

Elective Home Education

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Background

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of parents of children of compulsory school age to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to meet any special educational needs.
- Parents may fulfil this duty either by ensuring regular attendance at school or otherwise. The word 'otherwise' affirms parents' right under the law to educate their child at home instead of sending them to school. This is referred to as Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Whilst Local Authorities have no statutory duties in relation to monitoring the quality of home education on a routine basis, they do have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Local Authority Offer

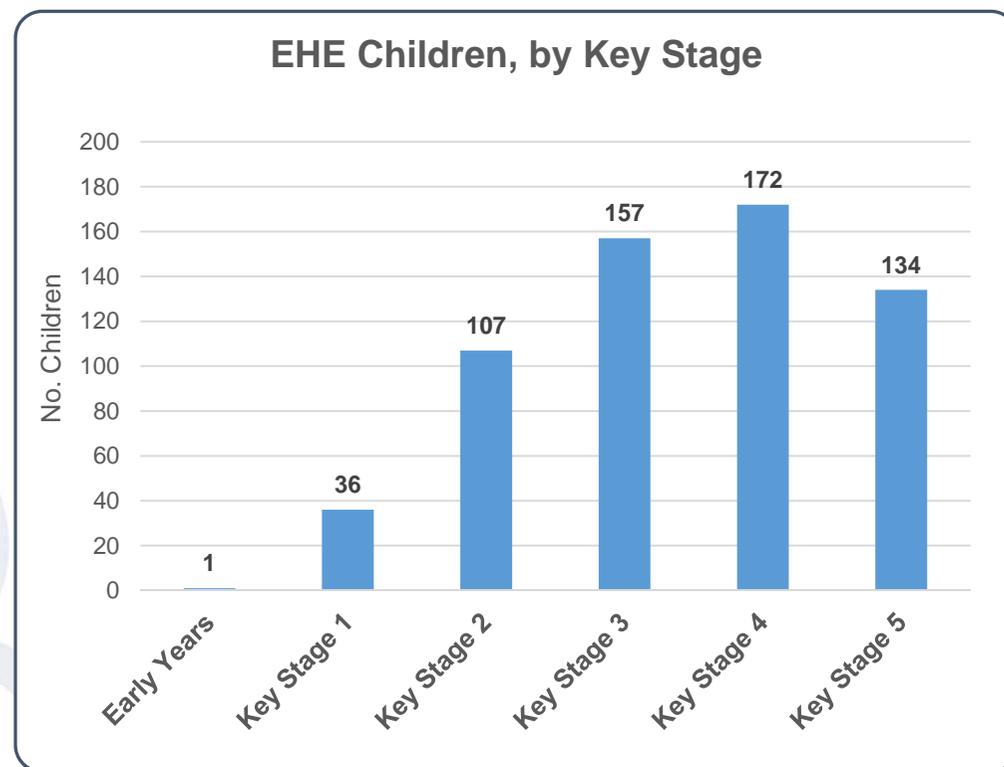
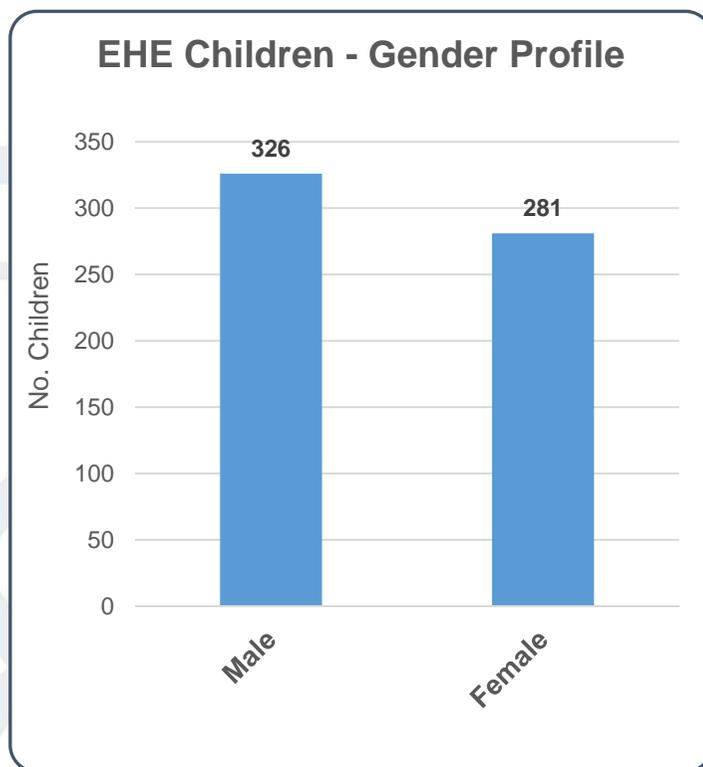
- When the Local Authority is notified of a parent's intention to home educate, a visit is offered to the family
- Working with the Inclusive Education Service and Education and Skills, the C&F Prevention Service has developed the EHE pathway which relates to:
 - The notification from schools of a parent's intention to home educate
 - The offer of an annual visit for children who are educated at home
 - The offer of an EHE identification badge, which is renewed annually
- As it is not a statutory requirement, parents are not obligated to accept the offer of the visit

EHE Visits

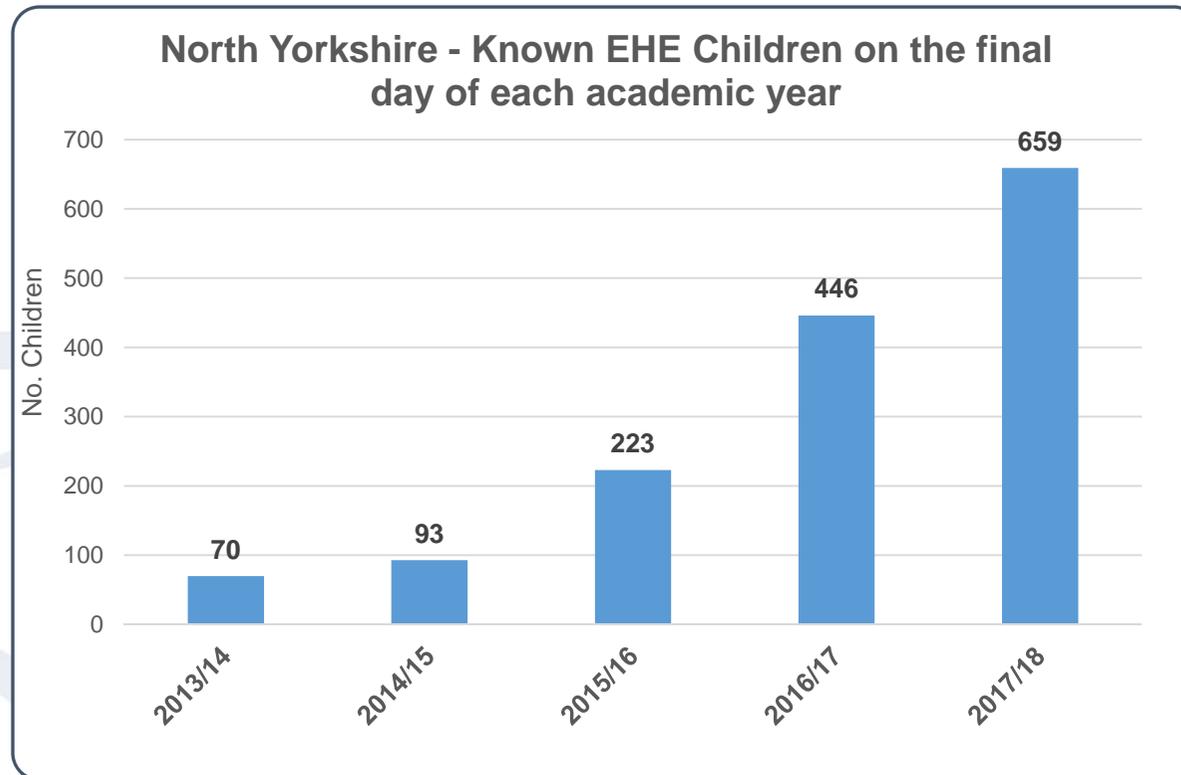
- When the Local Authority is notified of the intention to Home Educate, the case is allocated to a Family Outreach Worker (FOW):
 - FOW makes an offer of a home visit to the family
 - If at any stage concerns are identified with regards to the child/young person's welfare, these are immediately discussed with the Team Leader for Case Work
 - Where possible, a Healthy Child Practitioner attends alongside the FOW
 - FOWs are able to offer information/advice and signpost to appropriate resources to support parents who are electing to home educate
- If any concerns are identified regarding the quality of the home education, the Prevention Service will notify the Education and Skills Service
- If the child is identified as having Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND), the Inclusive Education Service are notified and will be sent a record of the visit

Number of EHE Children in North Yorkshire

- On 4 October 2018, we were aware of 607 children and young people being home schooled in North Yorkshire:



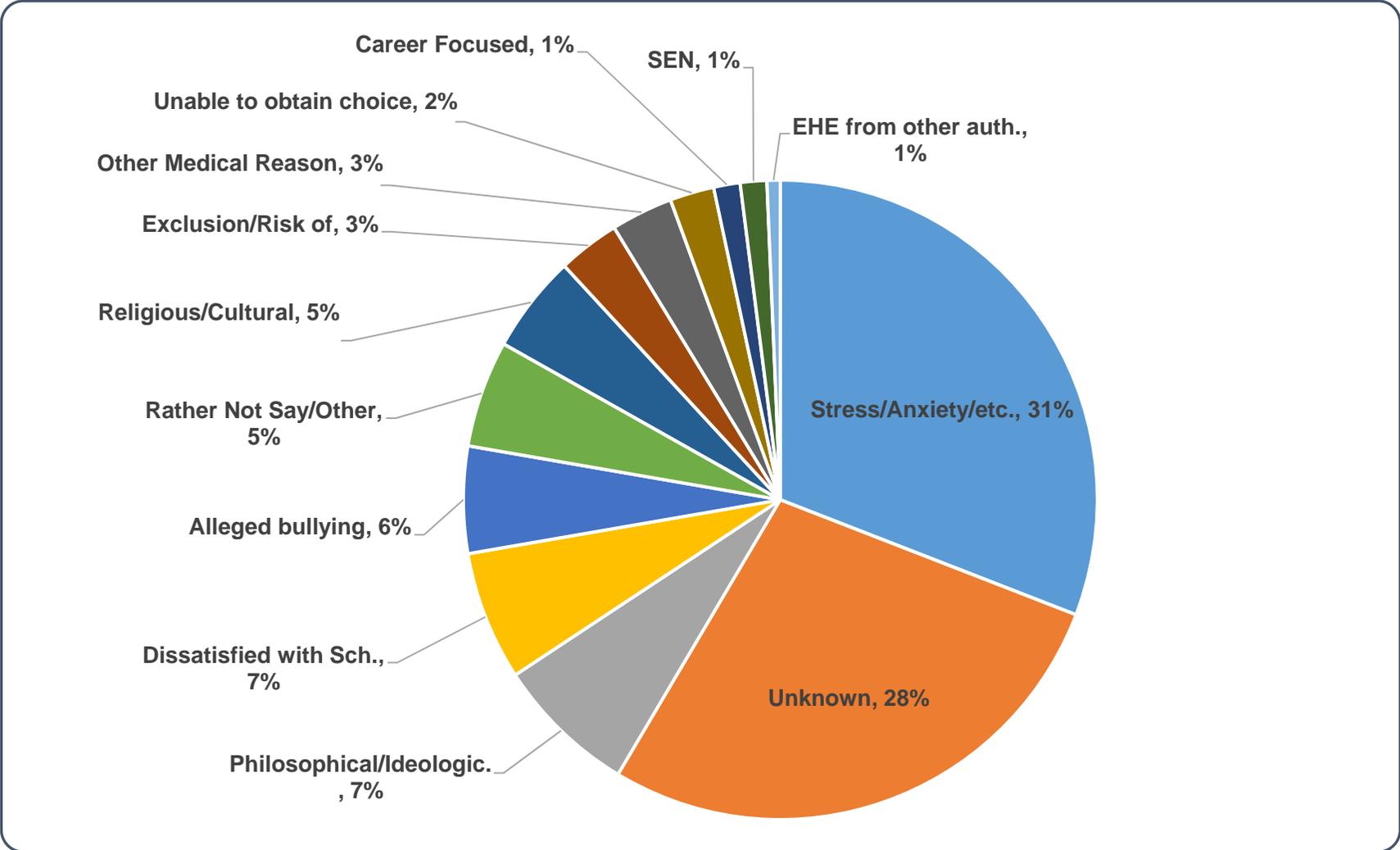
Number of EHE Children (2013/14 – 2017/18)



- LAs have reported an average 20% year-on-year increase in the number of children and young people known to be home schooled over the previous 5 years

(Source: ADCS elective home education survey 2018 report)

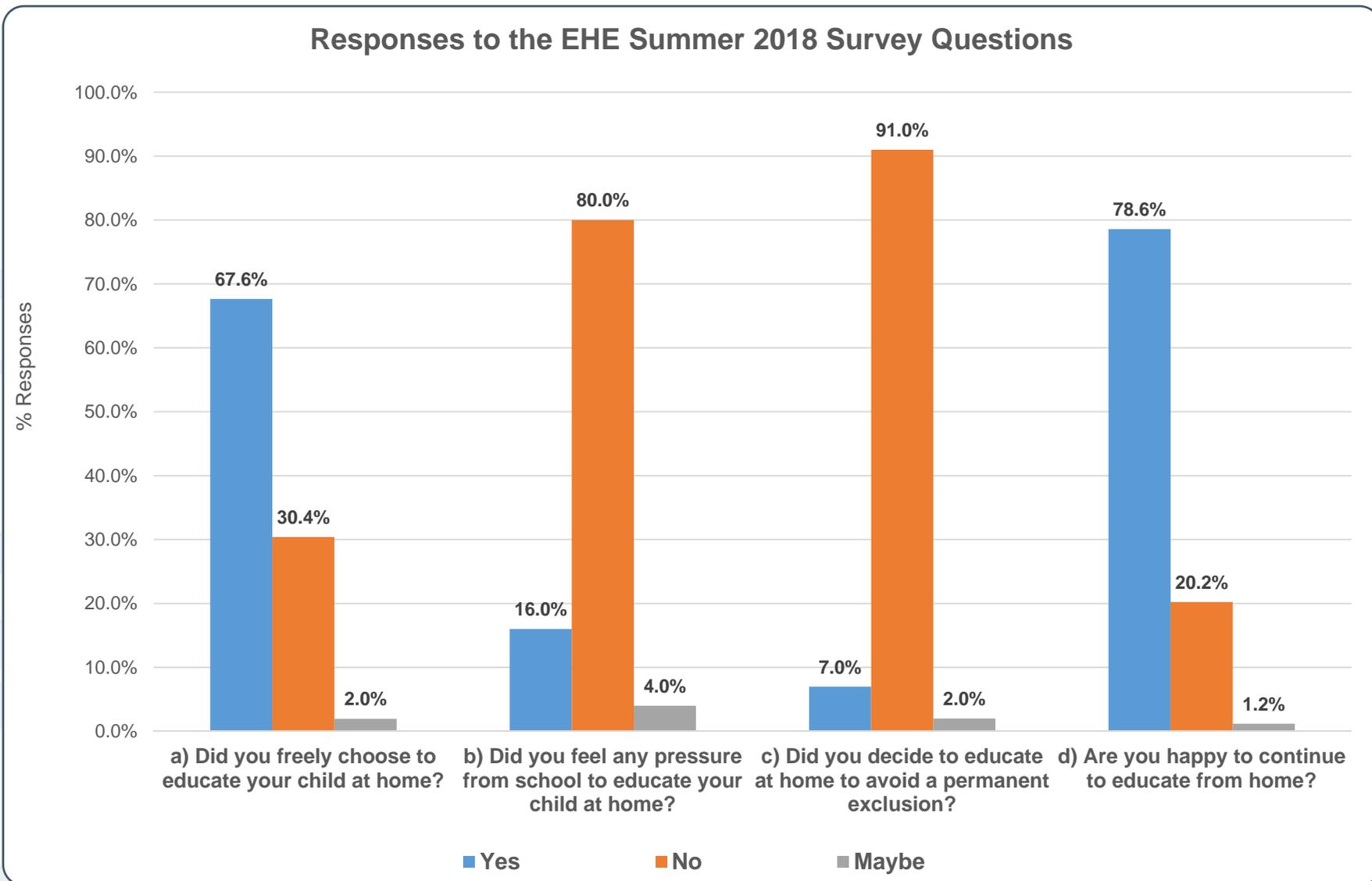
Parent / Carer Reasons for Choosing to Home Educate



EHE – Summer 2018 Family Survey

- Anecdotal feedback received suggesting a factor contributing to the increase in the home education population relates to some schools poorly advising families about EHE and encouraging action that was not always in the best interests of the child.
- In order to test this hypothesis, we undertook to directly contact 262 families over the 2018 summer and ask them to respond to some questions
- Also invited them to offer additional comment on their EHE experience
- Overall, as part of the survey, 121 families (46%) were contacted

Key Findings - Summer 2018 Survey



Key Themes - Summer 2018 Survey

- Key themes from the survey in terms of what led parents/carers to educate their child(ren) at home include:
 - Increased levels of stress/anxiety when at school, associated with mental health deterioration often linked to bullying and/or peer group pressure.
 - An unaccommodating school 'culture' in relation to not meeting the specific needs of the 'individual' child, leading to increasing parental (and pupil) disillusionment with the mainstream education system. Autism is also a feature.
 - Communication breakdown between schools and parents also feature within the responses to the survey
 - Where parents do not feel listened to or confident in the school's ability to meet the particular special educational or health needs of the child, they sometimes feel as if removal from the school roll is their only option.
 - More considered views are evident that some parents are able to provide a more appropriate education for their child, outside of the mainstream school system.

Next Steps

- Cross Directorate EHE Working Group established:
 - Consider how to most effectively reduce those situations where families feel they have not 'freely' chosen to EHE and remove the 'unknown' category from the list of reasons given to become EHE
- Implementation of two additional steps within the EHE notification process:
 - **a)** Introduction of a 3-way meeting between the FOW, the parents/child(ren), and the school to ensure that the decision to home educate has been made by the parents/carers following appropriate advice and guidance
 - **b)** Introduction of a 20 working day 'cooling-off' period from the point at which the 3-way meeting takes place. During this time, the child(ren) will remain on the school roll in order that they may immediately return to school if the parent(s) reverse their decision to home educate