

Children & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel

DATE	2 March 2026
REPORT OF	Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children’s Services
SUBJECT	Elective Home Education
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The North East Lincolnshire Council Plan 2023 – 2026 sets out the key aims of the council to continue to be ambitious in its drive to create stronger economies and stronger communities.

For children to receive a high-quality education, be that in a traditional school setting or otherwise, is essential for children to achieve their full potential.

Children who develop into young people with the skills and qualifications to be equipped for the local economy is fundamental to achieving council aims.

A firm strategy and practice around children who are Electively Home Educated also contributes to the aims of the Council to be a ‘Marmot Place’, by addressing social inequalities for a growing number of families, allowing our children to lead healthy lives regardless of their background.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary statement of children that are electively home educated in North East Lincolnshire, the impact of the Local Authority’s officers involvement in these cases, and where ongoing efforts continue to promote the best outcomes for these children.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

For the purposes of updating Scrutiny following approval of the EHE Strategy and Transformation Project work, and to guide members in their duties to communities and other functions as a Council to advocate for the children not on a school roll.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Parents have the legal right to home educate their children instead of registering them at school. All children are entitled to a full-time education suited to their needs, which can be provided at school or through elective home education (EHE), as outlined in the Education Act 1996.

Most families who choose EHE deliver a good quality education, particularly

when this decision is well-informed. Department for Education guidance notes no proven link between home education and safeguarding risk, but highlights that inadequate education may affect a child's development.

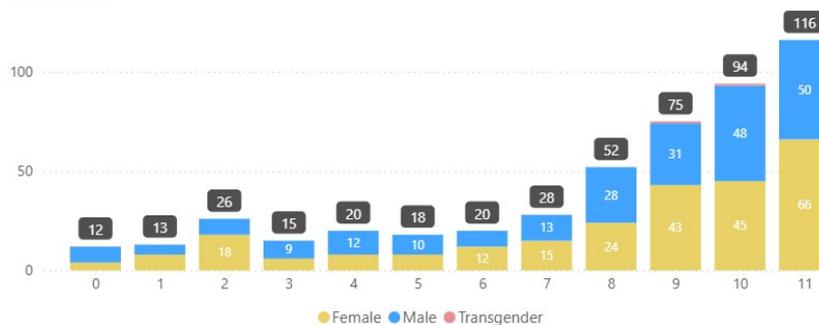
The number of home-educated children has risen nationally in recent years, with an increasing proportion of the school-age population now learning at home. Main reasons include mental health concerns, dissatisfaction with school, and lifestyle or philosophical preferences. North East Lincolnshire, there has been a notable increase in the number of children who are electively home educated, reflecting patterns seen at the national level. Locally, mental health concerns and dissatisfaction with school are the most common reasons for home education, highlighting the need to address challenges both in schools and for home-educating families.

Nationally, numbers of children educated at home have increased by 12.8% in the past year, reaching a total of 126,000. This equates to 1.5% of statutory school aged children, and this proportion is increasing annually. In North East Lincolnshire, 2% of school aged children are electively home educated, however the overall number of children educated at home has reduced by 3.4% (January 2025 vs January 2026). The higher proportion is largely a result of declining birth rates, meaning our statutory school aged cohort has reduced by almost 2000 children.

Following the increase in capacity due to Transformation funding, the service has undertaken significant changes to assure ourselves of children’s education. Children who are educated at home should be reviewed annually – this could be in-person, virtually, or via a report submitted by the parent to the team. Currently, 95% of children who are educated at home have had one form of the contacts above in the last 12 months.

The below chart demonstrates the concentration of EHE children being predominantly of secondary school age, however there has been notable increases across the entirety of the primary phase in the last 12 months, with more parents stating opting for EHE as a lifestyle choice. In respect of gender, 47% of children are boys, and 53% are girls, with relatively even distribution across each year group.

EHE by NCY



Exactly 50% of our children who are educated at home are in the most deprived 10% on the IDACII index, correlating with the geographic locations in terms of ward area being East Marsh, Sidney Sussex and South Wards.

Both the number and percentage of children who are EHE and have an allocated social worker has reduced in the last 12 months by more than 25%. The collaboration between Children's Social Care, Family Help and the EHE team has been very productive, and has led to timely assessments, shared supportive work with families, and children being returned to a school where their education has been deemed inappropriate under DfE guidance.

In some cases, legal intervention is required to ensure a child is in receipt of a suitable education. If relational practice and early notifications have not been successful in yielding evidence of a suitable education, the EHE team make effective use of School Attendance Orders, whereby a parent is directed to make an application for their child to a specific school for the purpose of enrolling them. Where these are used, a parent is not permitted in law to remove their child for the purpose of home education without the Local Authority revoking the order.

The local authority's EHE team continue to promote awareness of, and offer training on the topic of elective home education across the partnership. Partners are increasingly aware of the cohort of children educated at home and are vigilant to the risks to a child's development if suitable education is not being delivered. Partners liaise readily with the EHE team to work together in returning children to a formal setting where this is in a child's best interests.

Academic outcomes for children educated at home are not measured or reported on by the Department for Education, however increasing numbers of children are participating in courses at the Learning Centre with growing numbers of qualifications being sat by those who attend in Year 11. Children educated at home receive tailored support from Young People's Support Service in Year 10, and continues throughout Year 11 to support them with careers guidance and applications to Post-16 education. The most recent statement on NEETs shows that 73% of EHE children were in education, training or employment, showing an increase compared to the previous year.

Access to mental health support is a key focus of the partnership and is recognised as a main decision-making factor for EHE children. Through improved relationships with families and closer working relationships, there is a rising number of children accessing mental health support through commissioned provision at CompassGo. Recent data shows that 2.4% of inward referrals last quarter were for children electively home educated, meaning over-representation of this cohort. This demonstrates a significant proportional increase children accessing support compared to historic data, and is a positive impact of the work undertaken both by the EHE team and CompassGo to promote referrals from parents where a child is not on a school roll, and provides greater assurance considering the prevalence of mental health challenges cited as reasons for EHE.

From a physical health perspective in terms of children accessing essential vaccinations, data for the last 12 months shows that uptake is very poor in all aspects. Numbers of children accessing the seasonal flu vaccine are low across every year group, with children of some ages not accounted for at all in

statistics.

The greatest single uptake of a vaccination was 20% of Year 9 children receiving their DTP/Meningitis vaccinations. It is recognised that the lifelong benefits of vaccinations to both in an individual and the healthcare system are well rehearsed. The EHE team have committed to supporting colleagues in Public Health to undertake a deep dive into the barriers that are faced by EHE families and how the commissioned provider of vaccinations in North East Lincolnshire can work more effectively to reduce these health inequalities.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

There are risks around inequality of children educated at home and their ability to access future education, as well as their potential health inequalities discussed above.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

The local authority continue to diligently manage communications around elective home education, as a topic of significant media and political attention nationally. It is expected that this will be ongoing as the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill moves to Royal Assent, and the Schools White Paper are both released later this year.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no direct financial implications for the Council in relation to the contents of this report.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The contents of this report pertain to the children who are electively home educated in North East Lincolnshire. Continuing to improve outcomes in all ways for these children is an essential driver for systemic change across the Borough, which can be correlated with improved skills and employability and health outcomes later in life.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct implications on climate change, nature recovery and the environment.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

North East Lincolnshire Council has publicly committed to becoming a Marmot Place. Key tenets of this Public Health initiative are to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for our population. The EHE Strategy is written with the input of colleagues in Public Health and has remained rooted in the spirit of ensuring Marmot applies to our children who are not educated in a traditional education setting.

In practice, reviewing known health inequalities for electively home educated children as discussed above, confirms the rationale for diving deeper into barriers to health services such as vaccinations for these children.

8. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

9. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The contents of this report are Borough-wide and do not have implications on any specific ward areas.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

EHE strategy cabinet report – 10 December 2025
[9.-Cabinet-Report-Elective-Home-Education-Strategy.pdf](#)

11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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