

Health and Wellbeing Board – 26 October 2023

Written question from Julian Wadsworth from Action IW

Does the Health and Well Being Board recognise the increasing levels of vulnerable children and young people on the Island not in education or in reduced education scenarios and the increasing risks that some of them are facing in terms of either being a victim or a perpetrator of crime or anti-social behaviour or exploitation?

Does the Health and Well Being Board agree that there is a need for further joined up actions across the system to address these challenges ?

Response

- **the increasing levels of vulnerable children and young people on the Island not in education or in reduced education scenarios**

In terms of Children Missing in Education (CME) we have seen an increase in the number of referrals in 22/23 due to improved practices around identifying children who are not accessing education, and strong communicating with schools and other LA's. Due to this the number of children not located remained low - 7 students in 22/23.

The number of students on the Isle of Wight being educated at home is high in comparison to other LA's. (The DfE only started collecting Elective Home Education (EHE) data from local authorities this academic year, although some national data was available via the preceding ADCS (Association of Directors of Childrens Services) annual survey.

At the end of the academic year 2022/23 there were 619 EHE pupils which represents 3.8% of the total number of children in Isle of Wight schools aged 5-16 (including 124 Year 11 pupils who left statutory education at the end of June 2023). The Isle of Wight remains renowned for having a thriving EHE community and for many parents this represents a positive parenting choice rather than a choice that increases risk for the young people involved.

Further to an invite from the DfE, the EHE Team Leader attended a DfE seminar for those with high rates of EHE in June 2023. Data shared within this forum indicated the high levels of EHE but also high levels of communication with EHE families. Additionally, the levels of communication with the EHE community have been recognised to be "of a high standard" (KIT Award 2023 Gold Standard by Education Otherwise, EHE National Support Group).

There is not sufficient evidence to support that Children who are EHE are more likely to be at risk. As of October 23, 22 of 526 EHE students are identified as being open to a Child Protection Child in Need or Early Help Plan. This is in line with those that are not EHE.

For those students on the roll of schools, the LA works with schools to support students not receiving full time provision with the aim of increasing their time in

school where possible. All schools who have reported students to be in receipt of reduced hours provision or accessing provision elsewhere have confirmed that they have either completed a risk assessment for children open to a Child Protection or Child in Need plan or confirmed that the child is not on such a plan. Schools have also confirmed that they have consulted with any relevant authorities including social care, the Virtual School or SEN for EHCP children to discuss reduced hours provision prior to implementation where appropriate.

The figure for young people, post 16 who are not accessing any form of employment, education or training (NEET) on the Isle of Wight is 3.1% This compares very favourably to a national figure of 3.7%. Education, Island Futures and Youth Justice Services work closely together to identify any such children at risk from the above, and provide support, in particular with careers advice and access to work.

- **the increasing risks that some of them are facing in terms of either being a victim or a perpetrator of crime or anti-social behaviour or exploitation.**

The Youth Justice Services have information to support that some young people are more at risk of the above, but on the island, there is no evidence to determine which education category these children fall into.

- **Does the Health and Well Being Board agree that there is a need for further joined up actions across the system to address these challenges?**

There are good actions in place, with education being represented at the majority of CP and CiN meetings. The links with Education, LA Support Services such as E&I or EHE and Social Care are good. If other agencies or support groups are aware of individuals not accessing education or who are NEET these should be reported to the appropriate agencies.