



Not Fine in School

*SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DIFFICULTIES:
PARENT SURVEY RESULTS
(Including a comparison with our 2018 survey results)*

March 2020

Not Fine In School

'Not Fine in School' (NFIS) was established in November 2017 by parents working in partnership to offer support and guidance to other parents and professionals. In addition, NFIS also works to raise awareness of school attendance difficulties.

Our support group was created in reaction to the growing number of children who are struggling to attend mainstream school, and the difficulties parents experience in finding understanding and support for their children. Whether their struggle is related to anxiety, trauma, unmet Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, physical illness, bullying or academic pressure, many children are experiencing increasing difficulties within education systems in the UK, and in other countries around the world.

Our Facebook parent support group now has nearly 12,000 members. A closed Facebook Professionals Group, Facebook public page and Twitter presence allow us to share stories and articles of interest with a wider audience.

Our website www.notfineinschool.co.uk comprises a growing bank of resources for both parents & schools, articles and members' personal stories.

The survey

This survey follows on from our 'snapshot' survey conducted in May 2018, created to evidence the current situation and the difficulties parents are experiencing.

The May 2018 survey received 1,661 responses in one week; this survey received 714 responses and was cut short by the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. We recognise that the situation in schools and SEND services and provision has altered significantly since March 2020, however it is still important that we raise awareness of the issues that exist in regard to school attendance difficulties.

This report provides details of the 2020 survey findings and compares it, wherever possible, to the 2018 survey. Some questions differ, and the current survey aims to provide more detail in specific areas. As before, we have included a large number of comments made by parents in the survey as they all have a valid voice that needs to be heard and the comments and descriptions illustrate the situation much more vividly than any other data source.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Onset: Both the 2020 and 2018 survey results show that difficulties usually start prior to secondary school (64% and 75% respectively)

Attendance: 23.2% (165) of children in the 2020 survey are enrolled in a school but not receiving any education, a slightly higher percentage than our 2018 survey which showed that 19.3% (320) children were not attending school at all.

Deregistration: The overarching reason for deregistering a child was to prioritise their mental health & wellbeing. However, it is notable that five high scoring reasons all relate to a lack of support/empathy from school and pressure to increase attendance.

Influences: 555 respondents (78%) cited an anxiety disorder as a definite influencer behind school attendance difficulties (another 67 suspected this). Sensory difficulties and social/friendship issues came second and third. Unrecognised & unsupported SEND remained a key issue (as per the 2018 survey) with 129 respondents whose child had an EHCP citing inadequate support as a definite reason. In both 2018 and 2020 surveys social media, gaming & computing were NOT cited as a key influencer.

SEND & Medical Conditions: There were 342 children with diagnoses of anxiety disorder (48%) with 53 children currently being assessed and another 200 respondents who suspect their child has an anxiety disorder. Autism comes a close second, with 378 diagnoses, 87 children being assessed and another 108 suspected of requiring a diagnosis. Sensory processing disorder was the third highest diagnosis reported, followed by hypermobility and asthma. There were a notable number of diagnoses of social/behavioural difficulties (170) and communication difficulties (175).

EHCPs: Although the number of successful EHCP has increased since 2018 and there are fewer respondents who are unaware of EHCPs, there are still an alarming percentage who are discouraged from applying by their school or CAMHS (18%). There remain too many instances of an EHCP taking more than the statutory 20 weeks to secure (70%); 80 respondents had waited over a year and 10 over three years. Sadly, in 65% of cases, the EHCP didn't help with attendance problems. [This is corroborated by inadequate support despite having an EHCP being a key influencer for non-attendance].

Interventions: Timetable adjustments, a nurture room and 'pass' to leave class were the key interventions tried at school, but none were overwhelmingly helpful. The only interventions where a significantly higher number of respondents claimed them to be helpful were home education and private counselling. Sadly a buddy system, CBT & school/NHS counselling were largely unhelpful. It also took far too long to receive alternative provision, even once agreed, with 66% of respondents waiting for more than 4 months, and 12% waiting for over two years. When alternative provision was denied, it was largely because school or LA were being obstructive, disputing a medical diagnosis or simply ignoring parents. An alarming number of respondents (146) claim their LA has ignored section19 duties.

Support: Once again, most support has come from social media support groups, friends and family members, with school, LA and CAMHS being largely unhelpful. GPs were largely helpful (426 respondents). Most information is derived from websites, with

SENDIAS proving helpful and offering phone support. Significant numbers of respondents had participated in SEND, legal, mental health or other health training.

Attendance registers: Only 19% of respondents said their child's absences were authorised, with 29% not authorised and 19% a mix. Worryingly, only 101 (15.3%) agreed with the coding, 218 (32.7%) said it was wrong but the school refused to change it and 50 said the school required additional medical evidence. 30.6% of respondents didn't know if the coding was accurate. 289 children are coded O ('other' unauthorised) with only 96 coded I (authorised illness). 141 respondents said their child's absence remained unauthorised despite medical evidence and it was clearly very difficult to get absences authorised. 24% had a diagnosis of school anxiety, 12% school refusal but 52% were given no attendance-related diagnosis. Diagnoses were made primarily by CAMHS.

Blame: As before, parenting is blamed in 63% of cases (55% in 2018). The child's attitude is also criticised (69% in 2020, 68% in 2018)

Penalties: The threat of fines appears to have increased, from 26% in 2018 to 36%, although actual fines are still low. The same is true of prosecutions. As before, 98% said this hadn't helped with attendance.

Social Services: Referrals to social services appear to have increased, from 25% to 38%, with 50 children being put on a Child In Need Plan and 12 children being put on a Child Protection Plan. 1 child was taken into care. In 78 cases social service found no concerns. Accusations of FII (Fabricated or Induced Illness) have risen from 18% in 2018 to 23% (154 respondents) in 2020. Only in 3 cases were parents found guilty, with 3 awaiting a verdict.

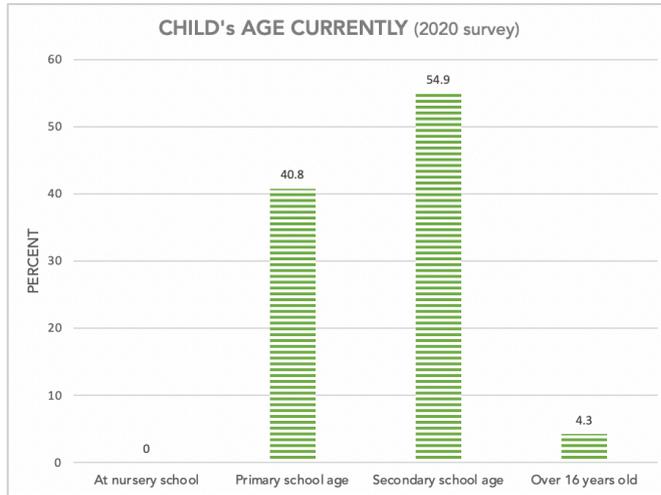
Forced attendance: It appears that the pressure to force attendance is unrelenting, although more parents are now refusing to do so (up from 21% in 2018 to 36% in 2020). Once again, the 2020 survey corroborated 2018 results, with 44% saying it hadn't helped (36% in 2018) and 53% claiming it made things much worse (59% in 2018). When asked if the current system supports these children, 579 or 81.5% of respondents felt it did not at all, and a further 96 (13.5%) thought it perhaps helped a little.

Family Life: The most significant effects of attendance difficulties are clearly on the child's wellbeing, family finances, relationships with a partner, employment and social life. Thankfully the effect on siblings' attendance is relatively low.

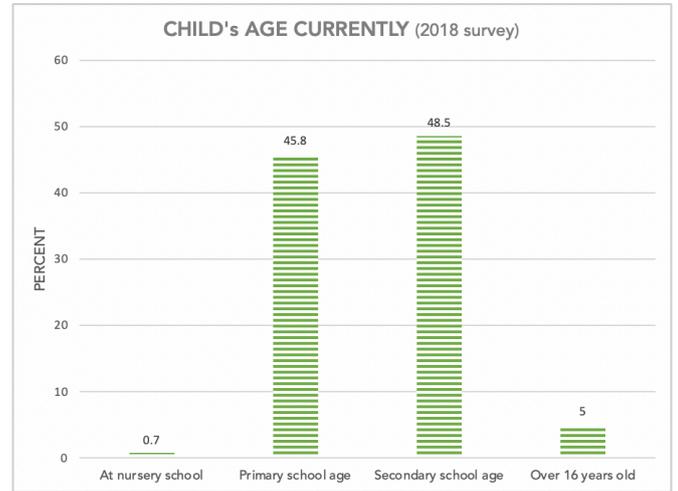
SURVEY RESULTS

Your Child

What is your child's age currently?



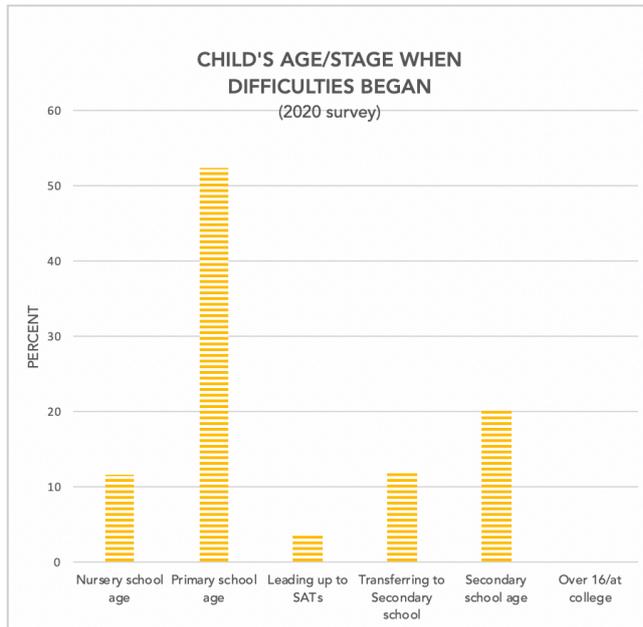
[714 responses]



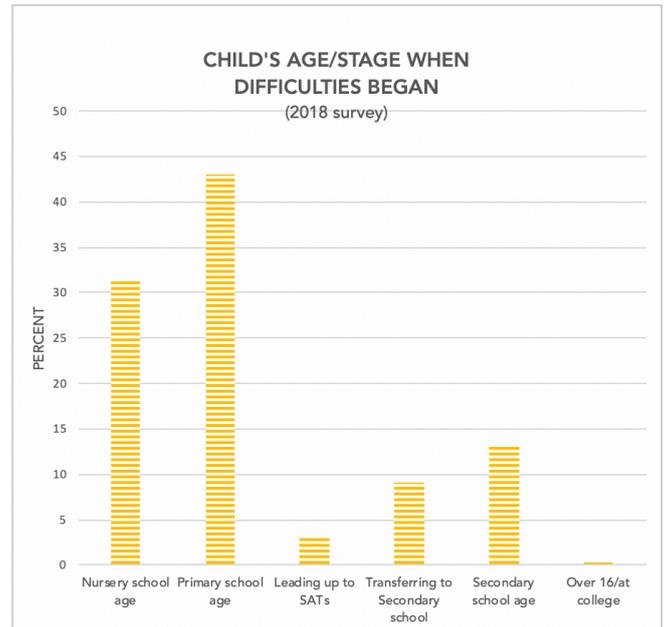
[1,661 responses]

In our 2020 survey a larger number of children were secondary school age.

When the difficulties began your child was:



[710 responses]



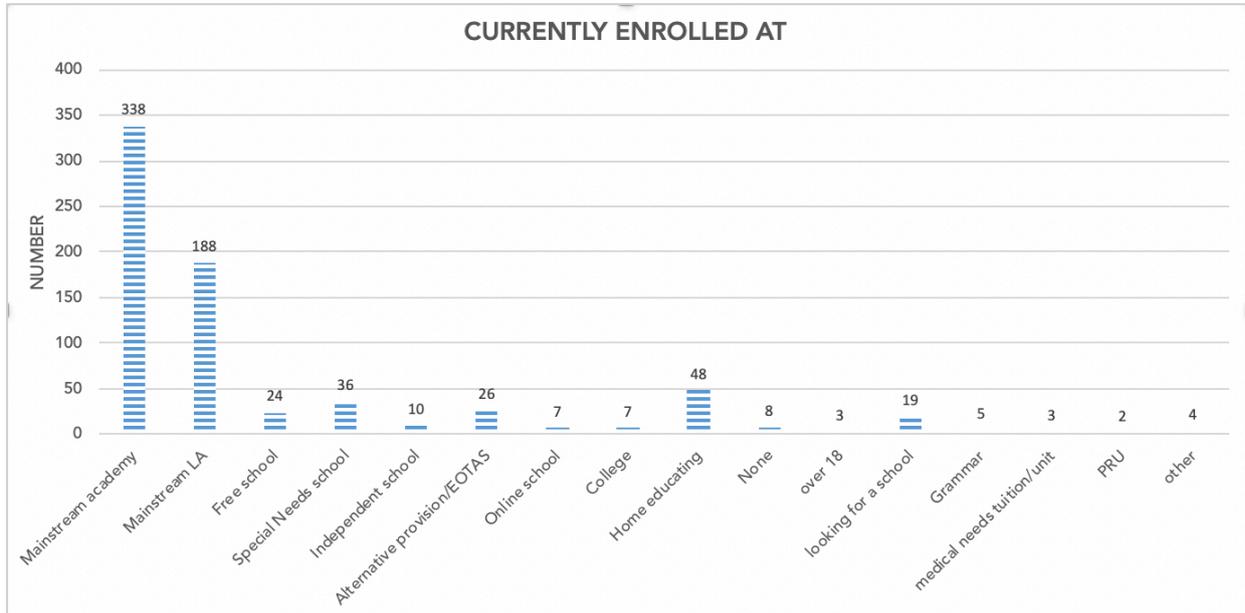
[1,661 responses]

In comparison with the 2018 survey, the 2020 survey includes more children for whom their difficulties weren't evident until primary school, and more in secondary school. It is clear once again that difficulties tend to begin prior to secondary school. In 2020 this figure is 453 or 63.8%, in 2018 it was 1239 or 74.6%.

Current Education Setting/Situation

What type of school is your child currently enrolled at?

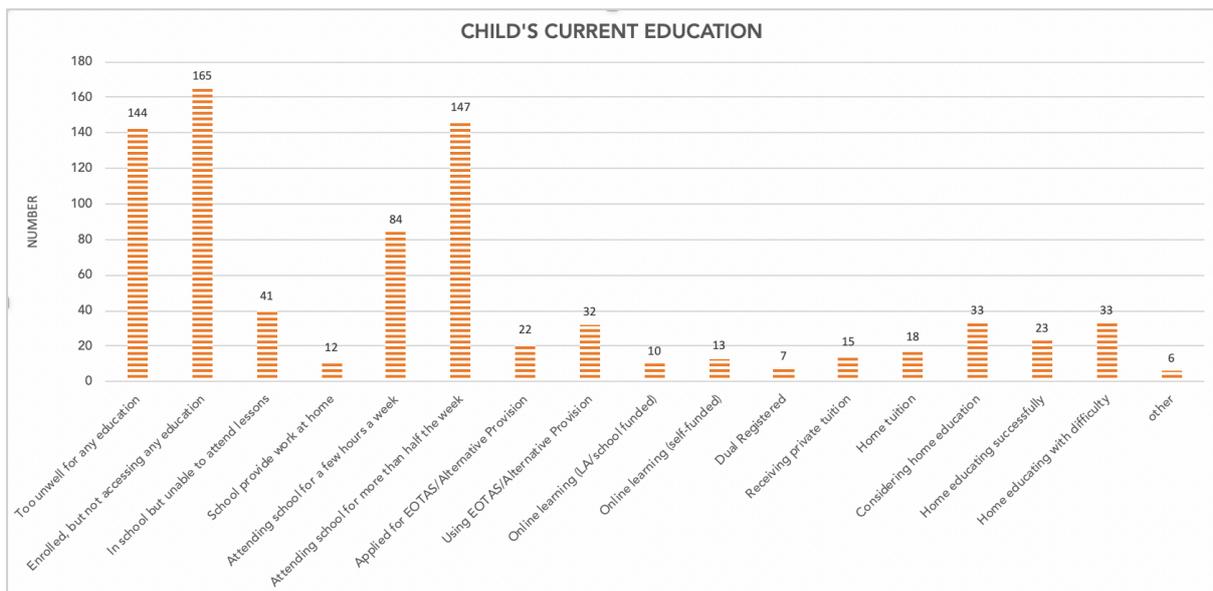
[There was no equivalent question in the 2018 survey.]



[714 responses]

Almost half (47.6%) of the respondents have a child enrolled in an academy school with 26.5% in LA schools (these are likely to be primary schools as the majority of secondary schools are now academies). Special Needs schools include 7 independents, 2 academies and 1 free school. There is some double counting, with children waiting to move schools, and others on roll at an academy/LA school whilst also receiving EOTAS (and possibly online provision too). Home educating figures include a few children for whom there is no appropriate school or who are waiting for appropriate provision.

Which option best describes your child's current educational situation?



[710 responses]

The most shocking statistics here are the children who are too unwell for any education (144 or 20.3%), enrolled but not accessing any education (165 or 23.2%), and in school but unable to attend lessons (84 or 11.8%). 231 are unable to attend full-time (32.5%). Despite this, very few respondents report that their school is providing work at home (12).

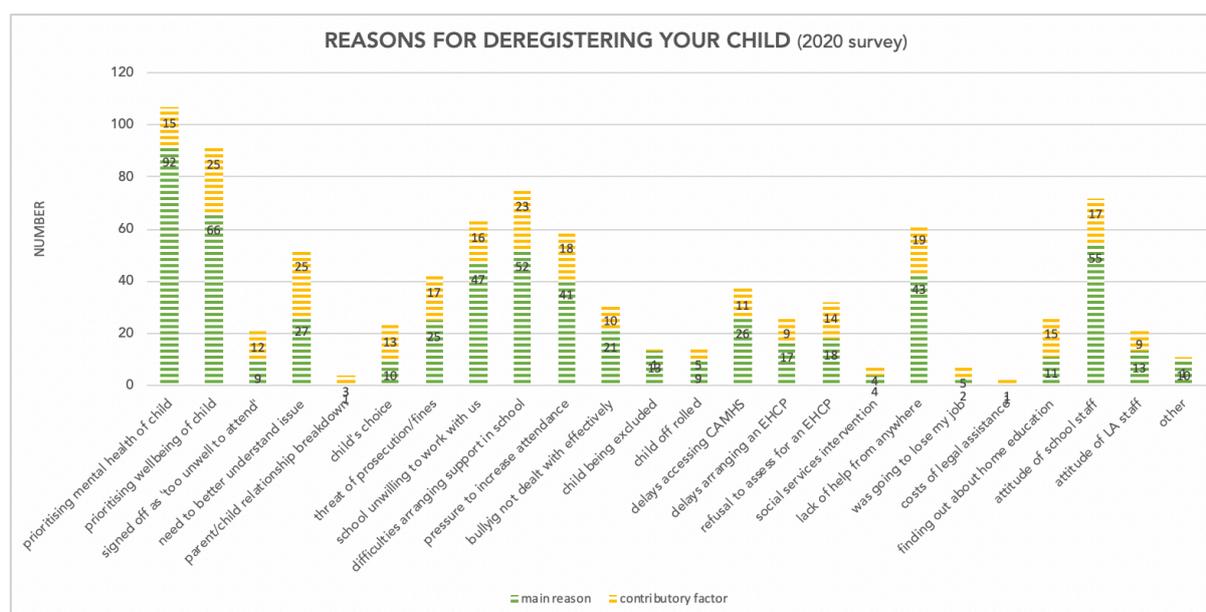
NB. Some respondents will have checked more than one answer, but that doesn't change the overall numbers in each situation.

In terms of home education, 33 respondents are considering it, 23 are doing it successfully and 33 are doing it with difficulty.

We can't make a direct comparison to 2018, as the choices were not the same, but at that time 19.3% (320) were not attending school at all, 25.6% were attending with anxiety/mental health issues (425) and 18.4% were attending school with SEND difficulties (306).

If you have deregistered from a school, why did you make that decision?

[There was no equivalent question in the 2018 survey.]

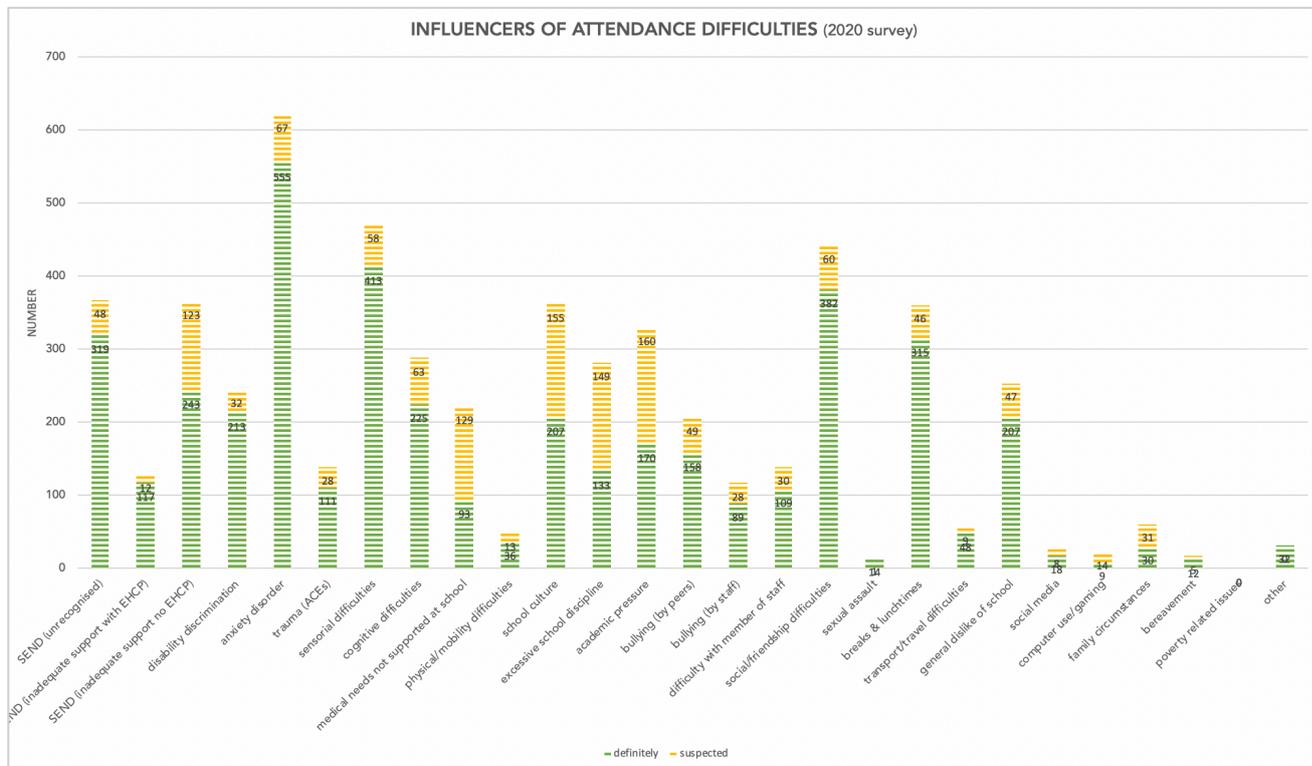


The overarching reason for deregistering a child was to prioritise their mental health (92 cited this as the main reason, another 15 as a contributory factor), closely followed by concern for their wellbeing (66 and 25).

Other notable reasons related to the lack of support and the attitude of school, plus the pressure to increase attendance. This begs the question that if attitudes changed, with schools willing to work more closely with parents and make reasonable, consistent adjustments, then is it likely that fewer parents would feel the need to deregister. That said, attendance difficulties are complex with no quick, easy answers, so it would probably require a long-term, sustained commitment from schools and improvements to SEND support and CAMHS systems.

Influences

What do you think has influenced your child's school attendance difficulties?



In our 2018 survey we asked similar (but not the same) questions. The school environment scored highest at 79.2% with inadequate support for SEND (73.7%) and social anxiety/friendship difficulties (70.2%) also key. These results are notable for the high percentage of respondents who felt factors that were NOT influencers were social media, computer/gaming and family circumstances.

In this year's survey we included more influencers and asked which directly influenced or which were suspected of influencing your child's attendance difficulties. Highest was anxiety disorder, followed by sensory difficulties & social/friendship difficulties. Break times and lunchtimes were clearly difficult for many children.

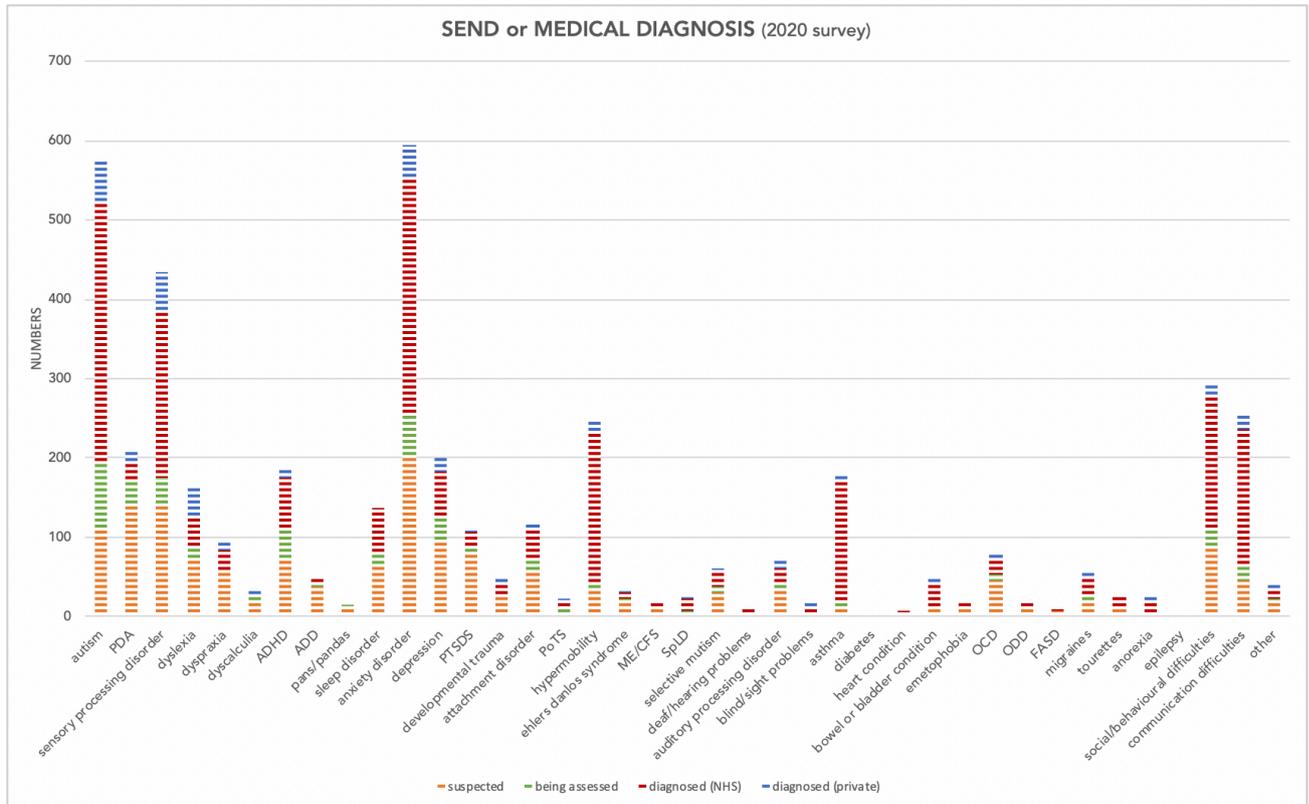
There were still significant numbers who felt that there was unrecognised SEND or inadequately supported SEND. Worryingly, there were 129 respondents with inadequately supported SEND despite having an EHCP.

Once again, social media, computers & gaming and family circumstances were NOT felt to be influencers in attendance difficulties. This is interesting given that in some academic research and educational psychologist reports, these things are often listed as 'pull' factors that work to keep a child at home.

SEND & Medical Conditions

Does your child have a diagnosis or do you suspect a diagnosis may be relevant?

[We did not ask about specific conditions in our 2018 survey]



Once again, anxiety disorders top the list here, with a staggering 342 diagnoses (48%) and another 200 suspected disorders.

Autism also scored highly with 378 diagnoses and another 87 currently being assessed.

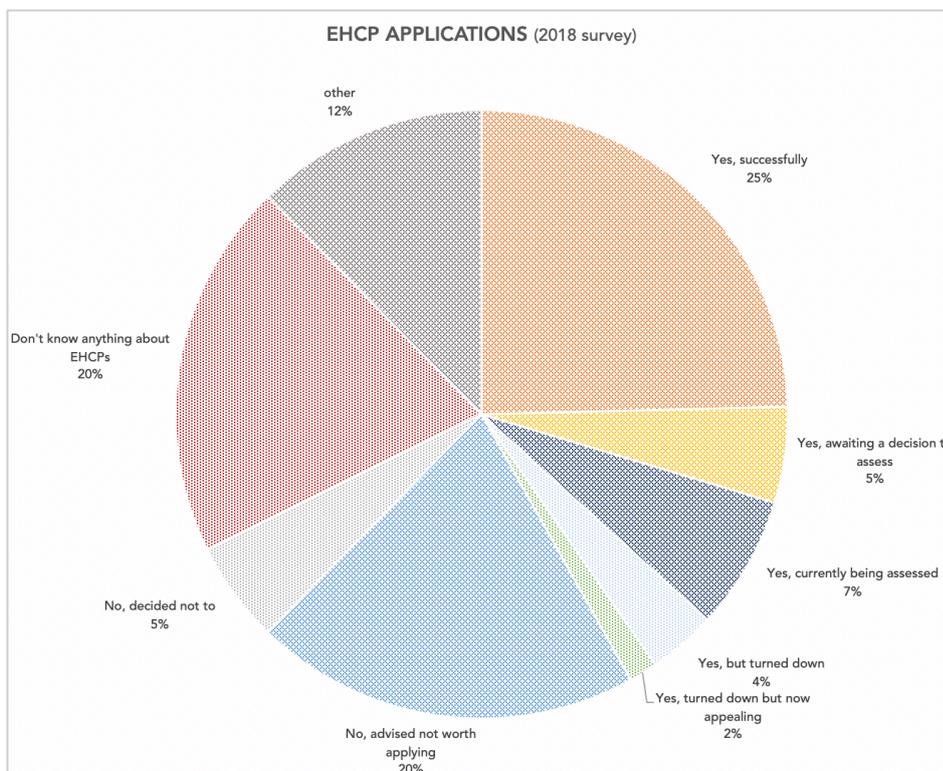
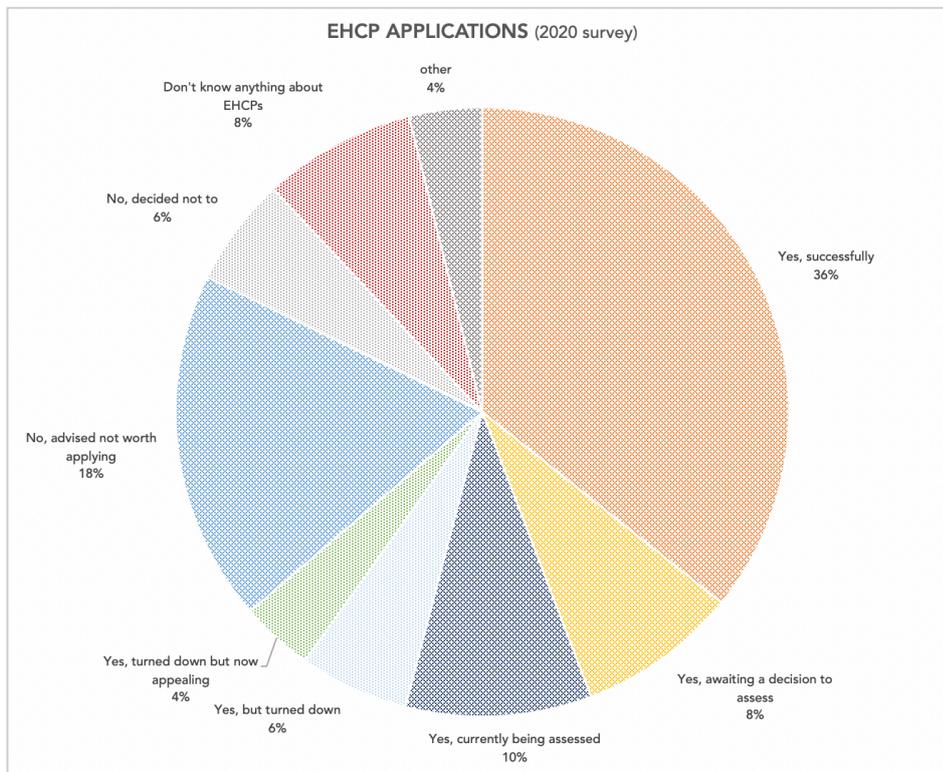
The other three notable diagnoses 'spikes' are for hypermobility (208 diagnoses), sensory processing disorder (258 diagnoses, with 138 suspected) and asthma (160 diagnoses).

Social/behavioural difficulties and communication difficulties were unsurprisingly high, with a relatively large number of formal diagnoses.

The very high suspected rate of PDA in correlation to the low formal diagnosis rate reflects the variations in recognition of PDA across the country.

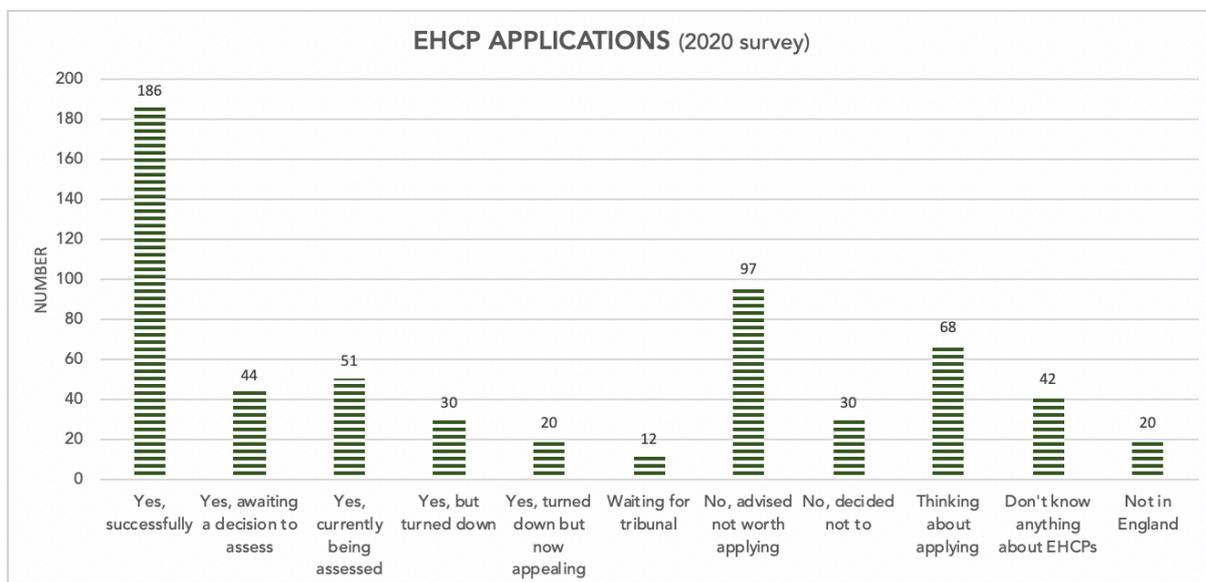
Education, Health & Care Plans

Have you applied for an EHCP?

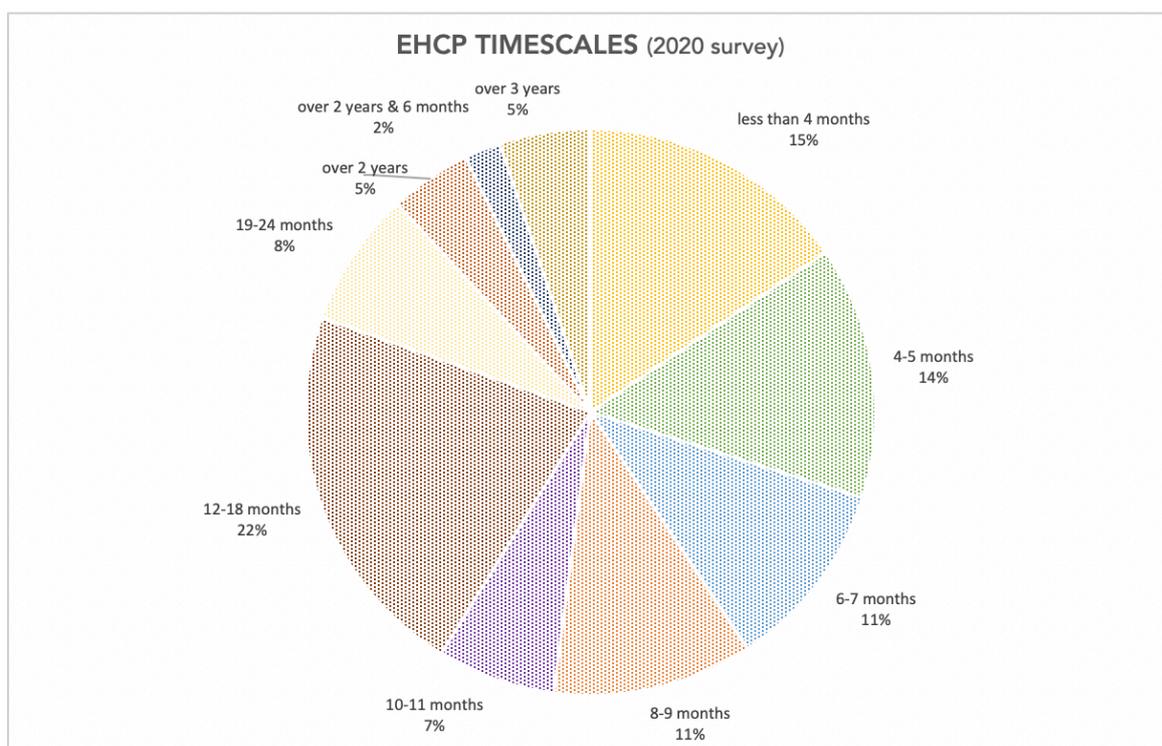


It is encouraging to see that the number of successful EHCP applications has increased (although we don't know what battles were encountered along the way and how many

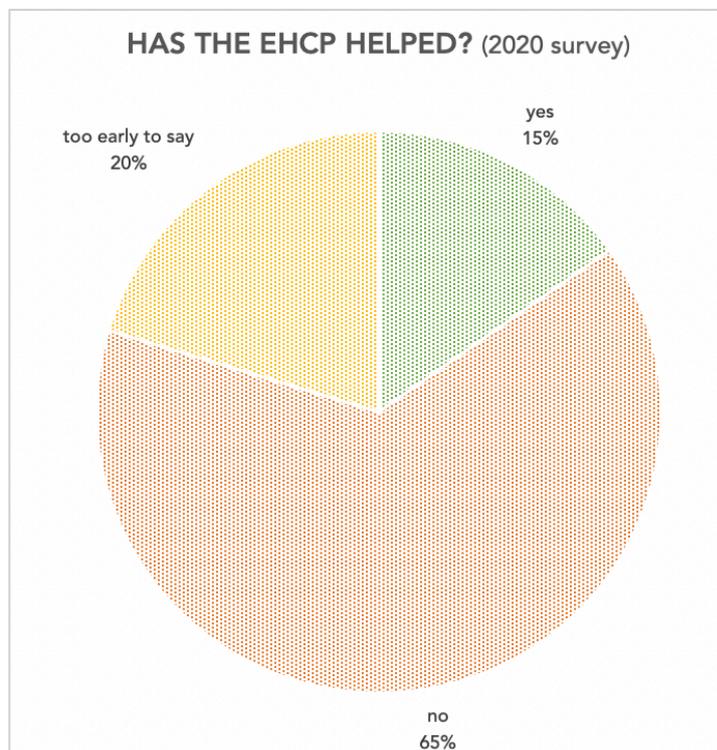
Tribunals it took to get there!) and that a far smaller percentage of parents are now unaware of EHCPs. However, the continuing number of parents discouraged from applying by either school or CAMHS is concerning (20% in 2018, 18% in 2020).



This year we also asked more detailed information about the EHCP process including how many were thinking about applying (68) and how many were waiting for tribunal (12). We had 20 respondents who told us that they did not live in England.



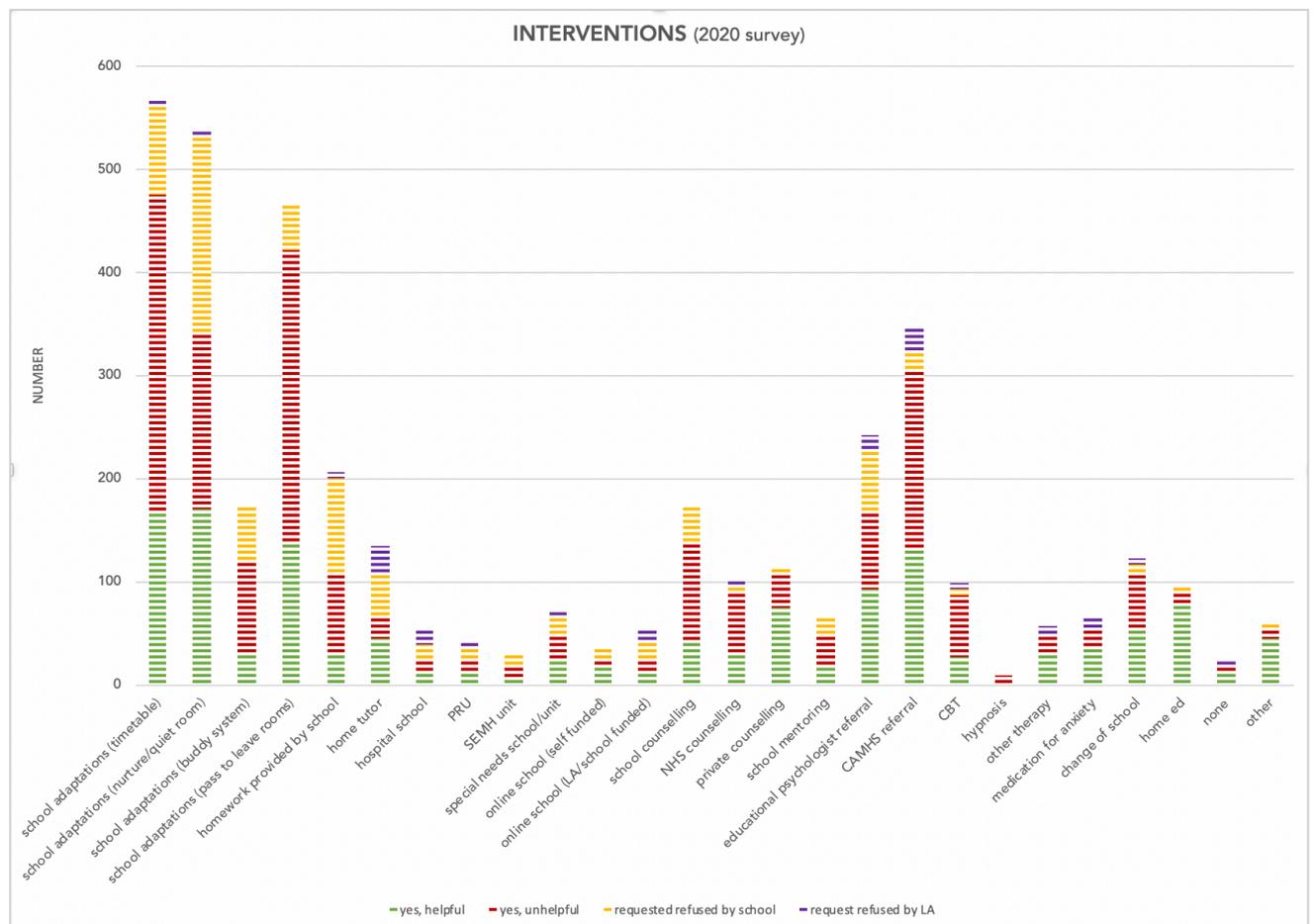
There are still far too many children (136 or 70%) waiting beyond the statutory 20 week timescale for an EHCP, with 80 waiting over a year, 13 over two years and 10 over three years.



It is disappointing to see that in 65% of cases (127) the EHCP has not helped to resolve attendance difficulties. However, this may well be a case of too little too late, an inadequate EHCP or the stipulated provision not being offered.

Interventions & Alternative Provision

What types of intervention or provision have been tried?



In our 2018 survey we asked respondents which interventions they had tried. This time, we asked more detail about whether they were helpful or not, and whether they were refused.

The most commonly tried interventions in our 2020 survey were adaptations to the school timetable, provision of a nurture room and a pass to leave class. CAMHS referrals were also quite common. Unfortunately, in most cases these were all more unhelpful than helpful (although if it works for some it might be worth a try). Schools seem reluctant to try a quiet room in many cases (it's hard to know if this relates to a shortage of space or staffing, or a reluctance to offer pupils a quiet room), and buddying systems were not commonly offered (or necessarily helpful).

LAs were most likely to refuse requests for home tutoring provision, or to make a CAMHS or Educational Psychology referral (which we assume is due to costs?).

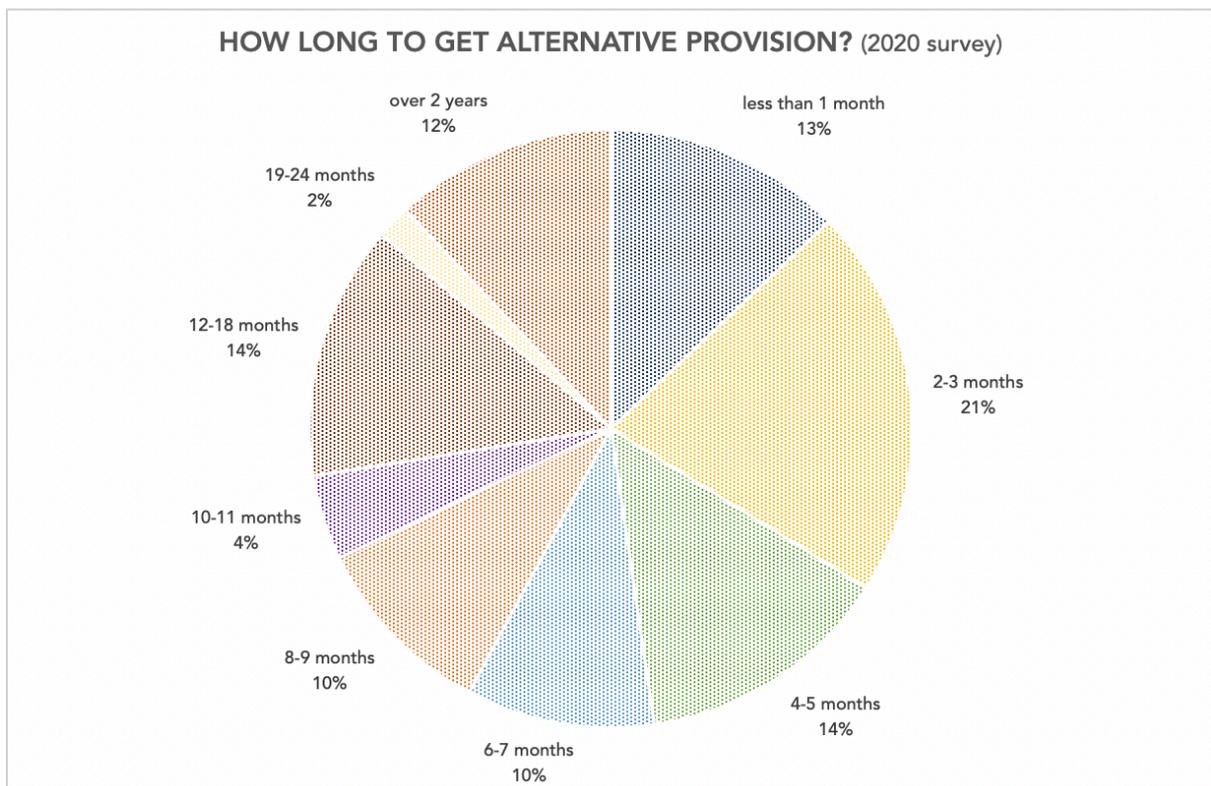
Sadly, CBT and school/NHS counselling does not appear to have been very helpful for those that tried them as treatments.

The interventions that seem to have had the highest success rates are private counselling and home education. 'Other' provisions mentioned as helpful include:

- much smaller autism-specific setting

- dedicated and appropriately trained staff
- art therapy
- Lego therapy
- private educational /clinical psychologist
- come into our home when he is not coping with school and who problem solve the issues with my son and myself - this has always worked to get him back into school
- direct communication with the tutors so problems can be sorted out rapidly
- private OT therapy
- removal of assessments (SATs)
- personalised timetable (tailored to child's interests)
- consistency and not removing support after a few weeks
- SLT
- horse-riding/equine assisted therapy (although hasn't helped with education)
- sleep meds
- AP unit
- relaxation of uniform code
- outdoor education

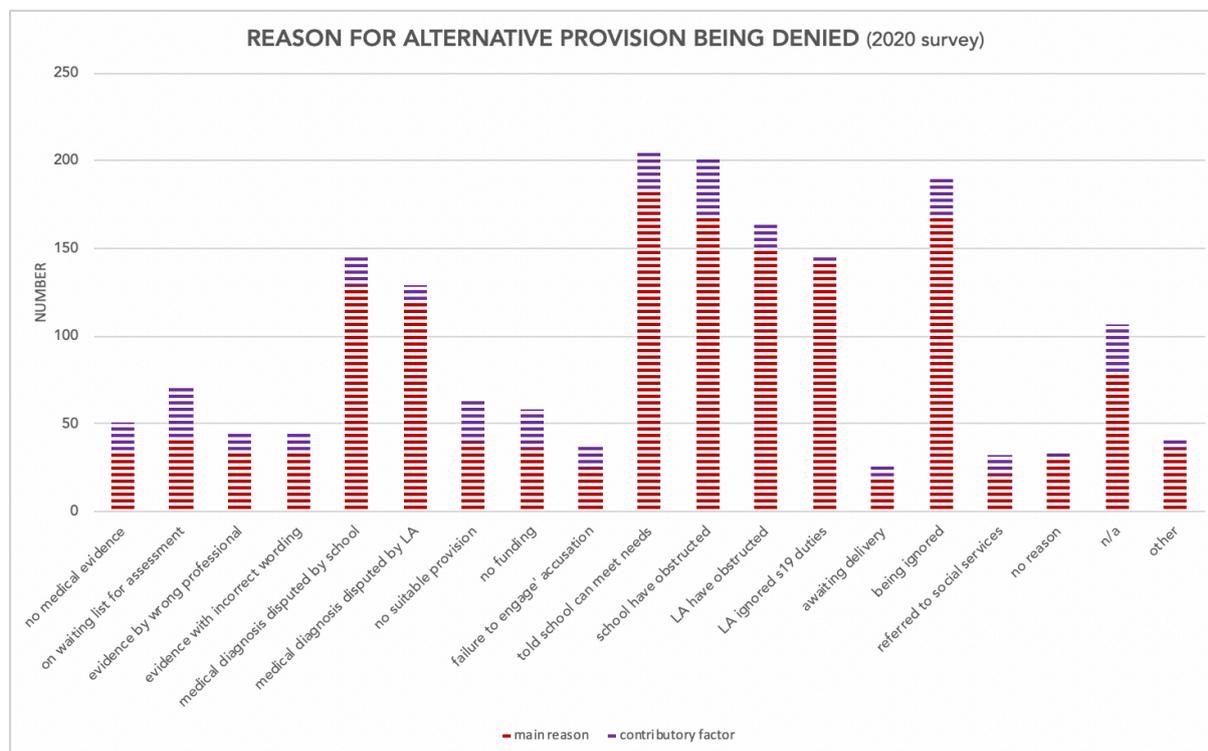
It is of course quite possible that more of the interventions would have helped had they been put in place earlier (too little, too late was a common comment). Several parents mentioned support being offered, but with no follow-through.



If a child is unable to attend school for 15 days, there is a legal duty on the local authority to provide some form of alternative provision. It is disappointing that once alternative provision was agreed, it still took an extraordinary length of time for it to be implemented.

Only 14 children received alternative provision in less than a month and for 57 children it took more than 6 months (for another 30 it took over a year).

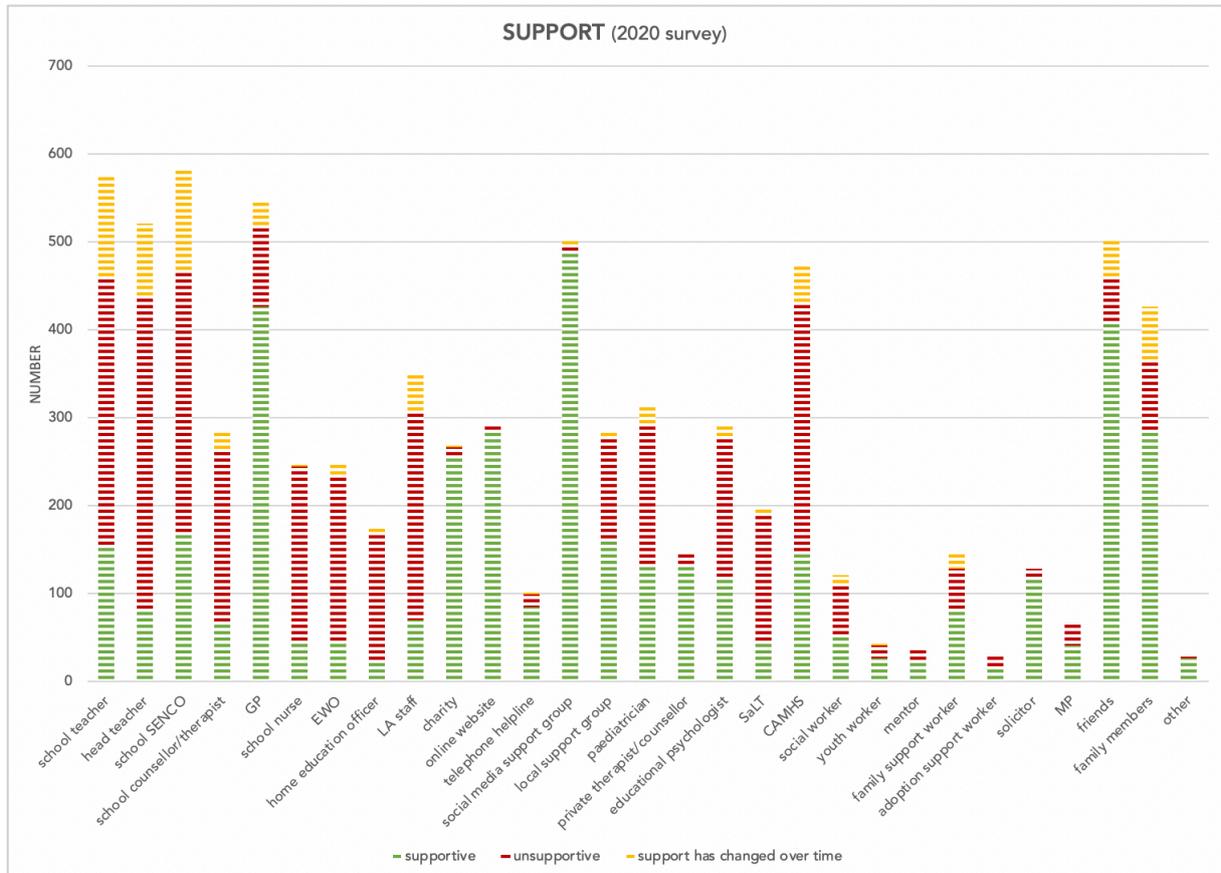
If alternative provision was denied, what reason were you given?



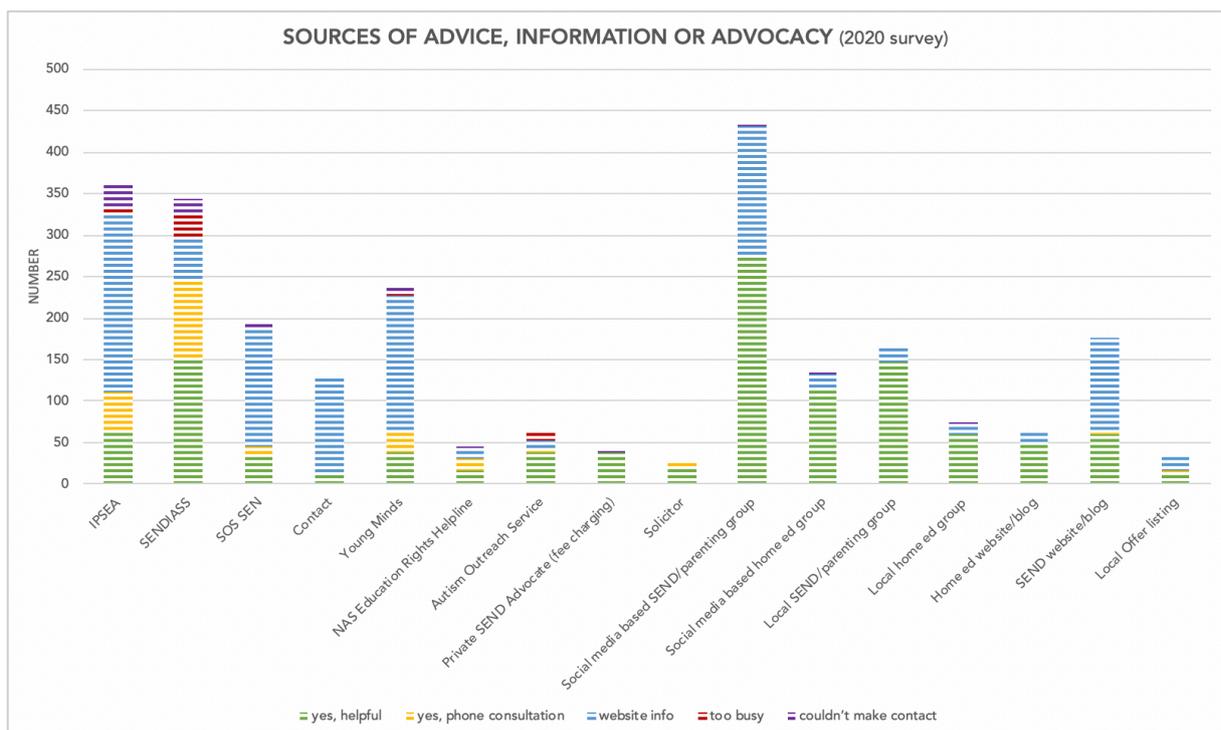
Once again, the overriding theme here is an unwillingness to support, with school or LA obstructing the process (168 and 150 respectively), parents being ignored (168) and (overwhelmingly) being told that the current school can meet a child’s needs (184, plus another 21 for whom it was a contributory factor). The number of respondents claiming their LA is ignoring its section 19 duties is a big concern (142), as is the number of schools and LAs disputing a medical diagnosis (129 and 120 respectively). There is also concern over medical evidence being provided by the wrong professional or with incorrect wording. DfE guidance makes it very clear that this should not be happening.

Support

Where have you found support?



Have you used any of the following sources of advice, information or advocacy?

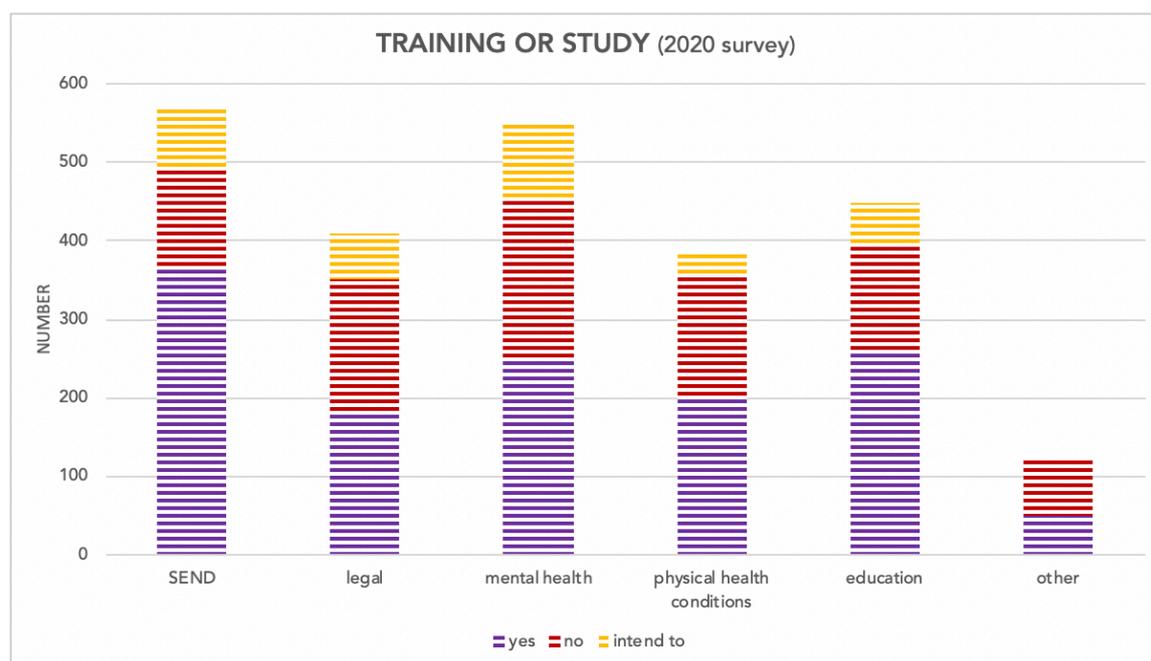


As in our 2018 survey, support comes primarily from social media support groups, charities, websites, friends and family members (none of which constitute the 'paid' support on offer!). GPs and solicitors are also found to be significantly helpful.

Worryingly, all the services that should be offering support – school, LA, education psychologist, CAMHS – are considered more unhelpful than helpful.

The chart showing where respondents have found information, advice and advocacy illustrates that several services have comprehensive websites, but also that demand means organisations like IPSEA and SENDIASS can be hard to contact. Again, it is the parent-led support groups that prove to be the most helpful.

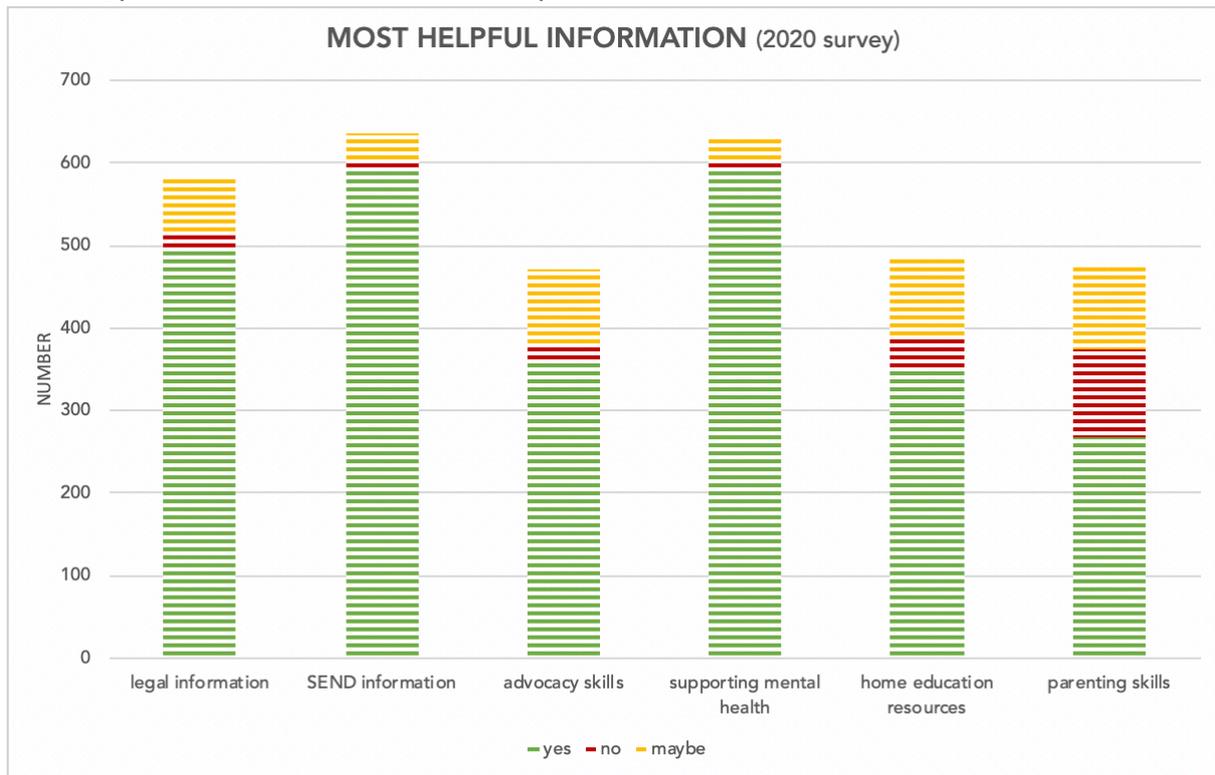
Have you completed any relevant training or study in response to your child's difficulties?



An extraordinary number of respondents have found it necessary to teach themselves about SEND (369 with another 72 intending to), mental health (247 with another 93 intending to), education (261 with another 52 intending to), the law (180 with another 58 intending to) and physical health conditions (200 with another 26 intending to), in order to support their child.

Becoming better informed by relevant knowledge is often crucial and empowering for parents in their quest to help their children. There is still the necessity for improved systemic advice and support to prevent an increase in the gap between those who have the ability (i.e. time, cost, willingness) to educate themselves, and those who do not.

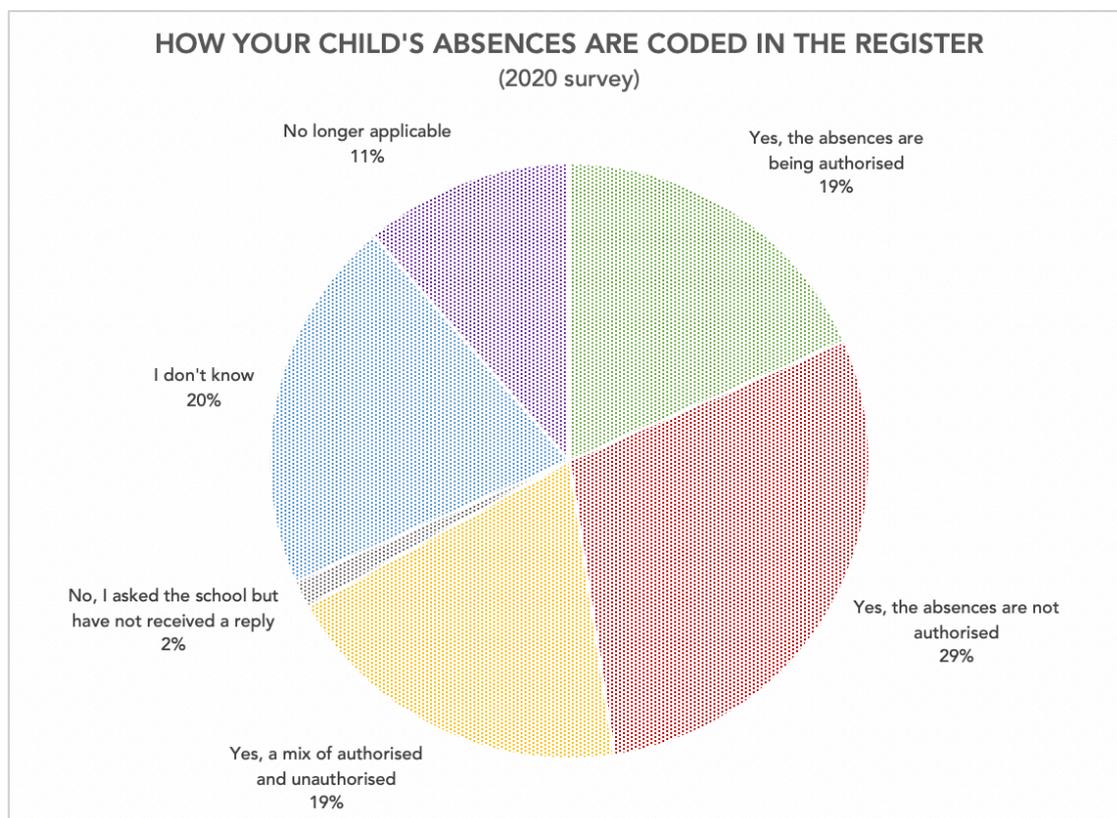
Which types of information are most helpful?



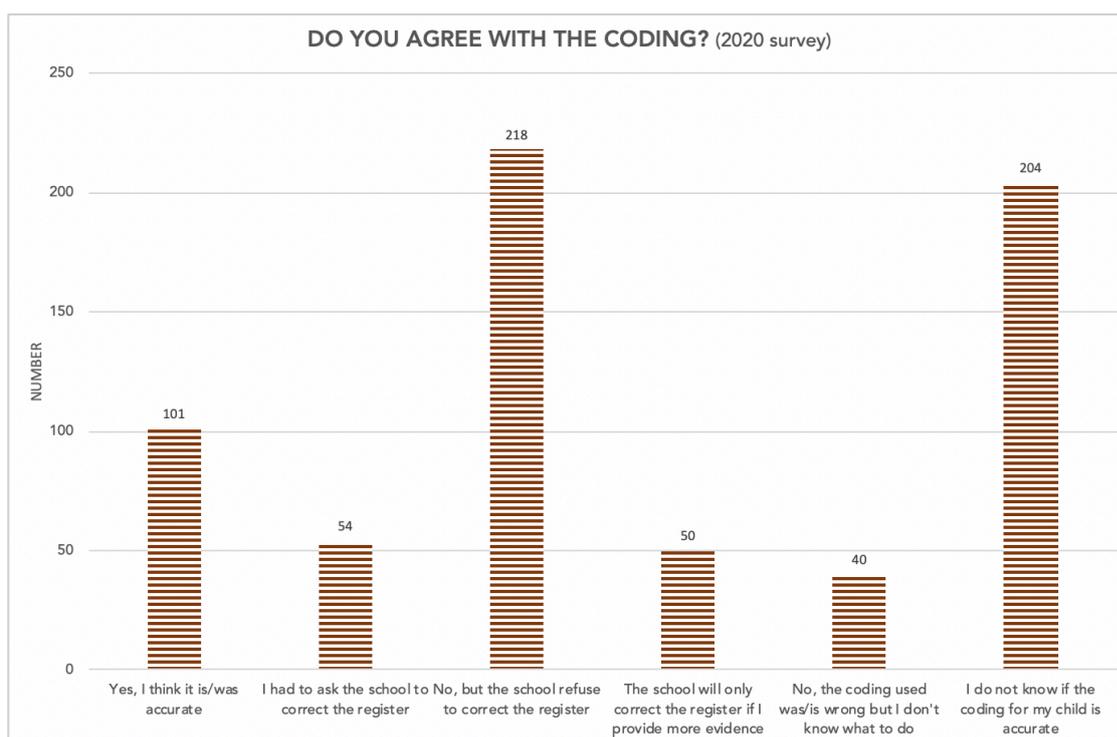
Attendance registers

Do you know how your child's absences are being coded in the register?

[We did not ask this question in 2018]

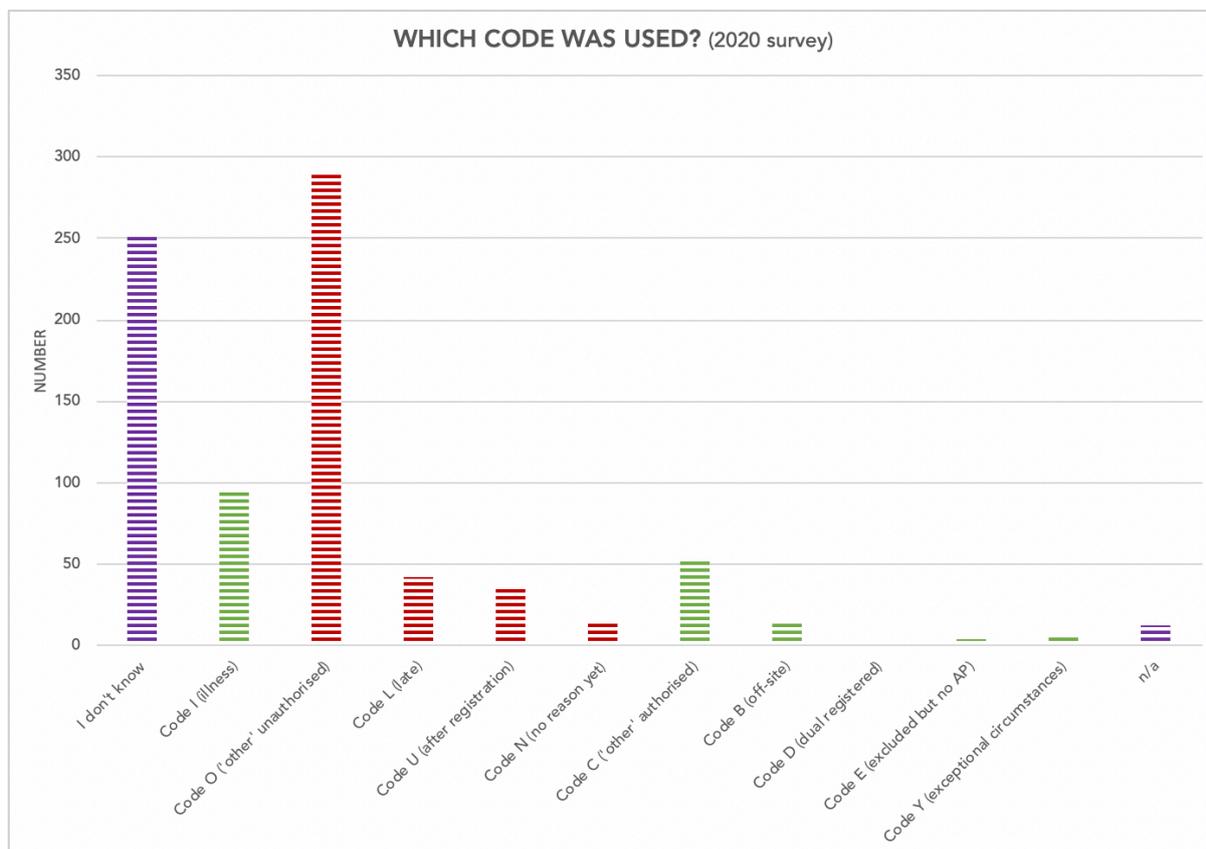


Do you/did you agree with the coding of your child's absences? [659 responses]



Only 101 respondents (15.3%) felt their child’s absence is recorded accurately. Worryingly, 218 respondents said it is wrong but the school refuses to change it, and another 50 say the school will only change it if they provide additional medical evidence.

Which code is (or was) mostly being used for your child’s absences?]

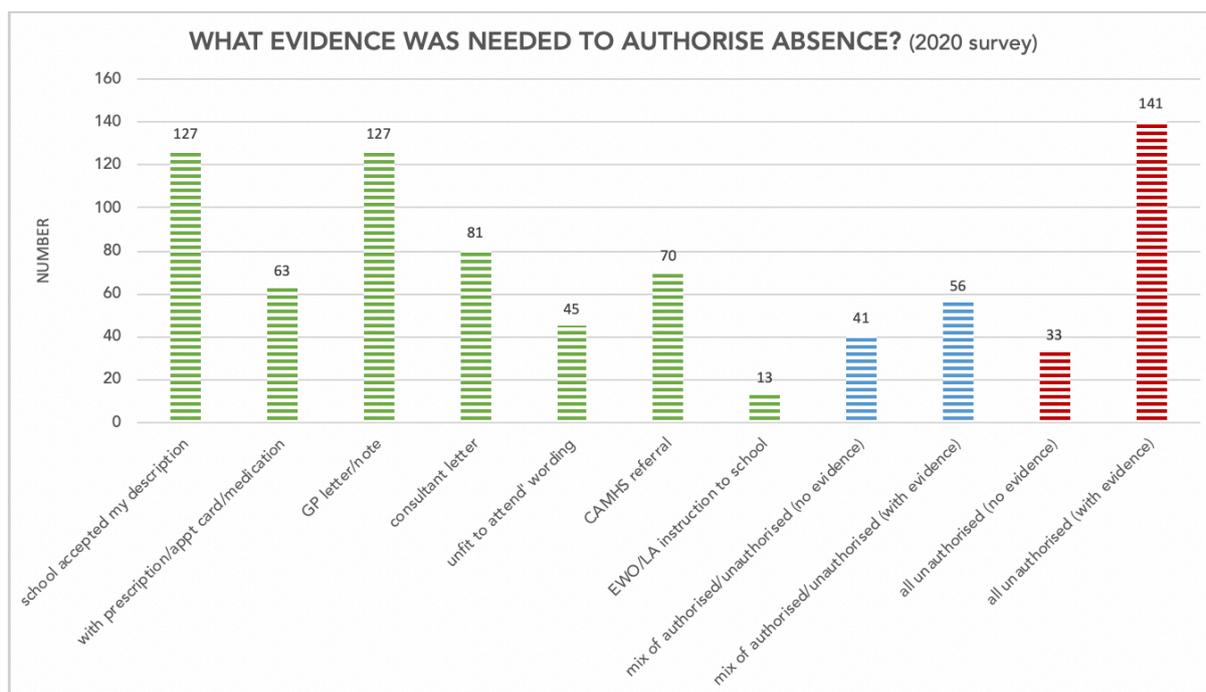


[688 responses]

As we suspected, the code most commonly used is O ('other' unauthorised absence), which 289 respondents claim is being used to record their child’s absences. Only 96 respondents claim their child’s absences are authorised as illness. That said, 19% of respondents claim a mix of authorised and unauthorised coding.

This really highlights the lack of accuracy around the coding, and the lack of detail which makes any analysis of absence almost impossible.

What evidence was needed for your child's absences to be authorised by the school?



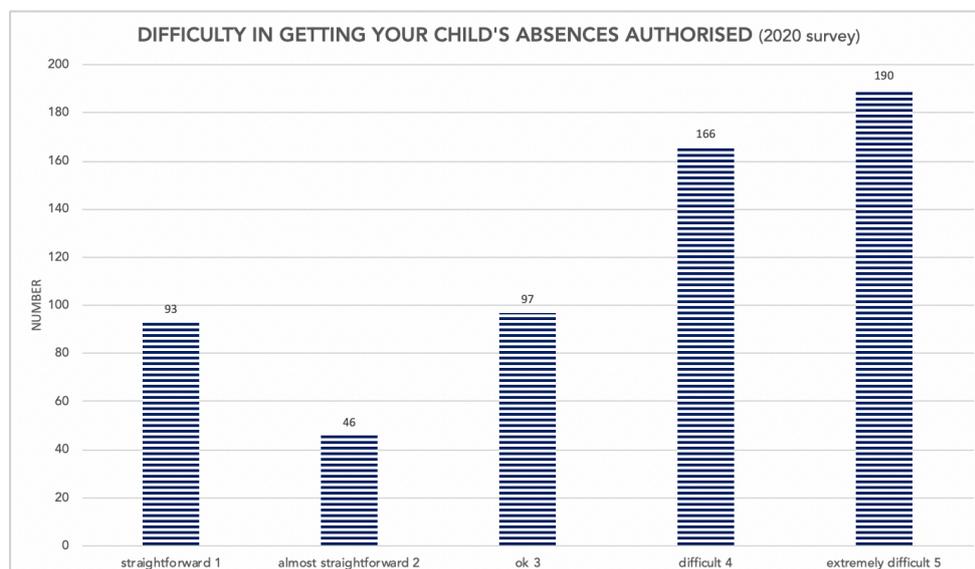
[599 responses]

In the charts above green has been used to denote authorised absence, red for unauthorised.

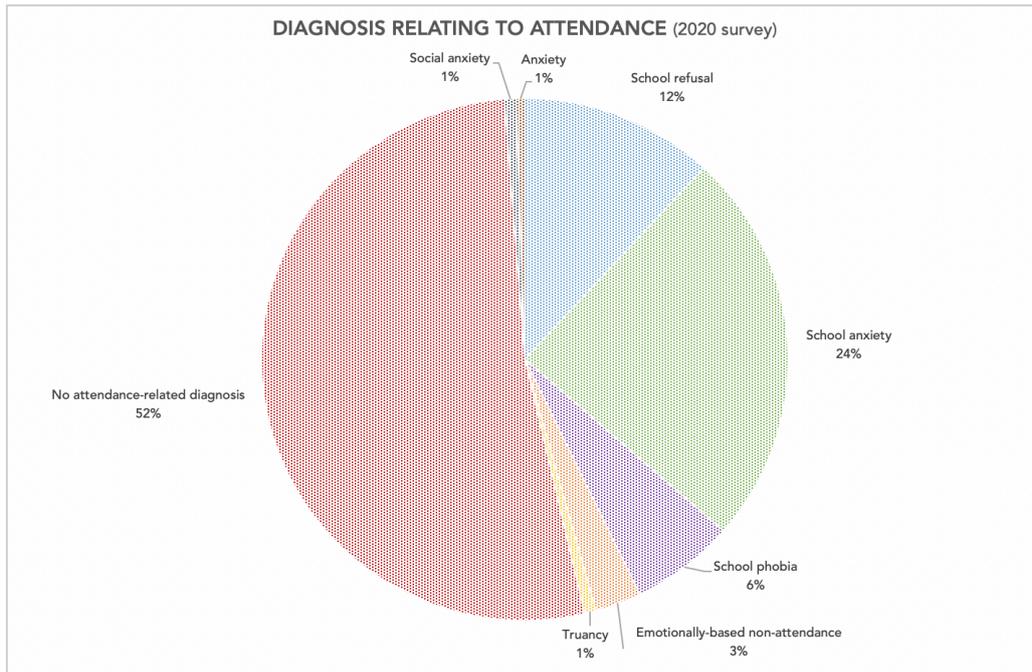
The number of absences that remained unauthorised despite medical evidence, is worrying (141 or 17.7%). Add in those that were a mix of authorised and unauthorised despite evidence being provided and the total is 197 or 24.7%. 66% of absences were authorised with 34% were either not authorised, or only sometimes unauthorised.

This use of codes has been an area of real concern for some time. Our survey clearly shows that where parents know how their child's absence is coded, and whether that complies with Government guidance, it is common for the coding to be wrong and difficult to get this changed.

How difficult was it to have your child's absences authorised? [592 responses]

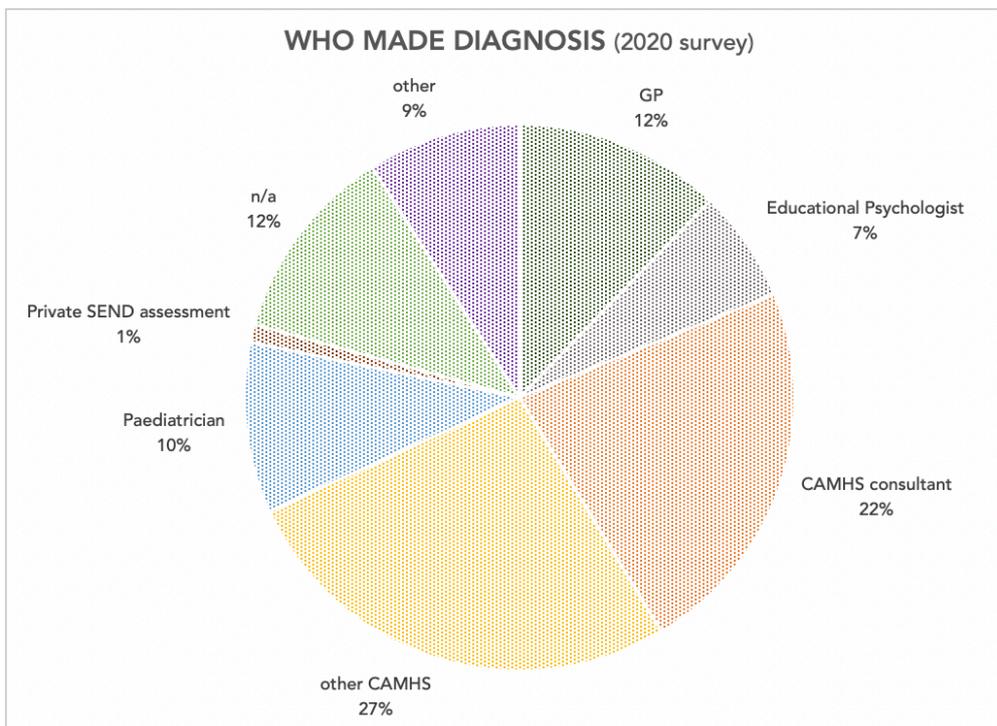


Have you been given a diagnosis relating to school attendance?



[501 responses]

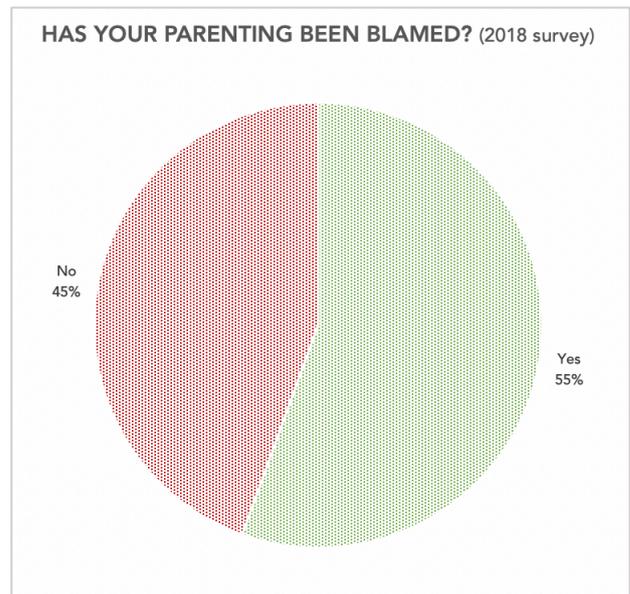
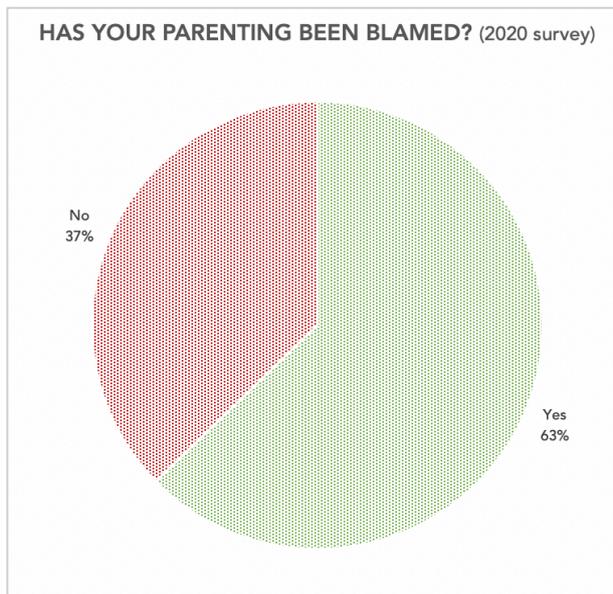
Who made this diagnosis?



[377 responses]

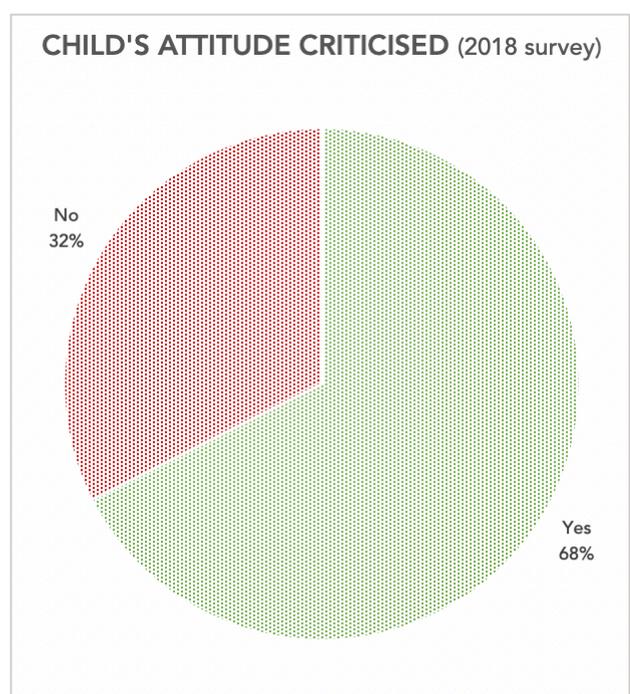
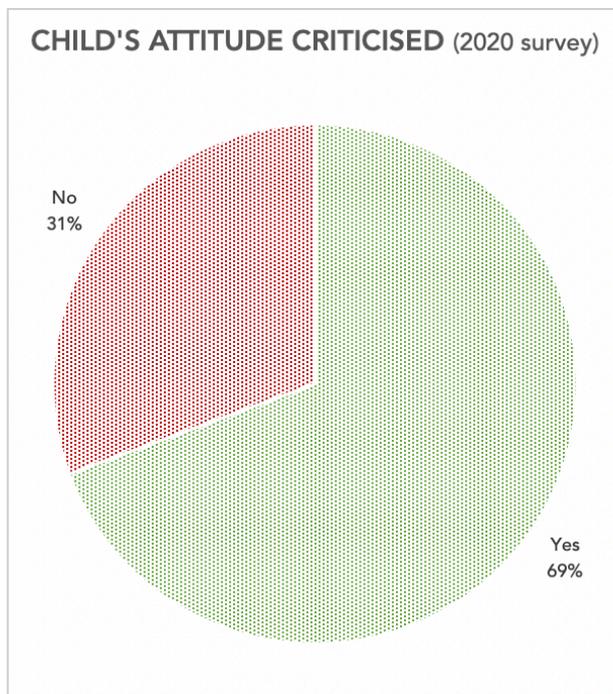
The 'Blame Game'

Has your parenting been blamed?



[700 responses]

Unfortunately the 'blame game' continues. In 2018 55.5% of respondents said they had been blamed for their child's non-attendance. In 2020 this has risen to 63% (439 parents).

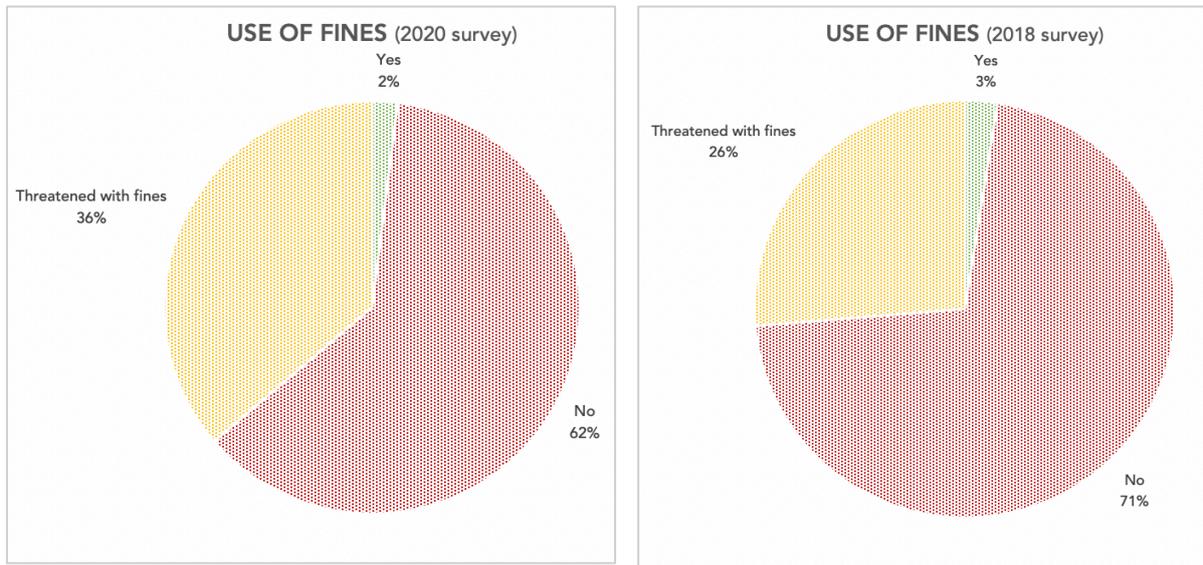


[702 responses]

Children's attitudes can also be criticised, and this seems unchanged since 2018.

Penalties & Prosecution

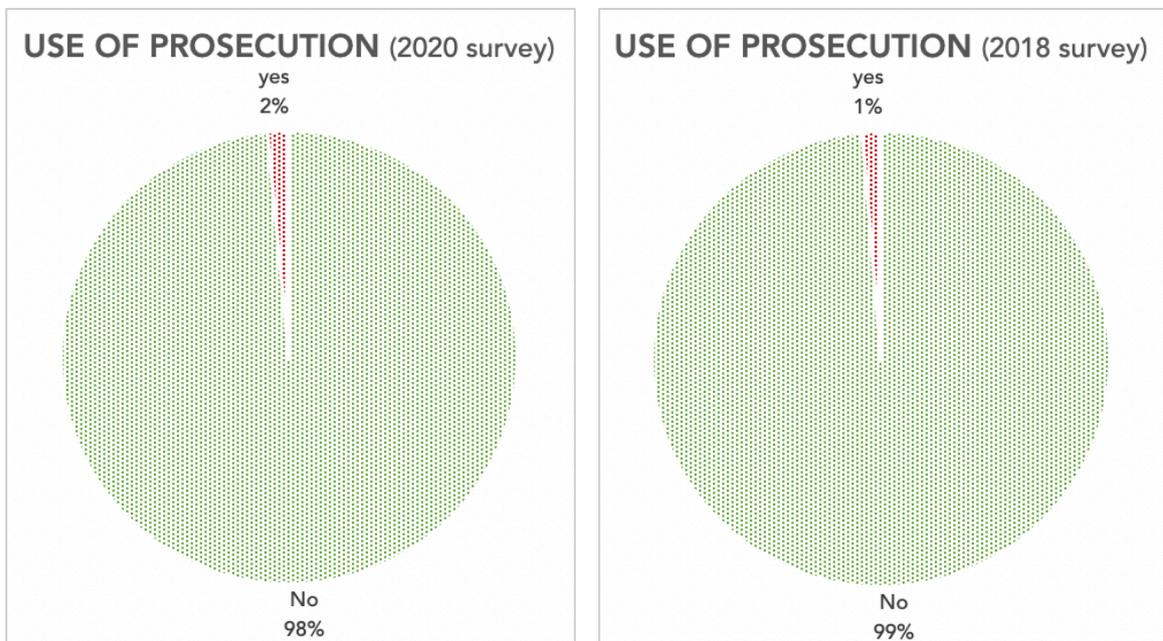
Have you been fined?



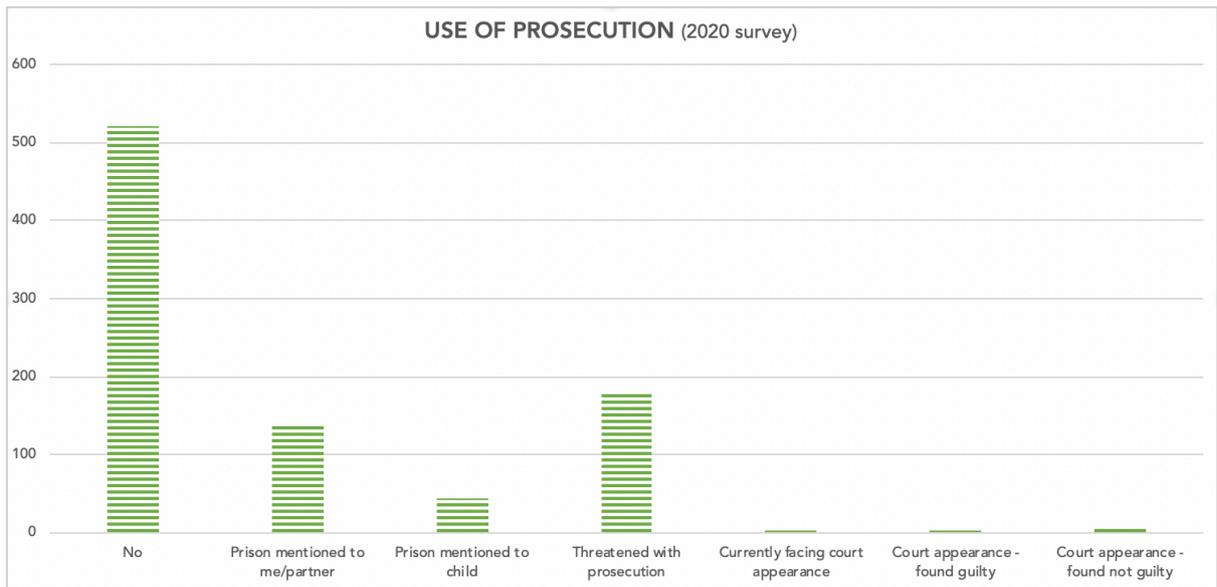
[706 responses]

Although fewer parents have been fined in 2020, the threat of fines has increased (from 26% to 36% or 444 parents. This includes fines mentioned to one or both parents (133), fines mentioned to the child (71) and threats of a fine (240).

Have you been prosecuted?

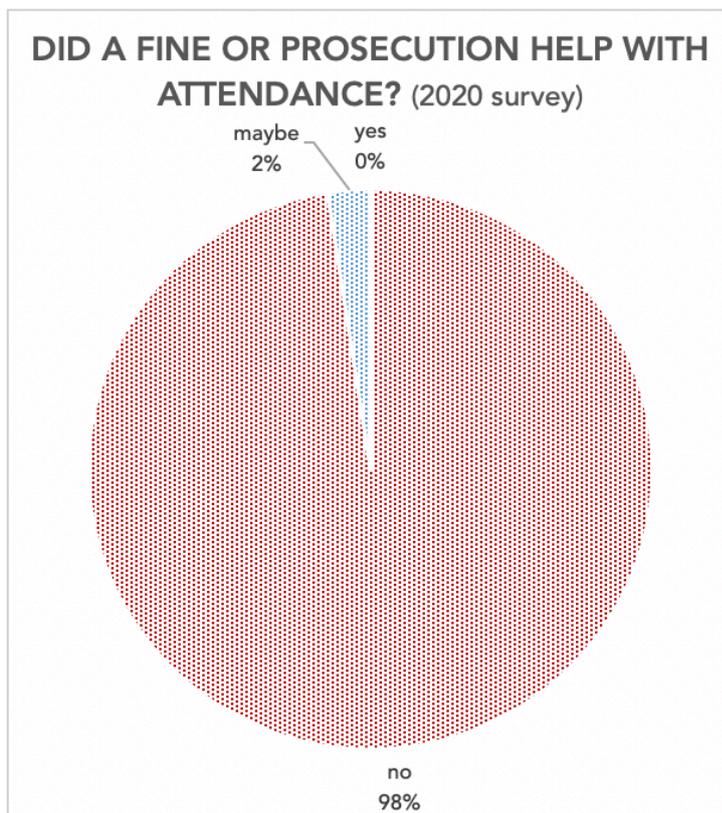


Thankfully prosecutions have not risen significantly, although in our 2020 survey 8 parents faced prosecution. Interestingly 4 were found not guilty (3 found guilty, 1 currently facing a court appearance).



[701 responses]

If you were fined or prosecuted did it help you or your child to improve their attendance?

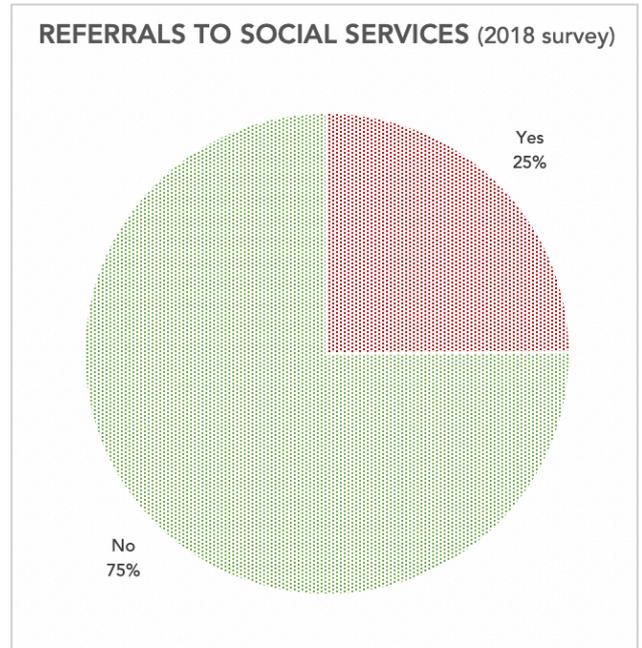
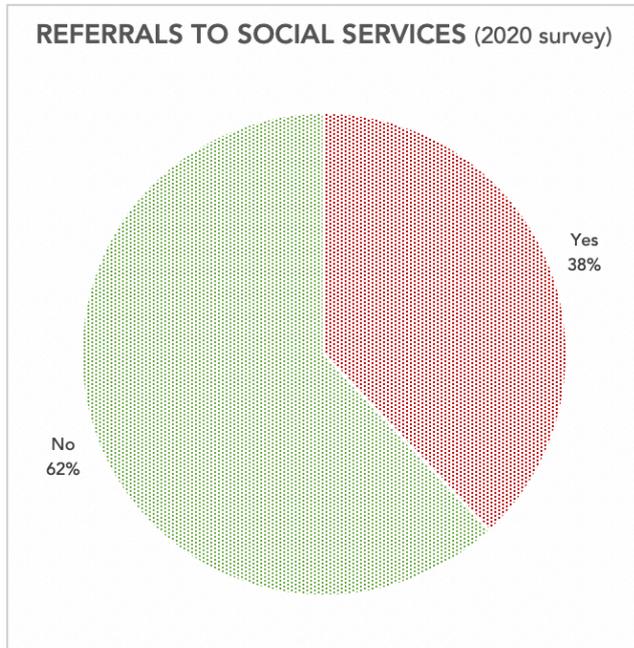


[41 responses]

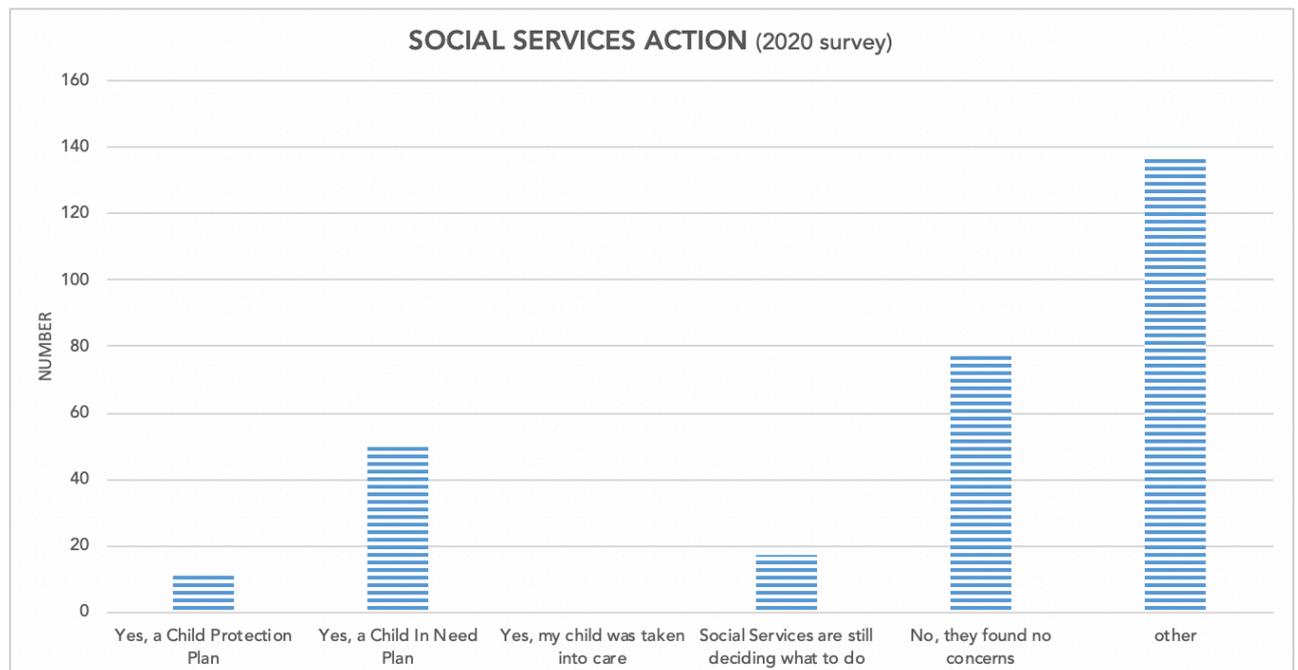
This seems conclusive evidence that fines and prosecutions do nothing to resolve school attendance difficulties.

Social Services Referrals

Have you been referred to Social Services because of your child's attendance difficulties?



Referrals to Social Services are extremely worrying and are a result of low attendance being a red flag on several safeguarding policies. Whilst safeguarding is hugely important, many of these families would not be subject to these referrals under normal circumstances. It simply adds to their stress if their child is unable to access education to then have unwelcome scrutiny from Social Services.



[295 responses]

'Other' responses included:

The delightful head reported me several times to many places . All found no concerns. The social worker was lovely and he made sure the EHCP was finalised before he discharged us.

CAMHS referral from the GP was rejected with referral to social services but we haven't heard anything. School referral to CAMHS still pending approval by primary mental health team two weeks after the case review meeting with the school Head and class teacher

Still waiting for social services although been waiting 6 months

My children are my long term foster children so we have a social worker

School lied to social services - accused me of saying he had medical conditions which he doesn't have, school implied to social worker that my sons illness was psychological and that he was anxious despite writing a letter to the paediatrician saying he was fine and telling me he was not anxious. School nurse lied to social services, said I refused their help when I pursued her for 2 months for her to say she was unable to help my son. GP and Consultant confirmed that my sons condition is a physical not psychological condition. Social worker said she had no concerns and discharged my son.

Held a CP conference but decided CIN

I have an Early Help in place with a Family Support Worker.

I have tried to self-refer to social services

After 3mths the case was closed - all good at home, the issue was education

The new Head suggested to staff that we were FII. The class teacher warned us and agreed home ed would be the best way forward, he was worried what would happen next. social services found no concerns and expressed to the school that they could see i was doing everything I could to get my son to school

School have written child protection forms against me but don't seem to have followed procedure for raising them but continue to use them against me. Hospital have raised concerns to LA that they are vindictive and unsubstantiated.

Got a good support worker disability access to short breaks had a long wait 10 years before any support 6 kids with SEND

Threatened with fines, but child not CSA waiting to hear from SS

We were told we were being referred for early help but have heard nothing- for months Referred self, helpful with emotional support but not regarding attendance to school

They removed him into his father's care

We had a social worker previously but when he attended his last school we were told we no longer needed help. Now we are awaiting another assessment as my son is excluded and not had any firm of education for almost 4 months

EHH refused to take any further action despite us asking for help.

School and EWO said concerned how my son was being managed at home and I am stopping him from having an education. Kept referring to children's services who kept saying no safeguarding concerns.

Social Services brought in by school who received complaints our child was being manhandled to school. School were aware of this as was GP, as parents we informed them of our concerns when advised to force our child to school by children's service. Children's Service ignored our concerns, school and GP did nothing. Until complaints to school from other parents and children were received. All services finally agreed it was totally wrong but our child was broken in the process as indeed we all were as a family

Accused of Fii/MSbP twice before daughters several diagnosis age 13

They decided he was 16 and didn't need protection

I referred myself to the disabled children's services, due to the strain being put on my family as a direct result of school issues.

We agreed to a family support worker months ago, have heard nothing and since deregistered him. So no idea if that will still happen, or who we would check with. I suspect because since the referral was going to come from the attendance officer at the LEA it has simply been dropped.

When he couldn't cope in SEN school, and I was left for 3 years educating my son with zero support, I started Judicial Review against the LA (social care). Their retaliation was to try and take me through Section 47 to have my son sent 460 miles away. They lost after 6 court dates and were slated by the judge. We are now filing JR against them

This was due to my child running away from primary school and police involvement

Heard nothing from social services after school referral

Social worker allocated because of safeguard issues at home. Non-attendance noted by them but too early to know plan to improve this.

SW was very helpful and now dropped to level 2 from level 3

It was a malicious referral Section 47 none of the assessment carried out above board it was to blackmail me, my solicitor even called it out too

CiN closed again, still no attendance. Court halted due to medical evidence till further assessments undertaken

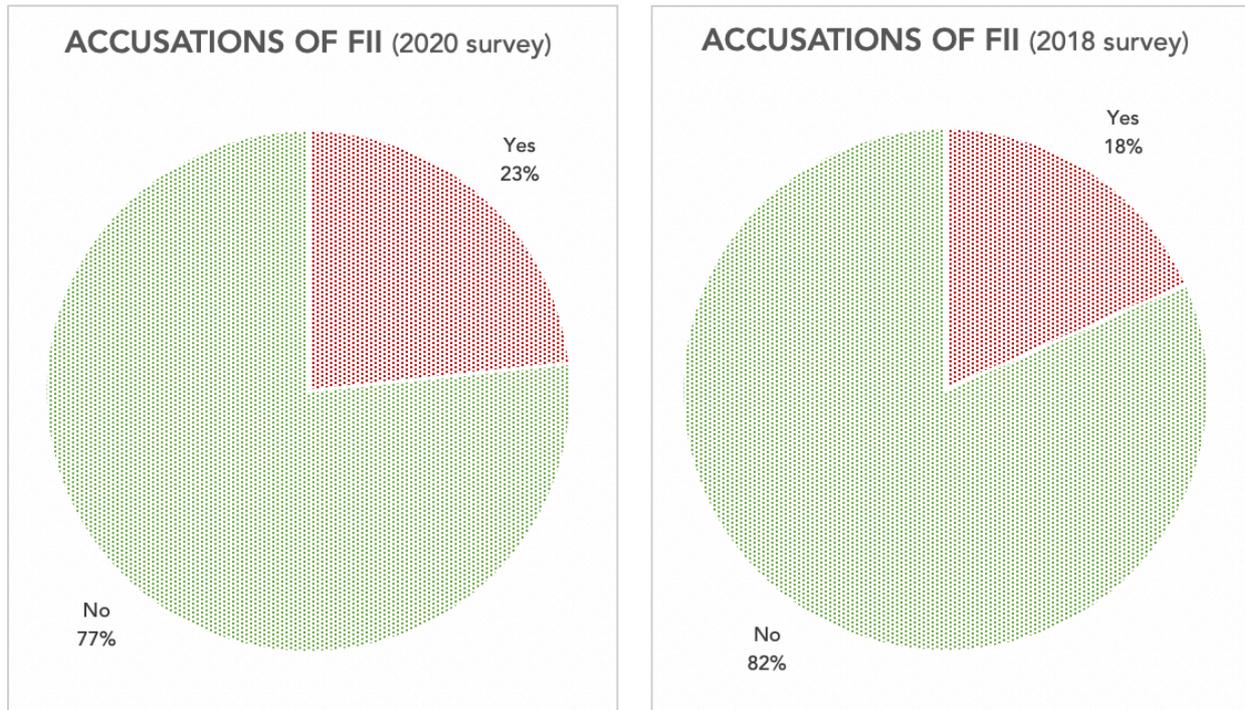
Early help support worker allocated

Reported to SS by school when we started home educating

Taken to court pleaded not guilty, case dropped

Accusations of FII

Have you been accused of FII (Fabricated or Induced Illness)?



[661 responses]

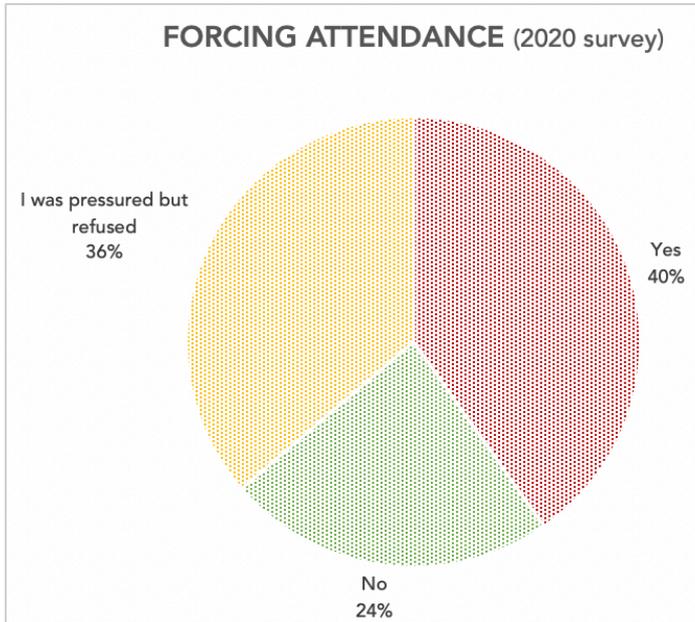
[1,661 responses]

Accusations of FII are alarming, as these are so rare in legal terms.

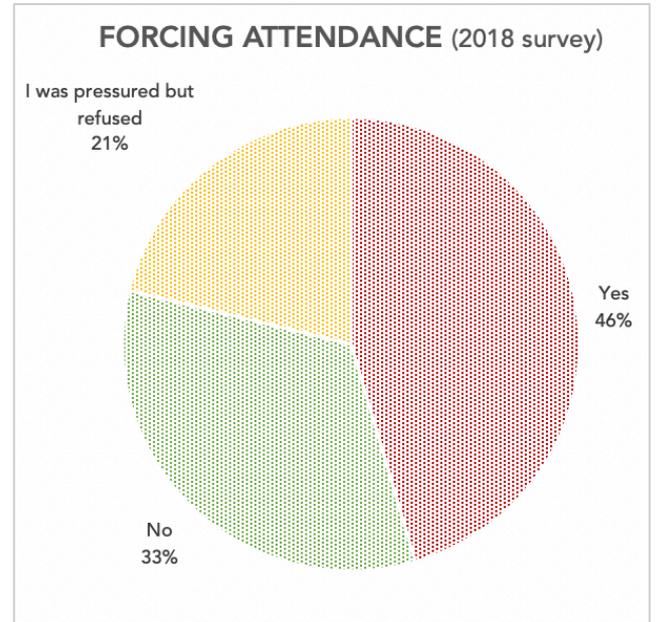
Whilst 154 respondents (23.3%) have been accused of FII in 2020, only 3 have been found guilty, with 3 waiting to find out. In 2018 this figure was higher at 298 respondents, although a lower percentage at 18%.

Forcing Attendance

Have you been made to force your child into school?



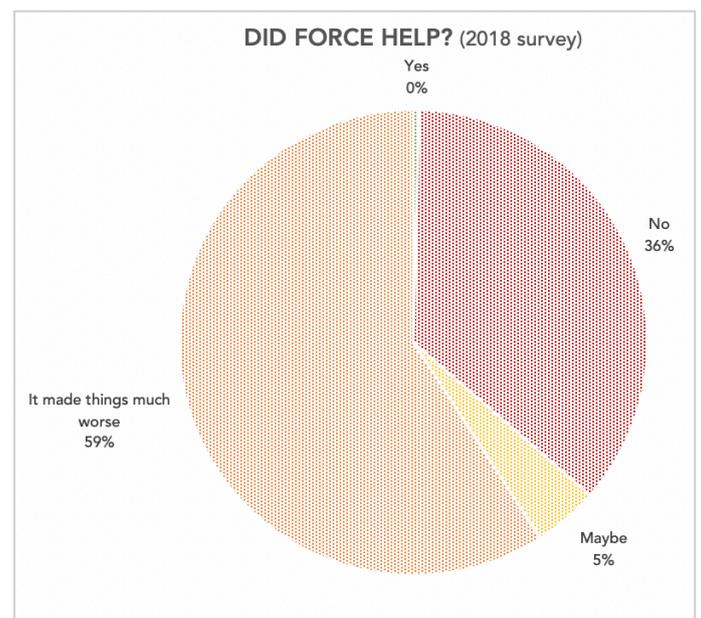
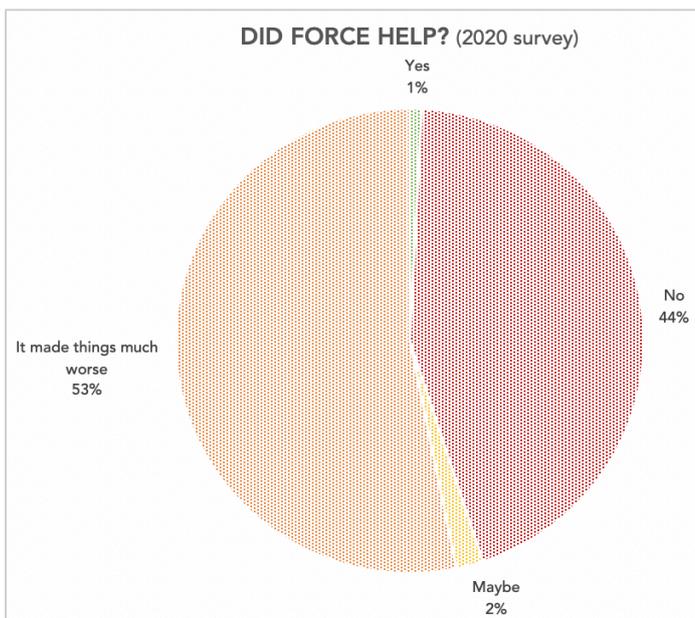
[683 responses]



[1,661 responses]

Unfortunately the percentage of parents who have been pressured to force their child's attendance (something Not Fine In School actively discourages) has changed little in two years (46% in 2018, 40% in 2020). What has changed in the last two years is the percentage of parents who have refused to do so.

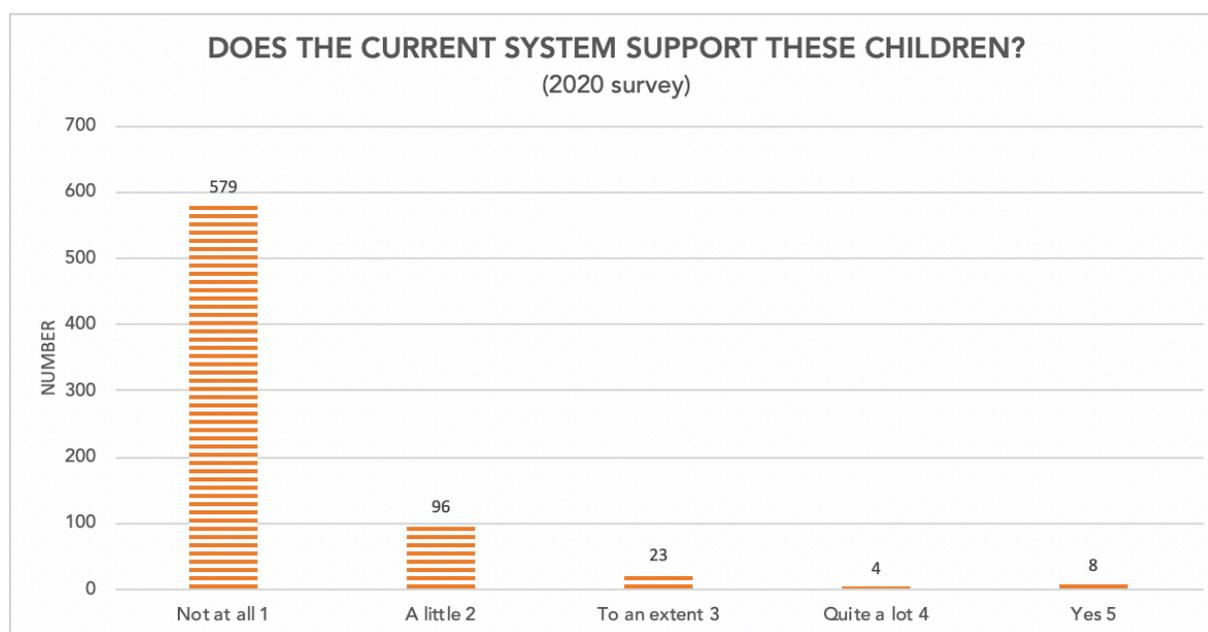
If you forced your child to attend did it help to resolve their anxiety or other difficulties?



Forcing attendance clearly doesn't work. In 2018 36% of respondents said it had not helped – in 2020 this has risen to 44% (214 parents). Less parents responded that it may have worked and there remained over 50% (53% in 2020, 59% in 2018) who claimed it

made things much worse. This is extremely worrying. We must surely now address the widespread policy to force attendance and ensure that Government guidance does not support this approach.

Do you think the current system adequately supports children who struggle to attend school?

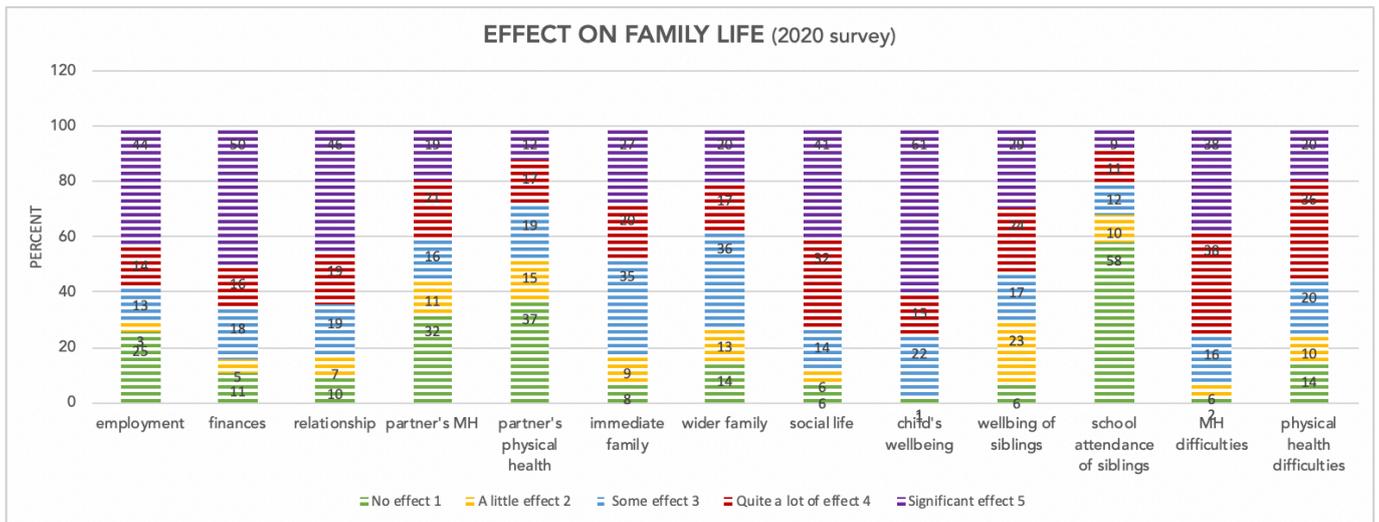


[710 responses]

The results show that the current system does NOT support children who struggle to attend school.

Family Life

Have you noticed any effects on the following aspects of family life?



The most significant effects are on the child's wellbeing (61% or 431 responses), family finances (50.5% or 354 responses), relationship with partner (45.7% or 294 responses) and employment (43.9% or 307 responses). Relationships with immediate and wider family, and friendships/social life were also adversely affected, scoring more than some effect (ie. 3-5) in 82.9%, 73.2% and 87.7% respectively. Thankfully the wellbeing of siblings wasn't as strongly affected and their own school attendance was unaffected by 57.9% or 332 respondents.

Further Comments

The lack of support for my child has been terrible, she was basically sent home and left to me to look after. Relationships with friend and family have deteriorated and we have been left to deal with this ourselves and finance everything. Our money can only go so far as have myself off work, dad is working and we have 2 other children too.

I felt abandoned by school as they just said we have lots of adjustments in place but he has to come into school, they were happy that they had done their job but my child's attendance was about 50% year 10 and 18% year 11, the school feel he will not get an access to education grant so won't apply / delay applying even though camhs/ehws asked the school to refer

Thank you for everything you do in helping my children & our family. It's truly appreciated. It's very lonely out here.

EHCP must be transparent, we have a 'cultural interpreter' yet nobody seems to know what it entails. 'Suitably qualified' is another lame quote that isn't helpful and easy for school to wiggle out of. This impacts on the child and results in needs not being met. Schools Senco should have regular accredited training to hold the Senco title - I've witnessed some shockingly bad practice- it should be law so not to fail our children.

I feel schools do not understand us as parents and what we go through we want our children in school and happy and educated but if your child has been bullied and it's led to anxiety and nothing was done about it in the first instance by school now they pressure you because your child won't go in is that rite and fair no they caused the problems, the senco refused to see their issues with my child she's on the waiting list for camhs possible high functioning autism anxiety depression she's also going through constipation and uncontrollable soiling yet the school are forcing her in she's sitting in her own poo all day because she's too embarrassed to tell them! Where's my child's dignity come into this I'm sure they would not attend school in that position yet they report me to social services blaming me because she doesn't want to go school! I'm trying all I can but she was bullied at the school and it's affected her she's become a very solitude little girl struggling with friendships etc the pressure is immense on her and on me and all this is just because of attendance markings and numbers if she misses registration she's marked down for the day it's such a struggle to get my daughter motivated and wanting to go to school I can't just put her over my shoulder and get her in it takes walking to school I've had problems with all my kids in this school all had learning disabilities and they refused to recognise it now my son 16 only has just received an ehcp! It's beyond a joke my other son just before he went to secondary special needs school my kids are missing out because schools refuse to see their needs and meet them it's heart breaking! Things need to change they need skills for kids with learning needs and disabilities because the half of them don't know what they are doing these are children's futures their playing with!

I think it's unacceptable for schools to offer no support but at the same time expect a letter saying your child is unfit for school, when this is impossible as it takes time and you can't see a GP or specialist every time your child is off school with ongoing illness, physical or otherwise.

We have been under lots of 'systems' for years. The only thing that helped was me paying for an independent EP with experience of anxiety coming in to advise everyone. All pressure removed. It's working. I'm seeing a slight increase in anxiety now but we hopefully know what to do if it creeps up. After 3 years of hell, an ehcp and amazing attitude from mainstream secondary school have helped my son get from 10% to 100% attendance. It's still a struggle, often, and it's only because I have fought and

fought (often with the very people who were supposed to help - eg Camhs, LA, ESMA) that he has had any help or support at all. It shouldn't have to be like this

Some questions only offered yes or no responses, when my response would have been partly.

Schools do not do enough to help children with hidden disabilities. Far too much pressure is out on families and children to ignore their mental health struggles and force them thru to boost schools grade records and their test result scores. My daughter hasn't attended since 2018 and despite having a ehcp hasn't been given much help to get any form of education. I spent 12 month having appointments with a senco promising alternative provision and she wasn't noting down meetings etc and then was sacked. I've recently put in complaints with the LA and the school regarding lack of support and help. I don't understand how a child who has had dealings with social workers and police etc can be out of school for so long and nobody has bat an eyelid. She's not been seen by anyone since December 2019 and yet nobody has even checked to see if she is safe! Safeguarding is a massive issue with this!

There is no support. You are passed round all the different agencies who acknowledge what a difficult and upsetting situation it is and then say there is nothing they can do to help! I feel lost and unsupported and all i need is for someone to start helping my son in education with the right techniques and understanding before his mental health is impacted beyond return. He is too anxious to return to his current school and they admit they can't support him yet there has been no support, only pressure to find a new school for him. All of which have been full for his year with multiple pupils in that year already with EHCPs so no school wants to take more on. Yet I am pressurised to get him into a new school. He hasn't been in school since 1st week in Jan and done no work in that time. Family support worker started our triage by telling me he's leaving and there's no longer and services to help. My son should have a mentor and counselling but there wasn't any they could give him. He said he would write to me in a week to 10 days. It's been over a month. No one helps.

Too many so called professionals are too quick to put blame elsewhere rather than at the door of the school. I've yet to meet a senco who hasn't lied to me. The way parents are treated by the schools is shocking and I can only imagine by the way they have treated myself by how they have treated my son.

Son has not received education for 16 months. School very unsupportive and had no contact from senco or head

Just frustrated with the lack of help for a child without a diagnosis

NFIS's work is essential to give confidence to parents and students, and to overcome ignorance among professionals and public about the reality of the struggles we face.

This whole process has been exhausting. Now my child has an ehcp the fight was worth it. She is in school, learning, the team support her and understand her . They respect us as a family and she has a chance to finally fly. But it's taken until she is 12. So much education lost, so many friendships not made, so many hardships no child should endure, so much pain and unnecessary distress, family time stolen. With no accountability for the head unless I sue her.

Which once my child turns 16 we will discuss with her. So we wait and hope she doesn't hurt any more families. It's barbaric what this system does to our most vulnerable children.

As a direct result of my child's poor attendance I lost my job in November. I am now unemployed and unable to get benefits because my partner earns just over the threshold. I am now isolated at home with her during the day.

Child is infinitely happier at home. School was a box ticking exercise for the "charity" and the Council's Inclusion Services. The whole thing was awful for everyone. Better now, but with nowhere to go. Shame.

I admire what you do. Thank you for supporting us all through this. Together we are stronger!

Only that a CAMH worker made out that I was someone to be afraid of they reported me to Social Services in no time I had them on my door doing a full core assessment CAMHS said I fabricated my sons illness and they suspected I had mental health problems. All because the CAMHS worker who was assigned to us I disagreed with them on a few things and because I wouldn't do what they said I told them NO to protect my child they reported me it was personal. I tried to raise a complaint against CAMHS and surprisingly our file went missing the CAMHS worker suddenly disappeared into thin air they made it so difficult to form a complaint if I could I would still do it today . The worse time of my life almost destroyed my family . They came into our home and dropped a grenade I suffer with flash backs and nightmares . A terrifying experience.

My child is only in Year 1 and has already faced numerous exclusions and a permanent exclusion. He has even attended a support base for children with social and emotional needs and still schools struggle to support children who struggle in a school setting but wants to attend school.

More needs to be done to support our children, especially SEN children.

I knew my son was heading for a car crash in year 2. I changed to a tiny school and it improved. But by year 4 I knew we were back in car crash route. The primary were useless. Didn't recognise his difficulties at all - said it was a "home issue". Had to push the paperwork through by doing it myself. In year 6 pushed for reduced timetable. Had attended coding issued after I imposed it myself. Secondary school were much more helpful. Own TA and own room despite no EHCP or funding in place. But son still couldn't cope. Out of school for 10 months before given alternative provision. Had to fight for the right one. It's a long way away and I don't qualify for transport because he is still registered at his mainstream school - because the alternative provision isn't a registered school.

The best thing I have ever done for my child was to remove him from school environment. The damage it has done to his mental health and wellbeing is disgusting not to mention his physical health and mine too. There is a total lack of support and funding he is much happier and actually learning now, instead of being bullied and threatened that his mum will go to jail, which terrified him amongst other things that he has had to endure both from pupils and staff.

Everyone is always nice till you start asking for support or reasonable adjustments that are needed. Then it turns to blame games to make you be quiet and go away, or just totally ignore you and do as they please. Meetings for attendance or sen paperwork are a waste of time no one listens to the child or parent especially the school. Nothing gets followed through on that is agreed and no one knows what to do to help a child go back to/stay in school, so easiest option is lets blame the parents. If I treated my child the way he has been treated within the school system and the trauma he has endured I would be in court so why is it ok for schools to do this with no accountability it's a total disgrace.

This school system is not fit for any child let alone one with individuality

I have Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and have been unable to work for 9 years. If I had not been at home in order to facilitate his needs and provide flexible transport then as a family we would have struggled even more. Our relationship with the School is proactive and open, built through five years of supporting our daughter's increasing and profound mental health problems. The challenges we have faced with her brother are as severe but less complex, and he is less self-aware and less able to communicate his feelings and needs. He has relied very heavily on my relationship with School leadership and the SEN department. School have not, however, been particularly helpful or imaginative in their working practice around either of my children beyond accepting that I was working with Camhs and that if *I* couldn't get them in then nobody could and they were marked as ill.

My child got moved to a specialist school and is now thriving.

My granddaughter was thoroughly unhappy and lost most of her confidence in yr7 and the start of year 8. During the second yr of HE she began to come to a few educational experience sessions organised by a local HE mum but still not interested in making friendships . The return of foster daughter after what should have been FD forever home broke down - she'd been away from us for 20 months - spurred GD to offer to attempt a new school with FD. The first month or so - November before he place was offered was beyond horrendous and my daughter nearly removed her. GD anxiety and anger through the roof but January.. something clicked ! Right now she's coping well- has a group of friends - and academically interested and achieving . We're getting positive reports. There have been issues with one member of staff giving unwarranted late and absence marks and threats of detention because GD wore black trainers not shoes but SENCO had previously agreed due to sensory issues but this all seems quiet currently

Just so disappointed in the school system, I have 3 boys, one in a specialist school (fantastic totally supportive, when he school avoids they come to the home and support him back into school, very relaxed gentle child led school, very little pressure etc..) - took 6 settings to get to this, he was pushed out of most of the other settings he attended as they put far too much pressure on him (PDA diagnosis) and then punished him for panic attacks. school system caused full breakdown. My middle son has severe school based anxiety and went into full school refusal year 5 so withdrew and home ed for 3 years as he was so traumatised by school (still has huge school based trauma and cannot even go near our local mainstream school, applied for EHCP, immediately got EHCP no fight but now no school will say they can meet need (one specialist indie school could but is full) so he is out of school. Youngest son has no sen but physical health issues which affect attendance but he likes school. school were given all consultant notes etc and authorised all absences year 5, in year 6 new head teacher sent out a letter saying after 5 days unauthorised absence (10 sessions) parents will be fined. After 10 days absence in a term and a half (all authorised all genuine illness due to chronic conditions) school sent a letter home saying they would no longer authorise absences (despite my son still having the chronic conditions) and requested to see his GP notes/speak to a GP. My GP was not happy with the school but wrote a letter summarising the letters they already had and stated that my son was to stay off school when he was vomiting. School have said nothing more about his absences (now at 27 sessions over 24 weeks).

Thank goodness for your website and social media acctts!!

Bullying was very badly dealt with. Staff poorly trained in trauma adhd anxiety etc. Parents blamed for difficulties especially accusations of lack of discipline. Staff showed obvious favouritism for the most academic children. Lack of empathy regarding problems at home.

Lost with lack of diagnosis, told anxiety and to take her to school, resulted in a hospital admission for 4 months as so unwell. Invisible illness and previous high grade meant school won't give SEND provision. School not wheelchair accessible, teachers do not understand POTS ME/CFS. Currently 1 to 1 tuition after nearly 18 months off school, not gradual return to school allowed.

Big thank you to all at not fine in school for the amazing support couldn't have got through last few years without this page and website.

I firmly believe that early intervention would have probably helped to avoid my child's complete school refusal. Instead we faced obstruction from school, including obstruction in helping my child accessing camhs and obstruction in getting him a diagnosis. They also tried to put me off applying for an EHCP and were very obstructive when writing their report by including completely inaccurate information (leading to a useless EHCP). Furthermore, my son was verbally abused and restrained by school staff (when he was 7!) which worsened his anxiety to the extent that he had not attended since last May.

Thanks for all you do

I wish I'd known we weren't the only family with school refusal issues and feeling pushed into home education excepting by the head teacher

Fining parents doesn't work. Schools are one size fits all, this doesn't work either.

I think the school's response has been inconsistent depending on who we see when I do get her in. Her main issues are sensory related but she's had no support for that. Also, a nurturing approach really works but not all staff provide a nurturing support. One of the worst offenders is in the SEN department! One day, I will get a lovely teacher coax her in. The next day, the lady from the SEN department will tell my daughter off for coming in late. The following day, I can't get her in at all.

The Govt needs to look at the evidence. Our SEND children are short-changed in every direction throughout the Education system. No child is *just* a statistic for the attendance algorithms, but this increases exponentially for those children who have daily battles with adversity well before the bell. Their achievements should have the acknowledgement, not the days they don't quite get there.

Thank you for everything you do 😊😊

I don't think I'd of made it through the past few years without this groups advice pointers and empathy but above all knowing that I wasn't alone in my struggles with my son - since starting home schooling he's becoming him again and the suicidal thoughts have gone - I'm finally albeit slowly getting my boy back

Our son wasn't diagnosed until age 8 with ASD so he was forced to go through first school and nursery with no support and on behaviour plans for being labelled a naughty boy. He was restrained pretty much every day of his school life and we now feel he has PTSD as a result which is impacting his teenage experience of school plus he's in an ASD school which uses a lot of agency staff who do not have the correct training and understanding of autism and ADHD. Our son has always struggled with school and only attends as he understands that if he doesn't go his mum will go to prison for non-attendance. The

school he attends has cages as outdoor spaces, no changing room to change for PE (they have to change in smelly toilet), no science lab, no teachers who can teach pe or sports qualifications and no suitable areas to play football or sports or for teenage boys to have an opportunity to do sports to help them self-regulate eg a gym or field etc - he feels trapped in a prison but we have no choice as there are no alternatives and no other options. His curriculum was also narrowed as it's a special school and could only choose certain subjects - this is not ok 😞 our son should have the same options as his peers in mainstream. His behaviours are communicating that his needs are not being met. I don't think they ever have been during his whole school life and I don't think they ever will be sadly.

I think that we are in an exceptional situation where our school have been brilliant and I think that this school should be an example to how to do it right. It has been hard at times, and I know the school couldn't cope with lots of students like my son, but he is achieving thanks to their support and acceptance.

Schools are very unsupportive and do not help it's all about the numbers for them not the child's wellbeing or mental health

My son experienced trauma at his previous School which no one wants to confirm (or even acknowledge) and he presents with a PDA profile which LA and CCG refuse to recognise! The emphasis has always been to pressure my son to attend School even though his Anxiety is clearly School-based. I feel that our voices have been ignored and even an independent EP said current School are not meeting his needs - School and LA trying to ignore!

I was shocked how low LA and school resort with unfair and illegal tactics instead of acting with integrity to support a vulnerable child

NFIS was my lifeline. Thank you. I lost friends and gave up my job but NFIS was always there to reassure and a space I could speak without judgement

Schools need to learn more on mental health and school refusal More funding needs to be given to schools to aid help for children that are struggling in the long term and less threats for prosecution

I believe that the decline in my child's mental health, could possibly have been prevented with earlier intervention. My child has experienced a series of significant trauma, which was known to school and to mental health services. Sufficient resources would enable more timely and effective family support when such times arise. Thus causing less distress to children and families, ultimately saving finances and service saturation in the longer term.

The school have treated my son so badly. They punish him for behaviour that he cannot help. There is no understanding of how to help him. No connection between senco and the teacher. They have used the EHCP to get rid of him. They have done it to so many other SEN children in the school. It has effected my confidence and my mental health and also my son who has missed out on so much education. They send him home formally and informally as they say he is not coping when it is clear they are not coping. I just don't know how they get away with it. I dont challenge them as I want to keep a good relationship with them as my son is still there.

We are about to homeschool due to difficulties accessing a proper education for our son via the school and LEA whilst he has been too ill to attend school and the constant looming presence of the EWO

"wanting to stay involved" even though our child is under CAMHS and being treated by them. This is causing stress and anxiety due to them trying hard to take us to court rather than understanding and helping or supporting us

My son has recently got a special needs place and still struggling to get to school. It brings it all back in an instance every time he hesitates. It's broken us all

I am so very grateful to you for everything you do. Thank you

The current system is broken. I work tirelessly to home educate one child after I watched his mental health fall apart and functional bowel issues as a result from the anxiety, and another who is disabled and EOTAS as they LA can't provide any placements within county. The lack of support for the EOTAS child made a huge contribution for the education and mental health of the other. School promised constantly to provide extra support and it never happened and I watched my son deteriorate mentally as a result so I removed him too. Since then, Camhs have signed us off saying EHE has had a huge positive impact on him. EP tested him and he's classed as gifted child working at 4 years above his peers. I tried to get EHCP to support the financial burden but was refused as no diagnosis so we are now having to pursue dx to get him support

My daughter was severely traumatised by her experiences within mainstream school. She was constantly put in internal exclusion, excluded, threatened with permanent exclusion, managed move to another school and transferred to alternative provisions. No understanding of her needs (diagnosed ASC) within school, constantly labelled as 'naughty, disruptive' when she was in crisis. The school just wanted to off roll her rather than support her. I was constantly told there wasn't any staff to help and lack of funding to help her. Also was told that support couldn't be put in place whilst we were going through the assessment process of diagnosing ASC which overall took 2 and a half years. Which resulted in her becoming anxious and depressed and having a breakdown and being unable to leave the house for months. I really don't know what I would have done without the help and support of Sheffield Education Autism Team and SENDIASS whom have been amazingly supportive throughout.

The system is draconian and needs a complete overhaul to fit with modern life and children's SEND, if we actually had the lawful support our daughter would be entitled to then she would be able to attend school and not need an EHCP. Staff even those who are supposed to be trained are not trained enough, they don't work with parents and they are more concerned about budgets and attendance records, rather than the mental health issues or disability of the children, all schools and LA's should no longer be able to unlawfully mark our children absent incorrectly and threatened with prosecution for truancy when they have health issues.

My son started experiencing high levels of anxiety and depression towards the end of year 10. The pressure of his GCSE and lack of understanding in school really damaged his mental health... they permanently excluded him in January of this year and he didn't receive any education until 12th March 2020 when he was finally given online tutoring! This has affected our immediate family in all aspects of our lives...to the point that my own mental health has started to deteriorate!

There have been numerous reports by government committees, DfE, Ofsted etc etc acknowledging how broken the system is yet no sign of action. LAs and schools continue to get away with breaking the law and failing to support children with SEND and there is no accountability.

Despite school making adjustments and us at home, our 9 year old child goes to bed anxious every school night and wakes up anxious every school morning. We have no idea what to do for secondary school. The local secondary school is not appropriate for our daughter but there is nothing that would suit her anywhere near us. It's a joke. We've paid taxes and yet there's no appropriate provision that will help her thrive. We will apply for an EHCP but even if we get it we doubt that will help us.

This group is invaluable with its information

Being a parent of 2 with PDA and ADHD emotional dysregulation pervasive anxiety it's been a rough road. Education needs to be child led person centred focused around child's special interests; it needs to be flexible with collaboration from all parties involved from parent child school social care health and family unit...this is imperative as are the outcomes agreed...happiness and mental health is key...trust is required before any of above can be achieved. I'm a mom of 6 with SEND I have seen trauma induced by inappropriate placements failure to make adjustments lack of staff training lack of funding, funding given not spent appropriately. Abuse and neglect by LA and school. It's not acceptable and needs to change!

Thank goodness for you!

School or LA have not offered any education for over 12 months. My daughter was finally referred to PRS but under medical because school wouldn't refer under behaviour so camhs referred under anxiety but this meant my daughter was mixing with children very different to her, they would not change this so daughter refused there too. The provision has apparently been cancelled now not informed just advised via social worker!!

School waiting for a diagnosis on paper rather than taking parent history and accounts. Waiting until at crisis point before applying for EHCP and putting me off applying. Not recognising extent of masking in school.

I find that we are all trying to fight the same battle but authorities do not want to help or do not understand

I have a daughter with now confirmed asd and feel my concerns and daily battles were ignored by the school from year 1 until my daughter hit crisis in year 6, for sufficient support to be offered to my daughter. Multiple referrals were made by my gp to CAMHS and paediatrician but we're always rejected.

Thank you for all you do ❤️

It concerns me that the waiting times are far too long for diagnosis and also that my daughters school seem to think a few tweaks will make a difference but not u deter a ding the problem.

Felt the school were not interested, no one took it seriously, all friends thought it was being faked

Even having an EHCP doesn't always help. Transition to college was poor, inadequate handover. Having to fight for everything is so draining.

This fb page (Not Fine in School) has been invaluable during an incredibly stressful time in need. Thank you.

Let parents in the classroom she loves NZ school but UK school is like Fort Knox and all kids are stressed. Two totally different worlds. Encourage school exchanges.

I work as a mental health nurse.

The NFIS is always striving to help/improve both our children's and our family lives so thank you 😊

School raised concerns when my son started in reception class and tried to say he had a behavioural problems. However, they did nothing to try to find the reasons why he was struggling and when we tried to get help for him, they denied there was a problem and lied to other professionals. That led to us obtaining a private ASD diagnosis at a cost of £1,800. We now need to pay for further assessments, as the LA didn't fully assess his needs - in fact all they did was ask school staff, who said his needs were minimal. Before we made a parental request for an EHC Needs Assessment, school said he was 2 academic years behind his age. However, as soon as we made our assessment request, school said he was age appropriate. This meant he made 2 years academic progress in just 1½ terms. So I can only conclude that to get the support my son needs and is legally entitled to, we need to pay to obtain the assessments the LA should have done. Also will need to go through at least 2 appeal processes and if the LA don't eventually issue an EHCP that will meet his needs, we could need to submit a third. We made our parental request in June 2019, but we're a long way from getting him an EHCP, even though the process should only take 20 weeks in total. And this has resulted in him refusing to go to school, frequent episodes of illness and many unmet needs. This led us to home educating him, something I believe that would have been unnecessary, had his needs been adequately met in an appropriate school.

Parents should not have to struggle so hard with so many services just to try to get the support their child is morally & legally entitled to. Thank you to NFIS for all your help.

Cfs is not understood by medical or educational professionals. They google it and believe the tripe that NICE guidelines have put out there.

My son was 11 when he was taken from me due to me being unable to get him to school. I have not seen him for 5 years. Everything was blamed on me I was later identified as Autistic which I thought my son had but I was according to them making up signs no one else saw. My son is now 16 been in a unit and is leaving with no qualifications as he could not sit in main stream class due to behaviour. My son tells me it's not your fault it is the schools that have let me down.

The stigma surrounding my child's difficulty in school was the biggest hurdle. I felt I was fighting against so much more than just school attendance. The stress surrounding this escalated the stress at home and negatively impacted the relationship between myself and my child. Once I stopped worrying what the school thought, I felt I could begin truly advocating for my child.

It is exhausting and if anybody thinks that we 'allow' our child to not attend school then they need to come and see the negative impact it has at home on family and friendships. There is no real support provided. I feel like I have to find out everything myself and that some of the so called help offered is just a tick in a box rather than any real help. NFIS is a real help and parents should be directed to it by schools.

I am aware that our experience has been very much more positive than a lot of others. We have been blessed to have supportive staff at both primary and secondary schools without whom things would have

been very different. We have found an amazing paediatrician who has fought to get the other professionals involved who can diagnose our daughter's HFASD and now we can start to find our way back from the place we went to when our daughter experienced an autistic burnout 2 years ago aged just 10 due to her previously unrecognised ASD.

There is nothing elective in elective home education - forced by unmet need & health concerns
Gp letter and Camhs letter plus many reports noting difficulties. All refused by the head saying the letters did not specifically say "*** is unable to attend" All the letters reports did all state though that *** needs a small school small classes and trained and experienced teachers with ASD to reduce ***'s significant anxiety and sensory difficulties. My son lasted 3 months in secondary school before not being able to attend due to anxiety, bullying and not understanding the curriculum. He has now been without any education since November 2019 and I am at tribunal on 20th April to request a specialist school that my son can cope with.

Been asking school for support for 4 years, becoming harder to get into school but little support or understanding

Head teacher good inclusion officer ok but not allowed to use common sense, P & P's the biggest problem

I have had to battle the LA since 2012, just to get the support my son is legally entitled to. It has been exhausting (both physically and mentally) and financially draining. Living with a child with additional needs is stressful. However, by far the largest contributor to the huge amounts of stress in my life, has been caused by the very people who should be supporting my son - school staff and the Local Authority.

Having to wait for a ridiculous amount of time for CAMHS to support my child has had a negative impact upon the her and our family.

At the moment my daughter has only been off school for 2 weeks and so while school are accepting our GP letter currently, this will only last so long and we were warned by school before we got the letter that the Educational Welfare Officer would have to get in touch about daughters absence.

Lack of any help and access to CAMHS was worst problem

when will schools let us take mental health days for our children and not just mark it as unauthorised?
Why can't head teachers realise that if your emotional health is not good then you are way below your peer group when it comes to learning. Emotional and mental health is more important than academia. The curriculum is too hard and fast paced. my child has emotional delay and developmental trauma. In year 4 he cannot keep up yet he is bright but has so many ACEs that he is finding it so hard. school don't realise sometimes he masks how he feels to he gets home and then bomb explodes. schools don't meet the needs of additional needs and I asked for an echp or a referral to a children's worker or safe families as we were going under. Head said we didn't need it. SCHOOL IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN PARENTING A CARE EXPERIENCED CHILD. THEY THINK BECAUSE THEY EDUCATE THEY KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT TRAUMA. ACTUALLY THEY KNOW LITTLE AND ARE UNWILLING TO LEARN. One size fits all education system does not work for the most vulnerable children in our society. Also Pupil Premium payment for care experienced children is sucked up into the schools general pot and used on anything.

My son started secondary school happy and full of confidence. He left the school 6 months later BROKEN. He has been home educated for two years now and is only just becoming the happy, confident not be was.

CAHMS said they would recommend she is tested for ASD but never received anything. Very difficult to know what to do or where to go for help or advice

I have endured, aggression, Parent blame, evidence building to blame child, disbelieving reality, school having an agenda, school stating would not meet with me, telling LA parents fault, blaming health services, after my child felt trapped and in trouble when ill in the medical room for 2 hours having a panic attack. School referred to early help who said nothing wrong at home or with child that it was school to blame - school ignored and wouldn't meet with me.

The present system is not centred to the child the child has to fit the system. Also school still do not recognise the difficulties some children are coping with while pretending to conform in school.

Someone somewhere has to sit up and take notice. We've had 2 years of hell, I've considered suicide. Secondary school and their draconian approach to punishment has almost definitely caused 90% of my son's issues as has their apparent refusal to address the bullying issues that he has experienced at the hands of both peers and, more worryingly, teachers. We have been told by school that his problems are down to bad parenting, but we have 3 other children with no such issues. My husband and I are heart broken and worried sick about my son's future and no-one appears to give a damn.

My son is 14 and because there was no early help available as he didn't meet the criteria and a late diagnosis of ASC just before his 14th birthday he is now not able to engage in any education or formal learning.

Had to beg social work for support. Teachers said my daughter was acting and there was nothing wrong with her when having a panic attack in school. Told me my daughter needs to be more resilient to bullies. Head teacher told my daughter that if she doesn't make an effort to attend school regularly then social work would be involved and there would be consequences. I had to do all the work ask for support and find out what had happened to my child as at first I had no idea what had happened to my daughter.

Why do we have to deal with so many people to get our children the support they need to cope at school? It's an endless loop of waiting for appointments. I don't understand why a child has to be in crisis before (and if) they get help. So many are failed by this system. Thank heavens for this group; at least I can find some answers. Thank you.

Blaming Parents for their children having SEN whether physical or mental health impacts on every aspect of a family's wellbeing. It has torn my family apart. My marriage of 25 years ended this month due to the trauma and lack of understanding which has been implemented on our family. I am now dealing with PTSD after 2 false Fii Allegations with no support. I have left my family home which I have been renovating for 10 years. I am left heartbroken and sad. I would not wish this experience on anyone. Thank you to Not Fine In School for all they do to support families going through hell.

I think the school's response has been inconsistent depending on who we see when I do get her in. Her main issues are sensory related but she's had no support for that. Also, a nurturing approach really works

but not all staff provide a nurturing support. One of the worst offenders is in the SEN department! One day, I will get a lovely teacher coax her in. The next day, the lady from the SEN department will tell my daughter off for coming in late. the following day, I can't get her in at all.

I have based this survey on our current situation. We were home ed for the whole of secondary due to unmet needs. Now out of college for same reason.

My son experienced trauma at his previous School which no one wants to confirm (or even acknowledge) and he presents with a PDA profile which LA and CCG refuse to recognise! The emphasis has always been to pressure my son to attend School even though his Anxiety is clearly School-based. I feel that our voices have been ignored and even an independent EP said current School are not meeting his needs - School and LA trying to ignore!

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Even having an EHCP doesn't always help. Transition to college was poor, inadequate handover. Having to fight for everything is so draining.

School finally put IDP into place September of year 11 after involvement from snap cymru. Struggle to get school to adhere to plan