

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00, Friday, 16 August 2019

Schooling Options for Children Living in Edinburgh – Follow up report

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.2 note the contents of this report.

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Schooling Options for Children Living in Edinburgh – Follow up report

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A report considered by the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2019 on "[Schooling Options for Children Living in Edinburgh](#)" provided details of the schooling options outside of those offered by City of Edinburgh Council for school aged children living in Edinburgh and set out how this information is captured in the current roll projection methodology used by City of Edinburgh Council to forecast future school rolls.
- 2.2 This follow-up report responds to requests from Committee members for more information about children who are home schooled and also sets out how children who have never engaged in the education system are recorded.

3. Background

- 3.1 Background information can be found in the "[Schooling Options for Children Living in Edinburgh](#)" report considered by the Education Children and Families Committee in March.

4. Main report

Home Schooling

- 4.1 Home education is a key aspect of parental choice. However, it's a choice only a minority of parents make.
- 4.2 Under Section 35 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, parents of a child who has been attending a public school must seek the local authority's consent before withdrawing their child from that school.
- 4.3 Senior Education Officers will meet with each applicant to approve the plan for their child's ongoing education. Each individual request is dealt with fairly and consistently as possible.
- 4.4 Currently in Edinburgh there are 56 children home schooled – 28 secondary and 28 primary.

4.5 Parents do not have to give a reason for choosing home education when requesting to withdraw their child from school. The authorities interest lies in how the parents intend to educate their children not their reason. However, the following reasons are common:

- Religious or cultural beliefs.
- Dissatisfaction with the system.
- A child's reluctance to go to school.
- A child's problems when at school, e.g. bullying.
- The wish to deal with a child's additional support needs in a particular way.
- As a short term intervention for a particular reason.

Identifying children where consent has not been required

4.6 While consent from the Council is needed to withdraw a child from a school, consent is not needed to home educate. Accordingly, consent is not needed in the following situations:

- The child has never attended a public school.
- The child has never attended a public school in Edinburgh.
- The child is being withdrawn from an independent school.
- The child has finished primary education in one school but has not started secondary education in another.
- The school the child has been attending has closed.

4.7 It is estimated that there will be small numbers of children who may have never been registered to attend school and therefore are not on any school roll in Edinburgh.

4.8 The mothers of these children will in almost all cases have been receiving anti-natal care and the child will be known to the universal Health Visiting service. As such there are opportunities for Health Visitors in their routine contact to enquire about plans for nursery and school. These opportunities have been extended with the introduction of the new universal pathway for children. Key times for enquiry are at the 27 to 30 month check, in respect of nursery, and at the assessment at 4 years just prior to school attendance age.

4.9 In discussions with NHS colleagues, they have agreed to raise this issue at their Clinical Nurse Managers Group to consider; what the estimated prevalence may be and consider any action required in respect of these children if Health Visitors are aware of potential for not registering children at school.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Consideration will be given to how the information contained in this report is captured in future school roll projections.

6. Financial impact

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 There is no requirement for stakeholder or community engagement arising from this report.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 Education, Children and Families Committee, 5 March 2019: “[Schooling Options for Children Living in Edinburgh](#)”

9. Appendices

None