

18 September 2018

TITLE OF REPORT: Review of approach to Elective Home Education

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Forum on the current situation both nationally and in Hertfordshire in relation to Elective Home Education (EHE), with particular reference to the significant and ongoing increase in the numbers of Electively Home Educated pupils in Hertfordshire.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This paper describes the current position in relation to Elective Home Education.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Schools Forum is asked to note and comment on the work being undertaken.

4. Background

- 4.1 This report is an update to the previous report to Forum dated March 2018.

5. National developments – Updates

- 5.1 Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill

(Lord Solely, Private Member's Bill)

The Bill had its third reading in the House of Lords on 24 July 2018 and was presented to the House of Commons on 24 July. This is the first reading and there was no debate on the Bill at this stage. The Bill is expected to have its second reading on 26 October 2018.

5.2 Department for Education – Consultation on Elective Home Education

The consultation focussed on two areas – a *Call for Evidence* on issues including registration, monitoring and support for home educating families and a request for comments on two DfE revised draft guidance documents: *Elective home education, Departmental guidance for local authorities* and *Elective home education, Departmental guidance for parents*. The consultation closed on 2 July 2018 and responses will be considered by the department and finalised versions of the documents along with a government response document will be published.

6 Current Position in Hertfordshire

6.1 (Figures in brackets are the EHE totals for the previous report as of March 2018)

6.2 As at 23 August (21 March) we had 1263 (1238) pupils known to us as being home educated. Of these, 597 or 47.3% (575 or 46.4%) are girls and 666 or 52.7% (663 or 53.6%) are boys. Numbers of pupils by year group and key stage are given in table 2.

Table 2

Year group	Age	Key stage*	Number of pupils	Pupils per Key Stage*
R	5	1	0 (5)	56 (99)
1	5/6	1	14 (34)	
2	6/7	1	42 (60)	
3	7/8	2	75 (73)	336 (300)
4	8/9	2	90 (60)	
5	9/10	2	80 (77)	
6	10/11	2	91 (90)	
7	11/12	3	111 (133)	454 (433)
8	12/13	3	165 (148)	
9	13/14	3	178 (152)	
10	14/15	4	187 (171)	417 (406)
11	15/16	4	230 (235)	

* Please note that the key stages are as from 1.9.18

6.3 This number does not include the 256 (114 girls and 142 boys) year 11 pupils who were EHE last year but whose EHE records were closed when they ceased to be of compulsory school age as of 29 June. Of these, 73% (187) only began EHE from 2016 onwards.

Year	2018*	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
EHE start	52	79	56	24	16	10	5	3	2	1	5	2	1

* Up to 23.08.18

- 6.4 Not all parents give a reason for their decision to home educate. Of those parents who gave their main reason for home educating, dissatisfaction with the school system was most prevalent as shown in table 3.

Table 3

Reason given for EHE	Number of pupils
Attendance difficulties	24 (32)
Bullying	50 (45)
Did not get school preference	19 (20)
Dispute with school	24 (19)
Dissatisfaction with school system	150 (166)
Educational philosophy	60 (60)
Health issues	27 (31)
Mental health issues	29 (30)
Religious reasons	2 (2)
Risk of exclusion	12 (15)
Traveller culture	39 (53)
Not recorded	827 (765)

- 6.5 76 or 6% (68 or 5.4%) of current EHE pupils have either an Education and Health Care Plan or a Statement of Educational Need. The numbers of EHE pupils by SEN primary need is shown in table 4.

Table 4

Primary Need	Number of EHE pupils
Autism Spectrum Disorder	26 (20)
Hearing Impairment	4 (2)
Moderate Learning Difficulty	9 (12)
Physical Disability	3 (2)
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	2 (1)
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	18 (19)
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	8 (6)
Severe Learning Difficulties	2 (3)
Specific Learning Difficulty	2 (1)
Visual Impairment	2 (1)

7. Conclusion

Following a meeting in June 2018 with Local Authority Officers and Head Teachers. HCC have commissioned Hertfordshire University to conduct further research into Elective Home Education in Hertfordshire. Lindsay Edwards (Interim Operations Director, Services for Children and Young People, Children's Services) and Richard Woodard (County Lead for Access and Inclusion) have met with Dr Karen Smith (Principal Lecturer in Collaborative Research and Development, School of Education Hertfordshire University) to outline the project.

The initial plan is for the research to focus on collecting qualitative data on reasons why families have chosen elective home education, what good elective home education looks like, identify established elective home education groups and the views of the young people currently receiving home education.

A further update can be provided to Schools Forum in December 2018 following the second reading of the Home Education Bill.