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Background

Elective Home Education (EHE) is a parental choice and a lawful educational option; however, local authorities have a duty to understand and respond to potential safeguarding, inclusion and welfare risks.

This includes ensuring children are visible to services, their needs are understood, and appropriate action is taken where concerns arise.

In Blackpool, an EHE audit has been initiated to review current practice, assess compliance with statutory guidance, and gain assurance about how effectively children educated at home are identified, supported and safeguarded.

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Why it matters

Children who are electively home educated may be less visible to services, which can increase the risk of unmet educational, health or safeguarding needs. National reviews highlight the importance of strong oversight, multi-agency information sharing and clear local processes.

The audit supports Blackpool's commitment to safeguarding, early help and assurance that children educated at home are safe, seen and supported appropriately.

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Information

The EHE audit in Blackpool has focused on understanding current systems, thresholds and practice across education and partner agencies. Work completed to date includes mapping local EHE processes against statutory guidance, reviewing how children are identified as EHE, and examining pathways for information sharing and escalation where concerns arise.

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A review of family's experiences has been undertaken to explore how safeguarding considerations are recorded, how often children are seen or spoken to, and how professional curiosity is applied. Engagement has taken place with key teams, including schools, safeguarding and Early Help, to capture operational perspectives and identify strengths and gaps.

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Emerging themes are shaping recommendations, learning, and service improvements. A multi-agency action plan and targeted Young Carers training are being developed to enhance EHE support, including fostering an inclusive school culture, providing early help so home education is safe and appropriate, co-producing online guidance for parents, and supporting children to return to education and access exams where they wish.

6

What to do

Practitioners should continue to follow local EHE procedures and statutory guidance, responding promptly to any safeguarding concerns through established pathways. Professional curiosity, the child's voice and clear recording remain essential. A 12-month multi agency Task and Finish group will oversee delivery of the action plan, monitor progress and provide ongoing assurance.

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Questions to consider

- Do we know which children are electively home educated and why?
- Are safeguarding considerations clearly recorded and reviewed?
- Is the child's voice visible in our work?
- Are concerns shared appropriately across agencies?
- Do we challenge and escalate when things do not feel right?

