Findings from Attendance Stakeholders Questionnaire

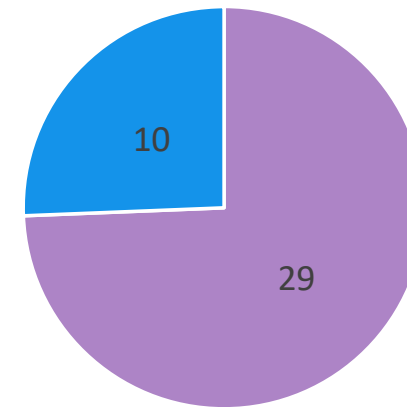- Gail Nowek
- Pamela McCallum
- Kirsty Nisbet

Overview

- Schools in NA were asked to complete a questionnaire about factors affecting pupil attendance and approaches used to support attendance in their establishment.

Establishment type

10

29

- Primary
- Secondary

39 responses:

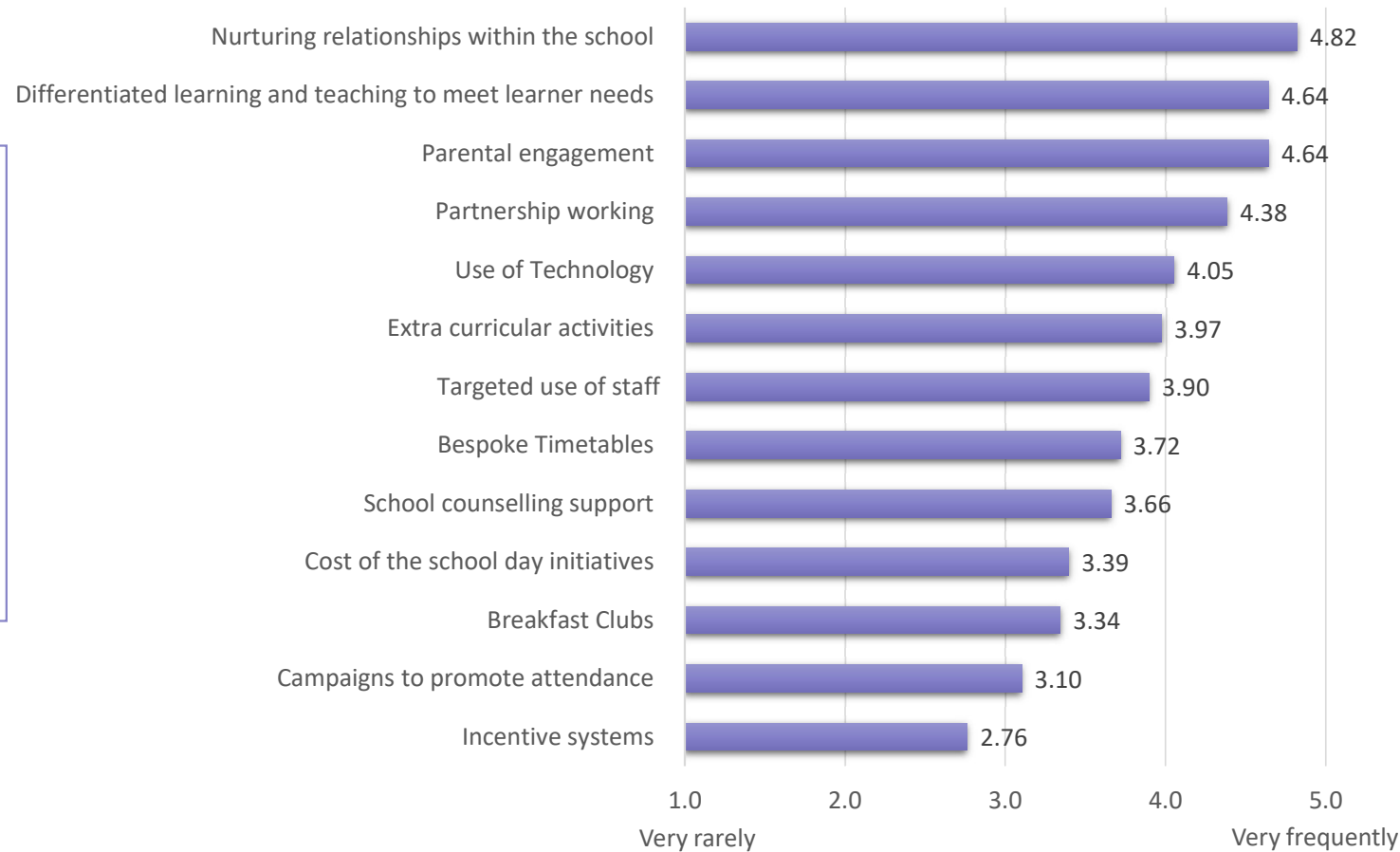- 29 from Primary schools
- 10 from Secondary schools

1. Universal Supports

Q: What approaches do schools use to support attendance?

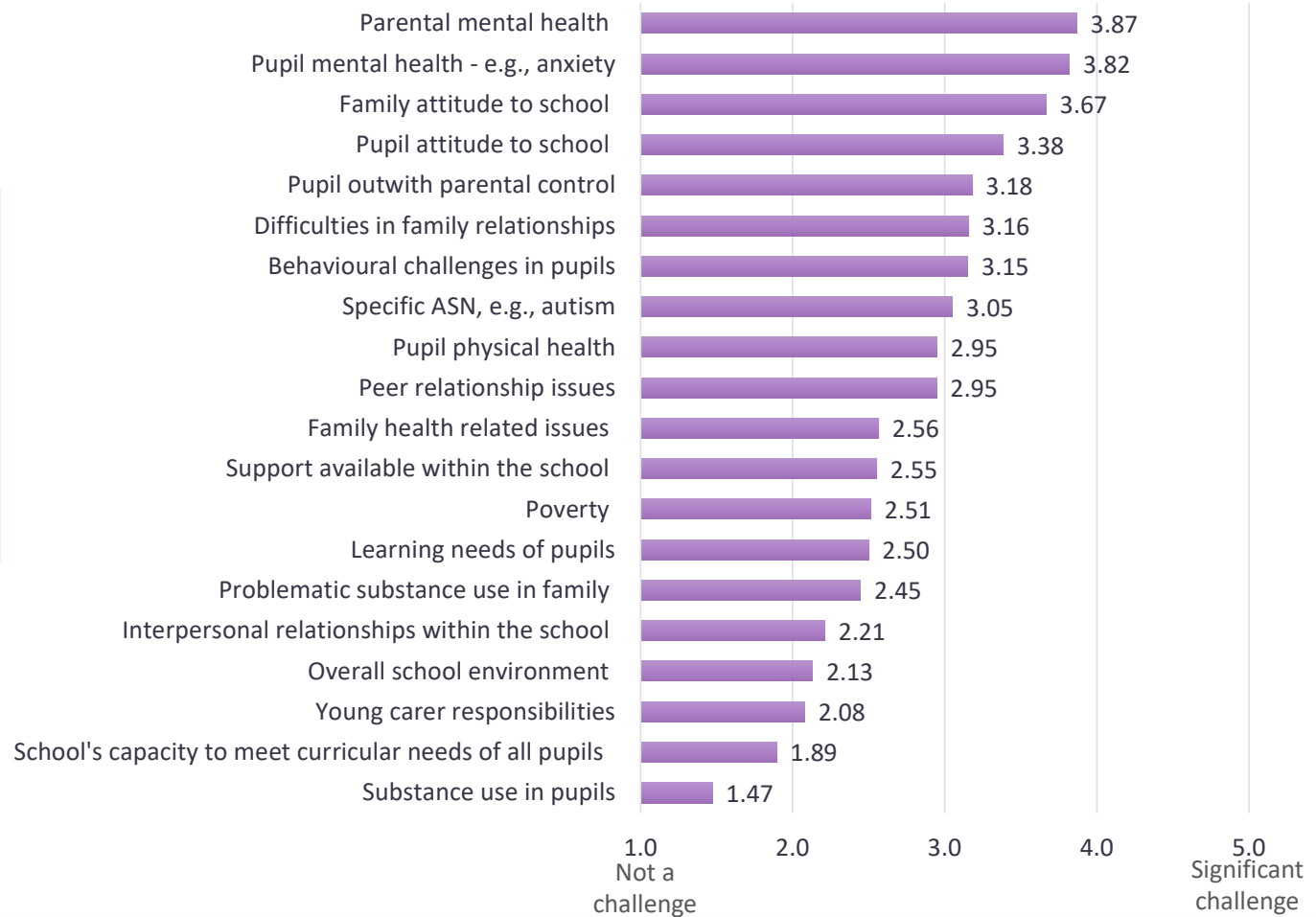The most common approaches used to support attendance were:

- **Nurturing relationships within the school**
- **Differentiated learning and teaching to meet learner needs**
- **Parental engagement**

Approach	Rating
Nurturing relationships within the school	4.82
Differentiated learning and teaching to meet learner needs	4.64
Parental engagement	4.64
Partnership working	4.38
Use of Technology	4.05
Extra curricular activities	3.97
Targeted use of staff	3.90
Bespoke Timetables	3.72
School counselling support	3.66
Cost of the school day initiatives	3.39
Breakfast Clubs	3.34
Campaigns to promote attendance	3.10
Incentive systems	2.76

Scale: 1.0 Very rarely — 5.0 Very frequently

Q: What are the challenges in relation to pupil attendance?

The most common challenges experienced in relation to pupil attendance were:

- **Parental mental health**
- **Pupil mental health (e.g., anxiety)**
- **Family attitude to school**

Challenge	Score
Parental mental health	3.87
Pupil mental health - e.g., anxiety	3.82
Family attitude to school	3.67
Pupil attitude to school	3.38
Pupil outwith parental control	3.18
Difficulties in family relationships	3.16
Behavioural challenges in pupils	3.15
Specific ASN, e.g., autism	3.05
Pupil physical health	2.95
Peer relationship issues	2.95
Family health related issues	2.56
Support available within the school	2.55
Poverty	2.51
Learning needs of pupils	2.50
Problematic substance use in family	2.45
Interpersonal relationships within the school	2.21
Overall school environment	2.13
Young carer responsibilities	2.08
School's capacity to meet curricular needs of all pupils	1.89
Substance use in pupils	1.47

1.0 Not a challenge — 5.0 Significant challenge

2. Processes, policies and data

Q: What aspects of the NAC Attendance Policy do schools find helpful?

Aspects of the NAC attendance policy that were most helpful:

- Maintenance of School Registers
- Criteria for Attendance
- Criteria for Absence

Standard Circular A6

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EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

ATTENDANCE IN NORTH AYRSHIRE EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Reference: TMcI/ FW/ JN
Date of Issue: February 2018

Aspect	Value
Maintenance of School Registers	27
Criteria for Attendance	23
Criteria for Absence	21
Exemption from Attendance	10
Non-Appearance of Children at ...	11
Letter templates	20
Removing the barriers to school...	15
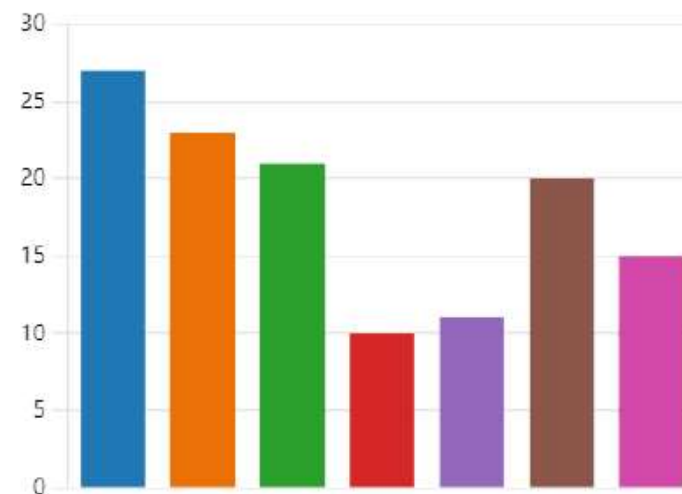
Q: What aspects of the NAC Attendance Policy could be improved?

Standard Circular A6

North Ayrshire Council
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EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

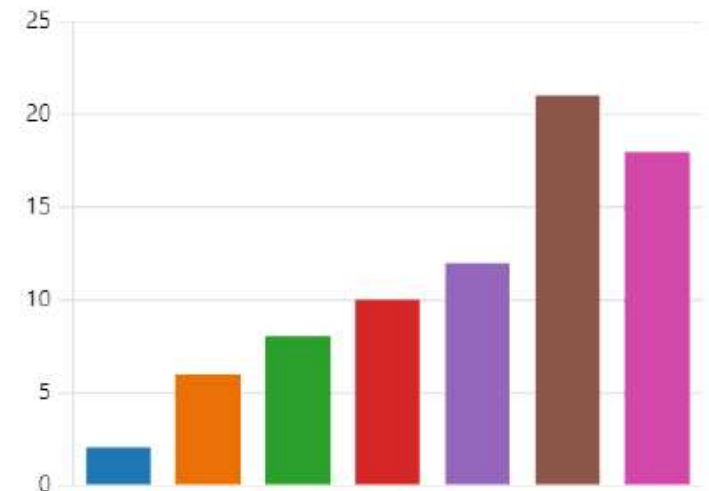ATTENDANCE IN NORTH AYRSHIRE EDUCATIONAL
ESTABLISHMENTS

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Reference: TMcI/ FW/ JN
Date of Issue: February 2018

Aspects of the NAC attendance policy that respondents most thought could be improved:
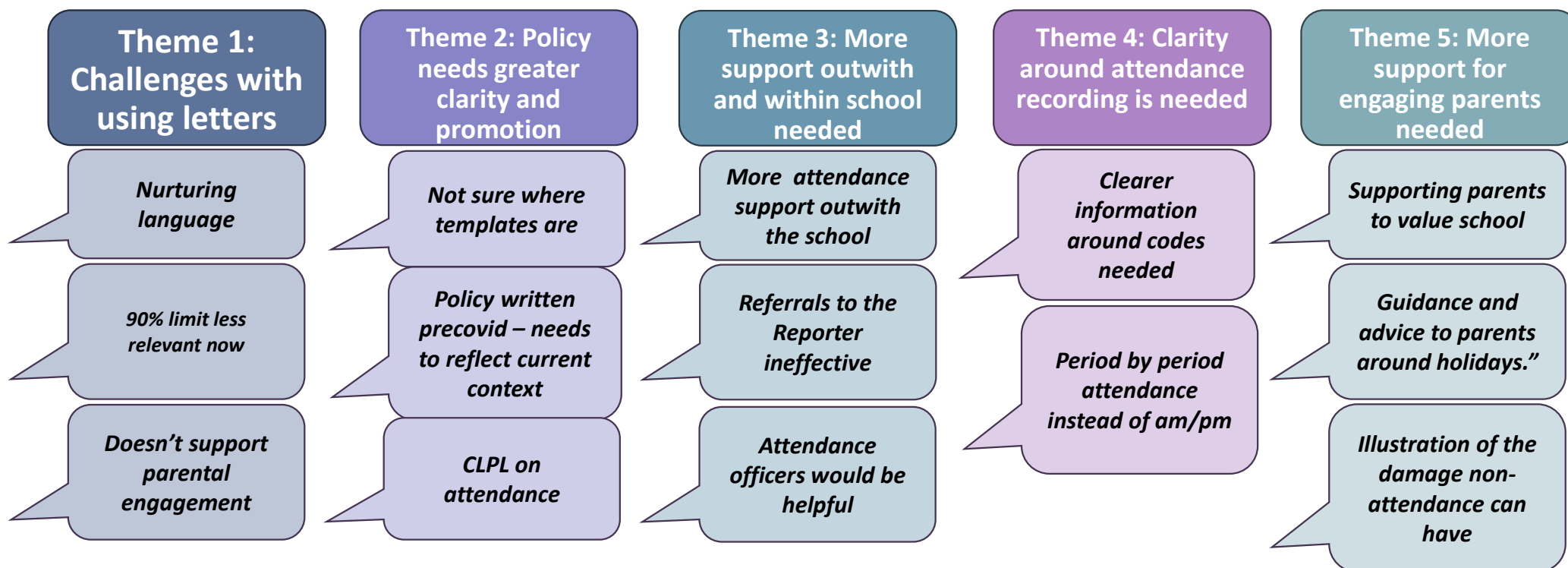
- Letter templates
- Removing the barriers to school attendance - support and guidance for schools
- Non-Appearance of Children at School

Maintenance of School Registers	2
Criteria for Attendance	6
Criteria for Absence	8
Exemption from Attendance	10
Non-Appearance of Children at …	12
Letter templates	21
Removing the barriers to school…	18

Q: What aspects of the NAC Attendance Policy could be improved? (cont.)

Examples

Theme 1: Challenges with using letters	Theme 2: Policy needs greater clarity and promotion	Theme 3: More support outwith and within school needed	Theme 4: Clarity around attendance recording is needed	Theme 5: More support for engaging parents needed
Nurturing language	Not sure where templates are	More attendance support outwith the school	Clearer information around codes needed	Supporting parents to value school
90% limit less relevant now	Policy written precovid – needs to reflect current context	Referrals to the Reporter ineffective	Period by period attendance instead of am/pm	Guidance and advice to parents around holidays."
Doesn't support parental engagement	CLPL on attendance	Attendance officers would be helpful		Illustration of the damage non-attendance can have

Discussion

Spend some time in your groups looking at the letters in front of you and use the Jamboard to record any feedback on the following:

- Do you have any feedback on the content of the letters?

- What could improve these letters?

- Any other comments?

Q: Are there any challenges in using SEEMIS codes?

No challenges: Almost half of respondents (14/31) experienced no challenges using the codes

Challenges reported by other respondents:

Theme 1: Codes do not reflect needs of all pupils	Theme 2: Inconsistency and lack of clarity of codes
• TBC used as a catch all • SEL should include mental health/anxiety • Part time attenders – too broad, needs more nuance (sometimes included on pastoral notes)	• Open to interpretation • Inconsistent use across secondaries • Lots of different codes is confusing

Examples

Q: Are there any specific approaches that you use to enhance parental communication?

Examples

Theme 1: Promoting importance of attendance

Regular newsletters /leaflets to highlight attendance and late coming and positive news

At parents events, e.g. Area inclusion workers attend and reinforce

Theme 2: Specific communication for low attendance

Phone calls/ Emails to families at key trigger points . Prior to letters being sent

Text messages /online system, e.g able to message school via Xpressionss to break down barriers

Letters to demonstrate what the tables mean in terms of average days missed

Theme 3: Regular, clear communication and building relationships with families

Meeting parents – SLT and area inclusion workers visit and collaborate on strategies

Understanding families is key.

Regularly offering support to parent/family/pupils

Effective use of the translation services

Q: What are your processes for managing late-coming?

Examples

Theme 1: Communicating and collaborating with parents

- *Calling parents to discuss*
- *Issuing letters and supporting with AIW*
- *Involving transport hub is appropriate*

Theme 2: Recording and monitoring

- *Late coming is recorded at main office*
- *Class teachers monitor and alert SLT*

Theme 3: Making late-comers welcome

- *Make latecomers feel welcome*
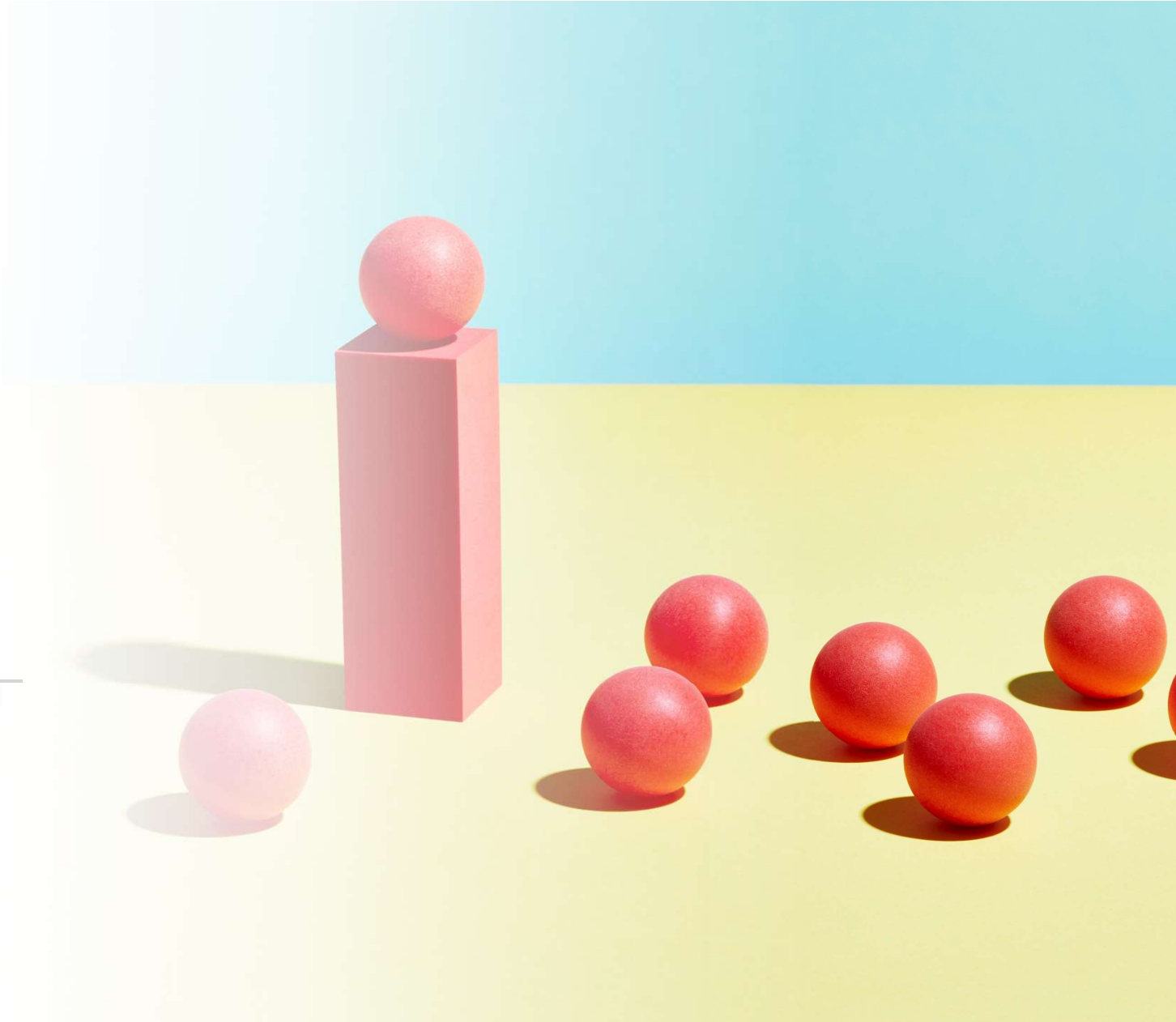- *Welcome committee at the main door*

Theme 4: Use of breakfast clubs

- *Breakfast club each morning toast in the playground.*
- *Use of breakfast club for parents*

Theme 5: rewards or consequences

- *Stickers and rewards for punctuality*
- *Use of detentions for lateness/absences*

# 3. Targeted intervention and supports for vulnerable groups

Q: What targeted supports do schools use to support more vulnerable children with attendance?

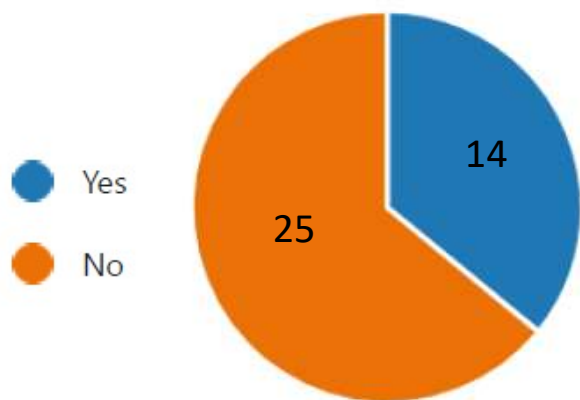The most common targeted supports schools use are:

- Use of Area Inclusion Worker
- Targeted support groups for specific pupils
- LIAM

Support	Value
Use of Area Inclusion Worker	33
Specific parental engagement f...	27
Targeted support groups for spe...	31
Behavioural interventions and s...	29
Part time timetables	28
Blended and bespoke learning i...	20
Mentoring	13
LIAM	31
Project Restore	6
School nurse	28
Educational Psychologist	26
School counsellor	22
Campus police officer	14
Other	9
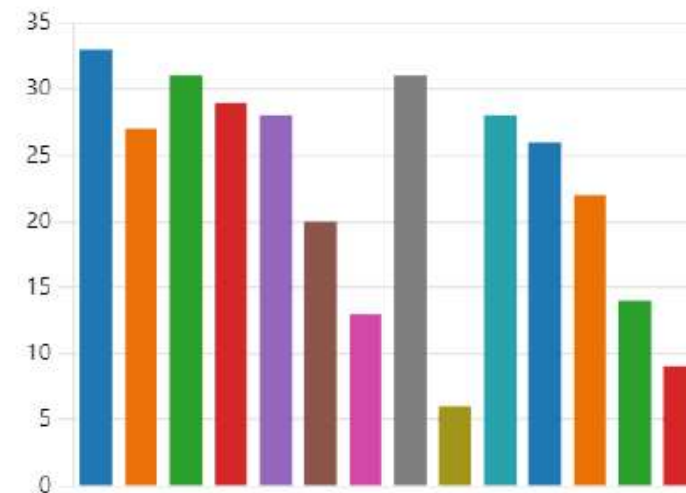
Q: Do schools use PEF funding to target attendance? How do they use it?

Schools that use PEF funding to target attendance

- Yes: 14
- No: 25

How is PEF funding used?

Theme 1: Funding specific staff roles

- *Nurture staff*
- *2 PT Inclusion* to oversee online and hybrid curriculum model.
- *EYP or CA* to support soft start
- " *Admin support* to work specifically on attendance."
- *Youth Worker* specifically to work with a targeted caseload of pupils (3 per year group)

Theme 2: Funding specific initiatives

- *PEF funding is used to support our SSR resource to support attendance.*
- *Outdoor learning.*
- *Employ 4 staff for Breakfast Club*

Q: Are there any additional supports schools that you think could help vulnerable groups of children attend school?

Theme 1: Adapted curriculum

Online learning

Other adaptations

Examples

Virtual offering across NAC

One to one teaching support from specialists

A central online offer of education.

Part time timetables – in exceptional circumstances

Need to be aware that authority wide virtual school could reduce attendance

Outdoor curriculum.

Theme 2: Extra Time and specific roles to support non-attendance

Dedicated time to manage those not attending.

Further staff support to visit homes

Access to the family well-being team.

Theme 3: Better mental health support

Counselling available from P1.

Better mental health support for those with anxiety

Theme 4: Improved links and continuation of external services

Improved links and response from Children's Reporter

Continuation of Exhange

Continuation of Aberlour

Theme 5: More support for parents

Breakfast Club which includes support for parents

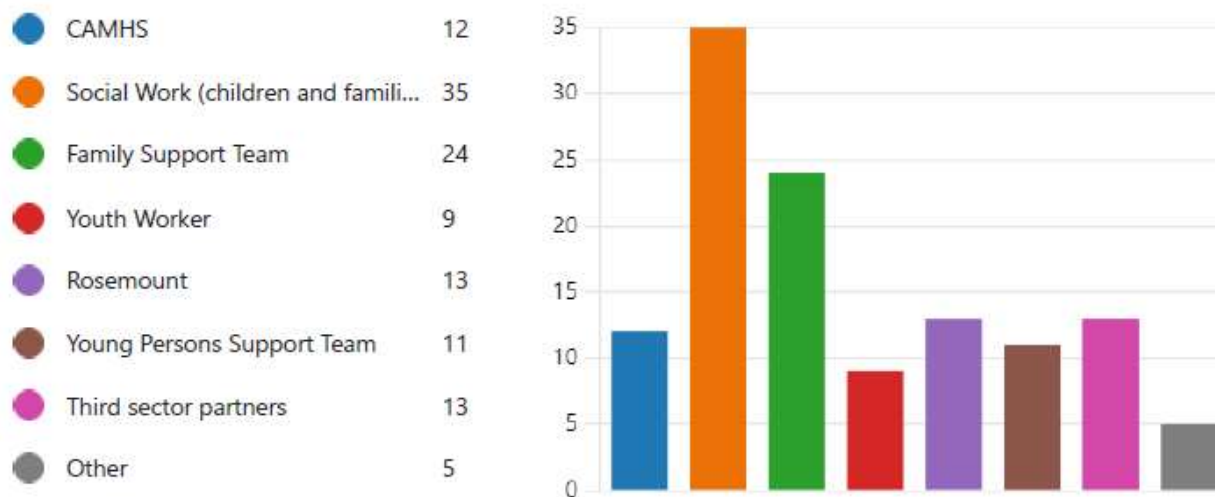More outreach to work with parents and carers.

4. Working with partners

Q: What partners do schools work with to help promote attendance?

The most common partners schools work with to help promote attendance are:
- Social Work
- Family support Team

● CAMHS	12	
● Social Work (children and famili...	35	
● Family Support Team	24	
● Youth Worker	9	
● Rosemount	13	
● Young Persons Support Team	11	
● Third sector partners	13	
● Other	5	

Q: What aspects do you find most helpful when working with partners to promote attendance?

Examples

Theme 1: Helping to support families

- *Targeted personnel who have the time and capacity to work with children and families*
- *Need partners to help engage with families at home*
- *Partners can be flexible in supporting at different times*
- *Family Centred Wellbeing Team helpful in supporting family around routines, etc.*
- *Partners can tap into additional resources and community based support when needed*

Theme 2: Sharing ideas and working in partnership

- *Helpful to share ideas*
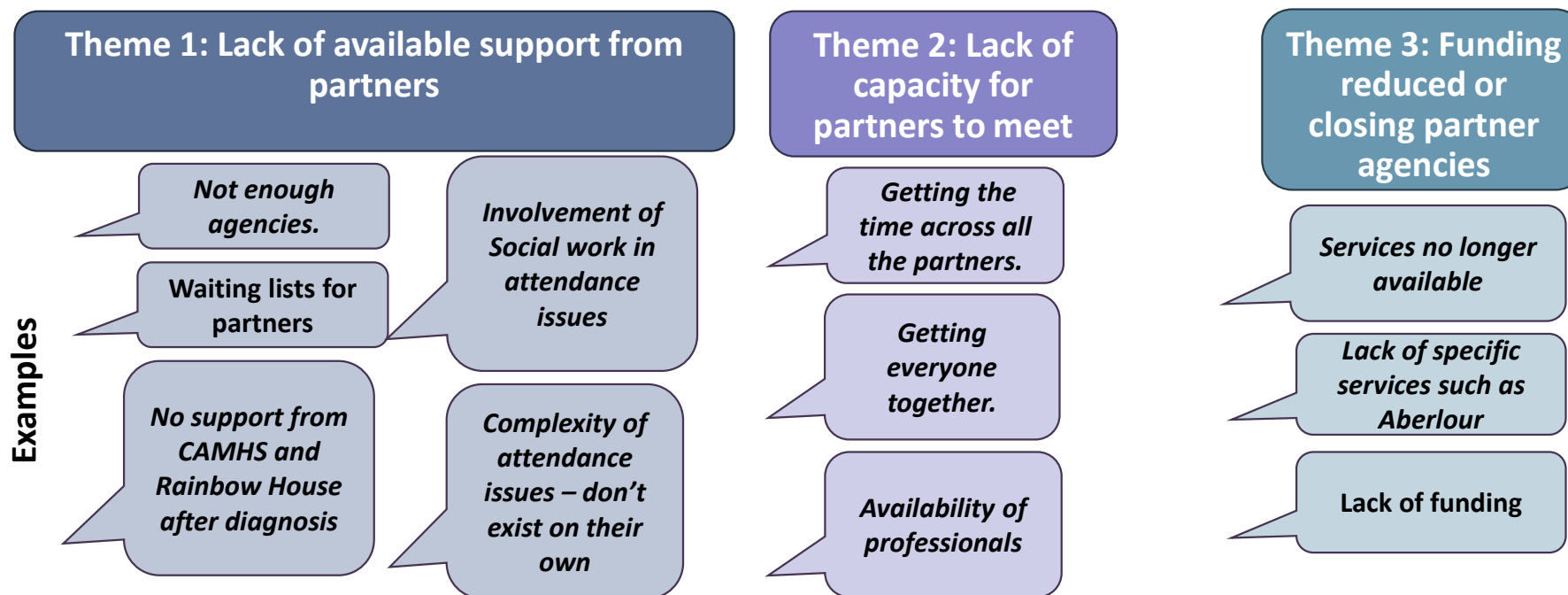- *Connected working, and shared conversations.*
- *Aberlour work in partnership to find solutions and strategies to help families.*

Theme 3: Providing fuller picture of family situation

- *Provides deeper understanding of family issues*
- *Can give a truer picture*

Q: What are the challenges in working with partners to promote attendance?

Examples

Theme 1: Lack of available support from partners

- Not enough agencies.
- Waiting lists for partners
- Involvement of Social work in attendance issues
- No support from CAMHS and Rainbow House after diagnosis
- Complexity of attendance issues – don't exist on their own

Theme 2: Lack of capacity for partners to meet

- Getting the time across all the partners.
- Getting everyone together.
- Availability of professionals

Theme 3: Funding reduced or closing partner agencies

- Services no longer available
- Lack of specific services such as Aberlour
- Lack of funding

4. What Young People told Us

Youth Cabinet – What the Young People told us

We asked -

Low school attendance is a significant concern. Some people say the reasons for this are rising anxiety levels due to the pandemic. What do you think are the reasons for the drop in attendance?

Main Themes from Responses –

Mental Health/Anxiety – 13 Responses
Bullying – 10 Responses
Issues with Curriculum – 5 Responses

Some people don't think that the education aligns with their career goals

Don't shame people for low attendance, instead find ways to help people get back to school

Supporting Attendance – Collaborative Activity

Link: Supporting attendance in North Ayrshire (padlet.com)