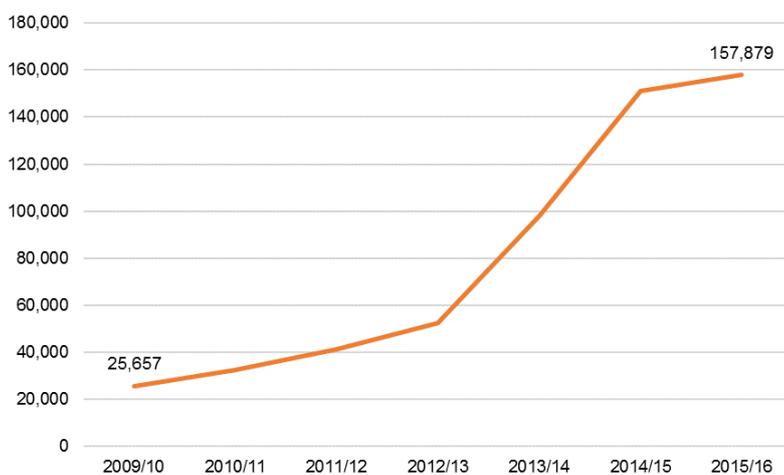




SFR 15/2017, 23 March 2017

This statistical first release reports on parental responsibility measures for school attendance for the academic year 2015 to 2016. The Department collects data at national and local authority level on the number of penalty notices issued to parents for failure to ensure that a child of compulsory school age regularly attends the state-funded school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. The number of cases entering the fast-track case management process, parenting contracts and parenting orders are also included in this release. This is the first time an overview document and user guide have been produced to accompany parental responsibility measures statistical tables.

## The number of penalty notices issued has increased slightly since last year



The number of penalty notices issued for attendance has increased slightly by 4% in the latest year, from 151,125 in academic year 2014/15 to 157,879 in 2015/16.

The number of penalty notices issued rose steeply between 2012/13 and 2014/15. Regulations amended in September 2013 state that term time leave may only be granted in exceptional circumstances, which may relate to the sharper increase in penalty notices issued. The rise in penalty notices issued between 2014/15 and 2015/16 is shallower.

## The number of penalty notices paid and withdrawn and the number of prosecutions following non-payment of a penalty notice have increased since last year



The number of penalty notices paid within 28 days has remained similar at 108,674 in 2015/16 compared to 108,024 in 2014/15. In conjunction with the overall increase in penalty notices issued, the number of prosecutions following non-payment of penalty notices increased slightly by 3.6% from 15,283 in 2014/15 to 15,828 in 2015/16. The number of penalty notices withdrawn increased by a larger amount, by 30.9% from 17,112 in 2014/15 to 22,394 in 2015/16. Out of all penalty notices resolved in 2015/16, the most common outcome remained payment within 28 days.

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## About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) reports on parental responsibility measures for school attendance (PRMA) for the academic year 2015 to 2016. The Department collects data on the volume of penalty notices issued to parents for failure to ensure that a child of compulsory school age (approximately 5-16) regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. The volume of cases entering the fast-track case management process, parenting contracts and parenting orders are also included. Data is collected at national and local authority level only. The number of penalty notices issued by an individual school or in regards to an individual pupil or parent are not collected. However data on the number of pupils of compulsory school age has been provided with the tables accompanying this release to give an indication of the pupil population nationally and in each local authority. A ["Guide to PRMA statistics"](#), which provides historical information on PRMA statistics, as well as technical background information on the figures and data collection, should be referenced alongside this release.

Figures held in this release are used as key indicators of measures implemented by local authorities to improve attendance.

## In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- SFR15\_2017\_National\_LA\_Tables.xls and .ods

A guide to PRMA statistics, which accompanies this release, provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data.

## Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at [schools.statistics@education.gov.uk](mailto:schools.statistics@education.gov.uk)

# 1. Penalty notices paid, withdrawn and prosecuted following non payment (Tables 1.1, 1.2 & 2)

The combined total of penalty notices paid, withdrawn and prosecuted may not match the total number of penalty notices issued in an academic year. These may include payments, withdrawals and prosecutions relating to some penalty notices that were issued in the previous academic year and will exclude any penalty notices issued during the relevant academic year, which had not been resolved by the end of the year.

## Penalty notices at National level

The number of penalty notices issued increased slightly by 4% from 151,125 in academic year 2014/15 to 157,879 in 2015/16.

The number of penalty notices issued has followed a general upward trend since 2009/10 and rose steeply between 2012/13 and 2014/15. Regulations amended in September 2013 state that term time leave may only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and may relate to the sharper increase in penalty notices issued.

The increase in the number of penalty notices issued between 2014/15 and 2015/16 is much smaller than the previous two academic years. During the same period, the rate of unauthorised absence in state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools in 2015/16 has remained stable at 1.1 per cent of possible sessions. Rates of unauthorised holiday absence and unauthorised absence due to late arrival have also remained the same as in 2014/15, at 0.3% and 0.1% respectively (please refer to the [pupil absence statistics series](#) for more information).

The number of penalty notices paid within 28 days has remained similar at 108,674 in 2015/16 compared to 108,024 in 2014/15. In conjunction with the overall increase in penalty notices issued, the majority of those penalty notices paid, 102,556, were paid within 21 days. Similarly, the number of prosecutions following non-payment of penalty notices has increased slightly by 3.6% from 15,283 in 2014/15 to 15,828 in 2015/16. The number of penalty notices withdrawn increased by a larger amount, by 30.9%, from 17,112 in 2014/15 to 22,394 in 2015/16. As in 2014/15, the greatest number of penalty notices withdrawn, 10,467, were withdrawn due to local authorities deciding not to bring legal proceedings when a penalty notice remained unpaid after 28 days.

## Penalty notices at local authority level

As in 2014/15, the region with the greatest number of penalty notices issued was the North West of England with 27,542 penalty notices issued in 2015/16. The region with the fewest penalty notices, also the same as in 2014/15, was the North East of England, with 4,576 penalty notices issued in 2015/16. However, it should be noted that the pupil population in the North East is considerably smaller than the North West. Furthermore, every local authority must draw up a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices and there is considerable variability in the number of penalty notices issued at local authority level. Local authorities may also show a large rise or fall in the number of penalty notices issued from year to year, or in the ratio of penalty notices issued to pupils of compulsory school age, due to changes in local policy. Figures at local authority level are therefore not directly comparable but are published for transparency. For more information, refer to the [guide to PRMA statistics](#).

# 2. Fast-track case management (Tables 1.1 and 3)

The number of cases going through the fast-track case management system, a process setting out actions and a time frame for improving a child's attendance, decreased slightly from 37,859 in 2014/15 to 36,003 in 2015/16. 6,605 fast-track cases resulted in prosecution during the period and 22,271 fast-track cases were withdrawn. The majority of cases, 16,040, were withdrawn due to improved attendance of the pupil. Fast-track case management is a non-statutory process and is not used by all local authorities. Therefore figures at local authority level are not directly comparable. For more information, refer to the [guide to PRMA statistics](#).

### 3. Parenting orders and parenting contracts (Tables 1.1 and 4)

The number of parenting orders issued by courts following prosecution for unauthorised absence remained largely flat with 192 issued in 2015/16 compared to 185 in 2014/15. The number of parenting orders has followed a general downward trend from 439 in 2010/11. The number of parenting contracts offered – voluntary agreements between parents and schools or local authorities – reduced slightly from 19,885 in 2014/15 to 18,319 in 2015/16. 72.8% of parenting contracts were accepted by parents during the period.

### 4. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format on the department's [statistics website](#):

#### National tables

##### Charts

1. Penalty notices issued 2009/10-2015/16

#### **National tables**

- 1.1 Penalty notices issued, paid and withdrawn during the period, prosecutions following non-payment of a penalty notice, cases entering fast-track case management, parenting orders and parenting contracts issued 2009/10 to 2015/16

#### **National, regional and local authority tables**

- 1.2 Penalty notices issued, paid and withdrawn during the period, and prosecutions following non-payment of a penalty notice 2009/10 to 2015/16
- 2 Penalty notices issued, paid and withdrawn during the period, and prosecutions following non-payment of a penalty notice 2015/16
- 3 Cases going through the Fast-track case management system in the period 2015/16
- 4 Parenting orders and parenting contracts 2015/16

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

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We preserve confidentiality

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires that reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all published or disseminated statistics produced by the Department for Education protect confidentiality.

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### 5. Further information is available

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Want previously published figures?

For the previous full year pupil absence figures visit: [Parental Responsibility Measures data: Academic year 2014 to 2015](#)

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Want Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland?

The School Census only collects penalty notice information from schools in England. For information for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, contact the departments below or access their statistics at the following links:

Wales: [school.stats@wales.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@wales.gov.uk) or [Welsh Government – Statistics and Research](#)

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Scotland: [school.stats@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:school.stats@scotland.gov.uk) or  
[Scottish Government – School Education Statistics](#)

Northern Ireland: [statistics@deni.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@deni.gov.uk) or  
[Department of Education – Education Statistics](#)

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For related publications

For related publications, visit [Pupil absence in schools in England](#)

Statistics on prosecutions relating to truancy (the failure of a parent to secure the attendance of a child in school) are also available from the Ministry of Justice for 2015 and published in the [Criminal justice statistics outcomes by offence data tool](#)

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Revisions?

There are no further planned revisions to this Statistical First Release.

However, if at a later date we need to make a revision, this will comply with the [Departmental revisions policy](#).

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## 6. Official Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as Official Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as Official Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## 7. Technical information

A "[Guide to parental responsibility measures statistics](#)" accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed. Definitions of key terms should be referred to alongside this release.

## 8. Get in touch

### Media enquiries

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Department  
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email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

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This document is also available from our [website](#)

Reference: [SFR 15/2017]



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