

Elective Home Education

How local authorities can monitor EHE children



Parents have a right to educate their children at home and the government wants these parents to be supported. The primary concern around elective home education (EHE) is safeguarding; ensuring that every child is educated in a safe environment.

Whilst the government believes that the primary responsibility lies with parents, the local authority within which the child resides has an obligation to ensure that each EHE child is safe and being suitably educated. If it is not clear that this is the case, the authority should act to remedy the situation.

According to guidance from the [Department for Education](#), “The department believes that although the primary responsibility for ensuring that children are properly educated belongs to parents, a local authority has a moral and social obligation to ensure that a child is safe and being suitably educated. If it is not clear that that is the case, the authority should act to remedy the position.”

What is Elective Home Education?

EHE is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or at home and in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time.

When is a child of concern?

If a local authority is aware that a child of compulsory school age is not attending a state or registered independent school full-time, and it is unclear how that child’s education is being provided, the authority’s task is to find out how they are being educated and whether that education satisfies legal requirements.

Local authorities should ensure that their enquiries are timely and effective and have the same safeguarding responsibilities for children educated at home as for other children. They should be ready to use safeguarding powers appropriately, when warranted.

Challenges for local authorities:

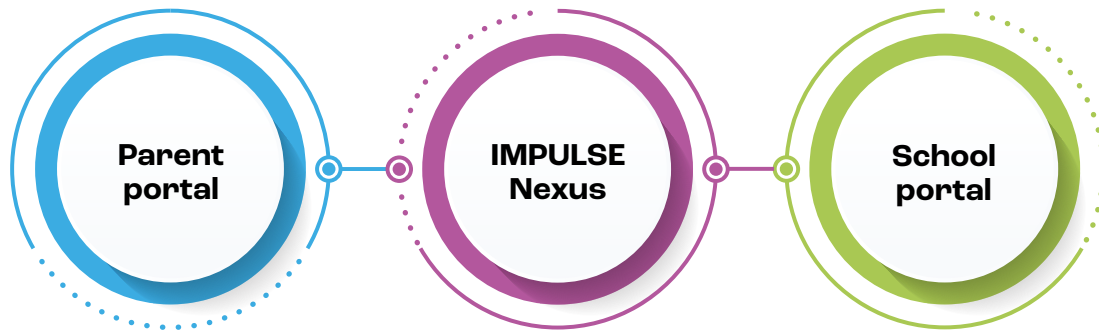
- One of the most significant issues for local authorities in maintaining adequate oversight is the initial identification of children who are being educated at home. There is no legal duty on parents to inform the local authority that a child is being home educated. [s.436A of the Education Act 1996] If a child never attends school, an authority may be unaware that they are being home educated.
- Identification of children who have never attended school and may be home educated forms a significant element of fulfilling an authority's statutory duty under s.436A of the Education Act 1996 - to make arrangements to enable the authority to establish, so far as it is possible to do so, the identities of children in its area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school, for example at home or in alternative provision. Until a local authority is satisfied that a home educated child is receiving a suitable full-time education, then a child being educated at home is potentially in scope of this duty.
- Children who have attended school - In some respects, fulfilling the s.436A duty in relation to children who may be home educated is easier for local authorities when a child has previously attended a school, but it is not necessarily the case that such children will automatically become known to the local authority.
- From September 2016 the regulations were amended so that the local authority must now be informed of all deletions from the admission register when this takes place at a nonstandard transition time.

The DfE recommends the following for local authorities:

- Provide parents with a named contact who is familiar with home education policy and practice and understands a range of educational philosophies who ordinarily contacts EHE parents at least annually so the authority may reasonably inform itself of the current suitability of the education provided.
- A named senior officer for every family with responsibility for elective home education policy and procedures, and the interaction with other work on issues such as children missing education, unregistered settings, vulnerable children and welfare.
- Organising training on the law and diversity of home education methods for all officers who have contact with home educating families, possibly in conjunction with other authorities.
- Ensure that staff who are the first point of contact for a potential home educating parent understand their right to choose home education. It is important that parents are provided with accurate information from the outset. Parents, however, are under no obligation to accept support or advice from a local authority and refusal to do so is not evidence that the education provided is unsuitable.
- Work co-operatively with other relevant agencies such as health services to identify and support children who are being home educated, within the boundaries established by data protection and other legislation.

IMPULSE Nexus - EHE supporting the way forward for local authorities:

The solution contains the following applications:



The benefits of IMPULSE Nexus:

- A modular solution for the management of referrals/requests for a child to be home educated
- Fully configurable for the organisation
- Links with other modules for other service areas
- The parent portal enables parents/guardians to make a referral/request to the local authority to home tutor their child[ren]
- Requests and ability to upload documents provide timely information which goes into the core record of the child. Professionals can see the information in real time
- Moving from manually held documentation to a single version of the truth
- A secure, GDPR compliant way to transfer and receive sensitive information
- User interface that is easy to use, see the example below of the log in page for the parent portal
- The school portal is available for school staff to make a referral to the local authority in a similar way
- Ability to report on activity, track and monitor visits and keep a chronology of the child's schooling and any interventions and support the child/family may have

