

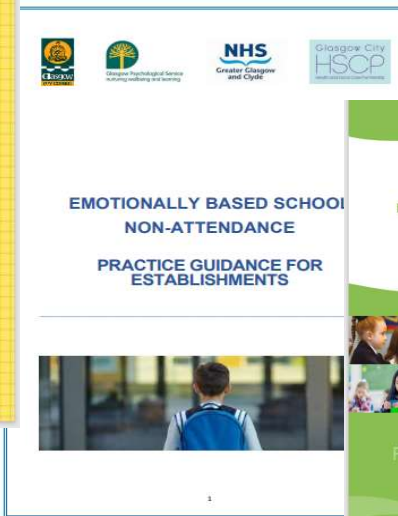
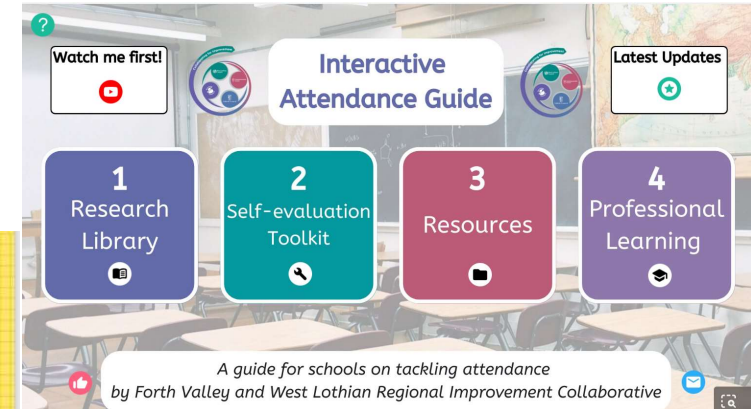
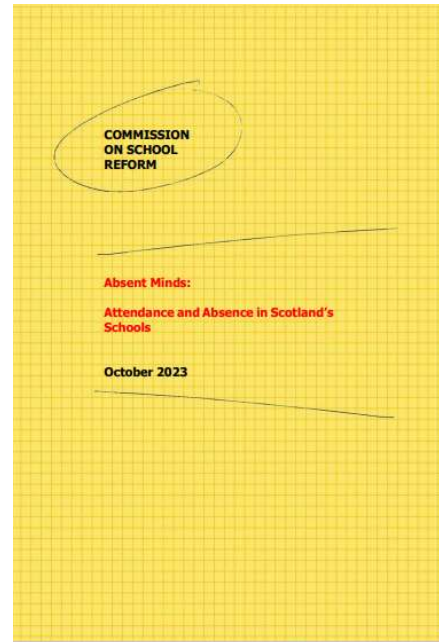
Attendance in North Ayrshire

- Gail Nowek

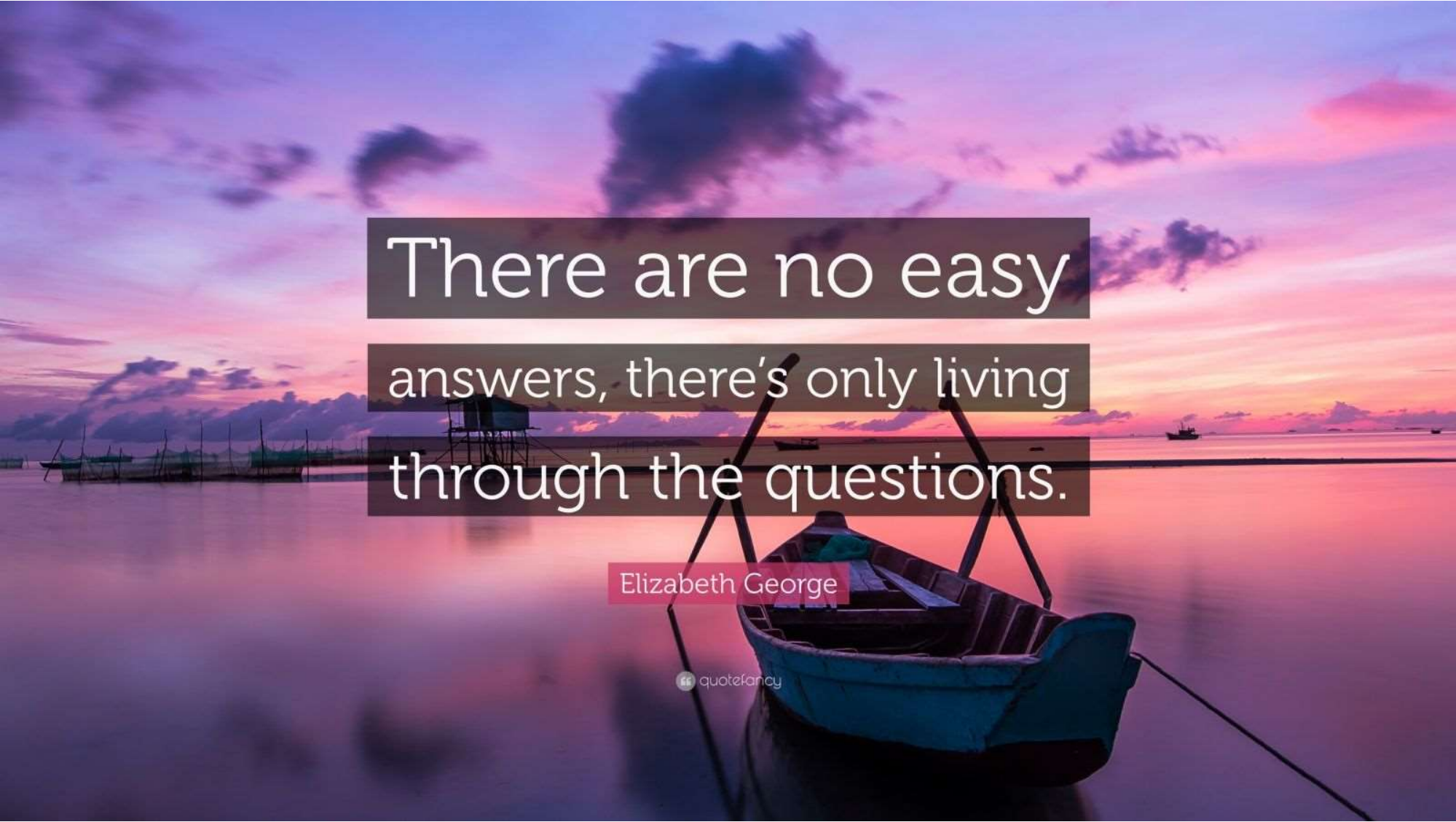


North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Air a Tuath

Delivering our services with
Focus. **Passion.** Inspiration.



- To provide some context on rationale for Attendance steering group and work undertaken to date
- To provide an opportunity to explore Seemis codes and determine some of the issues
- To share the results of staff survey and provide an opportunity to look in more detail at the challenges and supports to tackle attendance
- To explore North Ayrshire's data and determine what it tells us about the issues
- To provide some practical



There are no easy
answers, there's only living
through the questions.

Elizabeth George

quote fancy

“Attending and taking part in learning - wherever learning takes place - is fundamental to making sure that our young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.”

- Scottish Government



Why are we focusing on attendance?

National priority

Attendance rates declining

Persistent absence rates rising

Need to identify the nature/scale of the problem locally

Impact of poor attendance on a range of educational and life outcomes

Importance of attendance as a protective factor



National Guidance....

'Whilst both the causes and the impact of poor attendance are known to be complex and multifaceted, research demonstrates the potential impact that poor attendance can have. Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships; emotional and behavioural difficulties and poorer employment opportunities.

- Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1, A positive approach to the promotion and management of attendance in Scottish Schools





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In the mid 1970s persistent absence was a significant issue in Scottish schools, particularly secondary schools. Hostility to school amongst low achieving students was widespread. By 2004, indicators of pupil engagement such as truancy, staying on in school and pupil attitude scale showed that pupils valued schools more than ever before.

So what made the difference?

- A vision of a more democratic structure of schooling was realised – less selective schooling
- Improved culture and ethos – pupils given a voice, improved relationships
- Changes to courses and curriculum
- Introduction of guidance
- Abolishment of corporal punishment
- Education for citizenship

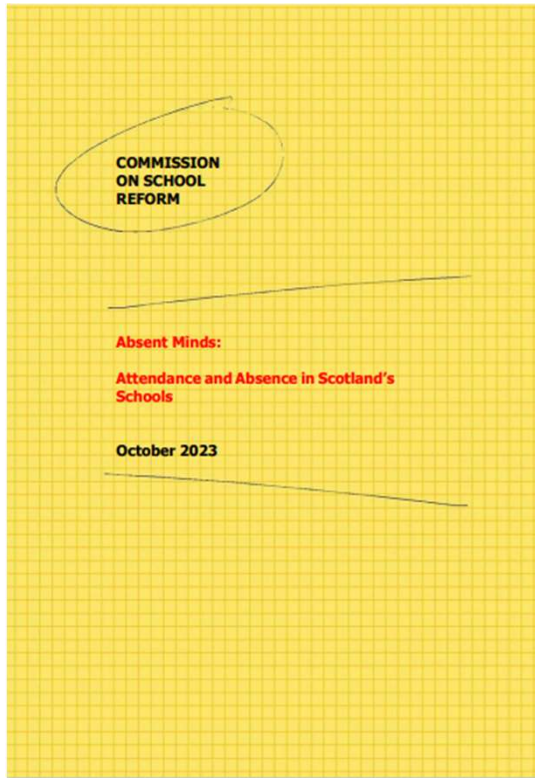


- Attendance rate is the numbers of pupils attending school at any one time, eg. 92% attendance rate
- Absence rate is the number of pupils who are not attending at any one time, e.g. 8% absence rate
- Persistent absence rate are the pupils who miss certain amounts of time in school over a period of time, e.g. pupils with attendance under 90%, under 80%
- Need to define the parameters and look at what areas we are focusing on

What's in a name?

- Truancy
- School refusal
- School phobia
- Parentally condoned absence
- Emotionally based school avoidance
 - Authorised absence
 - Unauthorised absence

What is the extent of the problem?



Year	Pupil Numbers	Attendance Rate	Under 90%	National under 90%
2018/19	18516	92.13%	4667 (25%)	141,502 (21%)
2021/22	18278	89.44%	7078 (39%)	218,787 (34%)
2022/23	18169	88.78%	7171 (39%)	210,672 (32%)

Gubbels study (2019)

Child school problems

- Negative school attitude
- Low educational achievement

Child physical and mental health

- Poor physical health
- Mental health problems (e.g., anxiety, depression)

Child behaviour problems

- Risky behaviour
- Substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, smoking)

Family circumstances

- Low SES
- Single-parent household
- Low parental control
- Low family cohesion

School factors

- Poor pupil-teacher relationship
- Low quality of school or education (e.g., low achievement standards at school)
- Negative school or class climate (e.g., low levels of school spirit)

Klein et al Scottish Study (2020)

- Determinants of school absenteeism multifaceted and complex, including family, health, psychosocial and school-related factors
- Family socioeconomic status and various SES dimensions are important predictors of school absenteeism, more so since the pandemic
- More research is needed on the pathways between family SES and school absenteeism
- Making decisions on education policy solely based on one SES measure (e.g., SIMD) may miss many children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Overall school absences are detrimental to student achievement in Scotland
- Unauthorised (e.g., truancy) and authorised absences (e.g., sickness) seem to be equally harmful •
- School absenteeism contributes to poverty-related attainment gap → Greater focus on reducing absenteeism, particularly among students from low-SES background

What are the risk factors for low attendance?

- Research demonstrates a range of child, family, peer, community and within school factors impact on low attendance
- Require a multifactorial approach to school absenteeism
- If we understand the causes, can tackle the symptoms



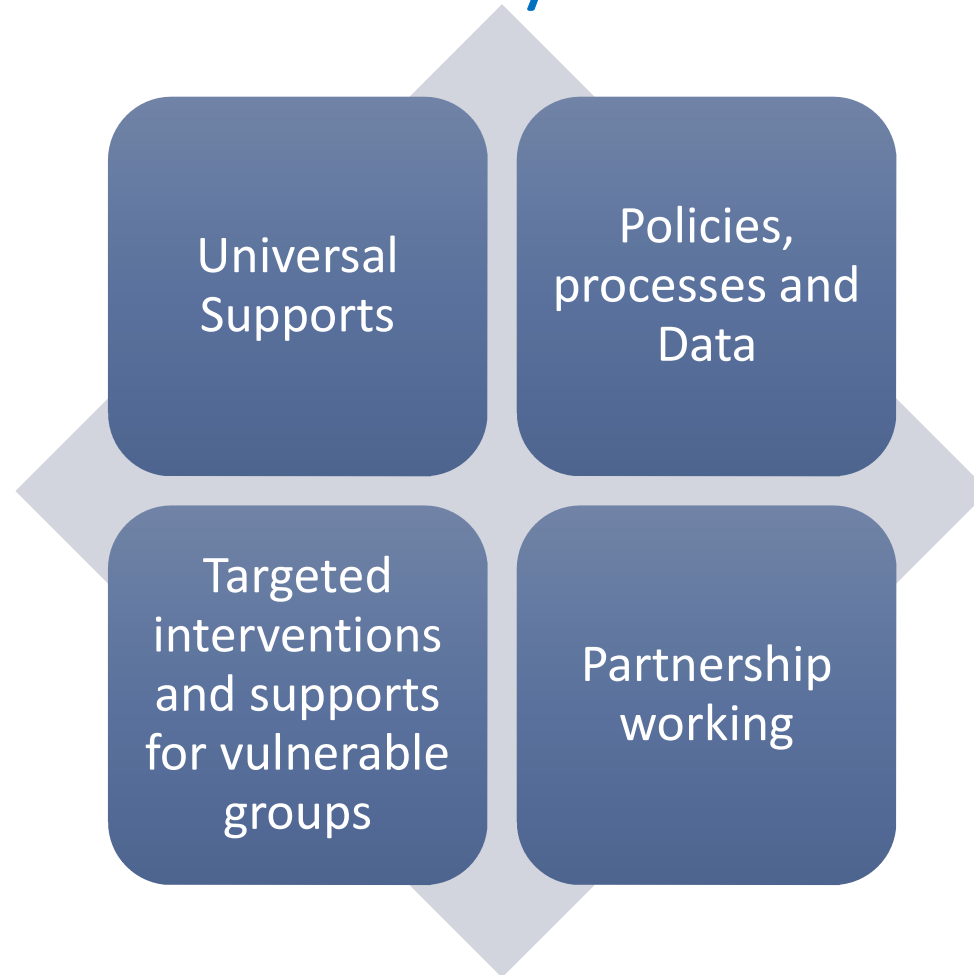
Child factors	Family factors	School factors
Negative attitude to school	Low parental/school involvement	Distance to school
Anti social behaviour	History of abuse (trauma)	Pupil/teacher relationships
Low academic self concept	Poor attachment	Negative school climate
Substance misuse	Family size	Large classes
Psychiatric problems	Parental mental/Physical problems	Nature of education provided
Depression		
Low academic achievement		

What is the accepted wisdom on tackling the issues?



- Ethos and culture, e.g. rights based, relational, anti-bullying
- Communication with parents, e.g. engaging with parental body, raising presence of attendance
- Developing systems and processes to monitor attendance
- Practical steps to remove barriers, e.g. transport, breakfast club, cost of the school day
- Working with agencies to address it
- Assessing needs and risk

Areas of focus in North Ayrshire



What have we done so far?

Key Actions to date

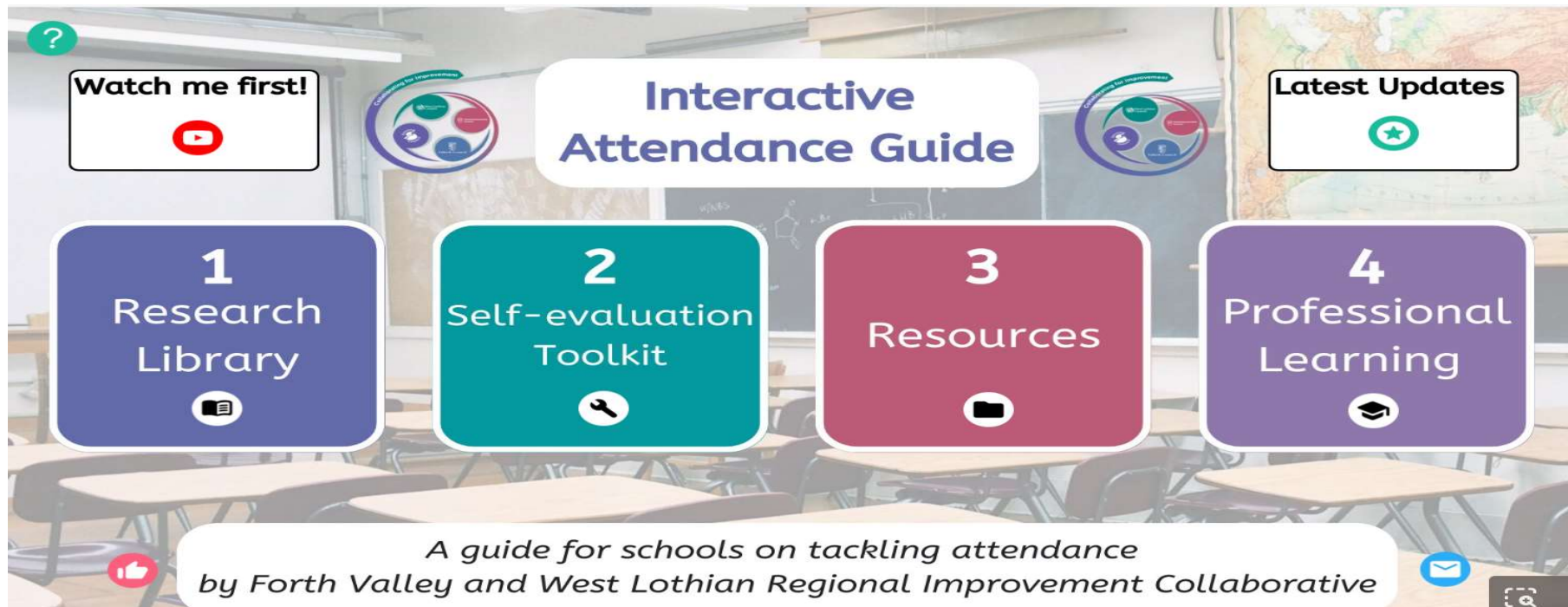
- Steering group formed
- Identified key areas of focus
- Investigated NA Data – created a new splash page
- Carried out a survey for all schools
- Gathered information from other collaboratives and LAs
- Attending national group on EBSNA
- Gathered key research papers on attendance

Next Steps

- Collaborative Day – gather more information
- Survey for partners, parents, cyp
- Refining Action plan and workstreams
- Adding to steering group membership from school and partner reps
- Updating local authority policy
- Sharing of good practice and approaches

Forth Valley

- [ThingLink](#)



Programme for the day

- Scene setting
- National picture
- Seemis Codes and Collaborative Discussion
- Using our data
- Survey results and collaborative discussion.
- Lessons from another Local Authority
- Table Top discussions

‘Sometimes the answer is in the room, sometimes it is in the room next door but the answer is often much closer than you think.’

Quick Discussion

On Yellow post its

- Note down at least one thing you would like to get out of the day

On pink post its

- Note down one question you would like answered

