

Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 15 June 2018

Title of report: Re-establishment of Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Elective Home Education

Purpose of report: For the Scrutiny Committee to formally re-establish the Ad-hoc Scrutiny Panel on Elective Home Education (EHE) to complete its work.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision	Not applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Governance and Commissioning Support?	Julie Muscroft
Cabinet member portfolio	n/a

Electoral wards affected: none specific

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. Information

- 1.1 In 2018 the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel - Elective Home Education began its work to look in detail and Elective Home Education in Kirklees.
- 1.2 Elective Home Education (EHE) is the term used by the Department for Education (DFE) to describe parents' decisions to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. This is different to home tuition provided by a Local Authority, or education provided by a Local Authority other than at a school.
- 1.2 Numbers of electively home educated children and young people are increasing in Kirklees, and are in line with neighbouring Local Authorities and national trends. The responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents. In England, education is compulsory, but school is not.
- 1.3 When established the intention was that the EHE Ad-hoc Scrutiny Panel would look at the reasons why parents choose to EHE, and how best to support children and parents throughout their education, particularly giving consideration to children who would like to take their GCSE exams. Work would include identifying national best practice and identifying how the approach in Kirklees reflects good practice.
- 1.5 The terms of reference approved for the Ad Hoc Panel are set out below:

To scrutinise Elective Home Education in Kirklees, with a particular focus on;

- Developing an understanding of why some parents and carers choose to home educate, and for how long children are typically home educated for.
- Scrutinising the Local Authority's responsibilities for home educated children.
- Scrutinising how the Local Authority identifies, supports and ensures the safety and wellbeing of electively home educated children.
- Scrutinise the outcomes for electively home educated children.

Progress to date:

- 1.6 The Ad-Hoc Panel has met on 2 occasions, 5th March 2018 and 19th March 2018. The Panel members, Cllr Cahal Burke (Chair), Cllr Habiban Zaman, Cllr Lisa Holmes and Kimberley Stocks received a number of briefing papers around the duties that local authorities have in relation to children who are home educate. In choosing to home educate a child at home, parents have withdrawn them from local authority provision and the responsibility, both practical and financial, then rests with the parents. However, as an authority, Kirklees feel it is beneficial for parents to meet with the EHE team to discuss how they will educate their child.

Some parents choose to engage with the EHE team, whilst others do not. The Panel have received data relating to how many families fall into each category, and have received further data in relation to the reasons why parents would choose to home educate their child. The Panel heard that schools do not always give a full explanation as to why a child had been taken off roll, and the panel felt that a more robust questionnaire would assist the EHE team in identifying where there may be problems at schools for some families.

Future focus:

The Panel intends to meet with some parents who home educate their children, and events will be set up to facilitate this. The Panel particularly wish to look at taking exams, engagement with the Local Authority and the proposal of a qualified teacher being available to evaluate work undertaken by home educated children. The Panel also proposes to consider the current Kirklees policy relating to EHE, and contribute to a review of the policy to enable both parents and the local authority to achieve the best outcomes for home educated children.

2. Implications for the Council

As part of its work the EHE Ad-hoc Panel will consider work within each of the areas below.

Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

Kirklees has an EHE protocol in place that is understood by all schools in Kirklees. When the Education Safeguarding Team is made aware of a child that has become EHE, it offers to visit the parent to provide an offer of support if required.

Economic Resilience (ER)

No specific implications

Improving Outcomes for Children

The Children's Scrutiny Panel understands that there is no one 'correct' educational system and that all children learn in different ways and at varying rates. The Panel also understands that parents and children choose a type of education that is right for them; however there is a need to ensure that the approach chosen is feasible and legally valid to enable the children to reach their potential.

Reducing demand of services

No specific implications

Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

No specific implications

3. Consultees and their opinions

4. Next steps

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee re-establish the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel for Elective Home Education.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the Management Committee approve the re-establishment of the Elective Home Education Ad-hoc Scrutiny Panel to complete its work in the 2018/19 municipal year.

6. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

Not applicable.

7. **Contact officer**

Penny Bunker, Governance and Democratic Engagement Manager.

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8. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

n/a

9. **Service Director responsible**

Julie Muscroft; Assistant Director: Legal, Governance & Commissioning

