

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland SEND Parent/Carer Survey April 2016

Summary analysis of responses and recommendations for next steps

- The majority of the 294 responses came from parents of children in primary phase (165) with the next greatest number in the secondary phase (107). Responses were received in all age ranges from 0-25.
- The highest proportion of respondents related to children with ASD (122 respondents), SEMH needs (109 respondents), general learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, speech and language needs and sensory needs.
- The very large majority of parents and carers indicated that their children were happy in their EY provision/school/college (80%). Responses were received from parents/carers of children in around 90 schools within and outside Northumberland.
- A very small minority of respondents (18%) indicated that their child was unhappy. The most common reasons for this related to feeling their child needed increased or better quality support, issues relating to social integration or bullying in school or children finding homework or schoolwork difficult.
- The very large majority of respondents felt their child was safe in school/college.
- The large majority of parents/carers felt their child was making progress at school with around half feeling that the progress was good or outstanding.
- The large majority of parents/carers know who the SENDCO is in their child's provision. A small minority did not.
- Where parents/carers have accessed support from the SENDCO, the large majority found this helpful. A very small minority found this unhelpful. The most common reasons for this were SENDCOs being new in post, where there were delays in implementing referrals or agreed actions and where parents felt that they had sourced better quality advice or research on their child's condition than the SENDCO was able to provide. In some cases, some of the comments from parents/carers indicated a lack of understanding of the role of a SENDCO and this may be something to explore further with schools/colleges.
- Parents were asked to think about any extra support their child received. The majority indicated that support was helping their child to make progress. Just over half were clear about why their child was receiving the support. This may be an indication of uncertainty with some parents as to the nature of the support and the reasons for it.
- Many parents indicated very positive responses about the quality of support their child received. When asked how education provision could be improved, respondents identified a need for more support from staff who are well trained to understand their child's needs. They also identified a lack of understanding of specific learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia. A few parents wanted recommendations from external professionals to be acted on more promptly.
- The very large majority (82%) of respondents indicated that their child's travel to their education provision was under 30 minutes, with a very small minority (14%) between 30 minutes and 1 hour.
- Of those respondents with children with a statement or an EHCP, most felt that the process had allowed them to share their views with professionals co-ordinating their child's assessment.

- The large majority of parents were made aware of support and guidance they could access during the EHCP process, eg through IASS.
- The very large majority of parents/carers feel the EHCP targets set for their child reflect their needs. Around 12% of respondents were unsure about this. The large majority feel the EHCP helps their child to make progress. 13% do not feel their child makes progress as a result of the support in their EHCP and free text comments indicated this was linked to a lack of support from staff trained to the correct level to meet their child's needs.
- When seeking advice and guidance, the majority of parents approach an education professional. Other popular responses included a health professional, parent groups and the internet. Fewer parents selected the IASS, the NCC SEND team or the local offer website. In their free text responses, parents identified issues with navigating around the NCC local offer website. They also requested a pack of information sent out when a child is identified with SEND and a list of charities/support services when the EHCP process commences.
- A very small minority of respondents (14%) had accessed social care support. The large majority of this group reported a satisfactory or better experience, but 28% were not satisfied with the support. The most positive responses related to the benefit of short break/respite care. Respondents raised concerns about a reduction in available respite and that thresholds to access Disabled Children's Team were too high.
- Around half of respondents had accessed health provision/support for their child. The very large majority were satisfied with their experience with over 60% rating the support as good or excellent. The most positive comments related to OT, physiotherapy and securing the correct medication for children. The most negative responses related to provision for mental health and the waiting times and lack of continuity of professionals at CYPS. However, a number of respondents acknowledged that once the therapy actually took place, CYPS did some good quality work.
- Parents had mixed views on how well professionals collaborated. Around a third felt that professionals collaborated very well. A similar proportion reported that collaborative practice was not strong. In their free text comments, parents raised issues of having to tell their story many times to professionals. They also wanted professionals to be better informed about their child before meeting them and to listen carefully to them and their child.
- Parents expressed a wish for more training and support for parents to prepare children for adulthood. This would be supported by the fact that a majority acknowledged they have not yet considered what their child will do after their education. Respondents also identified a need for more specialist training for school staff on specific learning difficulties and ASD.

Recommendations

- Survey summary analysis should be shared with Deputy Chief Executive and then SEND strategic group to consider future actions
- Survey summary analysis should be shared with:
 - Headteachers of schools/colleges
 - EY providers
 - Parent/carer forum
 - Social care teams through CSMs
 - Health professionals through clinical commissioners and DMO
 - LA education team including commissioners and SEND team
 - Elected members with responsibility for education/SEND
- LA education team to collect information about SENCO experience and qualifications and review school improvement training and support offer for SENCOs and support staff in schools/colleges
- SEND strategic group will continue with the planned workstreams relating to:
 - Provision for specific learning difficulties including dyslexia
 - Support for children's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- SEND commissioner to ensure wide distribution of the newly produced paper SEND guide to services so that it is readily available to parents via schools, colleges and EY providers when children are identified with SEND
- SEND commissioner to prioritise completion of the review of the local offer website to ensure it is accessible and provides useful information to parents/carers
- Northumberland Parent and Carer Forum to work with LA professionals to provide workshop sessions for parents and carers to support their children's transition into adulthood
- Clinical commissioners to work with CYPS to continue to address waiting times and continuity of provision for children
- SEND team to ensure that when professionals are invited to contribute to statutory assessment processes, they receive a copy of the initial referral information to avoid parents/carers duplicating their story
- Children's services to review the thresholds for the Disabled Children's Team and provide clear information about support pathways available where children do not meet thresholds
- Health and wellbeing team to initiate a programme of work with schools and with children/young people to highlight the increased risks of social vulnerability/bullying for children and young people with SEND.

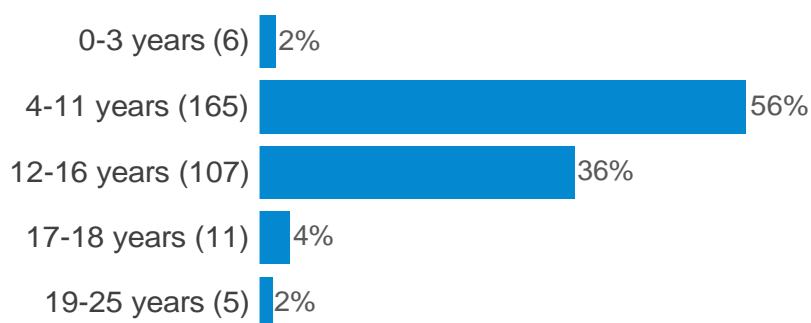
Northumberland SEND Parent/Carer Survey April 2016

294 respondents completed this questionnaire. Parents/carers of children/young people from around 90 schools responded. 140 of the respondents have children with a statement or EHCP or are in the process of being assessed for an EHCP. 224 of the respondents have only 1 child with SEND.

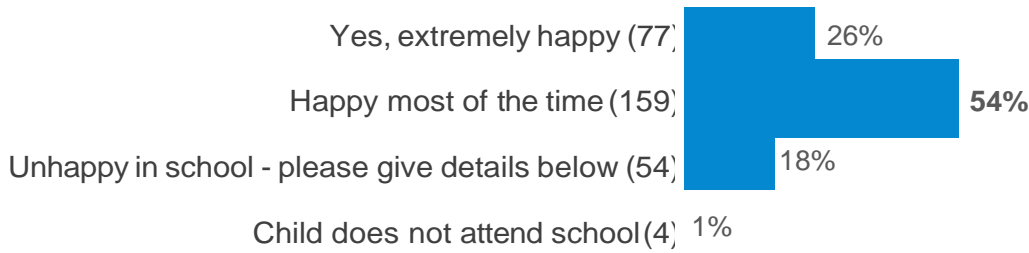
What type of SEND does your child have? Please tick all that apply.



What age is your child with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?



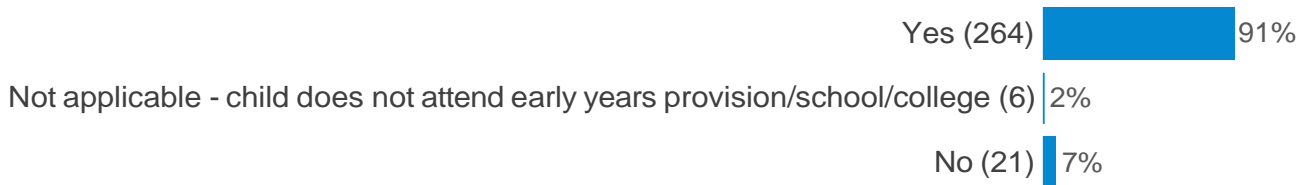
Is your child happy in their early years provision/school/college?



Where parents indicated their child was unhappy, the most common reasons for this related to:

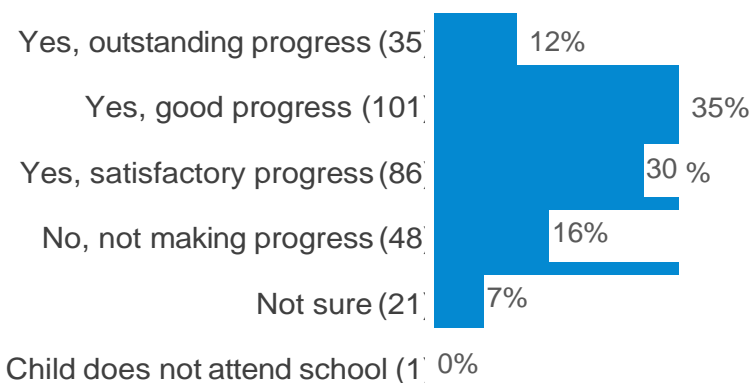
1. Feeling their child needed increased or better quality support
2. Feeling their child could not cope with social situations in the school
3. That their child had previously or was currently experiencing bullying
4. That their child finds school work and/or homework difficult

Do you feel your child is safe in their early years provision/school/college?

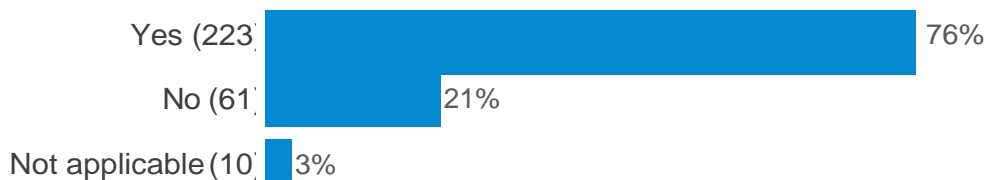


Parents were not given an option to indicate why they felt their child was unsafe, but were given information on how to address this, including links to safeguarding referral routes.

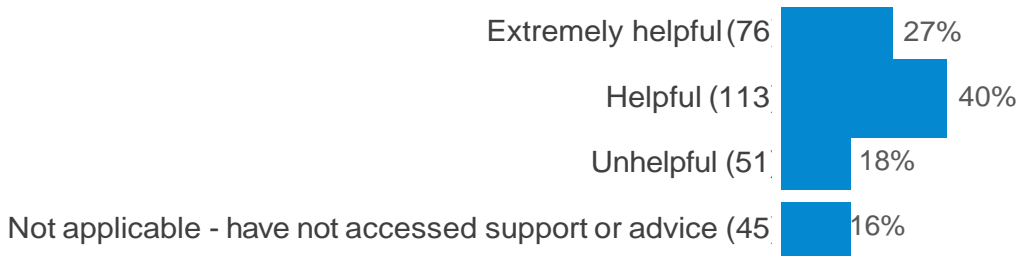
Do you feel your child is making progress at their early years provision/school/college?



Do you know who the Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO) is in your child's early years provision/school/college?



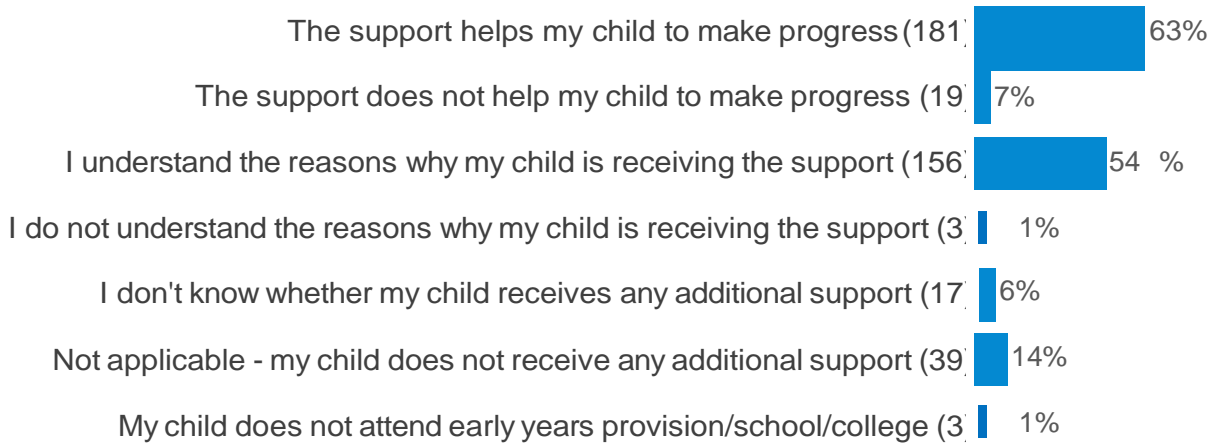
Where you have accessed support from the SENCO in your child's early years provision/school/college, did you find the support or advice:



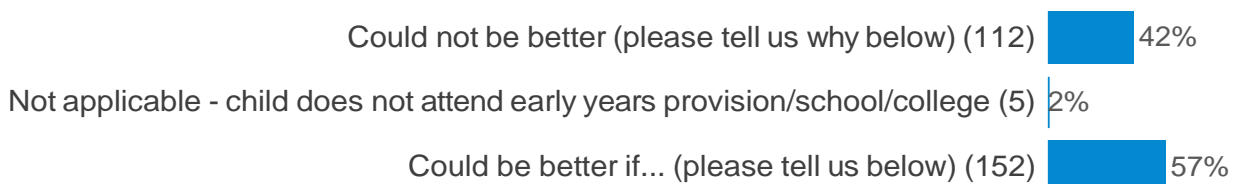
Where parents identified the support and advice as unhelpful, the most common free text responses related to:

1. Concerns where SENCOs were new in post and may not have the expertise or experience needed
2. Delays in implementing agreed decisions or referrals
3. Parents feeling they are driving the process and sourcing the specialist research or advice

If your child receives any extra support through their early years provision/school/college staff which is additional to that which every child receives (for example 1:1 support, small group work), please tick any statements that apply:



How could education provision for your child be improved?

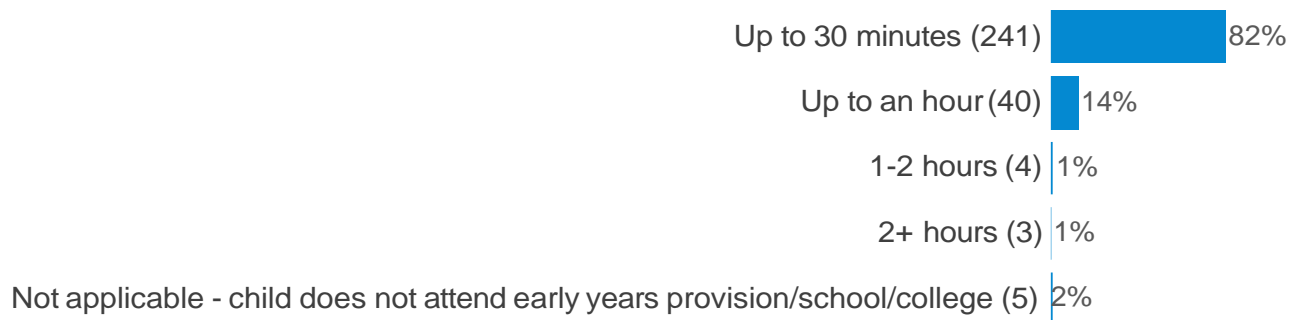


Where parents/carers indicated provision could be improved, the most common free text responses related to:

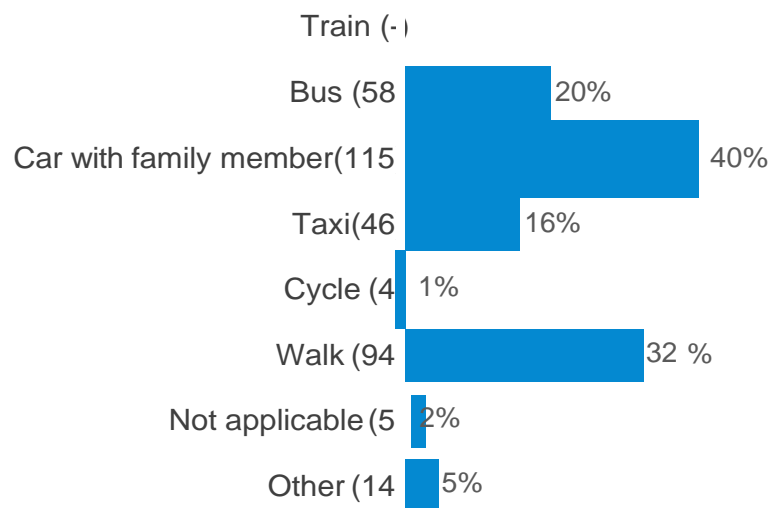
1. More support from staff who are trained to understand children’s needs
2. Recommendations from external professionals need to be acted upon more quickly
3. Better understanding of specific learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia

Within these responses, many parents made positive comments about the quality of support their child received. This was particularly the case in relation to specialist provision.

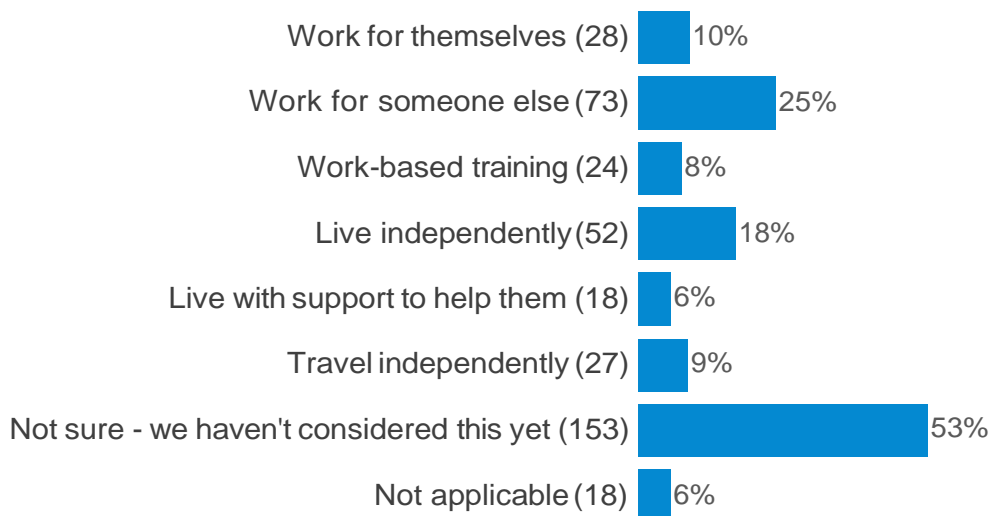
How long does it take for your child to get to school or college each day?



How does your child travel to school or college?



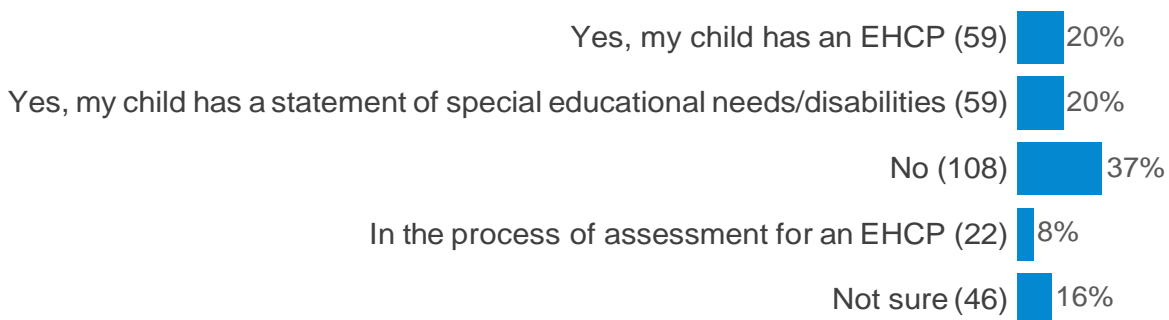
What does your child plan or hope to do after they leave education? (Tick any that apply)



Where parents commented on what would help their child to prepare for the future, the most common responses focused on:

1. Good quality education with good English and maths skills
2. Social and communication skills including greater confidence
3. Vocational opportunities and work experience
4. Planning for the future in relation to transitioning from education to employment
5. Life skills including financial, cooking etc.

Does your child have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or a statement of special educational needs/disabilities?



Please reflect on the process of applying for an EHCP or a statement of special educational needs/disabilities. Did you feel that you had an opportunity to contribute your views and opinions to the professionals who co-ordinated your child's assessment?



Were you made aware of support and advice that you could access to help you through the process? (e.g. Parent Partnership Service - now known as SEND Information, Advice or Support Service)



Do you feel that the targets set for your child in their EHCP or statement of special educational needs reflect your child's needs?



Where parents felt they did not reflect their needs, the most common responses related to:

1. Targets originally met the child's needs but need to be reviewed in light of their current needs
2. Targets not ambitious enough

Is the support outlined in the EHCP or statement of special educational needs helping your child to make progress?

Yes (83) Not sure (19)
No (15)

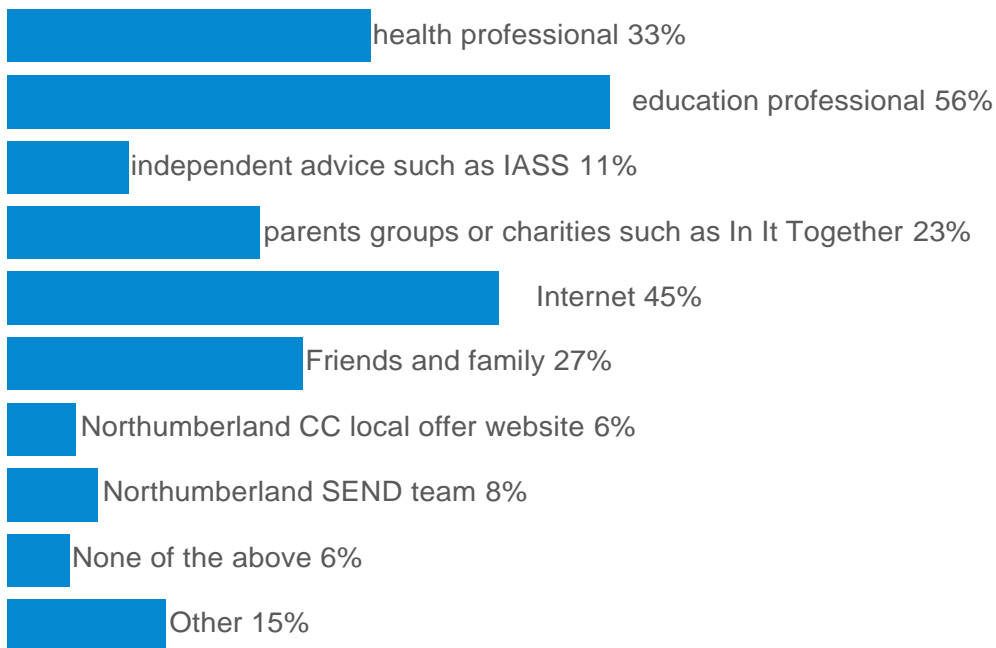
71%



Where parents felt that the EHCP or statement did not help their child to make progress, the most common responses related to:

1. Lack of consistent support provided from staff who were not trained to the appropriate level
2. EHCP just agreed and all support not yet in place

When you are looking for information, advice or support about your child's SEND where do you go? (Please tick all that apply)



Other included:

LIST teams
ADHD nurse
CYPS team
Toby Henderson Trust
IPSEA
Dyslexia Action
NAS helpline

Autism charities
Dyslexia North East
Citizens Advice Bureau
Ofsted website
ECCDS
Portage
LAC nurse

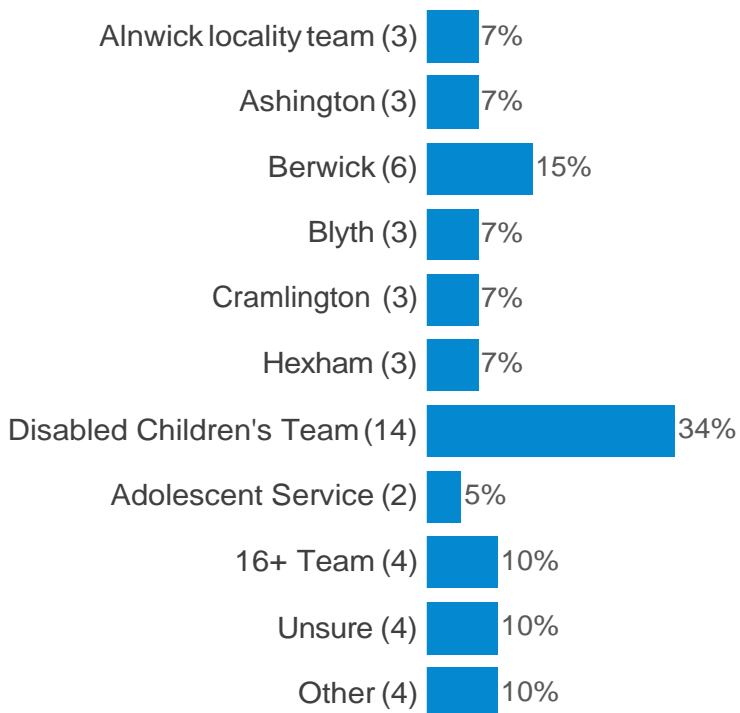
Where parents commented on the support that was available, the most common responses related to:

1. A request for a pack of information which can be sent out to all parents when their child is identified as having SEND/more information being made available through schools and via SENCOs
2. Feeling isolated
3. Local offer website difficult to use
4. A list of support services/charities to be sent out with EHC needs assessment paperwork
5. Wanting professionals to recognise the expertise that parents bring to the table

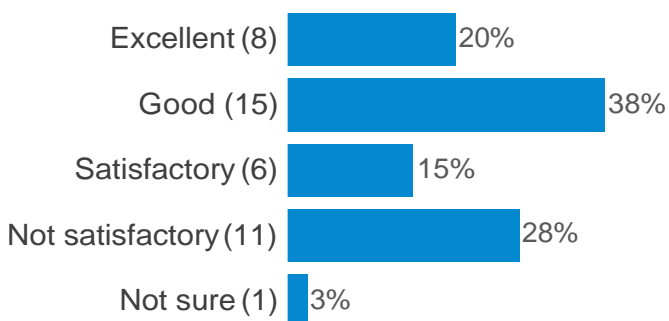
Has your child accessed Social Care support because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities?



Which Social Care team provided support to your family? (Please tick all that apply)



How effective was the Social Care support you received in helping you to meet your child's special educational needs and/or disabilities?

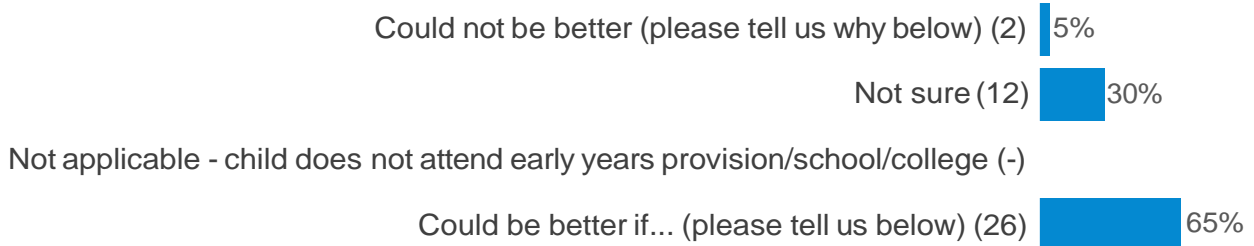


What aspects of Social Care support worked well for your family?

Most common responses:

1. Respite/short break care including holiday and social opportunities through direct payments
2. Social worker identifying the right professionals to provide support

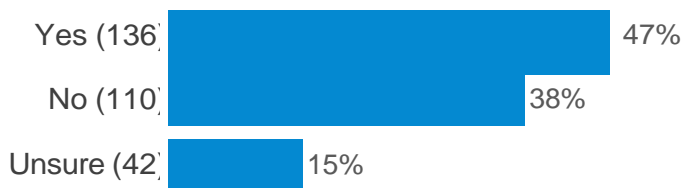
How could Social Care support be improved?



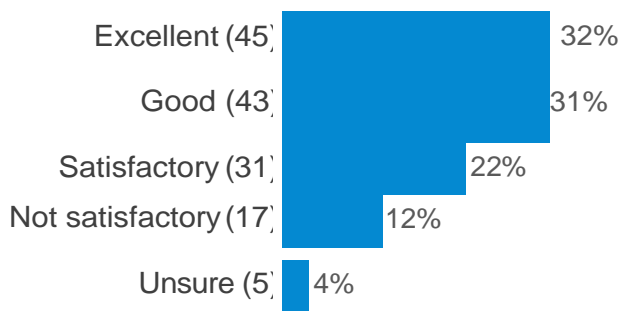
Where parents indicated that support could be improved, the most common responses were:

1. The risk of respite care being removed
2. Thresholds for access to Disabled Children's team being too high
3. More services for North Northumberland
4. Transport for access to respite care

Has your child accessed support from health services because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?



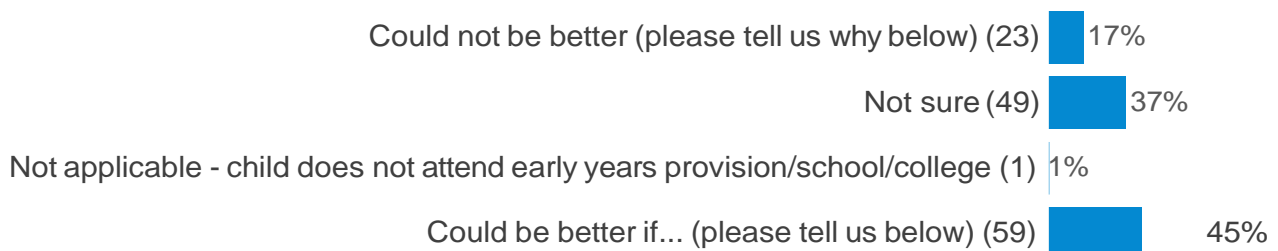
How effective was the health support that your child received in helping to meet their special educational needs and/or disabilities?



What specific aspects of health support worked well for your child? Most common responses:

1. Occupational Therapy
2. Physiotherapy
3. Obtaining medication for child
4. CYPS therapy, once secured after long waiting time

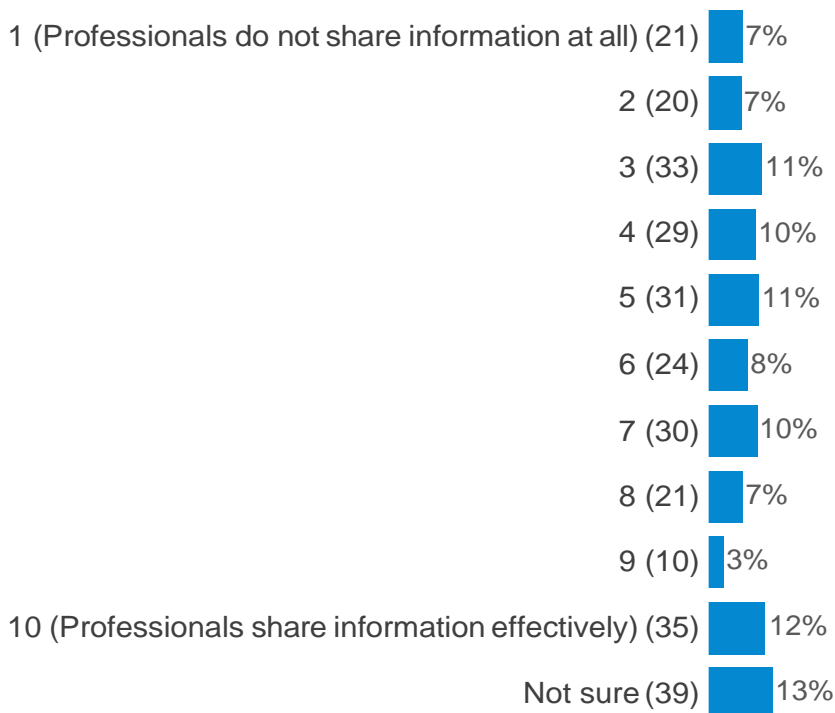
How could health support for your child be improved?



Please give details of how health support could be improved:

1. Better continuity of care and professional input – changes in professionals at CYPS a real issue for children with ASD.
2. Reduce waiting times for CYPS
3. Better mental health provision
4. Teachers were better informed about health needs

We are working to improve the way that professionals collaborate to help your child. Please tell us how well you think that professionals work together to share information about your child and how this helps to meet your child's needs.



Is there anything else you would like to share with us that would help us to improve provision in Northumberland for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Most common responses:

1. Better communication between professionals, particularly health and education
2. Professionals to be better informed about children's needs before meetings
3. More training/workshops for parents on issues such as transition planning, benefits at 18+, college options, housing
4. More respite and provision of social clubs in Berwick and other parts of rural Northumberland
5. More specialist training for SENCOs, teachers/teaching assistants, particularly on dyspraxia, ASD
6. Continuity of health professionals
7. Listen to the views of parents
8. Don't want to have to tell our story to every professional we meet
9. Listen to the child

How many children do you have with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?

