

---

**ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION POLICY**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Chris McEwan,  
Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Members' approval for the Elective Home Education (EHE) policy (**attached at Appendix A**).

**Summary**

2. Darlington has over 100 children whose parents have chosen to educate at home. The number has grown over the last ten years.
3. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) conducted a consultation during 2007 and new guidelines were issued.
4. Recent childcare enquiries have highlighted concerns regarding monitoring of the group of young people.

**Recommendation**

5. Members are requested to approve the Elective Home Education policy.

**Reason**

6. With the number of home-educated children and justifiable concerns around safeguarding, it is important that our policy and procedures ensure that children are safe and education is suitable.

**Murray Rose  
Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

Darlington EHE flowchart

Nigel Pell-Ilderton Ext: 2825

S17 Crime and Disorder	The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that the contents of this report have such an effect as the Policy will ensure that all home-educated children are receiving a suitable education.
Health and Well Being	This report will have a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of home-educated children as officers will be assessing the safeguarding conditions for these children.
Sustainability	It is considered that the Policy will have a positive impact on the future Darlington economy as a result of all home-educated children receiving an effective education.
Diversity	The policy will have a positive effect on the equality of opportunity for all home-educated children, particularly the traveller community in Darlington.
Wards Affected	All Wards but in particular those where traveller families reside.
Groups Affected	Children and families, schools.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are implications on officer time to effectively monitor the quality of home education and maintain a database of all children affected.  Members are requested to approve the adoption of the Elective Home Education Policy as part of Children's Services protocols.
Key Decision	This is not deemed to be a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This policy is linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy, in particular the themes of Prosperous, Healthy, Safer and Aspiring Darlington, as it is considered that an effective home education will have a positive effect on life outcomes for the children concerned.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

7. We have a large cohort of home-educated children for a borough of Darlington's size.
8. As of April 2008 Darlington had 108 EHE children of whom approximately 70% were of traveller heritage.
9. The national picture shows an increasing number of parents choosing to home educate. However, the increase in Darlington EHE numbers is large in comparison to those of other authorities.
10. A recent event in Birmingham has raised the profile of children kept or educated at home.
11. The policy draws heavily on the latest DCSF guidance (**attached at Appendix B**).
12. A guide for parents has also been produced (**attached at Appendix C**).
13. Recent events around safeguarding within Children's Services in Haringey, Birmingham and Manchester have highlighted the need for careful monitoring of all children in Darlington. It is of increased importance that we maintain our regular visits to homes and families and meet with parents and children. It is only through the actual meetings that we can ensure the well-being of children.

### Outcome of Consultation

14. Consultation has taken place within Children's Services with those officers and teams who have contact with the families concerned. Advice has also been sought from the Home Education Advisory Service (HEAS). HEAS is a national organisation which provides information, advice and support for home educating families.