



What people think,
feel and do



BBC

SEND Mothers



Key findings

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Project details

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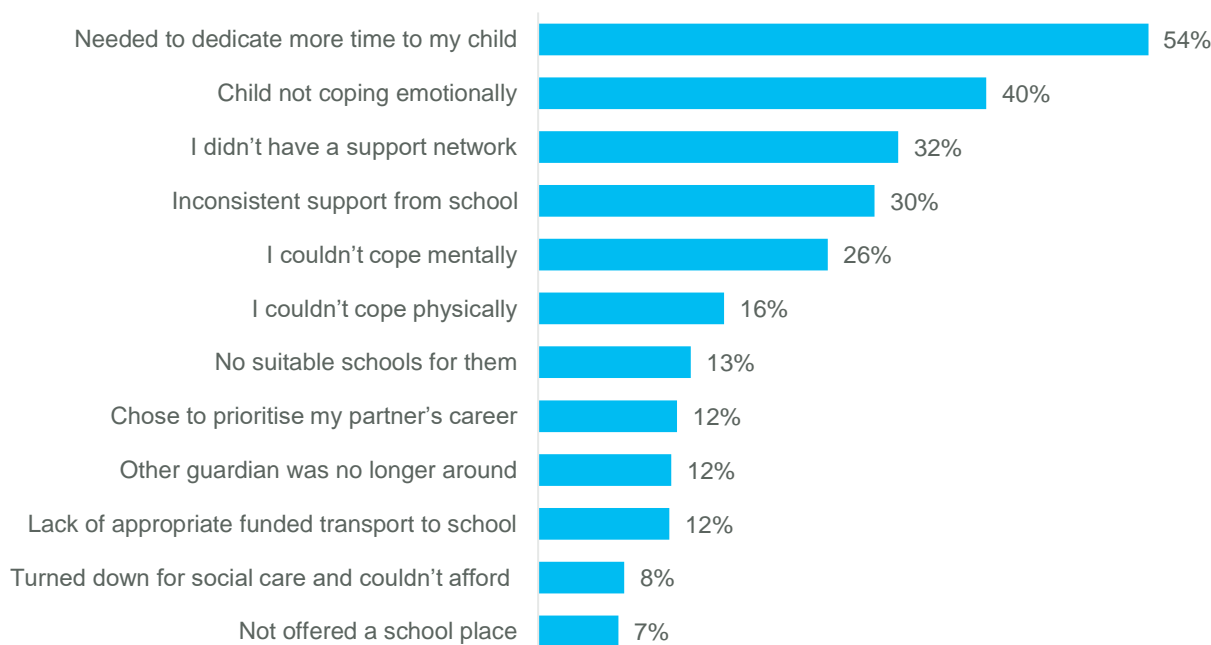
One in three mothers have give up work entirely to care for their SEND child

Almost two in three mothers (62%) find it difficult to balance caring for their child with other responsibilities, that rises to 67% of those with more than one SEND child.

Given this, it is no surprise that one in three (33%) mothers have, at some point, given up work entirely to look after their SEND child, including 14% who have not returned to work. A further 25% have considered doing so. Of those that did not give up work entirely, half (53%) did reduce their hours. That includes 30% who still work less than before.

For those that have given up work, either entirely or partially, the most common reason given is to dedicate more time to their child (54%). In fact, two in five (40%) did so as their child was not coping emotionally, while a third (32%) of mothers did not have a support network around them to help which led to giving up work. Many also found juggling work and caring for their SEND child was too much with one in four not coping mentally (26%) and 16% not coping physically.

Why working SEND Mothers have opted to give up work either entirely or partially



Others place the blame on the system whether that be a lack of appropriate funded transport to get to school (12%), being turn down for social care (8%) or not being offered a school place (7%).

One in five working SEND mothers passed over for a promotion

Aside from leaving the workplace, either entirely or partially, two in three (68%) mothers who have worked while caring for their SEND child believe their performance at work has been affected as a result, with a fifth (18%) believing it to have had a significant impact.

Half of working mothers who say their performance has been affected believe their work quality has suffered (48%). Perhaps as a result, 22% have been passed over for a promotion while others have been put on a performance plan (12%), been demoted (5%) or even lost their job (6%).

To continue earning an income while caring for their child with SEND almost one in four (23%) have started working from home. Some have looked to train in a new skill (16%) or even start their own business/side hustle (16%). Though 14% have had to downgrade their profession and for 12% it has led to a career change.

A third of mothers (33%) have also started to claim benefits to continue earning an income while caring for their child with SEND.

Almost three in four mothers believe the SEND system is broken

More than seven in ten mothers (73%) believe the SEND support system is broken in the UK. Across each nation in the UK more than three in five (66%) struggle to navigate the system and just one third (33%) feel well-informed about the resources available to their SEND child.

Three in four (74%) believe the process of getting their child the support they need is too complicated, higher in England (75%) than in Scotland (69%), Wales (68%) and Northern Ireland (64%). A similar number (76%) believe there are barriers which prevent them from completing administrative tasks related to caring for their child with SEND, with mental fatigue (48%) cited as the biggest barrier.

One in four (26%) struggle with jargon used in the process and a fifth (21%) simply struggle to follow the complex process. Not only that a similar number (18%) just don't have the time it takes too.

In terms of support, more than two in five (44%) mothers say schools and teachers have been the most useful to them for receiving support and advice around caring for their child with SEND, making them the most useful source. Just 13% believe the local authority are useful in providing support and advice, falling to just 6% of respondents from Wales. Interestingly, others mums (37%), healthcare professionals (27%) and charities (20%) all ranked higher.

Overall almost three in four (73%) do not feel that they have enough support as a SEND mother, rising to 83% in Scotland but falling to 53% in Wales. In fact, almost three in five (58%) feel isolated in their role as a SEND mother and two thirds (68%) feel overwhelmed, this rises to 70% and 80% of those in Northern Ireland, respectively.

Even those with EHC plans are left somewhat unsatisfied with their child's care



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Two in three (66%) English mothers have applied for an EHC plan for their child with SEND, more than one in four (28%) have not yet applied and one in twenty (5%) had never heard of an EHC plan. A third (32%) say their plan had been approved with 7% not being approved.

Of those that had not applied for a plan, the most common reason was an understanding that their child would not be eligible (31%). Others felt it was not necessary with their school's SEND provision working well already (23%) or not feeling the need for extra support (16%). Though some have felt overwhelmed by the process (14%) which has put them off applying and a similar number (12%) believe the process to be too difficult.

While nine in ten (90%) of those that have an approved EHC plan believe it has at least somewhat achieved what they were hoping for, just 27% say it has completely achieved what they were hoping for.

Similarly, more than four in five (85%) of those that have an approved EHC plan do believe the school recommended in the plan will meet the needs of their child. But less than one in four (24%) believe it will do so completely.

Overall only half (47%) of Mothers believe their child with SEND is well-supported in school, and those in Scotland (42%) are the least likely to feel this way.



About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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