

PERMANENT EXCLUSION AUDIT – ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Subject and scope of audit.

The scope of the audit covers all permanent exclusions for the Autumn term 2020 from 1 September 2020 to 31 December 2020. During that period, 24 children and young people were permanently excluded from schools in Shropshire.

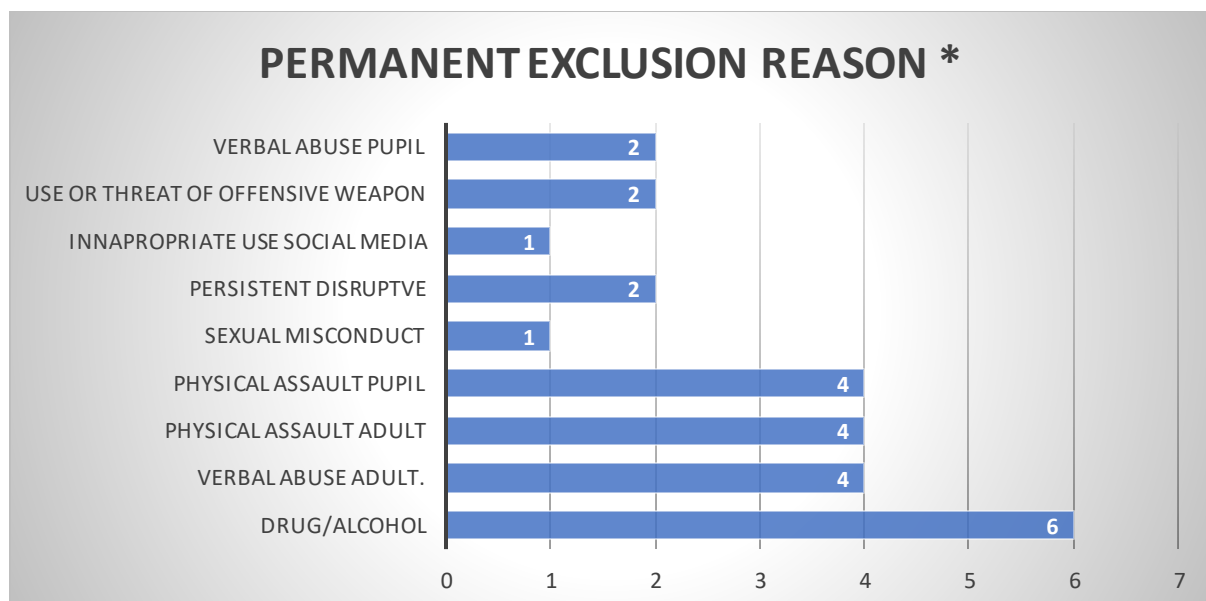
The subject of the audit is “A profile of permanently excluded pupils in Shropshire where Adverse Childhood experiences are present”

A permanent exclusion should always be a last resort and should only be taken:

1. In response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy; **and**
2. Where a pupil's behaviour means that allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

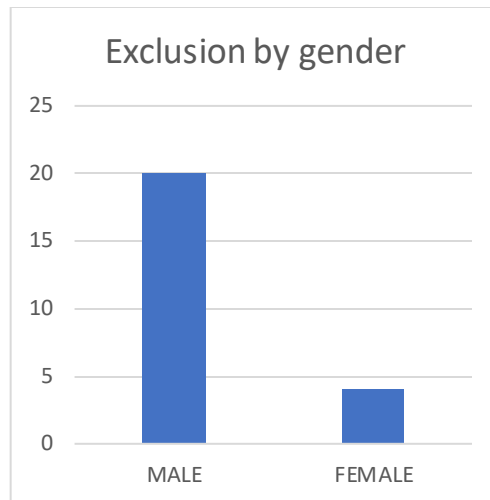
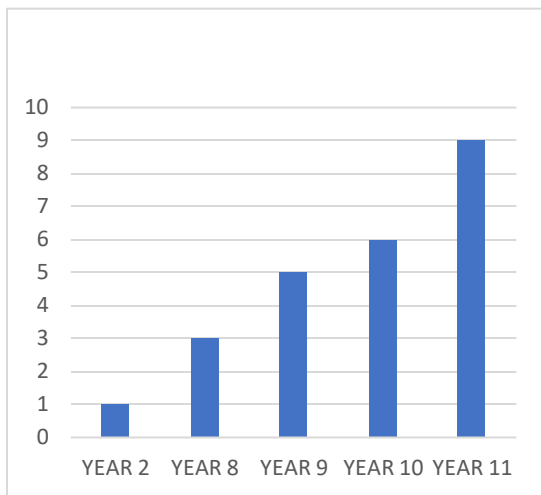
Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). For example: experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence in the home or community, having a family member attempt or die by suicide.

Reasons for permanent exclusion 1 September 2020 – 31 December 2020.



*Total permanent exclusions were 24, but two pupils were excluded for multiple reasons hence total of 26.

6 permanent exclusions during the scoping period were Drug and Alcohol related. 8 exclusions related to physical assault, 6 involved verbal abuse/threatening behaviour, 2 involved persistent disruptive behaviour, 2 related to use or threat of offensive weapon, 1 was for sexual misconduct and 1 for inappropriate use of social media.



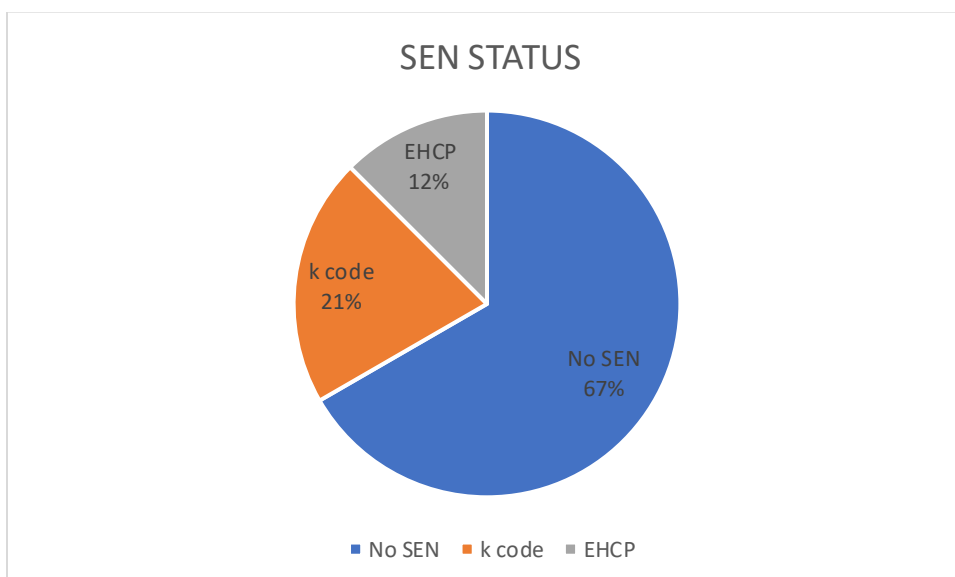
Of the 24 pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period, one was a Primary school pupil in year 2, three were in year 8, five in year 9, six in year 10 and nine in year 11.

20 of the pupils were male and 4 were female.

SEN status

Of the 24 pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period, 67% had no identified SEN, 21% were on the SEN register (K code) and 12% of pupils had an Education Health and care plan (EHCP)

A third of all Permanently excluded pupils in the scoping period were identified as having special educational needs.



The SEND Code of Practice states that:

A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

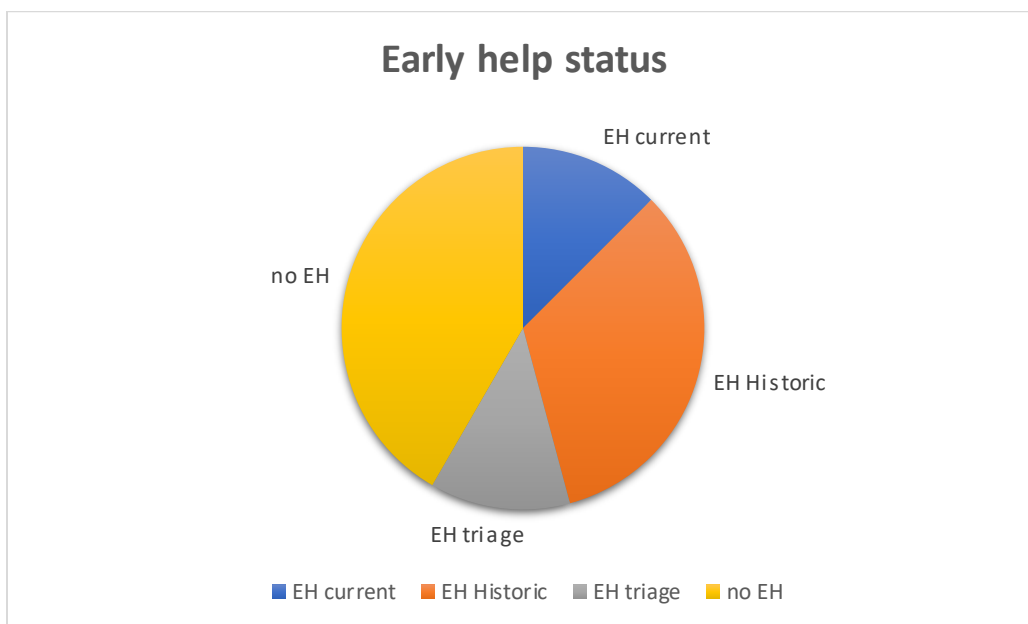
Making higher quality teaching normally available to the whole class is likely to mean that fewer pupils will require such support. Such improvements in whole-class provision tend to be more cost effective and sustainable. (SEND CoP 2015; 6.15)

“As well as having disproportionately high rates of exclusion, there are certain groups of pupils with additional needs who are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of exclusion. This includes pupils with EHC plans and looked after children. The head teacher should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any pupil with an EHC plan or a looked after child.” (DfE Statutory guidance)

Early Help

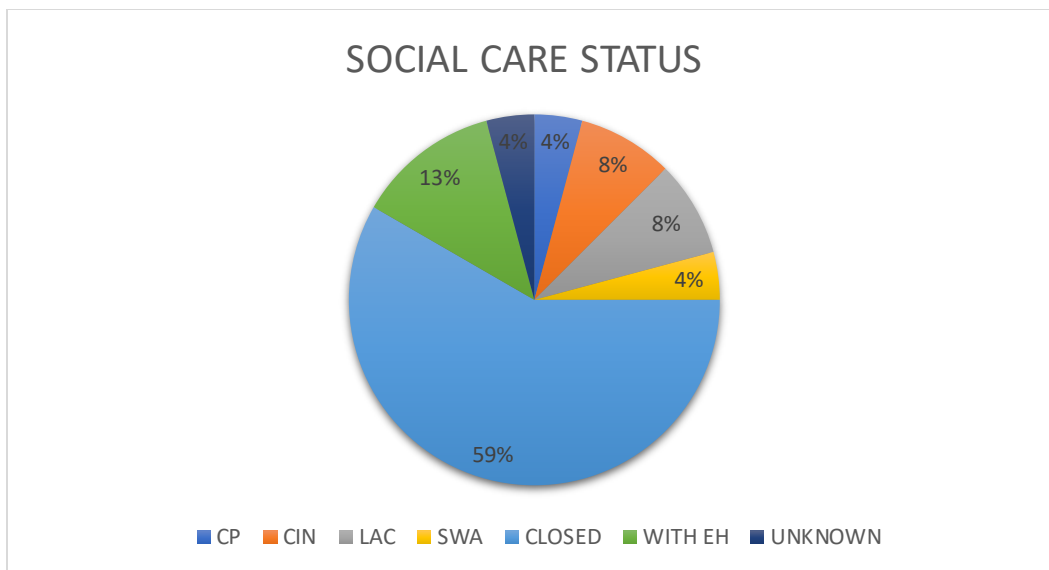
Early help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family as soon as a problem emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life, from pre-birth to adulthood, and applies to any problem or need that the family can't deal with alone.

Of the 24 pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period, 3 pupils have current Early Help involvement, 8 pupils were previously known to Early Help, three are currently being triaged within Early Help. Ten pupils were not known to Early Help which equates to 42% of pupils during the scoping period.



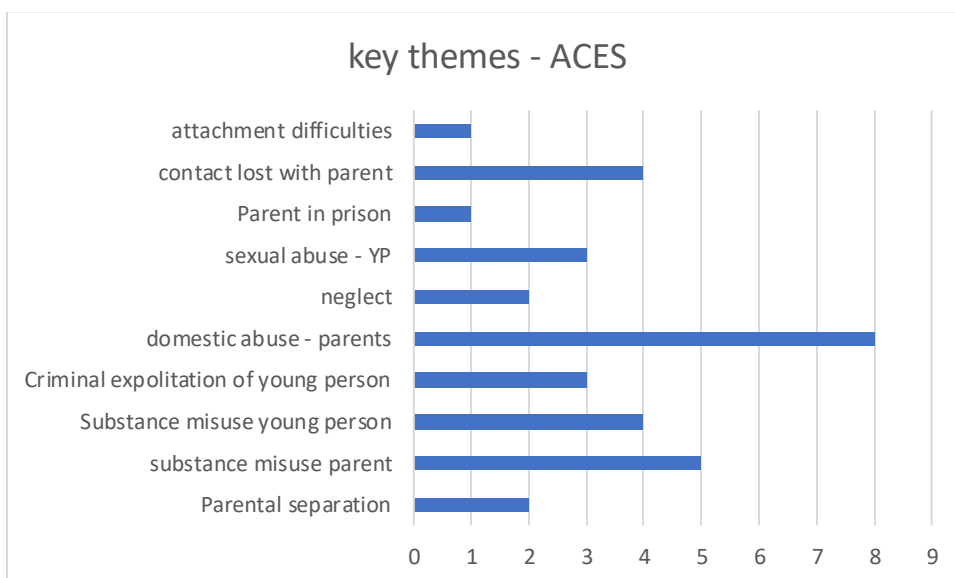
Social Care

Of the 24 pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period - 1 was on a child protection plan, 2 on a child in Need plan, 2 were looked after children, 1 was under social work assessment, 14 were closed to Social care. (Of the remaining 4 pupils, 3 have current Early Help involvement and 1 was status unknown)



“Where a school has concerns about the behaviour, or risk of exclusion, of a child with additional needs, a pupil with an EHC plan or a looked after child, it should, in partnership with others (including the local authority as necessary), consider what additional support or alternative placement may be required. This should involve assessing the suitability of provision for a pupil’s SEN. Where a pupil has an EHC plan, schools should consider requesting an early annual review or interim/emergency review.” DfE statutory guidance exclusions.

Evidence of Adverse Childhood experiences



Of the 24 pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period, there was clear evidence of multiple adverse childhood experiences present in the lives of 14 children and young people. There was evidence of at least two ACEs for all 14 children. 58% of pupils who were permanently excluded during the scoping period were impacted by ACEs

The most prevalent ACEs for children and young people was Domestic abuse (parents), substance/alcohol misuse (parent) and loss of contact with parent

Case Study

Pupil X is a year 9 male who has an EHCP. He is currently on a Child in Need plan and was permanently excluded from a specialist provision for physically assaulting a member of school staff. Pupil X now resides with his father and has a supportive and well-structured home life. Pupil X moved in with his father after child protection concerns were raised in relation to mother's alcohol abuse. Historically, pupil X witnessed domestic abuse between his parents. Pupil X has himself been involved in substance misuse. He mixes with older peers in the community and is at risk of exploitation. There is evidence that Pupil X has physically assaulted peers on numerous occasions. He has also been the victim of violence when in his local community. Pupil X has not been open to Early Help but his name is known to professionals.

Conclusion

Early intervention is clearly key to supporting vulnerable children and to avoiding a crisis situation from emerging. It is important that schools focus on prevention and early intervention as their central role within multi-agency plans in keeping children safe.

Some children, such as Children in Need, may have, or have had, complex family circumstances that result in them experiencing trauma or adversity, which can have a lasting impact. It is vital that schools try to understand the cumulative impact of being a Child in Need, develop stable and trusting relationships with the home, where possible, and crucially work with other agencies to share information and provide support. For those pupils subject of audit, 42% had no Early Help involvement.

Of the 24 pupils subject to audit, 20 had social care involvement at some point. This equates to 83%. Risk factors that increase the likelihood of a child being excluded is evidenced in this audit include: living in poverty; experiencing abuse and neglect at home; having a learning difficulty.

Audit findings would suggest that a child's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may impact on the way they cope with stresses or interactions with staff and pupils. The school itself can act as a protective environment for a young person and the denial of that setting through exclusion may induce further trauma.

Permanent exclusion potentially leads to the criminalising of a child. Once excluded, children have fewer protective factors, including access to trusted adults. Children who are excluded are at risk of disengaging from education.