



## PAPER C

Purpose: For Information

# Committee report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
Date	<b>THURSDAY, 7 JUNE, 2018</b>
Title	<b>ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION</b>
Report of	<b>STEVE CROCKER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of the elective home education report is to provide an update for the Policy and Scrutiny Committee.
2. Elective home education (EHE) continues to be high profile both locally and nationally with possible changes to legislation and guidance in the pipeline. The House of Commons Briefing Paper 'Home Education in England' published in February 2018, is a comprehensive summary:  
<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05108#fullreport>
3. Elective home education continues to rise on the Isle of Wight. At the end of March 2018 there were 406 young people between the ages of five and 16 registered as home educated. This represents 2.4 per cent of the compulsory school age population on the Isle of Wight (national comparison not available currently). This compares to two per cent of the school population in March 2017.
4. At the end of March 2018, 93 per cent of registered families had engaged with the local authority's EHE Team within timescales laid out in the local authority's EHE Policy. Children who have never attended school do not have to be registered with the local authority, although some choose to do so.
5. A national survey of local authorities (LAs) in October 2017 showed that there has been an increase in the number of home educated young people in the majority of LAs. We have good information and less cross-border movement compared to other local authorities, making our data very reliable.
6. The Isle of Wight shows similar patterns to both Hampshire County Council and the emerging national picture in terms of distribution across year groups; percentage open to social care; gender split; percentage with special educational needs or disability (SEND) and reasons for parents choosing to home educate their children.

## BACKGROUND

7. Currently, statutory requirements regarding EHE are minimal:
8. The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that each local authority provides written information about elective home education that is clear, accurate and sets out the legal position, roles and responsibilities of both the local authority and parents. Local authorities should recognise that there are many approaches to educational provision, not just a school at home model. What is suitable for one child may not be for another, but all children should be involved in a learning process.
9. Local authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis. However, under Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996, local authorities shall intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education. This section states that: "If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education." However, parents do not have to accept visits by the local authority and in this case, enquiries can only be made if there is other evidence that a suitable education is not being provided, for example, from visits by other professionals or contact from family/neighbours.
10. Local authorities also have a duty under Section 175(1) of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, Section 175(1) does not give local authorities powers to enter the homes of, or otherwise see, children for the purposes of monitoring the provision of elective home education.
11. Previous attempts to increase the powers of local authorities regarding elective home education have not been successful. Proposals for reform are currently outlined in the House of Commons Briefing Paper, Home Education in England Number 5108, 13 February 2018:
12. In June 2017 Lord Soley introduced the Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill 2017-19. The bill makes provision for local authorities to be placed under a duty to "to monitor the educational, physical and emotional development of children receiving elective home education in their area" and to "assess annually each child receiving elective home education in their area." Parents of home educated children would also be required to register with the local authority. The bill is a Private Member's Bill and, as such, will only pass into law if supported by the government.
13. The Lord's Second Reading debate on the bill took place on 24 November 2017. Lord Soley at this point outlined his intention to seek to amend the bill in committee, including removing the references to local authorities checking a child's physical and emotional development.

### **Updated guidance on home education:**

14. Whether or not the EHE bill becomes law, the DfE is consulting on revised guidance on home education for parents and local authorities. Draft guidance was published on 10 April 2018:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/home-education-call-for-evidence-and-revised-dfe-a/>

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

15. The Isle of Wight Council Corporate Plan 2017-20 identifies the following which are relevant to the Elective Home Education Service:

**Corporate priorities:**

- Keeping children safe and improving their education.

**Key outcome:**

- A well-educated and skilled community.

**Key activities:**

- Work with and challenge schools' performance to ensure that all are good or outstanding.
- Maintain focus on children's safeguarding practice to ensure a high quality of service with effective systems to protect children and keep them safe.

**EHE REPORT**

**Procedures**

16. The Isle of Wight local authority undertakes the following functions in relation to children who are electively home educated:

Checks are made when a young person becomes home educated and a record made of whether they are open to social care or the Education Welfare Service. Contact is then made with the relevant team.

Information is also shared with the police and NHS.

Termly meetings are held between the local authority's service manager for Children's Services, inclusion manager and lead officer for EHE to discuss young people who are most vulnerable.

When a young person becomes EHE, parents are sent an information pack that includes information on safeguarding, including internet safety and how to access the Island Futures Team (careers advice), the School Nurse Team, the Family Information Zone and the Isle of Wight Learning Zone (EHE support group).

Any child with a special educational need or disability is given information about the Local Offer, including Short Breaks activities, during the initial visit or at the interim statement/education, health and care plan (EHCP) review.

14. Data

**Table 1: Number of students registered as electively home educated**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Isle of Wight</b>
August 2016	365
August 2017	402
March 2018	406

**Table 2: EHE students registered by year group**

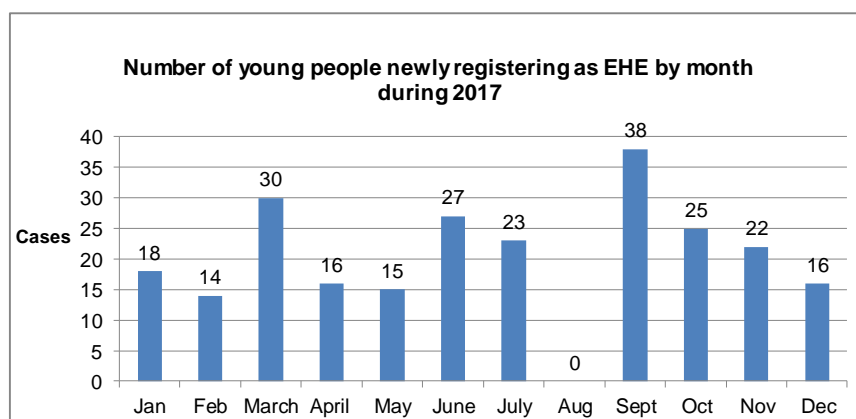
Year group	December 2016	December 2017	March 2017	March 2018
R	2	0	5	9
1	12	17	11	22
2	13	14	14	13
3	13	18	15	23
4	23	10	26	17
5	19	30	21	34
6	21	22	22	30
7	25	20	29	21
8	25	35	28	38
9	46	38	46	42
10	47	61	54	72
11	65	83	71	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>406</b>

The number of young people registered as EHE on the Isle of Wight at the end of March 2018 was 406 (including 69 at the Isle of Wight College and one at the Military Preparation College). The number of EHE students continues to increase, in line with a national trend.

184 young people became EHE between September 2017 and March 2018 (first two terms of the academic year):

- 92 from Isle of Wight secondary schools
- 63 from Isle of Wight primary schools;
- 29 from the mainland/abroad or who had never been to school.

A total of 111 young people left EHE between September 2017 and March 2018, with 93 starting or returning to school and 18 moving off-Island. This compares to 64 who returned to school between September 2016 and March 2017 and indicates a certain amount of turbulence within the Isle of Wight school population.



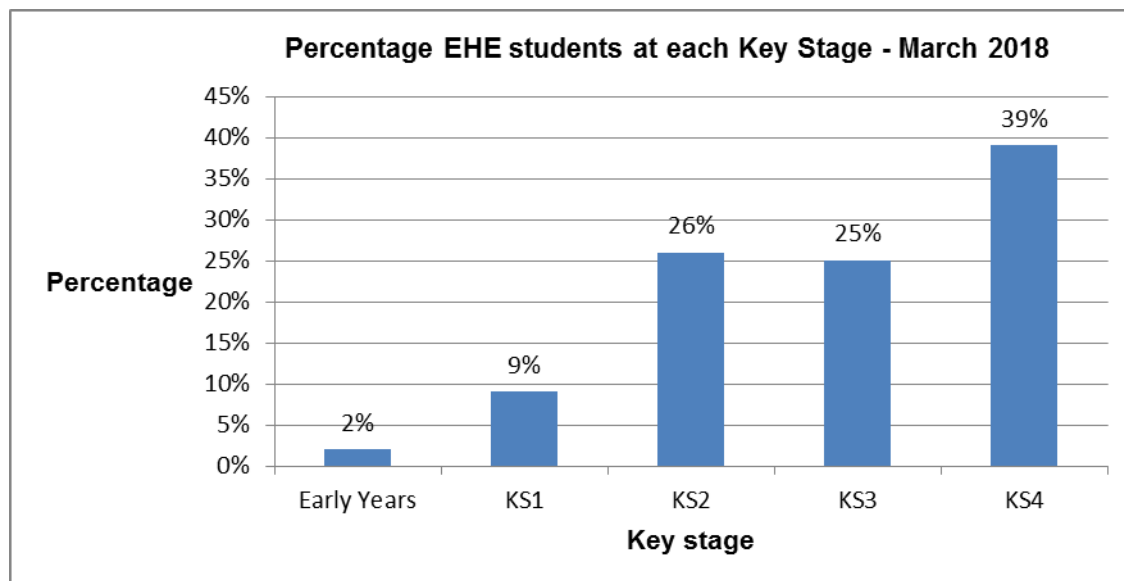
**Table 3: Gender– all young people currently registered as EHE**

Gender	December 2016	December 2017	March 2017	March 2018
Male	49%	53%	50%	50%
Female	51%	47%	50%	50%

This percentage has remained stable over recent years and reflects the national picture.

**Table 4: Current EHE young people by Key Stage**

Key Stage	Total Dec 2016	% Dec 2016	Total Dec 2017	% Dec 2017	Total March 2017	% March 2017	Total March 2018	% March 2018
Early Years	2	1%	0	0%	5	1%	9	2%
KS1	25	8%	31	9%	25	7%	35	9%
KS2	76	24%	80	23%	84	25%	104	26%
KS3	96	31%	93	27%	103	30%	101	25%
KS4	112	36%	144	41%	125	37%	157	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>		<b>348</b>		<b>342</b>		<b>406</b>	



**Table 5: Percentage of EHE students expressed as a percentage of the Isle of Wight school age population**

Date	Primary		Secondary	
August 2016	123	1.3%	242	3.2%
August 2017	135	1.4%	267	3.5%
March 2018	148	1.6%	258	3.6%

Date	Primary and Secondary combined	
August 2016	365	2.1%
August 2017	402	2.4%
March 2018	406	2.4%

**Table 6: Social care involvement**

Involvement	August 2017	December 2017	March 2018
Open to Social Care (Within last 2 years)	111 (28%)	62 (18%)	38
Currently open to Social Care	Child Protection 1 Child in Need 13 Disabled Children's Team 4 Early Help Plan 5 <b>Total 23 (6%)</b>	Child Protection 6 Child in Need 8 Disabled Children's Team 5 Early Help Plan 3 <b>Total 22 (6%)</b>	Child Protection 8 Child in Need 5 Disabled Children's Team 6 Early Help Plan 5 <b>Total 24 (6%)</b>
<b>Total EHE</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>406</b>

The figure of six per cent is broadly similar to the percentage of young people aged five to 16 on the Isle of Wight who were open to social care in the above categories at the beginning of September 2017.

**Table 7: SEND involvement**

SEND involvement	August 2017	%	December 2017	%	March 2018	%
K-SEND support	82	20%	79	23%	88	22%
Statement / EHCP	32	8%	20	6%	25	6%
Total with SEND	114	28%	99	28%	113	28%
No Known SEND	288	72%	249	72%	293	72%
<b>Total EHE</b>	<b>402</b>		<b>348</b>		<b>406</b>	

Six per cent of home educated young people have statements of special educational needs or disability or education health and care plans (EHCP). This compares to around 3.5% in the Isle of Wight school population as a whole. Nationally, the majority of local authorities surveyed in October 2017 reported a comparative figure of 0-10% for EHE students with statements or EHCPs.

**Table 8: Contact between the EHE Team and EHE families**

Type of contact	September - December 2017	January - March 2018
Advisory visits	2	4
Visits by EHE officer which are written up as reports	82	73
Written/e-mail EHE reports received	28	23
Telephone reports recorded	28	12
Annual statement/EHCP reviews/transfers; SEND meetings/admissions meetings attended by EHE officer	13	10
Social care meetings attended by EHE officer	46	18
Joint visits with social worker or education welfare officer	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>131</b>

The Isle of Wight EHE service currently consists of one full time officer with administrative support provided for six hours per week, term time only. Families are offered support if they make enquiries about EHE and throughout the period of home education via email, on the telephone or face to face.

At the end of March 2018, 93 per cent of families had engaged with the local authority's EHE team within timescales laid out in the local authority's EHE Policy (of those engaged with the local authority, 69 per cent received visits and 31 per cent provided reports). All families due a visit or new to EHE between January and March 2018 were contacted, but not all had responded by the end of term and will be followed up.

All Isle of Wight EHE families were sent a newsletter in September 2017 or when they became EHE after that point and updates are sent to the main EHE support groups for dissemination.

**Table 9: Reasons for EHE decision when provided by parents**

Reason	September 2017- March 2018	%	January-March 2018	%
Attendance	8	4%	0	0%
Behaviour/exclusion risk	13	7%	4	5%
Bullying	17	9%	5	6%
Cultural/philosophical/religious reasons	36	20%	13	16%
Emotional/physical health	32	17%	12	14%
Preferred school not available/changing school	7	4%	5	6%
Not identified	1	1%	0	0%
Other	26	14%	10	12%

SEND	13	7%	7	8%
To be confirmed	31	17%	27	33%
<b>Total new EHE cases</b>	<b>184</b>		<b>83</b>	

In many cases, there are several contributing/interacting factors but the pre-dominant reason based on the parents' view and information known about the young person/situation is recorded here. Of the 184 young people who became home educated between September 2017 and March 2018:

- parents of 36 young people (20 per cent) saw EHE as a preferred form of education/lifestyle choice;
- 62 (34 per cent) decided to home educate because of a sense that their children's special educational needs and disabilities were not being met, bullying or because of their children's poor emotional or physical health;
- an additional seven families (4 per cent) were waiting for a change of school or a place in a preferred school if they were just starting school;
- 21 young people (11 per cent) were removed from school by parents due to their behaviour, poor attendance or being at risk of exclusion.

#### 15. Planned actions

- Analyse in more detail the movement in and out of schools via EHE.
- Continue to work with Hampshire County Council to align processes and procedures.
- Involve headteachers in further developments including updating the Local Authority's EHE Policy and EHE Guidance to Schools.
- Keep up to date with changes to Department for Education EHE guidance to local authorities which is now out for consultation.
- Keep up to date with possible changes to legislation via the Private Member's Bill.

### CONSULTATION

16. The data provided in this report is based on communication with the EHE community on the Isle of Wight. We have a very good relationship with home educating families and local EHE support groups with more than 70 per cent of families accepting at least annual visits and a further 20 per cent providing written reports or telephone updates.

### FINANCIAL / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. If and when new EHE Legislation and DfE guidance are issued, there may be financial implications as policy and procedures will have to be reviewed to meet these requirements.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

19. The council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The



protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

20. Under the Equality Act 2010 we are required to have due regard to our equality duties when making decisions, reviewing services, undertaking projects, developing and reviewing policies. This must be done at the formative stage of your proposal, not retrospectively as justification for the recommendation.
21. Contact is made with every home educating family and additional support is offered where children are vulnerable due to being in need of/open to early help/social care or who have special educational needs or disabilities.

### RECOMMENDATION

22. The committee to note the contents of the report.

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