

AD Education Network: CME Group and University of Portsmouth – research with parents who electively home educate (EHE)

- Scope: the experiences of parents who home educate, and influences of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Aims:
 1. *To investigate why parents chose to home educate*
 2. *To examine parents' experiences of moving into EHE from school*
 3. *For parents whose children have recently returned to school after a period of EHE, to investigate their experiences of the transition back into formal education*

Key Findings:

1. Mental health problems were a driving factor in parents' decisions to home educate
 - *77% of parents reported concerns about their child's mental health as a reason for pursuing EHE (consistent with ADCS data)*
 - *Motivations for EHE largely not aligned with categories in official questionnaires; often complex*
 - *School dissatisfaction second biggest category (48%)*
 - *For some it felt a necessity for their child's wellbeing; for others it was a positive choice.*
2. The pandemic gave parents the opportunity to trial, and continue with, EHE – but some children will return to school in the future
 - *Lock-downs provided parents who had intentions to home educate the opportunity and impetus to begin and many now continue*
 - *Covid-19 was cited as a factor for 7% of respondents*
 - *Just over 10% had re-enrolled at school, others were considering this option for the future.*

AD Education Network: CME Group and University of Portsmouth – research with parents who electively home educate (EHE)



3. There is fairly wide variation in parents' perceptions of how helpful they found their LA during the start of their EHE journey, on balance they report that LAs are more helpful than schools
 - *Between 25% and 40% found their dealings with their LA positive;*
 - *50% of parents said that they found their child's school very unhelpful during the transition to EHE; parents were faced with negative judgement from the school*
 - *Parents stated schools need to better understand parents' perspectives; don't assume that the move to home education was a vendetta against the school*
 - *Parents wanted better communication regarding their child's current level of learning to facilitate a smooth transition; when transitioning children back into school many said that the schools were helpful.*
4. Attitudes held by some LAs and many schools towards parents who home educate should improve
 - *Many parents thought LAs needed to work on building transparent, supportive and non-judgemental relationships with the home educating parents to better support families.*
 - *Recognition of relative size of LA team & capacity to support varies depending where you live.*
- Where next?
 - *Feedback to local school leaders*
 - *Sharing protocols and processes across the South-east*
 - *Largely served to confirm current knowledge from LAs. Small response illustrates a big task to re-build trust with parents who EHE.*

Research sample information

- 8 LA areas provided links to parents on their databases. +/- 5000 invites sent; only 114 parents completed surveys.
- 13 parents took part in either a focus group or an interview