

# People and Health Scrutiny Committee

## 9 March 2023

### School Exclusions and Suspensions

#### For Review and Consultation

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** All

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**Report Status:** Public

#### **Brief Summary:**

This report provides information about school exclusions and suspensions as requested by the Chair of the Committee, following a question asked by Councillor Sutton at Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

#### **Recommendation:**

To review, comment, and provide feedback, to the service and Portfolio Holder, on the school exclusions and suspensions data, and the support being provided to schools and young people.

## Reason for Recommendation:

To enable the People & Health Scrutiny Committee to effectively monitor the performance of services and to enable the committee to scrutinise matters referred to the committee by councillors.

### 1. Permanent Exclusions Data

- 1.1 The number of permanent exclusions started increasing in Dorset and nationally from 2012/13. By 2017/18 Dorset's rate of permanent exclusions was higher than the national rate and reached a peak of 0.16 per 10,000 in 2018/19 (88). This fell to 0.13 in 2019/20 (63), although this was still above the national rate of 0.06. In 2020/21 Dorset's rate of permanent exclusions fell again to 0.07 (35), although again this was still above the national rate of 0.05.
- 1.2 The downward trend continued in the year 2021/22 when permanent exclusions from Dorset schools reduced to 0.06 per 10,000 which was 31 children and young people, with zero primary age permanent exclusions.

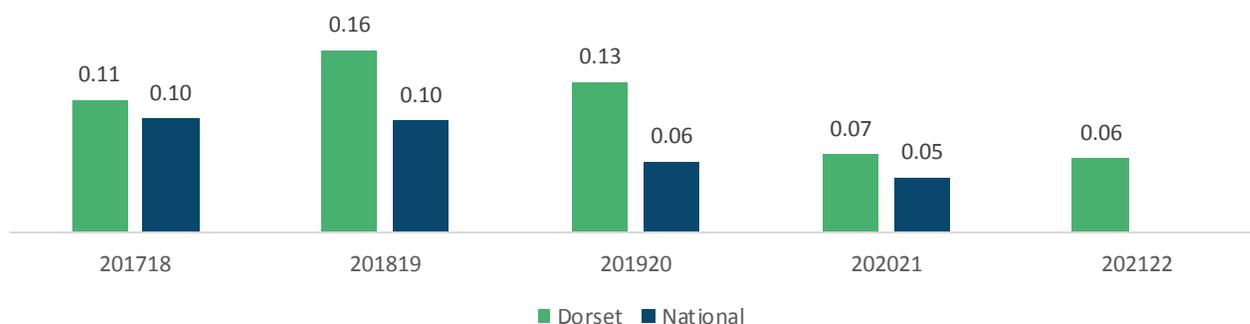


Figure 1: Permanent exclusion rates trend.

- 1.3 In 2021/22, there were eight permanent exclusions from the East Locality, seven from Chesil Locality, five from Purbeck Locality, four from Dorchester Locality, four from West Locality and three from North Locality.
- 1.4 In Dorset in 2021/22 there were 18 permanent exclusions from academies, 11 from maintained schools and two from free schools. This broadly reflects the proportion of maintained and academy schools in Dorset.

- 1.5 In Dorset in 2021/22 26 males were permanently excluded compared to five females. The latest DfE data (2020/21) showed that boys have more than 3 times the number of permanent exclusions than girls.
- 1.6 In Dorset, the majority of permanent exclusions in 2021/22 were of pupils in Year 10 (12). There were seven permanent exclusions of Year Nine pupils, four permanent exclusions of Year Eight pupils, three permanent exclusions of Year 11 pupils, three permanent exclusions of Year Seven pupils and two permanent exclusions of Year 12 pupils. The latest DfE data (2020/21) national data shows that children aged 14 are more likely to be suspended which is reflected in Dorset's 2021/22 data.
- 1.7 In Dorset, in the autumn term of 2021/22, the permanent exclusion rate for children eligible for free school meals was 0.03 compared to 0.01 for children not eligible for free school meals. Nationally, the permanent exclusion rate for children eligible for free school meals was 0.07 compared to 0.01 for children not eligible for free school meals.
- 1.8 In Dorset in 2021/22, the main reason for permanent exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour (14 children and young people were permanently excluded for this reason). Five were permanently excluded for drug and alcohol related incidents, three for physical assault against a pupil, three for sexual misconduct, three for verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult, two for damage to school property and one for aggression towards peers. The latest DfE data (2020/21) showed that nationally the most common reason recorded for permanent exclusion is also persistent disruptive behaviour.
- 1.9 So far, this academic year (2022/23) there have been 17 permanent exclusions of our children and young people from Dorset schools
- 1.10 Five of these permanent exclusions have been from Chesil schools, four from West, three from East, two from North, two from Purbeck and one from Dorchester.
- 1.11 The proportion of permanent exclusions by school type is broadly in line with the overall proportions of schools in Dorset:

School Type	Number of Permanent Exclusions
Maintained Schools	5
Academies	12

1.12 So far this year males are almost twice as likely to be permanently excluded as females



Figure 2 2: Permanent exclusions by gender so far this year.

1.13 So far this year the largest number of permanent exclusions have occurred in Year nine. There has been one permanent exclusion of a Year two child.

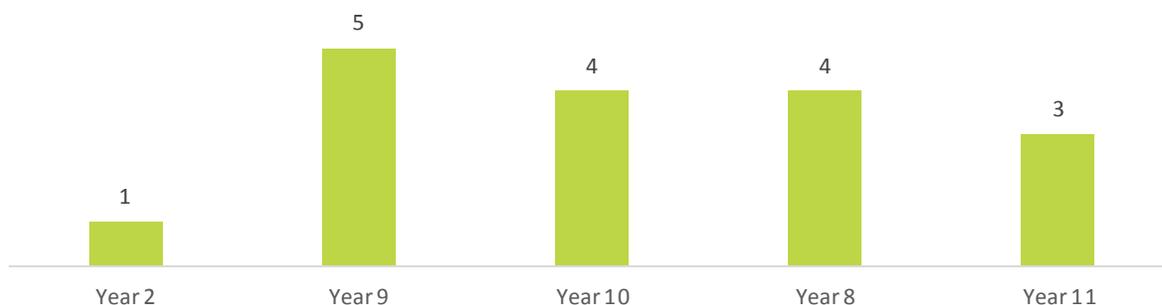


Figure 3 3: Permanent exclusions by year group so far this year.

1.14 Children eligible for free school meals continue to figure highly in permanent exclusions. So far this year, 59% of children with permanent exclusions are identified as being eligible for free school meals, however 19% of Dorset's cohort of children are eligible for free school meals.

1.15 So far, this academic year in Dorset the main reason for permanent exclusions has been persistent disruptive behaviour (10). There have been five for physical assault and two for drug related issues.

## 2. Suspensions Data

2.1 From below national in 2015/16, Dorset's suspension rate increased to above national in 2016/17 and reached a peak of 6% in 2017/18 and 2018/19. The rate fell in 2019/20 and 2020/21 but remains above national at 4.3%. Preliminary data suggests a total of 3334 suspensions in

2021/22, leading to a rate of 6.8%. This is a significant rise although there were lockdowns in 2020/21 which would have led to less suspensions.

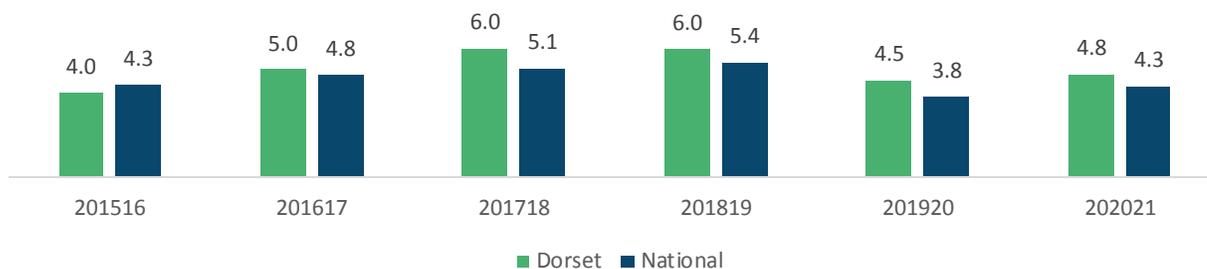


Figure 44: Suspension rates: Dorset compared to National.

2.2. So far for 2022/23 there have been over 1300 suspensions which suggests a further rise.

2.3 As with permanent exclusions, the rate of suspensions for children eligible for free school meals so far this year is four times that of their peers. This follows a similar pattern to that shown in the national 2020/21 data:

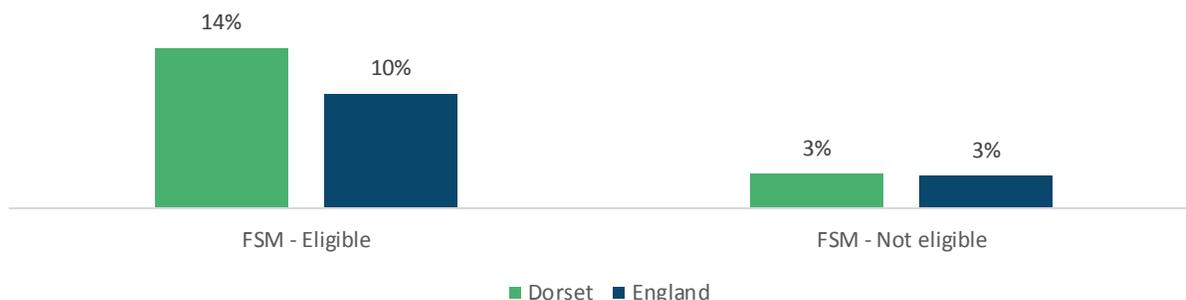


Figure 5 5: FSM Eligible suspension rates 2020/2021.

2.4 Male pupils have twice the suspension rate of females and rates broadly increase with age with Year 10 having the highest rate of suspensions.

2.5 Suspension rates in the Chesil Locality this academic year are at 6.7%, which is higher than other localities in Dorset.

2.6 The main reason for suspensions in Dorset is persistent disruptive behaviour (over one third), followed by verbal abuse to adults (over one fifth).

### 3. Dorset Council's support

- 3.1 Dorset Children's Services are delivered locally by a multi-professional team, including Social Workers, family workers, Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers, Inclusion Leads and Youth Workers, who are able to wrap around schools, children and families. Each school has a link family worker, Inclusion Lead, EP and Specialist Teacher. Joint planning meetings are held in each school termly and follow the graduated approach.
- 3.2 The Dorset Education Board (DEB) is a system leadership board for education in Dorset, independently chaired by the former Education Minister, Stephen Twigg. The Board has a number of focal points, particularly to promote inclusion and multi-agency and close peer working to raise standards, to close the disadvantaged attainment gap and to ensure all our children and young people thrive in their education.
- 3.3 Local Inclusion Partnership meetings take place monthly in each locality. They focus on children who are at risk of being permanently excluded, those with a high number of suspensions and those who are at risk of missing education. The locality suspension and exclusion data is shared with the schools at this meeting, and decisions are made in relation to individual children who need additional support to ensure they have a successful school life.
- 3.4. In addition, each school has regular Inclusion meetings and Inclusion Panels attended by their link Inclusion Lead.
- 3.5 We hold fortnightly inclusion oversight board meetings which are multi-agency and prioritise vulnerable groups. The board focuses on ensuring that rapid action is taken where a child is not in full time education.
- 3.6 Dorset Council are leading a whole system focus on good inclusive practice and building the skill and capacity of school staff to meet the needs of the children in their schools. This has included therapeutic thinking training, relational practice training and a forum, focusing on attachment and trauma and a Dorset-wide Inclusion Conference. The work that locality teams are doing with all our partners, including schools and academies to improve inclusive practice continues to be a focus. We will learn from settings that have strong inclusive practice and share this across our Dorset schools.
- 3.7 We are collecting live attendance and suspension data from our schools, which allows us to have a more robust focus on children with repeated suspensions.

- 3.8 Each locality area has a Local Alliance Group (LAG). Dorset Council will be providing each LAG with £100,000 to support inclusive practice and raise standards in schools.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

Permanently excluded pupils attend Learning Centres. The cost for a secondary school place is £23,556 and £24,526 for a primary school place.

We will be providing £100,000 to each of the six Local Alliance Groups in our localities. Schools will bid to fund projects that will reduce exclusions and suspensions.

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (May 2019) found that over one third of children who completed Key Stage Four in Alternative Provision go on to be not in education, employment or training (NEET).

#### **5. Environmental Implications**

N/A

#### **6. Well-being and Health Implications**

University of Exeter research conducted in 2017 and published in the journal *Psychological Medicine* found that poor mental health can lead to school exclusions, and vice versa. Excluded children can develop a range of mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.

A 2017 report by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) found that, in 2015-16, one in fifty children in the general population were recognised as having a social, emotional and mental health need. In schools for excluded pupils this rose to one in two.

#### **7. Other Implications**

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (May 2019) found of those reaching the end of Key Stage Four in 2015/16 just 7% of children who were permanently excluded and 18% of children who received multiple fixed period exclusions went on to achieve good passes in English and maths GCSEs.

The Timpson Review of School Exclusion (May 2019) also found that it is right to recognise exclusion as one indicator, among others, of a higher risk of exposure to and involvement in crime.

**8. Risk Assessment**

8.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk:

Residual Risk:

**9. Equalities Impact Assessment**

N/A

**10. Appendices**

None

**11. Background Papers**

None