



**Name of meeting: Children’s Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

**Title of report: Elective Home Education – progress update on Recommendations of Ad Hoc Panel Action Plan**

**Purpose of report:** To provide a progress update on the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel’s Action Plan recommendations for Elective Home Education.

<b>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?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	<b>Key Decision – No</b> <b>Private Report/Private Appendix – No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Service Director</u> &amp; name</b>	Jo-Anne Sanders – 18.11.2021
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</b>	N/A
<b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?</b>	N/A
<b>Cabinet member <a href="#">portfolio</a></b>	Cllr Carole Pattison - Cabinet lead for Learning, Aspiration and Communities  Cllr Viv Kendrick - Cabinet lead for Children (statutory responsibility for Children)

**Electoral wards affected: All**

**Ward councillors consulted: N/A**

**Public or private: Public**

**Has GDPR been considered?** There are no GDPR implications arising from the report.

## **1. Summary**

In November 2017, the Children's Scrutiny Panel considered a report on elective home education. This was submitted against a background of increasing numbers of home educated children in Kirklees; a trend which was replicated in both neighbouring authorities and nationally.

The report provided background information, including an overview of the legislative framework and the current practice in Kirklees, and explained that the rights of parents that had chosen to home educate their children were fully respected. It recognised that there were many excellent examples of home education and acknowledged that learning took place in a wide variety of environments. The report explained that there was a strong commitment within Kirklees to support children, young people and their families who had chosen to home educate.

Further to the agreement of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, an Ad-Hoc Scrutiny Panel was formed, with the Terms of Reference 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.
- Scrutinising elective home educated children's progression onto further education and employment and the outcomes achieved at Key Stage 4 & 5.

## **2. Information required to take a decision**

In March 2020, following its findings from the Ad Hoc Scrutiny review, the Children's Scrutiny Panel made the following recommendations:

1. A new Kirklees Policy on Elective Home Education is produced.
2. Consideration is given to the implementation of a dedicated Elective Home Education Team.
3. That direct dedicated phone number and email address be provided in respect of elective home education.
4. A new form for schools to complete when taking a child off roll be implemented.
5. The Council's website relating to Elective Home Education be updated and improved.
6. The possibilities for the provision of at least one centre where home educated students can sit exams be explored.

7. That the options for alternative provision particularly in respect of the Key Stage 4 cohort be investigated.

A progress update on the recommendations is provided in Appendix A of this document.

### **3. Implications for the Council**

#### **3.1 Working with People**

The Ad Hoc Panel consulted with parents of children who are electively home educated and listened to their views on improving relationships by having approachable, knowledgeable, and non-judgemental officers who were able to advise on all aspects of elective home education. The council is keen to work with parents to develop positive and productive relationships with families who home educate their children and are committed to providing a high-quality service.

#### **3.2 Working with Partners**

The Elective Home Education (EHE) team has developed close working relationships with schools and partner agencies. A Multi-agency approach is provided to families who may need support.

#### **3.3 Place Based Working**

Families who electively home educate live in all communities within Kirklees. The EHE Team can support individual families based on their needs in line with the EHE policy.

#### **3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality**

There will be no negative impact on the Council's commitment to tackle climate change.

#### **3.5 Improving outcomes for children**

The seven recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Panel are helping to shape and improve the council's Elective Home Education offer.

#### **3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions**

The Local Authority SEND Transformation Plan is currently underway; this includes a work strand on EHE. Proposals and business cases will be developed as part of this process.

#### **4. Next steps and timelines**

To continue to work on the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Panel and implement outstanding actions.

#### **5. Officer recommendations and reasons**

To continue to progress and implement any outstanding recommendations from the Action Plan.

#### **6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

Portfolio Holder's have previously supported the recommendations made by the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel and now welcome the update on actions taken to date.

#### **7. Contact officer**

Diane Yates, Elective Home Education Lead  
01484 221919: [diane.yates@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:diane.yates@kirklees.gov.uk)

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

[Item 11 Final Report to Cabinet.pdf \(kirklees.gov.uk\)](#)

#### **9. Service Director responsible**

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director - Learning and Early Support, Learning and Skills

## Appendix A

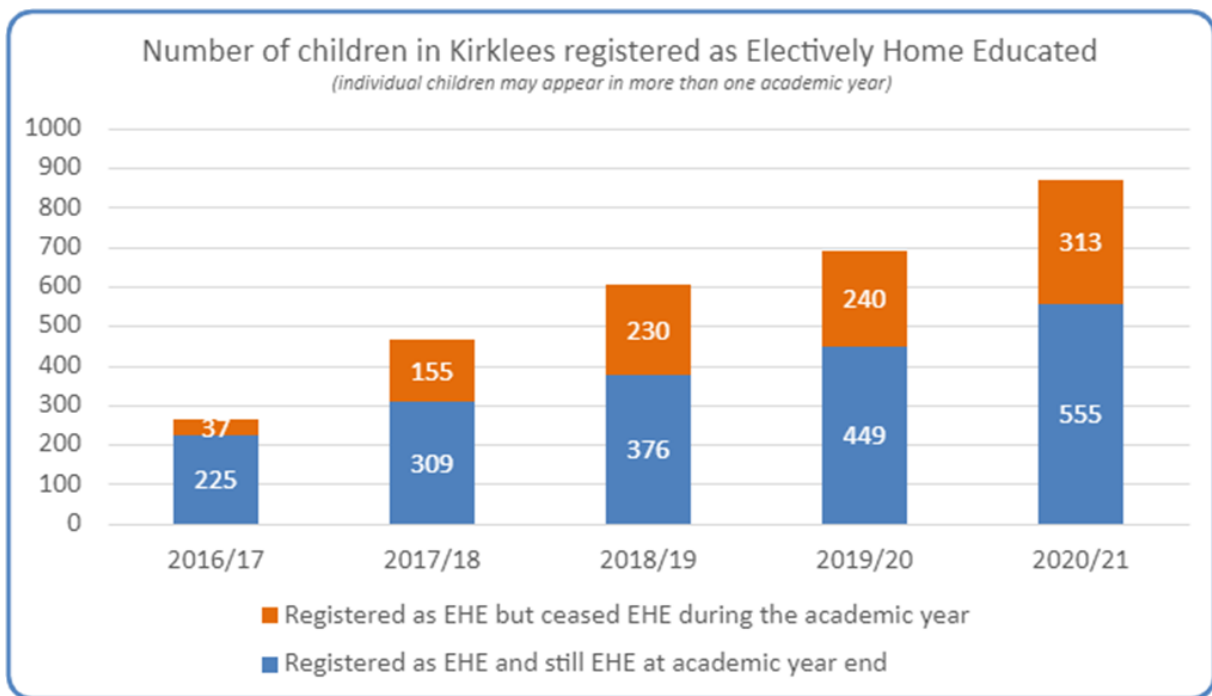
### Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel – Elective Home Education Action Plan Recommendations 1st December 2021

#### Background:

The numbers of children becoming electively home educated are continuing to increase in Kirklees; this is in line with neighbouring Local Authorities and mirrors the national trend.

The numbers of children being home educated fluctuate throughout the year; some parents choose to home educate as a temporary measure whilst waiting for a place to become available at their preferred school. Some parents decided to temporarily elect home education because of Covid-19, many of these children have now returned to formal education.

The following graph shows the numbers of electively home educated children over the past 5 academic years:



2021/2022 academic year (1.9.2021 – 10.11.2021)

- 489 current open EHE
- 101 ceased EHE
- 590 Total

**There are currently 489 children being home educated in Kirklees which equates to 0.7% of the school population as a whole. Again, this mirrors the national trend.**

## Action Plan Update:

No.	Recommendation	Update
1.	New Kirklees Policy on Elective Home Education to be produced, in consultation with home educators, at the earliest possible opportunity.	The new EHE policy, Information for Parents and Flexi-schooling guidance documents were approved by the cabinet on the 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2021. The policy has now been adopted.
2.	Consider the implementation of a dedicated Elective Home Education Team, including a qualified teacher, with dedicated budget provision sufficient to implement the policy effectively and consistently.	<p>As part of the Local Authority SEND transformation plan, we are reviewing systems, processes and roles across the wider service, including those relating to elective home education.</p> <p>In the interim, a dedicated team has been formed.</p> <p>The inclusion of a qualified teacher has been considered. Although there may be a need to have a qualified teacher assessment in situations where the legal process is being followed, these occasions are rare and therefore, this could be managed on an ad-hoc basis with the support of Kirklees Supply Service.</p>
3.	Provide a direct dedicated phone number and email address.	<p>A dedicated mailbox is now in place; <a href="mailto:EHETeam@kirklees.gov.uk">EHETeam@kirklees.gov.uk</a> – the introduction of the mailbox has been beneficial in streamlining communication and improving accessibility to the EHE team.</p> <p>The EHE team currently sits within the Education Safeguarding Service which has a dedicated telephone number allowing direct access to the EHE team for parents and professionals. We are exploring the possibility of an automated service that will enable the caller to link directly to the EHE team.</p>
4.	Implement a new form for schools to complete when taking a child off roll, for submission to the EHE Team within a short timescale.	<p>The purpose of introducing a new form for schools to complete is to ensure all relevant information is shared.</p> <p>New ways of working have now been introduced. The process includes telephone contact directly with schools upon receipt of all new EHE notifications.</p> <p>The contact with schools enables us to advise schools on the correct procedures they need to follow. It also allows us to gather relevant background information about the child. For example, information around any special educational needs, any ongoing plans in place etc.</p> <p>The introduction of this measure has been well received by schools, their feedback shows they find having a conversation with the EHE team reassuring, it provides a</p>

		<p>handover opportunity as well as checking all the correct procedures have been followed.</p> <p>The EHE team have found the school contact to be particularly useful in helping to identify and prioritise families that may need support.</p>
5.	Update and improve the relevant section of the Council's website.	Work to update and improve the EHE website is currently taking place. It will cover all the Panel's recommendations and is due to go live by the end of 2021.
6.	That the possibilities for the provision of at least one centre where home educated students can sit exams be explored, preferably one for North Kirklees and one for South Kirklees.	<p>Two independent provisions are now offering exam facilities to private candidates in North Kirklees, one of which is specifically for female students.</p> <p>We are continuing to explore other options.</p>
7.	That the options for alternative provision particularly in respect of the Key Stage 4 cohort be investigated.	<p>We have worked in partnership with Kirklees College to look at Early Access to College opportunities. A pilot started in September 2021 for a small number of children who are home educated to access 14-16 provision in South Kirklees.</p> <p>The plan is to evaluate the pilot at the end of this academic year and be in a position to offer a programme to more children who are home educated in North and South Kirklees.</p>