noticeable differences in the demographic and economic profile of the nine Local Authorities. For example, some Local Authorities reported high numbers of asylum seekers, economic migrants, Black Minority Ethnic groups while others had very small numbers of such groups. However, many of the issues they described were also common amongst other Local Authorities.
- There were issues for large Local Authorities in terms of working together, in particular bringing key stakeholders and agencies together for regular meetings. Coupled with this, geographically large Local Authorities also reported issues such as the nearest provision possibly being located miles

away from a pupil's home. The child may then have to take two to three buses to access it with all the associated disincentives of cost and inconvenience. As one YOT worker explained

“So you have some silly situations where all the local schools are full and you’ve got a Year 7, Year 8 child having to do an hour and a half on the bus to get to school. That is ludicrous, but that is the geography of the county.” (YOT, High)

- Similarly, there were issues for two-tiered authorities in terms of coordinating agencies in different districts

“Housing is slightly more difficult because, of course, for a County Council we don’t own any housing, housing is owned by the District Councils... They’re almost like two completely separate organisations... Because the LEA and all the other departments are just one organisation but in a County Council there are some things that are controlled by the County Council... and there are other things that are controlled by district councils.” (CME lead, Low)

- While in small Local Authorities the networks were said to be closer, the difficulty was that the CME leads and stakeholders were likely to have a number of responsibilities and this could lead to problems with prioritising issues. Furthermore, if a key representative was on leave or absent, a backlog of cases could develop as there was no-one taking them forward

“Then again, within the Authority a lot of people have been absent so there was a lot of stuff ongoing before Christmas that had to be, it slowed right up... and so all of the things that were going to happen, meetings and things, couldn’t take place. I mean, yesterday there was a meeting set up to talk about the database and the other key officer was not around so that has been put back again. This is the problem again, and I keep saying it, with a small authority. Because people are very key because they are doing so much... When you have to cover more than one patch there is a lot of stuff to do. It is very difficult.” (CME lead, Mid)

5.8.3 Move Towards Children Missing Education as a Statutory Duty

- There was a positive response from CME leads and stakeholders to the possible move to make Children Missing Education a statutory responsibility. Many suggested that measures to tackle the issue could only be effective if the requirement was statutory. Making the guidelines statutory would not only clarify the roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies but should also work towards ensuring conformity and consistency across Local Authorities.
- Furthermore, respondents reaffirmed that the responsibility should lie with Local Authorities as the lead agency. In the telephone audit, the view was expressed that the duty on certain other organisations or individuals should

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also be made statutory and this was explored further in the depth interviews. Respondents confirmed that they felt that the statutory duty should cover **all** children of statutory school age in **all** forms of education. This included independent, voluntary aided, city academies and foundation schools, and parents who educate their children at home.

- Similarly, respondents felt there should be a duty on **all** agencies that had information on children, including the Benefits Agency and Immigration, to share this information

“Because Benefits are governed by a different set of legislation because where they come under. What we’re concerned about is the children aren’t accessing into education and the only way we can find this is by having the parents’ details and they’re a little bit reluctant to disclose that. They write a letter and say that you can request this information if you put it in writing to this Authority. Different authorities have had mixed results on that, so we really need to have some greater coordination amongst that and also with people like the Home Office. If you’ve got a family that are coming into the UK, they’ll be given places of residence - that information needs to be passed to the Local Authorities so they can check that up. If you’ve got asylum seekers that have residency in one place and they just move around the country; names, date of birth everything just gets changed. There needs to be an improvement in making sure that, that data, personal details are correct. There needs to be more responsibility from other agencies.” (CME lead, High)

- Many respondents felt that the current Education White Paper would potentially make it harder for Local Authorities to deliver the Children Missing Education agenda

“Well, we think, because in the White Paper and the Government’s intention is to make all schools much more independent, so we fear from our selfish point of view that rather than academies being brought into line with the arrangements for the existing schools, the likelihood is that the other schools will move further away from the LEAs and have additional powers in the way the academies do. So our ability to place children will be even harder because schools are going to have yet more independence. So there needs to be a foundation of an understanding that LEAs have a duty to educate all children and to make sure that those powers are readily and properly available so that we can get children that we’ve identified into schools quickly. That is not happening in all cases now, is it?” (CME lead, Mid)

- This CME lead went on to say that the issue could only be diffused if the DfES addressed it as part of the statutory duty

“And it’s a problem almost unique for the secondary sector. It’s a particular problem, in [Name of Local Authority] because of the

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academies ... A third of our secondary schools are academies, they are responsible for their own admissions and they have got a vested interest in being successful schools. They are reluctant to admit difficult children. The other six schools I think are increasingly adopting similar lines because they are increasingly being compared to academies in terms of performance and it's becoming very difficult for us to place disaffected children into the secondary sector. So we would love something from the DfES to strengthen the force of protocols or legislation to enable us to place potentially difficult children in all of our secondary schools." (CME lead, Mid)

- Many also perceived the current attitudes and responses of schools to children missing education, particularly those deemed 'difficult' cases, as a cause for concern and an area in which action was needed. Some suggested introducing additional legislation for schools, requiring them to fulfil their duties. Others were more cynical, suggesting that schools were able to 'get around' existing legislation so further legislation was likely to contain similar loopholes.
- Conversely, school heads questioned the value of placing more duties on schools, given the number of policies already in place. As one head teacher remarked

"You're better off convincing them that something works and sharing the good practice with us rather than imposing requirements and we're also so sick of legislation. Dear God, this is my ninth year as a Head and I don't think I've had a year where there hasn't been some legislation and we're all tired of it. We'd like to just get on with what we're doing and consolidate what we've got without having to sit and think about the next bit of legislation that's coming on in." (School, High)

- Another issue identified during the telephone audit was the role of parents in helping Authorities tackle the issue of Children Missing Education. Among the qualitative sample, there were some doubts as to what could be done, given that the Government has already introduced Parenting Orders and Parenting Classes. There was a suggestion that Local Authorities could make a greater use of Parenting Orders but it was recognised that this could be counter-productive and further distance parents. Another suggestion was to engage parents with the education system as early as possible.
- Overall, Local Authorities felt that they needed more authority when dealing with other agencies both in terms of bringing them together to deliver Children Missing Education practices and procedures, and in sharing information. Without this, they felt they would be hampered in the extent to which they could successfully tackle Children Missing Education. They requested clearer guidance from the DfES as to what they **could** and **should** expect from other agencies (including Benefits Agency and Immigration).

5.8.4 *Sharing Good Practice*

- The idea of regional forums whereby people working in the area of Children Missing Education could meet up, find out what other Authorities were doing to tackle similar issues, share best practice and encourage the greater exchange of information and ideas, was explored with CME leads. Some had attended one of the regional forums that the DfES had already organised. They said they had found these extremely useful and responded positively to the idea of further opportunities to meet up with their peers from other Authorities. In the case of larger, two tier authorities, respondents felt that it would also be useful to run such sessions within a single Authority to share ideas and air issues between Districts. It was reported that in some parts of the country there are already groups in place that meet to discuss related issues, such as the London Truancy Forum.

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Appendix

6.1 Children Missing Education Progress Checklist: Self Evaluation

Use the following categories to rate the Local Authority (LA):

- **No: N** (Not previously identified, but discussions have now taken place and a plan has been produced)
- **Working Towards: W** (Achieved some of what is expected, identified some gaps, discussions have taken place and a plan has been produced)
- **Achieved: A** (The LA can provide evidence to support positive responses to the questions below)
- **Embedded: E** (The LA can demonstrate that the policy/processes/systems have been in place for a period of time and have been reviewed)

	W, A or E
Strategic Management & Leadership	
1. Does the LA have a written policy (1) concerning children missing education?	
2. Has the LA identified the ways that children become “missing” in their authority and put in place procedures (2) designed to close gaps?	
3. Is there regular monitoring (3) of the processes/numbers by Senior Management and Elected Members?	
Networks & Points of Contact	
1. Has the LA identified the key stakeholders (4) to provide information about children/young people without educational provision in your area?	
2. Has the LA provided and publicised notification routes (5) for all key stakeholders?	
3. Does the LA have a named contact (6) point to receive details about children missing education?	
4. Are there clear responsibilities (7) for this role or those to whom the duties are delegated?	
Information Systems	
1. Does the LA maintain a database (8) of children not currently in education?	
2. If so does the database include fields (9) such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date child/young person notified; ▪ Date form of provision determined; ▪ Date accessed provision? 	
3. Does the LA monitor the numbers (10) of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education?	
4. Does the LA have processes in place (11) to monitor the educational status of children in recognised vulnerable groups?	
5. Are there clear access rules and procedures (12) to ensure fair/safe data processing?	

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Provision Brokering Services	
1. Does the LA have clear processes (13) for securing the support of other agencies where it is needed e.g. for welfare reasons.	
2. Does the LA have an agreed process (14) for securing educational provision for children once found?	
3. Does the LA monitor the pace (15) they move into provision?	
4. Does the LA have the information systems in place (16) to allow access to up to date information concerning availability of school places and availability of places with alternative providers?	
Effective Pupil Tracking Systems	
1. Does the LA keep a record (17) of children who have left educational providers (school and alternative provision) without a known destination?	
2. Does the LA follow up children (18) at regular intervals until they are registered with a new provider?	
3. Does the LA have an agreed system (19) with schools concerning children leaving provision?	
4. Does the LA support and encourage (20) schools to transfer files via s2s?	
5. Does the LA have an identified officer (21) as database administrator for s2s with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database?	
6. Does the LA upload to and download from (22) the Lost Pupil Database?	

Evidence requirements for 'Achieved' status

(1) The policy itself which should be shared with and understood by at least Health, Education, Social Care, Police and Housing. The document(s) containing the policy should contain:

- the current position of the authority
- evidence about the scale and nature of any CME problem
- ways of tackling it in a multi-agency approach
- arrangements for monitoring

(2) There should be documentary evidence from studies of children missing education detailing the ways children go missing. There should be an analysis report of the local situation, and an identification of which ways are most relevant locally.

(3) The authority should be able to provide copies of records, or the ready ability to produce regular records from January 2006 onwards. 'Regular' is Termly.

(4) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence listing other agencies in their area who the CME named individual has spoken to, referred children to and/or given CME details, plus receiving details of missing children from other agencies and the general public.

(5) Documents showing notification routes, and evidence of the dissemination of this information should be available. Dissemination should be by: mail outs, website, leaflets etc.

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Essentially, if a number of likely important stakeholders are approached they should be able to say easily how they notify the authority.

(6) If contacted, the authority should be able to give the name of a person or persons with the responsibility for receiving information on children missing education.

(7) The person(s) in (6) should be readily contactable, and be able to provide, without difficulty information on their role and the limits of their responsibility and if they are not responsible they should know who is.

(8) The authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old), together with a description of how these figures are collected and calculated.

(9) The authority should be able to provide information on any case within the database and show the dates of notification, identification of appropriate provision and of actual access to that provision.

(10) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence that regular updates on the number of CME are sent to senior responsible officers within the organisation. Ideally the numbers should come from the same system that provides data in response to (8)

(11) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of the mechanism by which they identify children in recognised vulnerable groups in their area. There should also be documents detailing how the educational status of these groups is monitored. Ideally the monitoring should be robust, in that it should rely on more than one source of data to establish the situation regarding children in recognised vulnerable groups in their area.

(12) Rules and procedures should be known and understood by any member of staff in the authority who is likely to have to deal with CME data. Any case drawn at random should show the implementation of these processes if tracked through to support receipt. This knowledge should be consistent with written down and agreed procedures.

(13) Documented procedures for securing the support of other services should be known, understood and agreed by relevant staff both in the authority and those in the relevant support services. Any CME case tracked through the system that requires such support should reflect the documented procedure.

(14) Documented procedures for attempting to secure appropriate provision should be known, understood and agreed by relevant staff and followed regularly, so that any CME case tracked reflects those procedures in principle and shows records of any failures to secure provision.

(15) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence that gives regular updates on, for example, the mean, mode and range of time taken to access provision are sent to senior responsible officers within the organisation. Ideally the data should come from the same system that provides data in response to (8)

(16) The authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old) on the number of places available, broken down by at least statutory and alternative provision. A description of how these figures are collected and calculated should be available.

(17) The authority should be able to provide accurate, verifiable and up to date figures (no more than a month old) on the number children who have left education without a known destination. A description of how these figures are collected and calculated should be available.

(18) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of follow up procedures, together with a named contact for whoever is responsible for follow up work. Any case

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tracked should show evidence of regular (at least monthly) follow up contact until the case is registered with a new provider or the local authority CME Named Individual.

(19) Documentary evidence should be available describing the process for children leaving provision. There should be evidence that this process has been agreed to by all school authorities in the area, and that contact with staff responsible for implementing these procedures should show knowledge consistent with an understanding of the process. Any case tracked upon leaving provision should show evidence reflecting the appropriate following of the process.

(20) The authority should be able to provide documentary evidence of support given to all schools, and of appropriate encouragement of all schools in the use of the S2S system. Relevant staff in any school selected at random in the authority should be able to show that they are at least aware of the system. Ideally, where they are not currently using it, they should be able to show evidence of support from the authority to do so. This support should comprise at least the provision of relevant and appropriate materials on how to access the system.

(21) If contacted, the authority should be able to give the name of a person or persons with the responsibility for administering the S2S Lost Pupil Database.

(22) If contacted, the person(s) named in (21) should be able to provide documentary evidence of regular (at least monthly) uploads and downloads to the Lost Pupil Database. This evidence could comprise upload and download reports for each session.

6.2 Telephone Audit Questionnaire

Children Missing in Education

Enter respondent Identity code from contact database

□ □ □ □

SCREENING: Check that respondent is the person within the local authority that is responsible for putting in place the CME systems and procedures and is able to comment on how far these have been implemented.

NB If no systems or procedures are currently in place, check that respondent is/will be the person who will be responsible.

IF RESPONDENT IS NOT THE MOST APPROPRIATE PERSON TO INTERVIEW:

Record this on the contact database

Ask for the contact details of the person who has this responsibility and record these on the contact database

Make contact with this individual - if necessary, email him/her in advance and include a copy of the comfort letter

EXPLAIN PURPOSE OF SURVEY:

The research is on behalf of the DfES and involves all local authorities in England. The aim of the research is to get a picture of progress to date across all local authorities in the country and, in particular, to find out how useful the DfES guidelines have been. A key objective is to identify any gaps in, or improvements to, the guidelines.

As you are aware, the Government signalled (in the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All") their intention to introduce a new statutory duty on local authorities to identify children missing education. The findings from the research will also inform the development of any subsequent legislation and statutory guidance.

All local authorities are being asked to take part in the survey in order that the DfES can arrive at a comprehensive review of what works well and what needs improving. It does not matter how far you have got in implementing the current guidelines, we still need you to take part. You may have all the systems and procedures in place or just some of them, you may still be at an early stage in the process or you may even still be thinking about what you are going to do.

The research is being conducted on a completely anonymous basis, and the DfES will not know who has taken part.

Explain that the interview will broadly follow the Progress Checklist that was included in the CME Good Practice Guide

There are a total of 22 targets. These are grouped into 5 areas which are labelled A, B, C, D & E.

Within each section, each target is given a different number. In Section A there are 3 targets and these are labelled A1, A2, & A3. All the questions that refer to Target A1 are labelled as A1a, A1b etc.

For most questions you should encourage respondents to answer using the following options:

Yes i.e. this aspect of the procedure has been put in place

Working towards i.e. they are currently developing this aspect of the procedure - some things may be in place while others are being worked on

No i.e. this aspect of the procedure has not been developed nor is it being worked towards; this could be because it is something that has been put off for now or it may be something they have no plans to develop

DK i.e. respondent is unable to comment; if you get a lot of DKs please check that respondent is the appropriate person to interview

Where a target is in place or is being worked towards, you should ask the various follow up questions to determine whether all aspects have been put in place and whether there is evidence to support the claim that a target has been achieved. Prompts that start off with 'Evidence' provide you with some example prompts. You don't need to use all of the prompts and you can use others if this seems more appropriate - the main requirement is for you to feel satisfied that the claims can be substantiated. Please make a brief note of the evidence you have been given in the reply box

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Section A: Strategic Management & Leadership

A1a Does the local authority have a written policy concerning children missing education?

- Yes GO TO A1b
 (Claimed but no evidence) GO TO A1b
 Working towards GO TO A1b
 No CODE AS 'NO' AT A1e THEN SKIP TO A2a
 DK CHECK RESPONDENT IS THE BEST PERSON TO INTERVIEW; CODE AS 'NO' AT A1e THEN SKIP TO A2a

EVIDENCE: What is/will the policy be called? When was/will it be published? How would someone go about getting a copy?

A1b Is the policy/will it be shared with and understood by key staff working in each of the following areas? READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	No	DK/ Unsure
Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: How do you know it is shared and understood by key staff?

A1c Does/will the policy document include sections on each of the following? READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	No	DK/ Unsure
the current position of the authority (i.e. at the time the policy was written)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
evidence about the scale and nature of any CME problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ways of tackling the problem using a multi-agency approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
arrangements for monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: what was the scale and nature of the CME problem at the time the policy was developed? NB the involvement of other agencies and methods of monitoring are covered below so no need to explore these here

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

**A1d Has the policy been in place for at least 6 months?
And has the policy been reviewed since it was launched?**

- policy has been in place for 6+ months
 policy has been reviewed since it was launched
 claimed but no evidence
 neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was it reviewed? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If Written Policy does not exist and is not being worked on: code as No

If some but not all answers to A1b and A1c are answered Yes: code as Working Towards

If all answers to A1b and A1c are answered Yes but only one or neither of the first two answers to A1d are ticked: code as Achieved

If all answers to A1b and A1c are answered Yes and both of the first two answers to A1d are ticked: code as Embedded

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A1e

- No
- Working towards
- Achieved
- Embedded
- DK

A2a Has the authority... READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
Documented the different ways in which children can go missing from education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
carried out an analysis of the local situation and identified which of the ways children go missing are most relevant locally?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
put in place procedures designed to close the gaps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: can you give some examples of some of the more common ways children go missing in your authority?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

A2b Was this analysis carried out at least 6 months ago?
And has the analysis been reviewed or updated since then?

- analysis carried out 6+ months ago
- analysis has been reviewed/updated
- claimed but no evidence
- neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the analysis carried out? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to A2a are answered No/DK: code as No

If some but not all answers to A2a are answered Yes: code as Working Towards

If all answers to A2a are answered Yes but only one or neither of the first two answers to A2b are ticked: code as Achieved

If all answers to A2a are answered Yes and both of the first two answers to A2b are ticked: code as Embedded

A2c

- No
- Working towards
- Achieved
- Embedded
- DK

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A3a Is there regular monitoring of the processes and the numbers of children missing education by Senior Management and Elected Members

- Yes, by Senior Management GO TO A3b
 Yes, by Elected Members GO TO A3b
 (Claimed but no evidence) GO TO A3b
 Working towards GO TO A3b

- No CODE AS 'NO' AT A3e
 THEN SKIP TO SECTION B
 DK CODE AS 'NO' AT A3e
 THEN SKIP TO SECTION B

EVIDENCE: who provides the information to Senior Management/Elected Members?

A3b Can the authority readily produce records of the numbers of children missing education?

- Yes Working towards
 Numbers can be produced but not readily (i.e. time consuming/laborious process) No
 Claimed but no evidence DK

EVIDENCE: what does the process involve? e.g. a press of a button, someone extracting numbers manually etc

A3c How frequently are the numbers monitored?

- More than once a term
 Once a term
 Less than once a term

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

A3d Has this monitoring been carried out for at least the last 6 months?

And has the process of monitoring been reviewed or updated since then?

- monitoring carried out for last 6+ months
 monitoring has been reviewed/updated
 claimed but no evidence
 neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the monitoring first introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If A3a answered No/DK: code as No

If monitoring not done by both Senior Management and Elected members and/or numbers cannot be readily produced and/or monitoring is carried out less than once a term: code as Working Towards

If monitoring is by both Senior Management and Elected members and numbers can be readily produced and monitoring is carried out at least once a term : code as Achieved

If monitoring is by both Senior Management and Elected members & numbers can be readily produced & monitoring carried out at least once a term & both of the first two answers to A3d are ticked: code as Embedded

A3e

- No
 Working towards
 Achieved
 Embedded
 DK

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Section B: Networks and Points of Contact

B1a Has the Authority identified the key stakeholders to provide information about children and young people without educational provision in your area?

Yes, all of the key stakeholders have been identified GO TO B1b

Some of the key stakeholders have been identified CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT B1c THEN SKIP TO B2a

No CODE AS 'NO' AT B1c THEN SKIP TO B2a

DK CODE AS 'NO' AT B1c THEN SKIP TO B2a

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

B1b Has the complete list of key stakeholders been available for at least the last 6 months? And has the list been reviewed or updated since then?

complete list available for last 6+ months

list has been reviewed/updated

(claimed but no evidence)

neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the complete list compiled? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If B1a answered No/DK: code as No

If still working on producing a complete list of stakeholders: code as Working Towards

If a complete list has been produced: code as Achieved

If a complete list has been produced and both of the first two answers to B1b are ticked: code as Embedded

B1c

No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

B2a Has the Authority provided and/or publicised notification routes for all key stakeholders

Yes GO TO B2b

(Claimed but no evidence) GO TO B2b

Working towards CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT B2c THEN SKIP TO B3a

No CODE AS 'NO' AT B2c THEN SKIP TO B3a

DK CODE AS 'NO' AT B2c THEN SKIP TO B3a

EVIDENCE: what methods have been used to inform stakeholders of the notification routes? if I was to contact any of the key stakeholders named above, are you confident they could tell me how they would notify the Authority about a child missing education?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

B2b Have stakeholders been aware and using the appropriate notification routes for at least the last 6 months? Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since then?

stakeholders aware of/using notification route for last 6+ months

list has been reviewed/updated

claimed but no evidence

neither of these

EVIDENCE: who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

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If B2a answered No/DK: code as No

If still working on notification routes: code as Working Towards

If all stakeholders received details of notification routes: code as Achieved

If all stakeholders received details of notification routes and both of the first two answers to B2b are ticked: code as Embedded

B2c

No

Working towards

Achieved

Embedded

DK

B3a Does the Authority have a named individual or individuals to whom all enquiries and matters about children missing education are referred?

- Yes GO TO B3b
- (Claimed but no evidence) GO TO B3b
- Working towards CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT B3c THEN SKIP TO B4a
- No CODE AS 'NO' AT B3c THEN SKIP TO B4a
- DK CODE AS 'NO' AT B3c THEN SKIP TO B4a

EVIDENCE: what is/are the name(s) of these individuals/offices?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

**B3b Has named individual(s) been in place for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since then?**

- named individual(s) in place for last 6+ months
- has been reviewed/updated
- claimed but no evidence
- neither of these

EVIDENCE: who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If B3a answered No/DK: code as No

If in the process of doing this: code as Working Towards

If named individuals(s) in place: code as Achieved

If all stakeholders received details of notification routes and both of the first two answers to B3b are ticked: code as Embedded

B3c

No

Working towards

Achieved

Embedded

DK

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If a named contact is not yet in place (B3c codes as 'No' or 'Working towards') code as No at B4c and skip to Section C)

B4a Is the named individual(s)...

- readily contactable*
- able to provide information about their role and the limits of their responsibility*
- where they are not responsible for something, able to refer a caller to the person who is*
- None of these apply/no evidence*
- DK*

EVIDENCE: what happens when someone calls and the person is not at their desk? can you give me an example of something that falls outside this persons responsibility? who does have responsibility for this?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

B4b Has named individual(s) been in place for at least the last 6 months? - no need to ask this again, code as per answer to B3b
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since then?

- named individual(s) in place for last 6+ months*
- has been reviewed/updated*
- no evidence*
- neither of these*

EVIDENCE: who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If named contact not yet in place or B4a answered None of these apply/DK: code as No

Unless all 3 answers at B4a ticked: code as Working Towards

If all 3 answers at B4a ticked: code as Achieved

If all 3 answers at B4a ticked and both of the first two answers to B4b are ticked: code as Embedded

B4c

- No*
- Working towards*
- Achieved*
- Embedded*
- DK*

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Section C: Information Systems

C1a Does the authority maintain a database of children not currently in education

- Yes GO TO C1b
Working towards GO TO C1b
No CODE AS 'NO' AT C1d THEN SKIP TO C3a
DK CODE AS 'NO' AT C1d THEN SKIP TO C3a

C1b Can the Authority provide accurate...

- accurate and verifiable figures about the children not currently in education?
can it provide figures that are no more than 1 month old
(claimed but no evidence)
neither of these

EVIDENCE: how are the figures collected? how often is the database updated?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

C1c Has the database been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- database in place for last 6+ months
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If C1a answered No/DK: code as No

Unless can provide accurate figures on a monthly basis: code as Working Towards

If can provide accurate figures on a monthly basis: code as Achieved

If can provide accurate figures on a monthly basis and both of the first two answers to C1c are ticked: code as Embedded

C1d

- No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

IF DATABASE NOT CURRENTLY IN PLACE, CODE AS NO @ C2c AND SKIP TO C3a

C2a Does the database capture the following details for each child/young person

- The date the Authority were notified about the child/young person GO TO C2b
The date the appropriate form of provision was determined GO TO C2b
The date that provision was accessed GO TO C2b
None of these CODE AS 'NO' AT C2c THEN SKIP TO C3a
DK CODE AS 'NO' AT C2c THEN SKIP TO C3a

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YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

C2b Has the facility to capture these details been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

database in place for last 6+ months

has been reviewed/updated

claimed but no evidence

neither of these

EVIDENCE: who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If database currently not in place or C2a answered No/DK: code as No

Unless can capture all 3 dates: code as Working Towards

If can capture all 3 dates: code as Achieved

If can capture all 3 dates and both of the first two answers to C2b are ticked: code as Embedded

C2c

No

Working towards

Achieved

Embedded

DK

C3a Does the Authority monitor the numbers of children/young people who are not receiving an education?

Yes: numbers are monitored GO TO C3b

Yes: regular updates sent to senior CME officer GO TO C3B

(Claimed but no evidence) GO TO C3b

Working towards CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT C3c THEN SKIP TO C4a

No CODE AS 'NO' AT C3c THEN SKIP TO C4a

DK CODE AS 'NO' AT C3c THEN SKIP TO C4a

EVIDENCE: who does the monitoring? are regular updates sent to senior officers with responsibility for CME?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

C3b Has this monitoring been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

monitoring in place for last 6+ months

has been reviewed/updated

claimed but no evidence

neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was monitoring introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

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If C3a answered No/DK: code as No

Unless there is evidence of senior officers undertaking monitoring: code as Working Towards

If senior officers undertake monitoring: code as Achieved

If senior officers undertake monitoring and both of the first two answers to C3b are ticked: code as Embedded

C3c

No

Working towards

Achieved

Embedded

DK

C4a Regarding children missing education or at risk from missing education, does the Authority have... READ OUT

	Yes	<i>Claimed but no evidence</i>	<i>working towards</i>	No	DK/ Unsure
a method of identifying such children in their area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a method of monitoring their educational status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
does this method rely on more than one source of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline how such children are identified, the methods of monitoring used and the main sources of data used

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

C4b Has this monitoring of vulnerable groups been in place for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

monitoring in place for last 6+ months

has been reviewed/updated

claimed but no evidence

neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was monitoring introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to C4a are No/DK: code as No

Unless there is evidence to support the methods of identification and monitoring of vulnerable children which are based on multiple data sources: code as Working Towards

If there is evidence to support the methods of identification and monitoring of vulnerable children which are based on multiple data sources: code as Achieved

If there is evidence to support the methods of identification and monitoring of vulnerable children which are based on multiple data sources and both of the first two answers to C4b are ticked: code as Embedded

C4c

No

Working towards

Achieved

Embedded

DK

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C5a Are there clear access rules and procedures to ensure fair/safe data processing?

- Yes GO TO C5b
(Claimed but no evidence) GO TO C5b
Working towards CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT C5d THEN SKIP TO SECTION D
No CODE AS 'NO' AT C5d THEN SKIP TO SECTION D
DK CODE AS 'NO' AT C5d THEN SKIP TO SECTION D

EVIDENCE: briefly outline some of the rules and procedures in place

C5b Are these rules and procedures known and understood by any member of staff who is likely to deal with the data

- Yes
Claimed but no evidence
Working towards
No
DK

EVIDENCE: on what basis do you say that (e.g. have staff been trained?); are the rules and procedures written down and accessible to anyone who needs to deal with the data?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

C5c Have these rules and procedures been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- rules and procedures in place for last 6+ months
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when were the rules & procedures introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If answer to C5a is No/DK: code as No

Unless there evidence that rules and procedures are in place and understood by all relevant staff: code as Working Towards

If there is evidence that rules and procedures are in place and understood by all relevant staff: code as Achieved

If there is evidence that rules and procedures are in place and understood by all relevant staff and both of the first two answers to C5c are ticked: code as Embedded

- C5d** No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

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Section D: Provision Brokering Services

D1a When it comes to children missing education, does the Authority have... **READ OUT**

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
clear processes for securing the support of other agencies where this is needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are these procedures known, understood and agreed by relevant staff within the Authority?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are these procedures known, understood and agreed by relevant staff within the other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are you confident that any CME case tracked through your system where such support is required would follow the agreed procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline the procedures in place for securing such support; on what basis do you say that all relevant staff know and follow the procedures; are the procedures written down and accessible to anyone who needs them?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

D1b Have these procedures been in place for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- procedures in place for last 6+ months
 has been reviewed/updated
 claimed but no evidence
 neither of these

EVIDENCE: when were the procedures introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to D1a are No/DK: code as No

Unless there evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff: code as Working Towards

If there is evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff: code as Achieved

If there is evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff and both of the first two answers to D1b are ticked: code as Embedded

D1c

- No
 Working towards
 Achieved
 Embedded
 DK

D2a When it comes to securing suitable provision for children once found, does the Authority have... **READ OUT**

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
an agreed process for securing suitable provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are these procedures known, understood and agreed by relevant staff within the Authority?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are these procedures known, understood and agreed by relevant staff within the other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are you confident that any CME case tracked through your system where such support is required would follow the agreed procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline the procedures in place for securing provision; on what basis do you say that all relevant staff know and follow the procedures; are the procedures written down and accessible to anyone who needs them?

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YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

D2b Have these procedures been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- procedures in place for last 6+ months*
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when were the procedures introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to D2a are No/DK: code as No

Unless there evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff: code as Working Towards

If there is evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff: code as Achieved

If there is evidence that procedures are in place and understood and used by all relevant staff and both of the first two answers to D2b are ticked: code as Embedded

D2c

- No
 Working towards
 Achieved
 Embedded
 DK

D3a Does the Authority monitor the pace at which children missing education move into provision once found?

- Yes GO TO D3b
 (Claimed but no evidence) GO TO D3b
 Systems currently being developed GO TO D3b
 No CODE AS 'NO' AT D3d THEN SKIP TO D4a
 DK CODE AS 'NO' AT D3d THEN SKIP TO D4a

D3b Does this monitoring involve... **READ OUT**

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
collection of statistics such as the mean, mode and range of times taken to access provision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is this information sent to senior responsible officers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is this information updated on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is the information stored as part of the main database used to record children missing education?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline how this is done e.g. do you record the mean/mode/range of time taken? is this information sent to senior officers? how often does it get sent to senior officers? does it come from the same database used to record details of children missing education?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

D3c Has this monitoring been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- monitoring in place for last 6+ months*
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when were the procedures introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

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If answer to D3a is No/DK: code as No
 Unless all answers to D3b ticked as Yes : code as Working Towards
 If all answers to D3b are ticked as Yes: code as Achieved
 If all answers to D3b are ticked as Yes and both of the first two answers to D3c are ticked: code as Embedded

D3d No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

D4a Does Authority have information systems in place that provides information concerning... READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
the availability of school places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
the availability of alternative provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is this information kept up to date - that is, it is no more than 1 month old	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline how these figures are collected and calculated

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

D4b Has this information system been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

<i>information system in place for last 6+ months</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>has been reviewed/updated</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>claimed but no evidence</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>neither of these</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: when was the information system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to D4a are No/DK: code as No
 Unless all answers to D4a are ticked as Yes : code as Working Towards
 If all answers to D4a are ticked as Yes: code as Achieved
 If all answers to D4a are ticked as Yes and both of the first two answers to D4b are ticked: code as Embedded

D4c No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

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Section E Pupil Tracking Systems

E1a Can the Authority.. READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
provide accurate, and verifiable figures on the number of children who have left education without a known destination?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
does this include children who leave school and those who leave alternative suppliers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
is this information kept up to date - that is, it is no more than 1 month old	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: briefly outline how these figures are collected and calculated; how often are the figures up dated?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E1b Has this information system been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

information system in place for last 6+ months
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the information system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to E1a are No/DK: code as No

Unless all answers to E1a are ticked as Yes : code as Working Towards

If all answers to E1a are ticked as Yes: code as Achieved

If all answers to E1a are ticked as Yes and both of the first two answers to E1b are ticked: code as Embedded

E1c

No
 Working towards
 Achieved
 Embedded
 DK

E2a Where a child leaves education does the Authority.. READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
follow up the child until they have registered with a new provider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
have a named contact who is responsible for such follow up work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
follow up such cases at least once a month until a case is registered with a new provider?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: are the follow up procedures documented any where? where? who is the named contact? how often are individual cases followed up

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YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E2b Have these follow up procedures been in place for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- follow up procedures in place for last 6+ months*
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If all answers to E2a are No/DK: code as No

Unless all answers to E2a are ticked as Yes : code as Working Towards

If all answers to E2a are ticked as Yes: code as Achieved

If all answers to E2a are ticked as Yes and both of the first two answers to E2b are ticked: code as Embedded

E2c No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

E3a Does the Authority.. READ OUT

	Yes	Claimed but no evidence	Working towards	No	DK/ Unsure
have an agreed system with schools concerning children leaving provision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
has this process been agreed to by all school authorities in your area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
are the staff responsible for implementing these procedures familiar with the system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

EVIDENCE: is the system documented any where? where? how do you know relevant staff are familiar with the systems in place?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E3b Have this system been in place for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- system in place for last 6+ months*
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

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If all answers to E3a are No/DK: code as No
 Unless all answers to E3a are ticked as Yes : code as Working Towards
 If all answers to E3a are ticked as Yes: code as Achieved
 If all answers to E3a are ticked as Yes and both of the first two answers to E3b are ticked: code as Embedded

E3c No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

E4a Does the Authority support and encourage schools to transfer files via School-to-School (s2s)?
 Yes GO TO E4b
 (Claimed but no evidence) GO TO E4b
 Systems currently being developed CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT E4c THEN SKIP TO E5a
 No, schools use a secure intranet provided for that purpose by the Authority CODE AS 'NO' AT E4c THEN SKIP TO E5a
 No CODE AS 'NO' AT E4c THEN SKIP TO E5a
 DK CODE AS 'NO' AT E4c THEN SKIP TO E5a

EVIDENCE: briefly outline support & encouragement provided to schools; this should at least include details and information about how to access s2s

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E4b Have this support been in place for at least the last 6 months?
 Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?
support in place for last 6+ months
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If answer to E4a No/DK: code as No
 Unless there is evidence to show what support & encouragement is being provided : code as Working Towards
 If there is evidence to show support being provided: code as Achieved
 If there is evidence to show support being provided and both of the first two answers to E4b are ticked: code as Embedded

E4c No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

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E5a Does the Authority have an identified officer as the database administrator for s2s with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database?

- Yes GO TO E5b
(Claimed but no evidence) GO TO E5b
Systems currently being developed CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT E5c THEN SKIP TO E6a
No CODE AS 'NO' AT E5c THEN SKIP TO E6a
DK CODE AS 'NO' AT E5c THEN SKIP TO E6a

EVIDENCE: what is the name of this officer?

YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E5b Has this position been in place for at least the last 6 months?

Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- support in place for last 6+ months
has been reviewed/updated
claimed but no evidence
neither of these

EVIDENCE: when was the system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If answer to E5a No/DK: code as No

Unless there is evidence to show there is a named officer in place : code as Working Towards

If there is evidence to show there is a named officer in place: code as Achieved

If there is evidence to show there is a named officer in place and both of the first two answers to E5b are ticked: code as Embedded

E5c

- No
Working towards
Achieved
Embedded
DK

E6a Does the Authority/the above officer upload to and download from the Lost Pupil Database at least once a month?

- Yes GO TO E6b
(Claimed but no evidence) GO TO E6b
Systems currently being developed CODE AS 'WORKING TOWARDS' AT E6c THEN SKIP TO SECTION F
No CODE AS 'NO' AT E6c THEN SKIP TO SECTION F
DK CODE AS 'NO' AT E6c THEN SKIP TO SECTION F

EVIDENCE: are there upload and download reports for each session?

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YOU ONLY NEED TO ASK THE NEXT QUESTION IF THIS TARGET HAS BEEN ACHIEVED

E6b Has information been uploaded and downloaded for at least the last 6 months?
Has this aspect of the process been reviewed or updated since it was first introduced?

- in place for last 6+ months*
- has been reviewed/updated*
- claimed but no evidence*
- neither of these*

EVIDENCE: when was the system introduced? who undertook the review? what was the outcome of the review?

If answer to E6a No/DK: code as No

Unless there is evidence to show that information is being uploaded and downloaded at least once a month : code as Working Towards

If there is evidence to show that information is being uploaded and downloaded at least once a month: code as Achieved

If there is evidence to show there is a named officer in place and both of the first two answers to E6b are ticked: code as Embedded

E6c

- No*
- Working towards*
- Achieved*
- Embedded*
- DK*

Section F: Stakeholder Details

Explain to respondent that we would like to find out what types of stakeholder organisations are involved in implementing the guidelines and with which parts of the process they are involved. Rather than taking up more time now, explain you will email respondent a form for them to complete and send back. Check that you have respondent's email address.

F1 Record below

- respondent emailed stakeholder form*
- respondent refused to provide this information*

Be sure to include Local Authority identity code on the form before you send it

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Section G: Areas for Improvement

G1a Are there any parts of the DfES Good Practice Guide that your Authority have found particularly difficult to implement?

Yes ASK G1b

No SKIP TO G2a

G1b Record details below. Be sure to record which part of the guidelines are being referred to and the nature of the difficulty

G2a Have you or your colleagues identified any gaps or omissions in the DfES Good Practice Guide that you feel need to be addressed?

Yes ASK G2b

No SKIP TO G3a

G2b Record details below.

G3a Are there any other improvements or changes you would like to see being introduced into the Guidelines before they are made statutory?

Yes ASK G3b

No SKIP TO G4a

G3b Record details below.

G4a In the second stage of the research we are conducting, a smaller random selection of Authorities will be invited to take part in a face-to-face discussion about the Guidelines. This will cover in more detail their experiences of implementing the current Guidelines as well as looking at how they can be adapted and improved. This will give Authorities the chance to shape the future development of the guidelines.

If your Authority was selected for this second stage, would you be willing to take part?

If necessary: explain it will involve a face-to-face discussion with a researcher at the respondent's place of work. If appropriate, the respondent could involve one or two colleagues who are also involved in implementing the guidelines. It will last approximately 1 hour. It will be held sometime in March.

Willing to take part

Unwilling to take part

G4b Record below any periods in March respondent would not be available

6.3 Stakeholder Form

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Error! Reference source not found.

In Section A, please fill out the following details for each of the main stakeholders involved in the CME systems and procedures in your area. A main stakeholder is an organisation that is regularly involved in the systems and procedures. We have allowed space for up to 10 main stakeholders. If you have more than 10 main stakeholders, please add their full details at the end of the document

Other organisations that are only occasionally involved should be listed in Section B.

SECTION A: Main Stakeholders

Name of Stakeholder organisation			
Name of Main or principle point of contact			
telephone:			
email:			
With which parts of the process is this stakeholder involved? Tick all that apply			
Identifying children as (at risk of) missing education		Accessing appropriate provision	
Logging children's details on database		Monitoring attendance	
Locating children		Tracking and reconciling movements of children who cease to be registered with a provider until they are registered with a new provider	
Determining children's needs			
Identifying available provision and places			

Name of Stakeholder organisation			
Name of Main or principle point of contact			
telephone:			
email:			
With which parts of the process is this stakeholder involved? Tick all that apply			
Identifying children as (at risk of) missing education		Accessing appropriate provision	
Logging children's details on database		Monitoring attendance	
Locating children		Tracking and reconciling movements of children who cease to be registered with a provider until they are registered with a new provider	
Determining children's needs			
Identifying available provision and places			

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Section B: Other Stakeholders That are Occasionally Involved

	Name of Stakeholder Organisation
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
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7	
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12	
13	
14	
15	

Please email completed form to CME@creativeresearch.co.uk as soon as possible. If you have any queries about how to fill out the form, please contact Sunita Bhabra on 020 8567 6974

6.4 Discussion Guides

6.4.1 Children Missing Education Leads & Stakeholders

Aims of research - To explore

- The extent to which the Guidelines have been implemented
- Whether the 2004 non statutory guidance has been effective
- Whether Local Authorities can recommend any changes to the guidance
- Whether there are gaps/ areas for improvement based on experiences of implementing it prior to the introduction of statutory guidelines (subject to legislation)

NB Some stakeholders may not be familiar with the guidelines as such but they should still be able to offer their views on the procedures and systems and how these can be improved. Guidelines were produced in July 2004 and revised in December 2004 so where a stakeholder is not familiar with them, the dates may provide useful benchmarks e.g. when new practices were introduced.

NB It may not be necessary to cover all issues in all interviews especially where you have gained a good appreciation of an issue from earlier interviews.

Interview covers 2 broad areas:

- the stakeholders involvement in the CME procedures – where possible with a view of flagging up any issues/concerns/possible improvements
- their thoughts on how the guidelines could be improved

Involvement in CME Procedures

- CME as tackled by the Local Authority: briefly describe the situation, history, team, location (e.g. whether there have always been systems and procedures in place, whether some aspects were covered but not others, etc).
- About interviewee: How long been involved in CME role, how would they describe their role, full or part time (if part time, what proportion of their time spent on CME related issues), areas of responsibility, what has been their remit in terms of CME, who do they work closely with
- Use the sheet showing the main stages of the CME model to establish which areas respondent is involved with
- For each stage where respondent has involvement ask for a brief description of the protocols and procedures that are involved. Where appropriate, use the following prompts

Identifying children as (at risk of) missing education

- What qualifies as a child as either missing education or being 'at risk'?
 - what is the Local Authority's definition of CME?
 - to whom do they report such cases?
 - what is the method(s) for reporting such cases?
- Are there any issues or concerns regarding identifying children who are missing education or at risk from doing so; is it clear what is meant by Children Missing Education or at risk?
- What are the main categories they get involved with?

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Those on the roll but not attending (for various reasons – truanting, exclusions etc – check if all are covered)

Those not on the roll but which LA is aware of

Those on the roll and not aware of

- Does the CME policy cover all three categories? Do they monitor and track the first two categories (check whether it is all cases that fall into these categories). What steps have been put in place to minimise the third category? Which categories do they consider to be the core focus?
- Are there any issues or concerns about identifying Children Missing Education or at risk from doing so?

Logging children's details on database

- Is there a single data base or different databases for different categories of children? Is there a dedicated CME database or is it part of a larger database (e.g. EMS). What are the implications of this?
- What information is captured? (in particular: date case first notified/date suitable provision was determined/date when provision was accessed)
- Are there any guidelines in terms of how often data should be entered? how reasonable/easy it is to keep the database up to date?
- Is the database shared/accessible by different stakeholders?
- Are there any rules in terms of who can access the database (e.g. passwords) and/or in terms of how they can use the database (e.g. restrictions on who can change the data)?
- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Locating children

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?
- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Determining children's needs

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?
- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Identifying available provision and places

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?
- In particular, explore what happens in terms of

primary schools

secondary schools

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schools that have their own admissions procedures (e.g. voluntary aided, foundation, city academies)

independent schools

Alternative providers (such as Pupil Referral Units)

- Explore if there are any issues/difficulties here (e.g. hard to place pupils, students in GCSE years who need to be found places etc)

Accessing appropriate provision

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?

who is involved in the decision making (may be different professionals depending on the case)

how are decisions arrived at (e.g. lead professional presenting the case to a panel)

are the decisions recorded as part of the CME database?

- What steps or procedures are in place to try and make sure the child gains access to provision as quickly as possible once the decision has been reached?

is this aspect monitored in any systematic way? How? Is it recorded as part of the CME database?

- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Monitoring attendance

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?

- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Tracking and reconciling movements of children who cease to be registered with a provider until they are registered with a new provider

- What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?

are all such children followed up or only some (e.g. those felt to be more vulnerable)?

who is responsible for this

what happens when a child re-locates either to a different part of the country or abroad?

- In particular, explore what happens in terms of

primary schools

secondary schools

schools that have their own admissions procedures (e.g. voluntary aided, foundation, city academies)

independent schools

Alternative providers (such as PRUs)

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- Are schools encouraged to use s2s? What issues are there around this?
- Do schools/the LA upload missing pupils to the MPD? Any issues around this?
- Does the LA download data from the MPD? What do they do with this once it is downloaded? Any issues around this?
- Are there any further issues/problems with this part of the process?

Multi-agency Approach

- Were there any issues related to getting key stakeholders on board? Were some stakeholders easier to get on board than others?
- Are there any issues around working with a multi-agency approach?
- How often are there multi-agency meetings around CME
- The DfES guidelines state that Local Authorities should at least be working with Education, Police, Social Care, Health and Housing. Are there any other agencies that you feel Local Authorities should be working with to tackle CME?
- With regards to CME what are the statutory duties of other agencies? (Education, Police, Social Care, Health and Housing. Also explore perceptions covering other agencies such as Benefits, immigration)
- For the multi-agency approach to work, relevant staff in each Agency need to be familiar with the practices and procedures. In Agencies where there is infrequent involvement or where there is a high turn over of personnel, this may cause problems. Who should be responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are familiar with the procedures – each individual Agency? the LA? the DfES?
- A number of authorities mentioned that they found it difficult to track children who moved out of Borough, given this is there any value in terms of forging closer relationships with neighbouring Authorities e.g. for children educated out of Borough or when families move between Boroughs

How might this work?

What could be done to make it easier to track children who move further away?
(further away from the Local Authority)

- Is there any value in setting up regional forums where people involved in CME can meet up periodically to share best practice etc?

Resources

- How easy/difficult has it been to adequately resource the CME policy?
- Do you feel there is a need for a full time dedicated CME officer and/or CME team?

Nature of Authority

- Is the LA a unitary or 2 tier authority? What are the implications of this for CME practices and procedures? (In particular, within 2 tier LAs are there problems developing a centralised system?)
- Has the LA moved to/is it moving to being a Children's Services approach? What are the implications of this for the CME practices and procedures?
- Are there any aspects of the guidelines that are less relevant to your Local Authority? (for example, due to the size of the Local Authority – small/med/large, due to the population served – high ethnic minorities/asylum seekers)

Statutory Guidelines

- Moderator to explain the Government is considering introducing statutory guidelines. What is respondent's view on this? In favour or against. Reasons why
- Are there any gaps or omissions in the current guidelines that need to be addressed?
Possible prompts:
 - duties/responsibilities for schools/governing bodies: what should these be?
 - duties/responsibilities on providers with their own admissions policies: what should these be?
 - issues relating to Home Educators: what should these be?
 - duties/responsibilities on parents: what should these be?
 - duties/responsibilities on other agencies such as those able to identify CME – which agencies and what duties (e.g. immigration, benefits)
 - Duties responsibilities on other Local Authorities? What should they be and how should this be achieved?
- Any other changes or improvements respondent would like to see introduced into the guidelines.

Thanks and close

6.4.2 Secondary Schools

Aims of research - To explore

- The extent to which the Guidelines have been implemented
- Whether the 2004 non statutory guidance has been effective
- Whether Local Authorities can recommend any changes to the guidance
- Whether there are gaps/ areas for improvement based on experiences of implementing it prior to the introduction of statutory guidelines (subject to legislation)

NB Some schools may not be familiar with the guidelines as such but they should still be able to offer their views on the procedures and systems and how these can be improved. You may need to explain the nature and content of the 2004 non-statutory guidance on CME

NB The first section of the guide: *Involvement in CME* needs to be briefly covered to set the scene. The following two topics: *enrolling children* and *monitoring attendance* need to be covered in greatest detail. The remaining sections need to be briefly covered in the interview.

Involvement in CME

- About the school: Describe the school, number of pupils on the school roll, make up of school, number of feeder primary schools
- About interviewee: How long have they been at the school? How would they describe their role, areas of responsibility, who do they work closely with
- Awareness of CME guidance – have they seen it?
- Awareness and understanding of any Local Authority CME policy or protocols? Have they contributed to any?
- What do they know about CME and the Local Authority’s response to tackling the problem? (what do they feel is the extent and nature of any CME problem in their Local Authority?)
- What qualifies a child as either missing education or being ‘at risk’?
 - how would they define CME?
 - to whom do they report such cases?
 - what is the method(s) for reporting such cases?
- Are there any issues or concerns regarding identifying children who are missing education or at risk from doing so?

Enrolling children

- Schools that fall under the Local Authority’s admission control have a duty to provide Local Authority’s information on the availability of school places. How do you do this? What does this entail and what are the procedures involved?
- Can you describe how your school would respond if the Local Authority identifies a CME and wants them to attend your school? Who would make the decision? What are the agreed procedures? How well do these work in practice?

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- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process
- What steps or procedures are in place to try and make sure the child gains access to provision as quickly as possible once the decision has been reached?

is this aspect monitored in any systematic way? How?
- Explore if there are any issues/difficulties here (e.g. hard to place pupils, students in GCSE years who need to be found places etc)
- Are there any issues/problems with this part of the process?

Monitoring attendance (In this section explore the different ways/reasons children may not be attending school [for example, travellers, extended holidays, illness, truancy, family problems, temporary / permanent exclusions]. For EACH way explore)

- any statutory requirements
- any non-statutory procedures (e.g. that they may have agreed with their Local Authority)
- To whom should they report such cases, by which method and within which time frames?
- Explore how these systems and procedures work in practice and any issues

(Now explore the circumstances in which children are taken off the school roll – OTHER than when they come to the end of their school career)

- what are the statutory requirements
- any non-statutory procedures (e.g. that they may have agreed with their Local Authority)
- To whom should they report such cases, by which method and within which time frames?
- Explore how these systems and procedures work in practice and any issues

If not already raised, explore whether they are encouraged to use s2s

- What are the agreed procedures and how well do these work in practice?
- Do they use the Missing Pupil Database? If yes, what does this entail?
- When will a child be classified as 'missing from education'?

What are the agreed procedures and how well do these work in practice?

Multi-agency

- Do you attend any multi-agency meetings on CME? (hard to place panels?)
- If yes, who else is present at these meetings? What is discussed? How regularly do you attend these meetings?
- How useful and effective are these meetings?

Statutory Guidelines

- Moderator to explain the Government is considering introducing statutory guidelines. What is respondent's view on this? In favour or against. Reasons why
- Are there any gaps or omissions or other issues in the current guidelines that need to be addressed? Possible prompts:
 - duties/responsibilities for schools/governing bodies: what should these be?
 - relate to enrolling children
 - relate to children not attending school in relation to children being off the school roll
 - duties/responsibilities on providers with their own admissions policies: what should these be?
- [If time permits, cover the following]
 - issues relating to Home Educators: what should these be?
 - duties/responsibilities on parents: what should these be?
 - duties/responsibilities on other agencies such as those able to identify CME – which agencies and what duties (e.g. immigration, benefits)
 - duties/responsibilities on other Local Authorities?
- Any other changes or improvements respondent would like to see introduced into the guidelines.

Thanks and close

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