

Local Authorities' views of the Badman Review of Elective Home Education

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Abstract

This study explores the views of nine Local Authority (LA) professionals (home education officers) regarding their current elective home education (EHE) context and practice, and how they perceive their professional practice evolving or changing as a consequence of the Badman Review into EHE (2009). This study is topical due to the resurgence of interest in EHE in political and media discourse. Moreover, this study is also timely due to EHE being an under researched area generally; with professionals views rarely elicited. It is an area that is gaining in prominence, with the new Government's agenda concerning free schools (*Daily Telegraph*, 24/04/2010) and parent choice in education (*Guardian*, 02/05/2010; *BBC News* 28/07/2010).

The study found that current EHE practice was generally regarded to be insufficient. This was generally attributed to the fact that LAs have no legal requirement to see and monitor an EHE child, because there is no mandatory obligation for parents to register as EHE and thus have contact with their LA. The guidance that is available in terms of assessing whether educational provision is 'suitable and efficient' was also regarded as too vague.

Thus, several limitations and concerns are outlined in respect of current EHE practice, particularly in respect of safeguarding and welfare, which is why all of the LA officials welcomed the Badman Review and its recommendations. However, whether the recommendations will become law is questionable at present with the recent change in Government and the world wide recession.

Chapter one: Introduction

1.1 Overview

‘Are home-schooled children more vulnerable?’

(Telegraph, 20/01/09)

‘Should home educators face greater scrutiny?’

(TES, 31/07/09)

‘An inspector calls: Does mother or nanny know best?’

(The Economist, 22/10/09)

These three media titles from three different publications summarise the questions that are currently resonating around EHE. The purpose of this small scale study was to ascertain the views of LA officials regarding the Badman Review into EHE (2009), because it is a report that has ignited debate about the current state of EHE practice and provision in England and Wales. Therefore, it is important to address what role the Badman Review has played in the formulation of these questions, and why these questions are being asked now.

To try and discover this, my study focused solely on gaining LA officials views of the Badman Review in respect of its conduct, content and implementation. This is primarily because LA officials are at the forefront of engaging with and monitoring EHE provision and practice. Thus, their view of the Review from its design to publication and the value they place upon it will be useful in terms of understanding not only the current EHE context, but also the extent of the Review’s impact for the EHE context as a whole (i.e. EHE families and LA and multi-agency practices). Also,

LA officials' views about EHE have rarely been elicited in UK literature; with the focus being primarily on the views of EHE parents (see Rothermel, 2003; Parsons and Lewis, 2010). Thus, LA officials' views would add an interesting dimension to the literature that currently exists on EHE at a time when EHE is the focus of much interest and debate.

1.2 The aims of the study

As mentioned earlier, the broad objective of this study is to discover the views of LA officials regarding the Badman Review, whilst also providing an overview of the current EHE context.

This study is framed around these research questions:

1. What do LA EHE contexts currently look like (numbers/characteristics/reasons)?
2. What are the views of professionals (EHE officers) in LAs regarding the conduct of the Badman Review?
3. What are the views of professionals in LAs regarding the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?
4. To what extent do LAs plan to implement the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?

1.3 Structure of the study

The study is organised into five sections. The first will include an overview of the existing literature on EHE. A methodology section will detail the research design, the techniques used to gather data and the sampling strategy employed. A results and analysis section will contain the findings of the study, and this will be summarised further using literature. A discussion chapter will suggest areas for future research, and the conclusion will draw together the key findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to the Badman Review into *Elective Home Education* (2009) in order to critique why the government commissioned a Review of EHE. In addition, the implications of this Review are discussed, both in terms of EHE policy and guidelines in England and Wales (EHE guidance is different in Scotland; see Education Scotland Act, 1980 – Section 37, 2), and its relation to other countries policies and procedures on EHE.

To provide context to the current EHE situation both nationally and internationally it is also necessary to provide a brief synopsis of the history of the movement. This will be beneficial in terms of summarising the rationale and impetus underpinning this movement, and in turn how this has shaped the EHE population in terms of numbers and characteristics. Finally, reference to EHE research will be outlined to emphasise further why the Badman Review (2009) has become such a source of contention both within and outside of the EHE community.

It is important to note that the literature used to provide such a context will include a wide range of academic and media sources. This is because UK research into EHE is limited. Only in 2003, according to the *Evaluation and Research in Education Journal*, was a chapter solely designated to EHE in a UK academic journal (*Editorial, p3*). Media articles also offer a means of vocalisation for a wide range of interested parties (i.e. home educators, academics, government officials), and are also at the forefront of reporting changes to EHE policy and practice.

2.2 Badman Review into Elective Home Education

The Badman Review (2009) is the first comprehensive review into EHE commissioned by the British Government. The intention of the review was to provide a more detailed overview of EHE in England and Wales. This is because at present there remains a lack of awareness and information about the population despite the UK mirroring the international growth and popularity of EHE (DCSF, 2007). In contrast, other notable EHE contexts such as the US have developed an extensive research culture around this area, with research organisations founded primarily for this purpose (see: <http://www.nheri.org>). Moreover, this Review was also regarded as timely because of the death of a seven year old girl (Kira Ishaq) in Birmingham (May 2008) who died from abuse and neglect inflicted by her mother and stepfather after having been withdrawn from school on the understanding that she was to be EHE (*BBC News 25/02/10*).

Nevertheless, although this Review was regarded as both topical and timely by the Government, it has also been subject to intense scrutiny in both public (i.e. Ralph Lucas, House of Lords) and private arenas (Home Education groups) (*Guardian, 11/01/10*). This is because the basis and subsequent conduct of the Review has been noted as unjust and insufficient for large scale changes that would impact upon the EHE context. This is due to the Review at the outset being aligned with safeguarding concerns because of EHE registration not being mandatory. One notable example was provided by the then Children's Minister, Baroness Morgan who stated that:

‘In some extreme cases, home education could be used as a cover for abuse, forced marriage, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude’ (*The Times, 20/01/09*).

In addition, the Review was conducted over a short time period (January-April 2009) which, according to opponents of the Review, impeded the extent to which a

representative overview of EHE could be achieved. 90 LAs and 1300 EHE parents and children responded to a questionnaire survey (which formed part of the review; alongside interviews), but the time given to provide responses was limited. LAs were provided with 14 working days to turn round the questionnaire and the wider general public had 24 working days (House of Commons Report, 2009)

Increased conflict and tension therefore surrounded both the commissioning and conduct of the Review, which did not dissipate upon the publication of the 28 recommendations in June 2009. Instead, it arguably facilitated it further. This is highlighted by the situation on the *8th December 2009* when the highest number of petitions ever presented on a single topic; against plans for compulsory registration (Recommendation 1) were placed in the petitions bag behind the speakers chair (*BBC News, 9/12/09*). The protest was initiated by an overwhelming sense of concern within the EHE community that the Government was proceeding to legislate on EHE on the basis of inadequate and unsupported evidence.

One area of concern centred upon *Paragraph 8.12* of the Badman Review, which states that:

‘....on the basis of LA evidence and case studies presented, and even acknowledging the variation between authorities, the number of children known to children’s social care in some LAs is disproportionately high relative to the size of their home educating population’ (p13)

However, no figures were provided to support this claim in the Review and when EHE families accessed data about safeguarding in LAs through Freedom of Information Requests (see: <http://www.whatdotheyknow.com>) they found this to be false. This is because according to the EHE campaign group, the assertion was based on extrapolation from estimates provided by a potentially unrepresentative sample of 25 LAs. Further, the data included all EHE children ‘known to social care’ rather than

solely relating to safeguarding concerns. They found this to be further indicative of data being misrepresented to support the registration recommendation.

The campaign group noted that EHE children may be known to social care for reasons other than safeguarding concerns (e.g. a neighbour who was unaware that EHE is legal). The fact that a government public consultation opened on 11th June 2009 for a period of four months (closed on 19th October 2009) to gather more ‘extensive information’ about the registration and safeguarding proposals (DCSF, 2010) only served to compound the view among EHE groups that the first round of data collection was insufficient.

Nonetheless, although there was widespread condemnation within the EHE community regarding recommendations which focused on regulation or safeguarding concerns, not all of the recommendations were viewed unfavourably. Recommendations that focused specifically on improved support and services, particularly for SEN families and for any young person who wants to take public exams met with widespread approval.

One notable adversary of the Badman Review; Fiona Nicholson, Chair of *Education Otherwise* (Largest UK EHE group; 5,000 members) spoke in support of the recommendations that removed ‘the barriers for access to services for EHE children and families’ (*Radio 4’s Woman’s Hour*, 22/03/10).

Even so, this did not impede Nicholson’s view of the Badman Review generally, which she regarded as ‘damaging’ for the EHE community and society as a whole. This is because the registration and inspection procedures would limit the rights of parents to choose and provide the educational provision they deem to be appropriate, and instead give onus to the State.

2.3 Policy context

2.3.1 England and Wales

In England and Wales presently, the law on EHE is outlined in the Education Act, 1996 (*previously Section 36 of the Education Act, 1944*) which states that parents have a duty to ensure that their school aged children receive:

‘efficient full time education, suitable to his age, aptitude and ability, and to any special needs that he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’.

The right to home educate is therefore conditional on parents ascertaining what constitutes a ‘suitable’ and ‘efficient’ education and conducting the provision accordingly. This is because the UN convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the European Convention of Human Rights (1953) recognise education as a fundamental right of children. For example, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) recognises a ‘right to education but not a right to attend school’ (Article 28). Similarly, the European Convention of Human Rights (1953) explains in Article 2 of the First Protocol that ‘the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions’ (p160).

However, as a consequence of the Badman Review the government proposed the introduction of a *Children, Schools and Family Bill (2009)*, which would amend the *Education Act, (1996)*. The bill would make it mandatory for EHE children to be registered with their LA and would provide more succinct guidelines for home educators, due, in part, to defining the extent to which educational provision is deemed ‘suitable’ and ‘efficient’. Nevertheless, the EHE components of the Bill, along with those relating to sex education were dropped due to Conservative Party

opposition and parliament being dissolved in the run up to the General Election (07/04/10, *BBC News*).

In the short time the *Children Schools and Family Bill* was on the Government agenda, a considerable furore was evident both in public and private arenas (*Guardian*, 11/01/10). This was primarily because the Bill would change the home education context quite considerably in England and Wales, and would also have wider implications for its position and stature internationally, which is to a large extent synonymous with the US.

2.3.2 US

The US holds a similarly liberal approach to home education with no national definitive policy and guidelines. This is in line with *Amendment One* outlined in the US Bill of Rights (1791), which purports that:

“Congress shall make no law....prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that in spite of a lack of national legislation on EHE, US State Policy about EHE does exist. However, according to Kunzman (2009) it tends to be sporadic and diverse in nature, similar to LA EHE practices in England and Wales. Current regulations imposed by individual States to monitor and regulate home school curricula range from Indiana’s vague mandate for: ‘instruction equivalent to that given in public schools’, to Pennsylvania’s requirements of a portfolio of student work; standardized testing and a written report from an outside evaluator.

2.3.3 Continental Europe

In contrast, in Germany and the Netherlands EHE is highly regulated, because this practice is illegal (Spiegler, 2009). Families that have tried to challenge the ban in Germany (i.e. Leuffen, 1992 and Konrad) in accordance with the European Human Rights Convention (1953) have lost, because the European Court of Human Rights held that Germany is entitled to ban home education if it wants to. This is because the fundamental right at stake is a child's education, not a parent's right to provide it. However, if families do decide to pursue this approach they are liable to incur heavy penalties and criminal prosecution (Monk, 2003). This is why some families have fled these countries in favour of those which support EHE. Two families have been granted political asylum in the US because of Germany's stance against EHE (*Guardian*, 27/01/10; *BBC News*, 22/03 2010) and similarly the UK is also regarded as an attractive destination for German EHE families as outlined by a recent media article: '*Home-School Germans flee to UK*' (*Observer*, 24/02/08).

Therefore, given that the US and the UK are regarded as a safe haven for EHE families from different countries, it is unsurprising that the *Children, School and Family Bill* (2009) provoked such outrage among home educators in the UK. Moreover, some EHE groups (i.e. Education Otherwise) argued that the Bill was unnecessary because EHE has been a part of UK society for centuries.

2.4 History of Home Education

It is important to emphasise that EHE is not a new phenomenon, because its existence transcends compulsory schooling. The UK according to Rothermel (2003) was at the forefront of engaging and promoting such practices in the early 18th Century (prior to the Education Act, 1870). Nevertheless, it is only relatively recently that this model of education has grown both in popularity and dominance worldwide.

The precursor for current EHE practice in other countries resulted from US Christian Fundamentalists in the 1980s arguing that State governed educational provision contravened their right to freedom of thought outlined in the US Constitution (Lubienski, 2003). This is because US law states that public schools should have no religious affiliation (Farris and Woodruff, 2000). The US context certainly propelled the topic of EHE into the public arena, and given the UK's receptivity to this model of education throughout history it is unsurprising that this practice has also become a mainstay of alternative educational provision.

This is evidenced further by academics in the UK publishing literature and texts about EHE, similar to the works published by leading US educational theorists (John Holt and Ivan Illich) during the 1960's and 1970's. One notable UK author is Roland Meighan (2004) who has questioned the innate purpose and function of schools and continues to write and discuss publicly his opposition at the standards culture encompassing UK schools (see, *Personalised Education Now Blog*).

The interest in this area from academics does not look set to recede anytime soon, because the EHE population is growing worldwide (Ray, 2002). In particular, the UK and the US are reported to be at the forefront of this diversifying and rapidly evolving movement, given the current data available.

2.5 Numbers and Characteristics

The numbers and characteristics of EHE students both in the UK and US are not comprehensive. This is because in the UK a national registration scheme of EHE young people is not in existence and only certain States in the US account for home educators. Nevertheless, some studies have tried to ascertain the numbers and characteristics of the EHE population either through LAs or national EHE support networks in the UK and household surveys in the US.

2.5.1 UK

Research conducted by Fortune-Wood (2005) into EHE over a two year period, which included an in-depth examination of the EHE population estimated that UK EHE figures are somewhere in the region of 40-85,000. This figure was based on extrapolation of data provided by 263 EHE questionnaires combined with data from the National Statistics Office. However, although this data serves to indicate that EHE students are a visible part of society, the data has to be treated with caution due to the small numbers elicited. Nevertheless given that other studies, such as the DCSF feasibility study into EHE (Nine LAs sampled, 2007) and the Badman Review (90 LAs sampled 2009) have also cited similar numbers (again samples are small); the anecdotal evidence provided by national EHE organisations (*Education Otherwise*) about the prominence and growth of the EHE population seems to be substantiated.

Moreover, the characteristics of this cohort are also diversifying, with different ethnic minority and religious groups choosing this provision (DCSF, 2007; Fortune-Wood, 2005). This is further supported by El-Sawah (2006), who noted that the Islamic Home Schooling Advisory Service founded in 2000 to provide advice and

support for Muslim home educators, has seen its ‘numbers double’ since its inception (p1).

2.5.2 US

In the US, studies have also attempted to count the total number of EHE students and although projections have increased, estimates vary considerably depending on the data sets used. Ray (2002) from the National Home Educational Research Institute estimated the number of EHE students for the 2001-2002 school years between 1.725 million and 2.185 million. Whereas the National Centre for Education Statistics Report into Home Schooling in the United States (2003) estimated that in spring 2007, 1.5 million children would be home-schooled in the US.

Thus, there are variations evident in the data regarding the exact numbers of young people being EHE, but in spite of this there remains a general consensus within the research community and beyond that EHE is growing both in numbers and popularity; particularly among minority groups. A recent publication by Ray (2009) outlined that about 15% of home school families are non-white/non-Hispanic and that this percentage is continuing to increase.

The EHE population as emphasised by both US and UK research is increasingly diversifying to include families from different religious denominations and ethnic backgrounds. This indicates that there are a wide variety of people who choose this provision, and the reasons are many and varied.

2.6 Reasons for EHE

The reasons underpinning EHE is one area that has been explored quite extensively in US and UK research, particularly during the 1980's and 1990's when interest in this area grew. One notable study was conducted by US researcher; Van Galen (1991), who categorised North American home scholars into two groups: 'Ideologues' and 'Pedagogues'. The 'Ideologues' were defined as those who object to what is taught in schools, they hold traditional conservative values and follow a philosophy of Christian fundamentalism. Whereas, 'pedagogues' have educational reasons for home schooling: school teaching is viewed as inept and limiting because it focuses solely on learning opportunities provided by the teacher. Van Galen (1991) distinguished home schoolers as those who are dissatisfied with 'content' and those who are dissatisfied with 'method'.

However, although these categories can arguably still be used to define motivations of home educators (particularly in the US) Neuman (2004) asserts that the current situation is much more complex. This is because of the considerable growth and diversity of the EHE population in the US and UK over the last decade.

This was substantiated further by research conducted by Rothermel (2003) with 419 EHE families in the UK (1099 children, eleven years and under). The findings from the questionnaire phase of the research indicated that parents had multiple reasons for EHE, which encompassed: 'disappointment with education' and 'schools' (Including SEN/Gifted and Talented provision); 'ideological reasons', 'bullying' and 'child depression and stress'. Other reasons provided in the study (although to a lesser extent) centred upon: parental standards; parents' own negative school experiences and peer pressure.

Rothermel (2003) concluded from the study that there is no discernable category robust enough to incorporate all the reasons for EHE. However, one thing that can be assured from the research according to Rothermel (2003) is the positive value placed upon EHE and the desire of parents and children to continue with this provision. This is because of the wide ranging benefits resulting from EHE.

2.7 Benefits of EHE

Research studies conducted both in the UK and abroad (although on the whole small-scale) into the outcomes and experiences of EHE families have found that this approach is beneficial for children and parents.

2.7.1 Children and young people

Ray a US academic, has conducted numerous research projects into the achievement and outcomes of EHE young people. One that is particularly notable, given its sheer sample size, is a nation-wide study in the US with approximately 1,500 families and 4,600 children (1990). The findings indicated that EHE children were academically successful because they out-performed their counterparts in public schools on standardized achievement tests by 30 to 37 percentile points in all subjects (reading; language, maths, science and social studies). Moreover, EHE children were socially successful, because age was not a barrier to social engagement due to the incorporation of diverse learning experiences and affiliation to home school groups.

These findings have been similarly substantiated in the UK by Rothermel's (2002) research into the psychosocial and academic development of approximately 400 EHE children (under the age of eleven). The results highlighted that EHE children performed well above national average in national literacy tests: 64% of EHE

reception aged children scored over 75% on their Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) baseline assessments as opposed to 5.1% of children nationally. In addition, the psychosocial instruments confirmed that EHE children were socially adept and independent thinkers with limited behavioural problems.

Furthermore, research has highlighted that EHE young people continue to experience academic and personal success throughout their life course. Sutton and Gollway's (2000) research is evidence of this, as their nation-wide survey investigated the success of undergraduate college graduates from home schools, private schools and public state schools. The results revealed that home schoolers achieved well above average on five domains of learning: outcomes-achievement; leadership; professional aptitude; physical activity; and social behaviour.

Research commissioned by the Home School Legal Defence Association (Ray, 2003) into the outcomes of EHE adults (7,300; 5000 of whom had been EHE for at least seven years) found similar results. 74% of EHE adults (18-24) took college level courses compared to the national average of 46%. EHE adults were more active and involved in their communities, with 71% engaging in ongoing community service activities (i.e. coaching a sports team), compared to 37% of US adults of similar ages (18-24).

UK research on this area has also revealed that EHE young people are well adjusted and successful. Webb's (1999) research with 20 EHE adults revealed that they participated in a range of extra curricula activities; were active in their communities, and engaged in a variety of employment and ongoing education courses.

2.7.2 Parents

The benefits of EHE are not solely confined to children, as research has indicated that this provision impacts positively upon parents and enhances family life. One study which succinctly emphasised this view was conducted by US researcher, Wyatt (2008), who specifically explored EHE family ties and relationships. The results of this study indicated that EHE families reported improved relationships with their children, because of the increased time they were spending engaging and interacting with their children.

Research in the UK has also indicated the beneficial impact of EHE upon parents and families. Fortune-Wood's (2006) survey of 263 EHE families found that although there was a significant cost implication resulting from EHE, this did not deter parents resolve to continue. The parents surveyed felt the benefits of EHE were resolutely worth it, as one parent emphasised:

“I’m skint. I’m knackered. The house is a bombsite, but I have a great relationship with my kids. It’s a huge....privilege to see them testing their skills and finding their potential on a daily basis” (p78).

2.8 Summary

As evidenced by existing US and UK literature, EHE is arguably beneficial for children and parents irrespective of family demographic; motivation specified or financial cost. EHE also has a long and distinguished history, particularly in the US and UK, with limited Government control and defined protocols. Therefore, given the EHE context both nationally and internationally it is unsurprising that the proposed changes outlined in the Badman Review (i.e. registration and regulation of provision) polarised opinion in both public and private arenas.

It is important to note that not all the research evidence on EHE or debates surrounding the Badman Review have been extensively detailed given the length of this literature review. Nonetheless, the main points of interest were noted to provide an overview of this area, and to outline why research on the Badman Review in respect of professionals' views is not only topical, but also timely.

The next chapter will restate the research questions that guide this study, and summarise the research design and methods used.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reiterates my research questions, contains a description of the methods used to gather my research and outlines how I designed and piloted my research instrument, and selected my sample. Ethical considerations and problems I encountered when conducting my research are also discussed, as are the processes used to analyse my results.

3.2 Research Questions

The research questions that guide my study into EHE are cited below:

1. What do LA EHE contexts currently look like (numbers/characteristics/reasons)?
2. What are the views of professionals (EHE officers) in LAs regarding the conduct of the Badman Review?
3. What are the views of professionals in LAs regarding the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?
4. To what extent do LAs plan to implement the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?

3.3 Method

The method used to collect my data was interviews. The fact that this study set out to obtain views and insights of LA officials on a specific topic was a deciding factor in this choice of method. As Cohen et al (2000) outlines, a research interview has been defined as a:

“two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining people’s views and perceptions on a topic of mutual interest” (p269).

Thus, interviews had distinct advantages because they provided me with access to participants’ attitudes, norms, beliefs, values and preferences, because they allow

access to ‘what is inside a person’s head’ (Cohen et al 2000, p268). This in turn is useful for eliciting greater depth and understanding than is the case with other methods of data collection (Oppenheim, 1992, cited in Cohen et al, 2000). Moreover, interviews according to Bryman (2001) are better placed for handling more difficult and open ended questions, which is particularly pertinent for my study, given that EHE is currently a politicised topic and also one that is interested in obtaining exploratory information.

However, there are also limitations to interviews simply by virtue of eliciting rich, detailed information, because the information is prone to subjectivity and bias on behalf of the interviewer (Cohen et al, 2000). Furthermore, interviews are time and labour intensive both for participants and researchers. Nonetheless, even taken into account these limitations (as discussed in the problems encountered section) this technique was regarded as the most effective for the purpose of my study. Primarily, because it allowed me to gather in-depth information, and also allowed flexibility in the approach adopted.

3.3.1 Type of interview

According to Cohen et al (2000) there are three main kinds of interviews that may be used specifically as research tools: (a) the structured interview; (b) the unstructured interview; and (c) the semi-structured interview. The approach that was most suited to my study was a semi-structured interview because it allowed me to develop a series of open-ended questions, whilst also providing opportunities for participants to ask questions. This according to Bryman (2001) ensures high validity because the meaning behind an action may be revealed as the interviewee is able to speak for themselves with little direction from the interviewer.

In addition, semi-structured interviews are also amenable to both face to face and telephone interaction. This was beneficial for my study because I wanted to access a diverse range of LA participants. However, I realised that because of time and cost limitations the possibility of travelling to meet participants was not always viable. Therefore, combining both approaches in this study was deemed to be the most effective way of limiting such constraints.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the interview approaches adopted have specific limitations, similar to other interview approaches (i.e. groups). For example, in face to face interviews some respondents may limit the information they provide because of a lack of anonymity. In contrast, respondents in telephone interviews may feel more at ease providing sensitive data, but they are often more difficult to conduct because non-verbal cues are absent. However, in spite of the limitations evident, both in relation to face to face and telephone interviews (summarised in the problems encountered section), the strengths of these approaches and their applicability to this study outweighed their weaknesses and resulted in their inclusion.

3.4 Design of the study

In preparing a semi-structured interview schedule I was aware that interviewers need to consider prompts and probes. This is because according to Cohen et al (2000) prompts enable the interviewer to clarify topics or questions whilst probes enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, clarify or qualify their response. This is why when I was designing my interview schedule I developed specific questions relating to my topic and also included a series of prompts and probes for each topic, issue and question. The interview schedule was therefore ordered into four specific topic areas relating to my research questions:

- EHE context
- Conduct
- Recommendations
- Moving forward with EHE

An example of one question (relating to the first research question) contained in the interview schedule is highlighted below (interview schedule is provided in *Appendix I*):

Selected interview item on current EHE context

1. How many EHE children are currently registered with your LA?

Prompt: Does this change on a regular basis?

Probe: Could you say more about how you keep track of numbers?

3.5 Piloting the interview schedule

To further ensure that the design of my interview schedule was appropriate and accessible for the research participants I decided to conduct a pilot study. According to Punch (2005) it is an essential stage in the design process. This is because it can provide information on the length of the questions and features that respondents may find difficult or ambiguous. The participants who took part in the pilot study comprised of two research colleagues at the University of Birmingham. The individuals although differed from the target population in respect of professional context were similar in terms of understanding EHE (one was a home educator) and having an awareness of the field (both were interested in EHE).

The pilot provided useful information in several areas and prompted the following amendments.

Recommendations – In this section respondents felt that the questions were ‘too wordy’ and over complicated, when the same question could be asked in a simpler and more effective way. The following example is a question that was pin pointed precisely for this reason: ‘What other recommendations contained in the Badman Review do you deem to be of importance and significance?’. The respondents felt that I could rephrase the question to make it ‘shorter’ and ‘sharper’. I amended the question too: ‘Are there other recommendations in the Badman Review that you believe are important?

General comments – The respondents made some general comments about the interview schedule as a whole. This related to the length of the five topic areas, which they felt could be condensed to ensure that respondents would not ‘run out of steam’ in terms of detail provided in later sections. They also suggested that it might be beneficial to provide a summary at the end of each topic area to ensure that respondents had every opportunity to raise points of interest. I took notice of these comments by cutting down the questions in each section and providing summary questions.

Therefore, the piloting phase of the research proved invaluable because it outlined key areas which I needed to amend or change for the benefit of the main phase of the study.

3.6 Sampling

3.6.1 Selecting the sample

The respondents who were asked to participate in this research study were LA officials who worked in or were in charge of EHE (either through monitoring or overseeing the database) in their LA. This group of individuals were regarded as the most appropriate for this study because they had direct knowledge of EHE through their working practices. I also realised that it would not always be possible to contact EHE officials who were in charge of monitoring because of the transitory nature of their job role. Therefore, contacting EHE officials who may work in the same team (important to note teams are small) and have different roles was judged as a viable and realistic option.

3.6.2 Sampling frame

Once I had decided who I was going to contact I then had to decide where I was going to focus my attention. I devised a list of all the LAs in England (152 in total) and separated them according to their location and their type (i.e. urban/metropolitan). This is because I wanted to ensure that the LAs targeted were as representative as possible of the national LA context to avoid sampling bias (Cohen et al, 2000, p98). The decision to contact 23 LA's (via email or phone listings on the internet) was therefore informed and considered. The sampling frame also took into consideration that in research not all those contacted will participate (Cohen et al, 2000). This was particularly pertinent for my research due to EHE being a politicised topic presently. Thus, I decided to contact more individuals than was necessary for a small scale research study.

3.6.3 The sample

Out of the 23 LAs contacted (total of 30 respondents - 1 or 2 in each team) only 9 respondents from 9 LAs expressed an interest in participating, and were receptive to being interviewed either by phone (7) or face to face (1). Nevertheless, 1 interview schedule was emailed to an EHE officer because of time constraints. The sample consisted of 8 EHE officers who were head of EHE monitoring and data entry, and 1 official who was solely in charge of the EHE data base. The remaining cohort either did not reply (19) or declined to participate (2). The possible reasons for the low response rate are discussed in detail in the problems encountered section.

Table 3.1 outlines the sample participants in detail:

LA	Population(100,000s)	% White British	Location	Type
1	287.5	75	Midlands	Metropolitan Urban
2	758.2	95	Midlands	County Rural
3	435.5	88	North	City
4	249.6	32	South	Borough Urban
5	641.0	89	Midlands	County Rural
6	237.9	81	Midlands	City
7	1,376.4	90	South	County Urban
8	497.4	71	North	Metropolitan Urban
9	582.6	92	South	County Rural

The LA statistics are based on figures from the Office for National Statistics (2007).

3.7 Ethical considerations

Taking into account ethical considerations when conducting a research study is a necessity, as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004):

“All educational research should be conducted with an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom” (p5).

In addition, to these key principles that underpin the BERA (2004) ethical guidelines, the guidelines state further that researchers should be guided by their ‘responsibilities to participants’. This is focused primarily upon obtaining informed and valid consent of participants.

I made sure the methods employed to gain access and obtain the voluntary informed consent of participants were ethically acceptable by contacting the LA officials via email or phone and outlining who I was (an objective MRes researcher); what my study was about; what I hoped to achieve and the likely forms of publication (of which a copy would be distributed to each of the LAs on completion). The LA officials could then make an informed decision regarding participation.

Once access was granted by 9 EHE officials and a proportion of time set aside for the interviews I again stressed to participants the aims and purpose of my study. I also made clear that they could choose to withdraw from the research for ‘any or no reasons, and at any time’ (BERA, 2004, p6).

Further, I asked permission from the participants to use a tape recorder during the study (when conducting oral interviews). This was in order to gain a more thorough example of what was been said during the discussion. However, I reiterated that what was said would remain confidential because pseudonyms would be used throughout the research process from transcribing to the write up. In addition, the tape recordings would be kept in a locked filing cabinet. This is perhaps why all the participants who

participated in oral interviews (with the exception of one) were happy to be recorded, and designated a considerable amount of time to the interview (the oral interviews lasted between 40-65 minutes).

3.8 Problems encountered

The research study however, was not without complications. The first problem I encountered when conducting my study was negotiating access to LA officials (as mentioned in the sampling section). This was in spite of in depth preparation regarding sampling and ethics. However, Robson (2002) highlights that many other researchers face the same problem:

“We like to think, as researchers, that we are in control of sampling and research design, but matters are often taken out of our hands” (p64).

This was certainly the case with my study as I will briefly outline now:

Of the 23 LAs contacted (30 respondents in total) only 9 LA EHE officials replied. The research was therefore limited to a certain extent by the willingness of LA officers. This could be attributed to time constraints, but arguably more likely was the increased political and media polarisation of EHE, given the time scale for the project and the flexibility provided in terms of interview approaches (face to face, phone and email as a last resort). After all, of the 2 respondents that contacted me to decline participation, both made reference to the sensitivity of the current situation as a result of the Badman Review. They thought it was in their best interest, and the interest of their LA EHE community to not comment.

Negotiating access was not the only problems I experienced. I also encountered problems when conducting the (1) face to face interview and the (7) phone interviews. For example, at the beginning of the face to face interview the respondent seemed

wary of being tape recorded, because of the numerous worried glances directed towards the recorder.

To minimise the respondent's discomfort I informed her again that she would not be identified in the study and that what was said would be entirely confidential. I recognise however, that the tape recorder might be disconcerting or off putting to interviewees because it can be seen as 'threatening' or 'alarming' given that personal thoughts and views are being preserved (Cohen et al, 2000). Once the conversation was in full flow however, the worried glances directed at the tape recorder subsided. I assume that the respondent either had forgotten about it or it was no longer an issue.

This seems to support Bryman's (2001) assumption that:

"....if people do agree to be interviewed, they usually do so in a co-operative way and loosen up after the initial anxiety about the microphone" (p322-323).

Similarly, there were also problems experienced when conducting the telephone interviews. However, this method of data collection had the opposite problem of face to face interviews; namely I couldn't recognise non-verbal cues. Therefore, it was difficult to discern if a respondent was uneasy about a question or had any additional worries about the study. Although where I felt this was an issue, I did raise it with respondents in order to ensure that ethical practices were being upheld.

The interview schedule sent via email also raised particular problems, not least the fact that non-verbal cues were absent, but also the lack of comprehensive information obtained. This was despite outlining on the email the importance of gaining detailed information for the purpose of the study. However, one advantage of this method was the statistical overview provided about the EHE population in their locality (tables were provided about their population). Although, this benefit was not solely confined to the emailed interview schedule, as 2 other respondents who I conducted oral interviews with emailed me EHE stats (brief description of ethnicity from one LA and

a LA 2008-09 Steering Report from another) on separate occasions. Thus, for the purpose of my study the interview schedule sent via email was by far the most problematic, because of the limiting amount of information elicited.

In retrospect, therefore my study could have been improved, if I had the opportunity to sample more participants and to solely conduct interviews, but as mentioned this is not always possible. In future I intend to approach things differently by attending regional conferences or events in EHE to elicit more interest, and email interview questions alongside a brief synopsis of my research. This would counter problems specifically relating to phone interviews where it is difficult to ensure if respondents are entirely clear of the questions asked.

3.9 Data Analysis

The first step of data analysis according to Bryman (2001) is data preparation. This is why I made sure at the design stage of my project that the methods used were tenable, both in terms of ensuring that the data collected would be analysable, and also to simplify as much as possible the actual process of analysis.

Therefore, to help with the process of analysis I decided at the outset to ensure that my interview schedule was divided into themes in accordance with my research questions. This was to avoid the possibility of research questions not being answered or being repeated elsewhere in the conversation. In addition, it would limit the time taken to analyse the data, because the themes for the data would be for the most part evident.

However, this is not to say that analysing the data was not a lengthy process, even in spite of prior preparation. This is because firstly the data had to be transcribed which takes a considerable amount of time (42 hours in my case). Also, Bryman (2001)

states that researchers should listen back to the tape recordings to ensure that nothing is missed because of ‘mishearing, fatigue or carelessness’ (p313). I also added nuances of talk such as laughing, and used dashes for pauses on hearing the tapes again to allow for the data to analysed more efficiently.

Once I was happy with the final transcripts I then used the ‘scissor and sort’ (cut and paste method) advocated by Bryman (2001) to categorise the information under the required themes. A classification system for major topics and issues was then developed and all the transcripts incorporated into one word document to make it easier to analyse.

The interview schedule sent via email did not require in-depth analysis because of the lack of information received.

The next chapter presents the findings of the research.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of the primary research using research literature. The data is grouped into four themes. The final themes were selected on the basis of their relevance to the initial research questions.

The themes to be discussed concern EHE officials views of:

- LA EHE context (numbers/characteristics/reasons)
- Conduct of the Badman Review
- Badman Recommendations
- Moving forward with Badman

4.2 EHE context

This section provides an overview of the EHE population in respect of numbers, characteristics and reasons for this choice of provision.

4.2.1 Numbers

4.2.1.1 LA data

The numbers of EHE children and young people known to the LAs sampled (9) was approximately 1,931 (one LA gave a near estimate). Table 4.1 contains the figures of the EHE population for each LA.

Table 4.1 EHE population.

LA	EHE Numbers
1	96
2	358
3	54
4	78
5	196
6	95
7	600 (approx)
8	132
9	322

Table 4.1 shows that the EHE population varies considerably between LAs, with data ranging from 54 in one LA to over 600 in another. It is important to note however, that the size of the EHE population seems to reflect for the most part the total population size and density of the LA in question. See Table 4.2:

Table 4.2 LA and EHE population

LA	EHE Numbers	Population (100,000's)	EHE population %	Type
7	600	1,376.40	0.044	County Urban
2	358	758.2	0.047	County Rural
9	322	582.6	0.055	County Rural
5	196	641	0.031	County Rural
8	132	497.4	0.027	Metropolitan Urban
1	96	287.5	0.033	Metropolitan Urban
6	95	237.9	0.040	City
4	78	249.6	0.031	Borough Urban
3	54	435.5	0.012	City

The table indicates that the population size and type of a LA has a significant bearing on the number of EHE children. For example, the larger the LA (i.e. County) the greater the chance of there being higher numbers of EHE children. In contrast the smaller and more urban the LA, the higher the likelihood there is, of lower EHE numbers. This is summarised in further detail by Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 EHE population by LA Type

LA Type	EHE Numbers	Population (100,000's)	EHE population %
County Rural	876	1981.8	0.044
County Urban	600	1,376.40	0.044
City	149	673.4	0.022
Metropolitan Urban	228	784.9	0.029
Borough Urban	78	249.6	0.031

The EHE figures provided by LAs should be treated with caution however, because the numbers are small. Moreover, LA officers made reference to the transitory and rotating nature of the population which can impact upon the figures stated.

Furthermore, there is no requirement for EHE families to inform LAs of their intention to EHE, unless their child has been withdrawn from school. Thus, the number of EHE young people present in the LAs could be higher than the data suggests. This was certainly thought to be the case by the vast majority of EHE officials; although there were differences of opinion about the extent of the increase in projection. Figures ranged from 100% (*RSP 3; RSP 9*) to 10-15% (*RSP 7*).

4.2.1.2 Research on numbers

The findings from a DCSF study (2007) conducted with 9 LAs to ascertain the ‘prevalence of Home Education in England’ also found similar results. The numbers of EHE young people known to LAs (9) in the DCSF study totalled 1,245 and in this study they totalled: 1,931 (1 LA provided a near estimate). The slight difference between the numbers could arguably be a result of the size of the LAs, and the time period in which the data was collected.

The DCSF (2007) study also found a relationship between the numbers of children in receipt of EHE and the type of LA. As table 4.4 indicates (It has been adapted slightly for the purpose of providing a comparison).

Table 4.4 EHE population by LA Type

LA	EHE Numbers	EHE children as % of whole school population	Type
1	43	0.09	London Borough Urban
2	61	0.13	London Borough Urban
3	69	0.42	Unitary Urban
4	121	0.13	Metropolitan Urban
5	127	0.15	County Rural
6	130	0.14	Metropolitan Urban
7	200	0.30	County Rural
8	215	0.25	County Rural
9	279	0.25	County Rural

Table 4.4 highlights that there is a higher proportion of EHE children in larger, rural areas (Counties; 821) than compared to smaller city and metropolitan boroughs (424). However, the data indicates that there are exceptions (i.e. LA 3), but the reasons for this are not discussed. Similarly, the affect of LA size on the EHE population could not be ascertained because it was not included in the DCSF (2007) data.

4.2.2 Characteristics

4.2.2.1 LA data

The characteristics of the EHE population provided by LAs in my study were limited. Only 2 LAs for example provided comprehensive information (via email) about the characteristics of their cohort. This is not to say however, that the remaining 7 LAs were not knowledgeable about their EHE population, because they all identified key patterns and trends in relation to age and gender. They stated that secondary age students tend to outnumber primary students and that gender is evenly distributed throughout the course of the year.

The statistics provided by 2 LAs in relation to this area seem to corroborate this widely held view:

Table 4.5 (LA 8 2009/10) Age and gender.

Gender	Year 1-6	Year 7-11	Total
Female	22	46	68
Male	23	40	63
Total	45	86	131

**Table 4.6 (LA 9 2008/09) Age and gender.
2010 data had not been collected**

Population	Split		Total
	Male	Female	
Gender	129	157	286
	74	212	286
Year	1-6	7-11	All
	74	212	286

However, one significant point of difference between the 2 LAs who provided data and the 7 who did not was their awareness about the ethnicity of their EHE population. Only 2 other LAs provided data on ethnicity, but their records referred solely to White British children (they mentioned that other ethnic groups did exist, but the data did not reveal this).

The reasons why ethnicity was not recorded in detail (by 2 LAs) or at all (by 5 LAs) was not explained, but it could be attributed to the remaining LAs encountering problems when trying to obtain data on ethnicity. This seems to be plausible since all of the LAs did have methods in place to record characteristics (i.e. age and gender), the only difference being that they did not provide them to this study (due to time constraints, accessibility issues).

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 presents the data that was available on ethnicity in 2 LAs

Table 4.7 LA 8 (2009/10) Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	EHE Numbers	LA population (100,000's)	EHE population %
White British	80	354.8	0.023
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	32	80.0	0.040
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	2	5.9	0.034
White Asian	2	4.0	0.050
Other Mixed	4	1.4	0.028
Traveller	3	-	-
Roma Gypsy	3	-	-
Info not obtained	6	-	-
Total	132		

The LA population statistics are based on figures from the Office for National Statistics (OfNS, 2007).

Traveller and Roma Gypsy populations are not recorded on the OfNS.

Table 4.8 LA 9 (2008/09) Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	EHE Numbers	LA population (100,00's)	EHE population %
White British	202	535.4	0.037
White Irish	1	4.4	0.022
Other White	8	14.2	0.056
Other Mixed	3	1.6	0.018
White/Black African	2	0.7	0.028
White/Black Caribbean	2	2.9	0.068
Indian	1	6.2	0.016
Chinese	1	2.9	0.034
Not obtained	37	-	-
Roma Gypsy	24	-	-
Traveller Irish	2	-	-
Refused	3	-	-
Total	286		

The data reveals that the EHE population is made up of a wide variety of ethnic groups. In Table 4.7 for example, there is a higher proportion of Asian Pakistani, Asian Bangladeshi, and White Asian EHE than White British. In Table 4.8, although the majority are White (British/other) there are other ethnic groups engaged in this provision (i.e. White/ Black African/Caribbean). It is worth noting however that LA 8 has a higher proportion of ethnic communities than the rest of the sample, and so the data has to be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the data does seem to support the anecdotal evidence provided by the remaining 7 LAs that families who EHE represent a wide cross section of the UK population.

4.2.2.2 Research on characteristics

The DCSF (2007) study (sampled 9 LAs) found similar results in respect of the characteristics of the EHE population. For example, data on age and gender revealed that higher proportions of children are EHE in the secondary phase of education, and there is an even number of girls and boys. As highlighted by table 4.9 (amended slightly for the purpose of summarising age and gender together):

Table 4.9 Age and gender.

LA	Year 1 to 6	Year 7 to 11	Boys	Girls
1	22	30	26	17
2	22	38	34	27
3	11	57	26	43
4	38	78	61	60
5	-	-	-	-
6	62	60	65	64
7	42	155	104	96
8	85	128	105	110
9	-	-	60	67
Total	282	546	481	484

LA 5 did not keep records of age and gender/LA 9 did not keep records on age.

Data provided on ethnicity by LAs also seems to substantiate my findings that there are a number of different ethnic groups engaged in this provision. See Table 4.10:

Table 4.10 Ethnicity.

LA	White British	Chinese	Pakistani	Black Caribbean	Any other Black	White and Asian	Indian	Gypsy and Roma Travellers	White Other
1	11			4	3	4	2	5	1
2	18			3	1	1		2	3
3	21							48	
4	67		6					3	
5	-		-	-	-	-	-	6	-
6	123	2						5	
7	136						1	63	
8	106				2		1	49	24
9	-			30				20	
Total	482	2	6	37	6	5	4	201	28

LA 5 only kept records of Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GRT) Children.

LA 9 had estimated data.

LAs were chosen because of high proportion of GRT.

Interestingly, the data provided by LAs also seems to confirm my findings that not all LAs have a comprehensive record of EHE population statistics. After all, 1 LA could only provide fairly limited data on age, gender and ethnicity (which were estimated for the most part) and another LA only recorded their GRT population.

However, when compared to the lack of data available in my sample (particularly for ethnicity), the fact that only 2 LAs had limited or no information seems a relatively minor point.

The reasons for the difference in EHE data between my study and the DCSF (2007) study could be attributed to the fact that I am a single researcher, as opposed to a Government department asking for information (which could arguably have prompted their response). Moreover, in the DCSF (2007) study their sample was selected because they were known to have a higher proportion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children. Therefore, the transitory and mobile nature of the GRT community could have increased LAs resolve to update EHE population figures on a regular basis. However, it is important to note that because I did not sample all (152) LAs in England, similarly to the DCSF (2007) study, it is impossible to know why EHE data varies between LAs.

4.2.3 Reasons for EHE

The recording systems in place to monitor families' reasons for EHE were sporadic and diverse in nature, similar to the methods in existence for ascertaining EHE population statistics. For example, some LAs would send out questionnaire surveys once they had been informed (primarily by schools) of a family's decision to EHE. Alternatively, some LA officials may ring families for an informal chat to gather why this provision was chosen. However, regardless of the methods used, all the LAs did seem knowledgeable about the different reasons for EHE. Although, they did make it clear that they were not aware of every family's reason for EHE, either because they did not want to provide the information, or they were not registered with LAs. Even

so, the likelihood of families' stating a different reason from those known to LAs was regarded as rather slim.

The reasons for EHE provided by LAs are listed below in order of importance:

- Transition from primary to secondary
- Dissatisfaction with school environment
- Lifestyle/cultural/religion
- Negative reasons

The main reasons why families decide to EHE according to respondents related to issues of school choice, or problems with the school environment. This concerned bullying or SEN. The three following interview extracts highlight the role schools play in EHE in more detail:

School choice

“There is a lot of desire for EHE in secondary, because there is a lot more break down in placements....Yes I would say that definitely within some areas there is a trend for EHE if they don’t get the school that’s appropriate to your need....” (**RSP 4**).

Bullying

“The other thing that comes out, I would say in 90% of cases if not more is allegations of bullying. Either from children, or from teachers, there is a claim. They will usually claim that there has been some degree of bullying” (**RSP 3**).

SEN

“....I think if their (SEN) needs were been met in school then I don’t think they would not be in school....the only time parents get any sleep or any rest is actually when the child is at school because they have such erratic sleeping patterns....” (**RSP 4**)

Therefore, in many instances the reasons for EHE was a result of unforeseen circumstances, rather than a ‘true choice’ that parents had decided upon at the outset of their child’s education. This seems to substantiate the findings of Rothermel’s (2003) research study with 419 EHE families in the UK (1099 children). In terms of

motivations for EHE, a third of parents (30%) reported that ‘disappointment with education’ and ‘schools’ (Including SEN/Gifted and Talented provision) had motivated them to EHE. Bullying accounted for 25% of families’ motivations, with 24% referring to ‘child depression and stress’.

Parsons and Lewis’s (2010) research study with 27 parents of EHE SEN children also highlighted that EHE had not been their preferred choice of provision, but they felt that they had no other option. This was because of bad experiences with formal provision (37%) and the perceived failure of schools to meet their child’s needs adequately (30%). This was highlighted poignantly by one respondent:

“We are not choosing home education as an alternative lifestyle choice, but have been left with no other acceptable option” (p14).

Nevertheless, similar to my findings Rothermel’s (2003) study did highlight that there are a small number of families who decide upon this option because it was their intention at the beginning. For example, in Rothermel’s (2003) study 13% of respondents were motivated by morality and faith.

The extracts provided by LA officials regarding lifestyle/cultural/religious reasons are summarised below:

Lifestyle

“....quite often they have a particular interest....I’m thinking about a parent who is very skilled in neon tube bending, and wants his daughter to know all about that as one of the major activities they do” (**RSP 6**).

Cultural

“....a lot of Traveller families keep their child in school in primary and then take them out in transition.... mainly because they do not really approve of what’s going on in schools and they want to maintain the integrity of their community....” (**RSP 9**)

Religion

‘Jehovah Witnesses make up a significant proportion of EHE. They tend to take their children out of school in KS2’ (**RSP 7 – interview not recorded**).

However, one point of difference regarding motivations for EHE between my study and the studies cited is that no reference was made to ‘negative reasons’. In my study for example, 7 LA officers stated that a minority of parents decide to EHE to ‘avoid things’. This generally focused on criminal prosecution for truancy. As the following extract highlights:

“....for some of the young people who are withdrawn from school it is for negative reasons rather than positive ones....Sometimes it’s to avoid been prosecuted for failing to ensure that their child attends school” (**RSP 1**).

The reason why this motivation was not mentioned in the other studies could be a result of sampling. After all, both studies sampled parents who were obviously interested in and engaged in EHE to participate in their research. Moreover, it is unlikely that if a parent was educating for ‘negative reasons’ they are going to reveal this to a researcher. Nonetheless, it is important to note that ‘negative reasons’ for EHE were not regarded as wide spread by LA officials, although it still accounted for some of their EHE population.

4.2.4 Summary of EHE context

In summary, it was difficult to ascertain a comprehensive picture about LAs EHE population, because of a lack of consistency regarding data recording and information retrieval. Nonetheless, the data and information that was provided to this study in respect of numbers, characteristics and reasons highlight that the context in which LAs work is not too dissimilar. This is important to note given that the following section is concerned with outlining the responses of LA officials to the Badman Review. In particular the impact the review recommendations could pose to LA practices nationally and EHE families.

4.3 Badman Review

4.3.1 Introduction

This section outlines LA officials' views of the Badman Review which I have divided into three separate themes. First, the conduct of the Review is discussed, because as highlighted in chapter 2 (literature review) the rationale underpinning the Review into EHE was questioned (largely by EHE groups). Secondly, LAs views of the recommendations will be outlined to summarise those thought to be of most significance (A copy of the recommendations is provided in *Appendix 2*). Lastly, how LAs anticipate implementing the recommendations will be summarised and their views regarding the future of EHE practice and provision highlighted.

4.3.2 Conduct of the Review

This theme outlines LAs views of the conduct of the Review, from the evidence obtained through to its publication.

The respondents all stated that the Badman Review was warranted and necessary, because of the lack of knowledge and awareness that currently exists on EHE. In fact, the vast majority of respondents were of the opinion that the questions raised by Badman were long overdue, because EHE is an area that involves the education and welfare of children. Thus, the review was regarded as timely and also one that raised important points. For example:

“I think the questions needed to be asked....I have wanted somebody to ask these questions for so long....” (**RSP 5**)

“....I thought the review was good. I thought that it actually raised issues that needed to be raised....Badman went beyond what I expected and he picked up all the issues that LA's have problems with....” (**RSP 2**)

The timely nature of the Review and its importance in raising awareness about EHE was also outlined in the House of Commons (HoC) Report (2009) (Received 200 written responses from practitioners and families about Badman Review):

‘What has been striking about the Badman Review is the dearth of information on home educated children in England, not least basic data about the number of these children....’ (p3).

However, there were also limitations of the Review noted by my sample which concerned the time frame (four months) of the review and its focus on safeguarding. For example:

“It was done in a rush....everything had to get squeezed through for dates for parliament....I think it was definitely pressured” (**RSP 9**).

“....It (Badman Review) was a knee-jerk reaction, with the problems that happened with Baby P and Kiara Ishaq....Kiarah in particular was blamed on EHE to a large extent, and it wasn’t the fault of EHE....” (**RSP 3**)

The HoC Report (2009) also concurred with the view of respondents in respect of the limitations of the Review, with the onus on safeguarding and time pressures being particular points of contention:

“The way in which the Department has handled the review has been unfortunate – from the way in which it framed the review, through to its drafting of legislation prior to publication of the related consultation findings.” (p4).

However, although limitations were cited in regards to the conduct of the Review, this did not detrimentally impact upon the way it was perceived by my sample. This is because they asserted that the findings of the Review would have been the same irrespective of time frame or media polarisation of EHE prior to the review. As outlined by the following respondent:

“....I do accept that it (Badman Review) was done very quickly....and EHE was the focus of a lot of attention due to the situation with Kiarah....but then I’m not sure what the other findings would have been had it been done over a longer period of time or under different circumstances” (**RSP 1**).

Similarly, the HoC Report (2009) also referred to the lack of evidence that currently exists on EHE and expressed appreciation that this Review had sought to address this gap:

“We welcome the Badman Review for highlighting an area of education that is under-researched and understood....” (p3-4)

Nevertheless, although my findings are comparable to those cited by the HoC (2009) in respect of the conduct of the Badman Review, there is one notable difference. This centres upon the impact the review has had on LAs working environments. This was rarely made reference to in the HoC Report (2009). However, this could be attributed to the fact that the report was conducted relatively soon (October-December, 2009) after the Badman Review was published (July 2009). Whereas my study took place approximately a year later (April – June 2010).

The majority of respondents in my sample mentioned that certain EHE groups are intent on discrediting the Badman Review, because of limitations with the scale and scope of the review. LA officers noted that their work load had increased, because large numbers of freedom of information (FOI) requests were submitted for the purpose of comparing and contrasting the findings. For example:

“....the amount of work it has caused because we have had so many FOI that just drive us mad, because it’s not been a problem in (LA) and other authorities....” (**RSP 2**)

In addition, over half (6) of the sample mentioned that some members of their EHE community are increasingly suspicious towards them, because they or their colleagues contributed to the Badman Review. The following quote summarises this view succinctly:

“I think it has made some people suspicious....to them we are the enemy. It is like the land of the spider less conspiracy theory....I’m a pragmatic person and I realise that’s the way it is....Although, I don’t want to end up like (one LA official) who has been reviled on the web....If that was someone doing

something in a kind of BNP style way that would be prosecuted, it is hate....”
(RSP 4)

The conduct of the Badman Review was therefore regarded as notable, because of the strength of feeling it elicited among the EHE community. The consequences of which were made known to LAs in respect of increased suspicion or negative comments directed towards LA officials on websites and blogs.

However, regardless of the ramifications that followed the Review they were all of the opinion that the conduct of the Review was comprehensive and efficient. This is because all those involved in EHE were asked for their opinions; with the EHE community being the focal point of much discussion and deliberation. As emphasised by the following extract:

“.... I know that Graham Badman spent more time in the first instance talking with home educators than with LA’s.... I think there is this idea of whipping things up by certain EHE groups....” **(RSP 6)**.

Opponents of the Review were therefore regarded by respondents as a minority of home educators who were interested in projecting political debates about EHE, rather than seeking to address the problems and limitations evident in this area.

The next theme addresses the recommendations contained in the Badman Review.

4.4 Recommendations

4.4.1 Introduction

This theme presents LAs views of the Badman recommendations in order of their associated importance for EHE provision and practice. The recommendation LA officials perceive as the most important is cited first, followed by recommendations that are regarded as being particularly pertinent or noteworthy. The limitations of the Review recommendations are also discussed. A description of each of the recommendations contained in the Review is provided alongside LA officials responses for the purpose of clarity.

4.4.2 *Most important recommendation*

Recommendation 1

That the DCSF establishes a compulsory national registration scheme, locally administered, for all children of statutory school age, who are, or become, electively home educated (p9, Badman, 2009).

Recommendation 1 was regarded by nearly all respondents (with the exception of one; *RSP 2*) as been the most significant in terms of ensuring that all children have access to a ‘suitable and efficient’ education, and they are safe and well. This is because at present parents are under no obligation by law to register their child as EHE if they have never attended school. In addition, even those children who are registered on a LA database (primarily because of school withdrawal) cannot be visited by LA officials if their parents refuse. Therefore, registration was welcomed because it would ensure that all EHE children had equal rights to education and safeguarding. As the following examples from the interviews highlight:

“I think what comes to me is the right of the child to an education....I work with people who actually want to educate their children....Then you get people who actually don’t want to get out of bed to take their kids to school....” (*RSP 5*).

“Well of the recommendations....the one I would welcome the most would have been the compulsory register....I just wanted to know that all children have equal rights to safeguarding....” (**RSP 4**)

However, although greater awareness of education provision and safeguarding was noted as a major outcome of the registration recommendation, other reasons were cited in respect of its significance. Increased clarity about the EHE population was rated highly by all the participants, as the following statement summarises:

“Well I think the most striking thing is for them all to register....as EHE so it was nice and clear” (**RSP 6**).

Quantifying the EHE population was also regarded as beneficial for resource implications, both for LAs and EHE families, as the following extracts emphasise:

“....compulsory registration was going to make a huge impact if only in terms of my work load....If suddenly everybody came out of the wood work I think it would make a big difference to LAs in the fulfilment of their duties” (**RSP 5**).

“You would have had more clout saying to different people (about funding/resources) within the LA as well if we knew there were greater numbers....greater numbers is more parent power if you like....” (**RSP 6**)

Recommendation 1 was therefore viewed positively by respondents because it would allow LAs greater access to EHE families, and increase clarity about who is being EHE and why. In turn, additional resources would be provided to LAs as a consequence of registration, and this would be of benefit to LAs and home educators. However, it is not only respondents in my study who have highlighted the importance of a national registration scheme. As research studies conducted into LA EHE practice by Ofsted (2010) and Kendall and Atkinson (2006) have also found this to be the case.

The Ofsted review (2010) which sampled a wide range of professionals across 15 LAs, from officials with direct responsibility for EHE to agencies involved with EHE

(i.e. social services and education welfare) were all of the opinion that a registration scheme for EHE would be advantageous. This is because they regarded professional practices relating to EHE as insufficient, due to there being no compulsion in law for families to register their child as EHE or to have contact with LAs.

In addition, a study conducted by Kendall and Atkinson (2006) with 21 LA officials (from 16 LAs) found that change was needed in EHE (i.e. in terms of a national data base) if they were to fulfil their statutory duties and responsibilities in accordance with international (i.e. UNCRC, 1989) and national legislation (i.e. The Children Act, 2004). This is because at present they mentioned that there is no capacity (according to national guidelines) to identify children in receipt of EHE or to actively seek additional information about the children who are registered.

4.4.3 Other notable recommendations

Other recommendations that were regarded as being beneficial for EHE practice and provision by my sample are cited below in accordance with their aim (the recommendations have been summarised for the purpose of providing an overview):

4.4.3.1 Monitoring EHE

Recommendation 2

That the DCSF review the current statutory definition of what constitutes a ‘suitable and efficient’ education in the light of the Rose review of the primary curriculum.... (p10, Badman, 2009)

Recommendation 7

That designated LA officers should:

- have the right of access to the home
- have the right to speak with each child alone if deemed appropriate

(p17-18, Badman, 2009)

Recommendation 9

That all LA officers and others engaged in the monitoring and support of EHE must be suitably trained.

(p19, Badman, 2009)

Recommendations that were concerned with clarifying EHE monitoring terms, improving monitoring procedures and increasing training and awareness about EHE among service providers were viewed highly. This is because LA officials felt an overriding sense of powerlessness and frustration in respect of their job role. Not least, because guidelines for monitoring EHE were regarded as too vague or limiting, but also because multi-agency support was weak due to a lack of understanding about EHE. The following comments outlined by 3 respondents highlight the complexities and challenges faced by LA practitioners on a daily basis:

Lack of guidance on monitoring

“The way EHE is supposed to be assessed is extremely woolly....I think it is something to do with ‘taking place in the community of which they are part’ To be honest that is gobbledegook, it doesn’t say anything....” (**RSP 1**)

Monitoring procedures

“I think you will find with authorities that a lot of people look upon it (EHE) as a bit of a poison chalice....You are expected to do so much and yet I have no right to see the child....so how on earth do you monitor something?....” (**RSP 3**)

Multi-agency support

“They (social workers/educational welfare officers) come at it from their own kind of paramount duties and they often don’t understand. So I have had situations where they get really snippy with me....I have to explain to them that actually I have no teeth....” (**RSP 4**)

The recommendations cited in relation to EHE monitoring were therefore viewed positively, because they focused on areas where LAs had encountered problems; which for the most part were sustained.

4.4.3.2 Access to services

Recommendation 10

LA's must provide support for EHE young people to find appropriate examination centres and provide entries free to all EHE candidates for DCSF funded qualifications.
(p19-20, Badman, 2009)

Recommendation 11

LA's should, in collaboration with schools and colleges:

- Extend access to school libraries, sports facilities and specialist facilities....
- Provide access to specialist music tuition on the same cost basis.
- Provide access to work experience.
- Provide access to post 14 vocational opportunities.

(p20, Badman, 2009)

Recommendations 10 and 11 were regarded as noteworthy by respondents because they sought to widen access to services and increase support (including financial) for EHE families. At present, LAs have limited resources, as the following extracts summarise:

“My EHE families, the majority of them are desperate for help....they choose to home educate by default, not by design. So they come to us and say: ‘Help me, because I don’t know how to EHE’, but we have no resources to provide any help” (**RSP 2**).

“People do ask us, and I think some people when they do EHE they don’t realise that there will be no support” (**RSP 4**).

4.4.3.3 SEN

Recommendation 20

When a child or young person without a statement of SEN has been in receipt of School Action Plus support, LAs and other agencies should give due consideration to whether that support should continue once the child is EHE – irrespective of whether or not such consideration requires a new commissioning of service.
(p27, Badman, 2009)

Recommendation 20 was particularly welcomed by respondents; because of its implication for funding for SEN families (17-19 SEN recommendations focused

primarily on increasing support and improving practice). Currently, funding for SEN families is either unavailable (unless the child is statemented) or limited. For example: “Some of them (EHE families) have gone to a tribunal in (LA) to get additional funding for EHE kids who are autistic....so support is needed” (**RSP 9**).

The value placed upon these recommendations (monitoring; access to services; SEN) by respondents was not solely confined to this study however. Ofsted (2010) and Kendall and Atkinson’s (2006) research found that LA officials were frustrated with the lack of information regarding EHE monitoring (LAs only have access to *DCSF Guidelines*, 2007), which in turn resulted in divergent practices across LAs. For example, some LAs wanted a broad overview whilst others were more curricula focused. In addition, training and awareness of EHE among multi-agency staff was regarded as ‘ineffective’ and ‘ad hoc’ (terminology cited in Kendall and Atkinson, 2006). Access to services for EHE families was also regarded as limiting, and the needs of SEN families (for the most part) were not met because there was no means of support; financial or otherwise.

Nevertheless, although similarities were evident between my study and the studies mentioned in terms of areas for improvement, the level of emphasis placed upon particular areas differed according the sample group. In Kendall and Atkinson’s (2006) study the lack of funding and resources was noted as a pertinent issue by just under three quarters of respondents. In contrast, this was an issue that resonated throughout all the responses provided by LA officials in the present research study. In the Ofsted review (2010) there was a sustained focus on increased data sharing between LAs, whereas this was not an area that was particularly made reference too in the responses obtained. However, the reasons for such differences could be attributed to the time frame in which the studies were conducted.

Kendall and Atkinson's (2006) study was undertaken when public service spending was stable and not the focus of cuts; this has changed recently with the world wide recession. This could arguably have increased sensitivities among respondents taking part in the research study in respect of the support and services currently available for EHE and the resources that are likely to be made available in the future.

Similarly, the Ofsted study was also conducted at a time when funding for EHE and joined up LA practices were not regarded as being problem areas, given the Badman recommendations and their implications for funding. In contrast, the study in question was undertaken (exception of one respondent) after the registration proposal had been dropped from the *Children, School and Family Bill* (2009). Thus uncertainty encompassed responses elicited about EHE practice and provision.

4.4.4 Limitations of recommendations

The recommendations contained in the Badman Review however, were not without criticism. In fact, over half (5) of my sample noted limitations with the recommendations; the majority (3) of which focused on registration and monitoring. Therefore, although these recommendations were regarded as significant by the sample, they were also noted for their limitations. Particular attention was directed at the access criteria (i.e. to see a child) outlined in Recommendation 7, and the challenges faced in implementing and enforcing these recommendations. As the three following extracts highlight:

“....while it will (*Recommendation 7*) give us greater powers and ability in terms of carrying out the role there are some areas that can also be seen as intrusive....to suddenly turn round and say we have access to a home is an absolute mega forward....It can be anywhere according to me....” (**RSP 3**)

“I’m not convinced that the registration system is going to have a significant impact on safeguarding of children, because it will be difficult to enforce....” (**RSP 9**)

I doubt the law will change in terms of defining ‘suitable’ and ‘efficient’ because if they outline set (monitoring) criteria for EHE then it also has to be mirrored in schools (**RSP 7 – interview not recorded**).

The concerns outlined by respondents in relation to monitoring and registration recommendations were therefore focused on their design or implementation. Interestingly, the basis or rationale for the recommendations did not encounter criticism. This helps to explain why all the recommendations were viewed highly by respondents, even those that were in need of modification.

The next theme outlines how LAs plan to move forward with Badman and EHE.

4.5 Moving forward with Badman

4.5.1 Introduction

This theme outlines how LAs are responding to the Badman recommendations, and their views on the future of EHE.

4.5.2 Badman recommendations

In regards to how LA officials are moving forward with the Badman recommendations, the overwhelming response was one of uncertainty. This was because of the three factors listed below:

- Failure of Recommendation 1 (registration) to pass in the *Children, School and Family Bill* (2009)
- Parliamentary election
- World wide recession

These three factors were perceived by respondents as having implications for the Badman Review in terms of its trajectory and successful implementation. For example, the failure of Recommendation 1 to pass was regarded as notable by respondents, because it was seen as the precursor for the basis and inclusion of the other (27) recommendations. As highlighted by the following example:

“I’m disappointed that the requirement to register didn’t go through....registration was really the lynch pin for the others....if we don’t know who they are we can’t help support them or fulfil our duties regarding monitoring....” (*RSP 5*).

The outcome of the General Election was also regarded as noteworthy (7 respondents sampled during this period) by my sample, because they mentioned that a Conservative Government is less likely to ‘follow through’ (*RSP 4*) with the Badman recommendations, as opposed to a Labour Government. This is due to some Conservative MPs (i.e. Graham Stuart) campaigning and condemning some of the recommendations (i.e. Recommendation 1) contained in the review. In addition, the

impact of the world wide recession on public service spending was mentioned, because of concerns about the level of funding and support that would be made available for the Badman recommendations. As summarised by the following extract:

“....clearly if you are in an authority with a deficit of 60 trillion or so they are not going to introduce (recommendations), unless they absolutely have too, and you can't really blame them for that” (**RSP 3**)

4.5.3 Future of EHE

The future of EHE provision and practice was therefore regarded as unclear by respondents. However, in spite of this there was still an overwhelming consensus of opinion that the Badman Review had helped LAs. This is because the review had highlighted in the public domain the inadequacies and variations of EHE professional practice. It had also sought to address these areas in the interests of both practitioners and EHE families. This was highlighted poignantly by one respondent:

“....I think the Badman Review tried to aid understanding about EHE and what it means for everybody, not just Education Otherwise....If you look at the review it involved everyone....the recommendations are a culmination of that....” (**RSP 4**)

The respondents also contended that because of the beneficial impact of the recommendations for EHE practice it was unlikely that all of the recommendations would be dropped, irrespective of the presiding political party, or the world wide recession. In fact 2 LAs (*RSP 1/3*) mentioned that they were already starting to formulate plans for the inclusion of the no-cost recommendations in their daily working practices (*RSP 3* emailed me a copy of their plan; see *Appendix 3*), because they thought ‘it is what they should be doing’ (*RSP 3*).

The belief (and hope) that not all of the Badman recommendations would dissipate, does appear to be founded by the recent inclusion of funding for EHE in a new ‘pupil premium’ announced by Conservative Education Secretary Michael Gove (DFE,

26/07/10). The ‘pupil premium’ although is specifically targeted at raising achievement among disadvantaged children attending schools, it also set out a proposal to allow ‘LAs to claim for 10% of a unit of funding to help EHE pupils’. However, although this will arguably help some EHE children, it will not be available to all, because of the fact that EHE parents are not required to register their children with LAs. Thus, the debate about registration is unlikely to recede if the systems in place for EHE are not promoting a fair or equitable system.

Another question that remains is whether any more of the recommendations contained in the Badman Review will be implemented? They are certainly wanted and regarded as necessary by my sample, but only time will tell if the Badman recommendations are pursued, and their impact upon EHE practitioners and families.

The next chapter will discuss my findings and suggest areas for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter returns to the research questions originally set out in Chapter 1 and uses them as a framework for reviewing the results of this study and some of the implications arising for future research.

The research questions are re-rehearsed below:

1. What do LA EHE contexts currently look like (numbers/characteristics/reasons)?
2. What are the views of professionals (EHE officers) in LAs regarding the conduct of the Badman Review?
3. What are the views of professionals in LAs regarding the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?
4. To what extent do LAs plan to implement the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?

5.2 Researching EHE

Before discussing the findings of the study, it is worth drawing attention to what set this study apart from previous work conducted in this area. First this study involved professional's views of EHE, which is an area that has rarely been focused upon in research. Secondly, and perhaps more crucially it focused on a recent review of EHE that has polarised opinion in both public and private arenas. This study therefore sought to address the gap that exists in EHE research by asking for the views of an underrepresented group on an area that is both topical and timely.

However, as the results below highlight the study identified more questions than there were answers, and so my future PhD research will be interested in not only identifying the gaps that exist in EHE research, but understanding why they exist, and what can be done about it. Some of the areas that I am interested in pursuing are discussed below in relation to the research questions that were used to guide my study.

5.3 Research areas

The first question that my study sought to answer concerned LA EHE contexts:

1. What do LA EHE contexts currently look like?

This question was chosen in order to provide an overview of the environment in which LA officers work, and to situate the research within a wider setting. However, the outcome of this question was not as anticipated, because rather than providing an overview of the EHE population (in the LAs sampled), instead it revealed the limitations apparent in LA practices. This is because the majority of LAs lacked information about their EHE population, either because of insufficient data recording procedures, or because they had no means to access the data.

It would be interesting to investigate whether this problem is evident across all LAs, and what they are doing about it in light of the Badman Review. In addition, a detailed examination of the figures that currently exist on EHE and the quality of the data would be beneficial for the purpose of providing an insight into what is known about EHE nationally.

At present there is no national database on EHE children, and they are not included in the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) or the National Pupil Database (NPD). I would therefore use formal and informal means to gather the data. For example, I could contact all the LAs in England (152) and national EHE organisations for information on numbers and characteristics of UK EHE students, alongside accessing what data currently exists on websites such as the Office for National Statistics. This in turn will allow for the examination of regional, socio-economic and ethnic trends.

The second research question focused on the Conduct of the Badman Review:

2. What are the views of professionals (EHE officers) in LAs regarding the conduct of the Badman Review?

The respondents were all of the opinion that the Badman Review was necessary, because of the lack of knowledge and awareness that exists on EHE. Moreover, they mentioned that although there were limitations in relation to the time frame of the review and the focus on safeguarding it was comprehensive. Further, the outcome of the review would have been the same regardless of time period. The conduct of the review however had implications for their professional practice in terms of their relationship with some EHE parents, and an increase in their work load (i.e. FOI Requests). For future research it would be interesting to assess whether the tension noted by LAs is still in existence and the consequences of this for LA practice.

The third research question focused on the Badman Recommendations:

3. What are the views of professionals in LAs regarding the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?

The respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the Badman recommendations (in spite of their limitations), because they aimed to change current practices governing EHE and to offer more support to the EHE community. The recommendations that were regarded as being particularly influential concerned: national registration; monitoring (including increased training); access to services and greater support for SEN families. I recognise however, that a limitation of this study was that I only gained the views of LAs, and so ascertaining the views of EHE parents and children about the support they need or require would help to position my research in a wider context. In addition, it would also be advantageous to conduct

research with families, particularly children, because as I highlighted in Chapter 2 there is limited research about the experiences of children who are EHE.

The final research question was interested in investigating the future of EHE practice and provision:

4. To what extent do LAs plan to implement the recommendations outlined in the Badman Review?

The consensus of opinion from respondents was one of uncertainty about the future of EHE, because of the registration proposal been dropped; the parliamentary election and the world wide recession. However, there was still a sense of optimism that some of the Badman recommendations would be implemented, because of their importance for EHE nationwide. The value placed upon these recommendations by respondents was highlighted when 2 LA officers outlined that they were planning to implement the no-cost recommendations in the not too distant future. It would be interesting to examine in future research the affect of these recommendations in the LAs mentioned and the long term impact and outcome of the Badman Review for LAs and families.

5.4 Future research

The findings of this study therefore helped to clarify the areas that are in need of additional research, either because there is no research available, or it is limited. I am certainly concerned with addressing the limited knowledge and evidence base that currently exists on EHE, by focusing on areas in my PhD research that are important and will be of use to EHE professionals, families and policy makers. The questions stated below are the key areas I intend to focus on:

1. What are the outcomes of the Badman Review for practitioners and EHE families?

2. What do we know about the numbers and characteristics of the EHE population both regionally and nationally?
3. To what extent can regional patterns in EHE be used as a precursor to predict future developments in the EHE movement?
4. What are the experiences of EHE children and young people?

The next section provides concluding comments on this research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide an overview of professional (EHE officers) views regarding the Badman Review. The findings revealed that the Badman Review was viewed highly by all respondents (in spite of its limitations), because it focused on an area that is overlooked in policy, and is in need of additional resources and support. At present, it is uncertain whether any of the proposed changes contained in the review will have any impact on the UK EHE context. However, the recent admission by the DfE (2010) for EHE funding suggests that the possibility of EHE dissipating in either political or media spheres is unlikely.

The forthcoming weeks and months are therefore going to be of interest for everyone involved in EHE, and I for one will certainly be observing the developments intently as I commence my PhD research. After all, the issues raised in the Badman Review are important, and have wide reaching consequences for EHE practice and provision. I hope to disseminate further the impact of the review in future research, and build upon the points raised. In particular I aim to provide an overview of who is involved in EHE and why, since this has proved elusive in the research conducted to date. More specifically I aim to expand upon what is known about EHE and facilitate awareness about this topic, because as poignantly highlighted by one LA official in my study:

“....There are all these people around who don’t know anything about it (EHE) until they walk slap bang into the centre of it and go ‘Oh my God’ and I’m shocked because it’s education....” (**RSP 4**)

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8: Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

Specific questions to explore/prompt regarding the EHE population

Current EHE context

1. How many EHE children are currently registered with your LA?

Prompt: Does this change on a regular basis?

Probe: Could you say more about how you keep track of numbers?

2. What are the characteristics of the cohort?

Prompts: What is the age range?

What is the gender distribution?

What type of ethnic groups are engaged in EHE?

Are there trends and patterns evident in the data regarding characteristics?

Probe: Is there anything more you would like to add about characteristics?

3. What are the reasons provided by families for EHE?

Prompts: Are some reasons more prevalent than others?

Do reasons fluctuate according to time period?

Have you noticed an increase in terms of any reasons stated?

Probe: Are there any more examples you would like to provide?

Specific questions to explore/prompt regarding the Badman Review into EHE

Conduct

Basis for the review

4. What in your view is the main reason why the Badman Review was conducted?

Prompt: Do you think the review was commissioned to expand upon what is known about EHE?

Prompt: Do you think the review was commissioned because of concerns over Safeguarding and welfare?

Prompt: Do you think the review was commissioned to improve support for EHE families?

5. Do you think the review was needed?

Prompt: Was it timely/topical?

Evidence obtained

6. In your opinion was the four month time scale sufficient to obtain evidence for the Badman Review?
7. To what extent do you think that the evidence collected reflected the views of all those engaged in EHE?

Prompts: Do you think there are views not captured?

Do you think some views were over-represented?

Probe: Do you think this was because of time scale, or other reasons?

Summary

8. Overall were you happy with the conduct of the review?

Prompt: Do you think the review provided a representative overview of EHE?

Probe: Is there anything more you would like to add about this area?

Recommendations

Most important

9. What in your view is the most significant recommendation for EHE?

Prompts: How will it impact upon families?

How will it impact professional EHE practices?

Probe: Are there any other consequences of this recommendation for EHE practice and provision?

Other recommendations

10. What other recommendations contained in the Badman Review do you deem to be of importance?

Prompt: What impact will it have for EHE families?

What impact will it have for your current role?

Probe: Are there any other consequences of these recommendations for EHE practice and provision?

Limitations

11. Do you perceive any limitations in respect of the recommendations contained in the review?

Prompts: Do you think all of the recommendations are necessary?

Do you think the recommendations will be easy to implement?

Probe: Do these limitations affect your view of the recommendations generally?

Summary

12. Do you think the recommendations effectively convey the needs and requirements of all those engaged in EHE?

Prompt: Will the recommendations help EHE families?

Will the recommendations help professionals engaged in EHE?

13. Are there any other recommendations you feel should have been included?

Probe: Why do you think those recommendations would be important for EHE?

SEN

14. Do you think the recommendations will have a beneficial impact on SEN families?

Prompt: This is in terms of resources/support

15. Do you think the SEN recommendations contained in the review address the needs of these families?

Prompt: Do they take into account the various needs and requirements of all SEN families?

Summary

16. Are there any other recommendations regarding SEN that you feel should have been included?

Prompt: Do you feel there are areas not represented?

Probe: Which areas would you like to see represented?

Prompt: Do you feel there are areas overrepresented?

Probe: Why do you think these areas were focused on?

Moving forward

LA practice

17. How is the LA going about implementing these recommendations?

Prompt: Are you actively seeking to implement the recommendations?

Probe: What recommendations are you focusing on?

Probe: What is the time scale for implementation?

Prompt: Are you aware of any developments in terms of funding for the recommendations?

Multi agency practice

18. What are different agencies within health and social care doing in support of these recommendations?

Prompts: Are service providers actively seeking to implement the recommendations?

Are you hopeful for more joined up provision for EHE as a consequence of the recommendations?

General Summary

19. Would you like to add anything else about your EHE context or the Badman Review that you think would be useful for the research in question?

Appendix 2

Badman Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the DCSF establishes a compulsory national registration scheme, locally administered, for all children of statutory school age, who are, or become, electively home educated.

- This scheme should be common to all local authorities.
- Registration should be renewed annually.
- Those who are registering for the first time should be visited by the appropriate local authority officer within one month of registration.
- Local authorities should ensure that all home educated children and young people already known to them are registered on the new scheme within one month of its inception and visited over the following twelve months, following the commencement of any new legislation.
- Provision should be made to allow registration at a local school, children's centre or other public building as determined by the local authority.
- When parents are thinking of deregistering their child/children from school to home educate, schools should retain such pupils on roll for a period of 20 school days so that should there be a change in circumstances, the child could be readmitted to the school. This period would also allow for the resolution of such difficulties that may have prompted the decision to remove the child from school.
- National guidance should be issued on the requirements of registration and be made available online and at appropriate public buildings. Such guidance must include a clear statement of the statutory basis of elective home education and the rights and responsibilities of parents.
- At the time of registration parents/carers/guardians must provide a clear statement of their educational approach, intent and desired/planned outcomes for the child over the following twelve months.
- Guidance should be issued to support parents in this task with an opportunity to meet local authority officers to discuss the planned approach to home education and develop the plan before it is finalised. The plan should be finalised within eight weeks of first registration.
- As well as written guidance, support should encompass advice from a range of advisers and organisations, including schools. Schools should regard this support as a part of their commitment to extended schooling.
- Where a child is removed from a school roll to be home educated, the school must provide to the appropriate officer of the local authority a record of the

child's achievement to date and expected achievement, within 20 school days of the registration, together with any other school records.

- Local authorities must ensure that there are mechanisms/systems in place to record and review registrations annually.

Recommendation 2

That the DCSF review the current statutory definition of what constitutes a "suitable" and "efficient" education in the light of the Rose review of the primary curriculum, and other changes to curriculum assessment and definition throughout statutory school age. Such a review should take account of the five Every Child Matters outcomes determined by the 2004 Children Act, should not be overly prescriptive but be sufficiently defined to secure a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum that would allow children and young people educated at home to have sufficient information to enable them to expand their talents and make choices about likely careers. The outcome of this review should further inform guidance on registration.

Home educators should be engaged in this process.

Recommendation 3

That all local authorities analyse the reasons why parents or carers chose elective home education and report those findings to the Children's Trust Board, ensuring that this analysis contributes to the debate that determines the Children and Young People's Plan.

Recommendation 4

That the local authority should establish a Consultative Forum for home educating parents to secure their views and representative opinion. Such a body could be constituted as a sub-group of the Children's Trust with a role in supporting the development of the Children's Trust, and the intentions of the local authority with regard to elective home education.

Recommendation 5

That the DCSF should bring forward proposals requiring all local authorities to report to the

Children's Trust Board making clear how it intends to monitor and support children and young people being educated at home, in accord with Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 6

That local authorities' should where appropriate commission the monitoring and support of home education through the local Children's Trust Board, thereby securing a multidisciplinary approach and the likely use of expertise from other agencies and organisations including the voluntary sector.

Recommendation 7

The DCSF should bring forward proposals to change the current regulatory and statutory basis to ensure that in monitoring the efficiency and suitability of elective home education:

- That designated local authority officers should:
 - have the right of access to the home;
 - have the right to speak with each child alone if deemed appropriate or, if a child is particularly vulnerable or has particular communication needs, in the company of a trusted person who is not the home educator or the parent/carer.

In so doing, officers will be able to satisfy themselves that the child is safe and well.

- That a requirement is placed upon local authorities to secure the monitoring of the effectiveness of elective home education as determined in Recommendation 1.
- That parents be required to allow the child through exhibition or other means to demonstrate both attainment and progress in accord with the statement of intent lodged at the time of registration.

Recommendation 8

That reasonable warning of intended visit and invitation to exhibit should be given to home educators, parents and carers, not less than two weeks in advance. A written report of each visit must be filed within 21 days and copied to the home educating parent and child. A suitable process for factual correction and challenge to the content must be in place and made known to all parties.

Recommendation 9

That all local authority officers and others engaged in the monitoring and support of elective home education must be suitably trained. This training must include awareness of safeguarding issues and a full understanding of the essential difference, variation and diversity in home education practice, as compared to schools. Wherever possible and appropriate, representatives of the home educating community should be

involved in the development and/or provision of such training. It is recommended that all officers be trained in the use of the Common Assessment Framework.

Recommendation 10

That all local authorities should offer a menu of support to home educating families in accord with the requirements placed upon them by the power of wellbeing, extended schools and community engagement and other legislation. To that end local authorities must provide support for home educating children and young people to find appropriate examination centres and provide entries free to all home educated candidates who have demonstrated sufficiently their preparedness through routine monitoring, for all DCSF funded qualifications.

Recommendation 11

That in addition to Recommendation 10 above, local authorities should, in collaboration with schools and colleges:

- Extend and make available the opportunities of flexi-schooling.
- Extend access to school libraries, sports facilities, school visits, specialist facilities and key stage assessment.
- Provide access to specialist music tuition on the same cost basis.
- Provide access to work experience.
- Provide access to post 14 vocational opportunities.
- Signpost to third sector support where they have specialist experience and knowledge, for example, provision for bullied children.

Recommendation 12

- BECTA considers the needs of the home educating community in the national roll out of the home access initiative
- That local authorities consider what support and access to ICT facilities could be given to home educating children and young people through the existing school networks and the use of school based materials
- That the QCA should consider the use of ICT in the testing and exam process with regard to its impact on home educated children and young

Recommendation 13

That local authority provision in regard to elective home education is brought into the scope of Ofsted's assessment of children's services within the Comprehensive Area Assessment through information included in the National Indicator Set

(Recommendation 25), the annual LSCB report (Recommendation 21) and any other relevant information available to inspectors.

Recommendation 14

That the DCSF require all local authorities to make an annual return to the Children's Trust Board regarding the number of electively home educated children and young people and the number of School Attendance Orders and Education Supervision Orders as defined in the 1996 Education Act, issued to home educated children and young people.

Recommendation 15

That the DCSF take such action as necessary to prevent schools or local authorities advising parents to consider home education to prevent permanent exclusion or using such a mechanism to deal with educational or behavioural issues.

Recommendation 16

That the DCSF bring forward proposals to give local authorities power of direction with regard to school places for children and young people returning to school from home education above planned admission limits in circumstances where it is quite clear that the needs of the child or young person could not be met without this direction.

Recommendation 17

That the Ofsted review of SEN provision gives due consideration to home educated children with special educational needs and make specific reference to the support of those children.

Recommendation 18

That the DCSF should reinforce in guidance to local authorities the requirement to exercise their statutory duty to assure themselves that education is suitable and meets the child's special educational needs. They should regard the move to home education as a trigger to conduct a review and satisfy themselves that the potentially changed complexity of education provided at home, still constitutes a suitable education. The statement should then be revised accordingly to set out that the parent has made their own arrangements under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. In the wake of the Ofsted review, changes to the SEN framework and legislation may be required.

Recommendation 19

That the statutory review of statements of SEN in accord with Recommendation 18 above be considered as fulfilling the function of mandatory annual review of elective home education recommended previously.

Recommendation 20

When a child or young person without a statement of special educational needs has been in receipt of School Action Plus support, local authorities and other agencies should give due consideration to whether that support should continue once the child is educated at home – irrespective of whether or not such consideration requires a new commissioning of service.

Recommendation 21

That the Children's Trust Board ensures that the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) reports to them on an annual basis with regard to the safeguarding provision and actions taken in relation to home educated children. This report shall also be sent to the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit. Such information should be categorised thereby avoiding current speculation with regard to the prevalence of child protection concerns amongst home educated children which may well be exaggerated. This information should contribute to and be contained within the National Annual Report.

Recommendation 22

That those responsible for monitoring and supporting home education, or commissioned so to do, are suitably qualified and experienced to discharge their duties and responsibilities set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children to refer to social care services children who they believe to be in need of services or where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Recommendation 23

That local authority adult services and other agencies be required to inform those charged with the monitoring and support of home education of any properly evidenced concerns that they have of parents' or carers' ability to provide a suitable education irrespective of whether or not they are known to children's social care, on such grounds as

- alcohol or drug abuse
- incidents of domestic violence
- previous offences against children

And in addition:

- anything else which may affect their ability to provide a suitable and efficient education

This requirement should be considered in the Government's revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance.

Recommendation 24

That the DCSF make such change as is necessary to the legislative framework to enable local authorities to refuse registration on safeguarding grounds. In addition local authorities should have the right to revoke registration should safeguarding concerns become apparent.

Recommendation 25

That the DCSF, in its revision of the National Indicator Set indicated in its response to the recent Laming Review, should incorporate an appropriate target relating to the safeguarding of children in elective home education.

Recommendation 26

DCSF should explore the potential for Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) and other organisations, to identify and disseminate good practice regarding support for home education.

Recommendation 27

It is recommended that the Children's Workforce Development Council and the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit include the needs of this group of officers in their consideration of national training needs.

Recommendation 28

That the DCSF and the Local Government Association determine within three months how to provide to local authorities sufficient resources to secure the recommendations in this report.

Appendix 3

RSP 3 sent additional information (via email) about the Badman recommendations that have been adopted in their LA at no cost.

Recommendation 8 (Our systems were modified to accommodate this)

That reasonable warning of intended visit and invitation to exhibit should be given to home educators, parents and carers, not less than two weeks in advance. A written report of each visit must be filed within 21 days and copied to the home educating parent and child. A suitable process for factual correction and challenge to the content must be in place and made known to all parties.

Recommendation 11 (Systems were modified to accommodate some of this)

That in addition to Recommendation 10, local authorities should, in collaboration with schools and colleges:

- > Extend and make available the opportunities of flexi-schooling.
- > Extend access to school libraries, sports facilities, school visits, specialist facilities and key stage assessment.
- > Provide access to work experience.
- > Signpost to third sector support where they have specialist experience and knowledge, for example, provision for bullied children.

Recommendation 13 (We are now monitoring and recording home education in preparation for this)

That local authority provision in regard to elective home education is brought into the scope of Ofsted's assessment of children's services within the Comprehensive Area Assessment through information included in the National Indicator Set (Recommendation 25), the annual LSCB report (Recommendation 21) and any other relevant information available to inspectors.

