

Our children, our future



North East Lincolnshire Council
Children's Services



www.nelincs.gov.uk

The Virtual School & Elective Home Education in North East Lincolnshire

THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

The Virtual School has statutory responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of the children in the care of that borough, wherever they live or are educated. We monitor these children as if they were in one school.

There are also many more valuable young people and their families who make up our community. With duties to also oversee the education of

- children who are (or have been) supported by a social worker at Child in Need or Child Protection.
- children who have previously been in the care of a local authority
- children who are living in Kinship arrangements.

We do not replace the schools which our children physically attend and responsibility for improving the rates of progress and educational outcomes of the children in our care who are on their roll remains with them.

Our focus as ambitious, proactive corporate parents is centred on raising educational aspirations and both supporting and challenging our partners to reduce the attainment gap between that of our children in our care and their peers.

This involves multi agency partnership working alongside our children, carers and parents, schools, social care, the independent reviewing service and health

Context – children in our care

Virtual School Roll = 379 (19/09/2025)

Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Post 16
Age 3+ to NCY0	NCY 1-6	NCY 7-11	NCY 12-14
26	107	207	98

- NELC has greater numbers of children attending schools outside of our borough than seen nationally - approx 50%
- Our children attend 180 different educational provisions
- 39% of children in our care have an EHCP - 74% with a primary or secondary need of SEMH
- 22% of our children attend specialist or alternative provision settings

Attainment

- In recent years Key Stage Outcomes for children in our care have been broadly in line or better than children in care nationally and regionally and our absence, suspension and exclusion rates have been lower (better) **However** the Virtual School focus is on reducing the attainment gap between our children in care and all children in an attempt to level the playing field.
- 2024/25 Unconfirmed data suggests a dip in both Key Stage 2 combined Reading, writing and maths and GCSE English and Maths grade 4+. This is attributed to the extremely high (85%) of children that have SEND with just 50% of this year group being entered for any GCSE's.

Note - *comparing year on year outcomes is not a truly reliable measure ie. as well as different groups of children, the range of schools attended by our children in each year group differs enormously.*

- Comprehensive Personal Education Plans (PEP) hold schools to account by tracking term on term progress against aspirational but realistic end of key stage targets. Where progress is not being made the SMART targets are agreed, with personalised intervention and support. PEPs are reviewed 3 times per year (minimum)

Raising aspirations

- The secondary aged PEP has a section dedicated to careers and aspirations with explicit instruction that children are having careers interviews from year 8.
- The primary aged PEP explores children's aspirations for adulthood when gathering their views – this can often lead to planned experiences ie. visit to the fire station and may be incorporated into their learning to motivate and engage.
- The Virtual School works closely with the children in care and care leaver teams and also with the Young Peoples Support Service (YPSS) who attend PEP reviews throughout Y11
- 2 officers are dedicated to our post 16 young people meaning the Virtual School can continue to support beyond year 13 for any young people who attend or express a wish to return to further/higher education.
- The virtual school will also allocate funding for tutoring to retake exams.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

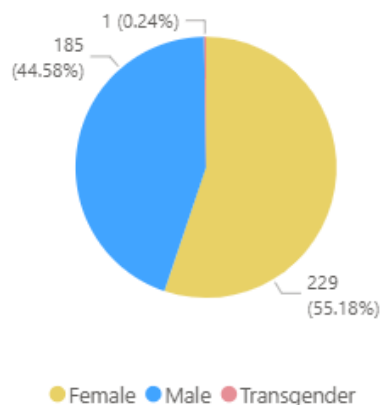
What do we know...

- Main reasons:
 - Dissatisfaction with school - general
 - Dissatisfaction with SEND provision
 - Mental health difficulties
- Parents weren't consulting schools beforehand
- Families sometimes had serious misconceptions about EHE
- Support agencies struggle to access EHE families
- Schools want to be preventative

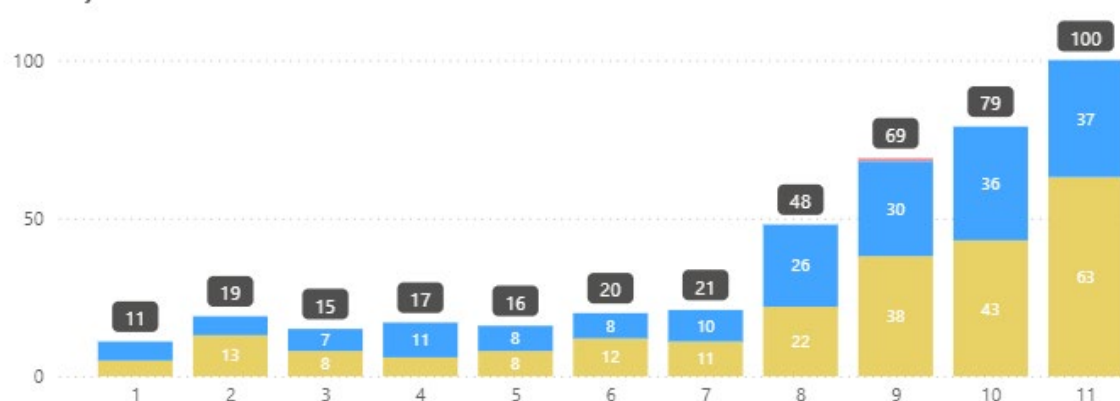
Current Picture – UPDATE BEFORE SUBMISSION

- Current – 417 children
- Highest – before Y11 re
- 31 children with an EH
- 26 children open to ch

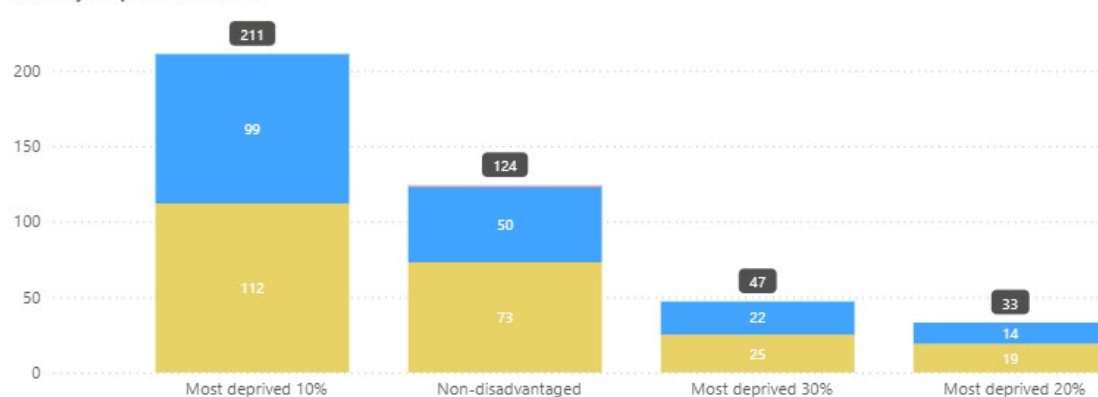
EHE by Gender



EHE by NCY



EHE by Deprivation level



Safeguarding our EHE cohort

- There is no causal link between elective home education and safeguarding – DfE
- There are children who are in need and in need of our protection. (19/6)
- Analysis shows the Partnership are aware of our EHE cohort – 80% referrals post-EHE.
- Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill – will require LA consent but only for CP. Power to return.

NELC Response

- Initial timelines strengthened
- Annual review expectations – very limited powers
- Transformation project – partnership-wide strategy
- Operational capacity & expertise
- Support for schools
 - CPD, outreach and early intervention, policy and procedure support
- Legal interventions
 - SAO to return to education