

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE- REGIONAL INEQUALITIES AND APPROACHES

GM Policy Hub Seminar

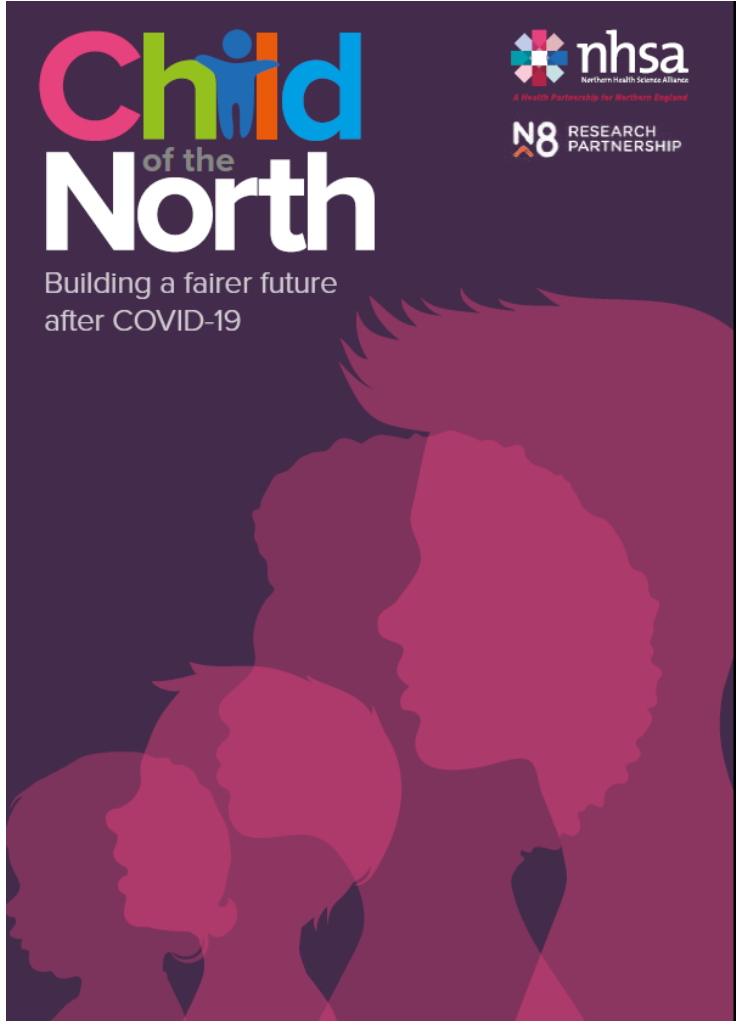
Caroline Bond

Matthew Fletcher



MANCHESTER  
1824

 **WIRRAL**



A country that works for all  
children and young people

## An evidence-based plan for improving school attendance

Child  
of the  
North

N8 RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIP

HEALTH  
EQUITY  
NORTH



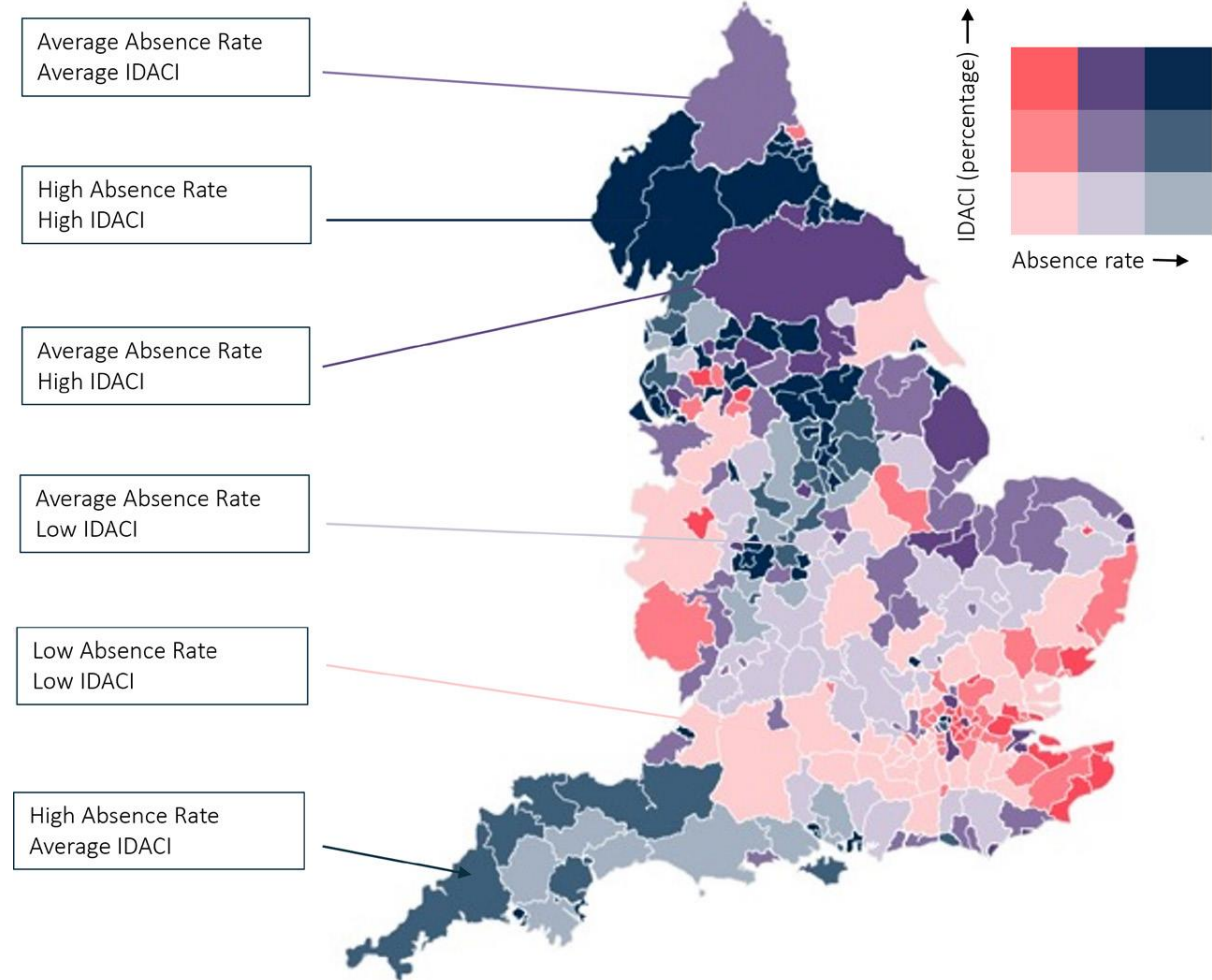
Bond, C., Munford, L., Birks, D., Shobande, O., Denny, S., Hatton-Corcoran, S., Qualter, P., Wood, M. L., et al (2024).

# Key attendance statistics: The North/South divide

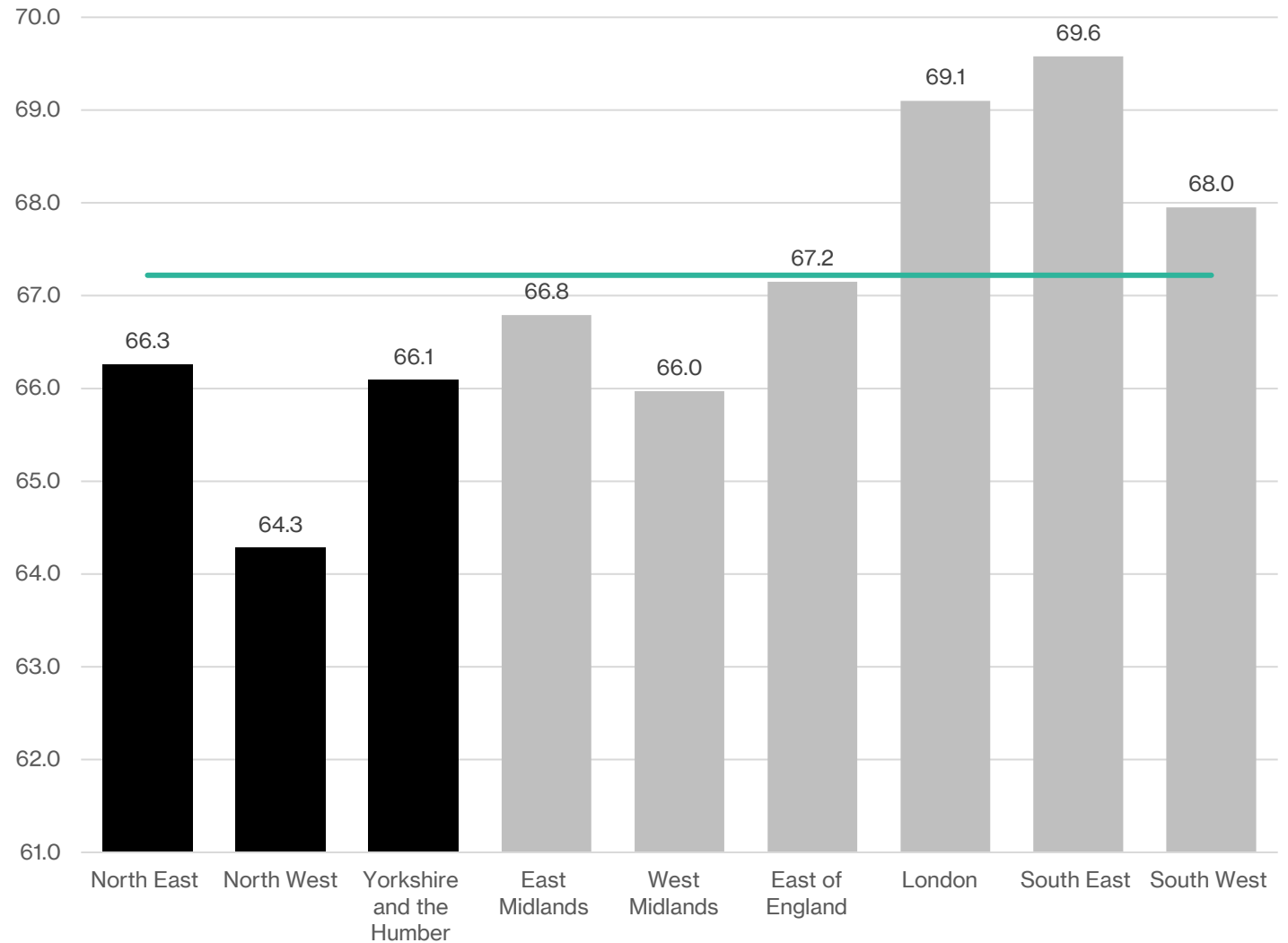


# Key attendance statistics: Is school absence linked to Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

Higher levels of IDACI indicate greater income deprivation which is associated with worse outcomes. Similarly, higher absences reflect greater absenteeism, also associated with worse outcomes.

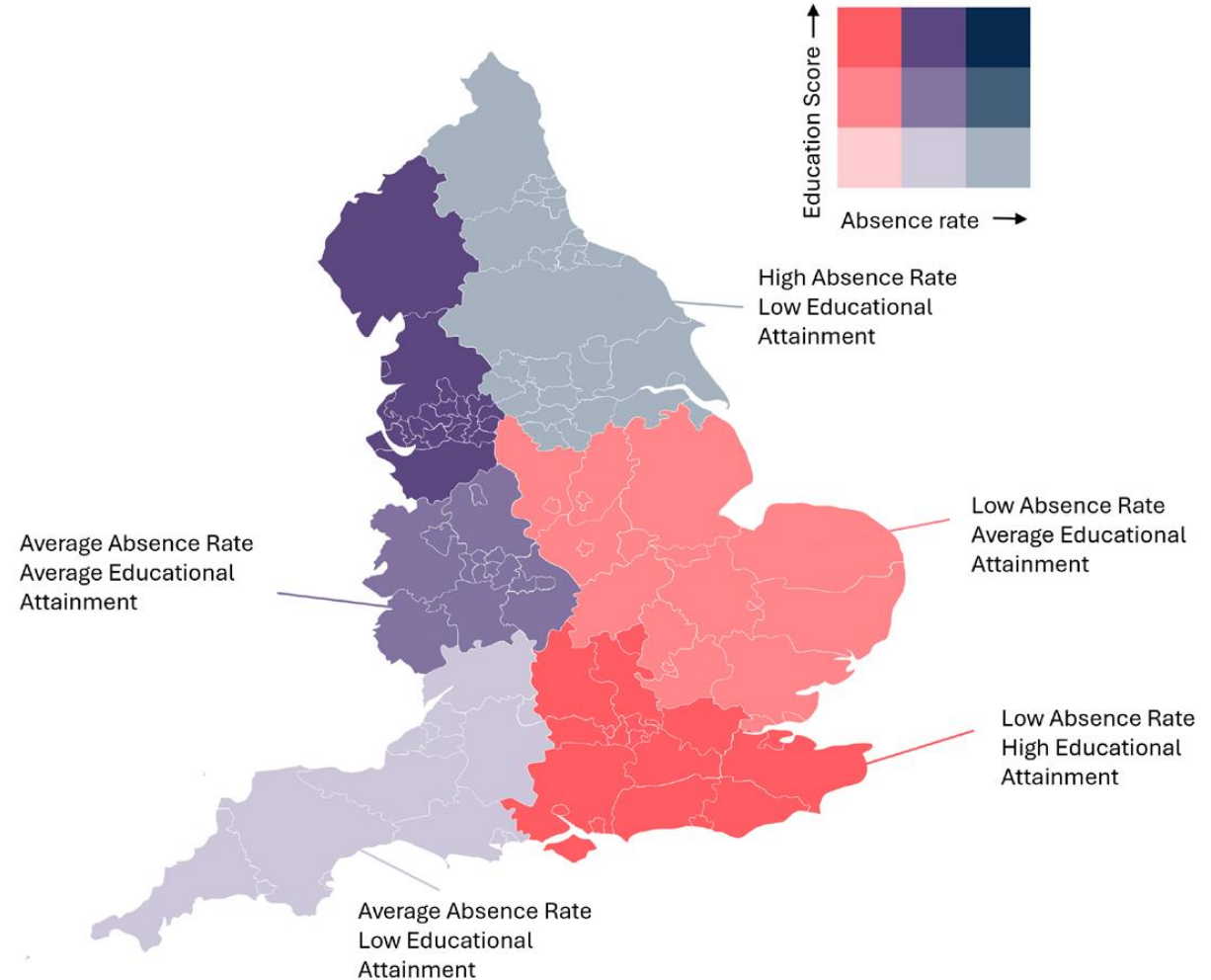


# Key attendance statistics: Is school absence related to School-Readiness?



# Key attendance statistics: Consequences of Persistent absence

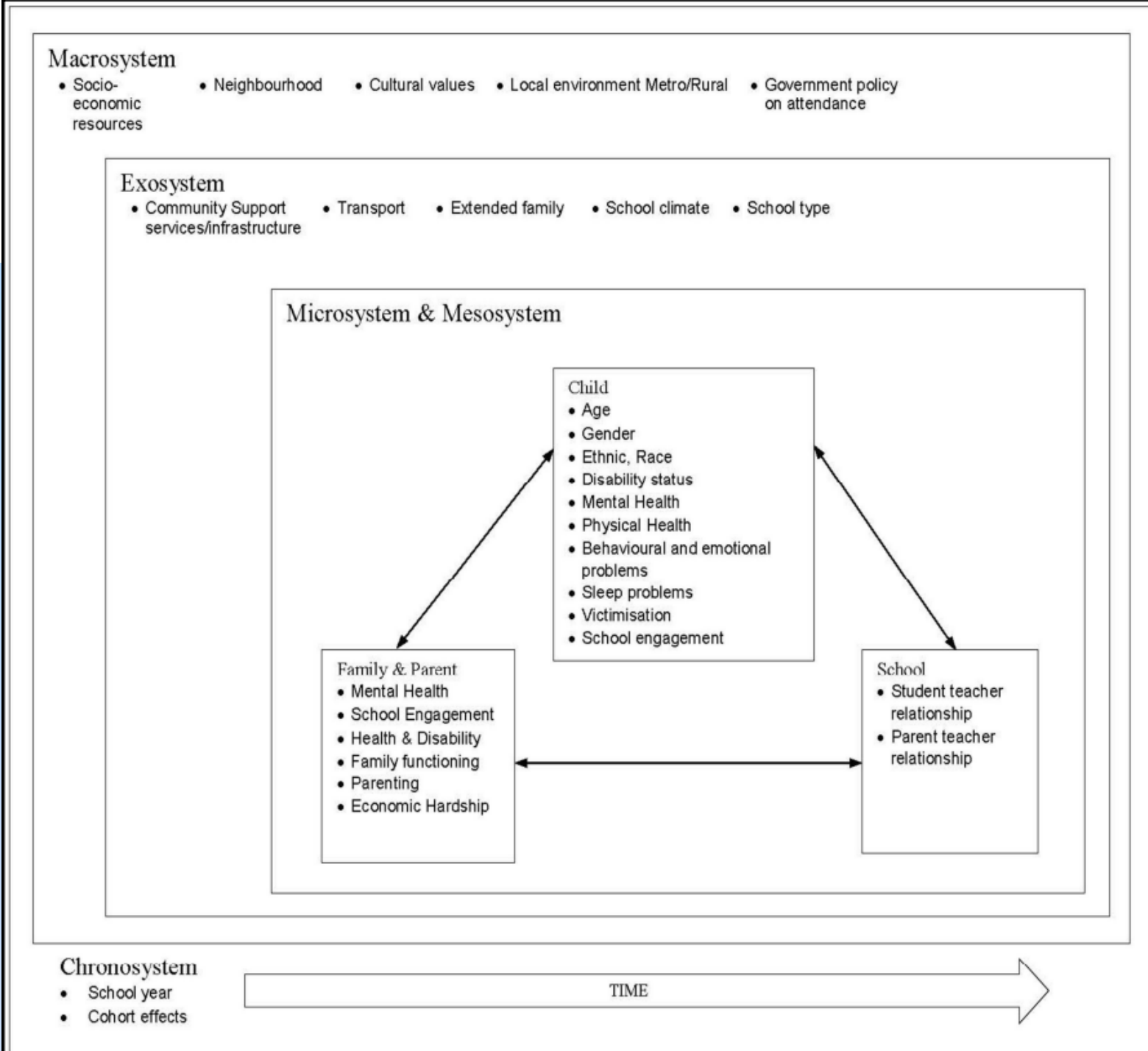
Higher education scores indicate better academic outcomes, which are associated with more positive outcomes. Similarly, lower absence rates reflect better attendance, which is also linked to better outcomes.



# The Kids and Teens at School (KiTeS) Framework

An Inclusive Bioecological Systems Approach to Understanding School Absenteeism and School Attendance Problems

Melvin et al., 2019, Frontiers in Education

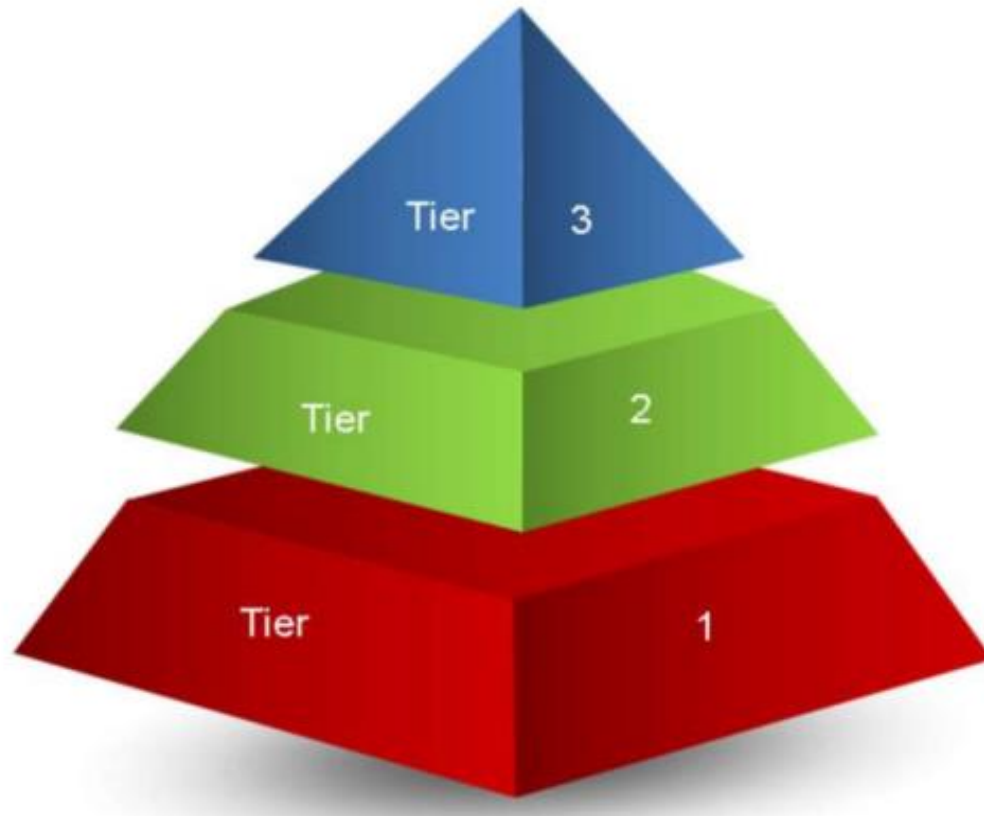


School Attendance or Absence

Truancy, school avoidance, school withdrawal, school exclusion

# Tiered approaches to intervention in school

Multiple/multi component interventions most impactful (EEF, 2022)



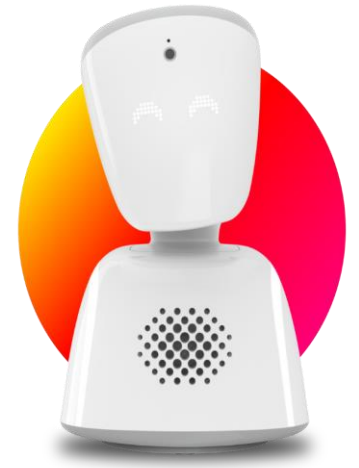
Kearney & Graczyk (2020)

*“There exists a need to divert attention from the characteristics of individuals and truancy to study what success in school requires, drawing out children’s strengths rather than weaknesses; success stems from a positive school climate, bonding with adults, and the development of core competencies”.*

Ekstrand (2015; 473)



# NW commissioned attendance research



- Collaborative development of a LA strategy to address emotionally based school avoidance (Boaler & Bond, 2024; Corcoran et al., 2023).
- Implementation of LA attendance strategies in different types of schools: primary, secondary (Ward & Kelly, 2024) and SEMH specialist
- One high school's approach to supporting transition for pupils at risk of becoming CME in an area of high levels of deprivation
- Understanding the experiences of autistic girls who returned to mainstream secondary school successfully (O'Hagan et al., 2022); views of autistic YP in an alternative provision (Neilson & Bond, 2023); supporting parents of autistic YP with school attendance difficulties
- How schools use AV1 robots to support attendance of pupils with physical and mental health needs (Fletcher et al., 2023)
- Alternative models for supporting pupils with severe attendance difficulties

# A Local Authority Approach



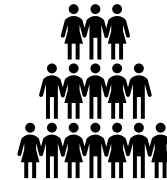
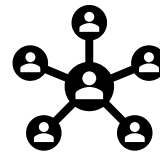
***“To educate and empower parents/carers and professionals around emotional barriers to school attendance (EBSA) to improve the emotional well-being of children, young people and their families.”***

# A Local Authority Approach

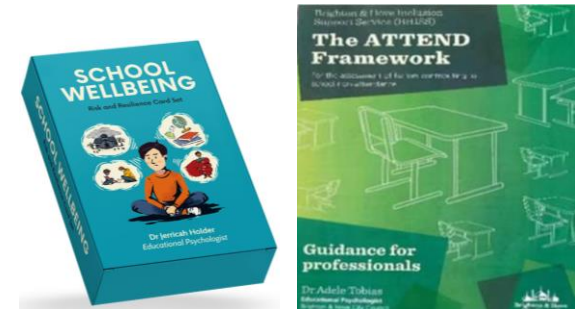


## Training Offer

- 94% of schools have attended
- Over 38 different LA Teams trained
- 336 professionals trained



- £50 of commercial resources provided to each setting and LA team



- Bank of supporting resources additionally shared e.g., support plan templates, strategies etc.

# A Local Authority Approach

## Additional Support



- Parent/Carer EBSA Training
- EBSA School Network sessions
- EP drop-ins
- Link EP role



# A Local Authority Approach

## Additional Support-AV1



# A Local Authority Approach

## Additional Support-AV1



AV1  
Promotes  
Engagement

- CYP uses the AV1 to observe lessons
- CYP uses the AV1 to build relationships with staff and peers

AV1  
Promotes  
Routine

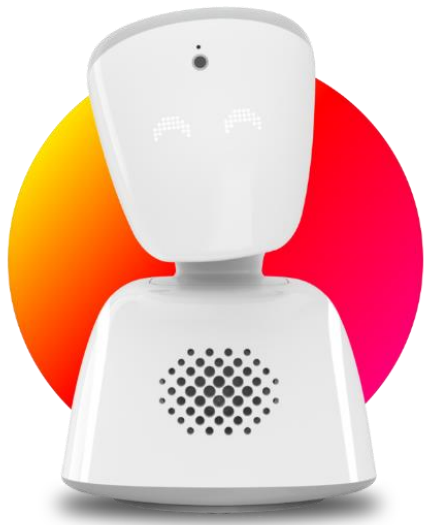
- CYP uses the AV1 regularly and consistency as part of a school routine
- CYP encouraged to interact more via the AV1 e.g., speaking/digital expressions
- Combination of learning and social experiences

AV1 Develops  
Confidence &  
Resilience

- As initial school-anxiety reduces, the CYP may be encouraged to try new experiences e.g., visit school
- CYP engages with a hybrid timetable e.g., combination of Av1 and in-person sessions

AV1  
Withdrawal

- CYP encouraged to access more in-person sessions
- AV1 lessons slowly reduced over time
- AV1 eventually withdrawn



# A Local Authority Approach



- Pilot Project Feedback-see Child of the North Report
- Recent Case Studies (2025)
  - Mainstream High School  
“Recently the student has started coming into school to take part in a lesson via the AV1. The student now feels confident enough to speak directly with teachers using the AV1”
  - Extra Curricular Opportunities

## Horse & Robot - Riding Through Barriers in Wirral

For children unable to attend school due to illness or anxiety, AV1 is more than just an educational tool — it's a bridge.



Rachael Taylor  
March 18, 2025





# A Local Authority Approach



## Summary of Lessons Learnt:

- Multi-agency working and collaboration
- Empowering Professionals and Parents/Carers
- Information sharing/signposting
- Promotion of early identification and intervention
- Promoting a sense of hope





# WITH THANKS TO ...



N8 Team - Shannon Corcoran, Sam Denny, Ola Shobande, Luke Munford, Pam Qualter  
DECP TEPs/EPs/Tutors - George Alaimo, Rhonda Boaler, Catherine Kelly, Claudia  
Hammond-Price, Jacqui Hanrahan, Judith Hebron, Rebecca Moynihan, Claire Neilson,  
Siobhan O'Hagan, Sarah Ward  
Research commissioners – C2C, CWaC EPS, GMCA, Louise Knox, Lancashire EPS  
OneEducation, Trafford EPS, Alison Wood



**Questions?**



# Against the clock: Delivering local climate change targets



**Speaker: Dr  
Chris Jones**

Knowledge Exchange  
Fellow, Tyndall Manchester



**Chair: Prof Maria Sharmina**

Professor of Energy and  
Sustainability, and Academic Co-  
Director of Policy@Manchester



**Speaker: Samantha  
Nicholson**

Director, Manchester  
Climate Change Agency



**Wednesday, 11 June**  
1:00 - 2:30pm



**University of Manchester**  
campus



**policy@manchester.ac.uk**