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Support in New Guidance

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Local authorities do not receive any funding for home educated children but the new draft home education guidance (England) recommends that LAs “*set aside the resources necessary*” because “*effective implementation in conjunction with work in related areas such as education welfare, CME and admissions, can reduce spend in the longer term.*” [Draft guidance paragraph 4.9]

The new guidance is not ready to be used. It is still at the draft stage. The consultation closed 18.1.24. The current guidance remains in force until such time as a final new version is published. The current guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

5 Potential Support Options

In the proposed new guidance support is to be left entirely up to local authorities to decide as part of their local process. **Nothing in the proposed new guidance is a must-do.** Annual monitoring is one of the **potential** support options. The 5 **potential** support recommendations in the consultation document are: **1/** written information; **2/** explanation of local process; **3/** voluntary registration scheme; **4/** annual check; **5/** positive relationships.

1. Written information on elective home education that is accessible, clear and accurate [draft guidance 10.18]
2. Explanation of local process (because it's up to LAs to decide what they will ask from families and what they will do if they don't think parents are co-operating sufficiently with the process) [draft guidance 3.8 + 4.7 + 4.8 + 4.9]
3. Voluntary local registration scheme (not clear about the “*support*” element here; if there had been any funding attached it might have been presented as a premium membership where parents would be tempted to sign up in order to get benefits, but here it mostly seems to be about LAs having a better overview of wider home education trends and patterns) [draft guidance 4.9 + 5.2]
4. Annual check. LAs checking in with (or checking up on) families once a year. It is not clear whether this is touching base, making sure any information held is up to date, asking if the child is still home educated and whether parents need any help or advice etc OR whether it is an annual monitoring inspection with a fresh assessment of suitability requiring detailed information on literacy and numeracy progress; draft 4.9 says “*so the authority may reasonably inform itself of the current suitability of the education provided*” which again leaves it entirely up to LAs to decide what they will ask of families year on year, as per the local process point above
5. Positive relationships with the local home education community (there is a specific consultation question about whether the guidance encourages positive relations)

Additional Support

The draft guidance has examples of “*additional support*” which local authorities apparently “*may be able to offer*”. These can be found on pages 44-45 of the draft guidance. It is accepted that “*the level and type of support will vary*” “*depending on their resources*” which is another way of saying postcode lottery except that lotteries have winners.

Parents have to make “*requests*” for support which will be considered “*on a case-by-case basis*” so it is entirely possible that parents might ask for help finding an exam centre only to discover that this is not included on the LA “*additional support*” menu.

Current Guidance

Guidance

The current version of home education guidance for local authorities in England was published in April 2019. The emphasis is on ensuring LAs are fully aware of existing powers and duties. The Home Education Guidance does not introduce any new powers or duties for local authorities to monitor the suitability of home education nor any ...

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