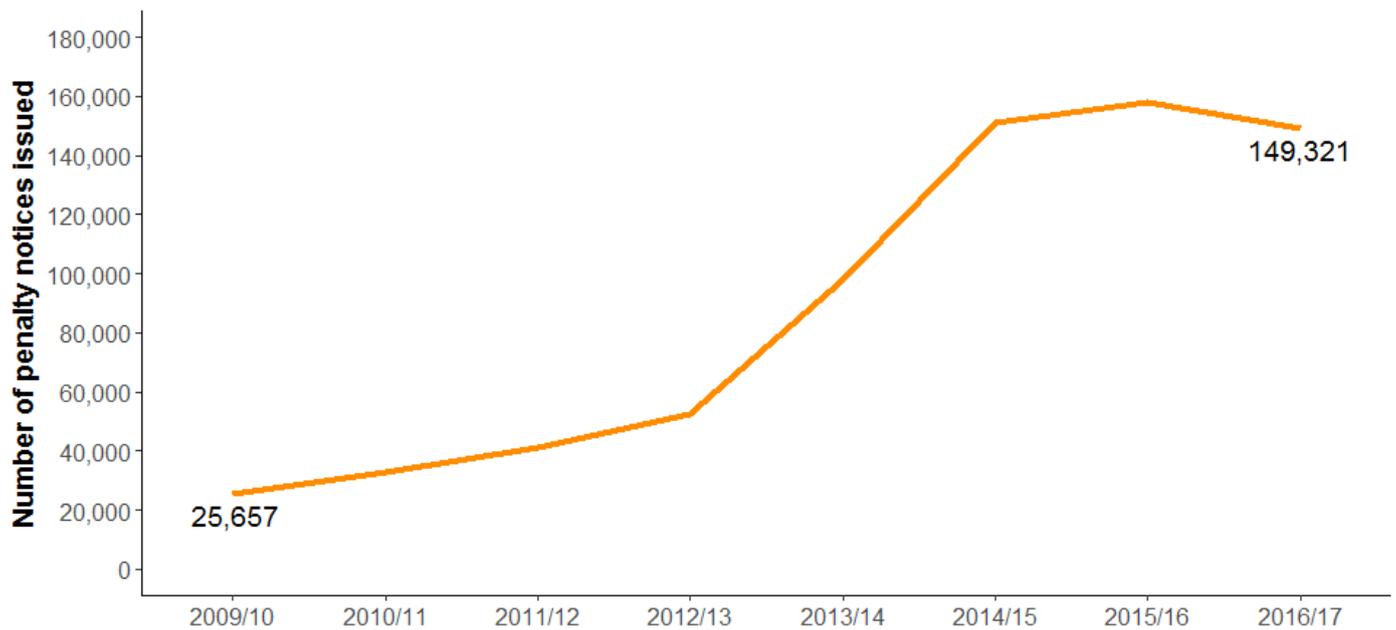




# Parental Responsibility Measures in England: 2016 to 2017

SFR 17/2018, 22 March 2018

The number of penalty notices issued to address poor attendance has decreased from last year



The number of penalty notices have decreased by 5.4 per cent in the latest year, from 157,879 in 2015/16, to 149,321 in 2016/17.

The number of penalty notices issued has followed a general upward trend from 2009/10 up until 2015/16, rising 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 reason for penalty notice being issued was collected for the first time in 2016/17, and was collected on a voluntary basis.

The most common reason for a penalty notice being issued was unauthorised family holiday absence

Overall, 77.5 per cent of all penalty notices were issued for unauthorised family holiday absence. The second largest reason for a penalty notice being issued was for other reasons, accounting for 21.4 per cent of all penalty notices. The reason for a penalty notice being issued was collected for the first time in 2016/17, on a voluntary basis.

The unauthorised absence rate in state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools was 1.3 per cent in 2016/17, an increase from 1.1 per cent in 2015/16 – the rate of unauthorised holiday absence also increasing from 0.3 to 0.4 per cent

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### About this release

This official statistics release reports on parental responsibility measures for school attendance (PRMA) for the academic year 2016/17. The Department collects data on the volume of penalty notices issued to parents for failure to ensure that a child of compulsory school age (aged 5 to 15 as of the start of the academic year) 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 local authority level and then aggregated to national level for reporting purposes. The number of penalty notices issued by an individual school or in regards to an individual pupil or parent are not collected. However, pupil enrolment figures have been provided within the accompanying tables to give an indication of the number of pupils who could have received a penalty notice 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 for measures implemented by local authorities to improve attendance.

### Changes to this release

Changes introduced in the 2016/17 collection mean that care should be taken when comparing trends over time. From 2016/17 the outcomes for penalty notices issued (for example - paid, withdrawn or prosecuted) were restricted to only penalty notices issued during the period, rather than collecting information on those potentially issued outside of the period. In addition, from 2016/17 the scope of the fast-track case management measure was expanded to include all types of case management so care should be taken when comparing figures to previous years.

Furthermore, this is the first academic year where we have collected on a voluntary basis;

- The reason for penalty notices being issued
- The number of unresolved penalty notices
- The number of supervision orders for the period

### In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- SFR17\_2017\_National\_tables.xls and .ods

### 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 prosecutions following non-payment

Penalty notices are issued to parents by schools, local authorities or the police for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the state-funded school where they are registered or at the place where alternative provision is provided for them. The amount payable under a penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must either prosecute for the original offence, or withdraw the notice.

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. Furthermore, the combined total of penalty notices paid, withdrawn and prosecuted may not match the total number of penalty notices issued in an academic year due to unresolved penalty notices.

## Penalty notices at national level

The number of penalty notices have decreased by 5.4 per cent from 157,879 in 2015/16, to 149,321 in 2016/17.

The number of penalty notices issued has followed a general upward trend from 2009/10 to 2015/16, rising 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.

Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, the rate of unauthorised absence in state-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools increased from 1.1 to 1.3 per cent. Rates of unauthorised holiday absence have increased from 0.3 to 0.4 per cent in 2016/17 and rates of unauthorised absence due to late arrival have remained the same as in 2015/16 at 0.1 per cent (please refer to the [Pupil absence statistics series](#) for more information).

The figures in this publication relate to the period after the *Isle of Wight Council v Jon Platt* High Court judgment (which was in May 2016) where the High Court supported a local magistrates' ruling that there was no case to answer and partially to the period after the judgment in the Supreme Court (which was in April 2017) where the Supreme Court unanimously agreed that no children should be taken out of school without good reason and clarified that 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

The reason for penalty notices being issued was collected for the first time in 2016/17. The majority of penalty notices issued (77.5 per cent) were issued because of unauthorised holidays, 21.4 per cent for other unauthorised absence and 0.4 per cent for pupils being late.

## Penalty notices at local authority level

In 2016/17, the region with the greatest rate of penalty notices issued (as a percentage of pupil enrolments) was Yorkshire and the Humber, at 3.7 per cent, the region with the lowest rate of penalty notices issued was the West Midlands at 1.0 per cent.

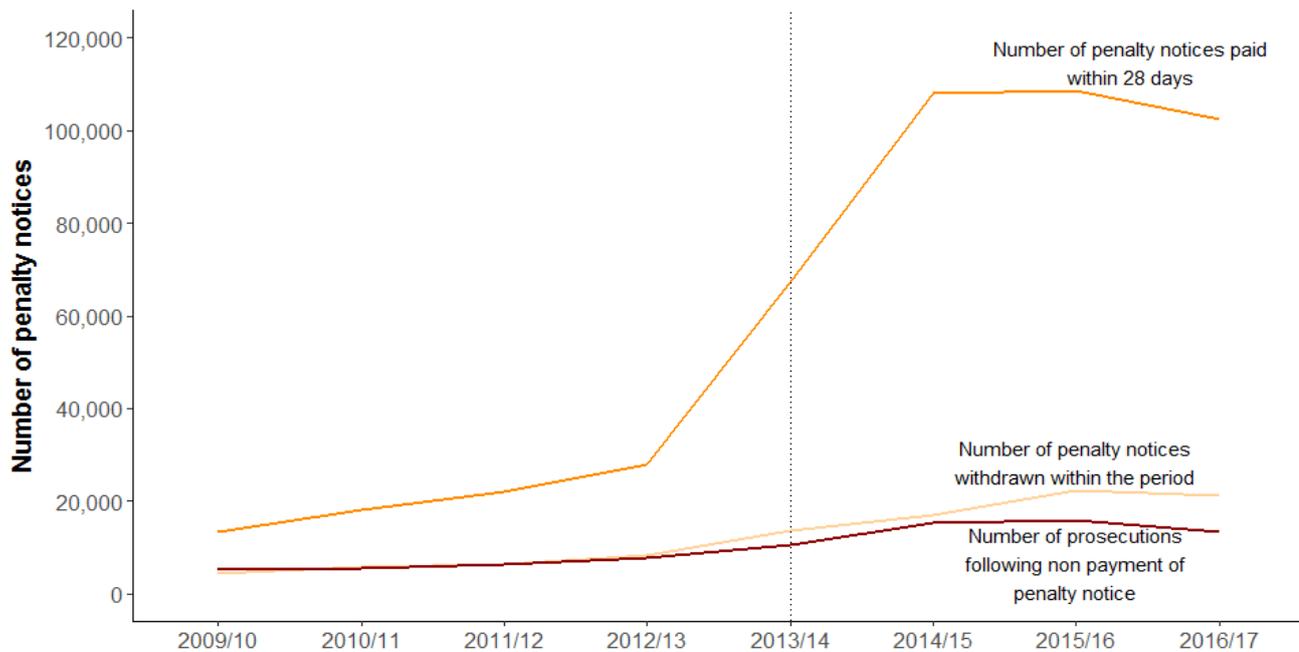
Every local authority must draw up a code of conduct for issuing penalty notices and there is considerable variability in the number of penalty notices issued at local authority level. For more information, refer to the [guide to PRMA statistics](#).

## 2. Payment of penalty notices

The number of penalty notices paid within 28 days decreased slightly from 108,674 in 2015/16 to 102,301 in 2016/17, reflecting the decrease in the number of penalty notices issued overall. The number of prosecutions following non-payment of penalty notices has decreased by 15.8 per cent from 15,828 in 2015/16 to 13,324 in 2016/17. The number of penalty notices withdrawn decreased by 5.4 per cent from 22,394 in 2015/16 to 21,182 in 2016/17.

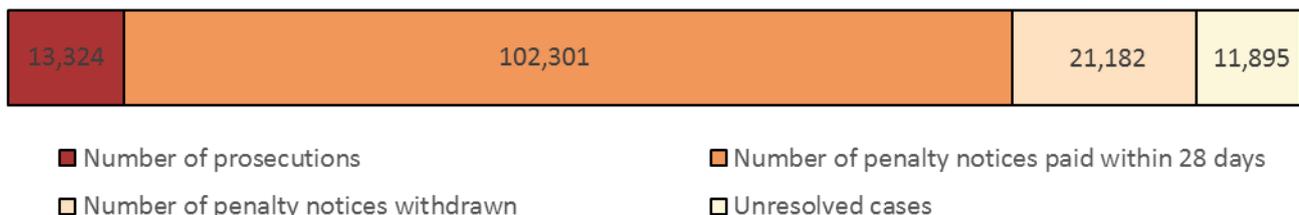
**Figure 1: Number of penalty notices paid and number of prosecutions**

England, 2009/10 to 2016/17



**Figure 2: Outcome of penalty notices issued during the period**

England, 2016/17



## 3. Case management including fast-track (Table 5)

This is the first year for which we have collected all cases of attendance case management rather than just fast-track cases, therefore numbers from 2015/16 are not directly comparable to 2016/17. The number of cases going through the fast-track case management system, a process setting out actions and a period for improving a child's attendance was 68,746 in 2016/17. Around half of all cases, 33,486 were withdrawn before prosecution. 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](#).

## 4. Parenting orders and parenting contracts (Table 6)

The number of parenting orders issued by courts following prosecution for unauthorised absence decreased by 6.8 per cent from 192 in 2015/16 to 179 in 2016/17. The number of parenting orders has followed a generally downward trend from 439 in 2010/11. The number of parenting contracts offered – voluntary agreements between parents and schools or local authorities – decreased from 18,319 in 2015/16 to 17,104 in 2016/17. 80.3 per cent of parenting contracts were accepted by parents during the period.

## 5. Accompanying tables

The following are available in Excel format:

### Chart

Figure 1      Number of penalty notices issued

### National tables

Table 1      Parental Responsibility Measures for Attendance summary

### National, regional and local authority tables

Table 2      Penalty notices issued, paid and withdrawn during the period, and prosecutions following non-payment of a penalty notice

Table 3      Penalty notices issued by reason

Table 4      Penalty notices issued, paid, withdrawn and prosecuted for non-payment during the period

Table 5      Cases going through the Fast-track case management system in the period

Table 6      Parenting orders and parenting contracts

Table 7      Education supervision orders

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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## 6. Further information is available

For previous PRMA figures visit: [Parental Responsibility Measures data: Academic year 2015 to 2016](#) and for pupil absence statistics visit: [Statistics: pupil absence](#)

Further information 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 and published in the [Criminal justice statistics outcomes by offence data tool](#).

The PRMA census only collects information from local authorities 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](#)

**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](#)

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](#).

## 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

Press Office News Desk, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT. Tel: 020 7783 8300

### Other enquiries/feedback

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