

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel

DATE: 7th December 2017

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WARD(S): All

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

1. **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to provide information on the current procedures used to monitor children educated at home in Slough and to provide details of national policy developments.

2. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that members note the legal context within which the service operates and the current procedures for monitoring home education.

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities applicable to this report**

1. Protecting vulnerable children

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes applicable to this report**

Outcome 1 – Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

For 2017/18 it is estimated that the cost of providing the service outlined below will be £42000. This is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and it is planned that funding will continue at this level in 2018/19, subject to changes in legislation and/or the number of pupils educated at home.

(b) **Risk Management**

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation
The Council continues to follow the current procedures	The risks are as follows: The LA is not aware of pupils educated at home.	There will be some pupils educated at home who

	<p>Pupils educated at home do not receive a suitable education.</p> <p>Parents refuse to allow annual visits.</p> <p>Annual visits are not completed on time</p>	<p>have not attended school and the LA may not be aware of these pupils. This risk cannot be reduced unless parents are required to register to home educate</p> <p>Annual visits are undertaken if parents give consent.</p> <p>The LA supports and advises parents in a constructive way to reduce the likelihood of them refusing an annual visit. Parents unwilling to consent to a home visit are asked to provide information about the education being provided.</p> <p>The LA commissions a school to carry out the visits. Performance is monitored. If there is an increase in the number of pupils educated at home, visits may be less frequent. The contract to provide the visits is reviewed annually according to the number of home educated pupils</p>
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications. There is no legal requirement for parents to register with LAs if they choose to home educate and the LA cannot require parents to co-operate with annual visits.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

None required.

(e) Workforce

There are no workforce implications relating to this report.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 Parents and carers have a duty to provide an education for their children but there is no requirement for this to take place in school, therefore parents do have the option to provide education at home if they wish. There are currently 121 children known to be home educated in Slough.
- 5.2 There is no national compulsory registration system, so there will be some families home educating who are not known to the LA.
- 5.3 If parents contact the LA about home educating they are given advice about the implications of this in terms of their responsibilities. If their child is on roll at school they must advise the school in writing before home educating. Their details are then added to the LA's home education database.
- 5.4 Each pupil known to be home educated is offered an annual monitoring visit. The LA has no legal power to insist on a visit and relies on parents to co-operate. Two members of staff visit and at least one is a qualified teacher. The visits are undertaken by Littledown School staff. The LA has a service level agreement with the school and staff complete a report following each visit. The LA reviews the reports and decides on the next steps. In most cases the education provided is satisfactory and no further action is taken. Some parents require additional support and advice. In a minority of cases there is no education being provided and steps are taken to return the pupil to school.
- 5.5 Details of the pupils known to be home educated are below

Number of pupils known to be home educated	121 (65 primary & 56 secondary)
Vulnerable children	3 pupils – active social care involvement 3 pupils – active early help involvement 6 pupils – EHC plan
RAG rating in terms of education provided	Red 6 Amber 11 Green 69 Not yet assessed 35 (mainly new additions to the database)
Gender	Male - 62 Female - 59

Year Group	Number pupils
Under 5's	6
Yr 1	7
Yr 2	4
Yr 3	14
Yr 4	8
Yr 5	9
Yr 6	17
Yr 7	10
Yr 8	12
Yr 9	12
Yr 10	8
Yr 11	14
Total	121

5.6 The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) completed a survey of LAs in October 2017. A summary of the findings are in Appendix 1 below. The ADCS recommends a registration system is introduced to ensure that LAs are aware of the pupils who are home educated in their area and that LAs have the powers to monitor the education being provided.

5.7 A private members bill sponsored by Lord Soley and known as the Home Education (Duty of Local Authorities) Bill, is due to have its second reading in the House of Lords in late November. A third reading would follow and then it would move to the House of Commons. The bill would give Local Authorities powers to monitor home education and parents would be required to register if they intended to home educate. The DfE are considering issuing new guidance to LAs on home education.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

6.1 There are no comments from other committees

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 The LA provides information, advice and guidance to parents who are home educating or considering home education. Once parents have made the decision to home educate the LA monitors how the education is provided as far as possible within the current guidance and regulations. There are proposals to tighten the regulations in a private members bill but this is in its early stages.

8. **Appendices Attached**

'A' - Summary Analysis of the ADCS Elective Home Education Survey October 2017

9. **Background Papers**

Home Education (Duty of local Authorities) Bill 2017-19