

TITLE OF REPORT: Elective Home Education

REPORT OF: Service Director, Education, Schools and Inclusion

SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on elective home education in Gateshead for academic year 2021-2022.
-

Background

2. Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.
3. This is different to education provided by a local authority otherwise than at a school - for example, tuition for children who are too ill to attend school.
4. Parents have a right to educate their children at home, and the government wants the many parents who do it well to be supported.
5. Educating a child (or children) full-time at home can be a rewarding but challenging task.
6. Parents may choose to engage private tutors or other adults to assist in providing a suitable education, but there is no requirement to do so.
7. There are other settings which may be used, for example parental support groups which offer tuition, and companies which give part-time tuition. This can also include provision made at further education colleges for children aged 14 and over.
8. Although children being home-educated are not normally registered at any school, parents sometimes choose to make arrangements for a child to receive part of the total provision at a school - the purpose of this will often be to provide education in specific subjects more easily than is possible at home.
9. Such arrangements are sometimes known as 'flexi-schooling'. Schools are under no obligation to agree to such arrangements, but some are happy to do so.

- 10.** Parents who choose to educate a child in these ways rather than sending the child to school full-time take on financial responsibility for the cost of doing so, including the cost of any external assistance used such as tutors, parent groups or part-time alternative provision.
- 11.** If the child attends state-funded school or FE college for part of the week, that will have no cost to the parents.
- 12.** Examination costs are also the responsibility of parents if a child does not attend school full-time, although some schools or colleges attended part-time may meet the costs.
- 13.** One of the most significant issues for any local authorities is maintaining adequate oversight.
- 14.** There is no legal duty on parents to inform the local authority that a child is being home educated. If a child never attends school, an authority may be unaware that he or she is being home educated.
- 15.** Identification of children who have never attended school and may be home educated forms a significant element of fulfilling an authority's statutory duty under s.436A of the Education Act 1996.
- 16.** In Gateshead local authority the elective home education officers maintain close links with other services and conduct a multi-agency elective home education group once per month to ensure information is shared so as far as it is possible to do so, so that the identities of children who may be being electively home educated are established so that it can be established if they are receiving a full time, suitable education.
- 17.** Gateshead local authority also require all schools to inform them of children and young people who have been removed from roll to be electively home educated.
- 18.** There are no detailed legal requirements as to how a local authority develop oversight to assure itself that every child and young person being electively home educated is receiving a suitable education.
- 19.** However, the Department of Education recommends that each local authority:
 - should provide parents with a named contact who is familiar with home education policy and practice and has an understanding of a range of educational philosophies;
 - ordinarily makes contact with home educated parents on at least an annual basis so the authority may reasonably inform itself of the current suitability of the education provided. In cases where there were no previous concerns about the education provided and no reason to think that has changed because the parents are continuing to do a good job, such contact would often be very brief;

- has a named senior officer with responsibility for elective home education policy and procedures, and the interaction with other work on issues such as children missing education, unregistered settings, vulnerable children, and welfare;
- organises training on the law and the diversity of home education methods for all officers who have contact with home-educating families, possibly in conjunction with other authorities;
- ensures that those local authority staff who may be the first point of contact for a potential home-educating parent understand the right of the parent to choose home education.
- works co-operatively with other relevant agencies such as health services to identify and support children who are being home educated, within the boundaries established by data protection and other legislation.

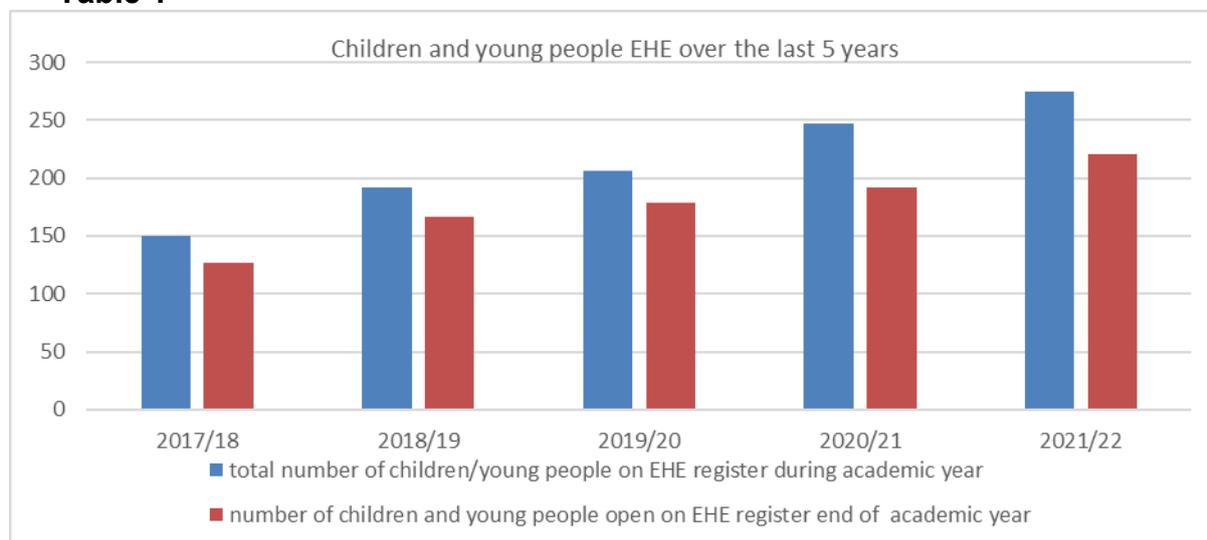
20. It is recognised that it is very important that parents are provided with accurate information from the outset to establish a positive foundation for the relationship.

21. However, parents are under no obligation to accept support or advice from a local authority, and refusal to do so is not in itself evidence that the education provided is unsuitable.

Elective Home Education 2021-2022

22. Table 1 Children and young people being Electively Home Educated

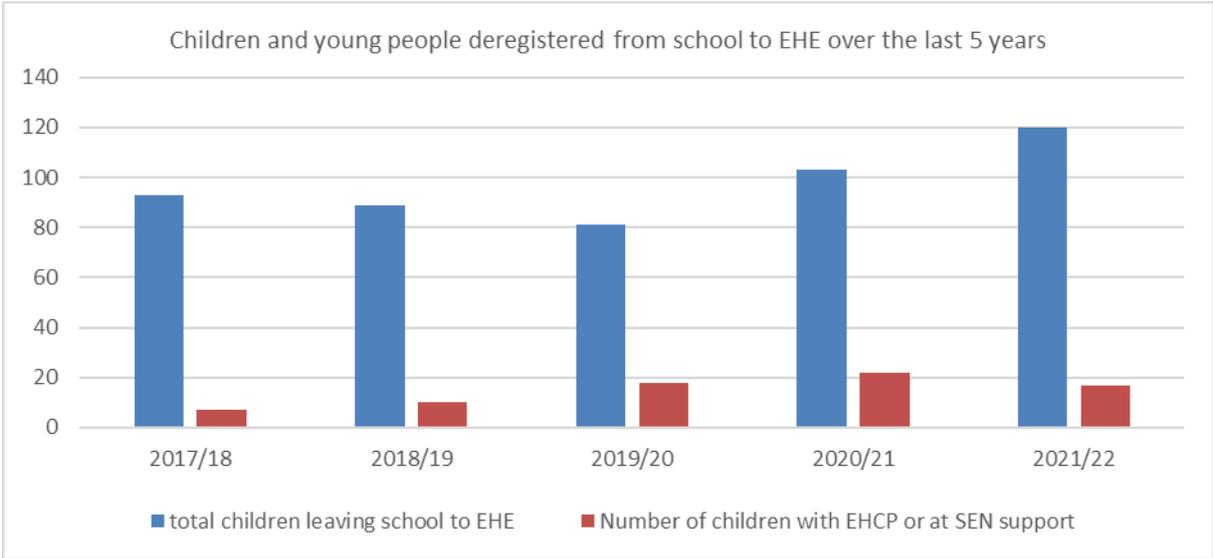
Table 1



Deregistration from school during 2021-2022

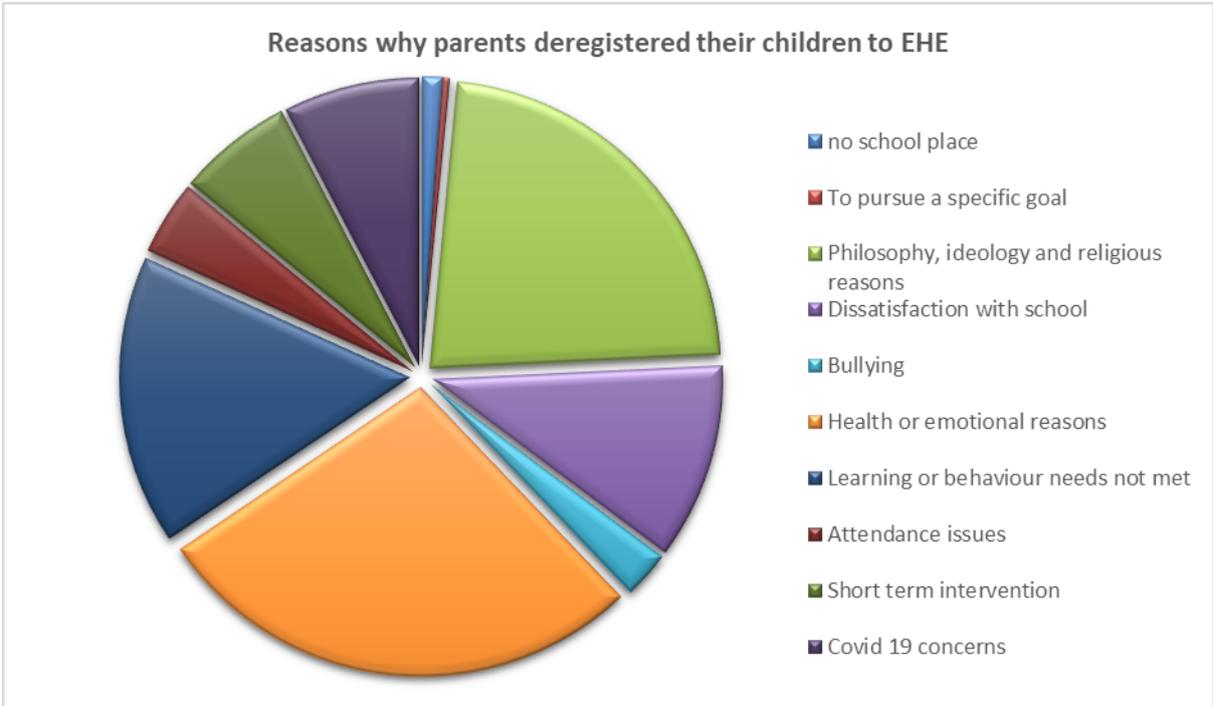
23. Table 2 shows the numbers of children and young people that were deregistered from school during academic year 2021-2022

Table 2



24. Table 3 gives an overview of reasons cited by parents (when given) who chose to electively home educated in academic year 2021-2022

Table 3



25. Table 4 shows ethnicity of children and young people being electively home educated in academic year 2021-2022

Table 4

Ethnicity of children and young people being electively home educated 2021- 22
Arabic 5
Black European 1
Traveller 2
Indian 1
White British 242
White Asian 2
White European 1
Black African 2
Bangladeshi 1
White other 2
16 other/unknown

Summary

26. There were 275 children and young people recorded on the Elective Home Education (EHE) register during academic year 2021-2022.

27. This was a 20% increase compared to academic year 2020-2021 and a 65% increase since 2017/18. This increase is in line with national trends.

28. There were 94 primary aged and 181 secondary aged children EHE in academic year 2021-2022.

29. There were a total of 42 children and young people who were at SEN support and 10 children who had an Education Health and Care Plan on the elective home education register during academic year 2021-2022. This represented a 20% increase from academic year 2020-2021.

30. There were 133 males and 142 females recorded on the elective home education register during academic year 2021-2022. Data shows that over a period of 5 years more females have been electively home educated than males.

31. The number of children and young people on the elective home education register changes throughout the year. At the end of the academic year there were 192 children and young people open on the elective home education register.

Deregistration

32. There were 120 children deregistered from a schools in Gateshead or elsewhere during academic year 2021-2022 and placed on the Gateshead elective home

education register. This is a 17% increase on data during academic year 2020-2021.

33. The 120 children deregistered from schools during academic year 2021-2022 were made up of 17 at SEN support or who had an education health and care plan.
34. The most significant rise in the number of young people being deregister from school to become electively home educated was year 8 - representing a 162% increase. Parents of children in year 8 indicated the poor transition, due to Covid restrictions, impacted on their child's integration into secondary school.
35. During 2021-2022 there was a reduction in the numbers of children who are electively home educated and have never attended a school.

Reason for choosing to electively home educate

36. Historically, ethical and philosophical reasons have been the most common reason for choosing to electively home educate.
37. During academic year 2021-2022 mental health and emotional needs became the most prevalent reason for parents deciding to electively home educating.

Children and young people known to children's social care services

38. During academic year 2021-2022 there were 10 children open to children's social care either at child protection or child in need and 11 children open to Early Help. These number have continued to increase during the last 5 years. There are currently no children being electively home educated that are open to statutory children's social care.
39. We are progressing work with social care colleagues to define a protocol that will address our concerns when parents choose to electively home educate when the family are known to statutory social care services or become known to statutory social care whilst being electively home educated so that children maintain their school placement or return to school as rapidly as possible.

Children and young people returning to school after a period of being electively home educated

40. During 2021-2022 there were 31 children and young people who returned to mainstream school often supported by the Fair Access Process.
41. There were 6 children and young people who were referred as children missing in education in academic year 2021-2022 who had been considered to be electively home educated.

42. During 2021-2022 there were 8 referrals to the Legal Intervention Team, to commence the School Attendance Order procedures as evidence of education provision was unsatisfactory.

Staffing

43. A part time elective home education Officer was employed in February 2022 (0.8 Grade G) to support the current officer. This is equivalent to one FT officer. They are supported by 0.3 admin time.

44. The officer made at least one visit to the overwhelming majority (75%+) of parents that preferred this method of interaction with us.

Recommendations

45. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to receive this report for information and discussion.

Documents

Elective Home Education Strategy: [2715-PS-Elective-Home-Education-Strategy-2020-2025-V5-August-2020.pdf](https://www.educationgateshead.org/2715-PS-Elective-Home-Education-Strategy-2020-2025-V5-August-2020.pdf) ([educationgateshead.org](https://www.educationgateshead.org))