

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 25 September 2018

REPORT TITLE:	Elective Home Education
REPORT OF:	Director for Children's Services

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is about children electively home educated and provides information around the reasons why parents choose to educate their children at home. The Education Act 1996 states it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children have a suitable full time education. Where a parent decides to electively home educate their child the parent must inform the Headteacher of the school the child attends.

The Education Social Welfare (ESW) service maintains a register of these children. A visit takes place within two weeks of the parent's decision to electively home educate, followed by a visit to determine the educational progress the child is making.

Numbers of children registered as Electively Home Educated continues to rise both locally and nationally. There was a 28% increase in the number of children registered as Electively Home Educated in Wirral by comparison with the previous year.

Over the last ten academic years, the number of children electively home educated has increased. At the end of the academic year 2017/18 there were 207 children (108 secondary and 99 primary). The main reasons given by parents to educate their children at home were philosophical/religious reasons (68) followed by health reasons (31).

This report provides a summary of the issues around children electively home educated in Wirral which can be used to measure the impact of work undertaken in the following pledges:

1. Children are ready for school

The Wirral Plan indicator scrutinises the percentage of children attaining a good level of development. A supporting measure is the narrowing of the gap between the attainment of children in receipt of free school meals and those children who are not. Another supporting measure looks at the percentage of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development.

2. Young people are ready for work and adulthood

The supporting measures in this pledge are: - to reduce the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2; to narrow the gap in progress between pupils with a SEN statement/EHCP and

their peers at the end of Key Stage 2 and to increase the percentage of children looked after who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

3. Vulnerable children reach their full potential

One of the supporting measures in this pledge is the same as the one in Children are ready for school pledge e.g. at the end of the Foundation Stage the percentage of children who are looked after achieving a good level of development increases.

This report provides the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information about this cohort of children.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the report's contents and agree that it should be shared with schools.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

This report has been produced to evaluate some of the Wirral Plan pledges, in particular Children are Ready for School; Young People are Ready for Work and Adulthood and Vulnerable Children Reach their Full Potential.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This cohort of children whose parents chose to educate them at home is scrutinised by ESW officers. The data is used to determine the reasons parents have for choosing to educate their children at home. When appropriate, parents and schools can be challenged, particularly when a parent is not able to provide an appropriate curriculum.

Children on the Electively Home Education register are being monitored on a case by case basis to ensure safeguarding requirements are met.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

The Electively Home Education 2018 report will be a key document used to implement the Wirral Schools Strategy. The necessary challenge to schools with an unusually high number of Year 10 and 11 ex-pupils electively home educated will be co-ordinated by existing staff resource.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan developments to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

The contents of the report will be shared with Headteachers. The Corporate Director for Children will challenge, as appropriate, the reasons given by schools for parents' decisions to electively home educate where it would appear not to be in the best interests of the child.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

(a) Yes and impact review can be found via the following link.

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017-1>

REPORT AUTHOR: Mike Clarke
(Team manager, ESW Service)
telephone: (0151 666 4934)
email: mikeclarke@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES Elective Home Education Report 2018

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date