

**TITLE** **Elective Home Education**

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY**

**WARD** None Specific

**LEAD OFFICER** Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

<p><b>OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY</b>  <b>To report on the education of children whose parents elect to educate at home.</b></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b>          To note the report of the Education Welfare Service.</p>	
<p>EHE Report for Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee – March 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Contents</a></p> <p><a href="#">EHE Context</a>.....2</p> <p><a href="#">Wokingham Context</a>.....2</p> <p><a href="#">LA Duties:</a>.....2</p> <p><a href="#">Statistics</a> .....3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><a href="#">SEN Pupils</a>.....3</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><a href="#">Safeguarding</a>.....4</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><a href="#">GRT</a> .....4</p> <p><a href="#">Reasons given for EHE</a>.....5</p> <p><a href="#">School Attendance Orders</a> .....5</p> <p><a href="#">POST 16 results</a>.....5</p> <p><a href="#">Development in 2019/2020</a> .....6</p>	

## Background

### EHE Context

Elective Home Education offers families and carers the opportunity to provide education for the children and young people in their care independent from Local Authority or established school provision. The law states that the responsibility for a child's education rests with their parents/carers. Whilst education is compulsory, attending school is not.

### Wokingham Context

A parent/carer can elect to home educate at any age or stage of a child's educational career. Should this option be taken from the earliest stage then the child will never be registered on any school roll and will not be known to the LA unless the information is either volunteered by the parents or we are made aware by another service. Since September 2016 the LA is informed by a school if they remove any pupil from roll for any reason at point of removal (Children Missing Education Guidance September 2016). The schools must inform the LA and the accountable service, in our case the Virtual School, and deregister the pupil from their roll. The Education Welfare Service takes responsibility for Elective Home Education which sits within the Virtual School. Since September 2019 the service offers schools and parents a meeting in school before removal from roll to inform parents of the responsibilities of Elective Home Education. If a child has an EHCP then permission must be given by the SEN Team to deregister the child. The LA holds a register of families/carers who have elected to home educate. Once registered as Elective Home Educated the families are sent information, a request for information and contacted for a home visit.

From September 2018 until September 2019 the service was without an Education Officer and capacity to have overview of Elective Home Education fully however was able to work with parents where a safeguarding issue was known or it appeared to the Local Authority that there was not suitable education in place. Since the appointment of said Education Officer in September 2019 the Service has been working hard to visit all Electively Home Educated pupils to assess suitability and effectiveness of the education in place to ensure that Wokingham is meeting its duty in relation to Electively Home Educated pupils.

Elective Home Education is parental choice and parental responsibility, including financial. Wokingham does not have a budget for this service and does not offer any form of financial support.

- Approximately 75% of home visits show an appropriate standard of education.

## Analysis of Issues

### LA Duties:

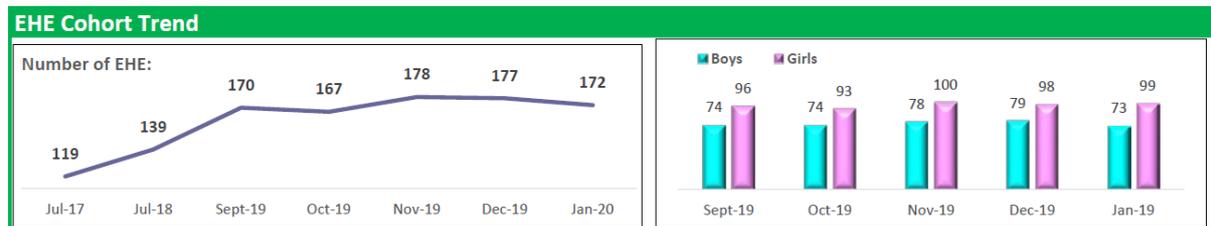
- Have a written statement on elective home education
- Set aside resources necessary to implement its policy effectively and consistently
- Consider organisational structures for dealing with home education and the related areas

- Seek to offer guidance to all known home-education families in the area about their rights and obligations, and also provide advice on good practice and available resources for parents who request it;
- Make clear in all documentation the role of the local authority, including safeguarding
- Regularly review home education policies to reflect current law and local circumstances.
- Provide clear details of complaints procedure

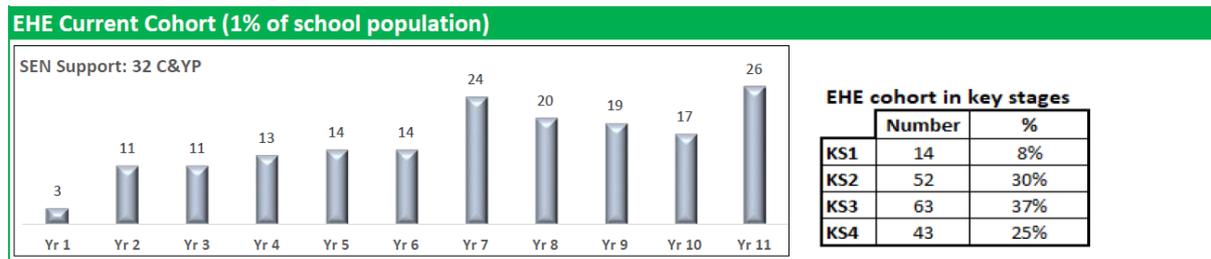
## Statistics

Currently we have 172 pupils in Wokingham Electively Home Educated (1% of the school population)

- Registration is currently not a legal obligation for either parents or authorities.

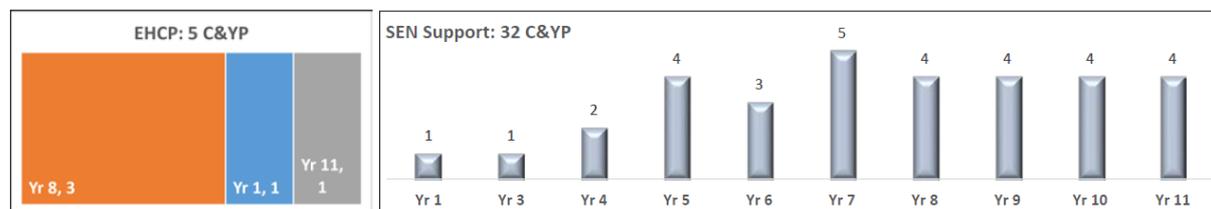


99 are female and 73 are male.



We see the largest number of pupils currently EHE during secondary education.

## SEN Pupils



- There are 5 pupils with EHCPs that are EHE which is an increase from previous years
- 32 pupils were SEN Support (K, N) when they left school (18.6%).
- There are 140 pupils with no noted SEN (81.4%). However, there are children within this group who do have a diagnosis of ASC, SEMH or other special educational needs but who do not have an EHCP
- The LA's responsibility for SEN is not removed when EHE applies, but practically to deliver those becomes very challenging. Educational Psychology are only able to offer support to home educating children when the LA maintains a statement or EHCP.

## Safeguarding

<b>Open to Social Care : 8 Pupils (4.7% of EHE cohort)</b>											
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11
CP					1				1		1
CIN											
Section 12											
Early Help										1	
Child & Family Assessment			1	1						1	
Safeguarding concerns										1	
Strategy Meetings held											

- The number of safeguarding issues in the EHE cohort remains low but has seen an increase over the years
- Where a child is on a CIN plan or Child Protection plan, the Education Officer attends all appropriate multi-agency meetings.
- When new children are withdrawn to be home educated, checks are made with social care to see whether they are known.
- Where children move areas, the Education Officer shares information with the new Local Authority before removing the child from the EHE register. The EHE Officer also has close links with school admissions to monitor those who have made new applications to school or to identify any new EHE children.
- Local Authorities have a duty for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in their areas. This includes children educated at home as well as those attending school. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires authorities to make arrangements for ensure that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Therefore the general duties of local authorities in relation to safeguarding are the same for all children, however they are educated.
- 50% of the families approached since September 2019 have accepted a home visit.
- Every family receives a report following a visit or information received.
- Of the families we have met with children have been present at all the meetings apart from 1
- A large % of the families declining a home visit have supplied evidence in forms of reports backed up with photographic evidence sent via email.

## GRT

There are currently 37 GRT pupils EHE of the 174 GRT pupils known to reside in Wokingham.

Year Group	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Numbers	1	0	8	4	11	5	8

The Education Welfare Service is regaining links with the GRT Community through the Education Officer where support & advice is offered in all education matters.

## Reasons given for EHE

Since September 2019 the Education Welfare Service has been making contact with all newly registered EHE pupils and their families and asking a set of 5 questions to ascertain the reasons for the decision to withdraw from school. These questions are also being asked at annual visits.

1. Why did you decide to withdraw your child to EHE?
2. When did you first become aware of EHE?
3. Did you discuss EHE with anyone at the school? If yes, Who?
4. Were you directed to the EHE Officer/EWS or website for more information?
5. Attendance % and Number of exclusions at de-registration

As this data set grows, we will be able to have a better understanding of reasons for withdrawal and be able to assess trends in a wider strategic context, for example identifying shortcomings in local school provision and alternative provision settings, or failures of schools to manage attendance and behaviours properly. Initial results show that the main reasons appear to be:

GRT pupils are traditionally withdrawn at secondary level. There are other pupils who have been removed for religious reasons (Christian/Muslims). There is a significant proportion who have a diagnosis of Autism or a mental health issue citing high anxiety. There are several children with severe health issues or disabilities. There are many long term home educators who do so for philosophical reasons or personal preference. There are also a large number who home educate temporarily while they wait for a space in their preferred school – either at a transition point (Year 7) or due to moving area. Dissatisfaction with the school is a rising concern and parents report that they feel that the school is not able to meet need.

## School Attendance Orders

The Education Welfare Service has issued 4 School Attendance Orders in the past 2 academic years due to education provision being deemed unsuitable.

2 issued in 2018/2019

2 issued in 2019/2020

All 4 pupils are from the GRT community.

## POST 16 results

Wokingham does not collate information on exam results and our destination data for the home educated is not good as the majority of families refuse to provide the information therefore it is difficult to assess outcomes for the EHE.

Of the 22 young people home educated last academic year:

7 went into further education (32%) (5 college 2 school 6<sup>th</sup> form)

6 went into employment without training (27%)

1 started an apprenticeship (4.5%)

1 is NEET (4.5%)

7 are unknown despite many attempts to contact (32%)

## Development in 2019/2020

This academic year the Education Welfare Service is focusing resources on ensuring that all pupils registered as EHE are receiving a suitable and effective education, which means offering **all** registered families a home visit. In addition to this we are:

- Improving information to parents and schools regarding EHE on our website
- Offering meetings in school prior to decision to withdraw
- Reviewing our policy in line with the Elective Home Education guidance for local authorities April 2019 (due May 2020)
- Building good relationships with the EHE & GRT communities
- Ensuring procedures and processes are clear, consistent and professional
- Offering training to schools and agencies regarding EHE
- Considering strategies to engage and encourage GRT pupils to remain in secondary education including home visits to support applications and support for appeals.

### RECOMMENDATION

To continue to monitor the education of children whose parents elect to educate them at home.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

There are no financial implications for this report.

***The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

#### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

#### Cross-Council Implications

N/A

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
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N/A
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<b>List of Background Papers</b>
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Children Missing Education Guidance September 2016
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