

# Agenda

## Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Monday, 29 November 2021 at 5.00 pm**  
**in the Council Chamber, The Council House, Freet Street, Oldbury, B69 3DB**

**This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations 5 (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**3 Minutes**

5 - 20

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 August and 27 September 2021.

**4 Additional Items of Business**

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.



- |    |  |           |
|----|--|-----------|
| 5  | <b>Elective Home Education</b>   | 21 - 96   |
|    | Members to consider an update on Elective Home Education and determine any recommendations.  |           |
| 6  | <b>Holiday Activities and Food Programme</b>   | 97 - 132  |
|    | Members to consider and comment on the Holiday Activity and Food Programme update.   |           |
| 7  | <b>Impact of the lockdown on children and families - Working Group</b>   | 133 - 136 |
|    | Members to consider the draft scoping document in respect of the proposed working group which will be considering the impact of the lockdown on children and families. |           |
| 8  | <b>Scrutiny Action Tracker</b>   | 137 - 140 |
|    | Members to review Action Tracker.  |           |
| 9  | <b>Forward Plan</b>  | 141 - 176 |
|    | Members to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan.  |           |
| 10 | <b>Work Programme</b>  | 177 - 178 |
|    | Members to consider and note the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Work Programme.  |           |

**Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL**  
**Interim Chief Executive**  
Sandwell Council House  
Freeth Street  
Oldbury  
West Midlands

**Distribution**

Councillor Shackleton (Chair)  
Councillors Chambers, Chidley, E A Giles, W Gill, Hadley, Hinchliff, McVittie,  
Millar, V Smith, J Webb, K Heeley and K Kujawa – Sogbesan

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## Minutes of Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Monday 23 August 2021 at 5.00pm  
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Shackleton (Chair);  
Councillor Chambers (Vice Chair);  
Councillors E A Giles, W Gill, Hinchliff, McVittie, Smith and  
Webb;  
Co-opted Member K Heeley (Primary School Governor  
representative).

**Officers:** Lesley Hagger (Director – Children's Services);  
Emma Taylor (Sandwell Children's Trust, Chief Executive);  
Mandip Chahal (Senior Joint Commissioning Manager)  
Alexander Goddard (Democratic Services Officer)  
Connor Robinson (Democratic Services Officer)

### 23/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E A Giles, Hinchliff, Hughes and Smith; as well as co-opted members K Kujawa-Sogbesan and C Ward-Lewis.

### 24/21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.



## 25/21 **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on the 2 August were agreed as a correct record.

## 26/21 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider however a statement was issued on the recent action taken by Birmingham City Council to terminate its contract with North Birmingham Travel following issues relating to DBS checks. The Executive Director of Children's Services informed the Board that both an internal and external review into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport contracts was underway and would be reporting to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. A joint Scrutiny Review was also being undertaken reviewing models and best practice going forward. The Cabinet had agreed 21 July to continue with current SEND Transport arrangements. The Board was informed that further details had been sought from drivers where required. The Service was progressing with arrangements for the start of the new term conscious that parents needed that reassurance.

The Board was informed that while there was a media interest in the decision by Birmingham City Council to terminate the contract with North Birmingham Travel in response to the issues around DBS arrangements. The process for checking DBSs within Sandwell was different; checks were conducted in-house and the Leader of the Council had instructed that all DBSs should be re-checked to provide additional assurances.

## 27/21 **Sandwell Children's Trust Annual Review**

The Chief Executive of Sandwell Children's Trust delivered a presentation to the Board emphasising the work of the Trust over the previous twelve months, the impact of the pandemic on the Trust and the work of the Trust going forward.



The full Ofsted inspection in 2017 on the Service had found it to be inadequate. There had since been multiple visits and inspections, most recently an assurance visit in early-March 2021 and a fostering regulatory inspection in July 2021. A full inspection was expected in late-2021/early-2022.

The key areas of focus over the previous twelve months had been the response to the pandemic. The issues and challenges dealt with by the Trust had mirrored those faced by Local Authorities nationally. A priority over this time was keeping children safe and there was a strong emphasis on seeing children face-to-face and ensuring their wellbeing. A very close partnership with the Local Authority was an important aspect of meeting the challenges as was building strong working relationships between senior colleagues.

It was reported that maintaining and recruiting staff continued to be a focus for the Trust. There had been a drive to communicate the '12 Reasons' to work in Sandwell. The pandemic had meant this had remained a challenge but there had been a small increase in permanent social workers and a decrease in agency staff. The Care Service had been impacted hardest with a range of measures taken to mitigate against this. Overall there had been stability of staff across the Trust throughout the year.

The key headlines stemming from current practice were that face-to-face visits had continued throughout the pandemic and were increasing incrementally, for a virtual visit to take place a valid reason was required. It was noted that improvements were required in the quality of assessments. Short and long-term placements for looked after children continued to improve, with key issues identified as permanency planning and implementing pathway plans. The March Ofsted assurance visit concluded that no child was at risk of harm and the Trust had had a good response to the pandemic. There remained areas for improvement notably in child protection planning and intervention.

The response of the Trust to the pandemic had included continuous evaluation along with oversight externally by the Department for Education. Sandwell had been disproportionately affected during the pandemic, and the leadership team had



managed to deal with emerging situations and enable business continuity across the Trust to continue.

Focusing on the future, Six Strategic Priorities had been developed as part of the Transformation Programme. The priorities were: People, Practice, Partnerships, Prevention, Meeting Need and Measuring Progress, and Striving for Excellence. These priorities would seek to strengthen staff recruitment and retention, strengthen services for vulnerable children and allow for permanency planning. They would also look to ensure interventions at the right point with an emphasis on Early Help and prevention, as well as allowing for the right plan for children to be developed ensuring quality of care and value for money. Overall the Trust felt that the priorities would allow for a culture of creativity, continuous learning and improvement.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The emphasis on keeping children safe was vital.
- The accusations of bullying within the Trust had been dealt with. Many in the Trust did not recognise the allegations however where staff have expressed concerns the right course of action had been taken. No allegation had been ignored and there was confidence that any concern would be addressed in the fairest and most consistent way.
- It had been agreed that 25 Afghan families would be relocated within Sandwell (with the possibility of more) – Sandwell’s Transition, Education and Partnership Service (commonly known as STEPS) would be supporting these families and any children would be supported in their education.
- Sandwell Young Carers continued to be supported. There was a risk that they could become isolated through caring for their families. Support had been allocated to them from the Voluntary and Community Sector. Work continued with schools to identify those who were young carers, but it was recognised that many young people did not want to be identified as such and it was important that they were not forced to.



- Some complaints had been received about staff, however this was to be expected due to the nature of the work and was not concerning.
- Wellbeing had been an increased focus with wellbeing days and staff surveys being distributed allowing for challenges and best practice identified.
- Ofsted may conduct a full inspection towards the end of this year or the start of next year. The Trust hoped to see an improvement on the 2017 inspection; it was hoped the good work that had taken place since that time would be recognised.
- The current issues around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport were not expected to have a detrimental effect on any Ofsted inspection or rating.
- If there were to be an SEND specific visit Ofsted were aware of the current issues surrounding SEND Transport.
- There was a close relationship with the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Services.
- There was expected to be an increase in referrals across the service with an increase in Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and Early Help assessments.
- The partnership between the Trust and the Local Authority was something that improved outcomes and would be a focus going forward.

28/21

## **Regional Adoption Agency Monitoring Annual Report**

The Executive Director of Children's Services presented the Regional Adoption Agency Monitoring Annual Report.

The service had now been in place for two years. The service was created following a reorganisation of adoption agencies nationally which saw the merger of local authority managed agencies into regional ones. In the case of Sandwell, it merged with the other Black Country councils of Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The purpose of the merger was to allow for greater regional working that would be able to look across a wider geographical area.



The first year had been very busy with a now stable workforce and noticeable results. The current year had seen an increase of 24% in children being placed and adoption support had been reaching adopters based on targeted assessments of need.

The performance of Sandwell was emphasised in delivering results for children:-

- There had been 35 Sandwell children placed in the last 12 months (124 children in total across the agency).
- The numbers placed in previous years had been 41 – 2019 and 36 – 2020.
- Since its inception 100 Sandwell children had been placed.
- Inter-agency usage was at 56% (70% for Sandwell) meaning places were being found across the Black Country.
- Getting children into the right places as soon as possible ensured they are not moved around the system and resulted in better outcomes for the children.

When it came to adopters in Sandwell it was noted that:

- There had been 51 adopters approved in the first year of the agency with 69 in the second.
- There had been increased enquires and interest in adoption during the pandemic but low conversion rates.
- There was a priority to reduce the inter-agency usage in the third year.
- Registrations of interest had increased by almost a third in the second year.
- There had been a joined-up communication campaign between regional agencies, there had also been a national recruitment campaign 'You Can Adopt'.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The new Adoption Agency was more effective than the previous in-house system. It had a greater ability to reach more people and find matches. It was also able to offer better after-support and at a reduced cost.
- The reason families did not pursue adoption or withdraw their interest varied. Some family configurations or single people did not understand that they could adopt. The process could also be tough and for some was very intrusive and could be overwhelming.



## Scrutiny Review - The Impact of the Lockdown on Children and Families

The Executive Director of Children's Services delivered a presentation on the pandemic response and the impact on children and families. The presentation consolidated previous updates provided to Scrutiny on the pandemic response and acted as a baseline for a more in-depth look at the impact of the lockdown on children and families in future Board meetings:

- Services had continued to operate throughout the pandemic and continued to be very busy. Many members of staff had volunteered to assist other response functions, including the early morning schools support helpline. Staff absences had continued to be low and those members who had been self-isolating had in most cases continued to work.
- Engagement with the educational establishments across the Borough had been excellent. There had been initial weekly meetings with the Department for Education which had continued and now occurred bi-weekly. A Return to School Support Strategy had been developed which focused on the welfare of children and young people.
- Sandwell had enabled Sandwell Children's Trust to access various Covid-related grants which supported services against increased costs and fast tracked additional equipment for social workers.
- During the School year STEPS had supported 160 homes with learning packs for International New Arrival Children. There had been 950 wellbeing follow up calls to check progress and resolve any issues. A centre supporting these families opened fully in early-March.
- Those children and young people being Electively Home Educated (EHE) was recorded at 557 at the end of January Half-Term. An EHE Advisory Teacher had been recruited to support these children and half-termly newsletters had been distributed. Free School Meals had been provided to those EHE children who were eligible.
- Vulnerable children had been a priority during the pandemic, the service had:



- Conducted an average of 254 contracts per week including phone calls, emails and in person visits;
- Delivered an average of 357 meals per week;
- Delivered 1334 Learning Resource Packs ;
- Supported 86 children living in hostels with Learning Resource packs and food parcels;
- Supported Alternative Provision settings to monitor their pupils;
- Supported the Return to Schools strategies.
- There had been some negative developments due to lockdown:
  - Free School Meals eligibility had increased by over 27%;
  - There had been an increase in domestic abuse and safeguarding incidents;
  - Children’s mental health had been impacted;
  - Digital exclusion for a number of students;
  - An increase in demand for EHCP assessments;
  - Increased pressures and increases in SEND assessments.
- The next 12 months were going to focus on a number of key areas:
  - Catch-up and recovery in education and child development;
  - Social care recovery;
  - Planning ahead, expecting an increase in demand for the service;
  - Continuing to deliver emotional and wellbeing support;
  - Managing the increase in Education, Health and Care Plan assessments;
  - Supporting staff;
  - Moving back to Business as Usual.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- The impact of lockdown had many detrimental effects on families. Some pupils were not where they ought to be with home learning not sufficient in some cases.
- The Learning Resource Packs had been well received.
- The behaviour of children at school was good and the vast majority were enjoying being back at the school setting.
- The Pupil Referral Units were going to be taking part in a two-year pilot scheme bringing together young people and professionals, in a bid to enhance skills and pupil engagement.



- Although there had been an increase in the numbers of children and young people requiring an assessment it was not possible to shorten timeframes every assessment needed to follow a particular process.
- The Prevent Team had been working with schools in a bid to combat extremism. Training programmes had been running and safeguarding champions established.

### 30/21 **Work Programme**

The Board noted the Work Programme. The next scheduled meeting of the Board would receive an update on the Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review. The Board will be continuing its work as part of the Joint Scrutiny Review into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport Models.

### 31/21 **Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Board noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.

### 32/21 **Chair's Announcements**

The Board extended its congratulations to pupils and staff following the GCSE and A-Level results day. A special mention was given to Councillor W Gill following his results. It was hoped that all young people had achieved what they wanted and would be moving onto their desired destinations.

It was announced that the meeting would be the last attended by the Executive Director of Children's Services Lesley Hagger who was leaving Sandwell. The Board thanked Lesley for all her hard work and dedication to the Children of Sandwell and wished her all the best for the future.

Meeting ended at 6.21pm

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# Minutes of Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Monday 27 September 2021 at 5.00pm  
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Shackleton (Chair);  
Councillor Chambers (Vice Chair);  
Councillors Chidley, W Gill, Hinchliff, Smith and Webb.

**In Attendance:** Councillor Anandou.

**Officers:** Katharine Willmette (Interim Director – Children's Services);  
Sue Moore (Group Head Education Support Services);  
Alexander Goddard (Democratic Services Officer).

## 33/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E A Giles, Hughes and McVittie; and co-opted members K Heeley, K Kujawa-Sogbesan and C Ward-Lewis.

## 34/21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.



## Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport Models

At its meeting on 2 August 2021 the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board had agreed to undertake a review into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport Models (see Minute No. 23/21). A scoping document was agreed and a cross-party Working Group, including members of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board had been established to carry out this review.

It was acknowledged that the Review needed to be carried out at pace in order to ensure suitable transport provision could be procured by February 2022, when the current interim arrangements would cease. To this end, the Chair of the Scrutiny Board directed the members of the Working Group to each take responsibility for a specific workstream that had been identified in the scope of the Review. Members carried out a range of research including collating data from local, regional and national sources; speaking to a range of officers and stakeholders (including parents and school staff); and liaising with other local authorities.

Members' findings had been discussed by the working group and had resulted in a range of recommendations. The Board discussed and agreed recommendations across three broad categories – matters pertaining to contracting of SEND Transport in February 2022 following the end of the existing interim arrangements, longer-term considerations and general matters. These would be reported to the Cabinet for consideration at the earliest opportunity.

The Chair placed on record her appreciation for the way in which members had supported the review in an efficient manner in the face of challenging timescales. She also expressed her gratitude to the officers who had supported the review. Members also spoke about the positive way in which the Chair had lead the review.

In response to comments about SEND Transport contract issues surrounding DBS checks in Birmingham City Council, officers reiterated the advice provided at the Board's meeting on 23 August



2021 (Minute No 26/21 refers) on the additional measures in place in Sandwell that prevented the same issues happening locally through officers checking DBS reports directly. The Board was also advised that these checks were carried out annually and the Council was also informed about any reportable matters relating to drivers during the year so that appropriate action could be taken if necessary.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) That the Director – Law and Governance arrange for the following recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration:
  - (a) That the Cabinet reviews the administration of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport to ensure consistency of approach and that resourcing is adequate in light of increasing demand on the service.
  - (b) That the Cabinet ensures that the Parent Group for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is communicated and consulted with on any changes to the Transport service and, where possible, the views of affected children and young people are also sought.
  - (c) That the Cabinet ensures that Education Health Care Plan assessments are carried out without delay to ensure early identification of recommended provision, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport requirements.
  - (d) That the Cabinet re-evaluates child to adult ratios for minibuses to ensure that they are appropriate and reflect assessed risks and needs on a case by case basis.
  - (e) That the Cabinet continues, and seeks to increase, the Independent Travel Training Programme.



- (f) That the Cabinet refreshes awareness campaigns relating to Personal Budgets and the Independent Travel Training Programme to ensure all families are aware of the options available.
- (g) That the Cabinet reviews Early Years provision in each town, which may help reduce transport costs.
- (h) That the Cabinet reviews time lengths of journeys to ensure that children are not needing to travel for more than 50 minutes in normal circumstances.
- (i) That the Cabinet considers how place provision strategically located throughout the borough can be used to minimise journey times.
- (j) That the Cabinet considers the following in relation to the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport for February 2022:-
  - (i) providers should ensure drivers and Passenger Assistants are trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, non-verbal communication, use of safety harnesses and manual handling. In addition there should be Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;
  - (ii) a market position statement be prepared, encouraging competition from a wide range of suppliers;
  - (iii) small and medium enterprises should be afforded opportunities to tender for the contracts;



- (iv) mainly whole school provision should be the preferred approach;
  - (v) some harmonisation of provision should be considered to balance effective management of contracts whilst retaining a diversified group of providers;
  - (vi) the model for provision should avoid the increased risk associated with awarding contracts to a small number of providers.
- (k) That the Cabinet undertakes a trial scheme for providing Passenger Assistants in-house, or in partnership with schools, as part of the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport and that a full analysis is carried out on the trial scheme to determine its effectiveness.
- (l) That the Cabinet investigates the feasibility of taking Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport provision in-house, this should include risks, costs, benefits, potential timescales and suitable performance indicators, and it should include the following options:
- (i) full Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service in-house;
  - (ii) combined provision with existing Adult Social Care Transport;
  - (iii) only Passenger Assistants service provided in-house.
- (m) That the Cabinet ensures that, however the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service is provided in future, Passenger Assistants:-
- (i) must be trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, communication with non-verbal children; and
  - (ii) during their induction and onboarding a clear and strong emphasis should be



- placed on relationship building between the Passenger Assistant, the family, the school and the transport provider;
- (iii) also include Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;
  - (n) That the Cabinet investigates with partners how children with Autism Spectrum Disorders can receive earlier diagnoses which can help improve outcomes, including around transport needs, for that group.
  - (o) That the Cabinet ensures that research relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is considered whenever it is available to identify potential areas of improvement in Sandwell's service provision.
- (2) That the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board is kept informed about the process for commissioning Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport in Sandwell.
  - (3) That Post-18 Provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities be included in the work programme for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.

Meeting ended at 6.11pm

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## Report to Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Monday 29 November 2021**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>         | Elective Home Education Working Group Report  |
| <b>Director:</b>        | Interim Strategic Director Children and Education<br>Katharine Willmette<br><br>Acting Operational Director Children and Education<br>Melanie Barnett   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Democratic Services Officer, Matt Powis<br><a href="mailto:matt_powis@sandwell.gov.uk">matt_powis@sandwell.gov.uk</a><br>Democratic Services Officer, Connor Robinson<br><a href="mailto:connor1_robinson@sandwell.gov.uk">connor1_robinson@sandwell.gov.uk</a> |

### 1 Recommendations

1.1 That the Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board considers the Elective Home Education Scrutiny Working Group report and debate whether to make any recommendations to the Cabinet on the following:

- (a) The EHE resource pack be reviewed and edited to make it more accessible to parents;
- (b) The EHE website be refreshed to provide information, guides and links to other information and links to EHE forums for advice and support;
- (c) To identify resource and support within the council to facilitate the refresh;
- (d) That additional spaces and facilities be identified for EHE groups to meet and carry out activities, and that competitive rates for use of those facilities be negotiated for EHE group use;



- (e) That the Council develop a mechanism for resources to be shared for EHE, such as a hub for books or other educational material to be kept;
- (f) That youth social networks, such as 'Just Youth', be promoted on the EHE website for users to find out what's on in Sandwell for young people and to encourage engagement;
- (g) To raise awareness of the SEN and EHCP support available and access for children.
- (h) That the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life and the DCS, on behalf of the Council, be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson and to the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry of Home Education, to register this council's findings from the Elective Home Education review which highlights the need for regulation and resources for Elective Home Education; and to endorse a letter from the Association of EHE Professionals which asks whether consideration is being given to strengthening the legislation to provide further safeguards for children who are EHE.

1.2 That Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board receive an update report to consider the position in relation to post Covid fluctuations and the Education Committee Inquiry on Home Education as detailed in Appendix 4.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board requested regular update reports relating to the work of the Elective Home Education Scrutiny Working Group. A progress update was presented to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 11 January 2021. Since then, the Elective Home Education Scrutiny Working Group has carried out a review of the current arrangements and support for EHE in Sandwell.

2.2 The findings and recommendations are based on evidence gathered in Sandwell between October 2020 and February 2021, relating to the Sandwell EHE offer and a report dated 21 June 2021 was prepared.



- 2.3 The findings reflect wider national concerns that the Association Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) and Association of Elective Home Education Professionals (AEHEP) have made to the Government relating to the need to strengthen the legislation, to provide further safeguards for children who are EHE and the need to provide funding to local authorities work with EHE children through Designated School Grant (DSG).

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p>Best start in life for children and young people<br/>Every child and young person whether educated in a school setting or at home deserves to have access to high quality support and resources to support their education. The report seeks to develop current practices and enhance the offer provided.</p> |
|---|--|

### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 An update report was previously submitted to the CSE Scrutiny Board on 11 January 2021.
- 4.2 Appendix 3 to this report (ADCS notifications October 2020) the ADCS continues to raise EHE issues and concerns with the Government contributing to the ongoing conversation both locally and nationally, recent press releases have highlighted the continued considerations around EHE. There continues to be concerns around those with SEND becoming EHE with a continued increase for those with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There is also a concern following the ADCS survey finding that 9% of pupils presently EHE being known to Children’s Social Care.

The ADCS had raised a number of points with government which it regarded as needing greater consideration:

- No definition of a ‘suitable education’. School Attendance Order (SAO) processes are slow, expensive and a blunt instrument and may not be necessary if there was a definition of, and framework against, which to judge a ‘suitable education’
- Potential confusion amongst parents/carers about access to a school’s remote education offer and EHE



- Lack of oversight of vulnerable children – LA has no power nor a right to see the child being home educated
- Most common reason cited (pre Covid-19) by parents for requesting EHE is dissatisfaction with school.

A response to the 2021 ADCS survey was submitted during the October (2021) half term break. National data based on the latest submissions from local authorities is not due to be published until late November / early December 2021.

The latest ADCS survey confirms that the government is considering a statutory duty on LAs to provide support to EHE families including an annual visit. The DFE is aware that LAs may require additional staff / resources.

### 4.3 The Elective Home Education Working Group

4.4 The rising numbers of EHE over the last 5 academic years in Sandwell prompted the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life to ask the Scrutiny Board to take a closer look at the situation. The Elective Home Education (EHE) Working Group formed in November 2020.

4.5 The review aimed to gather evidence to understand about education outside the school system and the ‘have, needs and wants’ for EHE support in Sandwell:

- To understand the current numbers and consider whether support for Elective Home Education in Sandwell is sufficient.
- To capture parents and young people’s perspective on education at home.
- To consider the attainment levels, and further education and employment trends for children educated at home.
- To raise awareness of the limitations placed on the LA and bring findings to the attention of the Secretary of State for Education.

4.6 The Membership of the Working Group was Councillors Preece (Chair), Z Hussain, McVittie, Millar and Shackleton.



4.7 Evidence gathering took place between December 2020 and March 2021 provides a snap shot of the EHE picture nationally and in Sandwell:

- 08.10.2020 – Discussion and scope
- 09.11.2020 – Research, data, EHE case studies, draft surveys
- 25.11.2020 - Focus group with Parents, children and EHE advisory teachers
- 02.12.2020 – Survey feedback, focus group feedback, detailed data analysis and costs
- 27.01.2020 – Update report, emerging themes and findings
- 10.03.2020 – Comparator data, alternative provision/ safeguarding case study and findings summary

4.8 The Working Group had reported progress to Scrutiny Board on three occasions and the DfE Senior case lead attending two of the Board meetings. It was important to monitor the National picture and emerging information during the review.

#### **4.9 The Evidence Base as confirmed by Governance See Appendix 1**

4.10 Nationally concerns were raised about the rising numbers in EHE. This was highlighted in the Association of Directors of Childrens Services (ADCS) Elective Home Education Survey 2020 which captured the number and characteristics of children and young people who were known to be home educated.

The survey also aimed to understand the reasons behind a family's decision to electively home educate, how LAs across the country were supporting these families, and how any available resources were being deployed in this area.

Sandwell's increase in EHE was higher than the 38% National average. As at 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Sandwell had received 220 new EHE referrals (including 90 citing Covid as the primary reason) representing an increase of 49% in comparison with the previous academic year.

4.11 The Working Group requested a Sandwell survey to find out more about why families were choosing EHE as an alternative to school



and why there was a rise in numbers. The survey was distributed to all home educating families registered in Sandwell, which represented 561 young people as at October 2020.

- 4.12 Parents and children were invited to fill in separate surveys. The survey response rate was low, however analysis of the feedback from 15 adult surveys and 19 children surveys completed was very positive about EHE support in Sandwell and provided some useful comments.
- 4.13 The working group reviewed evidence that Ofsted had reprimanded a council after discovering potential off-rolling of children in care, the number of pupils educated at home had increased by more than 20 per cent. Ofsted analysis had found that nine of the ten children's services visits conducted since September mentioned a rise in the number of children being home-educated, Ofsted recognised many councils had effective processes in place to track such changes.
- 4.14 The Working Group welcomed that Sandwell processes were working very well and since September 2020, Ofsted has been carrying out assurance visits to local authorities to consider if they are making the best decisions for children in care during the pandemic. There had been eleven satisfactory visits to Sandwell schools by mid-November.
- 4.15 The working group gathered and considered evidence including case studies, analysis from EHE surveys, feedback from a focus group with parents, children and EHE advisory teachers, the cost of home education in Sandwell and how EHE was funded.
- 4.16 The Focus Group with parents, children and advisory EHE teachers was held virtually. From the evidence gathered the working group has identified that Sandwell EHE support was 'strong' and that parents value the commitment and passion of the advisory teachers.
- 4.17 Key messages raised by the focus group in relation to wants and needs:
- The cost of home education – consider funding for EHE support (Note: Parents are responsible for direct costs)
  - Issues about EHCP, identifying issues earlier and access to support if the child was not in a school setting;



- Free spaces to use for EHE group activities, mutual spaces;
- Resource library / bank for EHE parents to share their books and educational materials;
- Safeguarding: parents protecting their own child from school bullies and safeguarding children who were not in school.

4.18 There were several matters highlighted for consideration by the Scrutiny Board which may improve the Council Offer and that could be investigated quite quickly as actions.

- That additional spaces and facilities be identified for EHE groups to meet and carry out activities, and that competitive rates for use of those facilities be negotiated for EHE group use;
- That the Council develop a mechanism for resources to be shared for EHE, such as a hub for books or other educational material to be kept;
- That youth social networks, such as 'Just Youth', be promoted on the EHE website for users to find out what's on in Sandwell for young people and to encourage engagement;
- To raise awareness of the SEN and EHCP support available and access for children.

4.19 The DfE Senior Case Lead for this area provided an update on the Education Committee Inquiry. The parliamentary policy team had indicated it would welcome Sandwell Council's EHE Working Group evidence to help inform the national picture, especially as the views of children, families, and advisory teachers were being gathered and there may be opportunity for representatives from Sandwell to re-engage with Westminster and the All Party Parliamentary process as previously attended by the Service Manager in his capacity as a member of the Association of EHE Professionals.

4.20 The Working Group had planned a second focus group with head teachers and teachers to further explore the support and advice in schools for pupils and parents and to establish if bullying was an issue, what measures were taken to prevent and protect against bullying. The timing of the review impacted on the capacity of the teaching staff who were providing remote learning during school closures. This activity can be carried out post Covid and when more is known from the parliamentary Inquiry of Home Education.



## 4.21 Evidence Summary

A table of evidence is included as appendix 1 to the report  
The table contains a summary of the information and data gathered during the review.

1. EHE Notification Trends
2. New EHE by area since April 2020
3. EHE wards/ towns
4. EHE Summary - Additional HMI information since April 2020
5. Active EHE in the period
6. EHE Equality characteristics
7. Survey Parents and children
8. DfE
9. LA Comparison data
10. Association of Directors of Children's Services and Education
11. Estimated cost of EHE in Sandwell
12. Funding streams
13. Safeguarding
14. Off rolling / backdoor exclusions
15. SEND / EHCP
16. EHE Support
17. Parent School discussions
18. Bullying
19. College
20. Case Studies

## 4.22 Consultation

The working group have conducted two surveys to consult with Parents and children who are educated at home.

## 4.23 Alternative Options

The purpose of the review is to consider current support for Elective Home Education and if it meets the needs of young people and parents, findings will inform if the Council should consider alternative options.



## 4.24 Conclusions

The Working Group agreed that an initial response report should be prepared for submission to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 21 June 2021. The report would summarise the process and findings of the work group in order to make recommendations to Cabinet. However, the CSE Scrutiny Board meeting did not take place.

- 4.25 The report would focus on the improvements the Council could consider making quite quickly and highlight the need to pause the review to allow time for the numbers of EHE children to stabilise post Covid. There was also a need to wait for the government's response to the Select Committee Inquiry on Home Education later this year.
- 4.26 The EHE Working Group has identified areas where the Council can start to consider making improvements to its current working practices to better support EHE families in Sandwell. These identified areas have been included in the EHE team's delivery plan for the 2021/22 academic year. After only 1 term of the current academic year, it is too soon to report on the progress made to date.
- 4.27 The EHE Working Group consider that the current regulations are insufficient, in respect of EHE children's welfare and safety, and in terms of checking progress on educational attainment. It is recognised that many EHE families are happy with their independence from regulation, however the Council has a duty to safeguard children and the working group feel strongly that Government must strengthen regulation to safeguard all children.
- 4.28 The Association of EHE Professionals (AEHEP) has recently written a letter to Government asking whether consideration is being given to strengthening the legislation to provide further safeguards for children who are EHE (Appendix 2).

The working group welcome the letter and highlight that it reflects their findings highlighting the need for regulation and resources for EHE.

The working group agreed to ask Cabinet to send a letter to the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson and the Home Education Inquiry select committee to endorse the comments of the



letter and indicate that the findings of the EHE Working Group reflect the AEHEP comments at a local level.

4.29 It was agreed that the Scrutiny Board would consider the Cabinet response, the EHE Trends and the outcomes of the parliamentary Education Committee Inquiry on Home Education in Autumn 2021.

4.30 Please see appendix 4 for summary update report - November 2021.

## 5 Implications

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Resources:</b>            | There continues to be increasing demands on the EHE service due to increasing numbers of children being educated at home.   |
| <b>Legal and Governance:</b> | There is a statutory requirement to ensure that all children in Sandwell receive efficient full-time education appropriate to their age, aptitude and special educational needs   |
| <b>Risk:</b>                 | Scrutiny will consider risk implications, including any safeguarding measures   |
| <b>Equality:</b>             | Scrutiny will consider implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how the Equality Duty is being met   |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing:</b> | Good education and attainment levels increase the wellbeing of children and young people and contributes to them having the best possible start in life.  |
| <b>Social Value</b>          | Sandwell is more likely to enhance the future employability of children who have been electively home educated by ensuring that sufficient resources are in place to adequately support the EHE community in fulfilling their responsibility to provide a suitable education for all EHE children and young people. |



## 6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – summary of evidence table (prepared by Governance)  
Appendix 2 – AEHEP letter to Government re EHE  
Appendix 3 – ADCS Notifications (November 2020)  
Appendix 4 - Summary update report - November 2021.  
Appendix 5 - Strengthening Home Education: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report

## 7. Background Papers

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board [20 July 2020](#)  
Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board [16 November 2020](#)  
Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board [11 January 2021](#)

## 8. Lead Officers

Group Head for Education Support Services, Sue Moore  
[Sue\\_moore@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Sue_moore@sandwell.gov.uk)  
Service Manager, Ramsey Richards  
[Ramsey\\_richards@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Ramsey_richards@sandwell.gov.uk)



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|                 | Evidence gathered   |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
|-----------------|---|---|---------------------------------|--|--|------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------|--------|-------|------------|------|---------------|--------|-----------------|-----|--------|-------|-----|------|
| 1               | EHE Notification Trends   | There is an upward trend 575 and rising. This had started in 2019 way before school closures, it is possible that the impact of Covid (school closure, remote learning and fear of sending children to school) has had an impact on rising numbers electing to home educate. Monitoring data is ongoing and the extension of timelines for the working group will potentially give a more balanced view, as some children will return to school education.  |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| 2               | New EHE by area since April 2020<br>165 - primary<br>87 - secondary | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Town</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Oldbury</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rowley Regis</td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smethwick</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tipton</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesbury</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Bromwich</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other / Unknown</td> <td>09</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>   |                                 |  |  | Town | Total                 | Oldbury          | 42                              | Rowley Regis | 37     | Smethwick | 41   | Tipton | 50    | Wednesbury | 23   | West Bromwich | 50     | Other / Unknown | 09  |        |       |     |      |
| Town            | Total   |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Oldbury         | 42  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Rowley Regis    | 37  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Smethwick       | 41  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Tipton          | 50  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Wednesbury      | 23  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| West Bromwich   | 50  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Other / Unknown | 09  |   |                                 |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| 3               | EHE wards/ towns  | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Town</th> <th>School Age population</th> <th>EHE # 22/01/2021</th> <th>% of Town school age population</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Oldbury</td> <td>11,930</td> <td>88</td> <td>0.74</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rowley</td> <td>7,237</td> <td>98</td> <td>1.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smethwick</td> <td>10,251</td> <td>103</td> <td>1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tipton</td> <td>7,138</td> <td>125</td> <td>1.75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |                                 |  |  | Town | School Age population | EHE # 22/01/2021 | % of Town school age population | Oldbury      | 11,930 | 88        | 0.74 | Rowley | 7,237 | 98         | 1.35 | Smethwick     | 10,251 | 103             | 1.0 | Tipton | 7,138 | 125 | 1.75 |
| Town            | School Age population   | EHE # 22/01/2021  | % of Town school age population |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Oldbury         | 11,930  | 88  | 0.74                            |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Rowley          | 7,237   | 98  | 1.35                            |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Smethwick       | 10,251  | 103   | 1.0                             |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |
| Tipton          | 7,138   | 125   | 1.75                            |  |  |      |                       |                  |                                 |              |        |           |      |        |       |            |      |               |        |                 |     |        |       |     |      |

|   |   |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------|-------|---------------|------|---------------|--------|---|------------------|-------|--------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----|--|----|------------------------------------|-----|--------------------|----|
|   |   | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Wednesbury</td> <td>6,832</td> <td>44</td> <td>0.64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>West Bromwich</td> <td>12,348</td> <td>111</td> <td>0.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>55,736</td> <td>569</td> <td>1.03% Overall %</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note the above figures have been calculated manually and have required some merging of location data as recorded on the Synergy system. Data intelligence have not had time to produce a a summary report which includes the % by town data and therefore, there may be some minor discrepancies although the differences above would be minimal.</p>   | Wednesbury                      | 6,832 | 44            | 0.64 | West Bromwich | 12,348 | 111   | 0.9              | Total | 55,736 | 569              | 1.03% Overall % |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| Wednesbury                                    | 6,832                                       | 44   | 0.64                            |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| West Bromwich                                 | 12,348                                      | 111  | 0.9                             |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| Total   | 55,736                                      | 569  | 1.03% Overall %                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| 4   | EHE Summary                                 | <p>EHE Summary between 02/09/2020 and 25/01/2021</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Total number of students</b></td> <td>569</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Female</b></td> <td>278</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Male</b></td> <td>291</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Percentage of total school population*</b></td> <td>(inc. academies)</td> <td>1.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>(exc. academies)</td> <td>1.70%</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>*Percentage of total school population based on January 2020 census data</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>&lt;Unknown&gt;</b></td> <td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Education, Health and Care Plan</b></td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>No Special Educational need</b></td> <td>443</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>SEN Support</b></td> <td>89</td> </tr> </table> | <b>Total number of students</b> | 569   | <b>Female</b> | 278  | <b>Male</b>   | 291    | <b>Percentage of total school population*</b> | (inc. academies) | 1.03% |        | (exc. academies) | 1.70%           | <b>&lt;Unknown&gt;</b> | 17 | <b>Education, Health and Care Plan</b> | 20 | <b>No Special Educational need</b> | 443 | <b>SEN Support</b> | 89 |
| <b>Total number of students</b>               | 569   |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>Female</b>                                 | 278   |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>Male</b>                                   | 291   |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>Percentage of total school population*</b> | (inc. academies)                            | 1.03%  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
|   | (exc. academies)                            | 1.70%  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>&lt;Unknown&gt;</b>                        | 17  |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>Education, Health and Care Plan</b>        | 20  |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>No Special Educational need</b>            | 443   |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| <b>SEN Support</b>                            | 89  |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
|   | Additional HMI information since April 2020 | 5 children on CIN plan; EHCP 5, SEND 34, no obvious pattern; 90 children given Covid related reasons for choosing EHE; fairly even across the wards – no obvious pattern; no schools have seen significant increase to EHE referrals.  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |
| 5   | Active EHE in the period                    |  |                                 |       |               |      |               |        |   |                  |       |        |                  |                 |                        |    |  |    |                                    |     |                    |    |

|  |  |   |           |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|--|--|---|-----------|--|--|--|-----|--|--|
|  |  | <b>New EHE referrals</b>                            | 280       |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  |   |           |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  | <b>Closed EHE referrals</b>                         | <u>75</u> |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  |   |           |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  | <b>Current EHE referrals</b>                        | 569       |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  |   |           |  |  |  |     |  |  |
|  |  | <b>Total active EHE referrals during the period</b> |           |  |  |  | 644 |  |  |

|              |                              |  |               |             |              |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 6            | EHE Equality characteristics | <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|              |                              | <unknown>  | 15            | 6           | 21           |
|              |                              | African Asian  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|              |                              | Any Other Asian Background   | 0             | 2           | 2            |
|              |                              | Any Other Black Background   | 6             | 4           | 10           |
|              |                              | Any Other Ethnic Group   | 3             | 3           | 6            |
|              |                              | Any Other Mixed Background   | 4             | 6           | 10           |
|              |                              | Any Other White Background   | 4             | 7           | 11           |
|              |                              | Black - African  | 2             | 4           | 6            |
|              |                              | Black - Ghanaian   | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|              |                              | Black - Somali   | 1             | 1           | 2            |
|              |                              | Black Caribbean  | 11            | 10          | 21           |
|              |                              | Black European   | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|              |                              | Chinese  | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|              |                              | Egyptian   | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|              |                              | Indian   | 7             | 7           | 14           |
|              |                              | Information Not Yet Obtained   | 10            | 12          | 22           |
|              |                              | Other Pakistani  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|              |                              | Pakistani  | 7             | 7           | 14           |
|              |                              | Traveller of Irish Heritage  | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|              |                              | White - British  | 44            | 33          | 77           |
|              |                              | White - English  | 4             | 2           | 6            |
|              |                              | White - Irish  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|              |                              | White / Asian  | 1             | 3           | 4            |
|              |                              | White / Black Caribbean  | 9             | 8           | 17           |
|              |                              | White Other  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>132</b>                   | <b>120</b>   | <b>252</b>    |             |              |
| 7            | Survey Parents and children  | The Working Group carried out a survey aimed to learn more about EHE in Sandwell and why families were choosing it as an alternative to school. The survey was distributed on 2 November 2020 to all home educating families registered in Sandwell, which represents 561 young people. Parents and children were invited to fill in separate surveys. |               |             |              |

|   |     |  |
|---|-----|--|
|   |     | <p>The Working Group received analysis from 15 adult surveys and 19 children surveys, some families had included all of the children in a single survey. The low response rate was disappointing, but the feedback received was very positive about EHE support in Sandwell and provided some useful comments.</p> <p>The responses received (3.5 - 4.0%) show that those who respond are often those carrying out good standards of home education and in the main are the supported families where we have no concerns. Their responses demonstrate that at the heart of their decision to home educate is the desire, not only, to provide a good home education with clear goals and aspirations involving accreditation and careers, but more importantly doing this within a safe and nurturing environment that looks after the emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of their children.</p> <p>All responders, whether welcoming advisory visits or not, appear to have a very positive view of Sandwell's Elective Home Education Service and genuinely have a desire to share their experiences and to offer up suggestions to help us improve services.</p> <p>Overall, the adults and children appear to share the same opinions about home education. The quality and richness of what they have shared provides us with a valuable insight into how we can develop services and move forward. Working in partnership with families and other organisations and will undoubtedly aid the Service's development plan into the future with collaborative ways of working with families, utilising their expertise and insight.</p> <p>It is evident also that those who responded to the survey took the decision to electively home educate based on the individual needs of their child. The full narrative version of this survey is added as an appendix to this report.</p> |
| 8 | DfE | <p><b>Progress of the Education Select Committee's review of EHE</b><br/> <a href="https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/280ccb44-6c91-47bb-b7f9-aa3d417e19bc">https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/280ccb44-6c91-47bb-b7f9-aa3d417e19bc</a></p> <p>Sandwell Council will share their review with parliamentary policy colleagues to help inform the national picture. The policy team said they would be more than happy to receive intel/data especially as you are getting the views of children, families, and teachers.</p>  |

|    |   |  |
|----|---|--|
|    |   | Opportunity for members to engage with parliamentary process – a follow up response is expected from the select committee and policy team.   |
| 9  | LA Comparison data  | <p>Unlikely to give a representative comparison because each local authority is different and we would not necessarily be comparing like with like: Birmingham, for example is 4 times larger than Sandwell and has an EHE population of 2,147 (October 2020) supported by a team of six people, including 4 teachers / advisers.</p> <p><b>Table</b> focus on the website and support offer.</p> <p>Note: Sandwell's increase in EHE is higher than the 38% National average - As at 30th October 2020, Sandwell had received 220 new EHE referrals (including 90 citing Covid as the primary reason) representing an increase of 49% in comparison with the previous academic year.</p>  |
| 10 | Association of Directors of Children's Services and Education (EHE) | <p>A survey of 151 councils by the Association of Directors of Children's Services has found that the number of home-schooled children in England has risen by 38% year-on-year, from 54,656 on October 1 2019 to 75,668 on the same date this year. Councils reported that fears around COVID-19 were the top reason given by parents for home-schooling their children, with many families saying they intend to send their children back to school once their concerns over risks associated with the pandemic are alleviated. Gail Tolley, chairwoman of the ADCS's Educational Achievement Policy Committee, said directors "want to be able to support these families to make sure they are making an informed decision and are equipped to offer a good and broad education", but cautioned that "without a statutory register it is impossible to know of every child or young person who is being electively home educated." The Government has yet to publish its response to a 2019 Department for Education consultation on setting up a register of children and young people who are not educated in school.</p> <p>ADCS Main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the recently published ADCS annual EHE survey shows, there has been a significant increase in number of pupils EHE with an alarming number of pupils being withdrawn from school rolls since September (more than 19,000)</li> <li>• Government yet to respond to the 2019 consultation though some views within DfE that LAs already have sufficient powers. DfE hopes to publish response to consultation before xmas but may slip to NY</li> <li>• DfE recently issued an updated suite of comms and guidance to schools, to parents and sharing of good practice in terms of schools advising LAs of EHE pupils</li> </ul> |

|    |                                   |   |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
|    |                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All agreed that we thought it likely that a good proportion of those pupils who've become EHE since September will return to school rolls when the pandemic abates but this will require careful monitoring</li> <li>• ADCS clear that the EHE cohort is now so large that LAs simply do not have the resource to fulfil their duties in relation to children receiving a suitable education. ADCS acknowledges that a mandatory Register alone will not safeguard EHE pupils, there must be a duty and attendant power of entry to make at least an annual visit but this will require full funding</li> <li>• ADCS noted that presently we have the worst of both worlds, that successive governments have not addressed these issues and parental rights to home educate continue to have precedence over a child's right to a suitable education</li> <li>• Moreover, the government has, rightly, made much of the importance of children and young people continued to attend school/college during the pandemic. We have a robust school inspection regime that makes professional judgements on the quality of teaching yet we allow 'teaching amateurs' to educate their children at home if they so choose</li> <li>• DfE acknowledged the libertarian dilemma for the government, that the inspectorate might have a role in any registration system, and the possibility of a multi-agency approach to suitable education/safeguarding of EE pupils</li> </ul> |
| 11 | Estimated cost of EHE in Sandwell | The current estimated cost of EHE support in Sandwell is £130,200 (Excluding resource or administrative support or any costs associated with the line management / supervision).  |
| 12 | Funding streams                   | <p>The Local Authority is responsible for setting a local schools funding formula for 2021/22. later this year the Government will be putting forward plans to move to a "hard" national funding formula in the future, which will determine school funding allocations directly, rather than local funding formula. Ultimately this means that when this becomes effective there would be a need to invoice schools for those services provided by the LA via the De-delegated and education functions budgets. The government may in the future change the funding rate and what it covers.</p> <p>Education Directorate funding at present is based on several funding streams including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. De-delegated budget / Delegated schools grants</li> <li>2. Education Functions budget</li> </ol>   |

|    |                                   |  |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
|    |                                   | <p>3. Central School Services budget</p> <p>4. Penalty Notice Income - suspended post March 2020</p> <p>As there is no dedicated budget, the future funding for Elective Home Education presents a degree of uncertainty and questions remain about the sustainability of existing and future EHE services. This is most concerning given the statutory need to ensure that all children in Sandwell receive "efficient full-time education appropriate to their age, aptitude and special educational needs".</p>   |
| 13 | Safeguarding                      | <p>We continue to work with partners including colleagues in social care and targeted early help to raise awareness of elective home education to enhance assessments in relation to vulnerable children etc. Please see email sent on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 to employees in Children and Education, Sandwell Children's Trust and partner agencies in relation to professional curiosity and children not in school.</p> <p>The Working Group highlighted that social workers have access to homes that the Local Authority would not when dealing with children who are not on a school roll. The Working Group planned to invite the Group Head Front Door SCT to attend meetings to strengthen collaborative working and raise awareness of home education.</p> <p>The working group considered whether it is "neglect" if the parents were not educating at home as they believe every child should have the education they require. These issues were further discussed at the QPP Neglect conference on 8 June 2021 attended by Emeritus Professor Jan Horwath who is on record in relation to educational neglect. The QPP sub-group have also been requested to undertake an audit of assessments and the inclusion of education/EHE matters where relevant.</p> |
| 14 | Off rolling / backdoor exclusions | <p>Back door" exclusion is a term that has developed to describe situations where a family feels under pressure to withdraw their son/daughter from their school or find an alternative school placement if they are at risk of permanent exclusion. There is no legal definition of the term, but such practices are not acceptable.</p> <p>Schools Week press release in December had highlighted that Ofsted has <a href="#">'rapped a council'</a> after discovering potential off-rolling of children in care, with the number of pupils educated at home shooting up more than 20 per cent. Analysis found that nine of the ten children's services visits conducted since September mentioned a rise in the number of children being home-educated,</p>   |

|    |                           |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|
|    |                           | <p>although, the watchdog recognised many councils had effective processes in place to track such changes.</p> <p>The Working Group has found that Sandwell processes are working very well. Whilst trends data confirms a rise in EHE numbers (see Appendix 4 Section1) there are no Sandwell Looked After Children who are home educated.</p>   |
| 15 | SEND / EHCP               | <p>The Working Group questioned parental engagement with assessment processes for children with special educational needs and/or behaviour issues. They also asked if there is a stigma attached in these circumstances.</p> <p>Answers to these questions were anticipated via a Teacher/Headteacher focus group</p>   |
| 16 | EHE Support               | <p>The offer of support while parents have a right to home educate their children if they wish, they don't have an automatic right to support from the local authority. In Sandwell we offer support to all families at the level of involvement they'd prefer – from the occasional call or email to comprehensive interventions where necessary. We also have parents who decline support completely. Some local authorities offer no such support at all, so we pride ourselves in reaching out to families; the majority of whom accept our offer willingly.'</p> <p><b>Home-schooling parents take legal challenge against council 'harassment'</b><br/> Parents whose children are permanently home-schooled have commenced legal action over alleged "harassment" by <b>Portsmouth City Council</b>. Portsmouth Home Education Group claims the local authority has issued legal "threats" to families ordering them to send children to mainstream schools. The council said it has a duty to ensure that children are receiving education that is suitable.<br/> <u><a href="#">BBC News</a></u></p> |
| 17 | Parent School discussions | <p>What window was available to discuss the child remaining in school?</p> <p>On 1st December 2020 the Association for Education and Welfare Management had discussed 'Elective Home Education and School Attendance'.</p>  |

|    |          |  |
|----|----------|--|
|    |          | <p>There could be a number of reasons why the parent was upset or angry but there was no cooling off period for parents/schools to discuss the implications or prepare for home education – once the letter was handed to the school the Head teacher was obliged to remove the child from school immediately. The Working Group want to talk about how the school and parents could work together more productively, where meetings were open to planning a way forward.</p>  |
| 18 | Bullying | <p>Was bullying a factor in children being removed from school either by parents to protect them or by schools removing the bully through exclusion? There was also bullying online to take into consideration. There was an anti-bullying charter in schools but what more can teachers do to identify children in need?</p> <p>Were parents too quick to remove the child rather than talk to the school and discuss the options. What was the school ethos, do schools have an open-door policy and do they address the situation? Do schools have workshops about bullying, do head teachers have sessions with parents /children about bullying?</p> <p>An evidence based review of the risks to children and young people who are educated at home (2017)<br/> Final Report<br/> <a href="https://orca.cf.ac.uk/111924/1/Home%20Education%20Report%20Final%204.10.17.pdf">https://orca.cf.ac.uk/111924/1/Home%20Education%20Report%20Final%204.10.17.pdf</a></p> <p><b>5.2.1 Bullying</b><br/> Brown et al (2011) estimate as many as 1 in 5 children are home educated due to bullying. Bullying appears to underlie dissatisfaction with school whether it directly leads to de-registration (Smith and Nelson, 2015; Wray and Thomas, 2013; Morton, 2010; Hopwood et al, 2007; Arora, 2002; Anderson et al, 2002) or indirectly as worries deter parents from sending their children to school (Bhopal and Myers, 2016). According to evidence presented at the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Bullying 2011-2016 (2017), schools do not acknowledge that some children may ‘disappear’ from school due to severe bullying. Some schools may actively encourage de-registration whilst others may opt instead to identify anxiety as the</p> |

|  |  | <p>cause for disappearance, especially if this occurs around the time of transition from primary to secondary school (Hopwood et al, 2007). Home education in these instances serves as an escape from a difficult situation, rather than reflecting parental preference or capacity, including financial, academic and/or emotional ability to support and home educate their children.</p> <p>Sandwell schools have an anti-bullying charter</p>  |              |                            |  |                      |   |  |   |  |  |                     |  |                                |  |             |  |                    |
|--|--|---|--------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------|---|--|---|--|--|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------|--|--------------------|
| 19   | College  | <p>Sandwell College took a decision to discontinue KS4 courses. To provide a KS4 course would require an additional layer of safeguarding in place for 14-16 year olds. Children attend Walsall and Halesowen College from the Sandwell area.</p> <p>Evidence to CS&amp;E Scrutiny Board re- Vocational qualifications could have further impact on EHE students.</p>   |              |                            |  |                      |   |  |   |  |  |                     |  |                                |  |             |  |                    |
| 20   | Case Studies   | <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Case Studies</th> <th>Reasons for home schooling</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Year 11 female African Caribbean living in Great Barr</td> <td>1. Particular Talent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Year 2 child - male Sikh background living in Tipton</td> <td>2. Academic to get into Grammar School</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Family of 4 children 1 female 3 males ranging from year 2 – year 10 African living in Tipton</td> <td>3. Dissatisfaction with what school can offer children in terms of their Interest base</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Family of 3 children 1 female 2 males ranging in age from 8-12 years old white British Wednesbury</td> <td>4. Lifestyle choice</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. 2 children 1 male and 1 female year 8 and year 11 white British West Bromwich</td> <td>5. Talent/vocational/lifestyle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Particular Case Study 6 2 girls year 8 and year 11 Cradley Heath- White British</td> <td>6. Cultural</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. 1 male year 3 Oldbury - dual heritage</td> <td>7. Health of child</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Case Studies | Reasons for home schooling | 1. Year 11 female African Caribbean living in Great Barr | 1. Particular Talent | 2. Year 2 child - male Sikh background living in Tipton | 2. Academic to get into Grammar School | 3. Family of 4 children 1 female 3 males ranging from year 2 – year 10 African living in Tipton | 3. Dissatisfaction with what school can offer children in terms of their Interest base | 4. Family of 3 children 1 female 2 males ranging in age from 8-12 years old white British Wednesbury | 4. Lifestyle choice | 5. 2 children 1 male and 1 female year 8 and year 11 white British West Bromwich | 5. Talent/vocational/lifestyle | 6. Particular Case Study 6 2 girls year 8 and year 11 Cradley Heath- White British | 6. Cultural | 7. 1 male year 3 Oldbury - dual heritage | 7. Health of child |
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| 2. Year 2 child - male Sikh background living in Tipton  | 2. Academic to get into Grammar School   |   |              |                            |  |                      |   |  |   |  |  |                     |  |                                |  |             |  |                    |
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|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | <p>8. 1 male year 11 1 female year 9 Dual heritage white Chinese Smethwick</p> <p>9. Child A</p> | <p>8. Lifestyle/dissatisfaction around limitation of state education to meet the needs of gifted and talented children</p> <p>9.</p> |
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2 March 2021

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

By email  
[Gavin.williamson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Gavin.williamson.mp@parliament.uk)

Dear Gavin Williamson

**Re Elective Home Education (EHE)**

The Association of Elective Home Education Professionals (AEHEP) was created in 2014 to provide a support network for local authority officers to create, share, and disseminate good practice and critically to raise the profile of EHE. The continued rise in numbers of EHE, particularly heightened during the current COVID-19 pandemic, is good reason for us to reach out to share our thoughts on the future for EHE.

We believe that this neglected area of education is in need some long overdue changes to ensure both safeguarding and education.

The number of EHE pupils has steadily risen as demonstrated by the ADCS annual survey in November 2020 to over 75,000, in 2016 the same survey estimated numbers at 37,500. The rise in numbers, doubling in 4 years, is not a concern in itself but the fact that this is an estimate and does not capture all EHE is a major concern. It might reasonably be inferred that most parents are providing an excellent education, although we cannot be certain as the current law and guidance does not empower LA's to really know. Certainly, lobby groups such as Education Otherwise, Education Freedom and others such as the Patriotic Alternative Campaign would project EHE as always providing an excellent education with local authorities being unreasonable and often giving advice on how to not engage with local authority officers.

Our concern as a group of professionals with direct experience of working with vulnerable children over many years is that COVID-19 has provided the impetus for a small but increasing number of children who need it most to lose the opportunity for education and for the protection which a school environment provides. It seems likely that the longer the situation continues it will be more difficult to reintegrate children into that environment. This is not a recent concern, but it has been exacerbated by the impact of schools being closed to all apart from the children of key workers and those who are vulnerable because of COVID19.

Every effort has been made by Local Authorities, schools and academies working together to maintain vulnerable children in education. However, it is increasingly clear that a combination of factors has led to a steep rise in numbers of children who are not likely to return to school soon, if ever. These factors are well documented and include fears about virus related safety, poverty, behavioural difficulties, off rolling and, regrettably, situations where parents/carers want to remove their children from any oversight by professionals for reasons which are harmful. There is a danger of creating mixed messages as the government are correctly worried about the amount of schooling lost by many pupils but the lack of effective oversight for EHE provides a very different message to the forgotten cohort of pupils who are EHE.

You will understand schools play a vital role in helping to keep children safe as they are one of the only universal providers which see children daily for most of the year. In some areas the contact is also maintained throughout the year through Playschemes and other informal community-based activities. We have seen, as anticipated, a significant increase in referrals of school-aged children, many which have met the threshold for social care intervention.

The impact of inaction on this subject will be felt by children for many years to come, indeed the recent Children's Commissioner for Wales report on home schooling makes for similar reading around inaction. Before the pandemic occurred, you will be aware of Serious Case Reviews/Child Safeguarding Practice reviews where a child had died or been seriously harmed where home education has provided a cover for abuse and neglect. You will also be aware of recent publicity about children not in education who have been targeted and groomed by organised crime groups and have died because of being drawn into these gangs.

As safeguarding professionals, we are of the view that the current legislative framework and guidance does not give sufficient protection to the children in these situations. There is no legislation which provides the opportunity for routine oversight of whether a child is safe and well, indeed the opposite is true in that local authorities must prove that there is concern before we can make an approach to the family.

When a child becomes EHE, the voice of that child is often lost, and some will experience little or no communication from anyone outside the home. We know from experience that neighbours and even family members can be reluctant to act despite having significant concerns. The voice that is heard is that of parents and lobby groups and whilst the vast majority will be perfectly reasonable a minority will be the opposite.

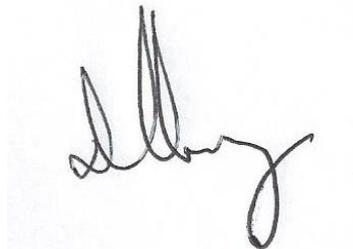
It is now apparent from our work looking at the profile of children who are EHE that there is a growing number of vulnerable families who are choosing this route to avoid sending their children to school. This includes families where children are known to be CIN or CP who are requesting that their child is removed from a school roll. I am sure that you will share our concern as we are very worried about the lack of visibility that these children will have as they will no longer have school as a protective factor in their daily lives. A home visit once or twice a year, where parents can refuse sight

of the child or not allow an officer to meet the child is not safe or conducive to understanding the child's viewpoint. This will also have a long- term effect as children born into these families in the future will probably not be enrolled in school and that invisibility will stretch into the next generation.

I am writing on behalf of the AEHEP to ask whether consideration is being given to strengthening the legislation to provide further safeguards for children who are EHE? This is both in respect of their welfare and safety, and in terms of the educational attainment which they are expected to achieve whilst at home. This together with definitive criteria for suitable education would be very much welcomed. Children have missed out in so many ways during 2020. If urgent action is not taken to raise the expectations about children who are EHE many of the most vulnerable children in the country will miss out for the rest of their lives, as well as those for whom the consequences are much more serious.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Harvey', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

**Dave Harvey**  
Chairman AEHEP

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# Elective Home Education Survey 2020

November 2020

## Executive summary

Since 2016, ADCS has undertaken an annual elective home education (EHE) survey to capture the number and characteristics of children and young people who are known to be home educated. The survey also aims to understand the reasons behind a family's decision to electively home educate, how LAs across the country are supporting these families, and how any available resources are being deployed in this area. This year's survey also included a focus on the Covid-19 pandemic and how this has impacted upon the number of children and young people electively home educated.

133 LAs responded to the 2020 survey, our highest ever response rate. Based on the data received, we estimate that a total of **75,668** children and young people were being electively home educated on the first school census day, 1 October 2020. This is **an increase of 38%** from the same school census day in 2019 (3 October). Of this number, we estimate that approximately 25% became EHE after 1 September 2020. Further, during the 2019/20 academic year, we estimate that the total cumulative number of children and young people being home educated was **86,335**. This represents **a 10% increase** since the 2018/19 academic year, despite schools being closed to the majority of pupils from 23 March 2020.

Feedback from responding LAs clearly indicated that health concerns over Covid-19 was a primary reason for parents or carers choosing to formally home educate their child this year. However, some parents or carers noted that their positive experience of educating their child at home during the partial school closures was a contributory factor.

Clearly Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the number of children and young people who are EHE. A number of LAs noted in their survey responses that many families intend on enrolling their child/ren back in school once their concerns over the virus are alleviated. However, prior to the pandemic, the EHE population was growing by approximately 20% each year for the past five years as previous ADCS EHE surveys have shown. Further, LAs have consistently highlighted the fact that they cannot be certain of the true size of this cohort given that there is no statutory register of EHE children and young people.

LAs have a duty to establish whether a suitable education is being provided but do not have a role in assurance of this. Survey responses show that LAs remain extremely concerned that they cannot know all children and young people who are EHE in their local area. Every child has the right to a high-quality education in a safe learning environment and ADCS is concerned that without powers to see both the child and their place of learning, we cannot know that these children are safe from harm or exploitation. LAs can only safeguard children who are known to them and without a mandatory register, there is no way of knowing the full extent of this cohort. ADCS awaits the outcome of the Department for Education's *Children not in school* consultation which proposed duties on LAs to maintain a register of children who are electively home educated and to provide support to parents who educate their children at home. While a voluntary register can only ever be partially effective, LAs have generally welcomed the proposed new duties in the absence of any indication that government has an appetite for a national mandatory register. However, ADCS is clear that the government must fully fund these duties, especially when the size of the elective home education cohort is increasing year-on-year.

# Summary Analysis of the ADCS Elective Home Education Survey 2020

## Key findings

- On school census day, 1 October 2020, a total of 66,648 children and young people were known to be electively home educated (EHE) across 133 responding LAs. It is therefore estimated that **75,668** children and young people were being EHE across all 151 LAs in England. This represents an increase of approximately **38%** from the same school census day in 2019 (3 October)
- 16,926 children and young people have become EHE since 1 September 2020. It is therefore estimated that **19,510** children and young people have become EHE since 1 September 2020. This represents **25%** of the total estimated number being home educated on school census day, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020
- During the whole of the last academic year (2019/20) 73,757 were known to be EHE. Therefore, an estimated cumulative total of **86,335** children and young people were being home educated across all 151 LAs during the previous academic year. This represents an increase of **10%** from the 2018/19 academic year
- The most common reason cited by parents for home educating their child/ren was due to health reasons directly related to Covid-19
- Approximately **9%** of children and young people being home educated are known to children's social care, both historical and/or current. **14%** are known to wider children's services, both historic and/or current.

## 1. Background

Since 2016, the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) has issued a survey to all 151 local authorities (LAs) in England on elective home education (EHE). The aim of the survey is to capture the number and characteristics of children and young people who are known to be home educated, the reasons behind a family's decision to home educate, to understand how LAs across the country are supporting these families, and how available resources are being deployed in this service area. The number of children and young people who are home educated is not currently captured via a statutory national data return.

This year's survey also aimed to capture the impact of Covid-19 on the number of children and young people being home educated. Anecdotally, it has been suggested that the number of families choosing to home educate their child/ren has increased dramatically and this has therefore stretched the capacity of LA children's services teams that work with EHE families. To reduce the burden on these teams, the 2020 EHE survey was shorter and focused on the numbers being home educated and the ways in which the pandemic has impacted this.

## 2. Understanding the cohort

### 2.1 Total number of children known to be home educated on Thursday 1 October 2020

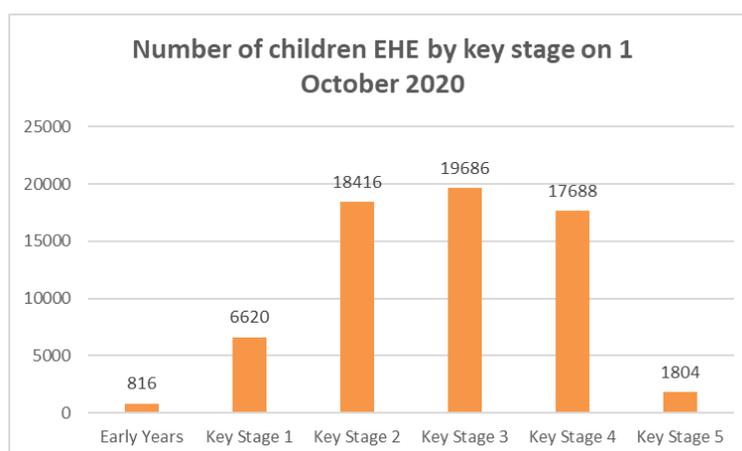
Across the 133 responding LAs, a total of 66,648 children and young people were known to be home educated on 1 October 2020, the first school census day of the 2020/21 academic year. It can therefore be estimated that there were 75,668 children and young people being home educated across all 151 LAs in England on this date. This represents a significant increase of 38% from School Census day on 3 October 2019. The largest reported cohort in a single LA was 3,167 young people

while the lowest number reported by an LA was four. The mean average across all 133 LAs was 501, a 33% increase on the average reported in 2019.

This year, LAs were asked to provide the number of formal requests for elective home education that had been made since 1 September 2020. 131 LAs responded to this question and provided a combined figure of 16,926. It can therefore be estimated that, since 1 September 2020, 19,510 formal requests were made for elective home education across all LAs, this represents approximately 25% of the total number of children and young people being home educated on school census day, 1 October 2020.

Feedback from survey respondents clearly showed the impact of Covid-19 and the partial closure of schools. When schools were partially closed during the first national lockdown in March, the number of formal requests made to home educate was significantly lower. Indeed, across responding LAs, only 5,678 children and young people began to be electively home educated from the period of 23 March to 31 August 2020 (an estimated national figure of 6,646). During this period, the majority of school children were being educated at home whilst remaining on a school roll and receiving support and learning materials from their school. However, since schools fully re-opened in September the EHE population has risen significantly as demonstrated by the numbers reported in the survey and comments provided by LAs:

LAs were asked to provide a breakdown of their EHE cohort on school census day by key stage. 131 LAs responded to this question and the findings from this year largely reflect that of previous years. The largest increase in the number of EHE children and young people from 2019 was in Key Stage 2 (6,427) followed by Key Stage 3 (4,750). However, the largest percentage increase since 2019 was in the early years (85%).



*“The majority of new EHE applications relate directly to Covid, however, not all through fear or anxieties around returning. For some, the experience of lockdown was a positive one and, with more families working from home, they wish to continue educating their children.”*

*“We were expecting more students to go EHE between March and August however due to Covid-19 and the national lockdown students stayed on school rolls.”*

*“We have seen an increase across both primary and secondary schools, with more young people who are eligible for free school meals and with previous social care involvement at some time in their life and more recently from BAME communities. Since September we are seeing more family groups becoming EHE, rather than individuals.”*

## 2.2 Relative size of the cohort

To gauge the relative size of the EHE cohort, LAs were asked to compare this to the wider school age population. 128 LAs responded to this question and a majority (80) reported that between 0.5% - 1.0% of their school aged population was being home educated on 1 October 2020. 26 LAs said that

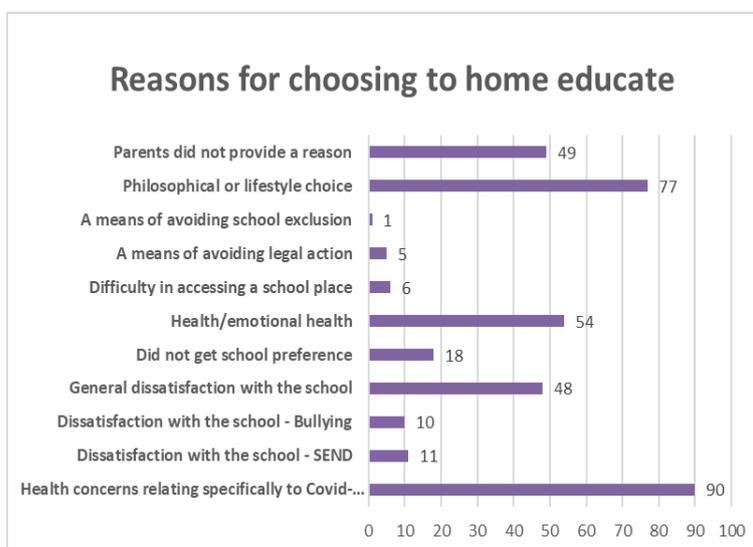
the proportion was between 1.1% - 1.5% and 15 LAs said that the proportion of their school aged population being home educated was less than 0.5%. Only two LAs reported this to be more than 4%.

### 2.3 The cumulative total of home educated children and young people in 2019/20

As with previous surveys, LAs were again asked to provide the cumulative total of children and young people known to be home educated at any point during the 2019/20 academic year. 129 LAs responded to this question reporting a combined total of 73,757. It is therefore estimated that 86,335 children and young people were being electively home educated nationally at some point during the 2019/20 academic year; an increase of 10% since the previous academic year. This increase is made more notable by the fact that schools were closed to a majority of pupils for much of the 2019/20 academic year when families were able to keep their children at home without formally removing them from the school roll.

### 2.4 Most common reasons given for choosing to home educate

LAs were asked to select the top three reasons provided by parents or carers locally for choosing to home educate their children. 130 LAs responded to this question and “health concerns relating specifically to Covid-19” was the most common reason, being cited 90 times. “Philosophical or lifestyle choice” was cited 77 times and “health/emotional health” was the third most common reason provided by parents or carers, cited 54 times.



Respondents generally noted that the number of EHE referrals dropped from March to August 2020 despite a general increase prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. When schools fully re-opened in September, the number rose dramatically. LAs attributed this to the concerns of parents over the health of their child/ren associated with Covid-19, however, the positive experience that parents had during the partial closure of schools was also cited, albeit less frequently. Further, in many instances families chose to home educate their child/ren with the intention of this being a short-term measure until the threat of the virus has receded. Consequently, in these instances, the decision to home educate is made much more quickly with less discussion with the school prior to removing the child or young person from the school roll.

*“Parents are anxious about the health and safety of their children at school and opting to home educate to avoid challenge over non-attendance. Parents routinely state that their children would be in school if it were not for Covid-19 and that they plan for their children to return ‘when it’s all over’.”*

*“During the partial school closures a lot of contacts were received from parents enquiring about the EHE support available from the LA with curriculum and learning materials. Parents did not fully*

*understand the difference between remote learning (during partial school closure) and elective home education and acquired misplaced confidence.”*

*“The disruption that children, parents and schools experience when they have to send a ‘bubble’ home has led to frustration with some parents not willing to continue and submitting formal de-registrations to take responsibility of their child’s education at home. LAs do not receive any government funding to support with home education and the LA now has the equivalent of a full primary school being home educated.”*

*“The increase that we have noted indicates that parents are not removing one of their children from a school roll to home educate them (as would have previously been the case) but are in fact removing all of their children from their respective school rolls due to their anxieties relating to the pandemic.”*

## **2.5 Type of schools**

This year, LAs were asked whether any specific types of schools have seen a noticeable increase or reduction in the number of their pupils becoming home educated. Most commonly, responding LAs noted the largest increase amongst children of primary school age becoming EHE. Most respondents found there was little difference between maintained, academy schools or independent. School governance was only mentioned on three occasions where the LA had concerns over one or more academies suspected of off-rolling.

*“Prior to Covid-19, the biggest rise in children being removed from school to be home educated was from years 9-11 and often related to behaviour, attendance, with the highest numbers leaving relating to schools [with an Ofsted judgement of] ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’. This academic year has seen children of all ages from all types of school (selective, mainstream, faith), leaving school due to concerns over Covid, as well as the usual numbers for the start of term that relate solely to year 7 school offers.”*

## **3. Safeguarding, welfare and special educational needs**

### **3.1 Special educational needs**

As in the 2019 and 2018 surveys, LAs were asked for the percentage of children and young people who are home educated and have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) on 1 October 2020. 131 LAs provided a response to this question with 104 saying that less than 5% of their EHE cohort has an EHCP. However, 26 LAs reported that between 6% and 10% of their EHE cohort has an EHCP. These figures largely reflect responses from last year’s survey. Within the feedback provided by LAs, very few noted an increase in children and young people from special schools or with an EHCP being home educated. However, a small number of LAs noted that some families chose to home educate their child with an EHCP while they wait for a placement at a special school.

### **3.2 Size of the electively home educated cohort known to children’s social care and/or wider children’s services.**

LAs were asked to provide the percentage of their EHE cohort that is known to children’s social care, both historical and/or current. 126 LAs responded with a mean average of 9% known to children’s social care representing a 4% decrease from 2019. However, some LAs said that they do not have historical data meaning that this figure could be higher. Responses ranged from 0% - 44%.

99 LAs provided the percentage of those being home educated that are known to wider children's services, both historical and/or current. On average 14% are known to wider children's services, again representing a 4% decrease from 2019. Responses ranged from 0% - 70%.

The biggest concern amongst responding LAs was the welfare of those children and young people whom they had not been in contact with, either because the parent or carer refused contact or because the LA lacked the capacity due to the significant increase in the number of electively home educated children and young people. However, LAs have prioritised contacting those who are known to children's social care or where the school has raised concerns.

### **3.3 Children missing education**

LAs were also asked whether they record EHE children and young people who move out of area as children missing education (CME). Of the 128 LAs who responded, 85 (66%) said that they did and 37 (29%) LAs said that they did not. The remaining six responding LAs were unsure. This marks a noticeable increase of 27 LAs recording these children and young people as CME since the 2019 survey.

### **3.4 Use of unregistered/illegal schools**

LAs were asked if they were aware of any unregistered or illegal schools operating in their area. Of the responding 129 LAs, 16 were aware of such settings:

*"Many tuition centres do not offer art, music, PE or even have an outdoor area for children to take a break in or take physical exercise. They know the law around home education and are adept at briefing parents in what to say to LAs, for example "parents are offering the remaining curriculum at home." Our concern with Covid-19 restrictions more recently has been with regard to many tutoring services and centres moving their services online and we would welcome the publication of the voluntary accreditation scheme for online schools which would further support parents to identify suitable provision."*

This year, LAs were also asked to provide comments on any concerns they may have over individuals or companies offering private tuition to **all** children in their area, particularly in light of the partial closure of schools in March 2020. Many LAs explained that parents are informed of the importance of safeguarding checks if they choose to use a private tutor e.g. DBS or using recommended tutors. However, the majority of respondents expressed serious concern around the lack of regulation or oversight of private tutors or companies providing education who are often unknown to the LA. Where families choose to educate their child at a tuition centre, LAs continue to raise concerns as these are not currently regulated in the same way as full-time education settings. Children are therefore put at risk of safeguarding issues such as radicalisation, online threats or abuse and neglect:

*"In light of EHE growth, tuition agencies and individual tutors may well promote their services in this area and it is concerning that there is no central responsibility for monitoring the credentials of these tutors. A register of all self-employed tutors and tuition agencies who offer tuition services to any family would provide some assurance. They should be required to provide evidence of qualifications, references and confirmation of the necessary DBS checks."*

*"There have always been concerns about private tutoring and this is purely a parental choice. The concerns are no different in the current situation, except that some parents have discussed EHE believing that the remote learning support offered by schools, celebrities and others during school closures will continue to be available to EHE families."*

*“There appears to be no or little accountability for such companies and private tutors, this raises concerns around the appropriateness of the work they provide and quality.”*

## **4. Support for electively home educated children and their families**

### **4.1 Offer of support**

Findings from previous ADCS surveys suggest that the vast majority of LAs request home visits with EHE families or a meeting at a neutral venue. This is not always due to the LA having specific concerns around safeguarding or unsuitable provision, but as an initial contact to all known EHE families. This will often include an offer of support from the LA.

This year, LAs were asked whether this offer of support had changed due to the pandemic. The vast majority of responding LAs noted that it had changed, although to varying degrees. Understandably, where home visits already took place, these were replaced with virtual visits with the family where possible. This year, many LAs reported having to reset parental expectations around support they would receive with EHE. Some families had assumed that the amount of support received during partial school closures would continue into elective home education, however, this is not the case:

*“[The] service was stretched before the pandemic and the huge increase in numbers since means our support is very thinly spread, we have had to draft in additional members of staff to support with processing referrals and updated our website to signpost parents to the EHE guide for parents rather than take individual calls.”*

*“We now produce a newsletter to support families who are home educating which includes information on local and national resources and references the local Covid situation. We have seen more parents receptive to offers of support, however this cannot be sustained without increased resource.”*

*“It’s been of the utmost importance that parents are fully au fait with what elective home education is, as opposed to what occurred during the partial school closures. We must ensure that families are aware that there is no support from schools, either academically or pastorally, and that they are taking on the duty of care to ensure their child’s educational, social, emotional and mental health needs are all being met when they opt to home educate.”*

### **4.2 Difficulty receiving qualifications**

To understand better the impact of Covid, LAs were asked to provide feedback on how the cancellations of exams (and move to teacher assessed grades) in 2020 impacted on electively home educated children receiving qualifications. The majority of responding LAs did not collect data on how many EHE children or young people had experienced difficulty in receiving a qualification, however, written feedback suggested that this was generally the case. In normal times, FE colleges will often provide support in their area for EHE Key Stage 4 learners to sit exams and LAs reported that in many areas this has continued. Nevertheless, LAs are already expressing concern over arrangements for 2021 exams:

*“EHE children struggled as they did not have teacher assessments to fall back on.”*

*“Unfortunately, there were several students who were entered to sit external examinations at private centres and who did not have a qualified teacher/tutor to submit evidentiary support on their behalf. Therefore, they were unable to receive a grade for the summer series and have had to defer to the autumn series.”*

*“We recognise that regardless of the pandemic it is becoming more difficult for EHE pupils to access exams as an external candidate. We would welcome some guidance from the DfE should [teacher] assessment be required in Summer 2021 so we can support families to achieve their goals.”*

### **4.3 Resources**

As in previous years, LAs were asked to provide their budget for supporting the coordination of EHE for the 2019/20 academic year. 93 LAs responded to this question reporting an overall average annual budget of £34,000 where a dedicated budget is allocated. This is a significant decrease of £30,000 from 2019. However, there was significant variation in annual budgets allocated and a number of LAs reported that they either did not have a dedicated budget or could not specify the budget allocation, possibly because these services operated in a wider context.

LAs were also asked to provide their actual spend on EHE for which 105 LAs were able to provide information. The overall average spend for the 2019/20 academic year was £35,000. However, 90 LAs were able to provide a figure for both annual budget and actual spend. 18% reported an overspend in their EHE budget and 15% reported an underspend, with the remaining 67% reporting no difference in spend.

### **4.4 Number of relevant full-time equivalent (FTE) staff**

126 LAs provided an answer to this question and reported an overall average of 2.3 FTE members of staff per LA to co-ordinate and monitor EHE provision, an increase of 0.5 FTE from 2019. Many LAs employ staff in this area who also have wider responsibilities within the LA outside of EHE. Further, due to demand pressures put on EHE teams this year, some LAs have drawn in more members of staff to help with the increased number of EHE referrals being received.

## **5. Additional comments**

LAs were invited to provide any additional comments on the national policy context or any specific trends in their locality. Comments touched on the strain LAs are under in trying to contact all families who elect to home educate. Where capacity allows, some LAs have worked with families, offering multi-agency support where required, in order to keep children on roll. . Most commonly, respondents were clear that without a register or a means of seeing the child in their learning environment, LAs cannot be satisfied that the child or young person is being educated in a safe or appropriate environment:

*“We would welcome: mandatory registration; a duty on all parents to notify the LA formally of their decision to home educate; increased statutory responsibilities placed on parents/carers with respect to a framework for EHE; a duty placed on parents to make themselves and their child available to meet with an LA officer on a routine basis (minimum annually).”*

*“When compared with the raft of safeguarding duties placed on schools in respect of their pursuit of non-attending pupils, the ‘light touch’ powers of LAs in relation to EHE children are derisory.”*

*“Currently, EHE legislation allows for parents to remove their children from school rolls without any meaningful opportunity first to unpick motivation or understanding of how children will receive a suitable and sufficient education from home. A mandatory ‘cooling off’ period would be helpful moving forward and during Covid-19.”*

*“During the pandemic, there are parents who would like their child to remain on the school roll but for them to access remote learning from home set by the school. This is because they would like their*

*child to go back to their school once they feel it is safer for them to do so and don't want to lose their space by electing to home educate. If there were an attendance code that allowed for this, schools might be more willing to consider this as an option. This could keep children on roll and reduce EHE numbers in the current climate."*

*"The trends have seen a significant increase in new EHE cases due to Covid concerns which is having an unrealistic impact on resources to support families new to EHE and to assess the quality and appropriateness of the education provision they are putting in place. There is an increase in vulnerable families moving to EHE which is of local and national concern."*

*"There needs to be future planning from the Department for Education and other national bodies on what we are going to do post pandemic when parents will be requesting their child's school place back and this is no longer available. We are absolutely going to face an admissions crisis over the next year which will in turn cause further difficulties within EHE, CME and attendance."*

*"We note that local authorities do not receive funding through DSG for work with EHE children. We estimate that had the 298 current EHE children in the local area been in school, they would draw down annual funding in the region of £2.16 million."*

*"We offer families a meeting with school, EHE Officer and Education Welfare Officer when parents indicate they are wanting to EHE to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and to try to resolve any issues in school which may be the cause of this decision. If parents deregister their child and decide it is not working within 12 weeks the child goes back on roll at the school they left."*

*"Prior to Covid, home education requests continued to rise (as has been the trend over the past few years), and cases once again were becoming increasingly more complex, with greater social care, SEND and multiagency involvement. Collaborative work between EHE and CME has been imperative, allowing for greater challenge when dealing with inappropriate home education, as well as liaising with social care and health when children may not have been seen by a professional and there is a safeguarding concern."*

## Appendix 1 – EHE cohort summary per region

A summary breakdown of key figures for each of the nine regions. Some LAs submitted their response anonymously and are thus not included in the below breakdown.

| <b>Region: North East<br/>(10 responding LAs)</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 2,044        | 204.4   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 613          | 61.3  |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 92           | 9.2   |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 2,171        | 217.1   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 6.7%  |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 8.2%  |

| <b>Region: North West<br/>(18 responding LAs)</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 6,661        | 370   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 1,790        | 99.4  |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 459          | 25.5  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 7,506        | 417   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 13.9%   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 18.6%   |

| <b>Region: Yorkshire &amp; Humber<br/>(14 responding LAs)</b>                               | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 6,323        | 452   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 1,751        | 125   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 430          | 33  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 7,517        | 537   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 6.9%  |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 12%   |

| <b>Region: East Midlands<br/>(8 responding LAs)</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 6,442        | 805   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 1,606        | 200   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 611          | 76  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 7,194        | 899   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 10.1%   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 16.7%   |

| <b>Region: West Midlands<br/>(11 responding LAs)</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 5,650        | 514   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 1,507        | 396   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 396          | 36  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 6,449        | 586   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 11.4%   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 18.5%   |

| <b>Region: Eastern<br/>(11 responding LAs)</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 10,599       | 964   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 2,401        | 218   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 831          | 76  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 12,091       | 1,099   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historical and/or current)    | N/A          | 4.7%  |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historical and/or current) | N/A          | 13.7%   |

| <b>Region: South West<br/>(9 responding LAs)</b>  | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 6,674        | 742   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 1,268        | 141   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 641          | 71  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 8,056        | 895   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historic and/or current)    | N/A          | 2.3%  |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historic and/or current) | N/A          | 5.4%  |

| <b>Region: South East<br/>(14 responding LAs)</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 11,521       | 822   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 2,743        | 196   |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 1,205        | 86  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 14,104       | 1,084   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historic and/or current)    | N/A          | 5.2%  |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historic and/or current) | N/A          | 15.8%   |

| <b>Region: Greater London<br/>(29 responding LAs)</b>                                     | <b>Total</b> | <b>Regional average per<br/>responding LA</b> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Number of EHE on 1 October 2020   | 7,231        | 258   |
| Number of EHE since 1 September 2020  | 2,311        | 83  |
| Number of EHE from 23 March to 31 August  | 878          | 31.3  |
| Cumulative total across 2019/20 academic year   | 7,831        | 280   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to children's social care (historic and/or current)    | N/A          | 12.5%   |
| Percentage of EHE population known to wider children's services (historic and/or current) | N/A          | 15.4%   |

## Appendix 2 – survey questions

### Data

1. On 1 October 2020, how many children and young people were you aware of being electively home educated in your local area?
2. As of 1 October 2020, what percentage of your school aged population are electively home educated?

Less than 0.5%

0.5% - 1.0%,

1.1% - 1.5%

1.6% - 2.0%

2.1% - 2.5%

2.6% - 3.0%

3.1% - 3.5%

3.6% - 4.0%

More than 4%

3. How many children were electively home educated by Key Stage, as captured on 1 October 2020?

Early Years

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 2

Key Stage 3

Key stage 4

Key Stage 5

4. How many formal requests for elective home education have been made since 1 September 2020?
5. How many formal requests for elective home education were made between 23 March 2020 and 31 August 2020?
6. During 2019/20, how many local children were known to be electively home educated at any point across the academic year (the cumulative total)?
7. Please provide any further comments

### Cohort

8. What are the top 3 reasons given by parents/carers for choosing to electively home educate, as captured on 1 October 2020?

Health concerns relating specifically to Covid-19

Health/emotional health

Dissatisfaction with the school - SEND

Dissatisfaction with the school - Bullying

General dissatisfaction with the school

Did not get school preference

Difficulty in accessing a school place

A means of avoiding legal action

A means of avoiding school exclusion

Philosophical or lifestyle choice

Parents did not provide a reason

9. What percentage of the total number of children who are electively home educated have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) as captured on 1 October 2020?

0-5%

6-10%

11-15%

16-20%

21-25%

More than 25%

10. Please provide comments on the impact that the pandemic and resulting partial school closures has had on requests for families to electively home educate.

11. If you have any further comments on the type of schools that have seen a noticeable increase or reduction in the number of children becoming home educated, please do so here. (Comment)

### **Support for EHE families**

12. Has your offer of support for children and families who are electively home educating changed as a result of the pandemic? How?

13. How many electively home educating children are known to have had difficulties in receiving qualifications following the cancellation of exams in 2020 due to them being unable to receive an assessment?

14. Please leave a comment in relation to question 13

### **Vulnerable children**

15. Do you routinely record children who are electively home educated and move elsewhere with their families as missing education (CME)?

16. What percentage of your total elective home educating cohort are known to children's social care e.g. are a child in need or have a care plan (historic and/or current)? Please omit the % sign from your answer.

17. Beyond children's social care, what percentage of electively home educating children are known to wider children's services e.g. early help (historic and/or current)? Please omit the % sign from your answer.
18. Are you aware of children who are electively home educated in your area attending unregistered or illegal schools? If 'yes', please leave a comment.  
Yes  
No
19. Do you have any concerns over individuals or companies offering private tutoring to all children in your local area, particularly in light of the partial closure of schools? Please leave a comment

#### **Arrangement of local services**

20. What was the budget/actual spend on co-ordinating and/or providing home education support services in your authority in the last full academic year (2019/20)?  
  
Budget:  
Total spend:
21. How many FTE staff work in this area, co-ordinating and/or supporting home educating families?
22. Please use this space to leave any additional comments you have on the national policy context or specific issues and trends in your locality, particularly in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on this area of work. Please also use this space to share details of local policies or practices you think might be of interest to others.

## The Association of Directors of Children's Services Ltd (ADCS)

ADCS is the national leadership association in England for statutory directors of children's services and their senior management teams



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|                  | Evidence gathered       |   |          |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |                  |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|------------------|-------------------------|---|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1                | EHE Notification Trends | <p>EHE numbers over the last 7 academic years have risen significantly in Sandwell – peaking at 576 statutory school age children in June 2021. The table below shows the rising trend in numbers at academic year end:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year end</th> <th>14/15</th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> <th>17/18</th> <th>18/19</th> <th>19/20</th> <th>20/21</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Statement / EHCP</td> <td>4</td> <td>7</td> <td>11</td> <td>17</td> <td>23</td> <td>25</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Active EHE</td> <td>142</td> <td>200</td> <td>267</td> <td>300</td> <td>334</td> <td>408</td> <td>576*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*This is the number of active cases prior to the removal of the year 11s from the data on the last Friday in June - the date for post 16 statutory school age leavers.</p> <p>The snapshot figure at the time of the ADCS survey (7<sup>th</sup> October 2021) showed 507 active EHE cases. Despite or due to the re-opening of schools since March 2021, we continue to see new cases of parents choosing EHE as an alternative to mainstream education.</p> | Year end | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | Statement / EHCP | 4 | 7 | 11 | 17 | 23 | 25 | 22 | Active EHE | 142 | 200 | 267 | 300 | 334 | 408 | 576* |
| Year end         | 14/15                   | 15/16   | 16/17    | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 |       |       |       |                  |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
| Statement / EHCP | 4                       | 7   | 11       | 17    | 23    | 25    | 22    |       |       |       |                  |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
| Active EHE       | 142                     | 200   | 267      | 300   | 334   | 408   | 576*  |       |       |       |                  |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |            |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |

|   |  |  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
|---|--|--|-----|---------|-----|------|-----|-----|--|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-----|-----|
| 2   | Current EHE referrals for period 2021/22 – HT1 | <b>Current EHE referrals (as at end of period)</b> |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
|   |  | Total number of students                           |     |         |     |      |     | 486 | Percentage of total school population* |                 |       | (inc academies) | 0.88% |     |     |
|   |  |  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  | (exc academies) | 1.45% |                 |       |     |     |
| * Percentage of total school population based on 2020 census data |  |  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
| Female  |  |  | 227 |         |     | Male |     |     | 259                                    |                 |       | School Support  |       | 92  |     |
|   |  |  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | EHCP            |       | 18  |     |
| New EHE referrals   |  |  |     |         |     | 52   |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
| Closed EHE referrals  |  |  |     |         |     | 81   |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
| Current EHE referrals at end of period                            |  |  |     |         |     | 486  |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
| Total active EHE referrals during period                          |  |  |     |         |     | 567  |     |     |  |                 |       |                 |       |     |     |
| 3   | EHE towns - HT1 (ending 29/10/2021)            | <b>Town Description</b>                            |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | <b>%</b>        |       |     |     |
|   |  | Oldbury  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 80              | 0.68% |     |     |
|   |  | Rowley Regis                                       |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 85              | 1.16% |     |     |
|   |  | Smethwick  |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 81              | 0.78% |     |     |
|   |  | Tipton   |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 103             | 1.48% |     |     |
|   |  | Wednesbury   |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 38              | 0.56% |     |     |
|   |  | West Bromwich                                      |     |         |     |      |     |     |  |                 |       | 73              | 0.60% |     |     |
| 4   | EHE Summary HT1 (ending 29/10/2021)            | <b>Elective Home Education</b>                     |     | 2020/21 |     |      |     |     |  | 2021/22         |       |                 |       |     |     |
|   |  |  |     | HT1     | HT2 | HT3  | HT4 | HT5 | HT6                                    | HT1             | HT2   | HT3             | HT4   | HT5 | HT6 |
|   |  | New referrals                                      |     | 227     | 47  | 22   | 36  | 33  | 45                                     | 52              |       |                 |       |     |     |
|   |  | Closed in period                                   |     | 50      | 17  | 31   | 24  | 53  | 77                                     | 83              |       |                 |       |     |     |
|   |  | Open at end of period                              |     | 536     | 566 | 557  | 569 | 549 | 517                                    | 486             |       |                 |       |     |     |
|   |  | Total closed and active                            |     | 586     | 583 | 588  | 593 | 602 | 594                                    | 569             |       |                 |       |     |     |

Reason for  
EHE - HT1  
(ending  
29/10/2021)

| Reason for EHE (parents' belief) |     |        |    |      |    |
|----------------------------------|-----|--------|----|------|----|
| At Risk of Exclusion             | 2   | Female | 1  | Male | 1  |
| Attendance/Prosecution           | 1   | Female | 0  | Male | 1  |
| Behaviour                        | 1   | Female | 0  | Male | 1  |
| Bullying                         | 31  | Female | 18 | Male | 13 |
| Covid-19                         | 96  | Female | 50 | Male | 46 |
| Declined                         | 9   | Female | 6  | Male | 3  |
| Dissatisfaction With School      | 74  | Female | 28 | Male | 46 |
| Emotional                        | 1   | Female | 1  | Male | 0  |
| Emotional Behavioural Diff       | 22  | Female | 10 | Male | 12 |
| Lifestyle/Cultural               | 115 | Female | 58 | Male | 57 |
| Medical                          | 1   | Female | 0  | Male | 1  |
| Medical-Child                    | 11  | Female | 7  | Male | 4  |
| Medical-Parent                   | 4   | Female | 1  | Male | 3  |
| Not Known                        | 6   | Female | 0  | Male | 6  |
| Not Preferred School             | 28  | Female | 12 | Male | 16 |
| Other                            | 12  | Female | 2  | Male | 10 |
| Philosophical                    | 6   | Female | 4  | Male | 2  |
| Problems SEN Provision           | 3   | Female | 1  | Male | 2  |
| Religious Beliefs                | 8   | Female | 3  | Male | 5  |
| Safeguarding                     | 1   | Female | 0  | Male | 1  |
| School Refuser/Phobic            | 6   | Female | 3  | Male | 3  |

|                         |  |  |               |             |              |
|-------------------------|--|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| 6                       | EHE Equality characteristics - HT1 (ending 29/10/2021) | <b>Ethnicity</b>   | <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|                         |  | <unknown>  | 15            | 6           | 21           |
|                         |  | African Asian  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|                         |  | Any Other Asian Background   | 0             | 2           | 2            |
|                         |  | Any Other Black Background   | 6             | 4           | 10           |
|                         |  | Any Other Ethnic Group   | 3             | 3           | 6            |
|                         |  | Any Other Mixed Background   | 4             | 6           | 10           |
|                         |  | Any Other White Background   | 4             | 7           | 11           |
|                         |  | Black - African  | 2             | 4           | 6            |
|                         |  | Black - Ghanaian   | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|                         |  | Black - Somali   | 1             | 1           | 2            |
|                         |  | Black Caribbean  | 11            | 10          | 21           |
|                         |  | Black European   | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|                         |  | Chinese  | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|                         |  | Egyptian   | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|                         |  | Indian   | 7             | 7           | 14           |
|                         |  | Information Not Yet Obtained   | 10            | 12          | 22           |
|                         |  | Other Pakistani  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|                         |  | Pakistani  | 7             | 7           | 14           |
|                         |  | Traveller of Irish Heritage  | 1             | 0           | 1            |
|                         |  | White - British  | 44            | 33          | 77           |
|                         |  | White - English  | 4             | 2           | 6            |
|                         |  | White - Irish  | 0             | 1           | 1            |
|                         |  | White / Asian  | 1             | 3           | 4            |
| White / Black Caribbean | 9  | 8  | 17            |             |              |
| White Other             | 0  | 1  | 1             |             |              |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>132</b>   | <b>120</b>   | <b>252</b>    |             |              |
| 7                       | Survey Parents and children                            | See appendix 1   |               |             |              |
|                         |  | Update – Following a nomination by Sandwell EHE parents, one of our advisory teachers was awarded a gold standard KIT award by Education Otherwise on 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2021). |               |             |              |

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 8  | DfE / Ofsted  | <p>Since the recent appointment of Nadhim Zahawi as the Secretary of State for Education, the DfE continue to consult with local authorities on the future role of LAs in relation to school attendance, children missing / missing from education and elective home education. Amended guidance and duties are anticipated (date unknown) but have yet to be confirmed.</p> <p>At a Regional Meeting held in Birmingham on 27/10/2021 attendees discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various delivery models including statutory v statutory plus (including targeted early help – where available – not the same in all local authorities).</p> <p>It was agreed that LA's will require further clarity on future duties, responsibilities and opportunities (e.g. traded v non-traded services plus future funding and resources for Elective Home Education – see section 10 below)</p> <p>DfE were also requested to provide clarity for colleagues in social care etc. in relation to “educational neglect” (failure to educate) and its place in the child protection / early help threshold hierarchy.</p> |
| 9  | LA Comparison data  | See appendix 1  |
| 10 | Association of Directors of Children's Services and Education (EHE) | <p>A response to the 2021 ADCS survey was submitted during the October (2021) half term break.</p> <p>Please note that National data based on the latest submissions from local authorities is not due to be published until late November / early December 2021.</p> <p>As at 7th October 2021 (the date of the ADCS survey) Sandwell had 509 active referrals including 111 citing Covid as the primary reason compared with 90 (citing Covid) in the previous year's submission.</p> <p>The latest survey confirms that the government is considering a statutory duty on LAs to provide support to EHE families including an annual visit. The DfE is aware that LAs may require additional staff / resources. (E.g. One LA had only 1.5 staff for an EHE cohort of 900 children).</p>  |

|    |                                   |   |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| 11 | Estimated cost of EHE in Sandwell | <p>The current estimated cost of EHE support in Sandwell is £135,500 (Excluding resource or administrative support or any costs associated with the line management / supervision).</p> <p>The structure of the education and children’s Directorate is subject to review and the future resources for EHE etc. have yet to be determined / confirmed.</p>  |
| 12 | Funding streams                   | <p>See Appendix 1</p> <p>As there is no dedicated budget, the future funding for Elective Home Education presents a degree of uncertainty and questions remain about the sustainability of existing and future EHE services in Sandwell. This is most concerning given the statutory need to ensure that all children in Sandwell receive "efficient full-time education appropriate to their age, aptitude and special educational needs".</p>   |
| 13 | Safeguarding                      | <p>See appendix 1.</p> <p>In March 2021 the LA (including the Trust) were subject to a “focused visit “ from Ofsted. A letter from HMI Peter McEntree dated 10 May 2021, included the following observation: There is effective work by the local authority to promote school attendance and engagement with remote learning. Schools are informing the local authority when children and families do not engage with them directly. All pupils with poor attendance last term have been referred to the authority and have received home visits. Where children are electively home educated or missing from education, appropriate processes are in place to monitor and offer support.</p> <p>Further to the “Annual Conversation” with HMI on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Lesley Hagger (Former Director of Children’s Services) received a second letter also dated 10 May 2021 from HMI, James McNeillie in respect of a range of topics including <b>out of sight children.</b></p> <p>We continue to promote the concept of "professional curiosity" and raise awareness of EHE and CME with other professionals including social care and early help colleagues. The EHE fact sheet for social workers</p> |

|    |                                   |  |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
|    |                                   | <p>and other professionals was revised and shared with Trust colleagues in October 2021. A reminder to SMBC and Trust staff plus partners was sent on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.</p> <p>We continue to work with partners as we are seeing an increase in EHE families with SEND (see data above) and/or other social care / early help support needs including; a rise in anxiety, mental ill-health and children struggling with the after effects of lockdown.</p>   |
| 14 | Off rolling / backdoor exclusions | See appendix 1 - The Working Group has found that Sandwell processes are working very well.  |
| 15 | SEND / EHCP                       | See appendix 1   |
| 16 | EHE Support                       | <p>See appendix 1</p> <p><b>Home-schooling parents take legal challenge against council ‘harassment’</b><br/> Parents whose children are permanently home-schooled have commenced legal action over alleged "harassment" by <b>Portsmouth City Council</b>. Portsmouth Home Education Group claims the local authority has issued legal "threats" to families ordering them to send children to mainstream schools. The council said it has a duty to ensure that children are receiving education that is suitable.<br/> <u><a href="#">BBC News</a></u></p> <p>As at 28/10/2021 this matter has yet to be concluded. An outcome is anticipated in coming weeks however, a firm date is not confirmed.</p> <p>Free school meals is not an entitlement of EHE families. However, following the re-opening of schools in September 2021, the Children and Education Directorate decided to continue the support offered to all vulnerable cohorts during the Covid19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Department for Education have awarded grant funding to Local Authorities to provide <b>Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)</b> to cover the October half term and schools' Christmas holiday period for 2021 to support children and young people aged 5-16 years (reception to year 11) including those with SEND who are eligible for benefit related Free School</p> |

|    |                                 |  |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
|    |                                 | <p>Meals to access healthy food and enriching activities free of charge. The grant is open to schools, voluntary and community sector, not-for-profit and others.</p> <p>The EHE Newsletter dated Autumn/Winter 2021, sign-posted families to <a href="https://www.scvo.info/category/funding/">https://www.scvo.info/category/funding/</a> and/or <a href="mailto:FSM_Vouchers@sandwell.gov.uk">FSM_Vouchers@sandwell.gov.uk</a> to check eligibility. Staff in the Directorate have administered / supported where families have requested assistance.</p> <p>The Newsletter also explored locations EHE families might use to and so far we have had these suggestions:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smethwick area – Warley Woods Café, Lightwoods Café, Why Not Café, The Bear Bookshop, Bearwood Community Hub</li> <li>• Oldbury – Flipout</li> <li>• Rowley Regis – Warrens Hall Stables</li> <li>• West Bromwich – Sandwell Valley Park and Farm, West Bromwich Albion Football</li> <li>• Boroughwide – Any Sandwell Leisure Centre</li> </ul> <p>This work is ongoing as part of the 2021/22 EHE Team delivery plan.</p> |
| 17 | Parent School discussions       | <p>Please see appendix 1.</p> <p>Whilst recent DfE guidance suggests LAs should attend meetings in schools for every child whose parent may be considering or who has made the decision to electively home educate their child/ren, this is not a statutory requirement and we do not currently have the capacity to do this. We continue however, to offer / provide consultation visits and information packs for parents plus early progress reviews for all new EHE children.</p>  |
| 18 | Bullying                        | See appendix 1   |
| 19 | College                         | See appendix 1   |
| 20 | Case Studies / Year 11 outcomes | <p>See appendix 1</p> <p>This year we had 67 Electively Home Educated children reached Year 11 and ceased to be statutory school age. 10 of these children had been part of the Elective Home Education provision at Halesowen College, the Inspire Programme and despite lockdown they all achieved their qualifications and have progressed into different further education, apprenticeships or jobs.</p>   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>In addition, 2 children were lucky enough to be the last people to have benefitted from the Elective Home Provision at NOVA Oldbury they too gained qualifications and have progressed into further education.</p> <p>32 year 11's joined various college courses.<br/>3 others have started traineeships in job settings including 2 who entered family businesses.<br/>13 have progressed into A level study or accessing training centres and 1 is continuing with online GCSE study.</p> <p>This goes to show that being home educated can prove that there are other ways to succeed besides attending mainstream education.</p> <p>Connexions continue to monitor and support all post 16 leavers whether home or school educated.</p> |
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House of Commons  
Education Committee

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# Strengthening Home Education: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report

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**First Special Report of Session  
2021–22**

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 3 November 2021*

**HC 823**

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## The Education Committee

The Education Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Education and its associated public bodies.

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### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Vanessa Donhowe (Committee Specialist), Dr Mike Everett (Clerk), Oliver Florence (Senior Media Officer), Rosemary Hill (Committee Specialist), Robert McQuade (Committee Operations Manager), Rebecca Owen-Evans (Committee Specialist), Reshma Rajendralal (Assistant Inquiry Manager (Apprentice)), Anwen Rees (Second Clerk), Owen Sheppard (Media Officer), Steiner Teixido-Oroza (Committee Operations Officer).

### Contacts

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You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsEd](https://twitter.com/CommonsEd).

## First Special Report

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The Education Committee published its Third Report of Session 2021–22, [\*Strengthening Home Education\*](#) (HC 84) on 26 July 2021. The Government's response was received on 20 October 2021 and is appended below.

## Appendix: Government Response

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1. The Education Committee published its report, 'Strengthening Home Education' on 26 July 2021. This document sets out the Government's response to the Committee's report. The Committee report did not number its recommendations to set them apart from the Committee's conclusions but they are identified by italic text in the report. The numbering of recommendations below is based on the order they appear in the report.

### Introduction

2. The Government welcomes the Education Committee report on Home Education as a follow-up to the 2010–15 Education Committee's report on support for Elective Home Education ("EHE"), prompted by the apparent rise in numbers of EHE pupils since 2012 and the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on those children scheduled to take public examinations in summer 2020.

3. The Government fully supports the right of parents to educate their children at home and most who do so educate their children well, sometimes in challenging circumstances. However, while many home educated children will be receiving a good education by dedicated parents, who deserve support, there will be others for whom the education being provided is unsuitable because their parents cannot educate them effectively at home. Similarly, while some home educating parents will legitimately be using part-time-education and extra-curricular settings as a way to complement their EHE, there are also likely to be some children who are deemed to be 'home educated' but most or all their education is through attendance at unsuitable settings, such as illegal unregistered independent schools.

4. The Government's intention has been to ensure that any proposals regarding home education do not impede those families who are genuinely, and through choice, educating their children at home.

5. With increasing numbers of children now being educated outside school there is a greater need for local authorities to be able to identify these children not in school to assure themselves about the education being provided; and to offer support to those home educating parents that would like it. We therefore remain committed to a registration system for children not in school. Further details on this will be in the Government's response to the children not in school consultation, which we will publish in the coming months.

## Response to the Committee's recommendations

1. *The next iteration of the Government's guidance for local authorities and parents must set out a clearer vision for a 'suitable' education - including the levels of numeracy and literacy which it would usually expect students to have achieved before they move on to later education, training or employment. This vision should take into account the different paths that children with SEND might take.*

6. Relevant case law<sup>1</sup> and the ECHR<sup>2</sup> gives broad discretion on the state in how the fundamental right to an effective education is implemented. For instance, a local authority may specify requirements as to effectiveness in such matters as literacy and numeracy when deciding whether education is suitable. Therefore, local authorities already possess the ability to specify levels of literacy and numeracy on a case-by-case basis.

7. Paragraph 9.4 of the Department's [Elective Home Education guidance](#) for local authorities already details eight components (including the point made above in paragraph 6) that local authorities should consider when determining whether a child is receiving a suitable education. This includes: enabling the child to participate fully in life in the UK; education not conflicting with Fundamental British Values; and isolation from a child's peers indicating possible unsuitability, to name but a few.

8. The Department remains of the view that a centralised definition of 'suitable' education would not be in the interests of home educating children, families or local authorities. Each individual assessment of whether education being provided is deemed 'suitable' must rest on a balance of relevant factors depending on the circumstances of each child. However, this may be an area the Department considers further when it next reviews its 2019 EHE guidance for local authorities and parents, which may need to take account of the outcome of the impending judicial review between Portsmouth City Council and an EHE parent.

## What do we know about children who are home-educated?

2. *The Committee's view remains that a statutory register, serving to more consistently identify children outside of school, is absolutely necessary. This would aim not to remove freedoms from those who are providing an effective education for their families, but to better target support to those who need it. The register should have a national reach but be administered locally. Rather than only targeting EHE children, it must cover all those who do not receive their principal education in a mainstream school. It may well be that the Government announces a statutory register ahead of this report being published. In any case, it must adhere to the principles we outline.*

9. The Government remains committed to a form of local authority administered statutory registration to identify children not in school. This would likely encompass children who are electively home educated and those who are missing education. Further details on this, as well as on proposals for supporting home-educated children, will be in the government response to the [Children Not In School consultation](#), which will be published in the coming months.

1 E.g. Konrad v Germany (2006) European Court of Human Rights app. 35504/03

2 [Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the European Convention of Human Rights](#)

3. *Once the statutory register of children outside of school is up and running, the Department for Education must make use of it to collate, analyse and publish anonymised annual data on the number of children out of school so that the Department, local authorities and others are better able to understand trends and create effective policy in response to them.*

10. The Government is committed to a form of registration for children not in school, but further details are yet to be decided, including how and what data would be collected. However, we would anticipate the Department to collect high-level data (not personal data of individuals) from local authorities, which would be analysed and published.

11. The Department recognises the value of data in policy creation and is keen to improve EHE data collection and analysis, and therefore will consider this as part of our next steps.

4. *When a pupil is excluded from school for more than five non-consecutive days in a school year, the pupil and their parents or carers should be given access to an independent advocate to help them navigate the process. Families considering EHE should also have access to these advocates, to ensure that they have the information and support they need to make an informed choice for them and their child.*

12. Within the statutory suspensions and permanent exclusions [guidance](#), we clearly state that the head teacher should draw parents' attention to relevant sources of free and impartial information. This information should include:

- a link to statutory guidance on exclusions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>).
- Coram's Child Law Advice service can be accessed through their website <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-exclusion/> or contacted on 0300 330 5485 from Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm.
- ACE education run a limited service and can be reached on 0300 0115 142 on Monday to Wednesday from 10am to 1pm during term time. Information can be found on the website: <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/>.
- Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (known as IPSEA – [www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)) is a registered charity. It offers free and independent information, advice and support to help get the right education for children and young people with all kinds of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. IPSEA can give advice and support on the exclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Autism Education Trust (AET), via the National Autistic Society (NAS) operates a helpline and advice service for parents and carers whose child is at risk or has been excluded. They also provide guidance and advice for education professionals on good practice and the law with regard to autistic children/young people and exclusion. Contact 0207 903 3660. Website: [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk).
- where considered relevant by the head teacher, links to local services, such as Traveller Education Services and the Information Advice & Support Services Network (formerly known as the local parent partnership).

13. We would already expect a similar approach to take place when dealing with parents considering withdrawing pupils to home educate. We advise that local authorities, schools, and other key professionals work together to coordinate a meeting with parents considering EHE to ensure they are making a fully informed choice that considers the best interest of the child.

14. Furthermore, the Children Not In School consultation proposed the introduction of a new duty on local authorities to provide support to home educating families, should they want it. Further details of this, along with the other proposals set out within the Children Not In School consultation, will be included in the consultation response which will be published in the coming months.

*5. Schools should publish their permanent and fixed term exclusion rates by year group every term, including providing information about pupils with SEND and looked-after children. Schools should also publish data on the number of pupils who have left the school.*

15. The Department collects data on suspensions and permanent exclusions from all state-funded schools via the termly school census. This data is published in an annual [statistical release](#) and includes data relating to individual schools. The latest release included, for the first time, termly rates and we plan on continuing this in future.

16. The suspensions and permanent exclusions statistical release also includes breakdowns on pupils with special educational needs.

17. The [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities in England](#) statistical release includes data on suspension and permanent exclusion rates amongst looked after children. As the looked after status is collected on an annual census, continued presentation on an annual basis is most appropriate. Due to the small number of pupils involved and the sensitivity of the data, publishing at school level is not appropriate.

18. Exclusions data is collected and published in arrears to allow time for review processes to take place and final outcomes to be determined. Therefore, the most recent release (published in July 2021) relates to the 2019/20 academic year. However, the Department is exploring whether the data can be released in a timelier manner.

19. It is possible to determine from the school census the number of pupils that are no longer on the school roll. However, unless a pupil moves to other state-funded provision, their destination is not known as the school census only collects pupil records in state-funded provision. The number of pupils who are no longer on the school roll does not provide a robust indication of the use of off-rolling or illegal schools as it will also include use of EHE, moves to independent schools and pupils who have migrated.

*6. In light of the evidence we heard on children with SEND, the Department must reconsider the potential for creating an independent, neutral role, allocated to every parent or carer with a child when a request is made for a needs assessment, which has the responsibility for co-ordinating all statutory SEND processes including the annual review, similar to the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer for looked-after children. This role would support families with the choice to EHE, and help ensure that any such choice was made in a truly informed way, and in the best interests of the child and their family.*

20. The SEND system already provides mechanisms for ensuring that families have access to support. Local authorities are bound by statute (by section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014) to consider the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers, when making decisions that affect them. They also have a duty to have in place a local information, advice and support service. These services, usually known as SENDIASS (SEND Information and Advice Support Service) offer children and young people with SEND and parents free, impartial advice and support. In this financial year, we are providing £8.6m additional resources to improve the quality of local services, to provide a national SEND helpline and online service, and to invest in parent carer forums. We therefore do not consider it necessary to create an additional role in this area.

*7. The SEND Review must address the need for consistent and sufficient support for children with SEND, no matter how they are educated. Access to Education, Health and Care Plans and the support they offer should not depend on being on roll at a school.*

21. The SEND Review is looking at ways to ensure the SEND system is consistent, high quality and integrated across education, health and care to improve early support for children and young people with EHC plans. The review will make recommendations in due course.

## **Elective Home Education: Local Authorities and support**

*8. When the Department responds to the 2019 consultation, it must clearly set out the expectations on LAs, other parts of the public sector (including health and social care) and parents with regards to EHE. It should supply case study examples so that EHE families and local authorities have a clear and shared understanding of what may constitute a 'suitable education', and what the thresholds for intervention should be—including for the serving of SAOs. The Department for Education should also track, publish and analyse data on SAOs at a national level on an annual basis.*

22. EHE expectations on local authorities, other parts of the sector and parents was not part of the scope of the Children Not In School consultation and as such would not be included in the government response.

23. The Department has set out components local authorities should consider when determining suitable education in existing guidance. Therefore, local authorities should already be able to access or request have sufficient information to determine whether a child's education is suitable.

24. The Department will work with local authorities to understand what data is held and can be supplied relating to School Attendance Orders (SAOs) to complement the data already collected on penalty notices, Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Orders. Data on these is published in the annual [Parental responsibility measures](#) statistical release. We will consider further data collection and analysis of SAOs in due course.

*9. The Department must revisit and revise key statutory guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children as soon as possible, so that they explicitly contain EHE within their scope, and contain clear and consistent messages for families, local authorities and others.*

25. The Department continues to review all key statutory guidance regularly. We will consider including EHE in Working Together to Safeguard Children at the next review point.

10. *The Department must assign Ofsted a role in quality assuring the delivery of local authority support for EHE and adherence to EHE guidance. This will require the creation of an inspection framework, based on the clarified guidance for local authorities and EHE families that we also expect the Department to produce.*

26. Ofsted already assess a local authority's EHE work as part of normal inspections of Children's Social Care services. Specifically, an inspection would request the following information:

The information the local authority uses to monitor the welfare of electively home educated children, in particular those children who are electively home educated and are either on a child protection plan, education, health and care (EHC) plan or are a child in need. If available, please provide the policy on elective home education. (2.04)

27. Furthermore, in the 'Evaluating the educational progress of children in care and care leavers' section of the [Ofsted framework for inspections](#) it states that the Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will analyse data and information about elective home-educated children and children missing education.

11. *The Department must clarify and strengthen the expectation in its 2019 guidance that local authorities make contact with parents on at least an annual basis, so that local authorities have the ability to see a child in person (at a venue of the family's choosing) in situations where this is necessary to establish the suitability of the education they are receiving. The Department must make any necessary statutory changes to enable this, and make clear that:*

- *annual contact with an EHE family is a minimum expectation;*
- *local authorities should be asking to see examples of children's work and parents should not reasonably refuse this;*
- *local authorities should be assessing children's progress from one year to the next, especially in areas such as literacy and numeracy which are essential to access future educational opportunities and employment. By the time children are at the age when they would leave compulsory schooling, they should be able to demonstrate the same baseline numeracy and literacy skills that we expect from their schooled peers. While children with SEND may follow different paths, it is vital that they too have the right support provided so that they can flourish.*

28. The Department will review its 2019 EHE guidance for local authorities and parents in due course, taking account of relevant developments that result from the impending judicial review between Portsmouth City Council and an EHE parent.

29. As outlined in the response to Recommendation 1, we already provide guidance and outline good practice on what we would expect when assessing suitable education. We have no plans to stipulate specifically how a local authority assesses the suitability of home education, as 'suitable' education assessment needs to consider a range of relevant factors depending on the circumstances of each child.

12. *The Department should provide local authorities with a set of clear criteria against which suitability of education can be assessed, taking into account the full range of pedagogical approaches taken in EHE, as well as the age, ability and aptitude of individual children, including where they may have SEND.*

30. Paragraph 9.4 of the Department's EHE guidance for local authorities already details eight factors for local authorities to consider when determining whether education is 'suitable'. Components as to how the term 'suitable' should be seen by local authorities.

13. *Given the rise in EHE numbers and lack of consistent support from local authorities, the Department should commission and roll out a national training package for all local authority officers with responsibility for EHE—developed with a wide range of stakeholders—so that those officers have a thorough and consistent understanding of the duties of and guidance for local authorities. That package should explain the various EHE approaches—possibly in the form of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). All local authority officers with responsibility for EHE must be expected to complete that training as part of their job.*

31. As stated, the Department is committed to a system of registration for children not in school. Further details on its operation are yet to be decided but decisions will need to be made on local authority implementation, which may or may not include a form of training packages for local authority officers.

## Outcomes, assessments and exams for children receiving EHE

14. *The Department must urgently commission and publish longitudinal research examining the life chances and social outcomes of EHE children in England (as a short-, medium- or long-term intervention), compared with those who have received a formal schooled education. This will need to include a range of short-, medium- and long-term self-reported experiences, 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes', and work in partnership with the full range of EHE communities. 'Hard' outcomes to be measured will include ability to demonstrate the skills in literacy and numeracy that are essential to future work or training. Soft outcomes could include less quantifiable factors such as mental wellbeing.*

32. The Department is committed to helping children and young people achieve the best outcomes in life, so they can realise their potential. While we can see the value of longitudinal research into outcomes of EHE children, we also recognise the challenges in undertaking such research given a lack of data on which households undertake EHE and approaches to involved. This includes the absence of requirements for formal assessments at set points, which are typically used to measure the outcomes of children attending school.

33. However, in light of the potential value of research into EHE outcomes we will review potential approaches again following the publication of the Children Not In School consultation response.

15. *The Government must place a duty on every local authority to ensure that home-educated children and young people have fair access to centres where they can sit accredited public examinations, with the Government meeting the entry costs for those exams. The Department for Education must also work to establish the appropriate level of entitlement, to which examinations the entitlement will apply, and the additional funding the Department will commit to support this.*

34. Many schools, colleges and other examination centres accept private candidates for examinations. The decision to accept private candidates is a matter for the individual centres to decide in light of their specific circumstances and the needs of the students concerned. The Department encourages all available exam centres to consider supporting private candidates and we have worked closely with the sector to ensure that there are enough centres available to support private candidates to take exams, with JCQ publishing a list of available centres to assist students in finding a suitable centre ahead of the entry deadline, first for the exceptional 2021 summer TAGs, and now on an ongoing basis.

35. The Department's guidance on EHE highlights that parents/carers who home educate will need to assume full financial responsibility for their child's education. This includes paying for the cost of entering their child for examinations. Some local authorities may provide financial or other assistance to home-educating families for public examinations, but this is discretionary.

36. In 2021, in light of the impact of the pandemic, GCSE grades were determined by teachers (Teacher Assessed Grades). To support centres with the additional requirements of assessing private candidates in 2021 we provided an exceptional grant to centres of £200 per private candidate entry. This funding aimed to avoid these additional costs being passed on to private candidates, so that they could access qualifications at a similar cost to a normal exam year.

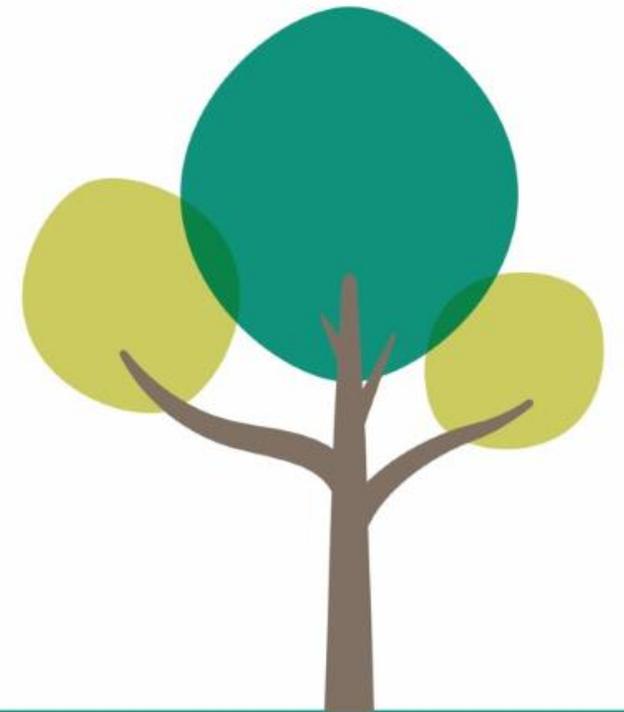
37. The Children Not In School consultation proposed a duty on local authorities to provide support to home educating families, should they want it. In theory, this could be in the form of examination support, however details of potential support will be included in the consultation response which will be published in the coming months, and will likely be subject to further discussion and consultation.

### **Concluding remark**

38. The Government agrees with the support from the Committee for the right of parents to opt for EHE, provided it is in the best interests of the child and the education provided is of a suitable standard. We agree that better data on outcomes is required to help Government and local authorities understand how many children receiving EHE are getting a suitable education and it is reasonable for local authorities to have the ability to assess suitability of education. The Government also remain committed to a form of registration for children not in school. This will improve local authorities' abilities to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities, improve data and will offer support and guidance for home-educating parents. Further details will be in the government response to the Children Not In School consultation, which will be published in the coming months.

# Elective Home Education Update

November 2021



# Since May 2021.....

- New Secretary of State Nadhim Zahaw & Robin Walker Schools Minister appointed in September
- School Attendance is nearly back to pre pandemic levels, except where there are Covid outbreaks
- COVID, lifestyle/cultural & dissatisfaction with school are the 3 main reasons
- EHE Teachers have continued to proactively engage with families providing support, learning resources and advice
- The Council continue to support low income families with food vouchers during school holidays (based on eligibility for FSM)



# Summer Activities Programme

- A 4 week long activities programme (8 sessions over 2 days) across 2 venues, Malthouse Stable & the STEPS Centre
- 27 advisory teacher lead activities : STEM activities, pond dipping garden workshop
- 7 instructor led activities : canoeing, climbing wall abseiling
- 34 children took part (with some attending all sessions)
- Feedback from children and parents:

*“The Malthouse is a lovely place to hold these activity days and are really enjoyed by my children. Thank you for organising.”*

*“Gabriel doesn’t normally join in, so today has been amazing.”*

*“My son really enjoys coming to the sessions, it gives him a different environment and he got to meet new people/friends.”*

*“My children thoroughly enjoyed the activities and I enjoy the fact that there’s something for all age groups.”*

*“Brilliant. Kids and myself have enjoyed it. Great team building and good for our children’s mental health. More activities like these would be brilliant.”*



# Latest EHE Figures

| Current EHE referrals (as at end of period – HT1 ending 29/10/2021) |     |                     |                 |                |       |
|---|-----|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| Total number of students  | 486 | Percentage of total | (inc academies) |                | 0.88% |
|   |     | school population*  | (exc academies) |                | 1.45% |
| * Percentage of total school population based on 2020 census data   |     |                     |                 |                |       |
| Female  | 227 | Male                | 259             | School Support | 92    |
|   |     |                     |                 | EHCP           | 18    |
| New EHE referrals   | 52  |                     |                 |                |       |
| Closed EHE referrals  | 81  |                     |                 |                |       |
| Current EHE referrals at end of period                              | 486 |                     |                 |                |       |
| Total active EHE referrals during period                            | 567 |                     |                 |                |       |

| Town Description |     | %     |
|------------------|-----|-------|
| Oldbury          | 80  | 0.68% |
| Rowley Regis     | 85  | 1.16% |
| Smethwick        | 81  | 0.78% |
| Tipton           | 103 | 1.48% |
| Wednesbury       | 38  | 0.56% |
| West Bromwich    | 73  | 0.60% |

For detailed EHE figures please see appendix 4 - summary update report November 2021



# Impact of COVID

- A response to the 2021 ADCS survey was submitted during the October (2021) half term break.
- Please note that National data based on the latest submissions from local authorities is not due to be published until late November / early December 2021.
- As at 7th October 2021 (the date of the ADCS survey) Sandwell had 509 active referrals including 111 citing Covid as the primary reason compared with 90 (citing Covid) in the previous year's submission.
- The latest survey confirms that the government is considering a statutory duty on LAs to provide support to EHE families including an annual visit. The DFE is aware that LAs may require additional staff / resources. (E.g. One LA had only 1.5 staff for an EHE cohort of 900 children).



# Year 11 outcomes – 67 no-longer school age

10 of these children had been part of the EHE provision at Halesowen College, the Inspire Programme and despite lockdown they all achieved their qualifications and have progressed into different further education, apprenticeships or jobs.

In addition, 2 children were lucky enough to be the last people to have benefitted from the EHE provision at NOVA Oldbury they too gained qualifications and have progressed into further education.

32 year 11's joined various college courses.

3 others have started traineeships in job settings including 2 who entered family businesses.

13 have progressed into A level study or accessing training centres and 1 is continuing with online GCSE study.

This demonstrated that being home educated can prove a successful alternative to mainstream education.

Connexions continue to monitor and support all post 16 leavers whether home or school educated.



## Report to Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Monday 29 November 2021**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>         | <b>Holiday Activities and Food Programme</b>                              |
| <b>Director:</b>        | Acting Operational Director Children and Education<br>Melanie Barnett     |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Samantha Harman, Play Strategy Manager<br>Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk |

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Scrutiny Board considers and comments upon the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) scheme midterm evaluation attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 That the Scrutiny Board receives the midterm evaluation regarding the Holiday Activity and Food outputs 2021-2022.
- 1.3 That the Scrutiny Board receives further information relating to future funding recently announced by the Department of Education following the comprehensive spending review for 2022-2025.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Sandwell HAF delivery is currently underway and a report on impact and outcomes will inform future delivery plans.
- 2.2 The Board has an important role to play in monitoring the effectiveness of delivery and the success of the scheme in Sandwell.



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Best start in life for children and young people<br/>School holidays are a period of concern for some families. The negative impact summer holidays may have potentially makes the HAF important in closing the outcomes gap between more and less disadvantaged children in Sandwell.</p> |
|  | <p>People live well and age well<br/>The involvement of families and children in accessing healthy food and enrichment activities will support families to live well.</p>   |
|  | <p>Strong resilient communities<br/>Sandwell HAF is embedded within a community offer and delivered at a local level which aims to build resilience of children, families and neighbourhoods.</p>   |
|  | <p>A strong and inclusive economy<br/>The use of local providers to support the delivery of the HAF reinforces Sandwell's ambitions for community wealth building.</p>  |

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 In summer 2018, the Department for Education invested £2 million in seven summer holiday pilots across England. Summer 2019 saw an investment of £9 million in 11 local authority areas, to improve coverage, joint-working, promotion, consistency and quality and the summer of 2020 saw an investment of £9 million investment covering 17 local authority areas, including projects that covered more than one LA.

The Holiday Activities and Food programme was expanded in 2021 so that children on free school meals in England could be offered free healthy meals and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. With an investment of up to £220 million delivered through grants to all local authorities.

4.2 Sandwell was awarded a grant of £1,932,480 for the period of the programme. The DfE have informed us that based on the success of the HAF21 programme further funding will be available year on year to 2025 further details in terms of allocations will be in due course.



- 4.3 Notification of extended funding should enable Sandwell to now work towards a more sustainable model of delivery which will enable more children and families to engage with the programme.
- 4.4 Overall the HAF21 programme was a success with a varied range of different activity taking place across all parts of the borough.

The partnerships with the voluntary, community and private sector provided the backbone of the programme and reach would not have been achieved without our community partners. 48 partners were grant funded to deliver totalling £499,798.

An additional £62,166 council funding was identified which allowed a universal offer to enable our “#summerofplay” programme to be delivered over the summer, and supported organisations to continue delivery during term time and October half term.

- 4.5 Management information returns suggest that 6934 children and young people have attended HAF Easter and summer activity representing 39% of the FSM population in Sandwell. Of those HAF eligible 75% were of primary school age and 25% of secondary school age.

We had a cumulative total of 18359 attendances across the summer delivered through 893 sessions and resulting in a total of 59989 hours delivery which we are pleased with on the whole.

More importantly the figures show that we have attendances from every ward in the authority with the average ward attendance being 15% and the highest being 43% in a ward where historically take up hasn't been high.

Our figures show that the take up overall is in line with previous holiday and food programmes that we have delivered, and the continued challenge is to drill down and identify how we gain traction with families which convert to attendance.

- 4.6 Overall considering time and economies of scale we are pleased with the overall outcomes particularly as Sandwell was still experiencing high levels of infection over the summer and many events had to be scaled down to ensure we were supporting public health with their messages.



## 5 Implications

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Resources:</b>            | The HAF programme is a restricted grant for the purpose of restricted activity and cannot be used for any other purpose other than that set out in the grant determination letter.             |
| <b>Legal and Governance:</b> | The HAF Programme is DfE grant funded and it is restricted for the purpose of this activity only as set out in the grant determination letter.   |
| <b>Risk:</b>                 | Scrutiny will consider risk implications associated with this project.   |
| <b>Equality:</b>             | An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) initial screening has been undertaken. The screening identified that there will be no adverse impact on people or groups with protected characteristics.   |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing:</b> | The HAF programme has had a positive impact on those participating and will continue to do so  |
| <b>Social Value</b>          | The HAF programme encourages the use of private and voluntary sector engagement and is seen as a conduit to boost local business whilst seeking to ensure wider investment from other parties. |

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1: Evaluation report – draft

Appendix 2: HAF presentation

## 7. Background Papers

Sandwell Easter Evaluation





# Midterm Evaluation of the 2021 Holiday Activities and Food programme

Report Authors: Samantha Harman, Tracey Jobber & Natasha Chavda

#SummerOfPlay

November 2021

# Project background

School holidays are a period of concern for some families. The negative impact summer holidays may have potentially makes this period important in closing the outcomes gap between more and less disadvantaged children<sup>3</sup>.

Research conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic showed deprivation continuing to be a major concern. Young people from low-income families were more likely to experience isolation during school holidays. Their parents could not afford costly enriching activities, so they had fewer opportunities to develop life skills (e.g. creativity, flexibility, teamwork) compared to their more affluent peers. (Evaluation of the 2019 holiday activities and food programme, 2020)

Between 2018 and 2020 to help close the existing evidence gap, The Department for Education committed investment that delivered free healthy meals and fun activities to disadvantaged children in pilot Local Authorities.

The Holiday Activities and Food programme was expanded in 2021 so that children on free school meals in England could be offered free healthy meals and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays. With an investment of up to £220 million delivered through grants to all local authorities.

The indicative allocation for Sandwell was £1,932,480 and an interim delivery report was submitted to the Department of Education February 2020. In Sandwell there are over 17,000 who have risk factors aligned to requiring FSM (Holiday activities and food programme 2021, 2021)

A number of actions were agreed to support the delivery of the programme:

- Sandwell governance for this scheme would be through the Children and Young People’s Strategic Commissioning Partnership.
- SMBC Play Service were identified as the lead service to steer this programme
- An interim steering group was identified to support the programme which includes a wide representation of internal and external partners.



## HAF REPORTING STRUCTURE



## Historical delivery in Sandwell

Prior experience of delivering similar programmes created a developed understanding of what was required in deciding how the programme moved forward in Sandwell.

- Let's do Lunch Model - Two previous small-scale delivery models and evaluations to learn from involving primary aged children

Although these projects were well received by the recipients and the families, take-up was only between 10% and 25 % despite them being marketed widely. This may be attributed to families having to attend a specific venue at a specific time to access the food offer or multiple age groups in families.

Based on the financial model applied to these pilots the overall cost to continue with this model would be £2,154,240

**Request a copy of the report email: [Samantha\\_harman@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk)**

- 2019 HAF Model - A scaled up 2019 HAF application detailing a three spoke delivery model – through schools and community centres, parks and CV sector organisations.

Based on the financial model applied to this proposal the overall cost to continue with this model would be £709,185 although it needs to be noted that some of these costs were not scrutinised due to the speed the application had to be submitted and would need revisiting. A disadvantage of this model assumed that uptake would be low, and potentially exclude 65% of the target group from accessing HAF.

**Request a copy of the full application [Samantha\\_harman@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha_harman@sandwell.gov.uk)**

**The aims of the Sandwell HAF21 programme were agreed in January 2021**

- To have a strategic quality centred approach that encourages CYP who meet risk criteria aligned to the purpose of FSM to participate in activities that stimulate growth and development.
- To connect partners to people to access activities and food provision that improve physical health outcomes for CYP.
- To support VCS infrastructure through preferred supplier network and charter mark.
- Develop robust systems and processes to issue vouchers that reduces schools transactional burden.\*
- To provide a range of activities that empowers parents and carers to access experiences that stimulate growth and development.

\*We need to note that the development of a voucher activity programme after discussion with the DfE was subsequently disallowed.

# Key statistics

**6934**

**Children  
reached**

**59,989**

**Contact hours**

**48 voluntary &  
community  
organisations  
grant funded**

**18,359**

**Meals  
delivered**

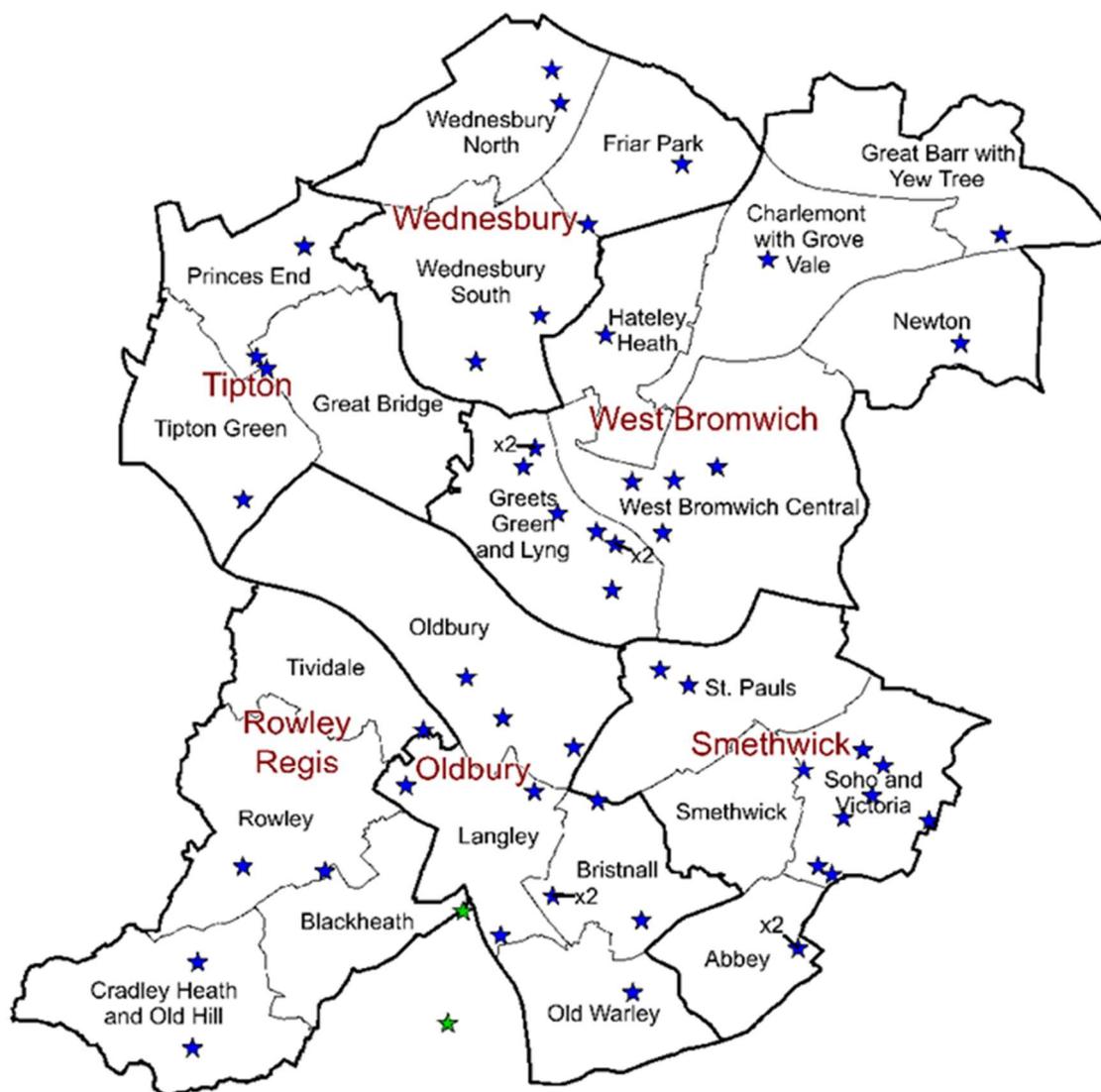
**893**

**Sessions**

# Data Analysis

Location & project breakdown

## Delivery Partners' Locations



Research  
Sandwell

Contains Ordnance Survey data.  
© Crown copyright and database right 2021.

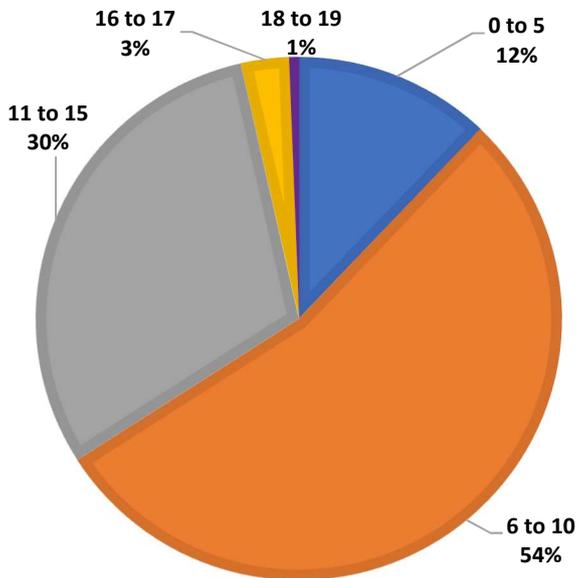
### Legend

- ★ Sandwell Location
- ★ Non-Sandwell Location

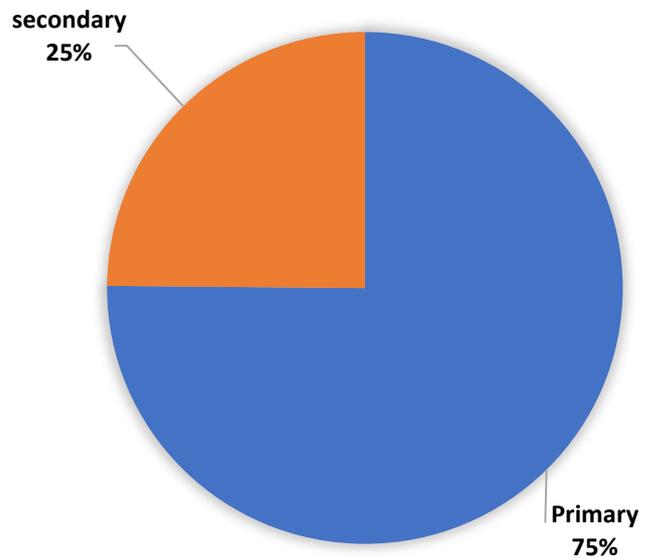
This map shows the locations of face-to-face project delivery across Sandwell as part of the Easer and Summer offer.

# Data Analysis

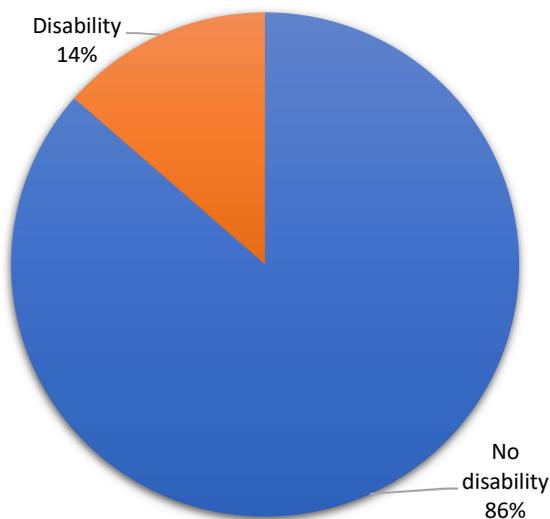
Age range breakdown of registered participants



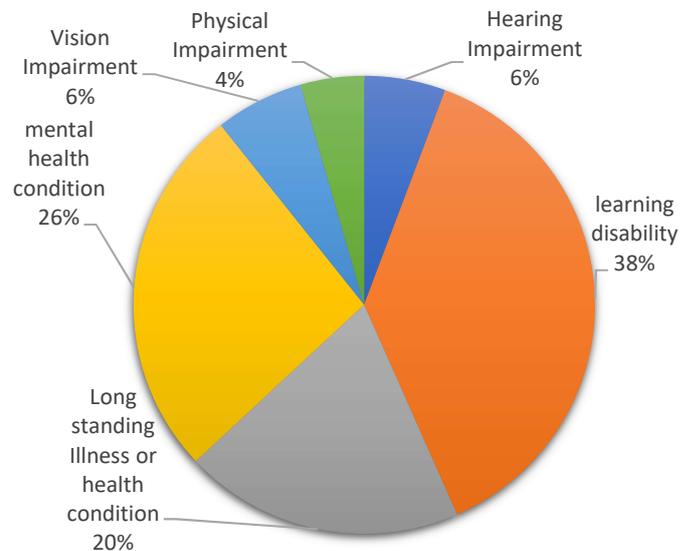
Age range breakdown by school



SEND data of registered participants

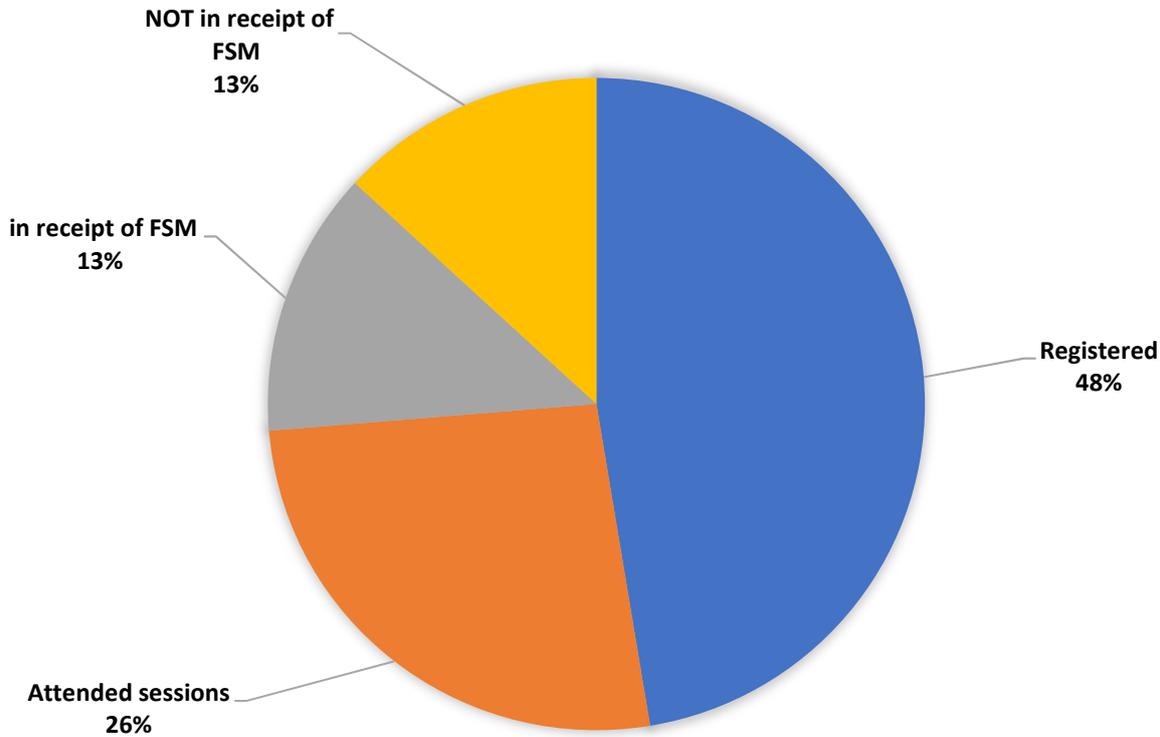


SEND data broken down by area of need

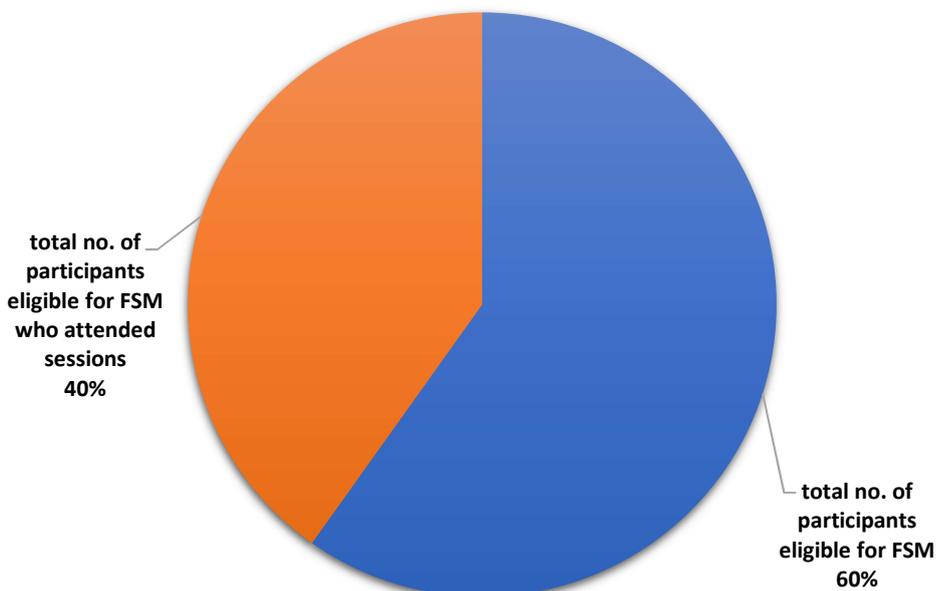


# Data Analysis

## Young people's attendance

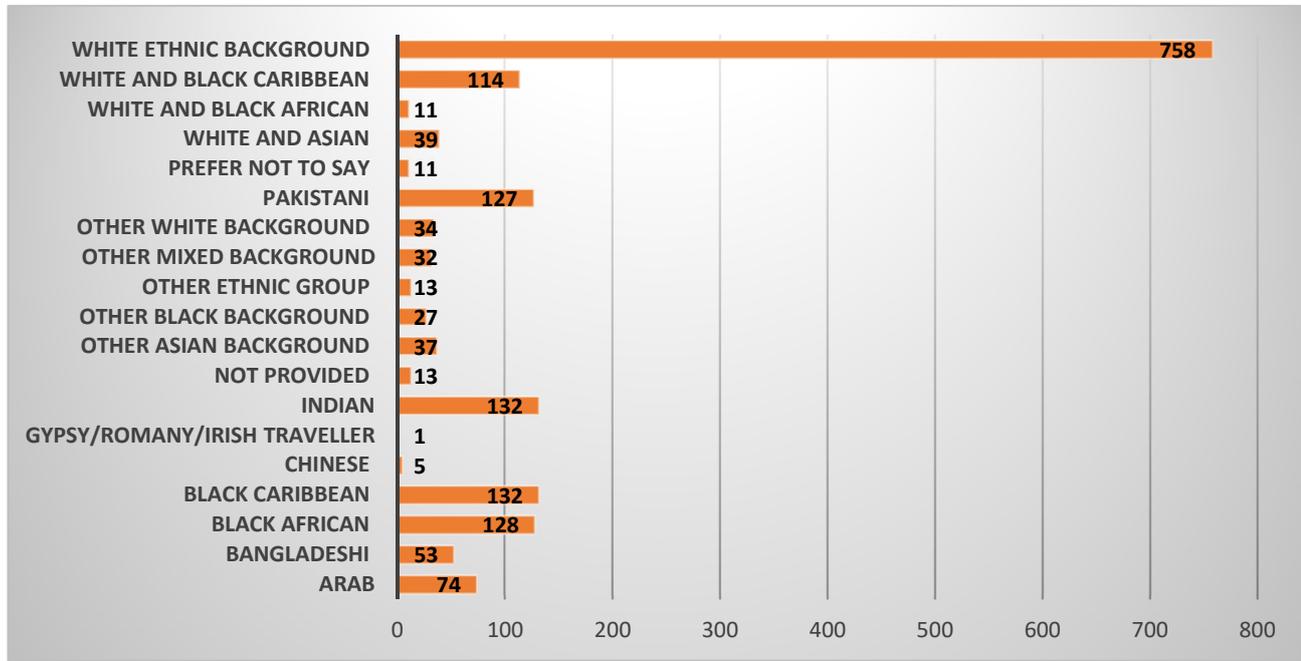


## Free School Meals data



# Data Analysis

## Ethnicity data



# Parent/carer survey analysis

**60%**

of parents/carers  
found registering  
easy

**76%**

Of parents/carers  
rated the quality of the  
sessions excellent or  
very good

**54%**

Of parents/carers  
rated the free meals  
excellent or very good

**95%**

Of parents/carers would allow their children to  
take part in sessions again

# Testimonials

***“All sessions were amazing, and my children enjoyed the activities and the food provided. We have been very pleased with all of the sessions.”***

***“Amazing, so good of council to start activities up for our youth they really need this to thrive especially after all that Covid has meant them in missing out.”***

***“My children loved the activities that were provided during the summer holidays. All staff were always friendly and excellent with the children. It was nice to have something for them in our area as we have never had anything like it available before”***

***“My 2 children loved it and would love to do it again, they learned new skills and enjoyed everyday off and the staff was great we did them at West Bromwich Leisure Centre.”***

# Testimonials

*“My child loved the Summer Playscheme this year! Lion Farm Action Centre put on a fun activities that my child came home to tell me about and she made many new friendships. The staff were fantastic with the children and were always happy to help with any questions I asked: and always met the children with a smile. The meals were lovely I could run through the menu which was email to me with my child and see what she was going to eat each day, I received recipe cards from Lion Farm Action Centre which I have found very useful. There was a good selection of different meals and healthy salads to go with each meal. I would be very happy sending my child to playscheme again. Thanks”*

*“My son loved going to the summer holiday club, he made new friends and got to do lots of fun activities. The food that he was offered was tasty and plentiful and he would love to do the holiday club next year too if possible.”*

*“The YCA did a fantastic job at keeping my child active and engaged during the summer holidays. She enjoyed the meals and I was happy that they were made in a healthy way which encouraged her to make some changes in the way she eats at home. This was definitely needed after all the lockdowns!”*

*“There was a wide range of activities offered which I found was really good. I hope this continues in the future. The outdoor activities with Sandwell farm and nature reserve were excellent. My children accessed play scheme, sports camp, go outdoor activities and they thoroughly enjoyed them all. They also attended an activity with action for children where they do some kickboxing, received gloves pads and a free membership for over the summer. This is something they have continued with and they attend weekly.”*

# Testimonials

*“My son enjoyed the sport activities and it was a breath of fresh air to have something for Children that can't get away for a holiday during these long weeks. New friends are also made and physical exercise helped the children both mentally and physically as they all came away with smiles on their faces.”*

*“The session was really interactive, and the instructors were very encouraging. My children were 7 and 12, and both were able to access and enjoy the session at their relevant levels.”*

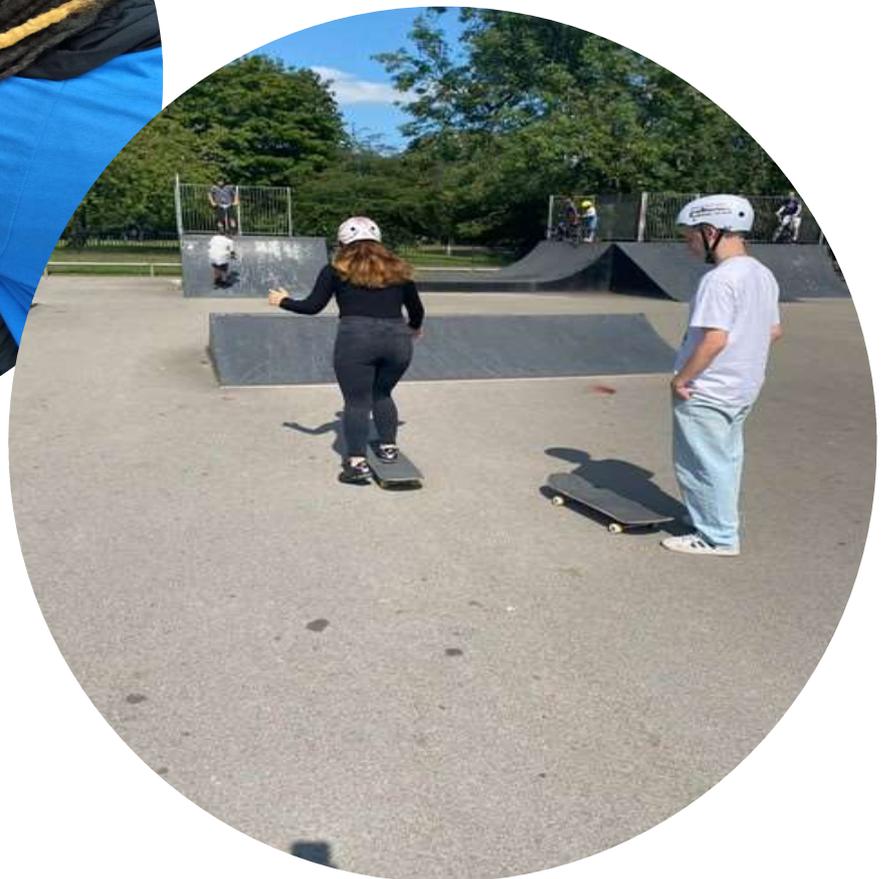
*“Sessions was brilliant. My son enjoyed very much and he asking when something like that will be on again. People who do Bushcraft were excellent.”*

*“Me and my children loved the activity packs and the meal packs, we made a meal and dessert together and really loved the whole experience”*



# Lessons Learnt

- Marketing and communication require development to drill down and identify how we gain traction with families that convert to attendance without applying stigma to the offer.
- Further discussions need to be had with schools to identify how we can access premises and offer activity on a greater scale.
- Observations have identified that when we implement a universal offer the uptake improves exponentially and this in turn reduces perceived bias with those not in receipt of benefit related free school meals.
- Commissioning and procurement of services proved challenging due to timescales defined by the DfE mechanism need to be in place to support future delivery.
- The positioning of HAF strategically as a mechanism to support the wider determinant of inequalities that are linked to food insecurity and equal access to activity for our children and young people.



# Delivery partners

We would like to thank all our local delivery partners who engaged with the programme and made it happen.



# Delivery partners



# Delivery partners



# Bibliography

GOV.UK. 2021. *Evaluation of the 2019 holiday activities and food programme*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-2019-holiday-activities-and-food-programme>> [Accessed 17 November 2021].

GOV.UK. 2021. *Holiday activities and food programme 2021*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2021>> [Accessed 17 November 2021].



Department  
for Education

# Holiday activities and food programme

# Our focus

- School holidays can be pressure points for some families because of increased costs and reduced incomes
- Some children are more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- Some children from lower-income families are less likely to access fun activities
- Free holiday clubs are a response to this issue. They can work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible activities, for more than just breakfast or lunch



# Our programme

Page 121

- Since 2018, we have invested in local programmes that deliver free healthy meals and fun activities to disadvantaged children in the summer.
- In summer 2018, we invested £2 million in seven summer holiday pilots across England.
- In summer 2019 we invested £9m in programmes in 11 local authority areas, to improve coverage, joint-working, promotion, consistency and quality.
- In summer 2020 we invested £9m in 17 local authority areas, including projects that covered more than one LA.



# Our summer 2020 projects

- StreetGames UK – Newcastle upon Tyne
- Edsential – Chester West and Chester, Halton and Wirral
- Gateshead Local Authority – Gateshead
- Leeds Community Foundation – Leeds and Bradford Metropolitan District
- Mayor’s Fund for London – Lambeth and Southwark
- The Romsey School – Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and Isle of Wight Council
- Spring North – Blackburn with Darwen
- Suffolk Local Authority – Suffolk County Council
- Tower Hamlets Local Authority – London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- Voluntary Action Sheffield – Sheffield

Covid-19 had a great impact on the delivery of the HAF 2020 programme, but we worked with our 2020 coordinators to ensure that the programme went ahead and supported thousands of children and families.

# Expansion in 2021

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- The Holiday Activities and Food programme will expand in 2021 so that children on free school meals in England will be offered free healthy meals and enriching activities over the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays.
- Our investment of up to £220 million will be delivered through grants to all local authorities.
- We greatly value the important role that community and voluntary organisations have played in this programme over the last three years, and we encourage all local authorities to work with a wide range of partners in the delivery of this programme.



# Impact of January 2021 Lockdown

- We don't know when schools will re-open again and when it will be safe to run HAF clubs face-to-face
- The 2020 programme showed us what was possible despite the restrictions
- The offers ranged from full face-to-face clubs with a focus on outside activities to food parcels with home activity packs
- LAs may want to plan for a combined approach – but we appreciate this is not ideal
- We will confirm further advice and guidance on the impact of the latest lockdown ASAP



# Our minimum standards aim to support high quality provision



Healthy food



Enriching activities



Physical activities



Nutritional education



Policies and procedures

## And a few other requirements:

- Inclusive and accessible provision (e.g. SEND and rural children)
- Provision offered to all FSM children in the local authority
- At least 4 hours for 4 days a week. For 4 weeks in the summer, and for a week in Easter and Christmas.

Our model aims to support high quality provision coordinated across a local area

## Local coordinator objectives



MAP  
PROVISION



AWARD  
FUNDING



SUPPORT  
PROVIDERS



PROMOTE  
PROVISION



WORK WITH  
OTHERS



DEVELOP  
SUSTAINABLE  
APPROACHES

## We want children attending clubs to:

- Eat more healthily
- Be more active
- Take part in engaging and enriching activities
- Be safe and not isolated
- Have greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- Be more engaged with school and other services
- Have greater knowledge and awareness of holiday club provision

# Feedback from parents

We asked holiday parents/carers about their experiences of the programme in 2020. Findings included:

- Despite Covid, the overwhelming majority confirmed their child had accessed provision in person with a clear majority attending exclusively in person
- The majority of respondents told us that their child attending a holiday club reduced stress and pressure, many told us it financially supported them and many told us it provided reassurance that their child was somewhere safe.
- Most respondents had been provided with advice on cooking healthy meals by their club.
- Most respondents would be willing to purchase longer hours, if they were offered. But some respondents were unaware they could reclaim up to 85% of the costs for attending Ofsted rated settings through Universal Credit

# What has worked well?



Huge amount of work done by coordinators and staff



Variety of approaches, from centrally-set programmes to club-led programmes and combination of the two



Big focus on building capacity in the sector



Some innovative approaches to mapping demand, ensuring that provision was in place in areas of real need



Minimum standards seemed to work well



4:4:4 seemed to work well - this needs to be applied flexibly



Some really good engagement with parents and families

# Challenges and reflections



Building the widest possible local partnerships, including schools and other partners



Collecting data and management information



Some settings needed to work hard to meet the food standards



Areas need sufficient time to plan and prepare



Some smaller clubs needed intensive support

# DfE implementation team



Regular conversations with local authorities from January 2021 and responding to issues.



Convening regional peer-to-peer support networks, sharing best practice and linking to relevant national organisations.



Reviewing delivery plans in advance of holidays and reports of provision submitted by local authorities following each delivery period. This may inform future payment instalments.



Providing more support for local authorities that need it.



Transition to national support partner from April 2021 but with DfE local implementation support continuing

# Next steps

## Further meetings

- Repeat of meetings planned for February
- First delivery report due by 19 February, setting out the intended scale and reach of their programme for Easter 2021 (we will be in touch shortly to provide you with a short template for these)
- Areas encouraged to continue to meet if it is useful
- Surgery sessions

## Contact details

- Implementation leads: Viv McCotter and Tara Whitehorn
- North, East & Midlands: Vanessa Mynard, Tom Edwards and Hannah-Mai Flynn
- South & West: Deborah McKay and Julie Nelmes

General enquiries: [HAF.Programme@education.gov.uk](mailto:HAF.Programme@education.gov.uk)



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## Scrutiny Review – Scoping Document

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Review Title:</b>   | Impact of the lockdown on children and families |
| <b>Scrutiny Board:</b> | Children’s Services and Education               |
| <b>Date of Review:</b> | November 2021 – March 2022                      |

### Reasons for undertaking the review:

On 23 August, 2021, the Board considered a presentation on the pandemic response and impact of the national lockdown on children and families.

The report and presentation highlighted that essential services had continued to operate throughout the pandemic including social care services and virtual online school learning. The Council had been proactive with all educational establishments across the Borough and continued to support stakeholders under difficult circumstances. In particular, the Council had provided support to Sandwell Children’s Trust to access various Covid-rated grants to mitigate against increased costs and fast track additional equipment for social workers.

The Council had developed a Return to School Support strategy to specifically focus on the welfare of children and young people. However, the Board noted that the lockdown had resulted in some negative developments such as increases in free school meal provision, increases in domestic abuse , safeguarding incidents and an increase in demand across services.

There was a consensus that the Board needed to establish a review to investigate and review recovery activity across multiple areas in education and social care with specific focus on uplifting standards and attainment.

Membership of the Working Group will be agreed by the Board and a subsequent project plan will be completed for this review.

### Key Lines of Enquiry – Impact of the lockdown on children and families

- a) Recovery plan for education attainment and child development
- b) Recovery plan for Social Care
- c) Response to increased service demand and mitigation planning
- d) Delivery of emotional health and wellbeing support
- e) Rates and management of those requesting Education Health and Care Assessments

f) Impact on child poverty rates and pupil premium children

**Intended Outcomes:**

to make further recommendations regarding areas in it considered would benefit from further scrutiny or policy development.

- To understand and capture how the Council and Schools have progressed with recovery plans to improve standards and educational attainment.
- Identify methods and strategies employed by schools/academies to shrink the educational attainment gap and uplift standards.
- To understand the impact of the lockdown on exam results
- To get a crosscutting picture on the impact of the lockdown on education attainment from a wide range of stakeholders.
- To investigate child poverty rates and mitigating measures.
- To understand the increasing pressure on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and those children and young people requiring EHCPs.

**Officer Group  
(including partners):**

**Links to Corporate Plan  
and Vision 2030:**

Best start in life for children and young people:  
  
Successful recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic will have positive impact on all ambitions contained in the Council's Vision 2030 benefiting communities, stakeholders and children within the Borough.

**Scoping undertaken  
by:**

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

**Council Chief Officer  
(or partner equivalent):**

Michael Jarrett –Director of Children's Services and Education  
Melanie Barnett

**Existing data available for consideration:**

Reset and Recovery Updates to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 21 September, 16 November 2020, 11 January 2021 and 15 March 2021.

Report and presentation to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 23 August 2021.

Education Endowment Foundation – Paper on Covid-19 on attainment gap

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Potential witnesses</b></p> | <p>Parents<br/>Young people<br/>Head Teachers representative<br/>Corporate Parenting Board representatives<br/>Citizens Advice<br/>Sandwell Children's Trust<br/>School Admission and Appeals Service<br/>Social Care<br/>Parent/Carer organisations such as Sandwell<br/>Parents Voices United</p> |
| <p><b>Activities</b></p>          | <p>Desk top research<br/>Survey<br/>Focus group(s)<br/>Meetings</p>   |

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**Overview and Scrutiny - Recommendation and Action Tracker**

O&S - Overview and Scrutiny. DM - Decision Maker. CM - Cabinet Member.

**Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board**

| Title<br>Recommendation(s)/Action(s)   | O&S<br>date | DM<br>date | Responsible<br>CM/Officer | Activity Log  |
|--|-------------|------------|---------------------------|---|
| Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport Models   | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (1)That the Director – Law and Governance arrange for the following recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration:  | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (a) That the Cabinet reviews the administration of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport to ensure consistency of approach and that resourcing is adequate in light of increasing demand on the service.  | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (b) That the Cabinet ensures that the Parent Group for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is communicated and consulted with on any changes to the Transport service and, where possible, the views of affected children and young people are also sought. | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (c) That the Cabinet ensures that Education Health Care Plan assessments are carried out without delay to ensure early identification of recommended provision, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport requirements.                                     | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (d) That the Cabinet re-evaluates child to adult ratios for minibuses to ensure that they are appropriate and reflect assessed risks and needs on a case by case basis.  | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |
| (e) That the Cabinet continues, and seeks to increase, the Independent Travel Training Programme.  | 27/09/21    | 20/10/21   | Cabinet                   | 20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months. |

(f) That the Cabinet refreshes awareness campaigns relating to Personal Budgets and the Independent Travel Training Programme to ensure all families are aware of the options available.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

(g) That the Cabinet reviews Early Years provision in each town, which may help reduce transport costs.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

(h) That the Cabinet reviews time lengths of journeys to ensure that children are not needing to travel for more than 50 minutes in normal circumstances.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

(i) That the Cabinet considers how place provision strategically located throughout the borough can be used to minimise journey times.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

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20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(j) That the Cabinet considers the following in relation to the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport for February 2022:-

- (i) providers should ensure drivers and Passenger Assistants are trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, non-verbal communication, use of safety harnesses and manual handling. In addition there should be Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;
- (ii) a market position statement be prepared, encouraging competition from a wide range of suppliers;
- (iii) small and medium enterprises should be afforded opportunities to tender for the contracts;
- (iv) mainly whole school provision should be the preferred approach;
- (v) some harmonisation of provision should be considered to balance effective management of contracts whilst retaining a diversified group of providers;
- (vi) the model for provision should avoid the increased risk associated with awarding contracts to a small number of providers.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(k) That the Cabinet undertakes a trial scheme for providing Passenger Assistants in-house, or in partnership with schools, as part of the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport and that a full analysis is carried out on the trial scheme to determine its effectiveness.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(l) That the Cabinet investigates the feasibility of taking Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport provision in-house, this should include risks, costs, benefits, potential timescales and suitable performance indicators, and it should include the following options:

- (i) full Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service in-house;
- (ii) combined provision with existing Adult Social Care Transport;
- (iii) only Passenger Assistants service provided in-house.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(m) That the Cabinet ensures that, however the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service is provided in future, Passenger Assistants:-

(i) must be trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, communication with non-verbal children; and  
(ii) during their induction and onboarding a clear and strong emphasis should be placed on relationship building between the Passenger Assistant, the family, the school and the transport provider;

(iii) also include Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

(n) That the Cabinet investigates with partners how children with Autism Spectrum Disorders can receive earlier diagnoses which can help improve outcomes, including around transport needs, for that group.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(o) That the Cabinet ensures that research relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is considered whenever it is available to identify potential areas of improvement in Sandwell's service provision.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

(2) That the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board is kept informed about the process for commissioning Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport in Sandwell.

27/09/21 20/10/21 Cabinet

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

20/10/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

(3) That Post-18 Provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities be included in the work programme for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.

27/09/21 Scrutiny Board

The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

|   | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area              | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered   |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|--|
| 1 | <p><b>Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell’s Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2023/2024</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts<br/>Director Children and Education</p> | Children and Education (Cllr Simms) | 15 December 2021 | N/A   | Report by Director Children and Education<br>Appendix 1: Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in Sandwell for 2023/24 |



|   | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area              | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 2 | <p><b>SEND Transport – Future Arrangements</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Sue Moore</p> <p>Director – Children’s Services</p>  | Children and Education (Cllr Simms) | 15 December 2021 | CSE Scrutiny Board 27 September                           |                                    |
| 3 | <p><b>Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-24</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Maryrose Lappin</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Director of Borough Economy</p> | Community Safety (Cllr Piper)       | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|   | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                    | Decision Date           | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|---|---|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 4 | <p><b>B2022 Commonwealth Games – Host Integration Project</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Chris Jones</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern</p>  | <p>Culture and Tourism (Cllr Millard)</p> | <p>15 December 2021</p> |   | <p>Cabinet Report</p>              |
| 5 | <p><b>B2022 Commonwealth Games Live Site</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Jane Lillystone/Chris Jones</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy</p> | <p>Culture and Tourism (Cllr Millard)</p> | <p>15 December 2021</p> | <p>No</p>   | <p>Cabinet Report</p>              |



|   | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area    | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|---|---------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 6 | <p><b>Award a Contract Plant Hire Equipment</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Weare/ Barry Ridgway</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy</p> | Environment (Cllr Bostan) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|   | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area    | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|---|---------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 7 | <p><b>Award a Contract for Coated Road Stone and Instant Road Repair Materials</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Weare/Barry Ridgway</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy</p> | Environment (Cllr Bostan) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|   | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area                       | Decision Date           | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|--|--|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 8 | <p><b>Direct Award of Contract for eCapture and Webcapture Services</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p> | <p>Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton)</p> | <p>15 December 2021</p> |   |                                    |



|   | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area                | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 9 | <p><b>Contract for the provision of a Revenues and Benefits application, a corporate document management solution and scanning and indexing services</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Sue Knowles</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p> | Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area                | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 10 | <p><b>Draft General Fund Budget Report 2022/23</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p> | Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |
| 11 | <p><b>Council Tax Base Calculation 2022/23</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>          | Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                           | Decision Date           | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|--|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 12 | <p><b>Business Rates Retention Estimates 2022/23</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn</p> <p>Director:<br/>Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p> | <p>Finance and Resources<br/>(Cllr Crompton)</p> | <p>15 December 2021</p> |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 13 | <b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23</b><br><br>Contact Officer: Ian Dunn<br><br>Director:<br>Simone Hines – Director of Finance   | Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton) | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |
| 14 | <b>Review of council tenant rents and housing related property charges</b><br><br>Contact Officer: Nigel Collumbell<br><br>Director: Director of Housing<br>Gillian Douglas | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)                  | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 15 | <p><b>Day to Day Repairs to Housing</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: J Rawlins</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 15 December 2021 |   | Report                             |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 16 | <p><b>Provision of new council homes via Construction West Midlands Framework- Design stage</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Mark Drake/Alan Martin</p> <p>Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth/Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 17 | <p><b>Provision of 10 new council homes at Britannia Road, Rowley Regis – Award of contract through Exemption to Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Alan Martin</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth/Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 15 December 2021 | N/A   | Report                             |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 18 | <p><b>Additional Licensing (West Bromwich Area) – consultation findings and proposed recommendation</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Karl Robinson / Gary Wright</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas - Director of Housing</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 15 December 2021 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area                 | Decision Date                   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|--|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 19 | <p><b>Appropriation of 148 Tower Road, Tividale</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Stefan Hemming</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director – Regeneration and Growth</p>                  | Regeneration and Growth (Cllr I Padda) | 15 December 2021                |   |                                    |
| 20 | <p><b>Land on the west side of Tunnel Road, West Bromwich</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: George Singh Gurcha</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth</p> | Regeneration and Growth (Cllr I Padda) | 15 December 2021 (Private Item) |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered  |
|----|--|------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 21 | <p><b>Information Governance Records Retention</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Maria Price</p> <p>Director of Law and Governance - Surjit Tour</p> | Leader                 | 12 January 2022 |   | <p>The Corporate Retention Policy</p> <p>E-mail Retention Policy</p> <p>Information Rights Policy</p> |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area                                | Decision Date                         | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 22 | <p><b>Sandwell and Community Caring Trust Contract</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Christine Guest</p> <p>Director: Rashpal Bishop – Director of Adult Social Care</p> | <p>Adults, Social Care and Health (Cllr Hartwell)</p> | <p>12 January 2022 (Private Item)</p> |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area              | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 23 | <p><b>Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy – Proposed Expansion</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts</p> <p>Director: Katharine Willmette - Interim Strategic Director Children and Education/Melanie Barnett – Acting Operational Director Children and Education</p> | Children and Education (Cllr Simms) | 12 January 2022 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                         | Decision Date          | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered   |
|----|---|--|------------------------|---|--|
| 24 | <p><b>School Organisation Plan 2021/2022</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts<br/>Director Children and Education</p> <p>Director of Finance – Simone Hines</p> | <p>Children and Education<br/>(Cllr Simms)</p> | <p>12 January 2022</p> | <p>tbc</p>  | <p>Report by<br/>Director Children and Education</p> <p>Appendices</p> <p>School Organisation Plan 2021/22</p> |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area              | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered   |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|
| 25 | <b>Schools Funding 2022/2023</b><br>Contact Officer: Rose Kerr<br>Director: Director of Finance – Simone Hines   | Children and Education (Cllr Simms) | 12 January 2022 | N/A   | Report by:<br>Director of Children and Education<br>Appendices<br>Source documents |
| 26 | <b>Street Naming, Renaming and Property Numbering Policy</b><br>Contact Officer: Robin Weare/ Barry Ridgway<br>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy | Environment (Cllr Bostan)           | 12 January 2022 |   |  |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                       | Decision Date          | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|--|------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 27 | <p><b>Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021-2051</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Maher</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p>   | <p>Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton)</p> | <p>12 January 2022</p> |   |                                    |
| 28 | <p><b>Procurement of a Corporate Asset Management System</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Simone Hines</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines – Director of Finance</p> | <p>Finance and Resources (Cllr Crompton)</p> | <p>12 January 2022</p> |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|------------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 29 | <p><b>Provision of 18 new council homes at Beaver Road, Tipton</b></p> <p>Contact: Alan Martin</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth/Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 12 January 2022 |   | Report                             |



|    | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|---|------------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 30 | <p><b>Provision of 15 new council homes at Hawes lane Rowley Regis</b></p> <p>Contact: Alan Martin</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth/Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 12 January 2022 |   |                                    |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|------------------------|-----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 31 | <p><b>Retro-fitting of Sprinklers in high-rise flats</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: J Rawlins</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas - Director – Housing and Communities</p> | Housing (Cllr Ahmed)   | 12 January 2022 |   | Report                             |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area               | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered                  |
|----|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 32 | <p><b>West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement/Masterplan</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Jenna Langford/Richard Reeves</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Director of Regeneration &amp; Growth</p> | Regeneration and Growth (Cllr Padda) | 12 January 2022 |   | West Bromwich Interim Planning Statement/Masterplan |



|                  |  |   |  |  |   |
|------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>33</b></p> | <p><b>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 3</b></p> <p>Tranche 3 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Bromwich Retail Diversification Programme</li> <li>• West Bromwich Town Hall Quarter</li> <li>• Smethwick Ron Davis Centre Expansion</li> <li>• Smethwick Midland Met Learning Campus</li> <li>• Smethwick Grove Lane Regeneration</li> <li>• Smethwick Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Canal Connectivity</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm</li> <li>• Smethwick Albion Family in the Park West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis Cycle and Walking Transport Schemes</li> </ul> | <p>Regeneration and Growth (Cllr I Padda)</p> | <p>January 2022<br/>February 2022<br/>(Private Item)</p> |  | <p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p> |
|------------------|--|---|--|--|---|



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area              | Decision Date   | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered               |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|
|    | Contact Officer: Jenna Langford<br><br>Director – Tony McGovern, Regeneration and Growth                                   |                                     |                 |   |  |
| 34 | <b>High Needs Block Funding Consultation</b><br><br>Contact Officer: Moira Tallents<br><br>Director Children and Education | Children and Education (Cllr Simms) | 9 February 2022 | N/A   | Report by<br><br>Director Children and Education |



|    | Title/Subject  | Cabinet Portfolio Area        | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|----|--|-------------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 35 | <p><b>Domestic Abuse Strategy</b></p> <p>Contact Officer:<br/>Maryrose Lappin</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Director of Borough Economy</p> | Community Safety (Cllr Piper) | 23 February 2022 |   |                                    |



**Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)**

|  | Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date    | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|--|---|------------------------|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
|  | Review of Fees and Charges  |                        | January          |   |                                    |
|  | Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools |                        | January/February |   |                                    |
|  | Schools Funding   |                        | December/January |   |                                    |
|  | Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring   |                        | February         |   |                                    |
|  | Council Finances  |                        | February         |   |                                    |
|  | Financial Regulations   |                        | February         |   |                                    |
|  | Business Plans  |                        | February         |   |                                    |
|  | Highways Asset Management Plan  |                        | March            |   |                                    |
|  | Local Transport Settlement  |                        | March            |   |                                    |



| Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date     | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Revenues and Benefits Policy framework 2022/23                                    |                        | March             |   |                                    |
| Schools Capital Programme   |                        | April to June     |   |                                    |
| Financial Outturn   |                        | May               |   |                                    |
| Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules  |                        | July              |   |                                    |
| Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges |                        | May – July        |   |                                    |
| Childcare Sufficiency Report  |                        | July - September  |   |                                    |
| Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring   |                        | August            |   |                                    |
| Model Schools Pay Policy  |                        | October/ November |   |                                    |
| Winter Service Operational Plan   |                        | October/November  |   |                                    |
| Road Safety Plan  |                        | November          |   |                                    |



| Title/Subject                      | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date | Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date) | List of documents to be considered |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring        |                        | November      |   |                                    |
| Council Tax Base Calculation       |                        | December      |   |                                    |
| Business Rates Retention Estimates |                        | December      |   |                                    |
| Council Tax Reduction Scheme       |                        | December      |   |                                    |



The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in private session:-

| Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                                | Decision Date           | Private Item – Reason for Exemption | List of documents to be considered |
|---|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <p><b>SEND Transport – Future Arrangements</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Sue Moore</p> <p>Director – Children’s Services</p>  | <p>Children and Education (Cllr Simms)</p>            | <p>15 December 2021</p> | <p>Commercial sensitivity</p>       |                                    |
| <p><b>Sandwell and Community Caring Trust Contract</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Hannah Soetendal</p> <p>Director: Rashpal Bishop – Director of Adult Social Care</p> | <p>Adults, Social Care and Health (Cllr Hartwell)</p> | <p>15 December 2021</p> | <p>Commercial Sensitivity</p>       |                                    |



| Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area                        | Decision Date                          | Private Item – Reason for Exemption  | List of documents to be considered   |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Land on the west side of Tunnel Road, West Bromwich</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: George Singh Gurcha</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern – Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>  | <p>Regeneration and Growth (Cllr I Padda)</p> | <p>15 December 2021 (Private Item)</p> | <p>Contains financial information which may prejudice future negotiations &amp; personal information</p> |  |
| <p><b>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 3</b></p> <p>Tranche 3 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Bromwich Retail Diversification Programme</li> </ul> | <p>Inclusive Economic Growth</p>              | <p>January 2022<br/>February 2022</p>  | <p>Commercial Sensitivity</p>  | <p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> |



| Title/Subject   | Cabinet Portfolio Area | Decision Date | Private Item – Reason for Exemption | List of documents to be considered |
|---|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Bromwich Town Hall Quarter</li> <li>• Smethwick Midland Met Learning Campus</li> <li>• Smethwick Grove Lane Regeneration</li> <li>• Smethwick Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements</li> <li>• Rowley Regis Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm</li> </ul> <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p> <p>Director: Director for Regeneration and Growth</p> |                        |               |                                     | <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>   |





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## Work Programme 2021/22 Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

| Meeting Date     | Item   | Links with Strategic Aims  | Notes   |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| 23 August 2021   | Sandwell Children's Trust Annual Review<br><br>Regional Adoption Agency Monitoring Annual Report<br><br>The impact of the lockdown on Children and Families - Review Scoping |   | Lesley Hagger (Executive Director for Children's Services)<br><br>Emma Taylor (CEO of SCT)  |
| 29 November 2021 | Elective Home Education (EHE)<br><br>Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)   | <br> | Melanie Barnett (Interim Operational Director Children and Education)<br><br>Sue Moore (Group Head for Education Support Services)<br><br>Samantha Harman (Play Services Manager) |
| 10 January 2021  | Youth Facilities Review - Update   |   |   |
| 21 March 2021    | TBC  |  |   |



## Items to be scheduled

- Report on outcome of trial of 16+ provision at the Westminster School and The Meadows.
- SEND – Support, and access to – Feedback from SEND Operational Board and Parent and Carers Board
- Discussion with Cabinet Member for Connected and Accessible Sandwell on options for the replacement of the Youth Bus.
- Elective Home Education Review - Report and Recommendations

## Scrutiny Review

### **The Impact of the lockdown on children and families**

The review will look at educational attainment and narrowing the gap, the wider impact on families (increase in FSM) and support and opportunities to address.

