

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

13th April, 2023

Report of the Head of Education Development - Chris Millis

Matter for information

Wards Affected: All

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION SERVICE UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

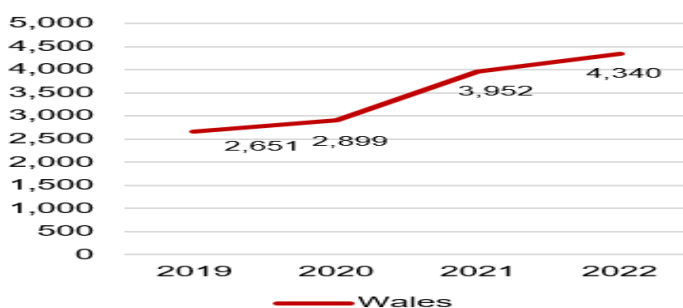
1. To provide Members with information and data in relation to Neath Port Talbot Elective Home Education Service.

Background

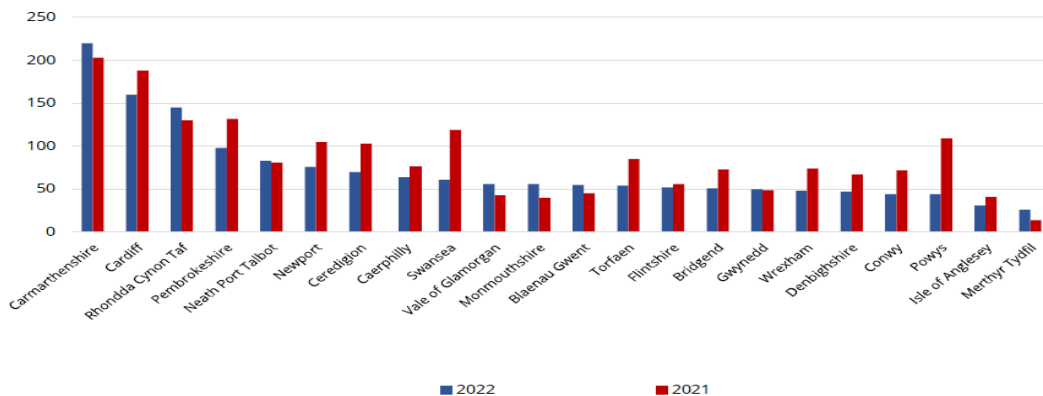
2. This report provides Members with key information relating to Elective Home Education (EHE) and current data taken as a snapshot at the time of the report.
3. Elective home education is the term used where parents/guardians decide to provide home-based education for their children instead of sending them to school. Parents have a legal right as part of the Education Act to home educate their child. Parents have an obligation to inform the school/local authority when they choose to de-register their child from a school roll, however, they are not obliged to state the reasons for doing so. Where a child has never been placed on a school roll, there is no legal requirement to inform school/local authority of the parents' choice to electively home educate.
4. There are a number of reasons why parents may want to educate their child at home. Some parents elect to home-school because of lifestyle or family reasons, while others do so because of adverse school experiences, for example; alleged or perceived bullying, exclusions or

for some problem specific to an individual. However, there has been an increase in parental requests since the start of the pandemic and this continues to rise, not only in the Borough of Neath Port Talbot, but across other local authority in Wales.

5. Parents are required to ensure that their children receive an education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, as well as any additional needs he or she may have. Local Authorities are not able to specify a curriculum which parents must follow and there is no legal requirement for children to take a particular set of qualifications. Home educated children & young people are not subject to set term-dates nor predetermined times of tuition.
6. The elective home education 'non statutory' guidance is currently going through a review. The new 'statutory' guidance will be released by the Welsh Government, early/late May 2023.
7. Numbers of children & young people being educated at home, on March 2022 was 255. The January 2023 annual PLASC data return, highlighted an increase to 291 children and young people.
8. Currently at the time of the report, we have 327 children & young people being electively home educated, this is live data, which can change daily. Top five reason given: 1st lifestyle choice. 2nd, no reason given. 3rd, anxiety/mental health. 4th, cultural and 5th, covid.
9. The 2023 PLASC data returns, captured every January are yet to be published. The national PLASC figures for calculations for 2022, highlighted an increase in numbers of young people electively home educated, across Wales by 10%. There were 4,340 children & young people known to be home educated in Nursery - Year 11. This was 388 more than the previous year.



10. Numbers ranged per local authority, Carmarthenshire having the highest numbers of children & young people electively home educated at 520 through to Merthyr Tydfil whose cohort was 59.



11. With the increase in the number of requests, the Welsh Government have given each local Authority a grant to support families. The monies are based on the numbers of electively home educated children & young people during the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data pull. This is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained primary and secondary schools each January.
12. Therefore, a tailored package of support has been compiled which aims to support individuals learning within the home or out in the community, and includes activities to promote health and wellbeing as well as educational opportunities. The provisions being catered for, span across a variety of children’s age ranges, which include family activities.
13. The various support offers include; Welsh lessons for all the family, aimed at beginners, intermediate and advanced. Family swimming including opportunities for children & young people to have swimming lessons. Margam park entry, Twinkl subscription, primary and secondary English, Maths and Science Lessons, entry to Botanical Gardens. WHSmith vouchers were also issued to help families purchase of educational resources including book and pens, especially with the cost of living crisis.
14. Families who reported they couldn’t afford to purchase a laptop or other form of electronic tablet to provide a digital means of home learning were provided with a laptop by the authority purchased from the Welsh Government grant to support EHE families.

15. Coffee mornings have been established in partnership with various departments and services, themes included: Q&A with the ALSNT team, the Childrens & Families Team demonstrating and promoting learning through play. CAMHS 'in reach service' workshops, NPT Minds, Forward Steps; behaviour support for parents whose children have an ALN. The Youth Service have supported many events including, transition support for post 16, where many other services such as Careers Wales, local Colleges were present to give advice and guidance.
16. Working in partnership, activities outside of grant include; Swansea City FC Mental Health project, this was a 4 week project including workshops on Mental health awareness/mindfulness, 5 ways to wellbeing & self-care, sleep matters and social media. Following the project attendees are rewarded with a stadium tour, Swansea FC merchandise and home tickets to see 1 league Championship Game.
17. Mess up the Mess – EHE community age 11yrs+ (funded by Families First), consultation with young people which resulted in them choosing the theme of “what makes you, you?” through mask and costume making and puppetry.
18. In partnership with the Youth Service we have held various outdoor cinema events, and established EHE youth club. We are currently in the process of training the EHE coordinator to deliver the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Various educational/training opportunities are also being delivered in-conjunction with the youth service and the assistant educational psychologist.
19. An evaluation was sent out to review the service, 80% said their views and worries were taken seriously. 90% said the staff were easy to talk too. 80% said the team worked in partnership with them, with 20% partially agreeing.
20. There has been some positive feedback from parents regarding the activities and how they have observed their child growing in confidence and achieving results. The activities have seen the engagement with the local authority increase.
21. Number of EHE request have increased, however, as a service we have supported 25 young people, who have asked if they could return to a school setting. The team have been supportive to the requests, and help arrange a school visit, attend the initial meetings with the school, until the young person and their parent feel comfortable in their return. This could be to their previous school or a new school of parental choice.

22. Members will continue to be provided with regular reports the work being undertaken by the Elective Home Education Service.

Financial Impact

23. There is no financial impact associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

24. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for information purposes only.

Valleys Communities Impacts

25. The information contained within this report covers all of Neath Port Talbot.

Workforce Impacts

26. There are no workforce or staffing issues directly associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

27. There is no legal impact associated with this report.

Risk Management

28. There is no identified risk in relation to this report.

Consultation

29. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external Consultation on this item.

Recommendations

30. That Members note the update provided within this report.

Appendices

31. None.

List of Background Papers

32. None.

Officer Contact

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