



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. You may find it helpful to read through the questionnaire before attempting to complete it. Click on the box to select your option and it will put a cross in. The text boxes are expandable, you need to start typing in the grey boxes. **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 on-line 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.

Please note, the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children and Young People are asked to sign off the response to this questionnaire before submitting it.

Please return your completed questionnaire by **Friday 6 February** to homeeducation.review@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Or by post to:

Elizabeth Green
Home Education Review
DCSF
Level 2
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Thank you for taking time to respond to these questions.

If you have any queries about this form, please phone Elizabeth Green on 020 79256898.

Section One – About your local authority

Name of LA	Staffordshire
Tel. No of main contact	01785 278 265
E-mail of main contact	olaf.hindmarsh@staffordshire.gov.uk
Would you be willing to take part in the next phase of the research in March (including in-depth interviews with key personnel in your organisation)?	Yes

1. Who is involved in supporting and monitoring home educated children within the local authority and other agencies?

Team with main responsibility -	
<i>List all teams / professionals involved</i>	
Support	Monitoring
Elective Home Education Service & West Midlands Consortium Services for Travelling Children, Schools and Families. Connexions Staffordshire - Sept guarantee & Transitional Reviews (SEN)	Elective Home Education Service. SEN Assessment Team - annual review for those youngsters in receipt of annual / transition reviews
<i>Describe how you ensure collaboration and communication between these teams / individuals</i> <i>Joint meetings. Inclusion Manager line manages both services. EHE co-ordinator and team members meet to review and share intelligence data and work on effective partnership approaches ie alternative provision for yr 10 & 11 youngsters.</i>	

Section Two – Data and Tracking

2. How many children are currently home educated in your local authority?

Phase	Registered with LA	Non-registered children
Primary age	98	reportedly 25% unknown
Secondary age	161	reportedly 25% unknown

Total	259	unknown
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3. Are these figures accurate or based on estimates?

Accurate ☒

Where do you get this data from?

Capita "ONE" centrally stores the details of known EHE children and Young People. Supporting and underpinning this is a rigorous database within Excel .

How do you know this data is accurate?

Fortnightly checks are undertaken by EHE manager and Admin Officer to ensure details are accurate. At the end of the academic year annual data is collected in an agreed format with other Local Authorities (voluntarily)

Estimate ☐

What data have you used to arrive at this figure?(List all sources

4. How confident are you in the accuracy of this data ?

Very confident ☒

Fairly confident ☐

Don't know ☐

Not very confident ☐

Not at all confident ☐

5. How often does the local authority get updated data?

List frequency for each source separately

Travellers - annually (+ as and when during school terms); admissions and EWS / Connexions referrals

6. Thinking about your home educated population, what proportions have the following characteristics? Please say whether these figures are based on estimates or accurate data.

Characteristic	Proportion	<i>Choose option</i>
Statement for SEN	4.2	Estimate
Non-statemented SEN	95.8	Estimate
Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage	12.3	Estimate
Other BME Group (<i>please state below</i>)	4.2	Estimate
•		Estimate
•		Estimate
•		Estimate

7. 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 ☐

8. 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 ☒

Why do you think that?
There will be a number of families who would be willing to engage with the local authority.....but... (see below)

No ☒

Why do you think that?
BUT....A number of families will not want to work with the local authority and will invoke "shielding" for their children and also want to hide behind the non-statutory guidance ie not enable the LA to discuss arrangements with child/young person. It will therefore be impossible to ensure that CYP is achieving the ECM outcomes. Safeguarding a major issue!!!!!!!

Don't know ☐

Section Three – Supporting Home Educating Families

9. How does the local authority ensure families know about their rights and responsibilities in relation to home education?

List all approaches used

The local authority produces guidance notes to parents, which are distributed when enquiries are made and also when EHE registration commences. This information is also available as downloadable documentation website www.sln.org.uk/home . The information is reviewed annually.

10. What support does your local authority provide to home educating families?

List all forms of support offered

Telephone advice / EHE Welcome Pack/ Connexions Service information, Immunisation Schedule, E-safety guidance for parents; voluntary EHE groups.

EHE consultants liaise with families to undertake periodic reviews. Partnership support also available EWS /Parent Partnership and Social Care.

Parents complete " customer satisfaction" evaluations:

Were you happy with the visit?

Was the visit helpful?

How confident do you feel to continue education at home?

How could we improve our service?

The EHE website :

<http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/Curriculum/Services/HomeEducation/> provides:- curriculum online subject information ; useful weblinks to voluntary EHE groups; details of study guide resources (CGP); NHS link; E safety (mediated social networking); GCSE advice (exam boards) exam timetable; employing a private tutor; free resources ie Ordnance Survey Maps ;

11. How does the local authority let families know about the services provided to support them in home educating their children?

List all approaches used

Telephone advice / EHE Welcome Pack/ Connexions Service information, Immunisation Schedule, E-safety guidance for parents; voluntary EHE groups. EHE consultants liaise with families to undertake periodic reviews. Partnership support also available EWS /Parent Partnership and Social Care.

Section Four – Assessment and Monitoring

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

Yes ☒ **No** ☐ **Don't know** ☐

12a. If yes, how often, on average, are these carried out?

More than twice a year ☒ How often?
Twice a year ☐ Once a year ☒
Less than once a year ☐

Additional comments

Generally EHE reviews are undertaken annually, however where there are some concerns then twice a year. Where there are serious concerns monthly reviews are undertaken until the provision improves. If the provision is not satisfactory then a referral to EWS for SAO

13. 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 ☐ *Please describe*

There are occasions when parents elect not to have a visit/meeting, but instead provide a retrospective record of activities undertaken. On other occasions the CYP is not present at a meeting (travellers). With the roll out of ContactPoint some parents have refused any "further contact"!!!

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

In the home ☒ At the home, but do not go inside ☐
Another venue ☐ Please specify libraries cafes
Depends on the child / circumstances ☐ *Please describe*

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

Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know ☐

15a. If yes, what further steps are taken?

EWS are informed to establish what arrangements the family are making. If EWS is not able to establish the whereabouts and cannot be satisfied then the CYP details would be added to CME register - A "Safe and Well check" may be carried out where no contact at all - via police Please describe

16. How is the 'suitability' of the education provided to the child assessed?

Please describe

Parents are able to provide documentary evidence which demonstrated that their CYP is engaged in a range of activities - the evidence can be written verbal electronic or graphic. The CYP ought to be acquiring new and varied opportunities to further develop their personal learning, knowledge and thinking skills and understanding.

Particular emphasis should be upon reading, writing, mathematics, ICT, creative and problem solving / project work.

An opportunity for the CYP to discuss their achievements and match with parents aspirations. The EHE provision should be well resources.

Staffordshire County Council feels that on its own no EHE philosophy is enough, and that further evidence of an endorsement is required.

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

Yes ☐

Why is that?

No ☒

Why is that?

There are no national set standards.

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

Yes ☒ **No** ☐ **Don't know** ☐

If yes, please describe the system

Within Staffordshire the EHE co-ordinator reviews all contact records before these are distributed to parents or stored electronically.

Descriptors which indicate the progress of a child are written into the record :

EHE Team – educational provision at home: concluding judgements. Officer & Parental Guidance for Frequency of contact.

	Judgement	Descriptor
1.	Exceeds Expectations	Annual review only: parents provide a good match which meets the child's age, aptitude, and ability; personalised learning.
2.	Satisfactory	Some recommendations made; annual review with the possibility of interim phone call(s) to ensure continuity and progression.
3.	Some Concerns	Lack of evidence in a variety of provision i.e. drafted/redrafted written work; graphic / annotated drawings; photographic portfolio/record; video; practical demonstration / presentation or demonstrate any flair / expertise / strength. Detailed advice given (interim review 3-6 months).
4.	Serious Concerns	Complex case where other agencies are involved or may need to engage. Lack of intent / purpose / direction / resourcefulness. "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable; a] to his age, ability and aptitude and b] to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise. Section 437 to 443 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on the Local Authority to take action if it appears that a child / young person is not receiving a "suitable education". "If it appears that the child/ young person is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise,...[the local education authority] shall serve a notice, in writing, on the parent requiring him to satisfy.....that the child is receiving such education". Detailed requirements outlined (review within a month)
5.	Non Engagement	Referral to EWS / CME / Missing Children. EHE ceases.

Recommendations for year 10 /11:

**In Yr 10 undertake work experience / seek advice from
Staffordshire Connexions.
Register with HEAS or Education Otherwise for advice on examinations
centres.
Establish college links - continue to review educational progress on an
annual basis unless feedback from colleges indicates otherwise.**

19. Of the home educated children in your area of whom you have knowledge, what proportion in your estimation are receiving a suitable, full time (20hrs a week) education?

Please describe
80%

20. 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 ☐

20a. If yes, what steps are then taken?

Please describe

4. Serious Concerns

Complex case where other agencies are involved or may need to engage. Lack of intent / purpose / direction / resourcefulness.

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable;

a] to his age, ability and aptitude and

b] to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise.

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Detailed requirements outlined (review within a month)

5. Non Engagement Referral to EWS / CME / Missing Children. EHE ceases.

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

Yes ☒ No ☐ Don't know ☐

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

Avoidance tactics by some parents which mean that the LA cannot see the child or the learning environment.

It should be a requirement that parents must register and agree to undertake a review of their provision by a LA EHE officer where the child is also present and can describe their achievements.

A Statutory code of practice ought to support the rights of the child and the responsibilities of parents and Local authorities.

22. Thinking about your local area, in the last five years¹, 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?

Please specify number²

Additional comments

Please include the number of Serious Case Reviews you know about that have a home education element

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

Yes ☐ *Why do you think that?*

No ☒ *Why do you think that?*

A child may never be seen; the Education Act does not require this!

¹ Since January 2003

² NB – this data will not be aggregated or used in any other way. This data will provide an overall sense of the scale of this issue.

Where the local authority may have undertaken regular reviews there are no guarantees that once these have taken place that the CYP would be safe until the next review!

Don't know ☐

24. Do you think that home educated children in your local authority are able to achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes?

Yes ☒ Please say why for each of the five outcomes.

Be healthy

If this an intergral part of the parents philosophy / approach and they have the resources, then it would be planned for, they would know how to achieve this.

Stay safe

If this an intergral part of the parents philosophy / approach and they have the resources, then it would be planned for, they would know how to achieve this.

Enjoy and achieve

If this an intergral part of the parents philosophy / approach and they have the resources, then it would be planned for, they would know how to achieve this.

Make a positive contribution

If this an intergral part of the parents philosophy / approach and they have the resources, then it would be planned for, they would know how to achieve this.

Achieve economic well-being

If this an intergral part of the parents philosophy / approach and they have the resources, then it would be planned for, they would know how to achieve this.

No ☒ Please say why for each of the five outcomes.

Be healthy

Where parents do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding or coaching skills they will struggle - certain complex cases will require

multi agency support.

Stay safe

Where parents do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding or coaching skills they will struggle - certain complex cases will require multi agency support.

Enjoy and achieve

Where parents do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding or coaching skills they will struggle - certain complex cases will require multi agency support.

Make a positive contribution

Where parents do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding or coaching skills they will struggle - certain complex cases will require multi agency support.

Achieve economic well-being

Where parents do not have the necessary knowledge, understanding or coaching skills they will struggle - certain complex cases will require multi agency support.

25. Do you think there should be any changes made to the current system for supporting home educated families?

Yes ☒ *What should they be?*

Access to resources - facilities in school / sports halls/ Extended services - an entitlement

No ☐ *Why do you think that?*

Don't know ☐

26. 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 ☒ *What should they be?*

All CYP are registered and monitored - parents have a duty to demonstrate how their child is receiving a suitable and efficient education to cover the key areas of:

A All ages (5-16)

- Understanding English, communication and languages
- Mathematical understanding
- Scientific and technological understanding
- Human, social and environmental understanding
- Understanding physical health and well-being
- Understanding the arts and design.

B Personal Learning and Thinking Skills - to be considered during Key Stage 3 & 4

Independent enquirer - process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it; take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes.

Reflective learners - evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success; monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning.

Self manager - organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement; actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities.

Team worker - work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part; listen to and take account of different views; form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

Creative thinker - think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections; try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of value.

Effective participator - actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them; play a full part in the life of their home, college, workplace or

wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves.

Parents should give some thought of how they can best present evidence of learning of A , and B, so that the local authority can be satisfied that the child is receiving a suitable education. For instance this could be as

- drafted/redrafted written work;
- graphic / annotated drawings;
- photographic portfolio/record;
- video;
- Practical demonstration / presentation or demonstrate any flair / expertise / strength.
- Third party testimonials
- Reading log
- Project(s)

No ☐ *Why do you think that?*

Don't know ☐

Thank you for taking time to respond to these questions.

Please return your completed questionnaire, by **Friday 6 February** to homeeducation.review@dcsh.gov.uk or by post to the address on page one. If you are returning the questionnaire electronically, please add the name of the DCS and Lead Member in the signature box.

Declaration

I agree that the information supplied in this questionnaire is a true reflection of practice in this local authority.

Signed Peter Traves
February 2009
Director of Children's Services

Date 10

Signed Peter Beresford
February 2009
Lead Member for Children

Date 10

The information you have provided may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that this may not exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want to keep your response confidential

