

## **FIELD TRIPS UNDERTAKEN BY EDUCATION OTHERWISE AND DCSF ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION TEAM**

**Fiona Nicholson Chair Education Otherwise Government Policy Group**

### **NORTH YORKSHIRE FEBRUARY 2009**

Representatives from Education Otherwise and DCSF Elective Home Education team visited North Yorkshire in February 2009 to investigate a model of good practice. The day was hosted by Ruth Hannah , Elective Home Education Advisor, North Yorkshire Council and was also attended by representatives from Special Needs, Quality and Improvement and Integrated Working, as well as the Education Otherwise Local Contact for North Yorkshire.

EO and DCSF were given Elective Home Education Packs which included Guidance for Staff and establishes a protocol agreed by the Council for engagement with home educating families. We were also given leaflets for the new Home2Work project at "Ourspace", Scarborough.

We learned about the exam centre access offered by the Pupil Referral Unit in Scarborough. Home educated young people can sit Maths and English GCSEs ( AQA) at the PRU and also have coursework authenticated, which is a major issue for home educators.

Feedback from local home educators suggests that the North Yorkshire approach has had positive results in terms of greater engagement of families with services. Where the authority has not been intrusive or judgemental, it has been agreed that engagement is of benefit to the children and young people.

Everyone in the children's workforce who comes into contact with home educated children and young people has received training in home education.

[http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/m1925\\_0.pdf](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/m1925_0.pdf)

### **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION NORTH YORKSHIRE**

3.4 The Elective Home Education Adviser requests information from the parents/carers on the educational provision they are making for their child. This may take the form of a discussion during a home visit or at a meeting at a venue away from the home; written educational philosophy; or completion of a questionnaire, or by some other method. Advice, support and guidance are offered if requested. "

7.1 The proportion of known EHE families engaging with the LA is high and officers of the Education Social Work Service (ESW) and Quality and Improvement Service (Q&I) work closely together in order to offer effective support and advice to families. All staff

have received training on Elective Home Education and the law.

7.2 It is extremely important that a meaningful dialogue is established between CYPS and home educating families and to this end there has been consultation and discussion on a variety of subjects including protocols, policies and training events. Parental feedback is requested and valued.

Two "Improving Relations" meetings between parents and LA representatives have been held in Thirsk this year and a third is planned for November 2008. The theme of these meetings has been "Opportunities and Support for 14-19 Years" with speakers leading discussion on the Connexions Service and the new Diplomas. All home educating families are invited and parental attendance has risen steadily."

7.4 The availability of the EHE Pack and Policy, usually distributed by ESW service and partly available on the NYCC website, has enabled both families and NYCC staff to have a better understanding of responsibilities on all sides.

A termly newsletter has been introduced to regularly disseminate information to home educating families.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENTS

8.1 External Exam Venue for Home Educated Young People. In partnership with the Roscoe Street Satellite Unit (part of Scarborough Pupil Referral Unit) it is now possible to offer young people a venue at which to sit GCSE examinations. In the past this has only been possible at the discretion of the headteacher and governors of a willing school. This year three home educated young people were entered for GCSEs in English and Maths at Roscoe Street.

### Post 16

Support for young people leaving home education post 16 has been provided in a number of ways. The sensitive involvement of Connexions Personal Advisers offering careers guidance and advice has been facilitated at the request of young people and their families. In addition 10 young people have been supported in their application to colleges of further education by the provision of appropriate written references. Two young people have been accepted onto University degree courses.

### 8.3 Access to the School Library Service and Bookstart.

Home educating families with children at KS1 and 2 may request and borrow up to 6 books per child from the SLS on an extended loan basis; books are then delivered to the child's nominated local library. In 2008 there were 13 registered home educated service

users. 106 items were issued in total – 99 from Northallerton Schools HQ and the remainder from other public libraries. Bookstart materials for the under fives have been distributed to HE groups throughout the county and all EHE packs contain information on the Bookstart initiative. Bookstart packs were demonstrated at the EHE Parents/LA Liaison Meeting held in Thirsk in January 2008. The materials were warmly received and the local parental HE Coordinator agreed to advertise the availability of the Bookstart materials on the North Yorkshire Home Educator's website – [www.nyhe.co.uk](http://www.nyhe.co.uk)

8.4 Adult Learning Opportunities and Extended Schools Provision  
Access to the above provision has been facilitated for children and young people who are electively home educated on the understanding that parents are required to accompany their children."

<http://www.nyhe.co.uk/>

North Yorkshire Home Educators Website

Local Authority Provision of External Exam Venue for Home Educated Children  
North Yorkshire County Council wishes to work cooperatively with parents who decide to home educate their children and it is now possible for any young person registered with the Children and Young Peoples Service to access GCSE examinations in English and Maths at the Roscoe Street Satellite Centre in Scarborough.

There are 3 GCSEs courses currently being taught at Scarborough  
AQA A 3702 English Language

AQA 3712 English Literature

AQA 4301 Mathematics Foundation Linear 1 and Linear 2

All prospective candidates will be responsible for their own exam fees and any other costs i.e. course work marking.

To find out more information please call the Elective Home Education Adviser on 01609 532509

## **SOMERSET MAY 2009**

On May 6<sup>th</sup> Education Otherwise visited Chard Home Education Centre to meet members of the Chard Home Education Centre Management Committee as well as many family visitors to the centre. Sadly Iain Campbell from DCSF had to cancel the visit at short notice but a report on the trip has been sent to DCSF and to Graham Badman's Independent Home Education Review.

Jennifer Sanderson and Mac Davison from Somerset Local Authority also came over to the Centre to share information about support for home educators in Somerset.

**The Home Education Centre, Chard**  
**Home educators and Somerset LA**  
**Access to exams for home educated young people in Somerset**

**The Home Education Centre**

<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk/>

The Home Education Centre is a Somerset-based home education group. HEC has families from Somerset, Dorset and Devon, with over 50 children ranging from babies to teenagers. It has a management committee which meets regularly to discuss policy issues. HEC gathers for 2 full days a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays during term time.

More information and photos can be found here

<http://www.homeeducationcentre.org.uk/blog.html>

There is a sliding scale of charges for families with more than one child, plus a reduced rate for families on low income. Children who attend both weekly sessions get a discount on the second session. Families can pay weekly or termly. HEC hires a 'Young Peoples Centre' in Chard for each session, comprising a studio, a quiet space, the main hall, the outside space, several storerooms. HEC also has use of the kitchen. There is parking space outside and level access for disabled participants. Rent is covered from annual membership subs and session fees.

[http://www.somersetyouth.co.uk/club/chard\\_young\\_peoples\\_centre/8](http://www.somersetyouth.co.uk/club/chard_young_peoples_centre/8)

On a practical level, there is a jobs rota drawn up at the beginning of each session, including outdoor supervision of free play sessions and organised sport activities. Different parents volunteer to share skills, for example music, languages, science, drama. The children have devised their own acceptable behaviour policy which is pinned on the wall.

Recently, through a good working relationship HEC built up with Somerset, the LA offered a specific HE grant to buy equipment and resources for the centre to "support as many home educating families in Somerset as possible".

The Management Committee of HEC wished EO to recap several points which have previously been made to the Review team, namely that the LA grant supported the provision which HEC had already developed and also that HEC co-wrote the contract for the grant with the Somerset EHE team.

The Management Committee believes this demonstrates that Somerset LA is supporting home educators in the way the home educators actually want. The Committee also feels it highlights the willingness of the LA to work co-operatively with home educators.

**Sport**

HEC negotiated use of a field, belonging to the neighbouring rugby club for sports use. HEC obtained a specific sports funding from 'the Healthy Living Pooled Fund' to purchase sports equipment, hire sports coaches and train parents in order to be able to continue providing sport in the future.

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=34730> for more information about Somerset's Healthy Living Pooled Fund.

HEC says “this means that the children will be able to experience many different sporting activities led by qualified coaches. It also gives any of our adults, who wish to participate, a chance to work alongside the coaches, so that we will be able to continue to offer a variety of sports to the children in the future.”

## **Home educators and Somerset LA**

In Somerset, they talk of home educators “being registered with the authority” or “being on the register.” This does not simply mean that home educators are known to the LA. There is an additional level of voluntary registration whereby collective funding is obtained by the LA in order to support the group of home educated children and young people in “Alternative Provision.” The collective funding is used not only to offer resources and support to individual families on the register but also to benefit home educating families in general, for example with the grant to the Home Education Centre, which is located in Somerset but has members from outside the county.

Somerset LA website says:

*“Last year the Local Authority accessed some funding which enabled us to develop our role in respect of home educating families. Over the year the Local Authority offered a number of activities and resources for children and young people on the home educating register. The activities included literacy and numeracy workshops, anti-racist drama workshops, storytelling workshops and a residential experience at Kilve Activity Centre in the Quantocks. The two advisers working with home educating families also provided resources such as check sheets, topic worksheets, mind maps, information from the Basic Skills Agency, Connexions and Anne Frank DVDs. <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/learning/eds/electivehomeeducation/>*

The following is taken from Somerset Council website which asks home educating families to consider registering in order that the LA can access funding.

“The LA has worked with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to find ways of accessing funding to support home educating families. We understand that if we register children and young people who are home educated as being members of an 'Alternative Provision' we will be able to get some funding.

Agreeing to your child being on this additional register does not mean they will be on a school roll or have to attend school. It does mean the Local Authority has to report anonymously on the group as a whole to DCSF.”

[http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do\\_download.asp?did=23452](http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do_download.asp?did=23452)  
non compulsory registration form ( so that the LA can access funding for EHE )

[http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do\\_download.asp?did=23777](http://www.six.somerset.gov.uk/equalities/do_download.asp?did=23777)  
Link to report of residential for EHE children and young people 2007

The week after the trip to HEC, David Taylor, Somerset's Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Directorate was due to visit Chard in mid May.

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/childrenservices/>

### **Access to exams for home educated young people in Somerset**

HEC has been working hard to establish links with local colleges in the area and has been supported at meetings by Somerset LA who are looking to fund exams for home educated young people under 16 on the Somerset register. Richard Huish College in Taunton has proved favourably disposed towards home education and HEC has just finalised a series of exam options to be made available to home educated children in neighbouring Devon and Dorset as well as Somerset.

HEC has undertaken to research the number of young people wishing to sit exams in the summer of 2010.

Issues raised with the college include: access to exams for under 16s; cost of exam board fees; cost of invigilation; additional needs/Access Arrangements costs; additional needs assessments; non-standard entry (ie entry to Level 3 or A Level equivalent courses without GCSEs) ; authentication of coursework; assessment for Science practicals; the new system of controlled assessments; IGCSEs as increasingly likely option because of problems with GCSE controlled assessments for private candidates.

<http://www.freedomforchildrentogrow.org/qca.htm> for more information about the problem with controlled assessment.

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/538/29.%20Access%20Arrangements%20Booklet.pdf> for more information about Access Arrangements with regard to candidates having disabilities or special needs.

### **Contacts**

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Contact form on the HEC website.

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