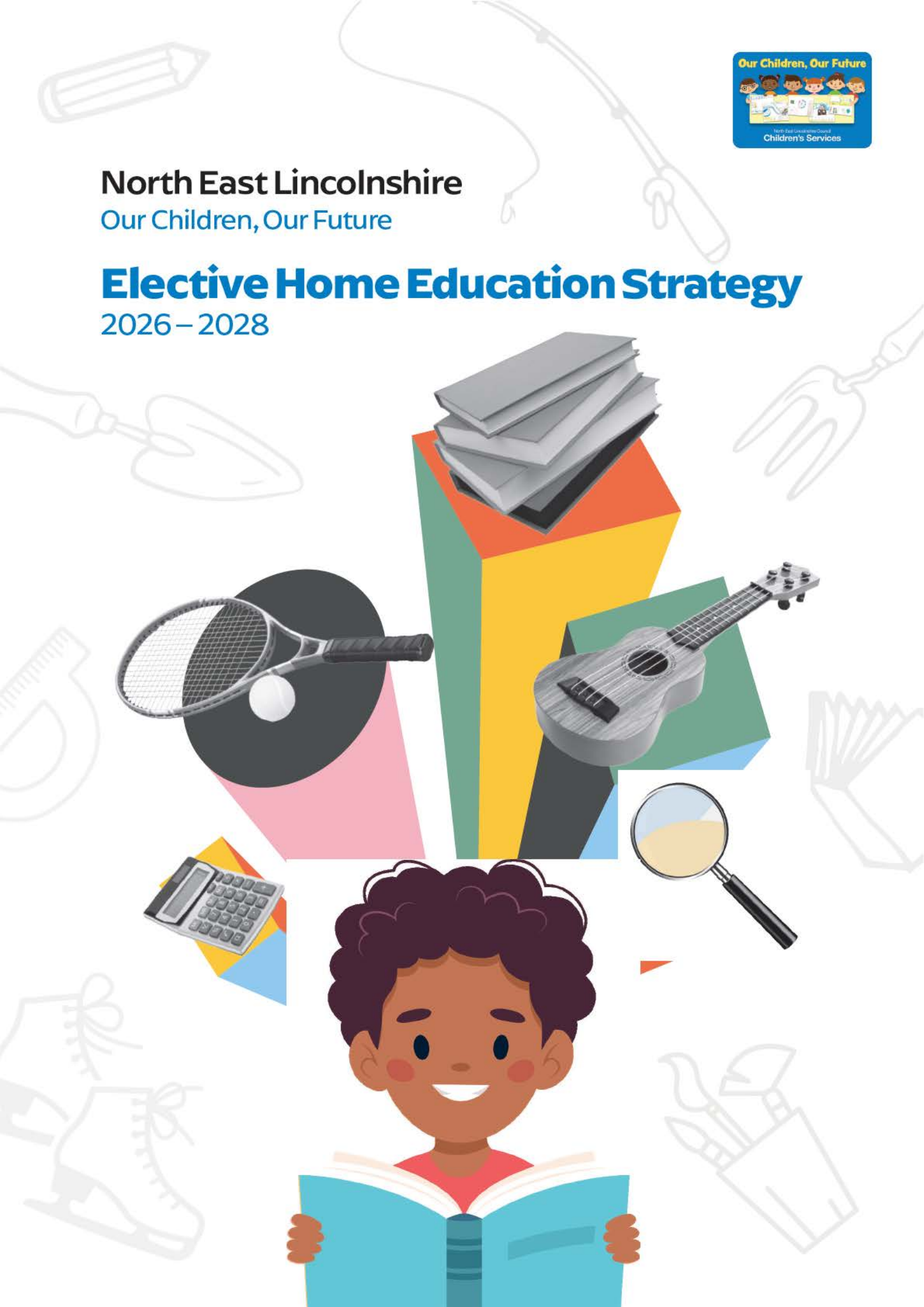
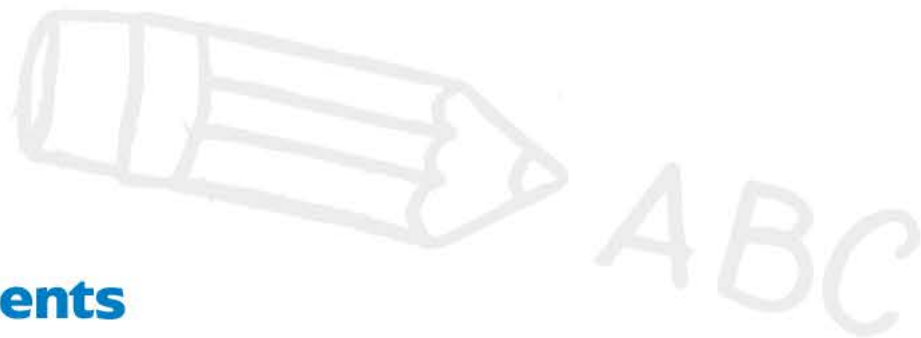


North East Lincolnshire
Our Children, Our Future

Elective Home Education Strategy

2026 – 2028





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Foreword

We are pleased to present the North East Lincolnshire Elective Home Education (EHE) Strategy.

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a valued and important part of our local education landscape. Across North East Lincolnshire, a growing number of families are choosing to educate their children at home, and we acknowledge the dedication, commitment and creativity that many parents and carers bring to this role. We recognise the diversity of approaches and the personalised learning experiences that home education can offer, and we are proud of the respectful relationships and constructive dialogue that have developed between the local authority and our EHE community.

As part of our wider transformation journey, we are committed to ensuring that all children and young people in North East Lincolnshire, regardless of their educational setting, are supported to thrive and achieve positive outcomes. We know from listening to families, professionals and the wider community that there are areas where the partnership must continue to refine our support, communication and systems around EHE. We are determined to respond to these insights and to work in partnership to strengthen our approach.

We recognise that our resources must be used wisely and collaboratively, and that our greatest asset is our workforce; those who engage with families, provide advice, and help ensure that children are safe, well and learning. We are committed to developing a knowledgeable, skilled and responsive workforce that understands the unique nature of home education and works with families in a way that is respectful, proportionate and supportive.

We also want to empower families to feel confident in their decisions and equipped to access help when needed. Our strategy sets out how we will improve pathways, strengthen relationships, and ensure that families who choose to educate at home can access the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

The North East Lincolnshire Elective Home Education Strategy has been shaped through engagement with families, professionals and partners. It outlines our shared priorities, principles and approach, and is designed to be a live and evolving document that reflects the needs and aspirations of our community. We are grateful to all those who contributed to its development.

Ultimately, the success of this strategy will be measured by the experiences and outcomes of children and young people who are electively home educated in North East Lincolnshire. We are committed to working with high support and high challenge, and to ensuring that our actions lead to real and lasting impact.

Together, we can make a difference – and we look forward to being part of the positive.

Ann-Marie Matson
Director of Children's Services

Cllr Margaret Cracknell
Portfolio Holder for Children & Education

Introduction

This strategy has been developed through collaboration and engagement with electively home educated (EHE) children and their families, a wide range of education providers and professionals across the partnership in North East Lincolnshire. Insights were gathered using a number of different methods including roundtable events, surveys, and face-to-face consultations.

The increase in the number of children that have become electively home educated makes it more important than ever to cement the partnership approach ensuring that our children and families are provided with accurate and consistent information, advice and guidance. This strategy will outline the principles, resources and support mechanisms that are essential for fostering a successful home education experience.

This strategy aims to ensure that all children and young people in NELC are receiving a quality education and have access to a nurturing environment in which they can thrive. We aim to provide a shared understanding to all stakeholders, including our children, their families and all relevant parties of this policy: outlining our legal obligations. We will collectively raise the profile of North East Lincolnshire partnership offer to electively home educated children. This strategy aims to provide advice on information sharing and multi-agency collaboration within a system that supports identification of the EHE cohort to all professionals. We endeavour to focus on supporting our partners working with electively home educated children so that we give them the best opportunity to thrive in the EHE environment.

Children, young people and their families need timely support during all stages of the EHE process:

- ♦ Before making the decision to electively home educate
- ♦ At the time of becoming home educated
- ♦ Throughout their time of being home educated
- ♦ If thinking about returning to or starting school

It is important that the partnership have a consistent understanding of elective home education to ensure we share the same approach to all stages of the home education journey.

In the context of 'Our Children, Our Future', we want to work stronger together children, families and partners across North East Lincolnshire so that it is a place where our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We are ambitious for children's futures with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can be.

National and Local Context

All children have the right to a full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. The Education Act 1996 stipulates that it is the responsibility of a child's parent or carer to arrange this education 'either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'. It is the right of a parent to consider the decision to educate their child in a formal setting, or to educate otherwise by electively home educating.

The Department for Education national guidance around Elective Home Education states that there is 'no proven correlation between home education and safeguarding risk. However, it is important to bear in mind that unsuitable or inadequate education can also impair a child's intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, and may therefore bring child protection duties into play'.

At both national and local levels, it is recognised that the majority of families who elect to educate their children at home are providing a good quality education, particularly when the choice is a positive and informed one.

National data shows a continuing increase in the number of children being educated at home. This trend is largely driven by dissatisfaction with school, especially regarding mental health and special educational needs (SEND), as highlighted by the Department for Education.

As at census date in autumn 2024, local authorities reported 111,700 children in elective home education (EHE). This is an increase from an estimated 92,000 in the previous autumn term. Since elective home education data has been collected by the Department for Education in 2022, numbers have risen by 38%, increasing to a level of 1.4% of the school age population. Elective home education, Autumn term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

Government statistics show the main reasons for elective home education are a combination of school dissatisfaction (13%) mental health concerns (14%) and lifestyle or philosophical choices (14%). While philosophical or lifestyle reasons such as religious or cultural beliefs and a rejection of an exam-based system, have always been present, data also shows that a growing number of families are choosing to home-educate due to problems with their child's school experience. Elective home education, Autumn term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

In 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. The local figures show a substantial rise of 40% between 2023 and 2025. Whilst the rate of this growth has been more pronounced than the national average, with similar factors influencing families' choices to opt for home education in the area, the number of families deciding to electively home educated has remained stable between 2024 and 2025. Elective Home Education in 2024 constituted 1.9% of the school age population in North East Lincolnshire, 36% higher than the England rate. Elective home education, Autumn term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK.

National and Local Context continued...

The most frequently reported reason cited by parents for choosing elective home education in North East Lincolnshire is mental health concerns, followed by school dissatisfaction. These factors underscore the importance of understanding and addressing the challenges faced by children and their families, both within the school system and in the context of home education.

Whilst there is no national data on academic outcomes at Key Stage 4 for children who are home educated, however in North East Lincolnshire 73.5% of home educated children reaching the end of statutory school age in 2024 progressed into education, employment or training.

North East Lincolnshire is home to a vibrant and growing community of families who choose to educate their children at home. In recent years, both formal and informal networks have emerged to support these families, fostering collaboration, peer learning, and shared resources. Alongside this, businesses and organisations within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector are increasingly exploring ways to ensure inclusivity and engagement for children and young people outside traditional education settings. This evolving landscape reflects a broader commitment to educational diversity and community-led innovation.



Embedding Marmot Principles in Elective Home Education

The Marmot Review, led by Professor Sir Michael Marmot, highlights the importance of addressing the social determinants of health, such as education, housing, and employment, to reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for everyone.

Marmot Principles emphasise health equity, proportionate universalism (support for all, with extra help for those who need it most), and the need to create fairer opportunities for children and families. North East Lincolnshire is proud to be working towards becoming a Marmot Place, demonstrating our commitment to embedding these principles across all our strategies and services.

This EHE Strategy is underpinned by the Marmot approach: it seeks to ensure that all children, regardless of background or circumstance, have access to a high-quality education and the support they need to thrive. By listening to the voices of children, young people, and families, and by working in partnership across agencies, we aim to reduce inequalities, promote inclusion, and deliver proportionate support, so that every child in North East Lincolnshire can achieve their full potential.

Vision and Strategic Objectives

In the context of 'Our Children, Our Future' we will work collaboratively to ensure that all children in North East Lincolnshire are receiving a suitable education, regardless of whether it is in the traditional school setting, or otherwise. This strategy has been developed as a result of extensive discovery work which generated valuable insights from children, parents, carers and other professionals. It has been designed to align with a number of strategic planning frameworks, including the Council Plan 2025-2028. The following strategic objectives, in collaboration with all key stakeholders, were agreed to enable the successful elective home education experience:

- ♦ To ensure families are empowered to make informed and appropriate decisions relating to EHE
- ♦ To ensure that the local authority has assurance that children who are electively home educated are in receipt of education appropriate for their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs
- ♦ Partners should collectively contribute towards the assurances that children who are electively home educated are in a safe environment, with necessary support in place to address any contextual safeguarding concerns

A child/young person's journey through EHE in North East Lincolnshire:

- ♦ When considering EHE: Feedback indicates that children have varied experiences during this stage. Some children reported challenges in communicating with their school, others express concerns about how as an EHE child they are perceived by the local authority, while some feel heard and view the start of home education positively. Many schools provide an opportunity for a meeting with the child or young person and their family early in the process to ensure that the child's perspective is included in decision-making about EHE.
- ♦ Becoming EHE: This process is typically efficient, with the EHE team contacting the family within 5 days of notification of EHE from a school or partner organisation, and the offer of an in-person visit soon after. During a home visit, the EHE officer will actively seek and consider the child's perspectives when assessing the appropriateness of the educational provision. If families choose to submit a written report instead of hosting a visit, it is requested that the voice and views of the child or young person are included within the documentation.
- ♦ Time throughout being EHE: Feedback regarding a child's experience with EHE is largely positive, with children indicating they appreciate the flexible scheduling, personalised approach to learning, and the beneficial effects on their mental health. We encourage children and young people to participate in the annual visits conducted by the EHE team, as these visits provide valuable opportunities to acknowledge and signpost to support, as well as to celebrate progress and personal achievements.





Feedback from Children and Young People

Valuable insights capturing the voices of our children, young people and their families who have been electively home educated has contributed to the shared understanding of home education across North East Lincolnshire, and is the cornerstone of ensuring relational approaches are implemented in our interactions.

Support to prevent EHE

'A school that has more time for individuals.'

The lead up.....

'School tried to help but it didn't work. I was depressed in school.'

Worries

'My mum tried getting me into 3 schools but because I was Y10 they all refused me so now I have to resit GCSE at college. Schools don't help, nobody does especially if you have educational needs like me.'

Support

- More home education groups
- Help with fees and exams being paid for

Strengths

- Relaxed timetabling
- Personalised Learning
- Better for my mental health

Feedback from Parents, Carers and families

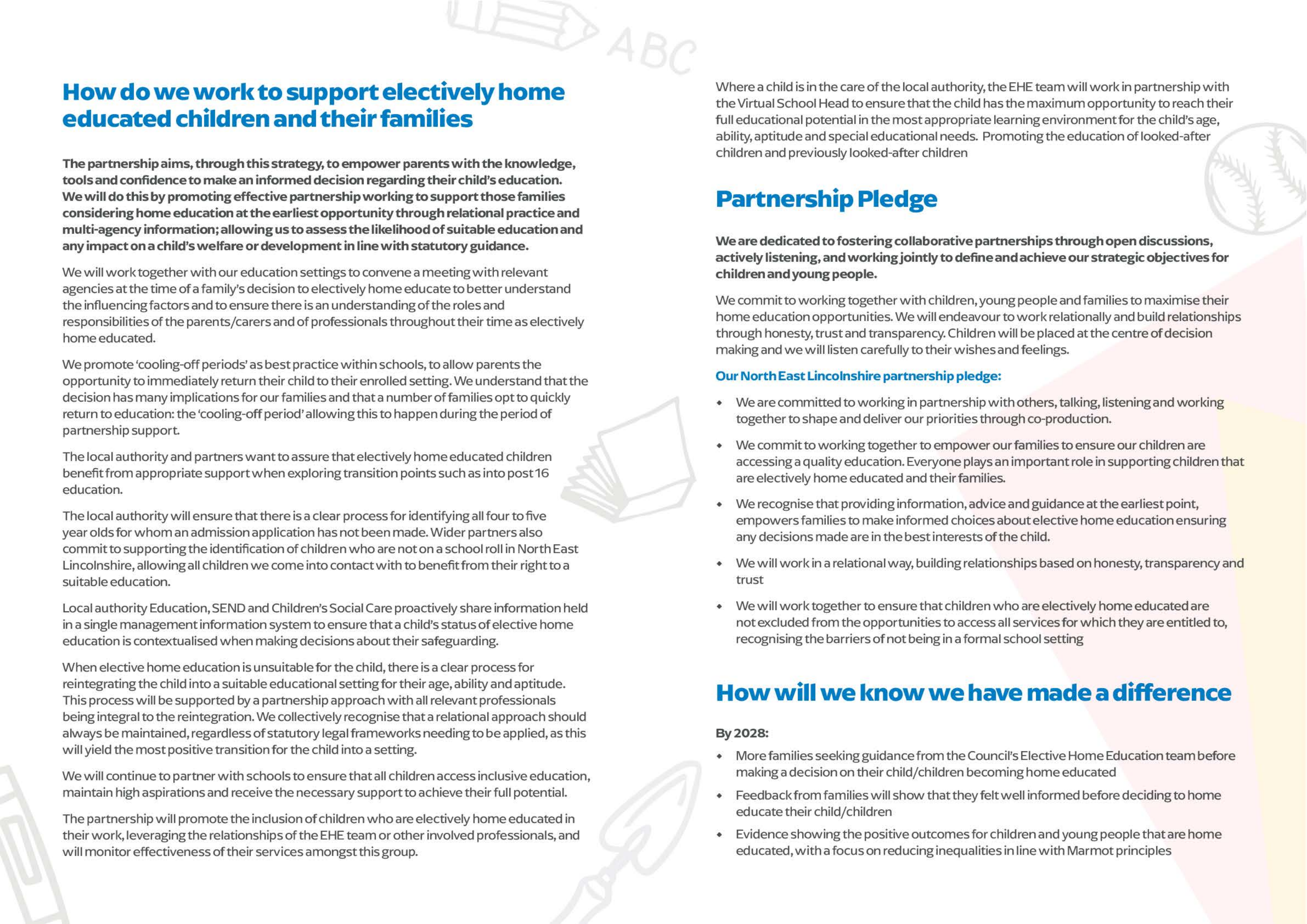
The Council has embedded the feedback and insights from parents, carers and families to develop the elective home education strategy to ensure the strategy is grounded in real experiences and reflects the diverse reasons families choose home education. It ensures that the partnership message regarding elective home education is practical and responsive, that services build trust through transparency, and promotes equity by acknowledging the varied needs of the community. By incorporating these voices, the strategy becomes more inclusive, evidence-based, and better aligned with the values and expectations of those it aims to support.

'When I first reached out to the home education department I was worried about the future and what I needed to do. Dan put me completely at ease and offered lots of advice and support with no pressure.'

I have needed to contact the home education a few times for different queries. Each time I gained the information that I needed with no extra questions from the department.'

'Last September I started to home educate, it was scary, overwhelming and a very stressful time. After many phone calls and what felt like useless conversations I found Claire, and what an absolute star she is, she arranged a face-to-face meeting explained everything in fine detail helped with paperwork and most of all made me feel like I wasn't alone and understood our frustrations. Your support has been invaluable, and I truly appreciate the time and effort you took to assist us.'





How do we work to support electively home educated children and their families

The partnership aims, through this strategy, to empower parents with the knowledge, tools and confidence to make an informed decision regarding their child's education. We will do this by promoting effective partnership working to support those families considering home education at the earliest opportunity through relational practice and multi-agency information; allowing us to assess the likelihood of suitable education and any impact on a child's welfare or development in line with statutory guidance.

We will work together with our education settings to convene a meeting with relevant agencies at the time of a family's decision to electively home educate to better understand the influencing factors and to ensure there is an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the parents/carers and of professionals throughout their time as electively home educated.

We promote 'cooling-off periods' as best practice within schools, to allow parents the opportunity to immediately return their child to their enrolled setting. We understand that the decision has many implications for our families and that a number of families opt to quickly return to education: the 'cooling-off period' allowing this to happen during the period of partnership support.

The local authority and partners want to assure that electively home educated children benefit from appropriate support when exploring transition points such as into post 16 education.

The local authority will ensure that there is a clear process for identifying all four to five year olds for whom an admission application has not been made. Wider partners also commit to supporting the identification of children who are not on a school roll in North East Lincolnshire, allowing all children we come into contact with to benefit from their right to a suitable education.

Local authority Education, SEND and Children's Social Care proactively share information held in a single management information system to ensure that a child's status of elective home education is contextualised when making decisions about their safeguarding.

When elective home education is unsuitable for the child, there is a clear process for reintegrating the child into a suitable educational setting for their age, ability and aptitude. This process will be supported by a partnership approach with all relevant professionals being integral to the reintegration. We collectively recognise that a relational approach should always be maintained, regardless of statutory legal frameworks needing to be applied, as this will yield the most positive transition for the child into a setting.

We will continue to partner with schools to ensure that all children access inclusive education, maintain high aspirations and receive the necessary support to achieve their full potential.

The partnership will promote the inclusion of children who are electively home educated in their work, leveraging the relationships of the EHE team or other involved professionals, and will monitor effectiveness of their services amongst this group.

Where a child is in the care of the local authority, the EHE team will work in partnership with the Virtual School Head to ensure that the child has the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential in the most appropriate learning environment for the child's age, ability, aptitude and special educational needs. Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children

Partnership Pledge

We are dedicated to fostering collaborative partnerships through open discussions, actively listening, and working jointly to define and achieve our strategic objectives for children and young people.

We commit to working together with children, young people and families to maximise their home education opportunities. We will endeavour to work relationally and build relationships through honesty, trust and transparency. Children will be placed at the centre of decision making and we will listen carefully to their wishes and feelings.

Our North East Lincolnshire partnership pledge:

- We are committed to working in partnership with others, talking, listening and working together to shape and deliver our priorities through co-production.
- We commit to working together to empower our families to ensure our children are accessing a quality education. Everyone plays an important role in supporting children that are electively home educated and their families.
- We recognise that providing information, advice and guidance at the earliest point, empowers families to make informed choices about elective home education ensuring any decisions made are in the best interests of the child.
- We will work in a relational way, building relationships based on honesty, transparency and trust
- We will work together to ensure that children who are electively home educated are not excluded from the opportunities to access all services for which they are entitled to, recognising the barriers of not being in a formal school setting

How will we know we have made a difference

By 2028:

- More families seeking guidance from the Council's Elective Home Education team before making a decision on their child/children becoming home educated
- Feedback from families will show that they felt well informed before deciding to home educate their child/children
- Evidence showing the positive outcomes for children and young people that are home educated, with a focus on reducing inequalities in line with Marmot principles

- ♦ Children and young people will tell us that they are being educated in a positive, healthy and safe environment that enables them to thrive and reach their potential
- ♦ Referrals to the EHE officers will be accurate, timely and appropriate with improved paperwork and reporting systems
- ♦ An increase in the percentage of children accessing a 'suitable education' at home
- ♦ A decrease in the percentage of children whose home education is assessed as unsuitable
- ♦ Website analytics will show that the EHE website is being increasingly visited
- ♦ Data reflects more timely contact, including any follow up work that is appropriate
- ♦ Feedback will be improved through surveys
- ♦ Increased contact from other professionals with the EHE team
- ♦ There will be a reduction in the number of home educated children that are not in employment, education or training (NEET) at post 16

- ♦ Improved feedback from partners
- ♦ Where home education has been determined to be unsuitable, children will return to a school roll in a timely manner
- ♦ The partnership will be able to report impact of their services, where relevant, to families who are home educating
- ♦ Our progress will be measured not only by educational outcomes, and improved relationships with families, but by how effectively we are narrowing gaps and advancing health equity as part of our journey to become a Marmot Place.

How we will monitor our progress

- ♦ There will be monthly performance reporting in the local authority's Education Assurance Meeting, chaired by the Service Director for Education, Inclusion & Integration.
- ♦ Annual reporting will be provided to the Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board, with quarterly performance reporting provided to the board via the Safeguarding Performance Practice Assurance Group.
- ♦ Progress monitoring for our elected members will take place at the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel
- ♦ We will track our progress not just by numbers, but by how well we are reducing inequalities in line with the Marmot principles, ensuring every child has a fair chance to thrive.

Partnership governance arrangements

Formal partnership governance of the North East Lincolnshire Elective Home Education Strategy, and the impact of partnership practice, sits within the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

Points of reference and other key documents

- ♦ Education-and-Inclusion-Strategy-2022-2025.pdf
- ♦ Skills-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-2023.docx
- ♦ NEL-Economic-Strategy-2021.pdf
- ♦ Elective home education: guide for parents
- ♦ Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities
- ♦ Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)
- ♦ Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill: policy summary notes
- ♦ Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children
- ♦ NEL CIOC CL Employability Strategy 2025 29 FINAL FINAL VERSION





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