

Independent Review of Home Education in England

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire about processes for supporting and monitoring home education. Completion of the questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Responses will be completely confidential and used only for the purposes of the independent review.

The Government is committed to ensuring that systems for keeping children safe are as robust as possible. As part of this continuing commitment, an independent review of home education will assess whether the right systems are in place for ensuring that home educated children have access to the five Every Child Matters outcomes. This includes whether Government should do more to support local authorities in discharging their duties in relation to home educated children. The full terms of reference for the review are available online at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/homeeducation

As organisations responsible for ensuring the safety, wellbeing and education of children and young people in your localities, we very much value your input into this review.

You may find it helpful to read through the questionnaire before attempting to complete it. Please note you cannot save the questionnaire and go back to it at a later date. Therefore, if you need to discuss responses with colleagues before submitting the form, please do so before attempting to complete the questionnaire. Please also note that we ask that the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children and Young People 'sign off' the questionnaire before it is submitted and you will be asked to confirm whether that has happened at the end of this questionnaire.

Thank you for taking time to respond to these questions.

[Privacy statement](#)

About your local authority

Q1 Name of LA

Lancashire

Q2 Tel. No of main contact

01695 585737

Q3 E-mail of main contact

angela.robinson@lancashire.gov.uk

Q4 Would you be willing to take part in the next phase of the research in February/March (including in-depth interviews with key personnel in your organisation)?

yes

Q5 Which team(s) have the main responsibility for supporting and monitoring home educated children within the local authority and other agencies?

Lancashire Education Inclusion Service (Elective Home Education Team)

Q6 List all teams / professionals involved in supporting home educating families

LEIS (EHEteam). Wider support available through the LA, eg Pupil Access team where entry/return to mainstream school is considered

Children's Integrated support team wher additional needs are identified eg Integrated Assesemnt support team/Children and Parent support Service/ SEN assesement team for Statemented children

Q7 List all teams / professionals involved in monitoring home educating families.

LEIS (EHE team) and SEN Assessment team

Q8 Describe how you ensure collaboration and communication between these teams / individuals

Regular meetings, formal referral processes, email contact as required, flowcharts and protocols

Data and Tracking

Q9 How many children are currently home educated in your local authority of primary age (Registered with LA)

102

Q10 How many children are currently home educated in your local authority of primary age (Non-registered with LA)

Not known

Q11 How many children are currently home educated in your local authority of secondary age (Registered with LA)

377

Q12 How many children are currently home educated in your local authority of secondary age (Non-registered with LA)

Not known

Q13 Total (Registered with LA)

479

Q14 Total (Non-registered with LA)

Not known

Q15 Are these figures accurate or based on estimates?

Accurate

Q16 If accurate, where do you get this data from?

Registration forms completed by parents and entered onto our MIS database systems

Q17 If accurate, how do you know the data is accurate?

registration forms completed by parent are in the majority of cases supported by information from the school where they have been on roll. in addition our data base refers only to children who are Electively Home Educated

Q18 If estimated, what data have you used to arrive at this figure? (List all sources)

n/a

Q19 How confident is the local authority in the accuracy of this data?

Very confident

Q20 How often does the local authority get updated data? (List frequency for each source separately)

Annual and termly total reviews, but info regarding children going into/out of EHE occurring daily. sources either parents or schools

Q21 What proportion (as a percentage) of your home educated population is stated for SEN? (please state whether accurate or estimate)

5% accurate

Q22 What proportion (as a percentage) of your home educated population is non-stated for SEN (please state whether accurate or estimate)

95% accurate

Q23 What proportion (as a percentage) of your home educated population is from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller heritage (please state whether accurate or estimate)

25% accurate

Q24 What proportion (as a percentage) of your home educated population is made up of other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups

unknown at this time

Q25 Please list which BME groups.

n/a

Q26 Do you believe the local authority knows about all the home educated children in your area?

- Yes, we are confident we know about all home educated children in the area
- We think we know about the vast majority of home educated children in the area
- We probably do not know about a fair number of home educated children in the area
- We probably do not know about a significant proportion of home educated children in the area

Q27 Do you think that you will be better able to track children in your area in the near future? e.g. planned changes to your own systems, ContactPoint, other system improvements?

- yes
- no

Q28 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

Although work on refining protocol agreements between teams, and updating Children Missing Education policy and procedures in light of new guidance will go some way towards improvement in tracking, the lack of requirement of parents to register their child /children on EHE remains the major barrier to effective tracking. Children who have never been on a school roll and who do not register for EHE will remain difficult to track.

Supporting Home Educating Families

Q29 How does the local authority ensure families know about their rights and responsibilities in relation to home education? (List all approaches used)

Information available via website. Information pack sent to all interested parents. awareness raising amongst other teams working with families and with Governing bodies and schools

Q30 What support does your local authority provide to home educating families? (List all forms of support offered)

Two initial visits followed by annual visits. Staemented children have Annual Reviews supported by SEN team and specific support can be targetted. Advice to parents where concerns exist which can be supprted by additional visits. Advice available via phone between visits if required. Parents are signposted to appropriate resources, courses, qualification routes..largely online

Q31 How does the local authority let families know about the services provided to support them in home educating their children? (List all approaches used)

website. Customer contact centre. Information packs sent to interested parents. Information supplied to schools

Assessment and Monitoring

Q32 Following the initial assessment visit, are further monitoring visits made to a home educated child?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q33 If yes, how often, on average, are these carried out?

More than twice a year

Twice a year

Once a year

Less than once a year

Q34 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

More visits if concerns exist. May be less than annual if meetings rescheduled at parents' request.

Q35 On average, how often is the child seen when a visit is made?

- Always, at each visit
- Usually, but not always
- Sometimes
- Never
- Depends on the child / circumstances

Q36 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

In some instances parents decline visits, and in such instances neutral venues are sought. When engagement is declined, reports only may be available annually. Sometimes parents specifically refuse access to the child/children, or the child may be elsewhere receiving provision at the time of the visit.

Q37 If the child is seen, where is s/he usually seen?

- In the home
- At the home, but do not go inside
- Another venue
- Depends on the child / circumstances

Q38 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

May be seen at parental request at other venues

Q39 If you are not permitted access to a child, is any further action taken?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q40 If yes, what further steps are taken?

Depends on circumstances and evidence supplied.

- 1) Another visit may be scheduled
- 2) Referral to CME may be appropriate
- 3) could be considered for Child in Need/CAF
- 4) Referral under Child Protection procedures
- 5) Any other action as circumstances dictate

**Q41 How is the suitability of the education provided to the child assessed?
(Please describe)**

Using teacher's professional judgement. Where possible, inclusion of testing results or other benchmarking evidence if made available. as a minimum, some evidence of progression between visits

Q42 Is the local authority clear about what the definition of a 'suitable education' is?

yes

no

Q43 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

Within the LEIS (EHE team) work is underway to moderate teacher level judgements and to ensure consistency of approach and judgement. However, the absence of any National Guidelines on standards which form a framework for a suitable education makes any local judgement as to suitability or otherwise difficult to prove.

Q44 Does the local authority have systems in place to track the educational progress of home educated children?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q45 Please use this space to add further detail to the answer you have just given

Tracking systems currently under development

Q46 Of the home educated children in your area of whom you have knowledge, what proportion (as a percentage) in your estimation is receiving a suitable, full time (20hrs a week) education? (Please describe)

Unable to estimate percentages as it depends on the understanding of "suitable" . currently this would vary depending on the subjective judgement of the officer. however, it is worth mentioning that we believe that amongst those parents who have elected to home educate because of philosophical reasons the percentage would be quite high. Amongst Y10 and 11 students who have elected to home educate because of reactive reasons I would expect, due to the numbers who refuse or decline any engagement, that the percentage would be quite low.

Q47 Does the local authority take any further steps if a home educated child's education was found to be unsuitable or not full time?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q48 Please use this space to add further detail to the answer you have just given

Advice for improvement given, followed by opportunity to improve and revisit. where no improvement takes place case is referred to CME for inclusion on database and follow up intervention, including duty to investigate. Collaboration with other LAs if appropriate

Q49 Does the local authority face any challenges in assessing whether home educated children receive a suitable education?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q50 If you answered yes to Q49, please describe the challenges and what you think could be done to overcome these

- 1) lack of duty on parents to register child for EHE
- 2) Lack of duty on parents to provide evidence
- 3) Absence of any national definition of "Suitable" education or common framework
- 4) Lack of duty on parents to meet with LA officer

5) Staffing and resources within the LA as numbers of EHE children increase

This could be improved by:

- 1) A requirement to meet and provide evidence to the LA officer at least annually
- 2) the development of guidance on Standards of evidence to promote consistent national benchmarking. this is especially relevant now in the light of the Participation age and our ability to make a judgement against EHE children as to whether they are achieving Level 2 or equivalency.

Q51 Thinking about your local area, in the last five years, how many cases have you come across that use the premise of home education as a 'cover' for child abuse, forced marriage or other aspects of child neglect?

0

Q52 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given. Please include the number of Serious Case Reviews you know about that have a home education element.

Advice from safeguarding and child protection teams reveal some are suspected but none are known to have Home Education elements

Q53 Do you think the current system for safeguarding children who are educated at home is adequate?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q54 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

Non requirement to meet annually or to have child present

Non requirement of parents to notify LA of children being home educated

Frequency of contact

Whereas we have no reason to believe that children educated at home are at greater risk than any other, they are at greater risk of any abuse/neglect not being identified or being identified more slowly, and of interventions being implemented slowly if at all.

Q55 Do you think that home educated children in your local authority are able to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes? Please say why you think that for each of the five outcomes

Be healthy.. in the majority of cases the LA officer sees the child and can make a judgment but not possible for those who do not agree to visits or have child available.

Stay safe ... see answers to Q 53/54 . Majority.. Yes Minority.. No. Failure to clarify how children who are home educated against exploitation under child employment is an issue

Enjoy and achieve... Some will have possible expectaions and attainment of high standards. others may not achieve any formal qualifications.

Achieve Economic wellbeing... Opportuniies to develop social /communication skills. some EHE children do not access the opportunities which would come through a school placement ie Connexions service or absence of formal qualifications as an expectation. this would impact on their economic wellbeing

Make a positive contribution... Children on EHE have in many cases fewer opportunities for their efforts to be recognised in the wider community compared to children in schools

Q56 Do you think there should be any changes made to the current system for supporting home educating families?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q57 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

Guidance suggests that LAs offer support but this is not a duty . The absence of Statutory duty requirement for EHE can cause funding issues. If it were a Statutory duty on LAs to provide this support, funding streams may be easier

Q58 Do you think there should be any changes made to the current system for monitoring home educating families and ensuring that home educated children are able to achieve the five outcomes?

Yes

No

Don't know

Q59 Please use this space to add detail to the answer you have just given

- 1) Parents required to notify LA when they elect to home educate.
- 2) Parents and child/children required to meet with and provide evidence of education to LA officer at least annually
- 3) Requirement of parent to notify the LA when leaving the area as potentially they could be missing for months between the last annual visit and re registering with a new authority
- 4) A change in regulations requiring schools to remove children from roll when EHE is decided. A 3 month cooling off/handover period is suggested to allow registartion and initial EHE visits to take place and reintegration to school if decision to EHE found to be unsuitable.
- 5) A national agreement as to what constitutes a "suitable education" with achievement standards.

Declaration

Q60 Has the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children and Young People seen and agreed with the answers you have given above?

- DCS
- Lead member