

Elective Home Education

Context

Torbay Authority supports the right of parents to educate their children at home and works on the premise that most who do so are educating their children well. We take our duties to ensure that all children who are educated at home receive a good education and are appropriately safeguarded seriously.

Nationally there is a belief that the number of home educated children are rising (a survey conducted by the Association of Directors of Children's Services ADCS) in the Autumn of 2017 suggested that numbers had risen by over 20% in the previous 18 months. This survey indicated there were 45,500 children registered nationally currently home educated.

The DfE has recently launched a Call for Evidence from all sector partners and a draft revised statutory framework for LA's setting out new duties and powers to oversee Elective Home Educated pupils. This will require the Local Authority to have greater oversight of the educational programmes of pupils.

Torbay context

It should be noted that there is no systematic collection of data prescribed centrally, Torbay like many authorities operate a voluntary registration scheme and uses levers such as removal from school roll to conduct follow up work. The figures below depict those children on the voluntary register however it should be noted that there may be a number of children that are unknown to the Local Authority.

Number of EHE pupils	
Primary phase	100
Secondary phase	155
Total	255

The information held locally informs us that there are a number of reasons for Elective Home Education;

- Parental choice
- Withdrawal of children due to attendance issues and subsequent action
- Withdrawal of children as an alternative to the child being formally excluded
- Withdrawal of children as a consequence of a school not dealing with special educational needs
- Parental dissatisfaction
- Home education as an alternative to unwanted school allocations

What is our current response to Electively Home Educated children?

The Local Authority has developed a comprehensive process to identify any known EHE pupils that are also known to SEND and safeguarding services. This workbook completed on a weekly basis enables the targeting of resources to the identified families (Appendix vi).

The Local Authority currently has a 0.6 FTE Elective Home Education Officer, this is funded through Local Authority revenue. His ability to deliver our process and the duties outlined in the draft guidance is compromised due to capacity.

This capacity issue can lead to a loss of schooling for a child or young person, making it harder for reintegration once initial visits have taken place. The delay in initial visits also means that the ability of the child to return to the original school due to off rolling is not always possible.

Financial Impact

As well as the impact on the individual pupil where a good quality home education offer is not provided, there is also a financial impact for the Local Area.

The Electively Home Educated pupils do not feature on a census return and as such no funds are drawn down into the Local Area. If all of the current pupils were registered in a school, this would equate to an annual figure of £921,262 (based on AWPU).

Conclusion

It is fully accepted that for many children and families elective home education is a lifestyle choice and can result in high quality education outcomes. However, for some children and families that have been marginalised out of a mainstream offer, we must do all we can to ensure that the child is not adversely affected. To do this we must be able to enact our protocol in a timely and robust manner.

For this reason I recommend that School Forum consider funding a full time EHE Officer at the cost of £46K in addition to the 0.6FTE currently funded by the Local Authority.

This post would only need to return an average of **12 pupils** returning to a mainstream offer to offset the cost of the post.

Recommendation

That School Forum agree to fund an Elective Home Education Officer 1 x FTE at the cost of £46k per annum.

Rachael Williams

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