



The home education charity
Different and Equal

Home Education Trends: Changing Cohorts



Wendy Charles-Warner

March 2024

Home Education Trends: Changing Cohorts

Education Otherwise's 'trends' series of reports maps numbers of home educating children and the reasons why parents across England and Wales choose to home educate their children; the 2024 issue separates England and Wales. This issue is for England.

Home educating families are changing and those changes are reflected primarily in those choosing to home educate in the last two years.

Media reporting has again highlighted rising numbers but, increasingly, we are seeing recognition of the fact that those rises are driven by parents 'voting with their feet' to remove their children from schools which they consider do not meet their children's needs. These parents are home educating but do not 'elect' to do so.

Ministers, members of both houses and public bodies still continue to propound the narrative of rising numbers of home educated children as a concern and promises of mandatory registration still continue to be made. However, good sense can prevail and a recent vote in the House of Commons found a Labour Bill to introduce a register for children not in school defeated soundly¹.

Previously noted increased awareness², on the part of Government and some public bodies, of the need to address widening divides between home educating families and local authorities continues. We are now seeing signs of improving relationships in many regions.

This year's report brings some signs of hope, tempered by worrying indications of increasing failures within the school system.



Chair, Education Otherwise

7th March 2024

¹ Hansard (2024) 'Children Not in School: National Register and Support'. Volume 744: debated on Tuesday 23 January 2024. [Online] Available from: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-01-23/debates/BB759A20-57E1-4C7D-A1C4-97FE7D824A5A/ChildrenNotInSchoolNationalRegisterAndSupport>

² Charles-Warner, W (2020) 'Home Education Trends: The Covid Effect'. Education Otherwise [Online] available from: <https://www.educationotherwise.org/category/research/>

Executive summary

Surveys of all 153 local authorities, together with surveys of home educating families reveal worrying trends as home education cohorts change.

- On school census day in October 2023 there were 94,190 home educated children, a reduction of 576 from April 2023 and a rise of 10,029 from October 2022.
- The average rise in numbers of children across all local authorities in England from 2022 to 2023 was 17% with a median rise of 15%.
- Parents coming new to home education in 2023 split effectively into two clear groups, with 54% citing the reason as their child's needs being unmet in school. These parents do not 'elect' to home educate but feel forced to do so.
- In 37% of cases, parents cite their children's mental health as their reason for deciding to home educate. Children's and adolescent Mental Health Services are overwhelmed and parents are left having to vote with their feet in order to educate their children.
- Parents choose home education because they believe that it is better than school in 13% of cases, 24% are generally dissatisfied with the school system and 9% consider the school curriculum to be neither suitable nor relevant.

Tackling failures within the school system to give parents real choice will lead to fewer parents choosing to home educate as those 'reluctant' to do so will elect for school. This could, in turn, lead to more positive relationships between parents and local authorities as mutual trust and mutual respect develops.

There are some seeds of change in the oft peddled narrative of home education as a cause for concern, with the Children's Commissioner 2024 report and public statements by Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for Education, being particularly welcomed by families and organisations alike.

The majority of parents feel neutral about relationships between local authorities and home educating families, but those relationships are, in many cases, improving.

It is a rare parent who does not want the very best for their child and, for thousands of children, home education is the very best education available. However, for those children whose parents want them to receive a good quality education in school, feeling forced to home educate is a serious concern in urgent need of addressing.

The background

Home education has always been and remains a legal choice for parents in England and Wales, a choice which is of equal legal status to school education.

The Education Act 1996 s7

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

Numbers of home educated children have risen steadily over at least the last forty years and successive proposals have been made in recent years to introduce registration and monitoring of those children, purportedly on the basis that they are at safeguarding risk. These calls for close oversight previously made the suggestion that these children are 'invisible', or 'unseen', however, in the last year there has been more emphasis by supporters of monitoring on categorising home educated children as Children Missing Education (CME).

In 2024, an opposition motion to seek to ensure that the Commons considered their Children Not in School (National Register and Support) Bill was defeated³. In 2024 the opposition sought unsuccessfully to introduce their Children Not in School (National Register and Support) Bill. Damian Hinds MP, Minister of State for education, won many home educators' hearts when he challenged the conflation of home education with CME⁴, by stating that "*Labour's motion contained a conflation between the issue of absence and home education*" and that "*If Labour believes the two are the same then they have failed to grasp this issue.*"

Home educating families nonetheless continue to experience media reporting of and public body comments on home education as 'othering', which leads to stigmatisation and feelings of inequity. Despite this perception, their sense of professional 'gaslighting' and institutional confirmation bias appears to be turning a corner with, not only Damian Hinds MP challenging conflation of home education with CME, but

³ Hansard (2024) 'Children Not in School: National Register and Support'. Volume 744: debated on Tuesday 23 January 2024. [Online] Available from: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-01-23/debates/BB759A20-57E1-4C7D-A1C4-97FE7D824A5A/ChildrenNotInSchoolNationalRegisterAndSupport>

⁴ Damian Hinds MP cited in Wheeler, R (2024) 'Government rejects Labour bid to create register for children absent from school'. The Standard [Online] Available from: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/commons-support-government-labour-damian-hinds-b1134344.html>



also a balanced and objective report 'Lost in Transition', having been recently published by the Children's Commissioner for England⁵. This report is a welcome sea change from earlier reports from the Children's Commissioner⁶ which inappropriately characterised rises in numbers of home educated children as a '*growing problem*'.

Currently, Flick Drummond MP has tabled a private members Bill aimed at placing a legal duty on local authorities to maintain a register of children not in school. Worryingly, when proposing her Bill in 2023 Ms Drummond said:

*"There could be up to 81,000 children in England who are being home schooled, but no one knows how they are being educated. Now, many of those, of course, will be well-educated because their parents are doing a brilliant job, but there are an awful lot of children that aren't and the local authorities at the moment have no right to actually go in and see how they are being educated, which is extraordinary"*⁷.

Parents are concerned that whilst the previous negative narrative appears to be experiencing an encouraging reversal, there remains an underlying intention to introduce not only mandatory registration, but also to undermine the primacy of parents by introduction of mandatory meetings between local authority staff and home educated children.

Against this background, this report examines changing numbers and highlights changing cohorts of home educated children leading to changing needs.

Method

This report examines trends in numbers of home educating families in England. Data on numbers of home educated children was obtained by sending freedom of information requests to each of the 153 local authorities in England. Each request was followed up in order to obtain a 100% response rate. The rationale for this, is that the wide range of local authority population sizes results in a wide range of numbers of home educating children across local authorities, making extrapolation from a sample population unreliable and misleading. All outliers were rechecked to ensure accuracy.

⁵ Children's Commissioner for England (2024) 'Lost in Transition' [Online] available from: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/lost-in-transition/>

⁶ Children's Commissioner for England (2019) Skipping School: Invisible Children. [Online] Available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/skipping-school-invisible-children/>

⁷ Drummond, F (2023) Cited in Bet, M. 'MP calls for register of home-schooled children in new Bill amid safety concerns' [Online] Available from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/bill-education-select-committee-schools-uk-parliament-commons-b2339460.html>

In addition, a survey of parents whose children had newly started home education during 2023 was undertaken in January and February 2024. A total of 473 parents responded, representing approximately 790 children⁸. This survey sought parents' reasons for deciding to home educate their children.

A third survey was undertaken in early 2024 to ask parents' views of whether their local authority practice has changed in the last year. A total of 1,181 complete surveys were received of which 37 were spoiled, leaving 1,144 valid responses.

Numbers of home educated children

This report, in common with previous reports in the series, relies on data which is accurate, informative and complete. Public bodies continue to rely on figures which are extrapolated from partial data, leading to lack of accuracy. In previous years these figures have been overstated but, unusually, this year's report by the Department for Education (DfE)⁹ understates the numbers at 92,000. As at census day October 2023 there were 94,190 home educated children, a reduction of 576 from April 2023 and a rise of 10,029 from October 2022.

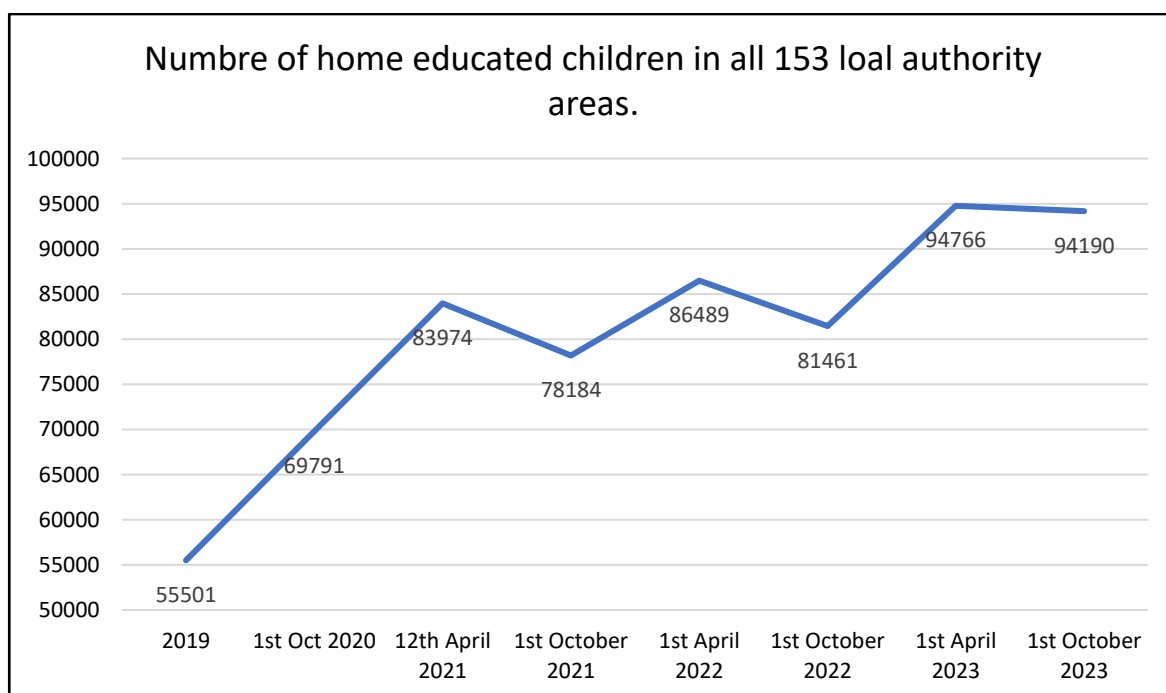


Figure 1: Number of home educated children in all 153 local authority areas.

⁸ This estimate is taken from previous surveys which elicited an average of parent numbers for home educated children as 60% of the number of children.

⁹ DfE (2024) 'Elective home education' [Online] Available from: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/elective-home-education>

Publication of DfE figures led to the now expected media frenzy of hyperbole with convenient past dates chosen to support announcements such as ‘*Number of home-schooled children nearly doubles*’¹⁰. In practice, the average rise in numbers of children across all local authorities in England from October 2022 to October 2023 was 17% with a median rise of 15%. Of course, when reading behind the headlines it becomes clear that the ‘doubling’ is actually over a 4 year period since 2019. These headlines appear to be designed to give the impression of exponential rises in numbers, which are of themselves problematic; a somewhat puzzling implication when home education is of equal legal status to school education.

Average rises in numbers across all local authorities in England on census days indicate a fluctuating pattern with 2019 appearing to be chosen as a reference date by the media in order to maintain a tired narrative of home education as a problem. The fact remains that there is no exponential growth but a rise which was steady when data was collected in our first reports¹¹ and which has fluctuated during and following Covid lockdown.

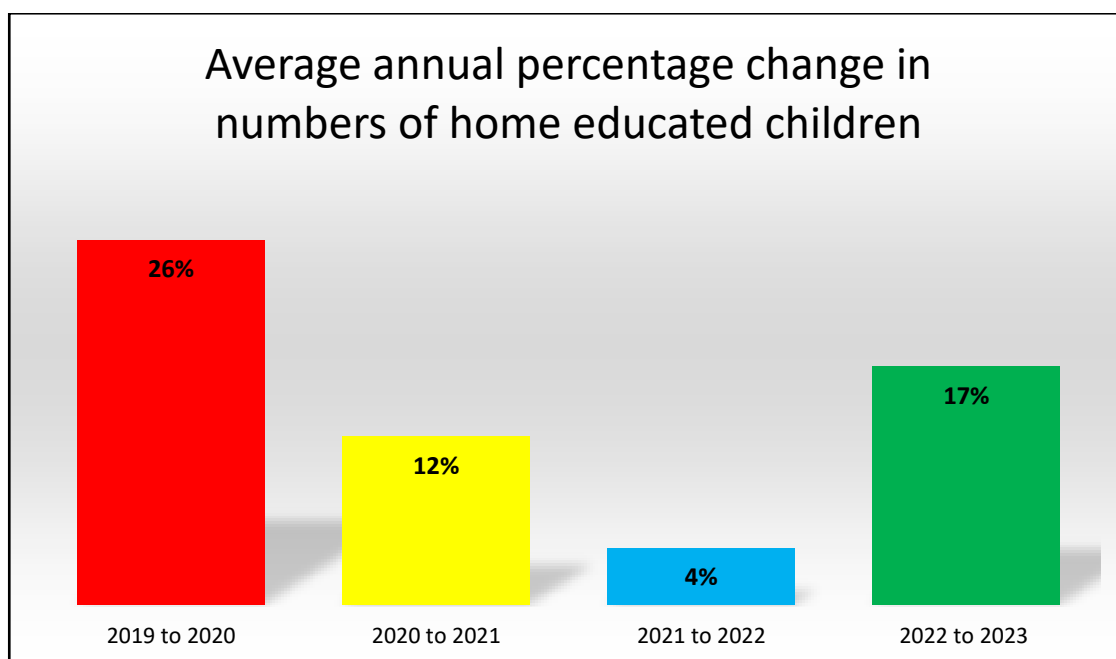


Figure 2: Average annual percentage change in numbers of home educated children.

¹⁰ Petrie, E. and Webber, A. (2024) ‘Number of home-schooled children nearly doubles’ BBC 3rd March 2024 [Online] Available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cpek23xl0po>

¹¹ Charles-Warner, W (2012) ‘How many home educated children are there’. Withdrawn from circulation as 100% of local authorities did not respond, the trend series relying on accuracy and full response.

Why parents decide to home educate their children

There are several factors leading to recent rises in numbers of home educated children, not least a *'Seismic shift in parental attitudes to school attendance'*¹² which has changed perceptions of Government campaigns such as *'Every day matters'* and *'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'*¹³. Researchers found that *'There has been a fundamental breakdown in the relationship between schools and parents across the socioeconomic spectrum'* and that children's mental health is compounding this issue. These findings support the experience of Education Otherwise, reflecting concerns reported by parents seeking advice from the charity.

Parents have lost trust in statements such as that by Education Secretary Gillian Keegan¹⁴, *'Our fantastic schools and teachers unlock children's imagination, potential and social skills which is why improving attendance is my number one priority'*. Which statement accompanied announcements of Government raising fines for children's absenteeism, notwithstanding recommendations that *'Fines are deeply unpopular with parents across the social spectrum. The efficacy and implementation of fines should be reviewed and potentially abolished.'*¹⁵

Ms Keegan goes on to state that *'Pupils' performance is ranked as some of the best globally – so it has never been more valuable to be in school.'* Whereas PISA tables¹⁶ belie this statement and demonstrate that in the United Kingdom:

'Average scores returned, in mathematics and reading, close to their pre-2018 level, reverting all gains observed in the previous cycle. In science, the most recent PISA results are close to the results observed in 2018, but below those of any previous assessment – confirming a decade-long decline that began around 2012'.

¹² Burtonshaw, S. and Dorrell E (2023) 'Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis.' Public First [Online] Available from: <https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/public-first-research-finds-parental-support-for-fulltime-schooling-has-collapsed.html>

¹³ DfE (2024) 'Major national drive to improve school attendance' [Online] Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-national-drive-to-improve-school-attendance>

¹⁴ Khan, U. (2024) 'The New Costly Reason Why Parents Might Want To Think Twice About Taking Kids Out Of School For Holidays' Huff post. [Online] Available from: https://uk.news.yahoo.com/costly-reason-why-parents-might-103240215.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly9sLmZhY2Vib29rLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQA-AAIrd9CBhCgsp3bplbyltYqZwKOP5HDCDWiHJJAWW5iOz6cEc_kPHCZ_jwnnIm-eF5LYCakHADkksedH7mKFZ3UCJbwPej_sA14fKyh8pqeOi0jsaQIGt7zY5ABQVDvPZ9euN_3O7d8llg56rBzEbsXbC9YM84LSegQhE1lLoLEkB

¹⁵ Burtonshaw, S. and Dorrell E (2023) 'Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis.' Public First [Online] Available from: <https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/public-first-research-finds-parental-support-for-fulltime-schooling-has-collapsed.html>

¹⁶ OECD (2023) 'PISA 2022 Results: Factsheets, United Kingdom. [Online] Available from: <https://www.oecd.org/publication/pisa-2022-results/country-notes/united-kingdom-9c15db47/#chapter-d1e11>

Figure 1. Trends in performance in mathematics, reading and science

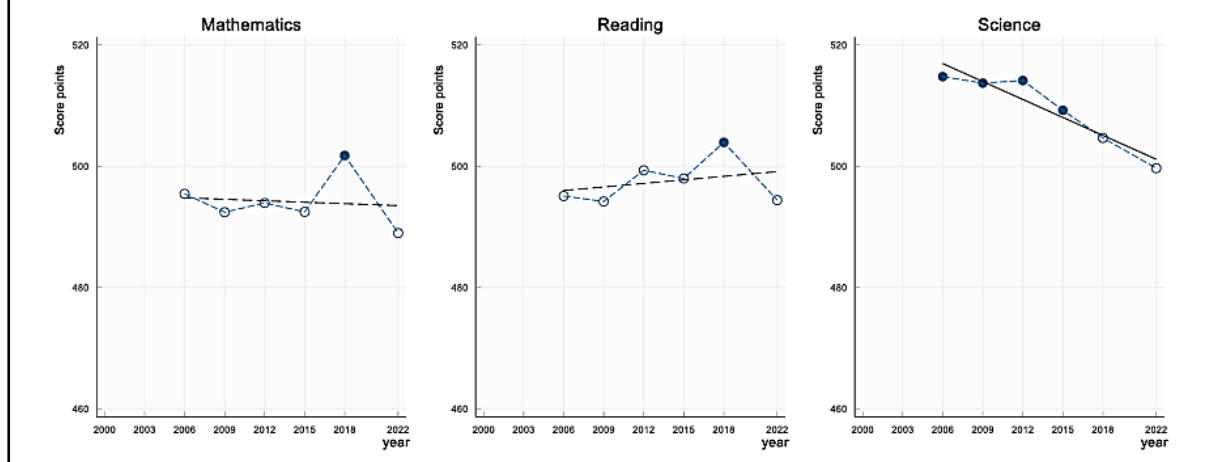


Figure 3: United Kingdom school performance. Source: OECD, PISA 2022 Database, Tables I.B1.5.4, I.B1.5.5 and I.B1.5.6.

Parents also report finding school attendance systems to be invasive and draconian, adding to rising dissatisfaction. Parents who have changed their attitude to school attendance have taken one step away from reliance on schools to educate their children and toward considering home education as a viable option. Parents also felt that Covid lockdown enabled them to dip their toe in the water of home education and to experience improvements in their children’s welfare when they did so.

There is without doubt a mental health crisis amongst British children with the Children’s Society reporting that ‘*children’s happiness continues to decline. Now, five children in a classroom of 30 are likely to have a mental health problem*’¹⁷. Concerns are increasing over a ‘*devastating explosion of untreated severe mental ill health among children*’ and ‘*1.4 million were referred to child and adolescent mental health services (Camhs) for treatment of anxiety, depression, eating disorders and other psychological problems*’¹⁸ in 2022.

CAMHS is overwhelmed, leaving children untreated and suffering worsening mental health, until crisis occurs. In May 2023 the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) reported that ‘*Children awaiting consultant led treatment has reached an all-time high, with 403,955 children*’ on waiting lists for consultant led treatment and with ‘*17,991 of these children have been waiting for more than a year for essential treatment*’¹⁹.

¹⁷ The Children’s Society (2024) ‘Children’s mental health statistics’ [Online] available from:

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being/mental-health-statistics>

¹⁸ Gregory, A. (2024) ‘Children’s emergency mental health referrals in England soar by 53%’ Guardian [Online]

Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/feb/07/childrens-emergency-mental-health-referrals-in-england-soar-by-53>

¹⁹ RCPCH (2023) ‘Record high: Over 400,000 children waiting for treatment amidst child health crisis’ [Online]

Available from: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/record-high-over-400000-children-waiting-treatment-amidst-child-health-crisis>

Parents often blame schools for failures in other areas of the system, particularly CAMHS, however, when the DfE recently rejected calls from MPs for a major cross government review of children’s mental health needs, school leaders ‘Warned that vulnerable children were being let down because of delays in being able to access services’²⁰ and called for urgent review of the system.

Our survey of 473 parents coming new to home education in the year up to January 2024, supports these findings with a previously unprecedented change in the cohort, reflecting rising dissatisfaction with the school system. In previous Trends reports²¹, the range of reasons given by parents for starting to home educate their child has been wide ranging:

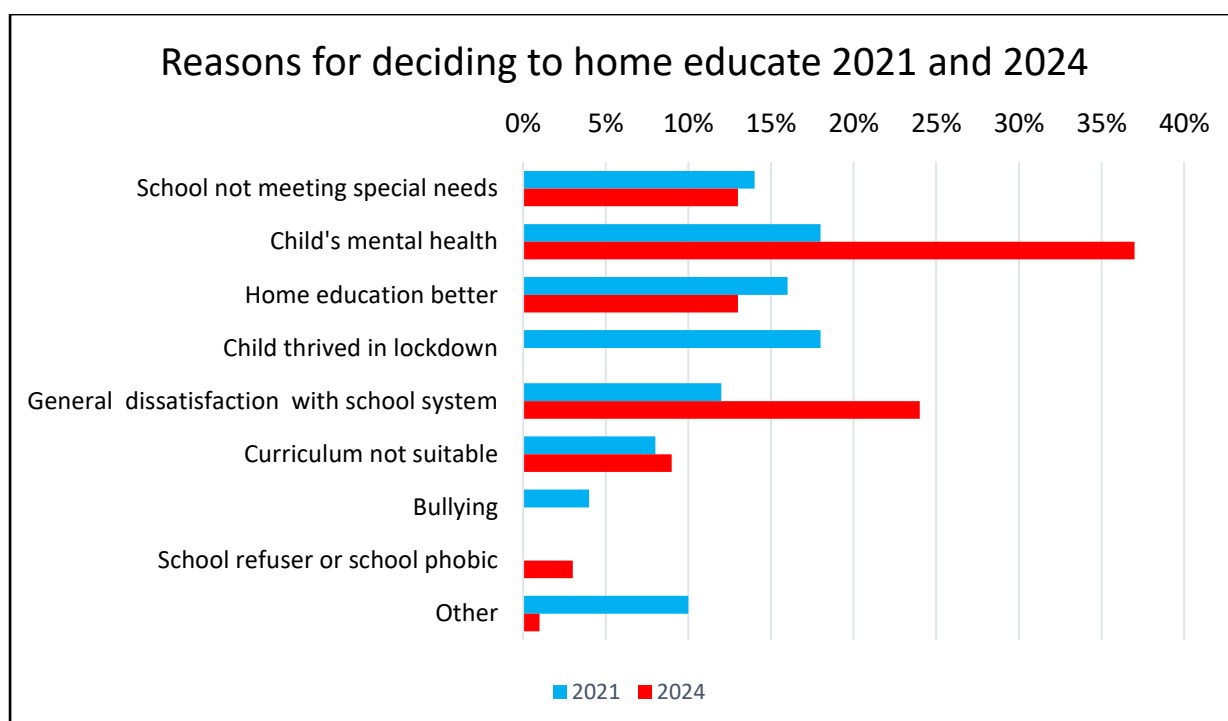


Figure 4: Reasons for deciding to home educate children 2021 and 2024.

Respondents to the current survey gave a narrower range of reasons than in previous surveys with two distinct groups being apparent. In 2021, 14% of parents cited schools not meeting their child’s special needs as their primary reason for deciding to home educate and 18% cited their child’s mental health, a total of 32% citing unmet needs as their primary reason. In 2024, 54% of parents cited schools not meeting their child’s needs as their primary reason for deciding to home educate their child, of which 13%

²⁰ Roberts, J. (2023) ‘Schools call for Camhs waiting list targets’ in TES [Online] Available from: <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/schools-call-camhs-waiting-list-targets#:~:text=A%20group%20of%20prominent%20state,and%20adolescent%20mental%20health%20services.>

²¹ Charles-Warner, W (2020) ‘Home Education Trends: The Covid Effect’. Education Otherwise [Online] available from: <https://www.educationotherwise.org/category/research/>

cited unmet special needs and 37% cited their child's mental health. Parents cited their child's school phobia in 3.2% of cases and 1% cited their child's physical health needs not being supported in school as their primary reason for home educating their child.

The second group of respondents were those who chose home education as more of a lifestyle choice, including 13% who stated that home education is better than school, down from 16% in 2021. In 24% of cases the parent cited general dissatisfaction with the school system as their primary reason, up from 12% in 2021 and 9% cited the school curriculum being neither suitable nor relevant, up from 8% in 2021.

Historically, lifestyle choice has been the primary driver for home education. Now, overall, we have seen a worrying increase in parents coming to home education who do not want to make that choice, but who feel that the school system is failing their child. Large increases in parents who are generally dissatisfied with the school system may, to a degree, reflect changing social attitudes to school. However, stark doubling of parents citing schools as not meeting their child's mental health needs, should ring very loud alarm bells to all stakeholders.

The evidence from our survey suggests that, as a society, we are failing our most vulnerable children because they cannot access good quality suitable education in schools. We cannot attribute blame in this respect to teachers, as they are no less concerned about rising mental health issues being unaddressed than parents are, but those teachers are at the coal face, watching children being failed and unable to address that failure.

Home education should never be a last resort and parents should be able to have genuine choice of which form of education they want for their child. Parents should not be faced with having to home educate because failing mental health and school systems have forced that 'choice' on them. These are parents prioritising their child's best interest whilst often giving up income and all that entails, making it no wonder that there is a '*Fundamental breakdown in the relationship between schools and parents across the socioeconomic spectrum*'²². Rising numbers of home educated children is a symptom of loss of trust in public bodies to protect and support our most vulnerable children and home education is bearing a burden of that situation.

²² Burtonshaw, S. and Dorrell E (2023) 'Listening to, and learning from, parents in the attendance crisis.' Public First [Online] Available from: <https://www.publicfirst.co.uk/public-first-research-finds-parental-support-for-fulltime-schooling-has-collapsed.html>

Changing cohorts changing relationships

Parents coming new to home education fuelled with resentment, frustration and dismay at failure of public services to meet their children's needs are not coming to their local authority's home education cohort as willing participants. That can fuel poor quality relationships between local authorities and home educating parents.

A third survey was undertaken in early 2024 to seek parents' views of whether their local authority practice had changed in the last year. A total of 1,181 complete surveys were received of which 37 were spoiled, leaving 1,144 valid responses.

Respondents were asked how they felt that their local authority practice had changed over the last year, if at all. Of those respondents, 62% felt that their local authority practice had not changed. Worryingly, 15% felt that their local authority practice had worsened or worsened greatly, however, 23% stated that their local authority practice had improved or improved greatly.

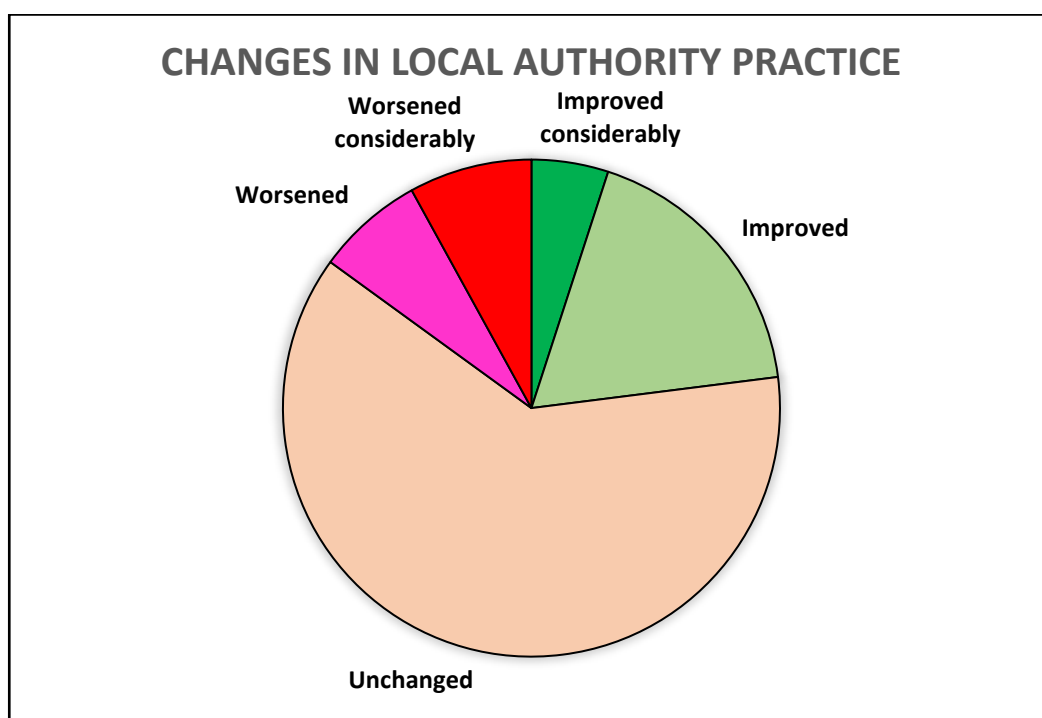


Figure 5: Parents' view of changes in overall local authority practice.

Amongst those local authorities reported as having practice which had greatly worsened, there was a clear correlation with them not having taken up the opportunity to take part in pro bono professional development (CPD) sessions offered by Education Otherwise. Only one local authority reported as having greatly worsened had done so and anecdotal reports suggest that this authority has recently had a change of staff including the loss of a highly respected service lead. Likewise,

only one of the local authorities reported as having greatly improved had not taken up the offered CPD. It is possible that those local authorities which only provide internal development for staff, proliferate practice which is negatively perceived by parents and that those which look outside their own organisation are more open to new ideas. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to investigate whether there is a causal relationship between take up of offered CPD and perceived practice changes.

Overall, 70% of respondents, when asked how they view their relationship with their local authority, stated that they were neutral. However, 18% were either positive or very positive about that relationship with 12% being negative or very negative. Many of the parents reporting negative relationships referred to having children with special needs, difficulties over Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) or children with mental health issues.

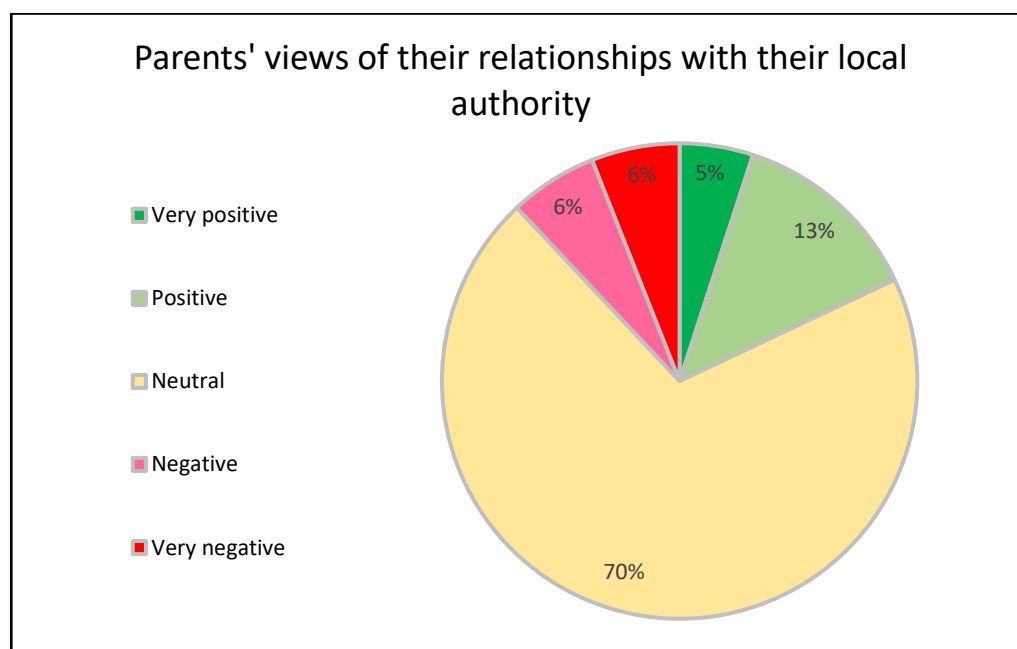


Figure 6: Parents' views of their relationship with their local authority.

'What should be a collaborative relationship between families and the LA to achieve the best outcome for the child, is, in my opinion them and us.' (EHCP parent)

'The first contact I had from the LA was them emailing me and telling me that they firmly believe school is the best place for all children.'

'There is no pressure from them, and as a home ed family we are treated with respect.'

'My opinion has improved as the community is more positive now.'

'She told me that a light touch involved having to meet and sharing my child's work.'

*'She gave me a time limit but didn't even reply to me for months.'
'XXXXXX are great and I could not commend them more on how amazing they are. They do not overstep and offer support as and when needed (if you choose to).'*

'Since my education officer changed, I'm feeling attacked from every level.'

'We have termly forums where staff and parents meet online or face to face. We feedback on their policy and written communication.'

'I provide my own reports and the LA have returned a complimentary and supportive reply.'

'They came to our house which suited us better as I wasn't looking forward to doing a report. Luckily everything went smoothly, the lady was very nice and supportive. She gave us loads of information, she didn't ask to see any work, she asked how it was going in general and if we needed any help with anything.'

'I have always had positive interactions with my LA. XXXX LA are good, they don't bully like others. They are respectful and offer help.'

'We are very happy with our LA. They lived up to their good reputation.'

'I have had nothing but positive dealings with my local authority. Group consensus in XXXXX FB groups is that of a positive attitude towards XXX EHE as a whole.'

'We chatted, this involved my finding out a bit about her and she about our child's education. What's not to like?'

'Changes have been seen due to local HE families, supported by EO, standing up to the unlawful demands of the LA and working with them to push for change. EO training was also integral to improvements.'

'Very respectful and communicated appropriately.'

'My LA is fab. We are extremely lucky on XXXXX to have (name). I've had some amazing support from (name) over the last year she really is a good egg.'

'Feels more professional. I have found the newly appointed representative very knowledgeable and pleasant. She gives positive feedback in a timely matter when I submitted a report. I chose to apply for an EHCP and the representative assisted in filling out the relevant paperwork which I feel was a huge relief for me personally.'

Some parents made direct reference to feeling unable to speak positively about their local authority in home education groups or fora, as they were fearful of criticism. Others referred to being influenced by local and Government policy:

'My opinion has probably been negatively affected by new government policy reviews. Also the new policy of reporting every contact with a home educating family by a health professional such as an optician, to the LA (even though we were already known to the LA) has eroded trust.'

Overall, there was a clear thread running through responses from parents who reported negatively about their local authority, of feeling battered by a system which had failed their child and then appears to be critical of their own measures put in place to protect them.

Anecdotal evidence raises a concern as Education Otherwise is becoming aware of a very small number of parents who, finding themselves unable to obtain provision under the Education Act 1996 s19²³ for their child, are removing them from the school roll in desperation with no real intention to home educate them. These parents are a tiny minority who see no other option but to exploit home education as a route to obtaining provision for their child. No parent should ever be in that position and parents should be made aware that home education does not operate as a short cut to such provision.

Conclusion

Numbers of home educated children have risen in the last year, but not at the rate suggested in some headlines. That rise in numbers is not, of itself, a concern. However, what is of concern is *why* so many parents are deciding to home educate their children. Findings make clear that this is not an active choice in 54% of cases, but a 'choice' made as a result of failings on the part of the school system. Teachers feel ill-equipped to deal with rises in mental health issues in children, whilst also dealing with large

²³ Education Act 1996 s19: 'Each local authority in England shall make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.'

numbers of children with special needs. CAMHS is overwhelmed and parents are left having to pick up the pieces of children's broken lives.

Children who are not supported adequately in school cannot learn and that support is crucial. Special needs provision and CAMHS are chronically underfunded in light of growing demand, which raises the question of why Government is still committed to a register of home educated children. Such a register would be costly and unwieldy to operate when such vital issues are crying out for resources. Put very simply, tackling failures within the school system to give parents real choice will lead to fewer parents choosing to home educate as those reluctant to do so will elect for school. This in turn leads to more positive relationships between parents and local authorities as mutual trust and mutual respect develops.

Parents currently continue to lack trust in public bodies in general, with some notable exceptions, as seeds of change are starting to appear in the oft peddled narrative of home education as a cause for concern. The Children's Commissioner 2024 report²⁴ and public statements by Damian Hinds MP²⁵, Minister of State for Education have been particularly welcomed by families and organisations alike.

The majority of parents feel neutral about relationships between local authorities and home educating families, but neutral can be a step toward positive and our findings suggest that the move is in that direction as those relationships are, in many cases, improving.

It is a rare parent who does not want the very best for their child and for thousands of children, home education is the very best education available. Home education is not a problem. However, what is a serious and growing problem is that parents who want their children to receive a good quality education in school, are feeling forced to home educate them in order to address failures within our school system.

Wendy Charles-Warner
March 2024

²⁴ Children's Commissioner for England (2024) 'Lost in Transition' [Online] available from: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/lost-in-transition/>

²⁵ Damian Hinds MP cited in Wheeler, R (2024) 'Government rejects Labour bid to create register for children absent from school'. The Standard [Online] Available from: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/commons-support-government-labour-damian-hinds-b1134344.html>