

Briefing Paper to OSC
November 2025
Briefing Report – Elective Home Education
1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary

1.1 To provide OSC with an overview of Elective Home Education (EHE) within Hull Children, Young People and Family Services as of November 2025. It outlines current statistics, key issues, and safeguarding considerations, as well as the role of Education Welfare Services (EWS) in supporting families who choose home education.

1.2 Key highlights include:

- **Current Position:** 844 children are currently electively home educated, with 61 holding Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). There are 25 School Attendance Orders (SAOs) in process.
- **Disparities** may exist between reasons cited by schools and those provided by parents for choosing EHE. Categories such as 'Unknown' and 'No Reason Given' remain prevalent.
- **Safeguarding:** While AIOs undertake regular safeguarding training, legislative constraints limit direct observation in some cases, as families may decline home visits.
- **Support and Engagement:** EWS continues to provide guidance, curriculum advice, and transition support for families considering a return to school. Collaborative events with partner agencies aim to address broader wellbeing and educational needs.
- **Legal Framework:** The local authority maintains its statutory duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure all children receive a suitable education, applying a support-first approach before considering enforcement through SAOs.

1.3 Elective Home Education (EHE) Summary:

Category	Number
Total EHE Cases	844
Child Protection (CP)	3
Child in Need (CIN)	26
Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)	61
Cases Closed This Academic Year	109
Pupils Refused Statutory Assessment Prior to EHE	32
School Attendance Orders in Process	25

2. Background

- 2.1 Elective Home Education (EHE) occurs when parents choose not to send their child to school full-time and assume full responsibility for providing a suitable, full-time education outside the school setting.
- 2.2 The Department for Education's guidance (April 2019) acknowledges that parents may choose EHE for a variety of reasons, which are often complex and overlapping. Schools are required to notify the Education Welfare Service (EWS) when a child is withdrawn for EHE, typically via an exit questionnaire. While schools are encouraged to meet with parents to discuss implications and responsibilities, attendance at such meetings is not mandatory. Consequently, reasons recorded by schools may differ from those provided by parents, or may be listed as "unknown."

3. Issues for Consideration

Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse Concerns

- 3.1 Access and Inclusion Officers (AIOs) receive regular safeguarding training and follow established procedures when concerns arise, including risk assessments and referrals to Children's Social Care. EHE families may decline home visits, opting instead to submit annual reports, which aligns with current legislation. This limits direct observation of some children.

Categories of Reasons

- 3.2 Due to the non-exhaustive nature of reasons for EHE, categories such as "Other," "Unknown," and "No Reason Given" have been used. Efforts are made to clarify reasons during initial EHE meetings, though disclosure is voluntary. The DFE has now introduced a set of categories to be used and therefore moving forward, the service will record the category that best fits the description provided. It is worth noting however that only one reason can be recorded, when in fact there may be several reasons provided by the parent.

Role of Education Welfare Services

- 3.3 EWS provides:
- Home Visits (with consent) to assess suitability of education and offer guidance.
 - Support and Advice on curriculum planning, legal responsibilities, and access to resources.
 - Transition Assistance for families returning to school, including collaboration with SEND teams.
 - Safeguarding Oversight in partnership with health, social care, and other agencies.
 - Events and workshops to support EHE families, addressing topics such as mental health, social integration, and post-16 education pathways.

- 3.4 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents must provide an efficient, full-time, and suitable education. Local authorities have a duty under Section 436A to identify children not receiving such education. Where education is deemed unsuitable, a School Attendance Order (SAO) may be issued.

Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Families

Contact Officer: Hayley O'Grady

Background Documents: None