

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Tuesday 11 November 2025

at 4.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Boddy (VC), Buchan, Dunbar, Harrison, Holbrook, Little and Morley (C).

Co-opted Members: Gillian Hood, C of E Diocese and Joanne Wilson, RC Diocese representatives.

School Heads Representatives: Adam Palmer (Secondary), Sue Sharpe (Primary), Zoe Westley (Special).

Parent Governor Representative: Martin Pout

Six Young Peoples Representatives

Observer: Councillor Allen, Chair of Adult Services and Public Health Committee

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2025 (*previously circulated and published*).

4. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS

None.

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone.

The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

5. KEY DECISIONS

No items

6. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

None.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7.1 Elective Home Education – *Executive Head Teacher, Vulnerable Pupils*

7.2 Children Missing Education – Annual Report – *Executive Director of Children's Services*

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd December 2025 at 4.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2025



Subject: ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION
Report of: Executive Head Teacher, Vulnerable Pupils
Decision Type: For information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- Where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide updated information in relation to Elective Home Education (EHE).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Over the last 6 years there has been rising numbers of children being removed from school to receive elective home education, with a significant percentage increase in 2024. This increase continued in 2025, however at a much lower rate.

The table below shows the number of children receiving EHE at the school census point in October each year.

Number EHE	Oct 19	Oct 20	Oct 21	Oct 22	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25
Male	21	32	41	52	61	120	127
Female	34	47	67	80	109	139	152
Total	55	79	108	132	170	259	273
% increase		43.6	36.7	22.2	28.8	52.4	5.4

The table below shows the year groups of the children currently EHE.

Year Grp	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25
REC	2	3	1
Year 1	9	6	4
Year 2	7	12	6
Year 3	9	6	12
Year 4	5	20	8
Year 5	10	13	17
Year 6	6	15	10
Year 7	13	11	26
Year 8	17	33	23
Year 9	28	31	48
Year 10	27	48	46
Year 11	37	58	64
Post 16	0	3	8

3.2 Special Educational Needs (SEN)

At present **75** children receiving EHE have identified Special Educational Needs.

SEN	Number children with SEN		
	Oct 2023	Oct 2024	Oct 2025
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	2	11	10
SEN Support	32	48	65
% of cohort	20	22.8	27.5

Primary SEN Need	Number of children (EHCP)	Number of children (SEN Support)
ASD	4	4
SEMH	1	16
SLCD	1	8
MLD	2	13
Physical	1	1
SpLD	0	12
C & L	1	11

ASD Autism Spectrum
 SEMH Social, Emotional, Mental Health
 SLCD Speech, Language, Communication Difficulties
 MLD Moderate Learning Difficulties
 SpLD Specific Learning Difficulties
 C & L Cognition & Learning

3.3 Social Care Involvement

There are currently **9** children open to social care receiving elective home education.

Social Care Involvement	No of children
Early Help	2
Child in Need	5
Child Protection	0
Open referral	2

The Virtual School team have excellent relationships with social care and link with the children allocated workers regularly. Social workers are invited to EHE meetings with parents/carers.

3.4 Reasons for Removal

Reason	Number of Children		
	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25
Risk of exclusion/ Exclusion	3	7	2
Attendance	3	11	13
Awaiting school place/ Not given first preference	1	4	7
Bullying	8	22	28
General dissatisfaction with school	32	39	65
Health/ Mental health	28	51	57
Lifestyle/ Philosophical	6	8	9
Parental Choice	57	68	54
Parental Choice- Covid	6	5	4
Parental Choice- SEND	2	20	16
Pregnancy	1	1	0
Unknown	23	23	18

3.5 Schools Children ceased to attend due to EHE

School	Number of Children			% school population
	Oct 23	Oct 24	Oct 25	
Brougham	1	1	3	
Clavering	2	2	5	
Eldon Grove	5	6	6	
Eskdale	1	0	0	
Fens	3	5	5	
Golden Flatts	1	1	0	
Grange	1	1	2	
Greatham	1	1	1	
Hart & Elwick	3	3	4	
Jesmond Gardens	3	6	5	

Kingsley	3	4	4	
Lynnfield	1	2	3	
Rossmere	7	8	3	
Sacred Heart	2	5	5	
St Aidan's	0	1	2	
St Cuthbert's	1	1	1	
St Helen's	2	2	1	
St John Vianney	3	2	2	
St Joseph's	0	1	2	
Stranton	4	11	9	
Throston	1	1	1	
Ward Jackson	1	0	0	
West Park	4	5	5	
West View	2	0	4	
Dyke House	26	43	44	3.5
The English Martyrs	17	11	12	0.9
High Tunstall	11	14	25	1.8
Manor	22	37	34	3.5
St Hild's	15	35	40	6.6
The Horizon School (PRU)	0	2	4	3.9
Out of Authority (either in school or previously EHE)	22	37	32	
Never attended School	4	9	7	

3.6 Date EHE Commenced

The information below shows the date when the children who are currently EHE commenced their education at home.

Date	No of children
2015	1
2016	1
2017	0
2018	1
2019	2
2020	13
2021	7
2022	16
2023	53
2024	77
2025	102

The table below shows the month that the **102** removed from schools in 2025 were taken off-roll.

Month- 2025	No of children
January	13
February	5
March	14
April	7
May	10
June	12
July	4
August	3
September	30
October	4

3.7 Children not accessing Suitable Provision

There are currently **7** children who we do not have information from parents/carers, or the information we have received is not sufficient to clarify whether the children are receiving a suitable, full time, appropriate education. The local authority therefore follows the School Attendance procedures which ultimately could lead to a School Attendance order being requested and the children returned to school.

3.8 Alternative Provision

There are currently **30** children (11%) who attend some form of alternative education provision as part of their elective home education. These provisions include:

- East Durham and Houghall College
- Hartlepool Sixth Form College
- Stockton Riverside College
- Woolsey hall Online School

3.9 Communication with Parents/Carers

The Virtual School seeks to provide support, advice and guidance to parents who make the decision to educate their children at home. The team seeks to forge positive relationships with parents to ensure that the children are receiving a suitable education. It is becoming more common for parents to refuse to engage with the team and seek to have all communication in writing. In October 2023 there were **34** children where parents will have no other communication with the team other than in writing. As of October 2025, this has risen to **56** children whose parents will only communicate in writing and therefore the children are not seen by the team.

Hartlepool Home Education procedures seek to engage with parents at least twice a year. There are increasing numbers of parents stating that they will not engage in these meetings and have requested annual contact only. All home educating parents have been written to, and the policy re-iterated that the team will continue to make contact twice yearly. If parents do not engage, the team are able to take non-engagement measures as the child is not receiving

a suitable education, and the school attendance order process will commence.

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Children's Services Committee are requested to note the contents of the report.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	None.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	None.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	None.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	None.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	None.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	None.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	None.
CONSULTATION	N/A

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Children's Services Committee notes the contents of the report.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To raise awareness of the rising numbers of children being removed from schools to receive Elective Home Education.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Executive Head Teacher - Vulnerable Pupils
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01429 284370

Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 15.10.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 15.10.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 15.10.2025

CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2025



Subject: CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION – ANNUAL REPORT

Report of: Executive Director of Children's Services

Decision Type: For information

1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

Hartlepool will be a place:

- Where people live healthier, safe and independent lives. (People)

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide an up-to-date report about number of children identified and tracked as a child missing education.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Children Missing Education (CME) statutory guidance places statutory functions on Local Authorities for tracking and identifying children who are missing from, or not receiving, a suitable education.
- 3.2 The statutory guidance sets out the expectations and responsibilities for local authorities and schools to work collaboratively and effectively to identify, monitor, track and trace all children who are at risk of, or missing from, education. Schools must notify and provide the local authority with the full details and contact information of all children who they admit to the school register. In Hartlepool, children on a school roll are added to the EYES system at the point they are admitted to a school. All maintained schools and academies update the details and destination of pupils, and this information is imported into this database daily. Details of pupils who are admitted to, and removed from, the roll of independent schools are sent directly to the Attendance Team. Local Authorities are required to make joint "reasonable" enquiries to locate children who are missing from education.

- 3.3 New statutory guidance was issued in August 2025, clearly outlining the circumstance when pupils should be removed from the school roll. These are listed in Annex A of the guidance. There are 12 sections listed in Annex A and removal from the school roll for any reasons not listed in Annex A is illegal.
- 3.4 The explanation of Annex A has been shared with all schools in Hartlepool, and it is on the reverse of the CME referral form.
- 3.5 Ofsted has placed an increasing focus on the off-rolling of pupils nationally since the off-rolling of pupils and the safeguarding implications relating to children missing education, alongside its relationship to children who are home educated, is a government priority.
- 3.6 Key messages around CME is disseminated to school staff with an increasing focus on the link between children who are electively home educated and children missing education. Information on the illegal removal from the roll is discussed with school staff during Targeted Support Meetings with all schools and academies. All schools and academies share their daily attendance on the DfE Portal (VYED) View Your Education Data, allowing the School Attendance Officers to see any child who has been removed from the roll. A new report within VYED reports any pupil removed from roll who does not have an end destination. This report is ran every two weeks and the School Attendance Officer will check with the school any student who doesn't have an end destination and if a referral hasn't already been submitted one is requested.
- 3.7 The Attendance Team work with school attendance champions to ensure schools are fully aware of their responsibilities relating to Children Missing Education by providing support, guidance and challenge where appropriate.
- 3.8 Amendments to the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance assists with the tracking of children missing education as schools should have more than one contact for children, they admit on to the school roll. Schools and academies now have email addresses for most families. Contacting families by email has enhanced the tracking of some pupils, as parents and carers do not change their email addresses as frequently as they change their mobile numbers.
- 3.9 The number of children missing education referrals from schools and enquiries from other local authorities during this academic year decreased from 193 in the academic year 2023-24 to 178 in the academic year 2024-25 (eight percent decrease).
- 3.10 Once the Attendance Team has exhausted all available avenues to locate a child, their details are added to the Hartlepool Inclusion Panel (HIP) agenda, under the category of 'missing'. Members of the multi-agency panel share any information they may hold which might assist with tracking the child and their family.

- 3.11 Following discussion at HIP, if the child's whereabouts remains unknown and no further information comes to light which assists with tracking the child, it is at this point that a letter is sent to the family's last registered GP alerting them the family are missing from education, and a flag is then added to their medical notes. If the child or family member subsequently attends A & E or registers with another GP, their previous practice will share the child's whereabouts with the Inclusion and Attendance Coordinator.
- 3.12 Schools and academies are required to add the children's details onto the School to School (S2S) website if they cannot be located after 4 weeks. The child is then removed from the roll, and the Attendance Team take responsibility for the continued tracking of the child and family.

Academic Year 2024-25

Month of Referral	Total number of Referrals	Number Traced
September	26	26
October	24	24
November	13	13
December	7	5
January	21	21
February	7	7
March	21	21
April	10	9
May	16	10
June	28	19
July	5	1
Total	178	156

In addition to the above CME referrals received from schools/services within Hartlepool, a further 108 referrals were received by other local authorities. Of the 108 referrals received 74, became registered pupils at a Hartlepool school. The remaining untraced referrals were referred to the authority, as we had no evidence indicating that the family were residing in Hartlepool.

- 3.13 Of the 178 CME referrals made in 2024-25, 156 children have been successfully traced, and 24 cases remain open with ongoing investigations. Two children remain open as long term CME cases. This is a significant reduction from academic year 2023-24 where 19 cases remain open. The reduction in CME referrals is due to a new information sharing agreement with UK Border Force.

CME Referrals by National Curriculum Year 2024-25

NCY	Number of Referrals	Number Traced
Pre Admission	29	28
1	15	11
2	15	15
3	10	9
4	14	11
5	12	11
6	10	10
Primary Total	105	93
7	22	19
8	13	11
9	17	13
10	15	14
11	6	6
Secondary Total	73	63
Grand Total	178	156*

- 3.14 The table above highlights that 73 referrals were made in respect of secondary-aged children, and 105 referrals were made in respect of primary-aged children or pre-admission-age children. The CME procedures are not statutory for non-compulsory school age (children become statutory school age the term following their fifth birthday). However, referrals are actioned when received for pre-school children, but not all can be tracked into education as attendance at nursery is non-compulsory. This cohort of pre-school children will have their details checked on the term following their fifth birthday.
- 3.15 With regard to those who remain missing, referrals remain open to the Attendance Team and checks are made with Getting Pupil Information Database and other agencies.

4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Local Authority guidance for Children Missing Education is currently under review following the issuing of new statutory guidance late in August 25. Once the policy is updated, it will be shared with schools and academies. Webinars will also be offered to all schools and academies in relation to the changes.
- 4.2 The School Attendance Team will continue to deliver the Local Authority statutory functions in relation to Children Missing Education.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

RISK IMPLICATIONS	There are no risk implications.
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no financial considerations contained in this report.
SUBSIDY CONTROL	None.
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	There are no legal considerations contained in this report.
SINGLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT	N/A The report is for information only.
STAFF CONSIDERATIONS	There is no staffing considerations contained in this report.
ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	There is no asset management consideration contained in this report.
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS	There are no environment, sustainability and climate change considerations contained in this report.
CONSULTATION	No consultation was required in the production of this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Committee is asked to note this report and the work of the School Attendance Team to deliver the Local Authority statutory functions in relation to Children Missing Education.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The recommendation is to ensure the Local Authority is compliant with statutory duties in relation to Children Missing Education.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Managing Director	Date: 21.10.2025
Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 21.10.2025
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 21.10.2025