

Elective Home Education Report

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1.0. What is Home Education?

1.1. Elective home education (EHE) is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their child(ren) at home, instead of sending them to school full-time. This is different to education provided by a local authority other than at a school, for example for children who are too ill to attend school.

2.0. Home Education in Plymouth

2.1. Across the full academic year 2023/24 there were 888 children registered as home educated at given point during the year. The 471 new registrations to EHE equates to 53.04% of the total cohort across the year.

2.2. On 28th June 2024 there were 774 statutory school aged children registered as home educated in Plymouth this was an increase of 42.9% (256) from 2022/23 and 79.58% (343) in 2021/22 (appendix 1). After this date the number of children electively home educated fell by 154 when the year 11 cohort were no longer statutory school aged.

2.3. The continuing rise in the number of children being withdrawn from schools to be home educated is a concern, particularly at the secondary phase.

3.0. What we are doing well

3.1. As a result of our relational approach to supporting families who home educate, more families are requesting home visits or reaching out for advice and support. We have embedded arrangements for children and families who need our support to return to school.

3.2. We are confident that our arrangements for oversight and monitoring the suitability of home education are effective. In respect of home educated children the Children's Services Inspection report states '*Oversight of this cohort of children is beginning to improve and work is under way to strengthen how services work more effectively together to monitor and promote the welfare of these children.*' (Published 15th March 2024).

3.3. Following the Rapid Review of Child C a series of [technical papers, local authority protocols and multi-agency working agreements](#) were formally approved by the multi-agency Child Safeguarding Practice Review sub group of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership (PSCP) on 7th July 2022 and rolled out across all agencies. In addition. The resources published by Plymouth City Council set out the process for all schools to notify the Local Authority (LA) when a parent decides to electively home educate. This includes:

- schools maintained by the LA
- academies
- free schools
- Independent schools

3.4. When the LA is informed that the parent of a child or young person is considering home education, the school notifies the Attendance Support Team using a notification form. We ask that schools seek the consent of the parent to keep the child on roll for up to 10 school days in order to enable an LA caseworker to conduct a home visit and provide information, advice and guidance to the family and to see whether we can assist in resolving any school-based issues. Parents do not have to engage with this process. During the 10 day period, checks are also made with Children's Social Care. If the child is open to Children's Social Care the Social Worker is notified and joint action taken to ensure that any decision made regarding a child's education is in their best interests.

3.5. If a child has an EHCP, the 0-25 SEND Team are notified of the parent's intention to home educate and schools are expected to coordinate an early review of the child's EHCP prior to removal from roll. If a child has an EHCP and is registered at a special school, the child must not be removed from the roll of the school without the permission of the local authority.

3.6. Once a child is registered as home educated, home educators are contacted by the Inclusion Attendance and Welfare Service within 3 months to provide information and evidence of their provision. This is then assessed by the Home Education Advisor who is a qualified teacher. The Home Education Advisor provides the family with a comprehensive report regarding their assessment with recommendations.

3.7. If a child's home education provision is considered to be suitable, the assurance checks happen once every 12 months. If it is felt that home education provision is not suitable, action is taken by the Home Education Advisor to provide information, advice and guidance to the family about how to develop their provision. Where there continue to be concerns about the suitability of the home education provision, the child is registered as a Child Missing Education (CME) and the case is RAG rated and monitored at a weekly meeting with the team manager.

3.8. In cases of CME, a casework officer will try to engage the family in order to support a child back to school. Where these attempts are unsuccessful and the child continues to be a CME, appropriate statutory enforcement action is taken to enforce school attendance. In 2023/24 academic year to date 31 formal notices have been issued and 10 School Attendance Orders.

3.9. Where parents do not comply with a School Attendance Order, a pathway of legal enforcement is commenced. However, the magistrates courts are limited in terms of penalties and cannot enforce registration and attendance at school. As a result, parents who breach a School Attendance Order are convicted and issued with a fine. In these instances, a child will continue to be missing education and the Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare team will continue to undertake casework work with the family until the child is on the roll of a school.

4.0. Opportunities for improvement

4.1. Early help to prevent children being withdrawn to home education needs to be prioritised across children's services and with schools. Plymouth City Council is committed to reducing the numbers of vulnerable children in the city who move into home education. Achieving this will involve applying effective systems for early identification so that children, young people and their families are supported as far as is possible to remain in the school system.

5.0. Data methodology

5.1. The data used within this report has been sourced using data from Eclipse, CAPITA and the Inclusion Scorecard. The data is not routinely available through an automated system. The CAPITA One Strategic review will provide an automated system of self-service which will increase capacity and routine access to data.

6.0. Home education and gender

6.1. Of the 774 children registered as home educated on 28th June 2024 in Plymouth (364 (46.38%) were male and 410 (53.62%) female. Home educated males and females share common themes in respect of likelihood of being likely to have had low rates of school attendance prior to elective home education. Rates of children with previous suspensions and requiring SEND Support is high across the home educated cohort.

7.0. EHE by year group

7.1. Rates of children being withdrawn to home education increase significantly when children transition into mainstream secondary school. The Local Area SEND Inspection reflects a view that primary schools do not have the needs of children with SEND assessed in a timely way and as a result their needs are not met or understood when they transition into secondary education. The inspection report goes on to say that too many children and young people with SEND do not get the necessary help to succeed in secondary school. Sometimes, this is because they do not receive the support they need before secondary school, or for other pupils it is because they do not get the help they need when they are at secondary school. These pupils are also more likely to have poor attendance than other similar pupils nationally.

7.2. Once children leave primary school and transition into year 7 the likelihood of a child being home educated increases significantly. Trend analysis shows a 229.41% increase in the numbers of children being withdrawn to home education in year 7 when compared to the numbers of children in year 6. This increasing trend continues throughout secondary schools and numbers of children in home education peak in year 10 (appendix 2 and 3).

7.3. Transition arrangements have been strengthened through the city's 'place-based' approach. The needs of children are now captured with greater consistency and accuracy as they transition from primary to secondary through the transition portal. This has meant that children with additional needs are identified from the earliest point. The 2024/25 academic year is the second in which the portal will run. In addition, an early years into primary portal is running for the first time in this academic year. The most significant impact of the portals has been to achieve consistency of transition practice across schools and trusts: all primary and secondary schools have engaged, and significant numbers of children have had their needs identified.

7.4. The Home Education Team has engaged with families through the Plymouth Parent Carer Voice and presented at the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Conference in the summer term. As a result of our involvement at the event, there were a number of families supported to effect change in their child's education provision, this included providing support to keep children with an EHCP in school and signposting families to the social prescription pilot.

7.5. We are holding termly information, advice and guidance sessions across the city.

7.6. We are writing to home educators at key transition points to ensure that they are aware of the options available for them in the city and the routes available for home educated children to access formal examinations and qualifications.

7.7. We have launched a Home Education Facebook page to provide information for families. The Facebook page was launched in the Spring Term and now has c120 followers. The number continues to increase. The platform is used to provide information and signpost families to activities, events and support.

8.0 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

8.1. The Local Area SEND Inspection Report reflects the concern that too many children in school either do not have their needs identified or met in schools. This reflects the trend that we see with regards to children who need Special Education Needs (SEN) Support being withdrawn to home education and the reasons parents cite in their decision making. 233 (30.1%) of the current EHE cohort were registered as needing SEN Support in school, this is an increase of 167.8% (146) when compared to 2022/23 and 202.6% (156) when compared to 2021/22 (appendix 1). Of the current cohort 150 children (77.32%) were deregistered from Plymouth secondary schools.

8.2. Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) require special consideration in order to successfully implement an efficient education. Of the current cohort of children in the city who were registered as home educated on 30th June 2024, 31 (4%) have an EHCP. This is an increase of 181.81% (20) when compared to 2022/23. The current number of 31 is an increase of 5 (13.79%) when compared to 2021/22 when there were 27 children with EHCPs who were home educated. (appendix 1). Of the cohort of 31 four were de-registered from Plymouth special schools, six from Plymouth Primary Schools and 16 from Plymouth secondary schools. The remaining five children have not previously been registered at a school. With the exception of the children previously on the roll of a special school, is not known whether a child had an EHCP whilst in school or whether it was issued during the current period of home education.

8.3. A report produced by the Health Surveillance Agency in Plymouth highlighted that between 2018 and 2021; of all the episodes of children with recorded SEND being home educated, social, emotional and mental health represents 46% of the cohort. Moderate learning difficulty has the second highest prevalence (13.5%) and Autism Spectrum Disorder is the third highest (9%) of those children with recorded SEND Needs. The EHE Team are currently engaging with the Health Surveillance Agency to engage with a social prescribing project for EHE children and their families.

8.4. It has not been possible to conduct an analysis of SEN area of need as there is no reliable data set for this specific focus. Action is being taken to address the data quality on CAPITA and is expected to be completed within the next 12 months. Once complete this with further our understanding.

8.5. The EHE Team meet regularly with the 0-25 SEND Team to discuss and jointly plan for children with EHCPs. This has ensured joint oversight and continuity of casework for children.

8.6. We are strengthening our links with the Plymouth Parent Carer Voice (PPCV), the Home Education Team is working with the PPCV to develop opportunities for co-production. We seek to understand the lived experience of children and families through multi-agency case audits and appreciative enquiries with families who home educate. The learning will be captured and shared with schools and partners to improve practice in schools so that families do not feel that they have no choice but to home educate.

8.7. The correlation between pupil absence, being known to children's social care and home education is strong. Currently Targeting Support meetings are held jointly between the Attendance Support Team and Early Help Teams. From September 2024 the SEND Service will join the meetings for schools with high rates of absence for their SEN cohort.

8.8. The Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) resource has been co-produced with families and partners across education, health and social care. It includes information and resources to support schools in their work with a specific chapter on collaborating with families. The resource clearly

identifies what schools must do support all children and young people. The universal provision described in the OAP is the offer created by schools to ensure they are inclusive by design and consistently work to reduce as many barriers as possible. This clearly allows schools and professionals to then identify where a child is making progress with a consistent universal offer and where extra targeted provision will need be given in a mainstream environment. Implementation and impact of the OAP will be evaluated through applications for targeted funding, feedback from the educational psychology services and specialist teachers via their termly consultations, parent surveys and the reduction of numbers of children being withdrawn to home education.

8.9. Plymouth City Council has collaborated with special schools within the city to develop and outreach offer of support for mainstream schools. This was launched in September 2024. The outreach offer provides specialist advice and support to professionals in mainstream schools so that they can be equipped to meet the needs of complex children and/or cohorts within their school.

8.10. The prevalence of SEND within the home educated cohort of children has been prioritised by the Inclusion Steering Group of the SEND Strategic Board. Case studies of children will be shared with the group and will inform planning and action to improve inclusion and outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

9.0. EHE from Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts

9.1. In Plymouth we have a number of schools who are over-represented in the rates of children being withdrawn to elective home education. These schools also have high suspension and pupil mobility rates.

9.2. There are four secondary schools with disproportionately high rates of children being withdrawn to elective home education. These schools are situated in areas of Plymouth with high rates of deprivation. The schools account for 37.6% of all new registrations to home education in Plymouth.

9.5. Primary schools with multiple children being withdrawn to home education are often because of a parent withdrawing all of their children from the same school to be home educated. Nonetheless, the numbers of EHE have increased year on year and this academic year to date is the highest rate that we have ever seen in Plymouth.

9.6. A pilot was launched on 10th June 2024 based on a best practice model that was developed in Portsmouth and which had a significant impact on reducing the rates of home education. The purpose of the pilot in Plymouth is to reduce the rate of home education. The impact of the pilot will be evaluated in October 2024. If the pilot is successful, it will be rolled out to all schools in the city.

9.7. The Director for Education holds Inclusion Meetings with multi academy trusts to analyse and strengthen areas for improvement; informing strategic planning for inclusive approaches and best practice across the city.

9.8. The first meeting of the EHE Task and Finish Group was held on 5th July 2024. The purpose of the Task and Finish Group is to review the EHE Pilot and consider best practice approaches to reducing home education which can be rolled out across all schools in the city. The next meeting of the task and finish group is scheduled for 15th October 2024.

9.9. Each school has an allocated Access and Attendance Officer and an Early Help Link Officer. Access and Attendance Officers are working in small teams across each locality, contacting schools

on a fortnightly basis to discuss any child who is missing out on education. In addition, termly meetings are being held jointly between Early Help and Attendance Support Teams, the 0-25 SEND Team will join the meetings at secondary schools. Working across education and Children's Social Care will ensure effective joint planning and support for individual children.

10.0. Reasons for EHE

10.1. Prior to September 2023, the reason for EHE was not recorded consistently. From September 2023, we have started to record reasons and have recently aligned our initial EHE Questionnaire to include the list of reasons prescribed by the Department for Education. In every case, parents are contacted to offer an initial home visit to discuss their decision to EHE. The purpose of the visit is to resolve any issues with school, offer advice, guidance and information. If parents do not respond to our enquiries an Officer will attempt to home visit twice. Extensive effort is made to meet and engage with the family.

10.2. Of the 471 new EHE registrations in 2023/24 child mental health (28.34% (133)) stands out as a reason for many parents electing to home educate. Health partners of the EHE Task and Finish Group have agreed to undertake a deep dive analysis into this cohort of children, the learning from the thematic review will inform the development of practice standards across the local area. A high proportion of the other reasons for parents withdrawing to home educate indicate a lack of parental confidence in how their child is being supported in school.

10.3. Plymouth City College are funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency to provide a 14-16 curriculum for EHE children. On 30th May 2024 there were 673 children in home education. Of the cohort 123 Key Stage 4 children were accessing the City College provision which is equivalent to 75% of the KS4 Cohort. The provision provides a range of functional skills and vocational qualifications. The Home Education Team meet monthly with the College to track and monitor attendance and engagement by home educated children at the provision. This ensures effective oversight and swift action for families where it appears that children are not receiving a suitable, fulltime education. In the majority of cases the City College provision is effective in meeting the needs of the children who attend. A more flexible approach to the curriculum at school may prevent children being withdrawn to home education at KS4. The City College provision is operating a waiting list. The College has an offer that schools can purchase for their students, however many schools feel that they do not have the funding available to commission long term vocational packages for students. In addition, the College provision is full of EHE children which limits the availability of the traded offer to schools.

10.4. Many parents that we speak to feel that they have no other choice but to home educate and have reached the end of what they feel they can tolerate for their child in school. We are working with schools to reduce the rates of children being withdrawn to electively home educate and have launched a pilot with schools that have the highest rates of home education.

10.5. A key strand of the 2024/25 'place-based' plan is to develop further the relationship between City College Plymouth and school and Trust leaders so that a joint pre-16 vocational offer can be developed. An example of this would be the alignment of school timetables so that children are able to spend a proportion of their week studying a vocational option without a clash with core subjects. The aim of this programme will be to reduce the number of children who are engaged with a 14-16 programme of study at City College Plymouth who are registered as electively home educated as they are able to attend the College and remain on a school roll.

10.6. In 2023/24, 153 children were supported to return to school from home education. Of those 10 were returned to school as a result of a School Attendance Order and the remaining 143

returned with positive support and relational practice from the EHE team. 30 formal notices were issued parents to.

10.7. A reducing exclusions toolkit is being developed by the Schools Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead this will be informed by the learning from the pilot project led by the Education Psychology Service to prevent exclusions.

10.8. The Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Task and Finish Group is developing support for children who moving into post 16 in order to reduce the numbers of vulnerable children not in education, employment or training.

11.0. Deep dive analysis

11.1. On 30th May 2024 there were 637 children registered as home educated of the cohort 79.79% (537) children identify as white British or white English. There are 80 children for whom we do not know the ethnicity. The ethnicity data is taken from the child's previous school information. If the child has never attended a maintained school in Plymouth, the data is unlikely to have been reported to Plymouth City Council. Of the 80 children for whom with have no recorded information about ethnicity, 62 have not been registered at a maintained school in Plymouth. Full academic year 2023/24 deep dive data will be available at the end of September 2024.

11.2. We are developing our reporting process to capture the ethnicity of all home educated children at the point that they are registered as home educated. Based on the current data set there are no emerging themes in respect of the Black and Minority Ethnic cohort.

11.3. Of the sample of 637 children, males who were persistently absent at school, have been suspended or who have SEND are more likely to become home educated than their female counterparts. Females who are home educated are more likely to have more than one episode of home education and are more likely to have been severely absent at school.

11.4. The quality of the data in respect of free school meals and pupil premium is being developed to enable accurate reporting and will be available from the end of September 2024.

11.5. Of the 673 children who are home educated on 30th May 2024:

- 79 (11.74%) had more than one episode of home education
- 15 (2.23%) have been permanently excluded from school
- 178 (26.45%) have had one or more suspension
- 7 (1.04%) have been on a part timetable
- 28 (4.16%) have an EHCP
- 194 (28.831%) require SEN Support.
- 230 (34.18%) were severely absent (<50% attendance) form school in their last academic year of school registration.
- 222 (33%) were persistently absent (<90% attendance) from school in their last academic year of school registration.

11.6. Poor levels of school attendance and high rates of absence correlate strongly with becoming electively home educated. Of the 515 children for whom we have prior school attendance data, 231 (44.85%) were severely absent (less than 50% attendance) from school, 232 (45%) were persistently absent (50 – 89% attendance) (Appendix 4).

11.7. Using attendance data from the last two academic years we are able to get an indication of the link between home education and school attendance.

11.8. The data shows a strong correlation between severe absence, SEND, suspensions and children's social care involvement. For the severely absent cohort these are risk factors to becoming EHE. There were 231 (44.85%) children who were severely absent from school prior to being home educated:

- Nine have an EHCP
 - 99 required SEN Support
 - Less than 10 children had been on a part timetable.
 - 28 children had one previous episode of home education.
 - Less than 10 had two or more previous episodes of home education .
 - 127 children have been known to Children's Social Care in the last six years.
 - 14 children are currently on a Child in Need (CiN) Plan or Child Protection (CP) Plan
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- Less than 10 children were in receipt of free school meals.
 - Less than 10 children are recorded as being part of a service family.
 - Less than 10 children were recorded as Pupil Premium.
 - 100 children had received one or more suspension.

11.9. The data shows a strong correlation between persistent absence, previous episodes of home education, previous social care involvement and SEND. For the persistently absent cohort these are risk factors to becoming EHE. Of the sample of 515 children who were home educated in 2023/24, 232 (45%) were persistently absent from school prior to being home educated:

- 12 have an EHCP
- 68 required SEN Support
- Less than 10 had been on a part timetable.
- 197 children had one previous episode of home education.
- 21 children had between two and five previous episodes of home education.
- 89 children have been known to Children's Social Care in the last six years.
- 12 children are currently on a Child in Need Plan or Child Protection plan.
- Less than 10 children are recorded as being part of a service family.
- 68 children had received one or more suspension.

11.10. A quality assurance process is being developed to gain a deeper understanding of common themes in order to share the learning and consider preventative approaches to early identification of risk factors and preventing EHE with a particular focus in children who have had a social worker, and children who have had previous episodes of home education.

11.11. Every school has now been assigned an Access and Attendance Officer who will track attendance data using the inclusion scorecard on a fortnightly basis. The Officers will contact the schools to discuss children who are at risk of becoming persistently absent, those with 10 days of absence and to agree a joint approach for all severely absent children. In addition, Officers will meet at least once a term with each school in Plymouth to discuss children who need support to remove barriers to attendance. This new approach will be live across all schools in September 2024.

11.12. The Extended Role Officer of the Virtual School is conducting a desk top analysis of behaviour policies across schools in Plymouth, measuring their impact against school level data. The findings of the research will be presented to the Plymouth Education Board and the Quality Assurance Delivery Group. The learning will inform the ongoing review and development of service delivery plans in respect of home education, suspensions and exclusions.

12.0. Children Missing Education

12.1. A child missing education (CME) is defined as a statutory school aged child who is not registered at any school. Of the 673 children home educated on 30th May 2024, less than 10 are recorded as having been on a part timetable whilst at school and 42 had one or more episodes of CME.

12.2. Of the CME Cohort, less than 10 had one or more suspensions prior to EHE and 35.71% (15) are known to Children's Social care.

12.3. All Children Missing Education are allocated an Access and Attendance Officer who undertakes casework with families to support the child to receive a suitable, full-time education at school or otherwise. As part of the casework Officers proactively engage with Children's Social Care in order to jointly plan for a child to access education.

13.0. Part Time Timetable cohort

13.1. Schools submit information about children on part time timetables to the local authority. These children are then tracked and monitored on a termly basis. The 0-25 SEND Team and Education Psychology Team are provided with the list of children on part time timetables to enable follow up at planning consultation meetings in school (Educational Psychology Service) or as part of EHCP casework.

13.2. Schools will meet at least once every 6 weeks with their allocated Access and Attendance Officer to discuss children who are severely and persistently absent from school. These meetings are held jointly with Children's Social Care. In addition, the Attendance Support Team have fortnightly contact with schools to discuss children who are severely absent from school or at risk of persistent absence (which will include children on part timetables) to inform joint planning and early help to remove barriers to attendance.

14.0. Duration and episodes of EHE

14.1. Of the deep dive sample of 673 home educated children, 79 (11.74%) home have had more than one episode of home education (appendix 5 and 6.). Most home educated children are home educated once only.

14.2. Of the 79 children who have been home educated more than once:

- 65 have had two episodes of home education.
- 14 have had between three and six episodes of home education.

14.3. Of the 65 children with two episodes of home education:

- 50.77% live in the West Locality.
- 32% are known to require SEN Support.
- Less than 10 have an EHCP.

- 29.3% have had one or more suspensions.
- 53.8% were known to Children's Social Care in the last 6 years.

14.4. Of the 14 children with between three and six episodes of home education:

- 45.45% live in the West Locality.
- 36.36% live in the North Locality.
- 27.27% are known to require SEN Support.
- 18.18% have received one or more suspension.
- 45.45% were known to Children's Social Care in the last 6 years.

15.0. EHE by Neighbourhood and Locality

15.1. The correlation between deprivation and EHE is strong, the majority of home educated children come from neighbourhoods with the highest levels of deprivation. This was reflected in the report produced by the Health Surveillance Agency which looked at data between 2018 and 2021. An analysis of the current EHE cohort reflects the same trend in 2024.

15.2. When looking at the neighbourhood data across all the localities, it is the neighbourhoods with the highest levels of deprivation which have the highest number of home educated children (appendix 6).

15.3. In addition to the pilot and task and finish group, a new Vulnerable Pupils Panel has been set up with schools and multi-agency partners across the local area. The panel is based on learning and best practice from Sutton Borough Council. The panel will be held as a partnership between education, health, police and Children's Social Care, providing early help and prevention to support children, removing barriers to their access and engagement with education. The panel will feed into the strategic review of alternative provision and report to the Plymouth Education Board.

16.0. Known to Children's Social Care

16.1. Of the 673 children, 252 have been known to Children's Social Care within the last 6 years. This does not assume that the child was on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan, the data draws on any recorded contact with Children's Social Care.

16.2. If a child is on a Child Protection Plan at the point a parent notifies the LA of their intention to home educate steps are taken in partnership with Children's Social Care to keep the child on the roll of their school. If a child goes onto a Child Protection Plan during their period of home education, then steps are taken to work with Children's Social Care to support the child back into school. It is accepted that where a child is on a Child Protection Plan the environment will not be suitable for the child to receive and education. Any child who is home educated and on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan is allocated a key worker from the Home Education Team who will work with the child's Social Worker and as part of the child's plan.

16.3. Of the 673 children 32 were on Child Protection Plan or on a Child in Need Plan (appendix 7). All of the children on Child Protection Plans are secondary age children

16.4. For the children on Child Protection or Child in Need Plans, it is not known how long the plans were in place. In addition, the category of abuse is not known. More needs to be done to audit and understand this cohort to see whether there are common themes and opportunities to prevent home education. Of the cohort:

- Less than 10 children are primary school aged.
- 24 are secondary school aged.
- Less than 10 have been home educated for 0-3months.
- Less than then have been home educated for 3-6 months.
- Less than 10 have been home educated for 6-9 months.
- Less than 10 have been home educated for 12+ months.
- Ten children are recorded as requiring SEN Support
- 13 children received one of more suspension whilst at school.
- Less than 10 children have previous episodes of home education.
- 14 children were severely absent from school.
- 15 children were persistently absent from school.

16.5. An Attendance Charter has been co-designed with the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership and aims to support our collective ambition to make attendance everyone's business. The Charter will launch in September 2024.

16.6. 'A Strong Start to September' campaign was launched in August and is continuing throughout September. In addition to a media campaign, each school has been contacted within the first two weeks of September to identify any children who have not arrived back at school as expected, support has been made available to schools and families by the Attendance Support Team.

16.7. Each school has a single point of contact within the Attendance Support Team. An Attendance Officer meet at least once every 6 weeks with each school in the city to provide information, advice and guidance on matters relating to school attendance. These meetings are held jointly with Children's Social Care. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss and agree casework referrals for severely absent children.

16.8. Attendance Officers use data from the Inclusion Scorecard to have targeted and early hep conversations with each school on a fortnightly basis to discuss and agree plans for:

- Children who are severely absent (<50% attendance) form school
- Children at risk of being persistently absent (90-65% attendance)
- Children with 10 or more days of absence (consecutive or culminative in 12 month period)

16.8.1. The expected outcome will be to see a reduction in rates of absence but to also ensure that children who are at risk of becoming electively home educated are supported to remain in school.

17.0. Safeguarding Children in Home Education

17.1. In May 2024 the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published a briefing paper Safeguarding Children in Elective Home Education. The golden thread running through the briefing paper is the lack of oversight for home educated children both from professionals and their wider network. The harms experienced by these children had a detrimental impact on their physical, emotional, and social development, alongside other factors associated with abuse and neglect, including malnutrition, and living in what were often described as squalid conditions.

17.2. The findings of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reflect the findings of

Plymouth's Rapid Review of Child C and include:

- the limitations of professional oversight for children who are home educated.
- The invisibility of children who are home educated and the potential for significant harm where parents themselves have difficulties and are vulnerable.
- Lack of parental engagement and the need for professional curiosity.

17.3. The panel made a series of recommendations for safeguarding partnerships to assure themselves about the effectiveness of their local systems as they relate to the safeguarding practice for children who are electively home educated. As a result, a series of actions have been presented to the Quality Assurance Improvement Board of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children's Partnership. These actions are embedded within the Home Education Service Delivery Plan.

17.4. Governance for the progress for delivery of the plan will be reported to the Plymouth Education Board and the Safeguarding Partnership on a quarterly basis.

18.0. Next steps

18.1. The Inclusion, Attendance and Welfare Team will continue to improve data quality in respect of free school meals, ethnicity, SEN area of need and pupil premium to enable accurate reporting and targeting of resources to support early help.

18.2. The multi-agency EHE Task and Finish Group will engage with the Plymouth Parent Carer Voice to co-produce an early help framework for key groups in order to support schools, target key groups and prevent children being withdrawn to home education.

18.3. Analysis of impact and outcomes for home educated children who are registered with Plymouth City College. The learning will be used to develop the Pre-16 vocational offer which is a collaboration between the Place Based Working Group and Plymouth City College.

18.4. Plymouth Education Board to develop and implement Three Tier Alternative Provision strategy, Belonging Framework and Pre-16 Vocational offer - delivering a system which supports children to remain in or return to mainstream education.

18.5. A practice review group for multi-agency partners to come together and identify common themes and areas of learning in respect of safeguarding children who are excluded, missing out on education and home educated. This will be held jointly with the PSCP in November 2024. The findings will be reported to the Quality Assurance Delivery Group of the PSCP and the Plymouth Education Board.

18.6. The Education, Participation and Skills Service will roll out a program of professional development (3 times per year, starting in term 2) for schools and multi-agency professionals which will include modules in respect of school attendance, home education, exclusions and suspensions. The training will include the findings of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report and the learning from the practice review group.

18.7. The PSCP will agree a reporting cycle for the home educated and Children Missing Education cohort so that this can be built and embedded within safeguarding governance.

18.8. Monthly reporting of practice and performance against home education Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of registered as home educated.
- Number of new registrations to home education.
- Number of suitability checks completed.
- Number of suitability checks dip sampled as good or outstanding.
- Number of home educated children returning to mainstream school.

18.9. Plymouth's Home Education Policy will be reviewed and updated in partnership with home educating families in the Autumn Term 2024.

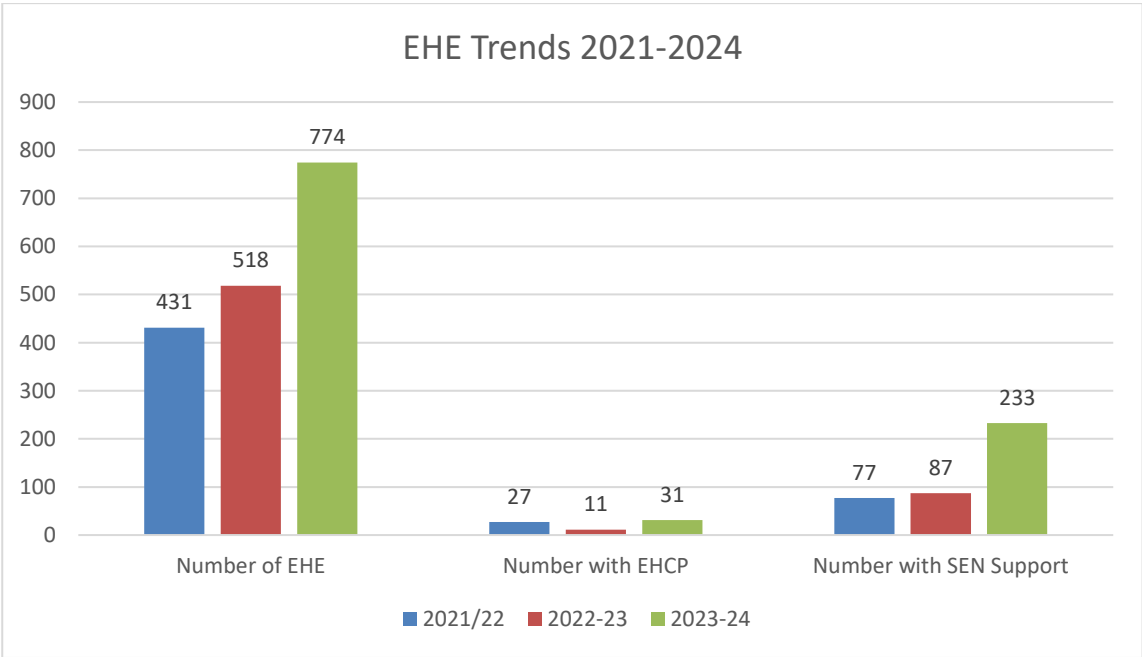
18.10 A research project between Plymouth City Council, Plymouth University and Plymouth Arts University will be implemented in the Autumn Term. The learning from the research will inform practice across the city to ensure that we understand the drivers for families who elect to home educate. From the learning we can create a preventative system to support vulnerable children to remain in school.

18.11. The actions from this paper are embedded in the EHE Service Plan held by Education Participation and Skills. The service plan and supporting data report was approved by the Plymouth Education Board in July 2024 and will be presented to the Education and Social Care Scrutiny Committee in October 2024.

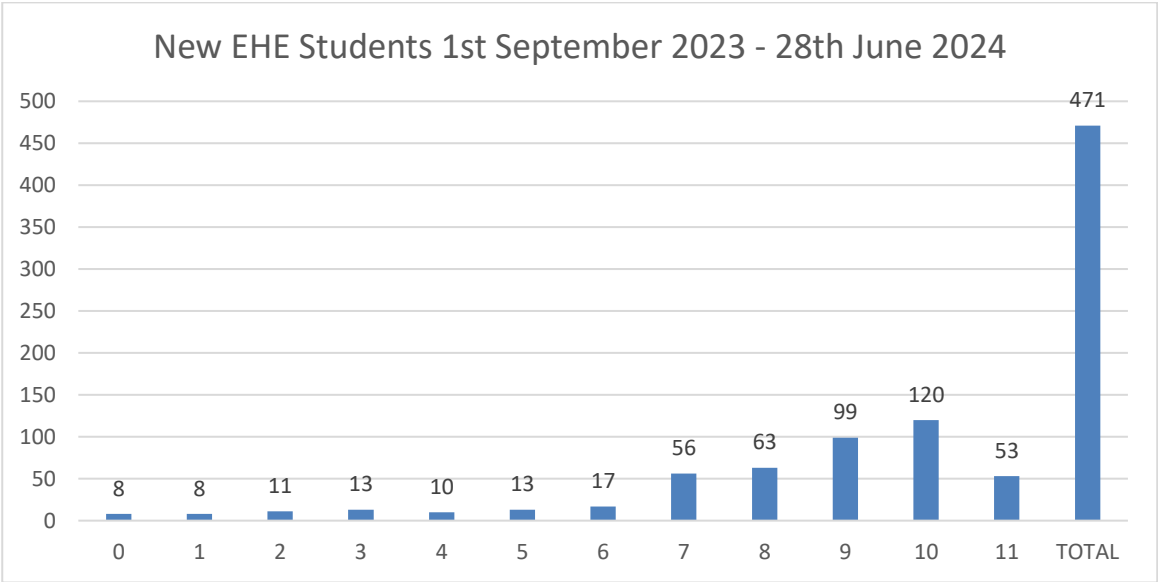
Author: Isabelle Kolinsky, Service Manager Inclusion and Welfare.

Date: 2nd October 2024

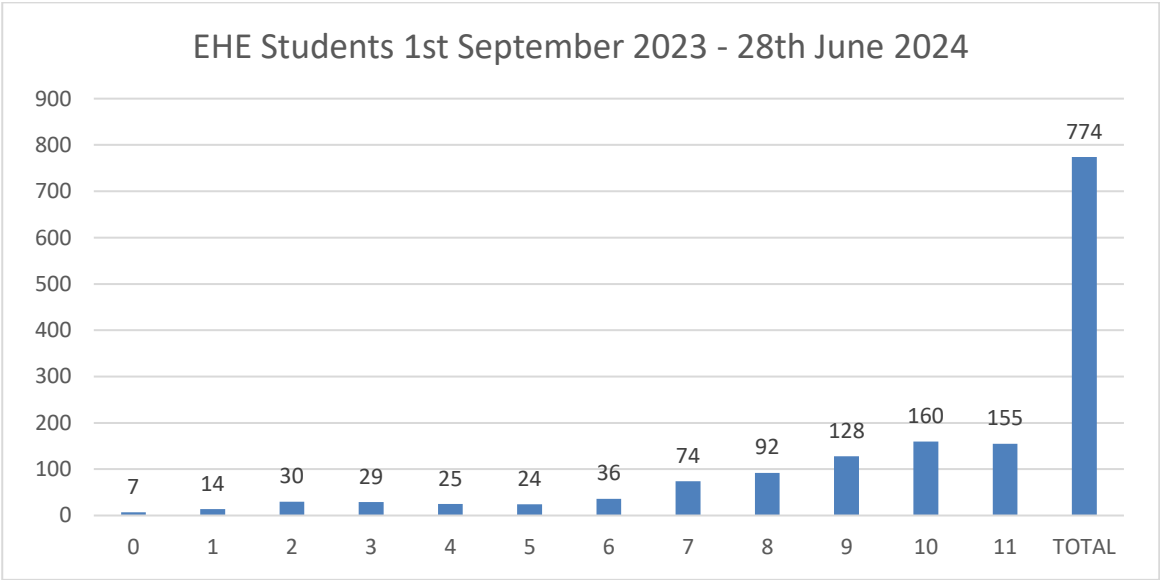
Appendix I – EHE Trend



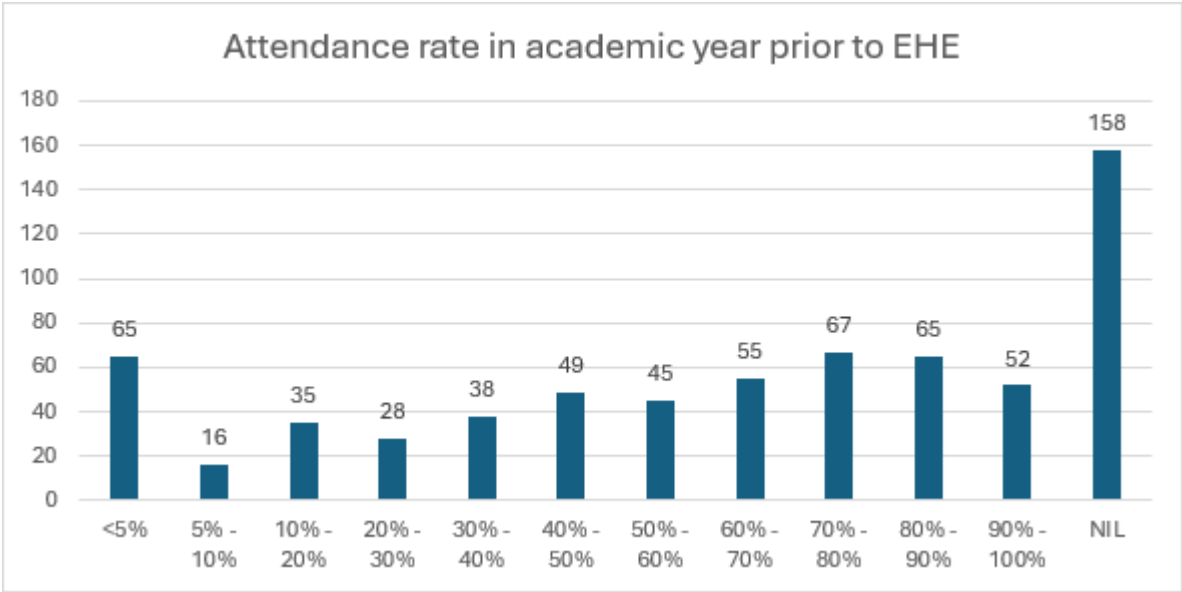
Appendix 2 – New registrations to EHE by year group 2023/24



Appendix 3 – EHE by year group



Appendix 4 – School attendance and EHE



Appendix 5 – Duration and Episodes of EHE

Duration of EHE	Number of children	Multiple episodes of EHE
0-3 months	111	13 (11.71%)
3-6 months	109	16 (14.96%)
6-9 months	117	15 (12.82%)
9-12 months	36	<10
12+ months	301	34 (11.29%)

Appendix 6. EHE episodes and vulnerability

Episodes EHE	No. Children	West Locality	South and East Locality	North Locality	Locality recorded Nil	SEN Support	EHCP	Suspensions	PEX	Known to CSC last 6 years	Previous CiN/CP	Current CP/Cin
1	594	210	197	175	12	169	24	157	14	209	30	32
2	65	33	15	14	<10	21	<10	19	<10	35	<10	0
3	11	<10	<10	<10	0	<10	0	<10	0	<10	0	0
4	<10	<10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<10	0	0
5	<10	0	0	<10	0	<10	0	0	0	<10	0	0
6	<10	<10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<10	0	0

Appendix 7 – EHE and Children’s Social Care

Childrens Social Care involvement	Number of children
Known to Children’s Social Care in last 6 years	252
Current Child Protection Plan	<10
Current Child in Need Plan	29