

Home Education + SEN Survey Autumn 2015

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I'm trying to find out more about how local authorities in England deal with electively home educated [EHE] children who have special educational needs, in particular where there is a statement of SEN in place or one of the new Education Health and Care Plans [EHCPs].

Elective home education is where parents take responsibility for the child's education themselves, and either don't enrol their child at school or ask the school to take their child's name off the school roll.

The web address for this file is

<http://edyourself.org/senehesurvey2015.pdf>

It contains a preview of the questions in an online survey which you can find here <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SENandhomeed2015>

Introduction

In 2012 the then head of SEN in Birmingham told the All Party Parliamentary Group for Home Education that the most common drivers for home education were: parental choice; dissatisfaction with special provision or preference for specific specialist interventions not currently available through the local offer; specific anxiety/phobias/mental health issues that impact secondary transition; waiting on tribunal outcomes; and planned re-integration following disruption as a consequence of a crisis.

He predicted that with the rise in numbers and pressure on provision and significant rise in specific areas of need more children would effectively become home educated through "crisis", and suggested that home educated children would need specific additional support to navigate in and out of provision. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his view was that relationships between home educating parents and local authorities was "often challenging."

The law on special educational needs changed in September 2014 although councils have up to 2018 to transfer existing statements over to the new plans. The system is now supposed to be less bureaucratic, putting families at the heart of the process. I would like to get an idea of how the current SEN system works for home educating families, and whether home educators have noticed any difference since the law changed.

I have recently asked all local authorities in England for copies of the letters they send to parents of children with special needs at various points such as taking a child out of school, reviewing the statement, and changing to the new EHCPs. Where I find user-friendly letters I will ask if they can be shared (some councils already put template letters on their Local Offer web pages)

This questionnaire is aimed at parents. Your answers will be kept confidential, and I'm not asking

for your name or the age of your child/children. The default is that your local authority is not identified. However, if you would like to share the name of your council, there is an option for you to do that at the end.

When I write about what parents are saying, I will be looking to highlight any recurring themes. I have found that using people's own words is a very effective way to get a message across and I may want to take a short direct quote from your response to illustrate a point. If you would rather I didn't quote you directly, please answer No to the question at the end.

1

Which best describes your child

They have a statement of SEN

They have an Education Health and Care Plan

They don't have a statement or an EHCP

They are going through the assessment process for a new EHCP

They are in the middle of transfer from statement to EHCP

Comment

2

Which best describes your situation:

Child has never been to school

Home educating for 2+ years

Home educating for less than 2 years

Home educated in the past

Considering home education

Other

Comment

3

Which best describes your situation:

Child previously on roll at a special school

Child previously on roll at a mainstream school

Child has never been to school

Other

Comment

4

If you have taken a child out of school to home educate them, which of the following factors applied:

You liked what you heard about home education

Child not making progress at school

Child unhappy at school

Child too anxious to attend school

Child being bullied

Child being excluded (temporarily or permanently)

No suitable school in area

Disagreement over allocated school place

Someone suggested/recommended home education

Other

Comment

5

Was it straightforward taking your child with a statement/Education Health Care Plan out of school to home educate?

Yes

No

comment

6

Did you know what to expect from the council when you started to home educate a child with a statement/Education Health Care Plan?

Yes

No

Comment

7

Do you feel that your local authority has a good system for dealing with home educators where children have a statement/EHCP?

Yes

No

Comment

8

When was your child's statement last amended? (Or how long ago is the date on your child's statement?)

Less than a year ago

Between 1 and 2 years ago

Between 2 and 5 years ago

Other

Not applicable

Comment

9

Which best describes your experience as a home educator with the council SEN department

It's fine

The people are nice but the forms they have to use aren't home-ed friendly at all

I find it stressful

No experience yet

Other

Comment

10

Do you have contact with the council's home education department

Yes

No, we only deal with the special needs department

We never hear from anyone at the council

Comment

11

Does your child get any of the support detailed in the statement?

Yes

No

Not applicable

Comment

12

Which best describes your experience of the annual statement review

It's a good chance to review what has happened during the year and to look ahead

It feels like a box-ticking exercise

It feels like an inspection of our home education

The statement hasn't been reviewed since we started home educating

Not applicable

Other

Comment

13

If your child currently has a statement do you have any idea when they will transfer to a new Education Health and Care Plan?

Yes

No

Not really

Not applicable

Comment

14

How do you think the EHCP transfer process works in your authority?

I think they will want to do it all at the statement review meeting and convert the statement into a new Plan soon after

They'll need to look at a lot of other areas now so I imagine it could take quite a while

I don't really know what to expect

Other

Comment

15

Are you hoping for more support with an EHCP than with a statement?

Yes

No

Other

Comment

16

If your child now has an Education Health and Care Plan was this

Converted from a non-statutory EHCP in a "Pathfinder" authority after the law changed in September 2014

A new EHCP from scratch (not converted from a statement)

From an existing statement converted at a "transfer review"

Not applicable

Comment

17

Do you see any benefit in your child having a statement/EHCP when they are home educated?

Yes

No

Not right now, but they might need it later

Not applicable
Other
Comment

18
Are there any disadvantages in your child having a statement/EHCP when they are home educated?
No
Yes
Not applicable
Comment

19
If the statement/EHCP was ceased now, do you think it would be straightforward to get an EHCP later
Yes
No
Not thought about it
Comment

20
Given a choice would you want the statement/EHCP to be ceased
Yes
No
It's complicated
Not applicable
Comment

21
Did your council ever suggest ceasing the statement/halting the Education Health and Care Plan process and if so, what reason did they give
Yes
No
Not applicable
Comment

22
Which best describes how you feel about your child going into school/college at some point
Yes, we have somewhere in mind and we are working to put the right support in place
I can't see how they would be able to cope
No, we will stick with home education
Other
Comment

23
Do you think your child could manage in school/college/6th form without an Education Health and Care Plan?
Yes
No
Not thought about it
Comment

24

If your child has a statement or an Education Health and Care Plan and you are currently considering home educating, which of the following factors apply

You like what you have heard about home education

Child not making progress at school

Child unhappy at school

Child being bullied

Child being excluded for "behaviour"

Child refusing to go to school because of anxiety

No suitable school in area

Disagreement over allocated school place

Someone has suggested home education

Not applicable

Other

Comment

25

Have you ever been to tribunal for SEN provision?

Yes

No

Comment

26

Are you happy for anything you have said in this questionnaire to be quoted in a write-up of this survey (with any identifying details removed) ?

Yes

No

Comment

27

The default for this questionnaire is that your local authority is not identified. However, if you would like to share the name of your council, please enter it in the box below. The box can also be used for any additional comments.

Comment