

## EIGHTH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) REFORMS IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY FOR PARENT CARER FORUMS NOVEMBER 2016

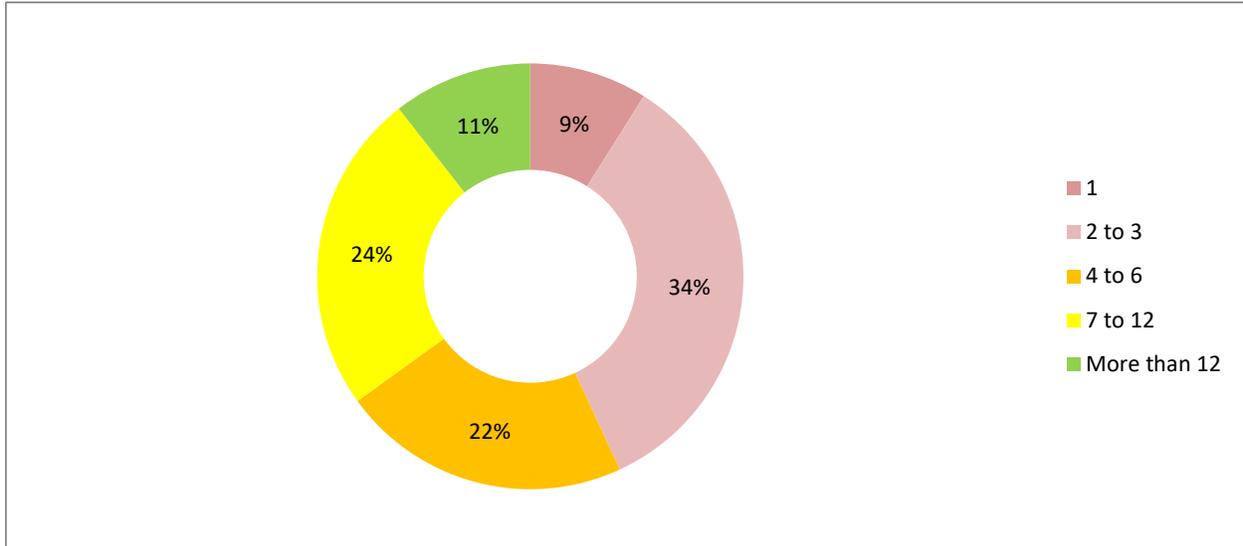
In November 2016, the eighth Department for Education SEND survey was carried out with local authorities and parent carer forums to establish how the ongoing implementation of the SEND reforms is faring in their local areas just over two years into the new SEND legislation. Completed surveys will also help to identify challenges, support requirements, and examples of good practice that might be replicated in other areas.

*Below are the summary findings of the parent carer forum survey based on an England wide response.*

A total of 123 parent carer forums responded to the survey, representing an 81% return and an 11% increase on the June 2016 survey (70%). This is the highest forum response rate to date.

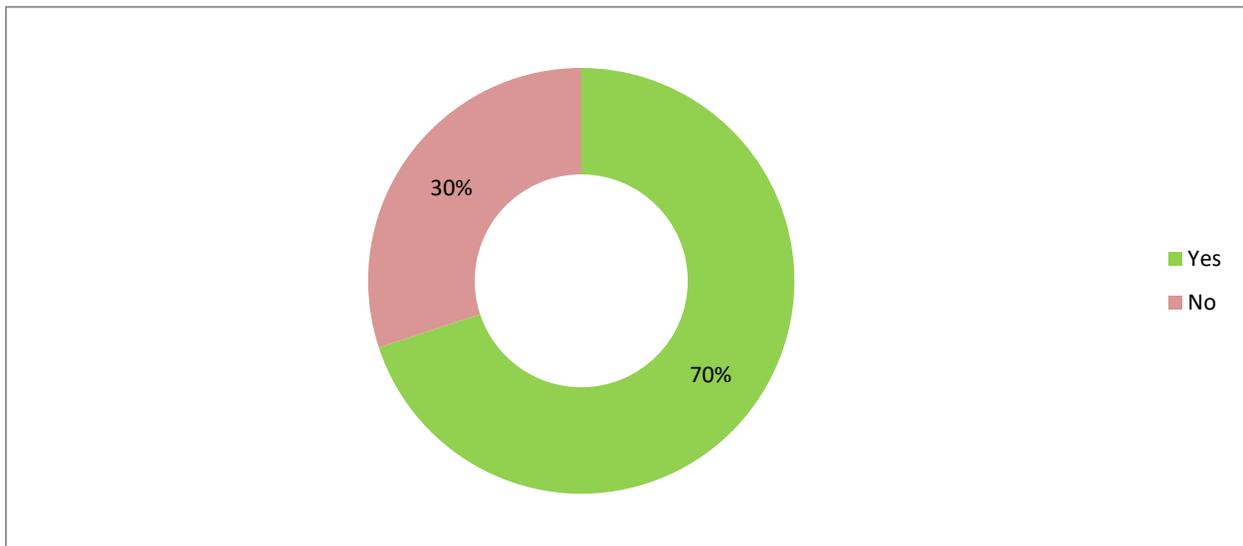
### **Q2 Number of forum members involved in considering the responses to this survey?**

57% of responses to the survey had 4 or more forum members completing the survey highlighting that responses contained a cross-section of views. This is a 9% decrease on survey 7 when 66% of responses were completed by 4 or more members and is perhaps indicative of the increased demands on forums' time.



### Q3 Have you discussed responses to this survey with your local authority?

70% of parent carer forums discussed their responses to the survey with their local authority; this is a large increase from the 7<sup>th</sup> survey when 45% discussed with responses with their local authority and could be an indication that local areas are jointly preparing for their impending local area inspections with their parent carer forum. However, many reported that they discussed their responses post-completion or that they had intended to discuss with their local authority but were not able to find a mutually convenient date. Other forums preferred to complete the survey without the local authority as they felt that their answers would be truly independent that way, or cited a lack of response from their local authority.

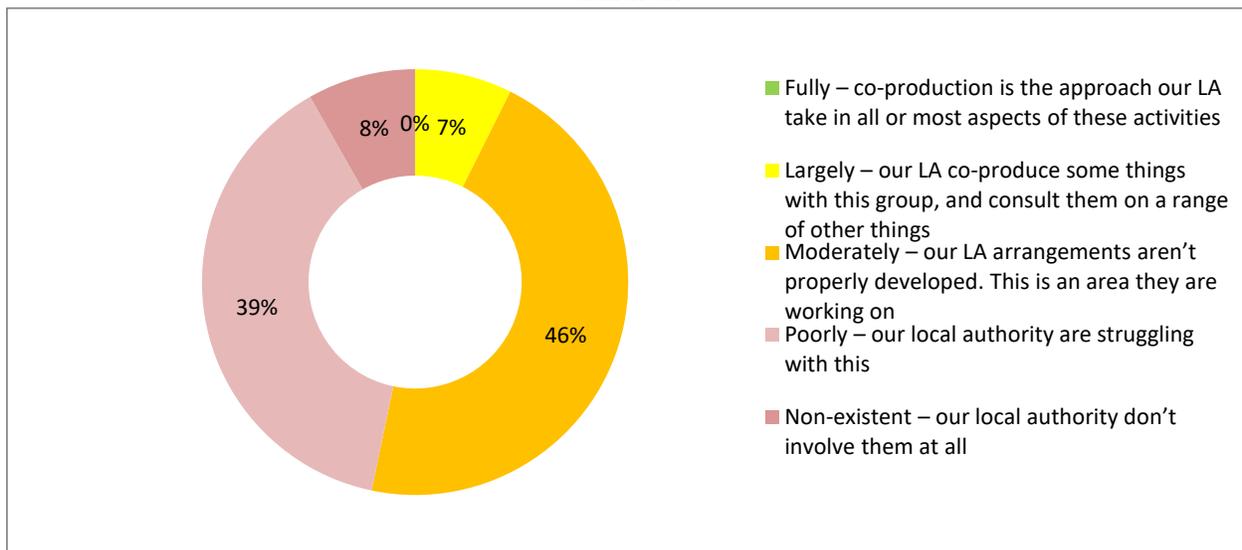


**Key findings:**

**Q4 How engaged does your Parent Carer Forum feel children, young people and parents are in strategic planning and co-production of SEND services (e.g. developing the Local Offer):**

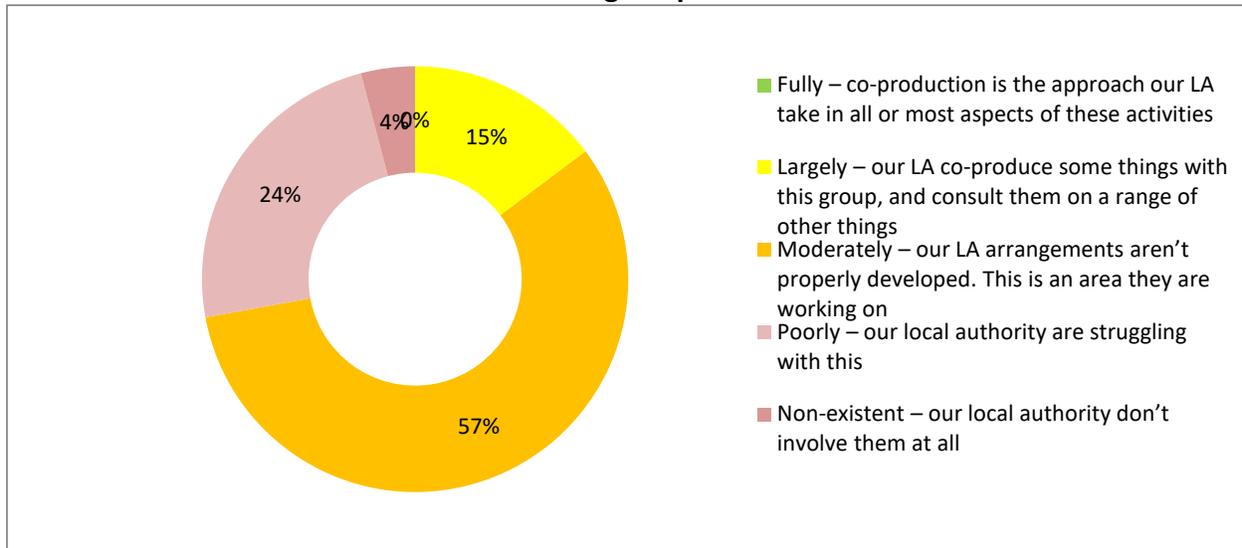
60% of forums feel that parents are largely or fully engaged in strategic planning with their local authority. This is a slight drop from 62% in the 7th survey, which saw a similar drop from survey 6. These figures are much lower still when considering the engagement of children (7%, a 1% increase) and young people (15%, a 2% decrease) but largely echo the results from the last survey.

**Children**

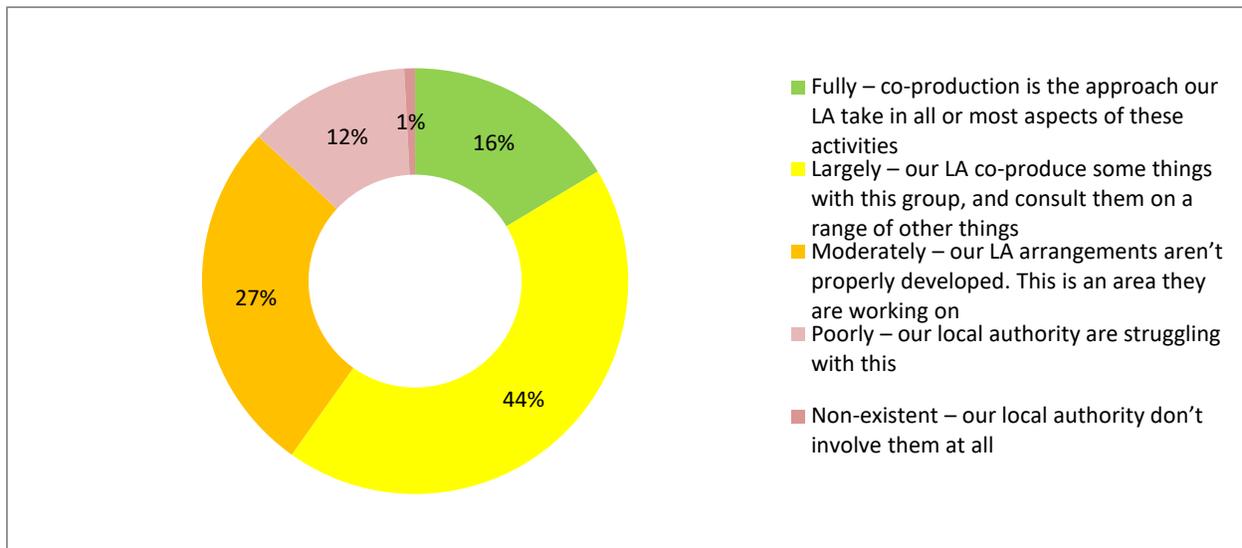


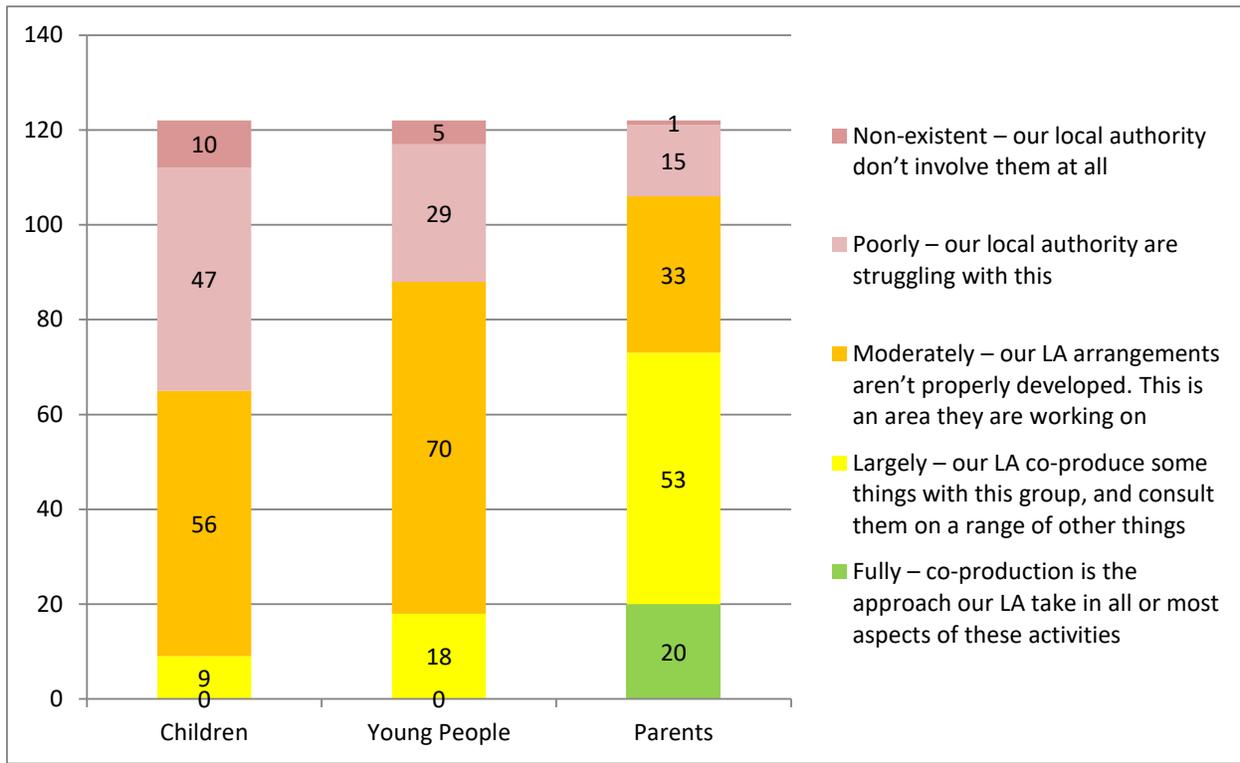
- Fully – co-production is the approach our LA take in all or most aspects of these activities
- Largely – our LA co-produce some things with this group, and consult them on a range of other things
- Moderately – our LA arrangements aren't properly developed. This is an area they are working on
- Poorly – our local authority are struggling with this
- Non-existent – our local authority don't involve them at all

## Young People



## Parents





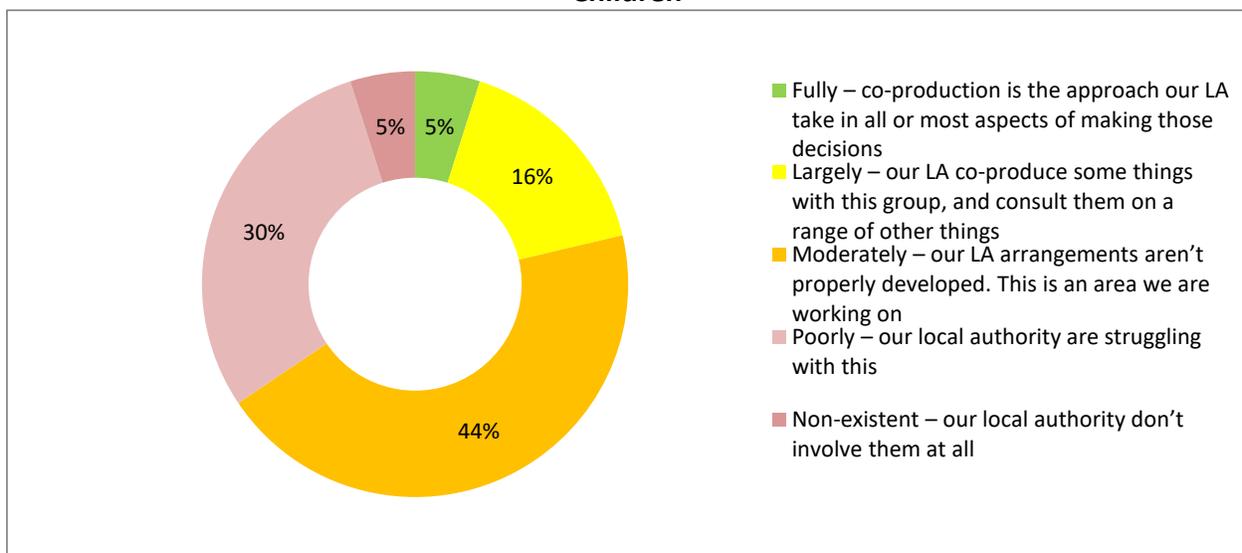
Forums reported on their involvement in a vast array of strategic boards and work streams across services. Some examples cited included involvement in recruitment of the workforce; in developing resources including the Local Offer; in tendering and commissioning; preparations for local area inspections; short breaks; surveys; training, workshops and events, as well as partnership agreements and strategies. Some examples of young people's participation were given and some forums mentioned groups that local authorities consult with regarding policies and resources such as the Local Offer, though many forums commented on how children and young people's engagement is just developing and could be strengthened.

Forums reported challenges in the same areas: lack of involvement in the Local Offer and issues with short breaks and SEN transport; some forums feeling that though they were involved, they had not been listened to or did not receive feedback, others stated that the local authority are unwilling to have the forum involved strategically but will consult them; forum and local authority capacity; changes of personnel in forums and local authority staff turnover. Health engagement was flagged as a concern in many areas, as was concern around the quality and timeliness of EHCPs and transfers. Many forums commented that children and young people's participation and co-production is a work in progress.

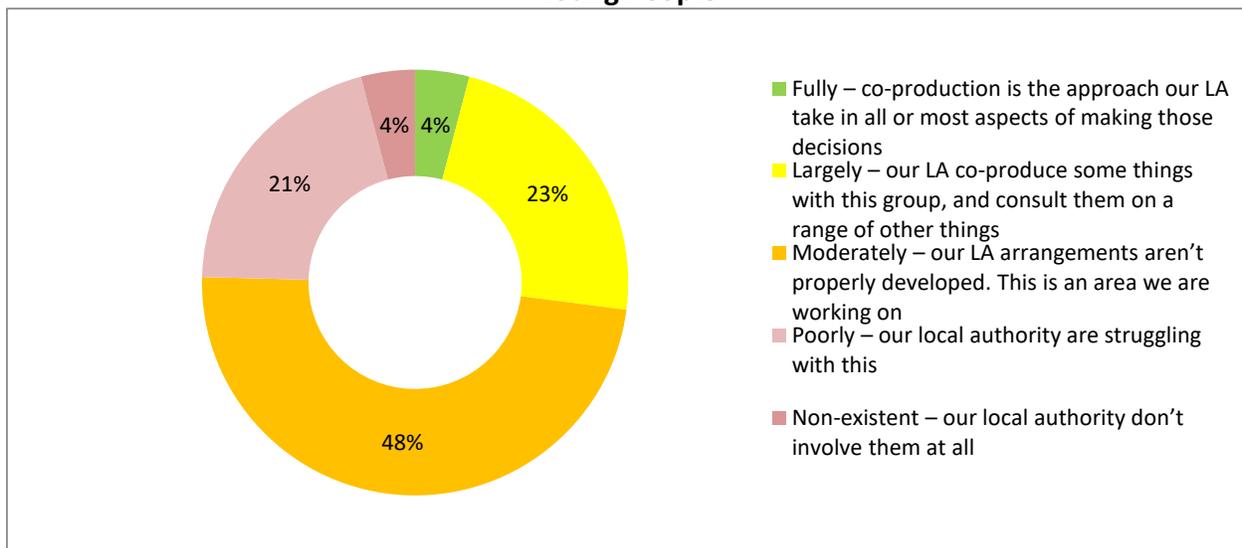
**Q5 In the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum how well engaged are children, young people and parents in making decisions about their own SEND provision (e.g. developing their own EHC plan):**

When considering involvement in decision making about their own SEND provision, forums reported that 21% of children (down 1% from the 7th survey) and 27% of young people (up from 23% in the last survey) are either fully or largely involved. 49% of parents are largely or fully involved in decision making around their child or young person's provision, remaining unchanged from the last survey.

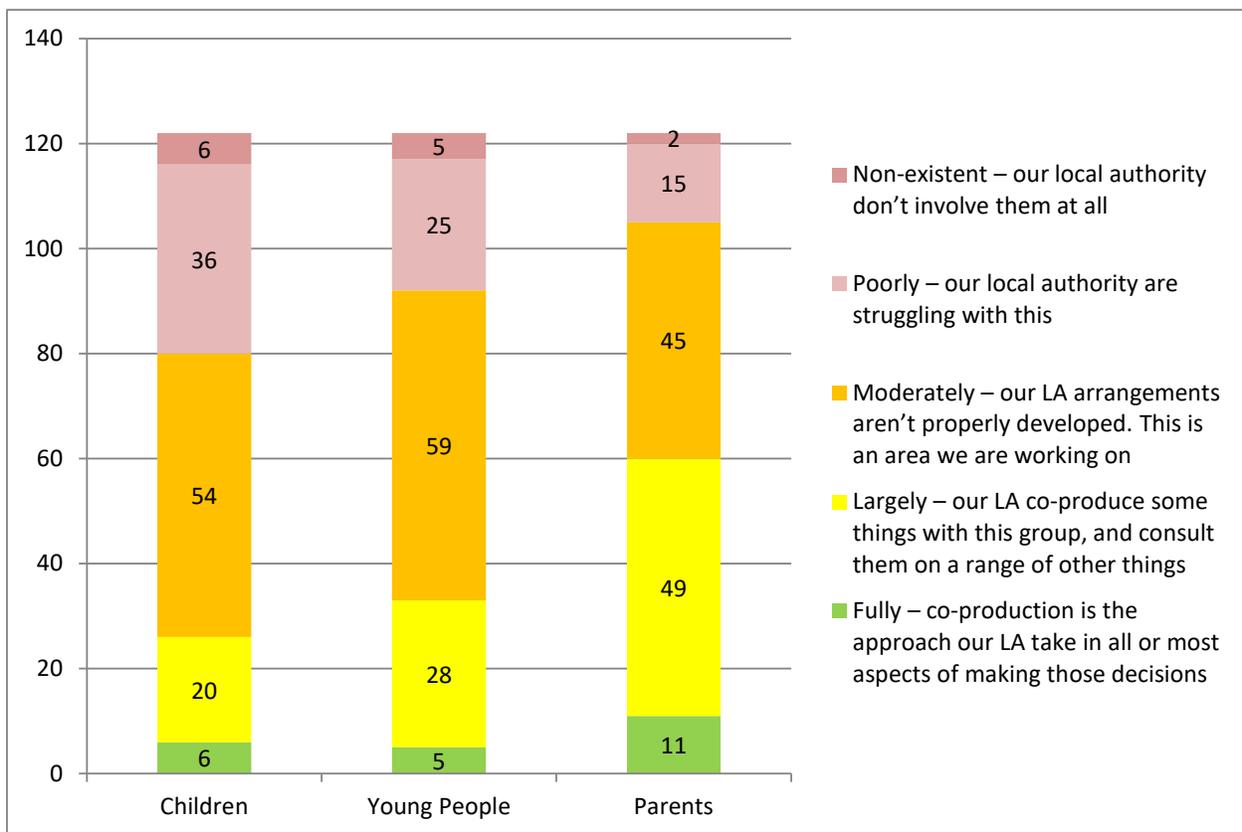
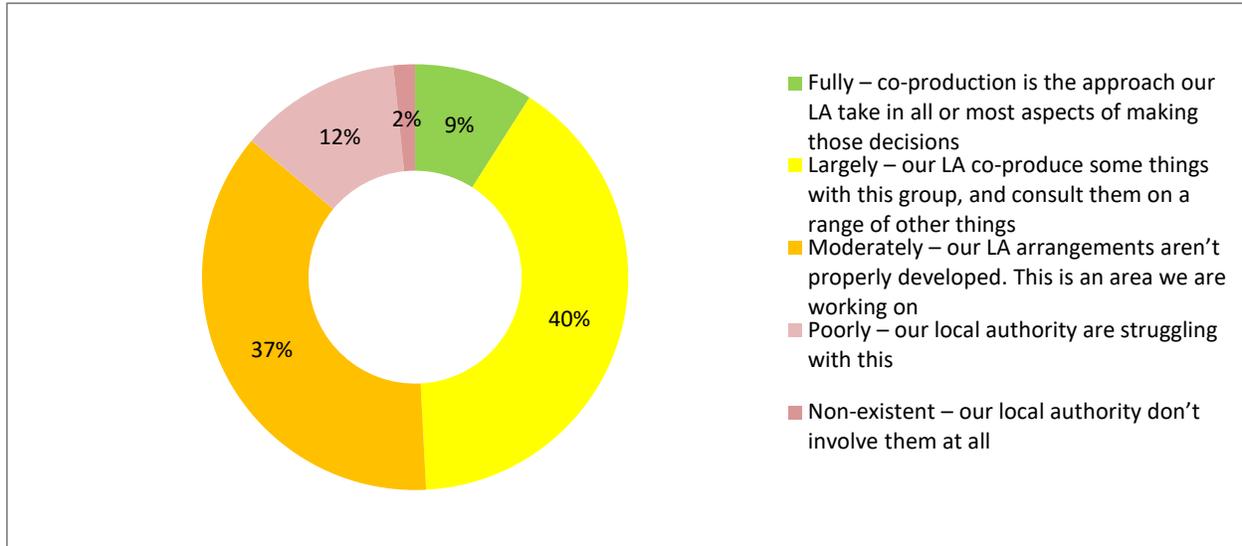
**Children**



**Young People**



## Parents



Some forums reported that good practice for involvement around their own provision includes the process being person-centred with children and young people attending meetings and contributing their views, which leads to a higher quality EHCP. Others reported that when IASS or IS were involved, the process was smoother for families.

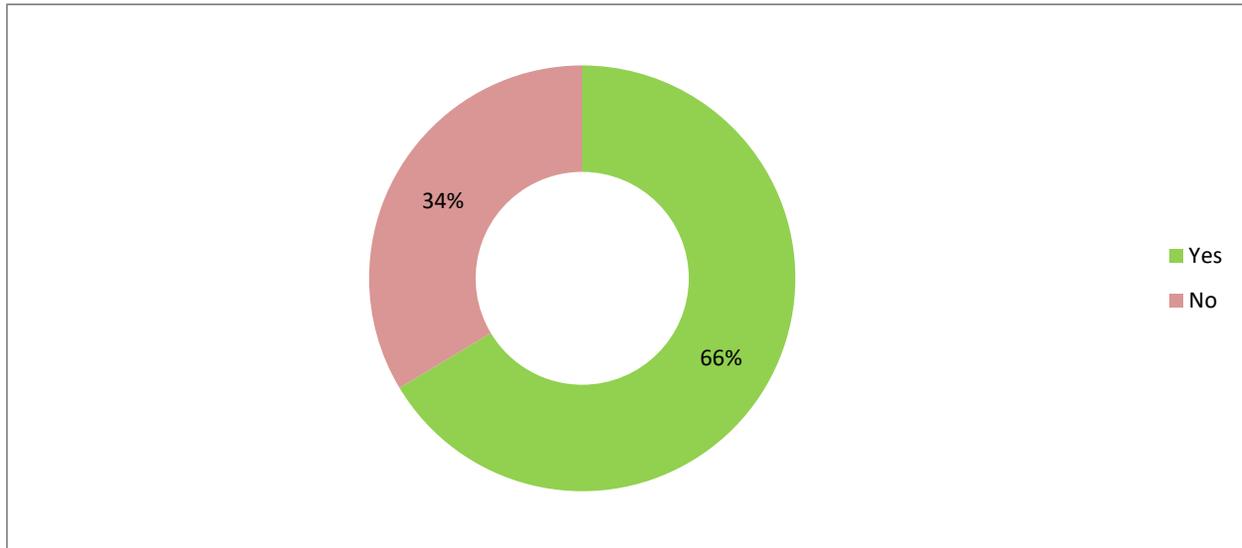
Reported difficulties were in the consistency of the plans and the challenge of speed and meeting timescales vs. quality of assessments, input, information and the final plan; lack of person-centred planning and input from the young person themselves; lack of understanding of the process by parents, and practitioners, whose approaches are variable.

**Q6 In the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum how is the local authority engaging children, young people and parents in the ongoing development of your Local Offer?**

Responses to this question varied hugely from parents and children and young people being fully involved through the initial stages and development, and in the ongoing improvements to the Local Offer (LO), to a lack of involvement, or a cease in further development of the LO. This included dedicated LO work streams, officers with direct responsibility for developing the LO, direct work with the forum, focus groups, workshops, user testing and feedback to monitor and review the LO. Many forums report more involvement with parent carers than with young people themselves though many local authorities are engaging, or are beginning to engage with young people to develop their LO. Often there need to be more creative methods of doing so due to capacity and communication needs.

**Q7 Is your Parent Carer Forum aware whether your local authority has published an online summary of comments received about their Local Offer?**

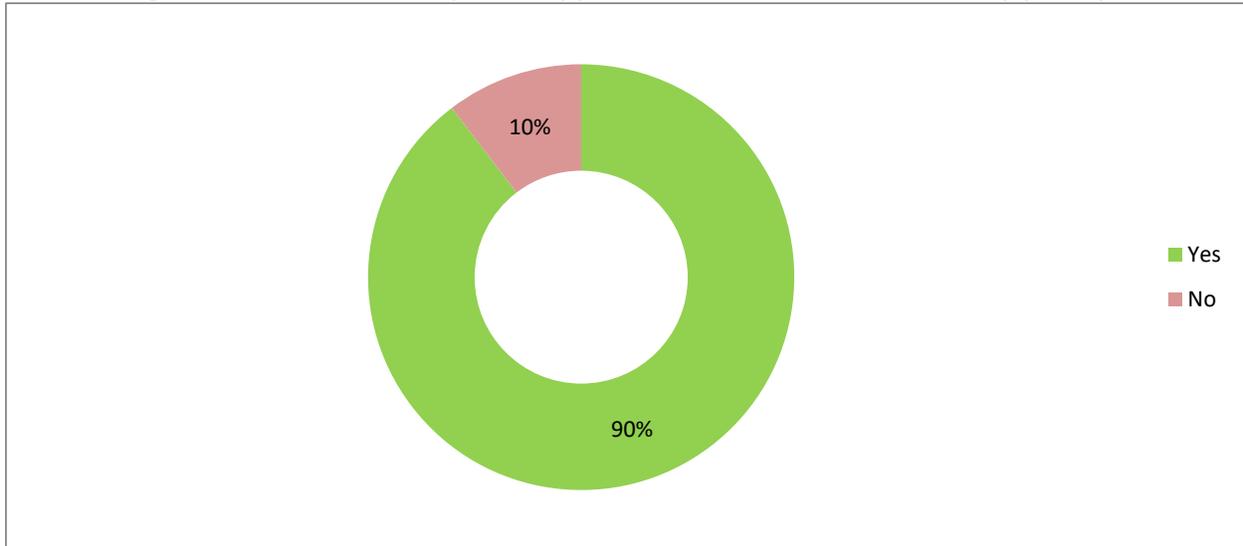
Forums report that two-thirds of local authorities have published an online summary of the comments received about their Local Offer.



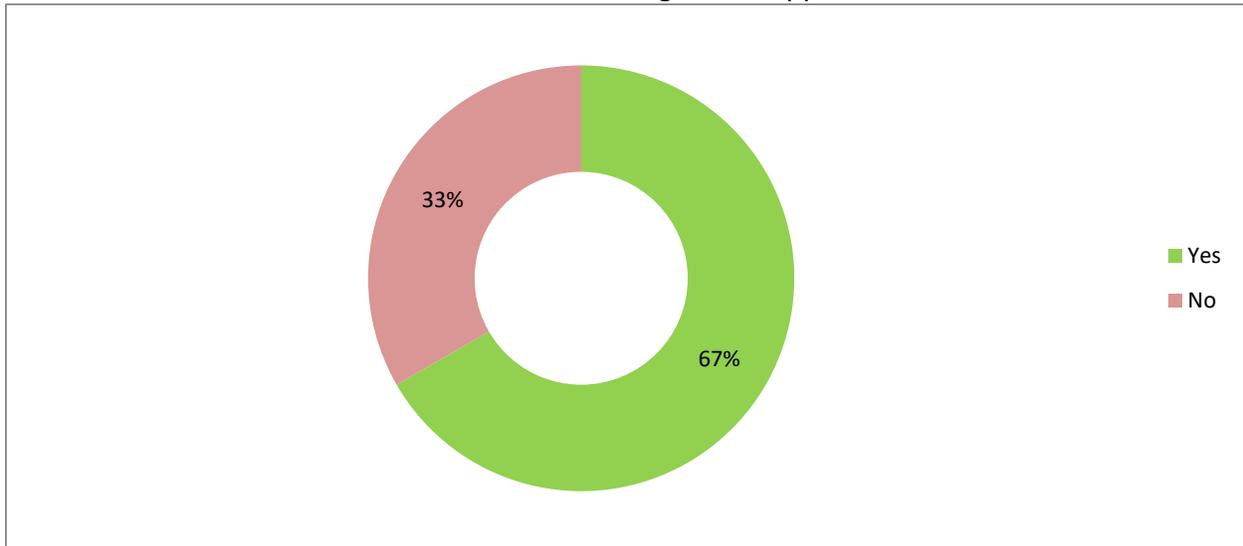
**Q8 Does your local authority use the following strategies to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in the Early Years sector?**

With regard to Early Years settings, 90% of forums state that training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all Early Years providers, a 30% increase from the last survey. 67% of forums now believe that their Local Offer gives clear information about what Early Years providers are expected to make available through SEN support, a 19% increase. 82% of forums (an 18% increase) say that Area SENCOs and other specialist services are provided to support Early Years settings. 87% of forums say that other specialist services are provided to support Early Years settings, and 85% of forums say that it is clear how Early Years providers can access high needs funding. Since the last survey, 73% of forums said that their local authority had published guidelines about the threshold for an Early Years ECH assessment, which represents an increase of 35% since the June survey.

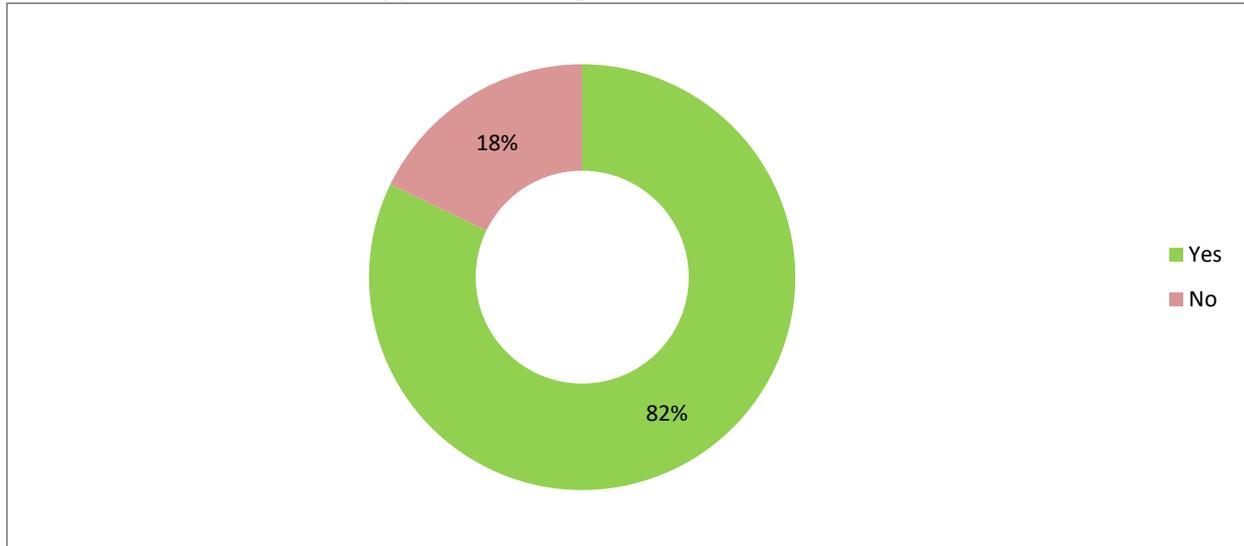
a) Training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all early years providers.



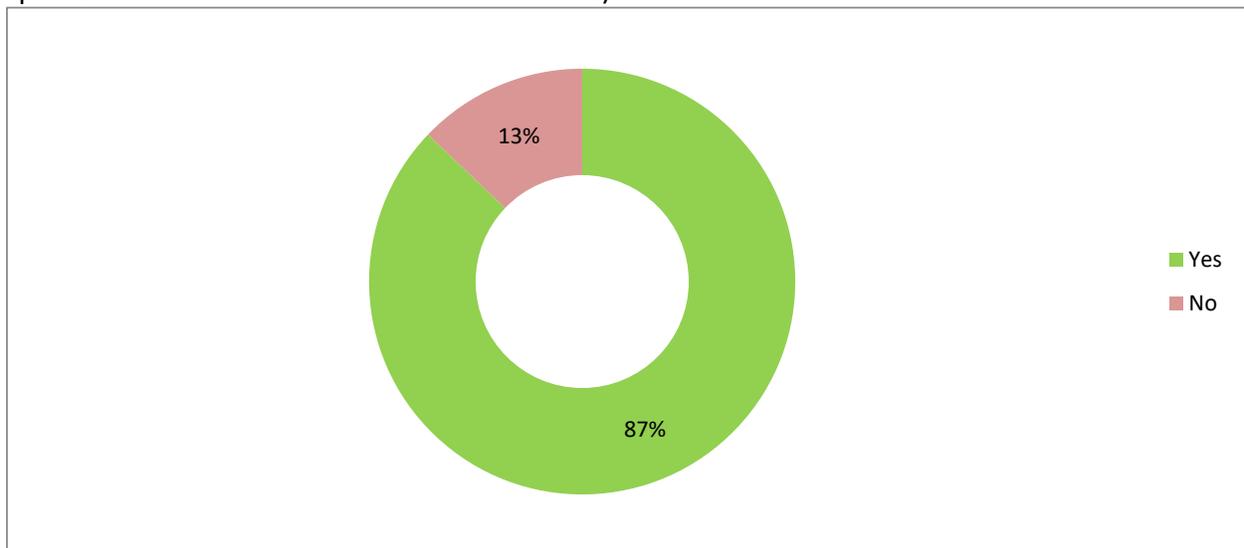
b) The Local Offer has clear information about what the local authority expect EY providers to make available through SEN Support.



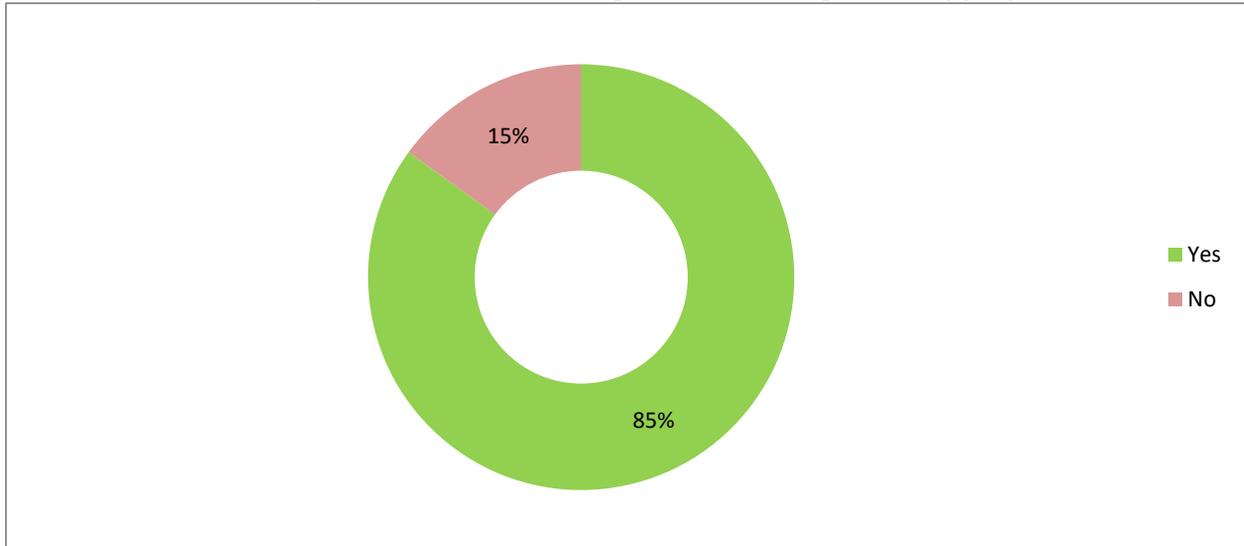
c) Provide Area SENCOs to support EY settings



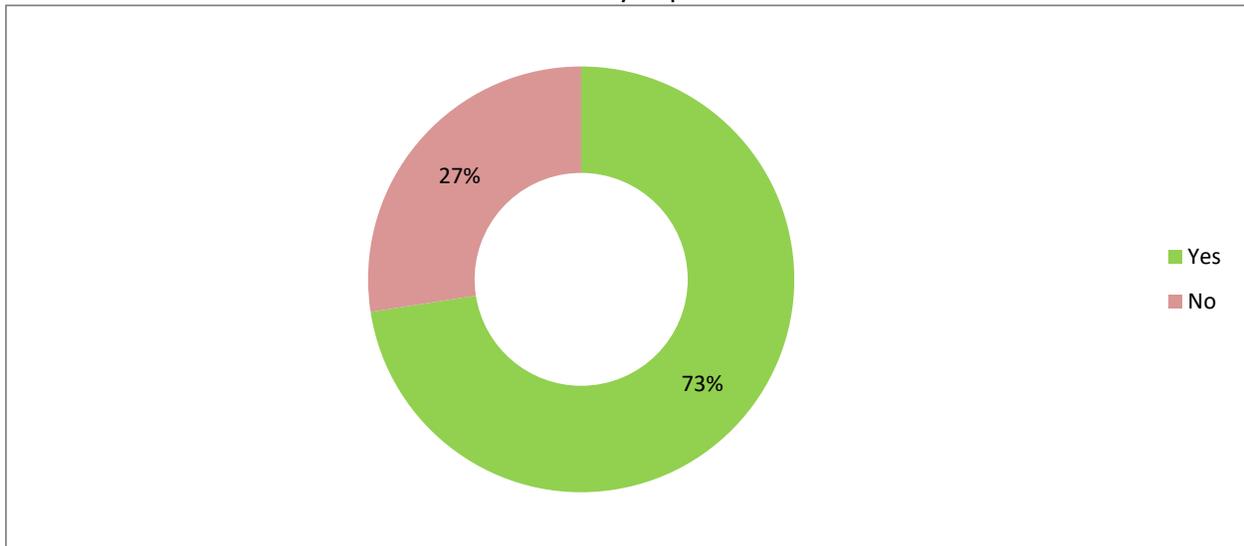
d) Provide other specialist services to support EY settings (please provide details of other specialist services in the comments box below)



e) Make it clear how EY providers can access high needs funding where appropriate.



f) Published guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment and the evidence they normally expect.

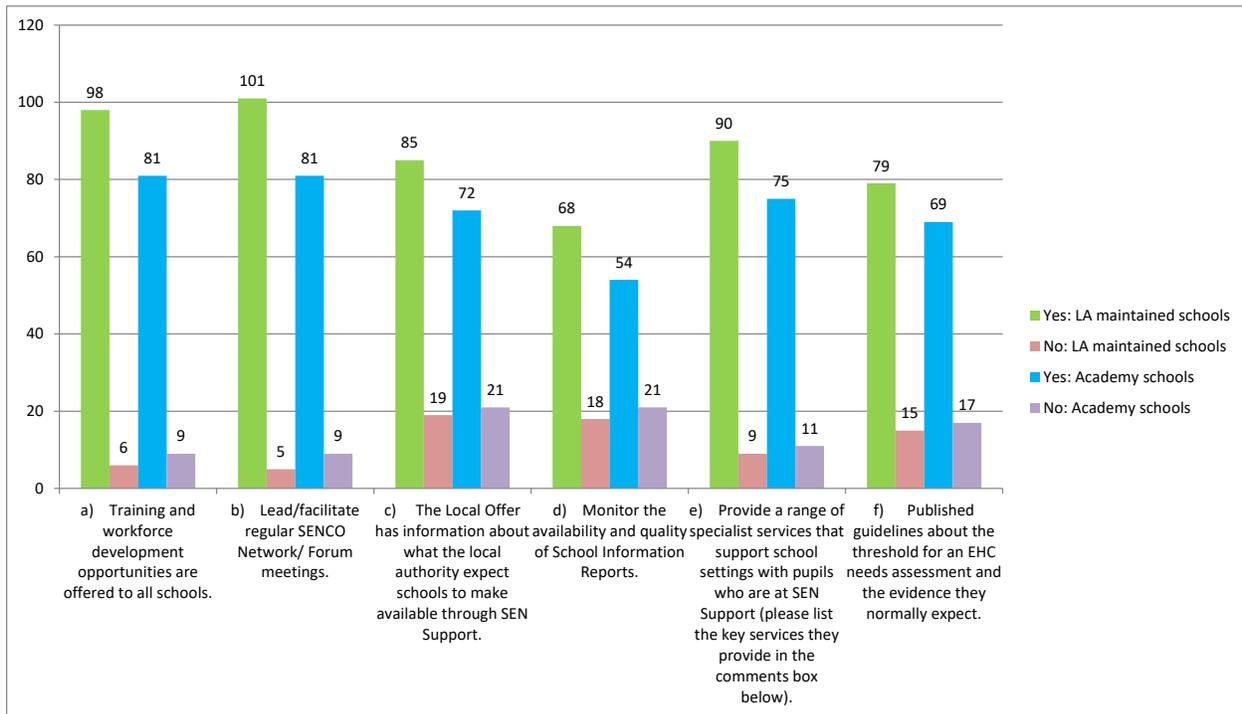


Many forums quoted a list of support services and strategies that their local authority offers to develop and maintain effective SEN support systems in the Early Years sector including therapies, Early Intervention Team, Educational Psychology Service, Early Years Inclusion Team, Autism Outreach, area SENCOs, Portage and sensory services. Others were not aware of what their local authority was doing, or relied on the Local Offer to inform them.

**Q9 Does your local authority do any of the following to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in schools, including academies:**

When asked about developing and maintaining effective SEN support systems in Schools, forums in 101 out of 123 areas (83%, and static from the last survey) reported that their local authority leads or facilitates regular SENCO forum meetings for LA maintained Schools; the figure for Academies was slightly lower (81). 98 forums said that their local authority provides training and workforce development opportunities for all Schools, whilst only 81 forums said that Academies provide the same for their workforce. Forums state that 90 local authority areas provide a range of specialist services that support school settings with pupils who are at SEN Support in Maintained Schools, with 75 local areas' Academies also providing this. 21 forums said that Academies do not monitor the availability and quality of School Information Reports; 18 areas said that the local authority does not do this for their maintained Schools.

	Yes: LA maintained schools	No: LA maintained schools	Yes: Academy schools	No: Academy schools
a) Training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all schools.	98	6	81	9
b) Lead/facilitate regular SENCO Network/ Forum meetings.	101	5	81	9
c) The Local Offer has information about what the local authority expect schools to make available through SEN Support.	85	19	72	21
d) Monitor the availability and quality of School Information Reports.	68	18	54	21
e) Provide a range of specialist services that support school settings with pupils who are at SEN Support (please list the key services they provide in the comments box below).	90	9	75	11
f) Published guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment and the evidence they normally expect.	79	15	69	17



In order to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in schools including academies, forums report that the main services that local authorities have in place are:

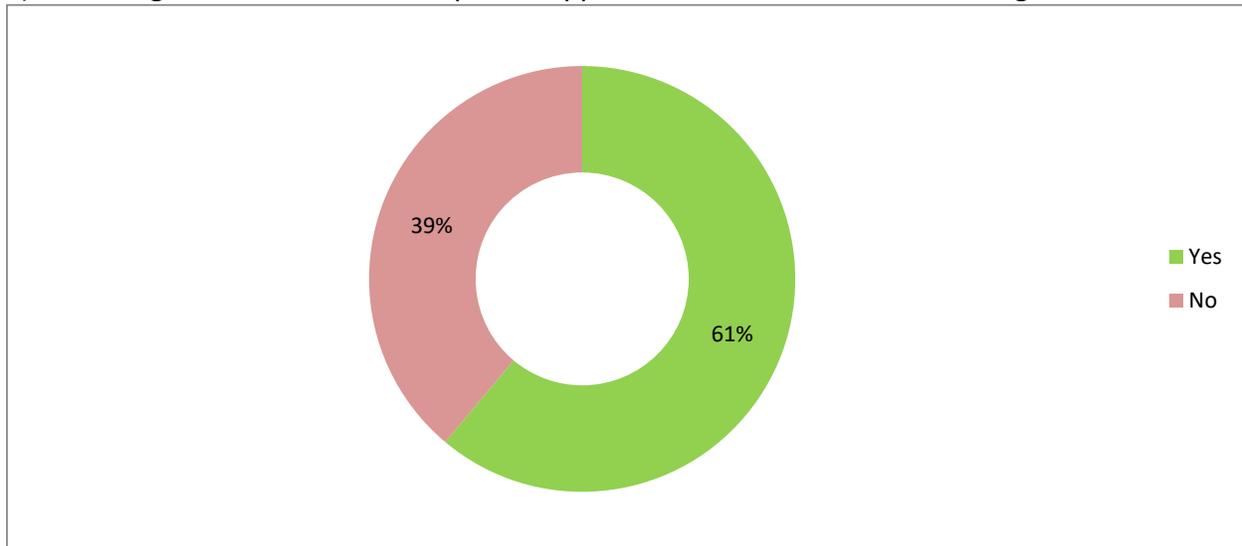
- Educational Psychology Service
- Autism Team
- Hearing and Visual Impairment Teams
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support
- SENCO, Governor and Head teacher training
- Therapies (OT, PT, SALT)
- Specialist advisory teachers
- Behaviour Support
- Early Intervention Team
- SpLD team
- SENDIASS
- Specialist outreach services
- SEND caseworkers
- CAMHS
- SENCO networks  
(names of services/teams vary between authorities)

Some forums reported that they were unaware of what their local authority offered.

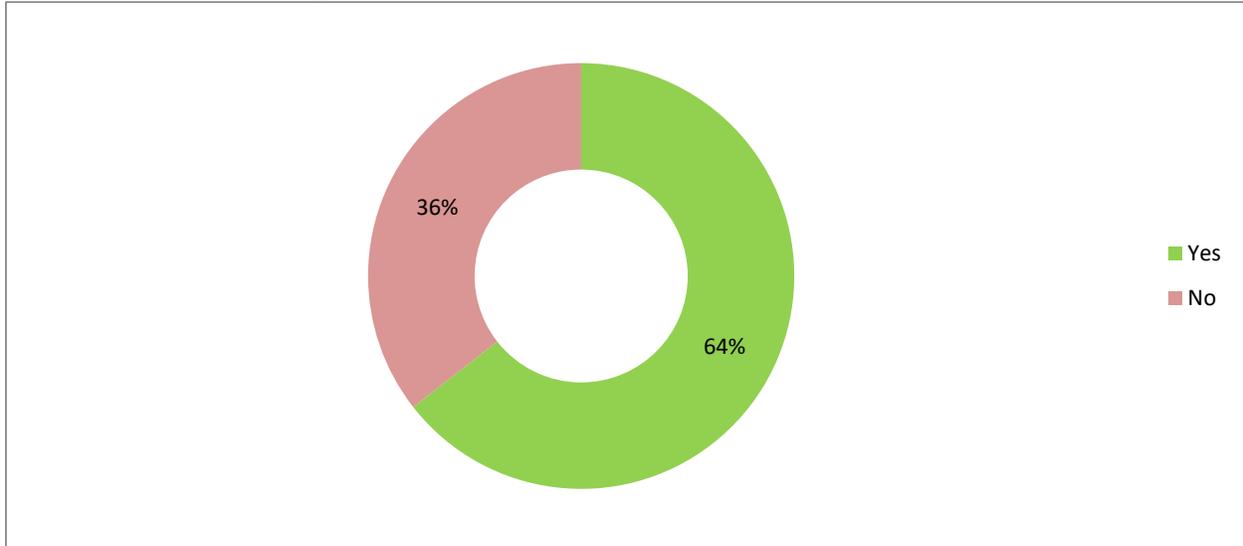
**Q10 To the knowledge of your Parent Carer Forum does your local authority do any of the following to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in mainstream colleges:**

When asked about the development and maintenance of effective SEN Support systems in mainstream colleges, 61% of forums maintain that training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all colleges. 64% say that there are regular SENCO/ALSM (Additional Learning Support Manager) forums or meetings. 61% of forums say that their Local Offer includes information about what they are expected to make available through SEN support. 51% of forums state that their local authority provides a range of specialist services to support college settings with SEN support students, with 66% publishing guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment.

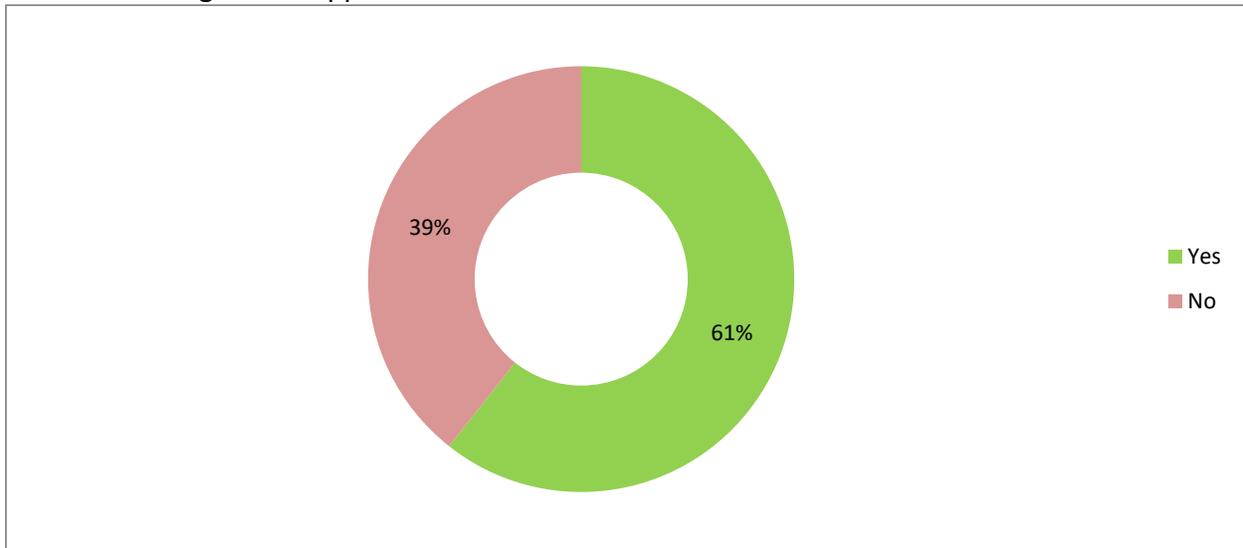
a) Training and workforce development opportunities are offered to all colleges.



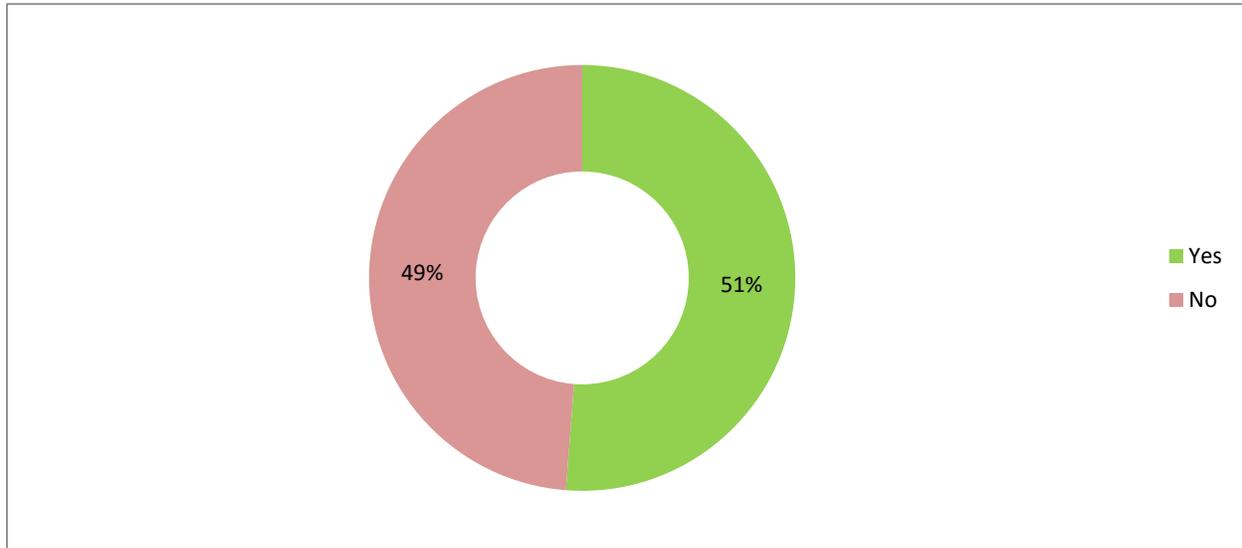
b) Lead/facilitate regular SENCO/ALSM (additional learning support managers) Network/Forum meetings.



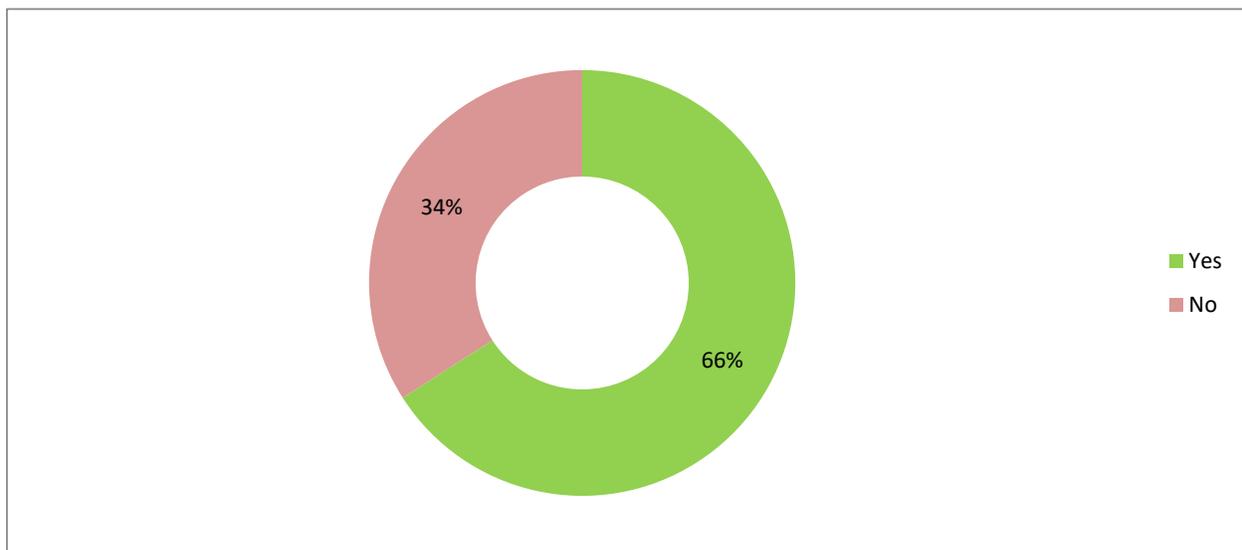
c) The Local Offer has information about what the local authority expects colleges to make available through SEN Support.



d) Provide a range of specialist services that support college settings with pupils who are at SEN Support (please list the key services provided in the comments box below).



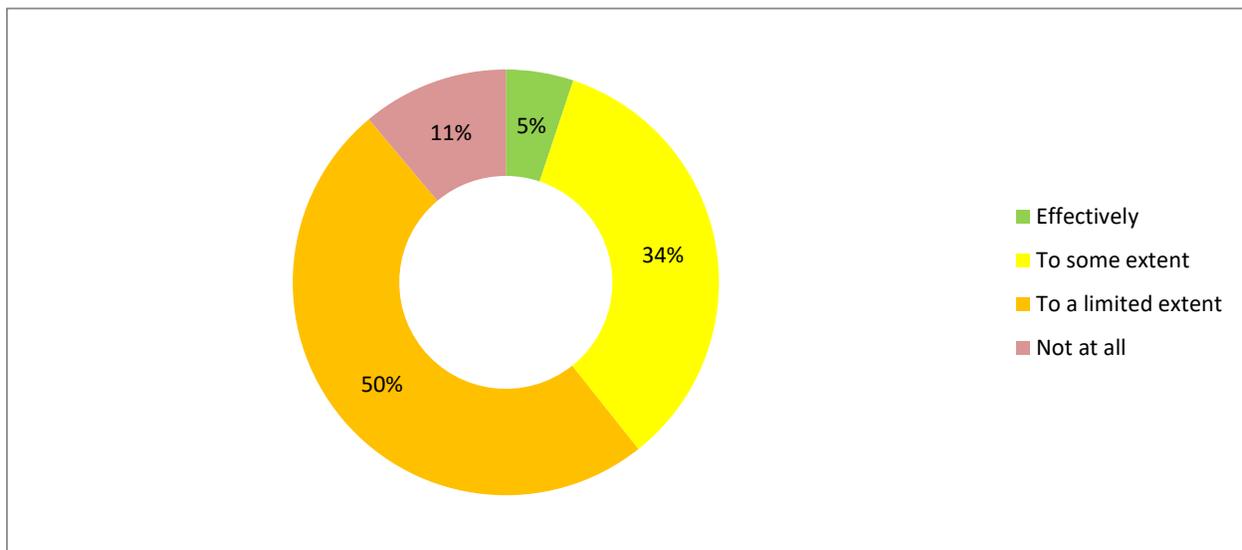
e) Published guidelines about the threshold for an EHC needs assessment and the evidence the local authority normally expect.

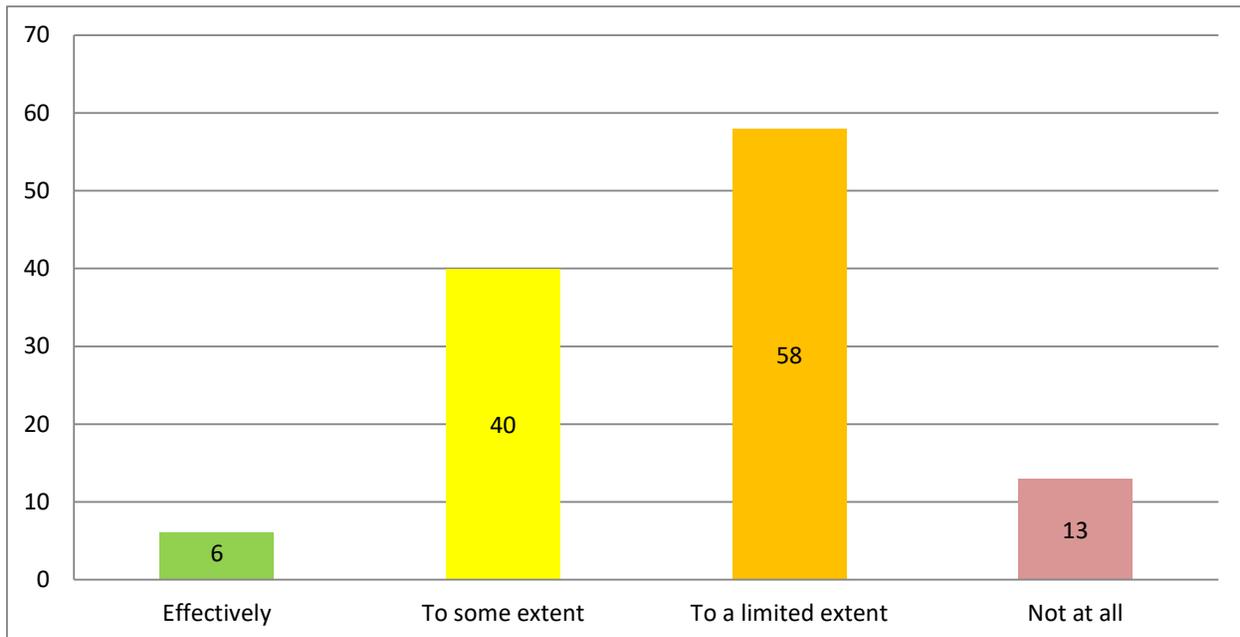


Forums were generally less aware of what local authorities were doing to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in mainstream Colleges. Some of the same services were mentioned as for Schools, however there were many 'don't know' comments. Some forums are aware of specific workforce development and training for post-16 providers. Many commented that this was an area of weakness in their area's Local Offer.

### Q 11 How effectively is your local authority working in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver the SEND reforms?

5% of forums feel that their local authority is effectively working in partnership with post-16 providers to deliver the SEND reforms, whilst 34% say they are working in partnership to some extent. 11% of forums say that their local authority is not working in partnership with post-16 providers at all.





**Q12 What would help your local authority to develop better provision on preparation for adulthood within your local area (list the top three things)?**

Responses from forums to this question were many and incredibly varied, however, some of the more common answers were: Beginning Preparation for adulthood earlier, including a more effective Y9 review; improving the Local Offer was another common theme; improved post-College opportunities including jobs and supported internships; closer links and better communication between health, education and social care as well as between children's and adult services; communication with Colleges, and listening to families; transition support; personalised pathways with a broader range of provision.

**Q13 If known, how many supported internships are being delivered within your local authority in the 2016-17 academic year? (number):**

51% of parent carer forums who responded to the survey were unaware of how many supported internships were being offered in their local authority area in this academic year.

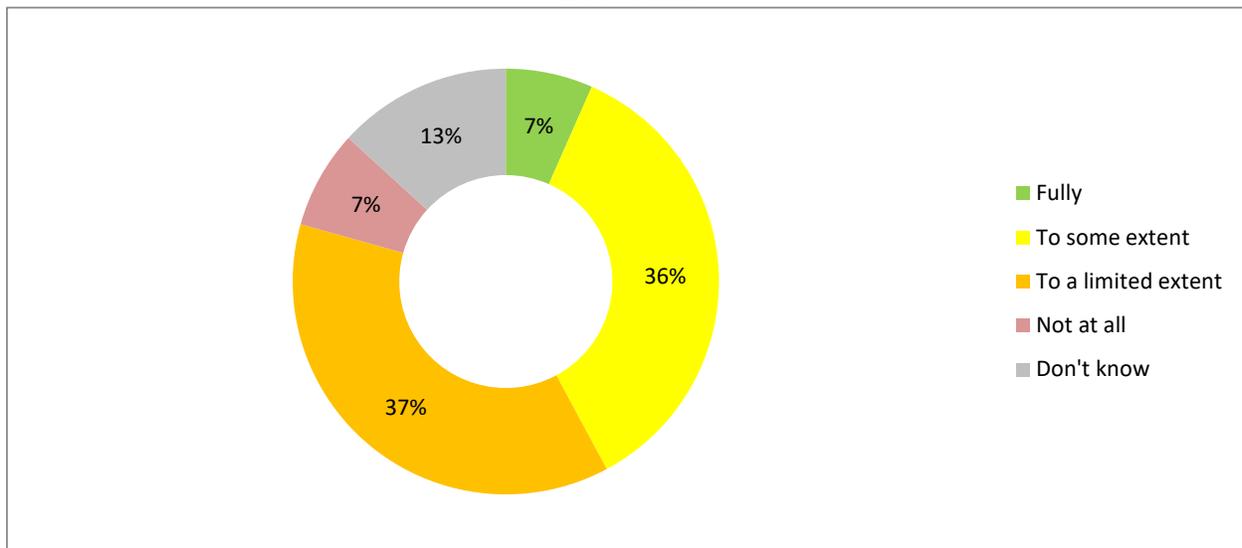
**Q14 If known, on 1 September 2016, how many young people aged 19 or above were holding an EHC plan (including those where assessments were ongoing) (number):**

52% of forums are unaware of the number of young people 19+ who hold an EHCP in their area, though several commented that their local authority would be providing the figure.

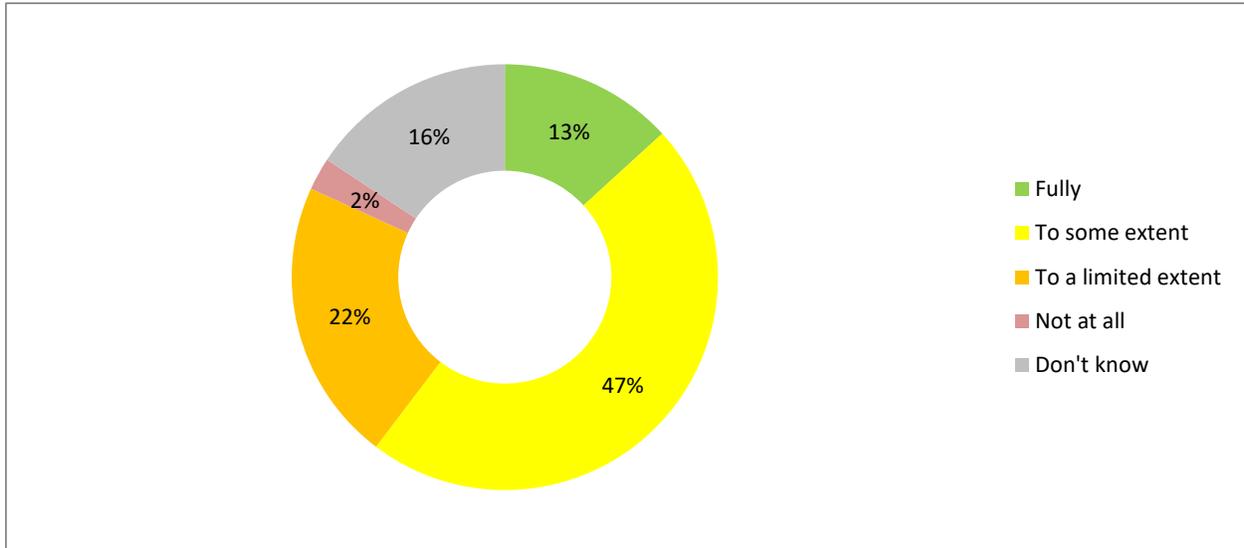
**Q15 The SEND Code of Practice says, 'Joint Commissioning is an ongoing improvement cycle...Partners should agree how they will work together to monitor how outcomes in education, health and care are being improved as a result of the provision they make.' In the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum to what extent is your local authority meeting this expectation with education, health and care partners in relation to monitoring outcomes?**

In response to questions about monitoring improvements in joint commissioning, 43% of forums say that their local authority is meeting their joint commissioning expectations with education fully or to some extent; 60% feel that they are meeting their expectation with health, whilst 58% believe that their local authority is meeting its expectations with social care fully, or to some extent.

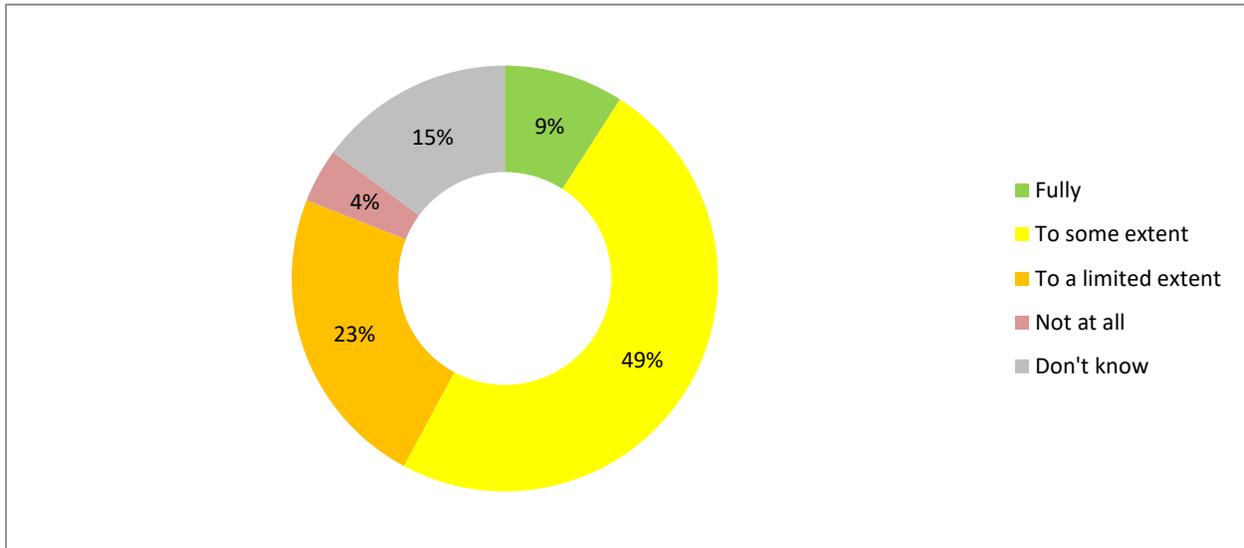
### Education

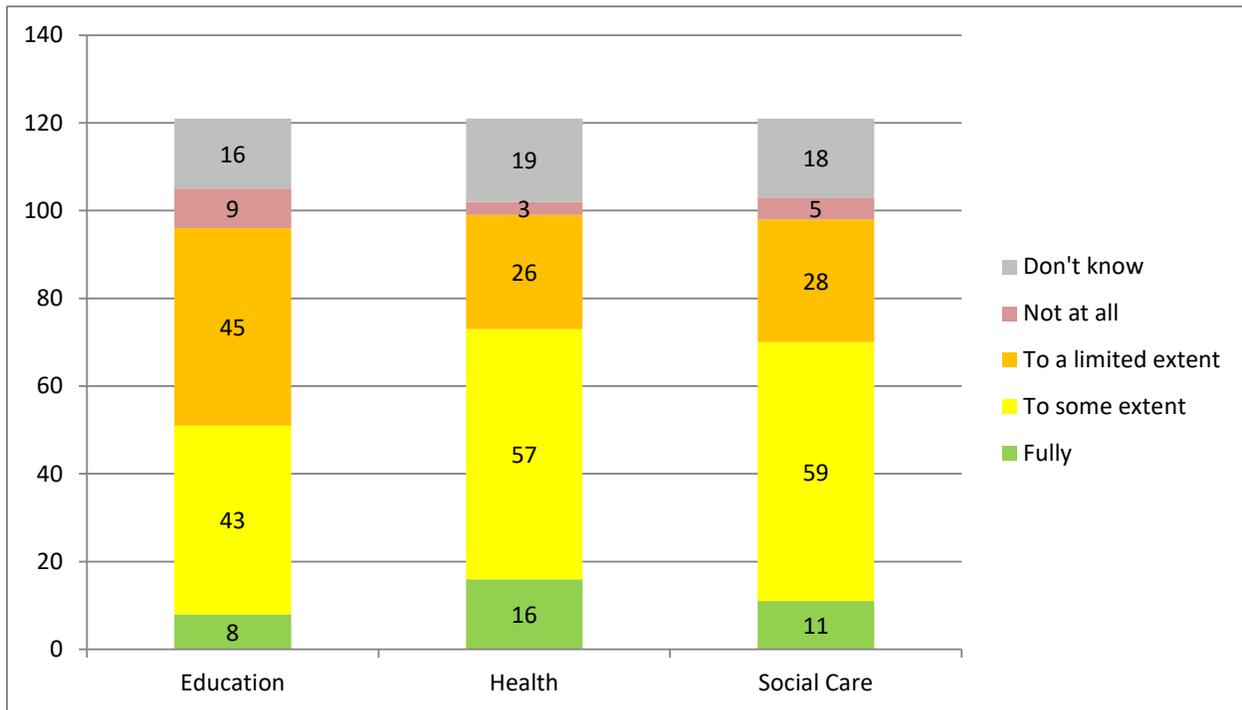


### Health



### Social Care

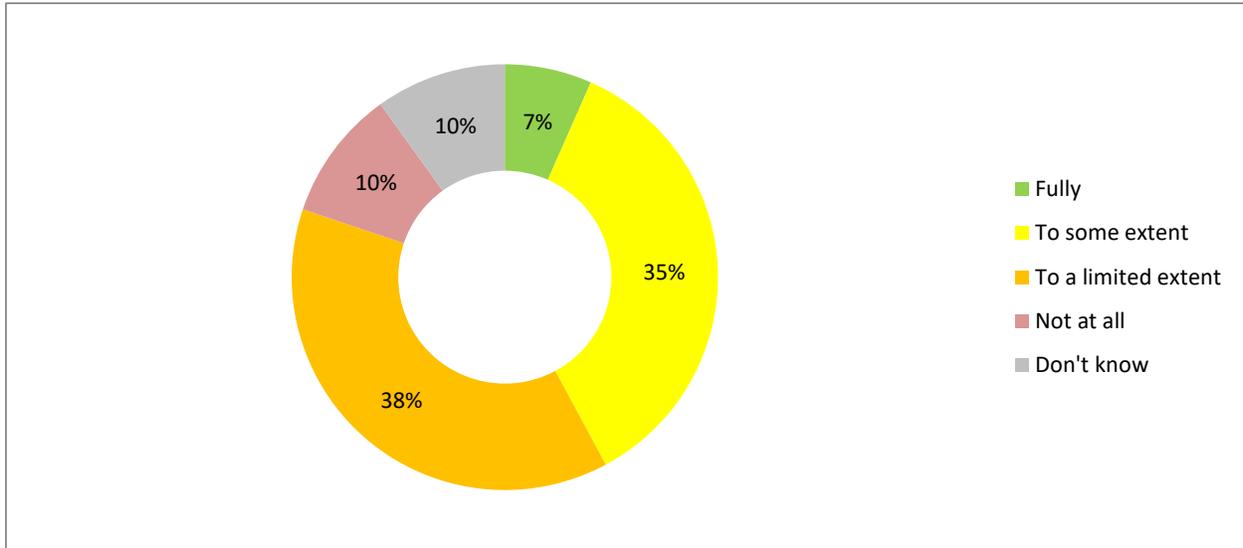




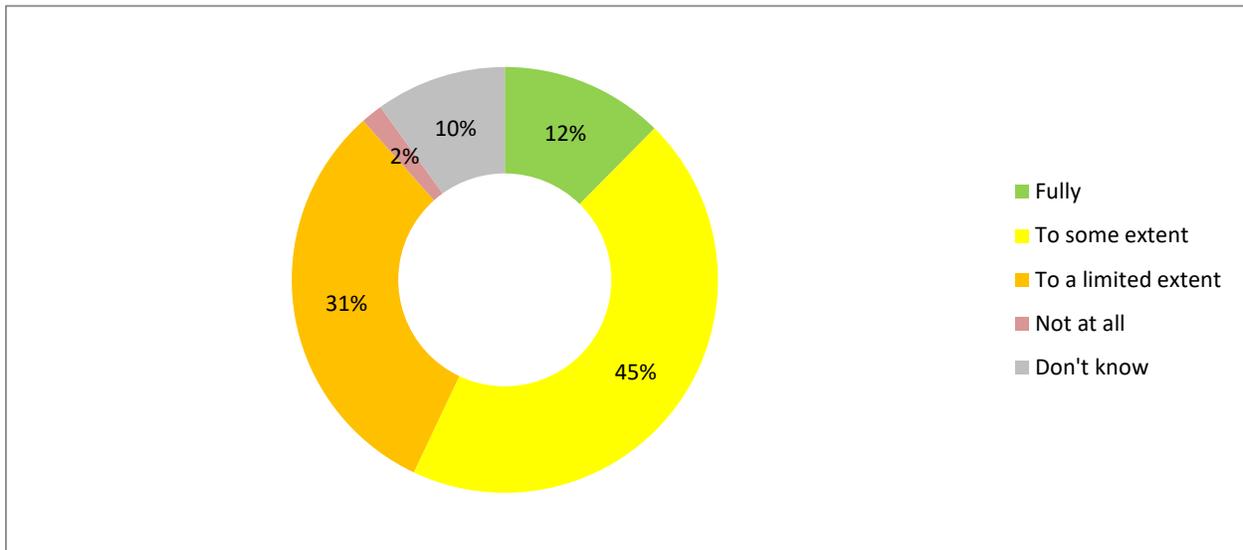
**Q 16 In the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum, in general, how well developed do you think your local authority's joint commissioning arrangements between Education, Health and Social Care are?**

When asked about how well developed those joint commissioning arrangements are, 42% of forums think that their local authority's arrangements with education are fully developed, or developed to some extent. The figure for health was higher at 57%, and for social care 49%.

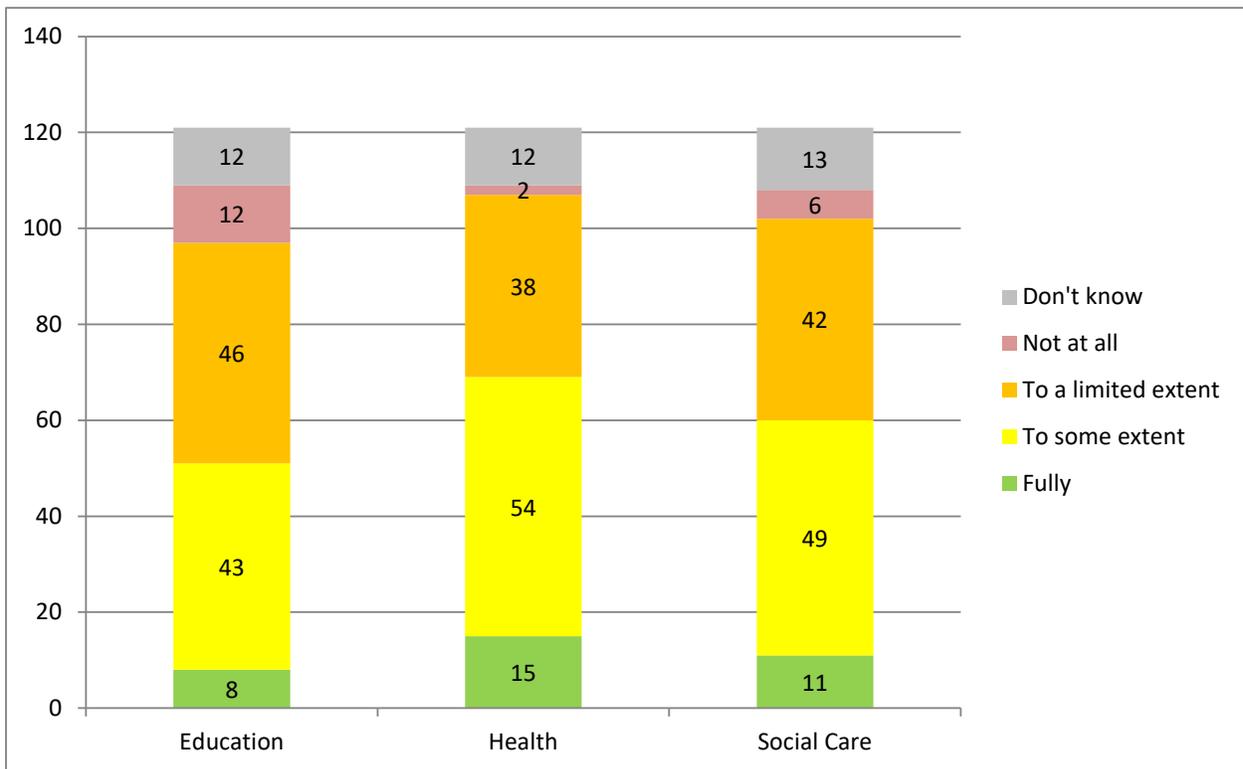
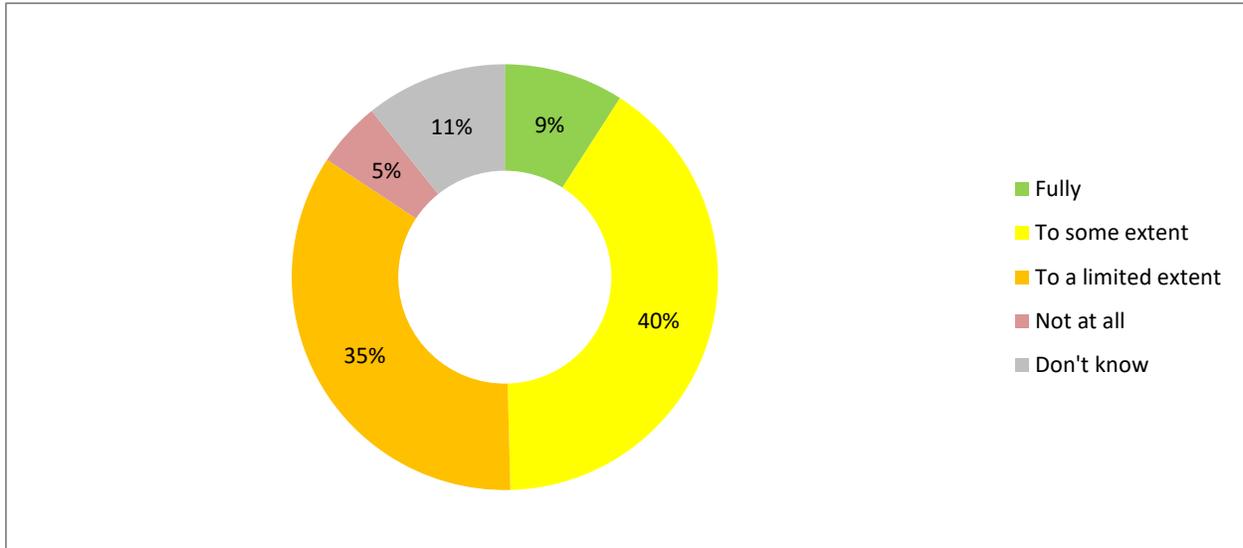
### Education



### Health



### Social Care



**Q17 If possible, please offer any reasons to explain where things are going well (re Joint Commissioning)**

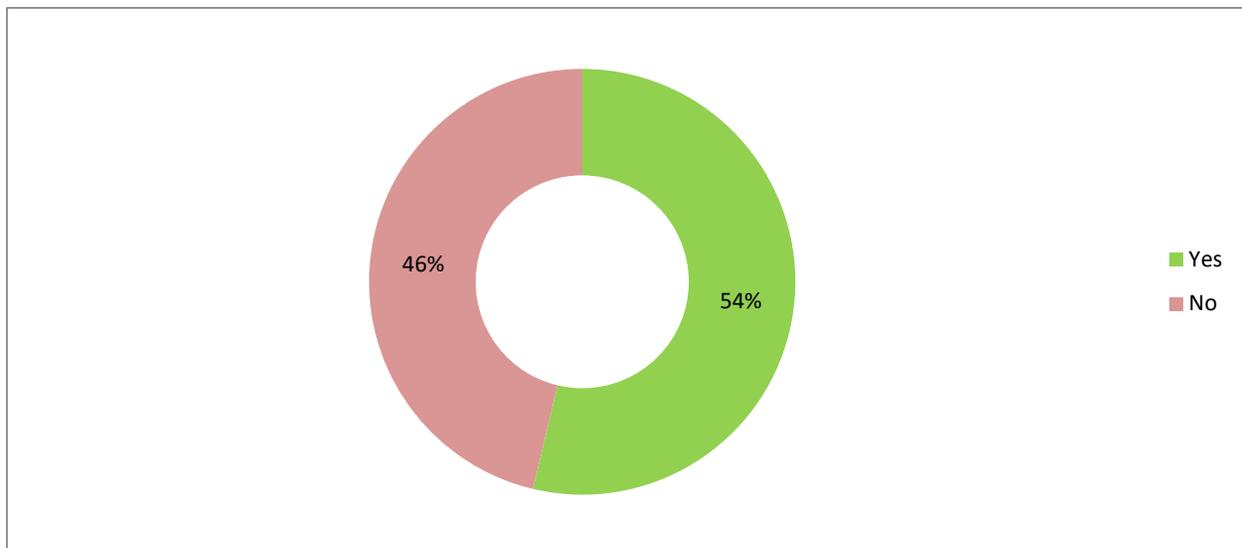
Many forums reported that joint boards, or multi-agency panels were a key element of successful joint commissioning in their area; some also reported that there was a joint commissioning strategy or plan in place to back up the arrangements. Some forums mentioned that links with health have improved.

**Q18 If possible, please briefly describe what you think the most significant barriers and challenges are and what is needed to overcome them (re Joint Commissioning).**

Capacity, poor communication and lack of coordination across services were noted as issues that can affect joint commissioning arrangements. In contrast to the last question, health engagement in joint commissioning was also cited as a challenge. Separate and limited budgets are believed to be barriers to effective joint commissioning.

**Q19 Is your Parent Carer Forum working in partnership with your local CCGs/Children's joint commissioner?**

54% of forums report that they are working in partnership with their local CCG and Children's Joint Commissioner.



## To what extent is the local authority engaged in promoting this relationship?

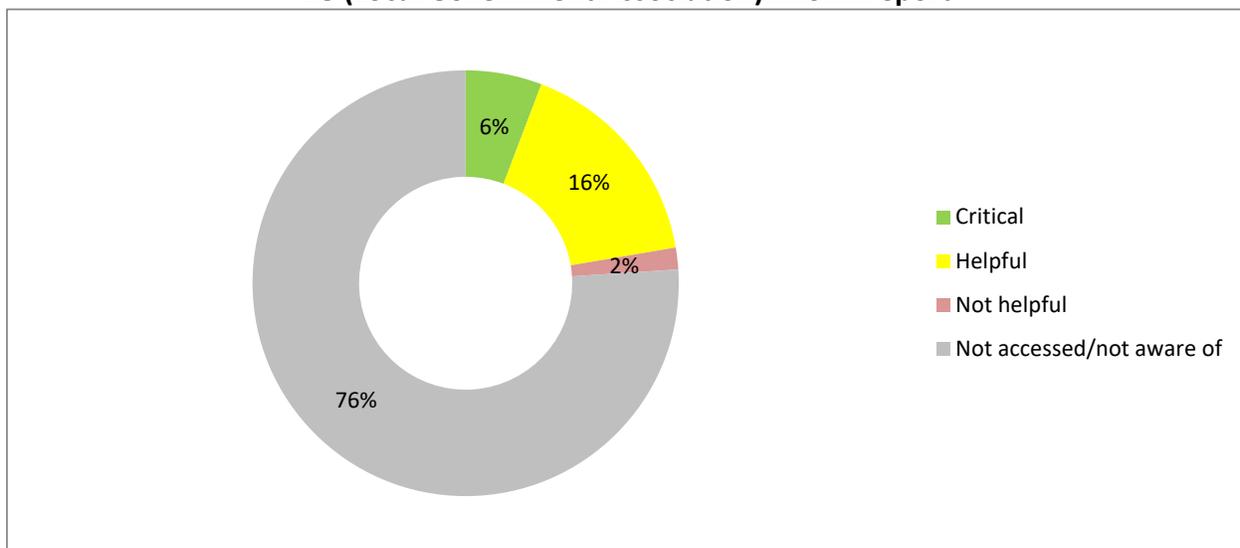
There is a mixed picture here from forums. Of the forums who completed the survey, some report that there is no longer a Children's Joint Commissioner or they do not have a relationship with them; others state that it is a new relationship that is developing, sometimes with the DMO/DCO; whilst others enjoy a productive working relationship. Many forums have established this relationship independently of the local authority and have been invited to speak at CCG meetings or have CCG members attend forum meetings; other local authorities have facilitated the forum's involvement with the Commissioner or CCG.

## Q20 How helpful do you find the following resources for monitoring and improving your delivery:

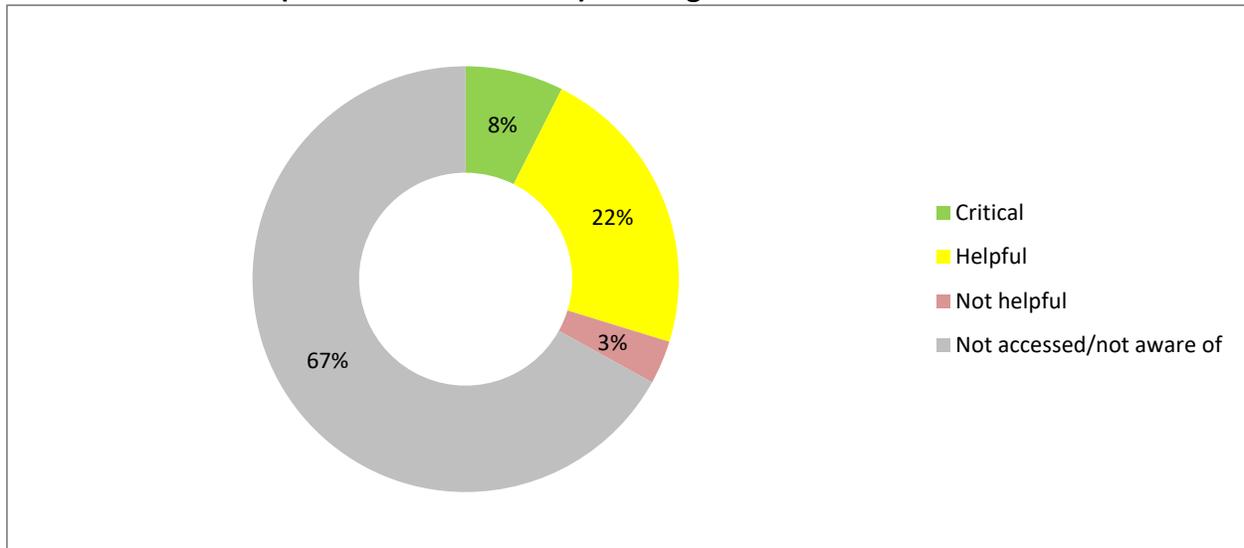
Forums found many resources helpful in assisting them with monitoring and improving their delivery. Of the resources available to them, those that forums deem to be the most valuable are:

1. Forums' own research or locally held evidence (89% critical or helpful)
2. Contact a Family PCF survey (88% critical or helpful), a further 10 forums stated that they were not aware of the survey and we believe they misinterpreted the question as it did not specifically state that it was the SEND survey or report
3. Ofsted and CQC local area inspection reports (79% critical or helpful)

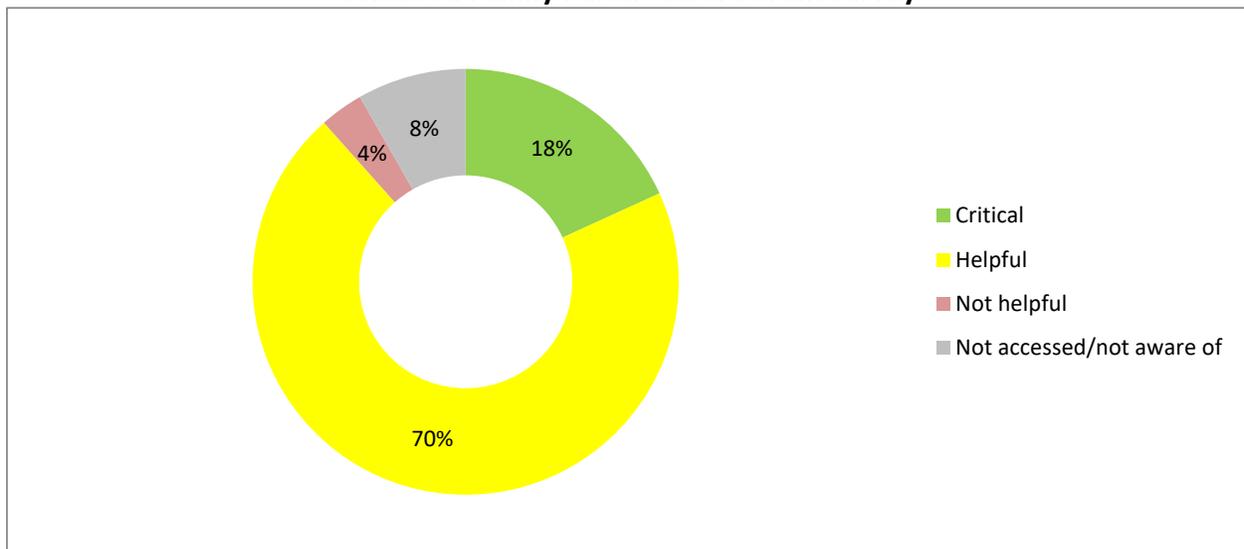
### LG (Local Government Association) inform report



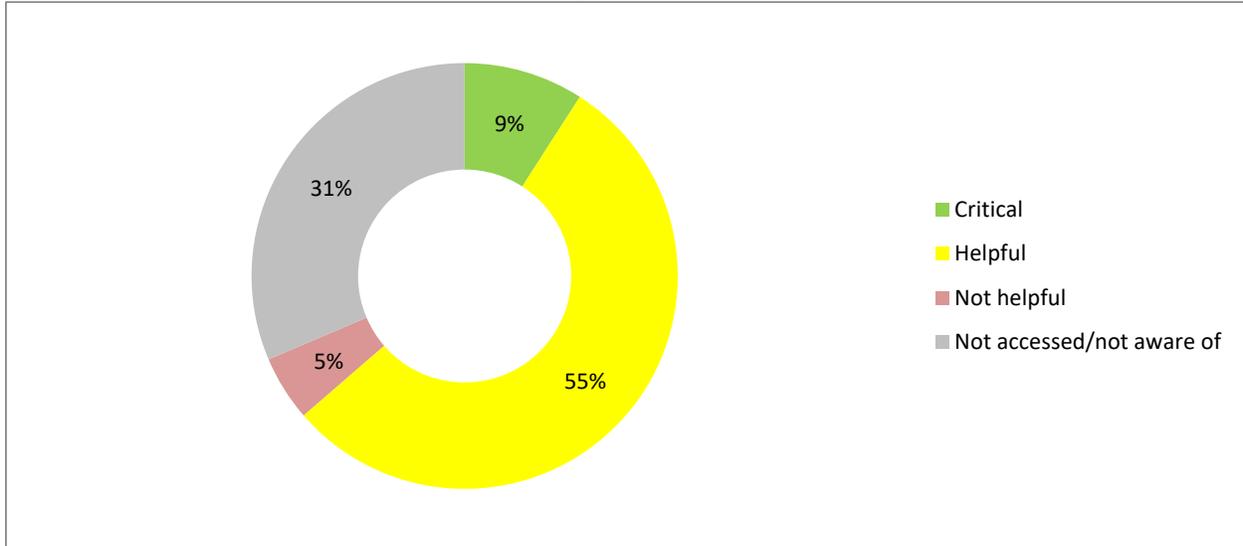
SFR (statistical first release) data e.g. SEN2 and school census



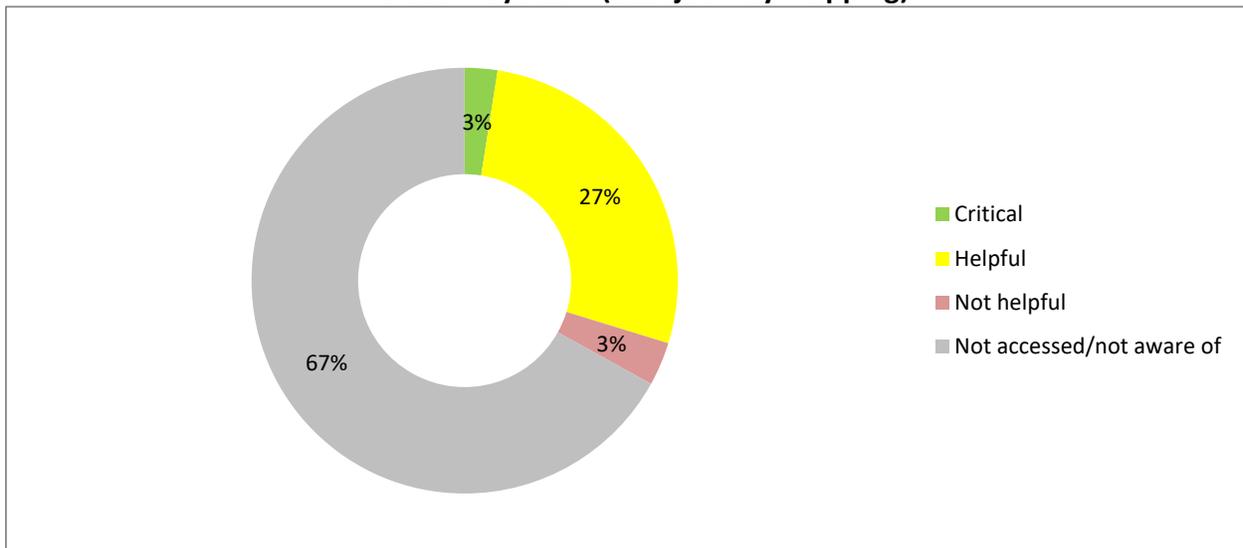
Contact a Family Parent Carer Forum survey



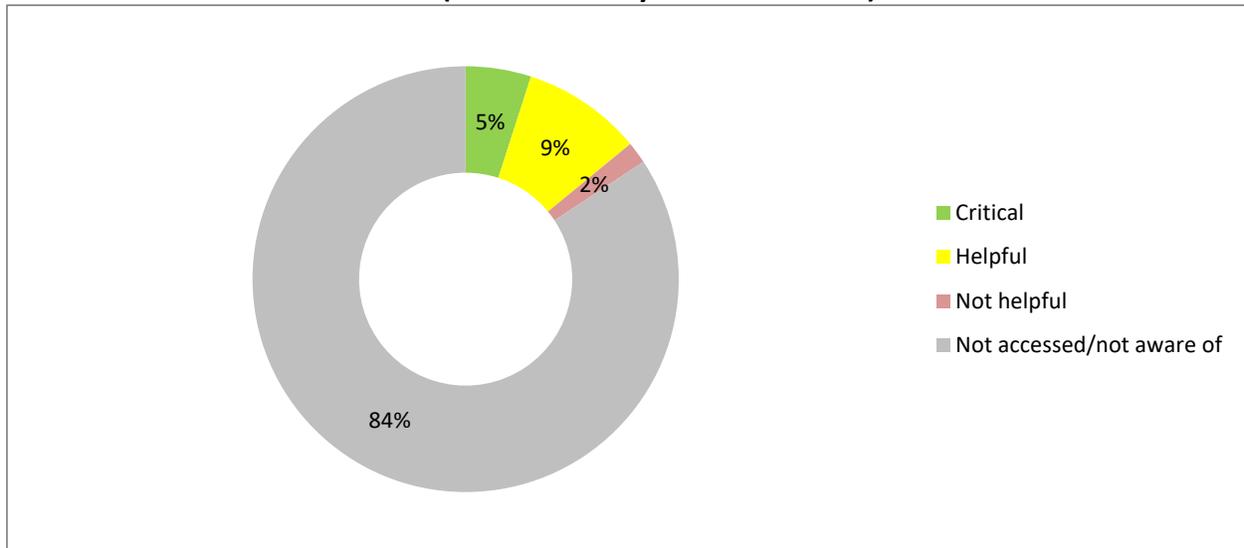
The high-level findings of the DfE LA Implementation Survey (the latest survey results can be found in the DfE September Newsletter 2016)



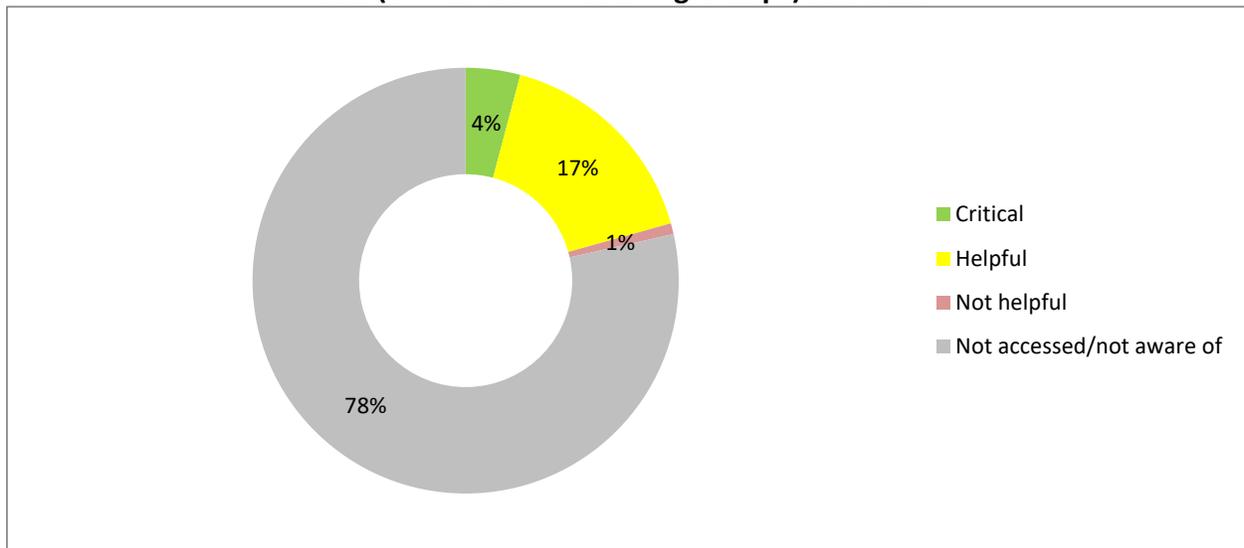
EHCPJourneys.com (user journey mapping)



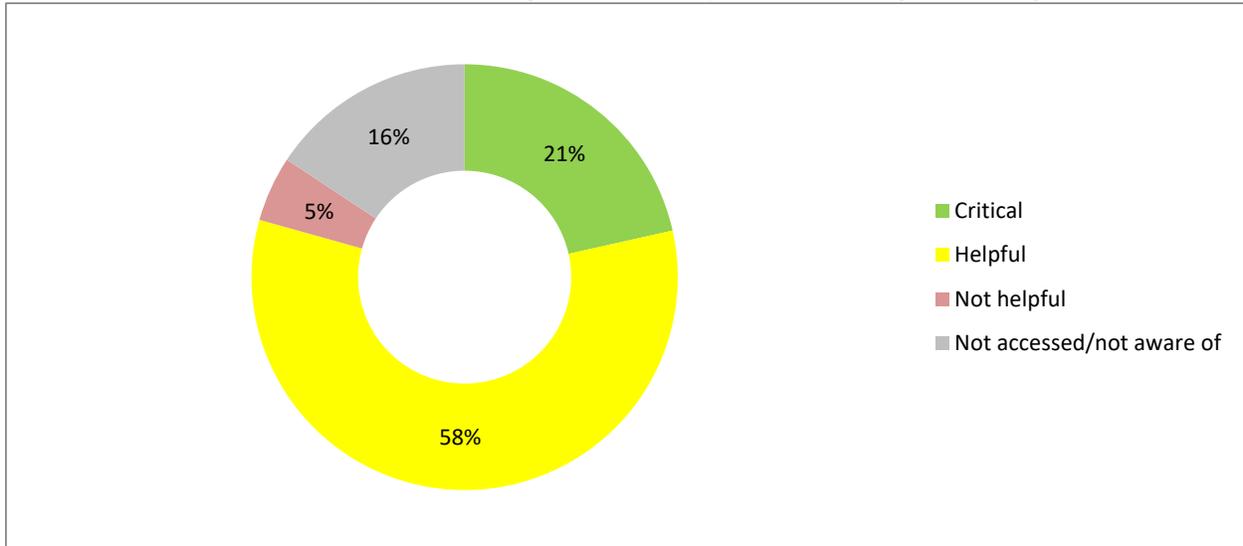
### LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool)



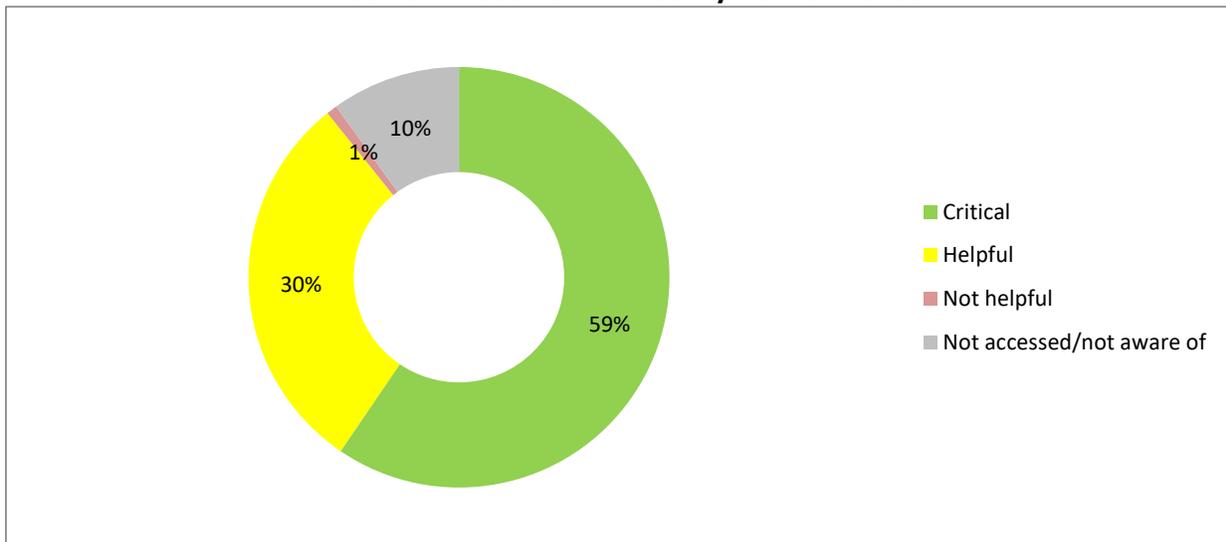
### CCG (Clinical Commissioning Groups) audit tool



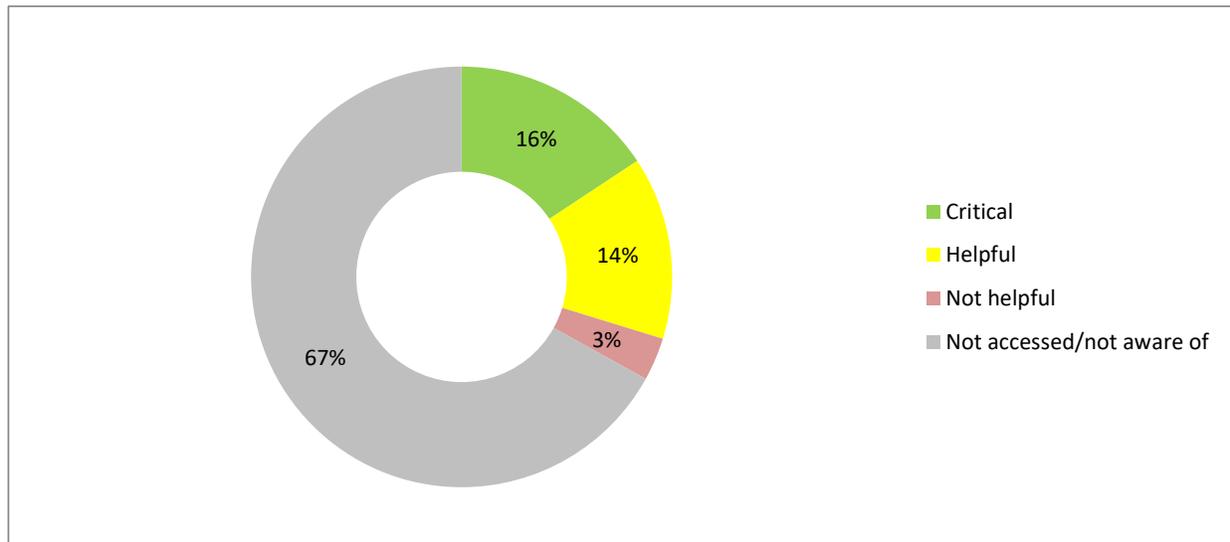
### Ofsted and CQC (Care Quality Commission) local area inspection reports



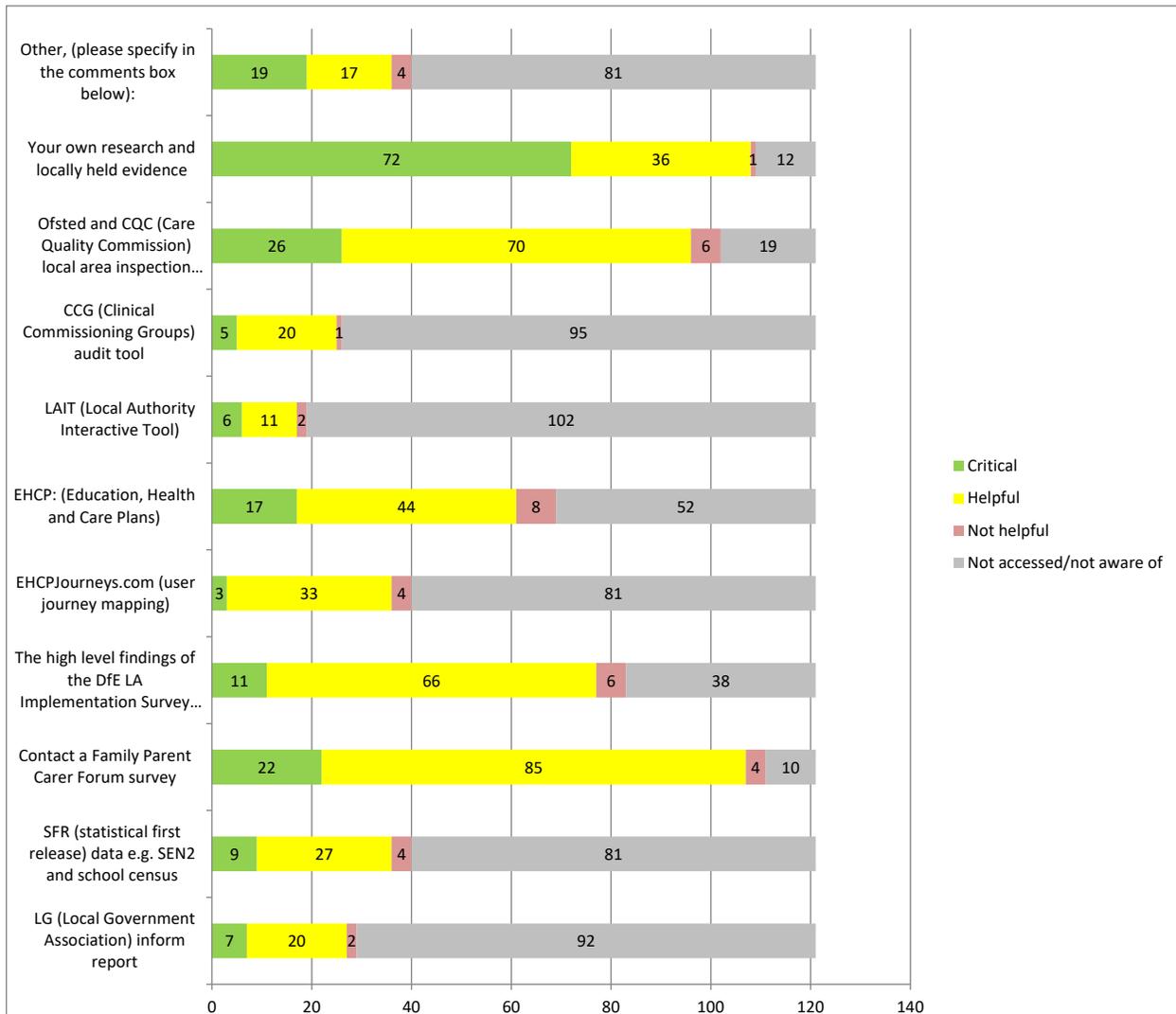
### Your own research and locally held evidence



### Other



Other resources were also useful but forums' awareness of them was much more limited. For example, 84% of forums who responded to the survey are unaware of the LAIT (local authority interactive tool), though the majority of those who are aware of it, (16% of forums aware, 14% of all forums) find it helpful. Resources that forums reported as finding useful were NNPCF reports and Representatives; Contact a Family reports, resources and webinars; Preparing for Adulthood toolkits; good practice examples; Council for Disabled Children publications, CCG Audit Tool etc.



### Q20b What additional evidence and resources would help assessment and improve performance:

Forums' responses here were varied though many referred to data and tracking in respect of statistics, for example on EHCP transfers and SEND survey results. Several forums also mention opportunities to share good practice.

### Q21 EHC plans and young offenders in custody:

- If known, how many requests for EHC needs assessments has your local authority received for young offenders in custody\* since 1 April 2015?
- If known, how many EHC needs assessments for young offenders in custody\* (at any point in the assessment process\*\*) has your local authority undertaken since 1 April 2015?
- If known, how many final EHC plans has your local authority issued to young offenders in custody\* (at any point in the assessment process\*\*) since 1 April 2015?

The vast majority of forums were unable to answer these questions and stated that they did not know. Forums' comments included that this information was not shared with them, that they weren't involved in this area of work or that there were low percentages of youths in custody in their area.

### Q22 EHC plans and Personal Budgets:

- If known, how many final EHC plans has your local authority issued between 1 May and 30 September 2016?

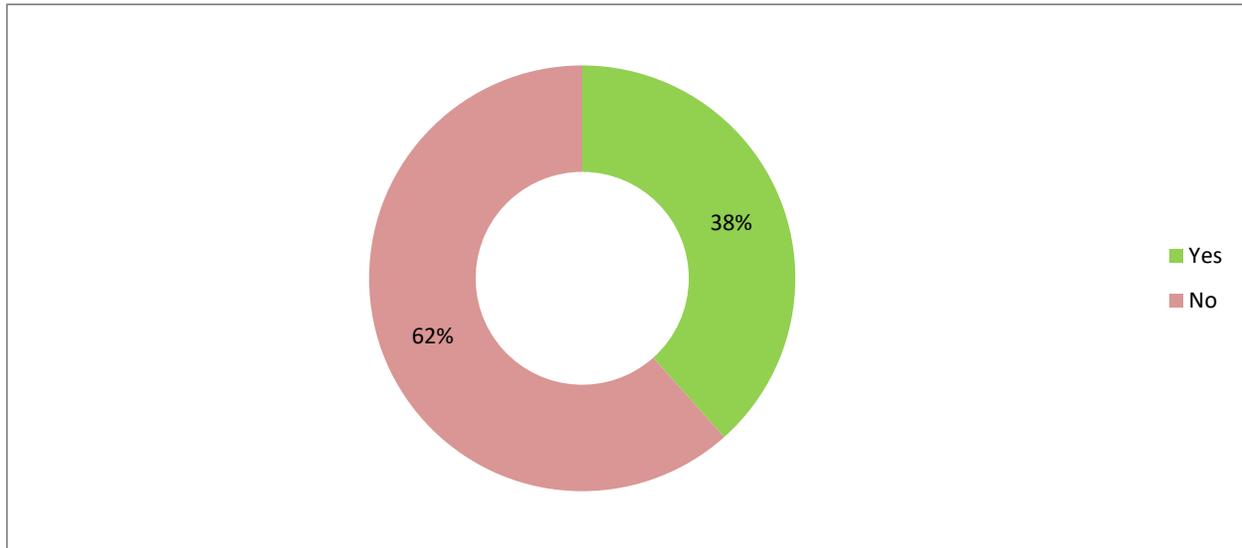
Many forums could quantify this answer, but equally, a large number of forums had access to this information from their local authority. Others stated that they had figures but that they were not up to date.

- If known, of these, how many carry a Personal Budget?

The prevailing answer to this question from forums was 'unknown' or '0'.

### Q23 In the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum is your local authority currently managing to issue most (at least 90%) of new EHC plans within 20 weeks (unless statutory exceptions apply)?

38% of forums believe that their local authority is meeting the 20-week deadline to produce EHC Plans in 90% of cases.



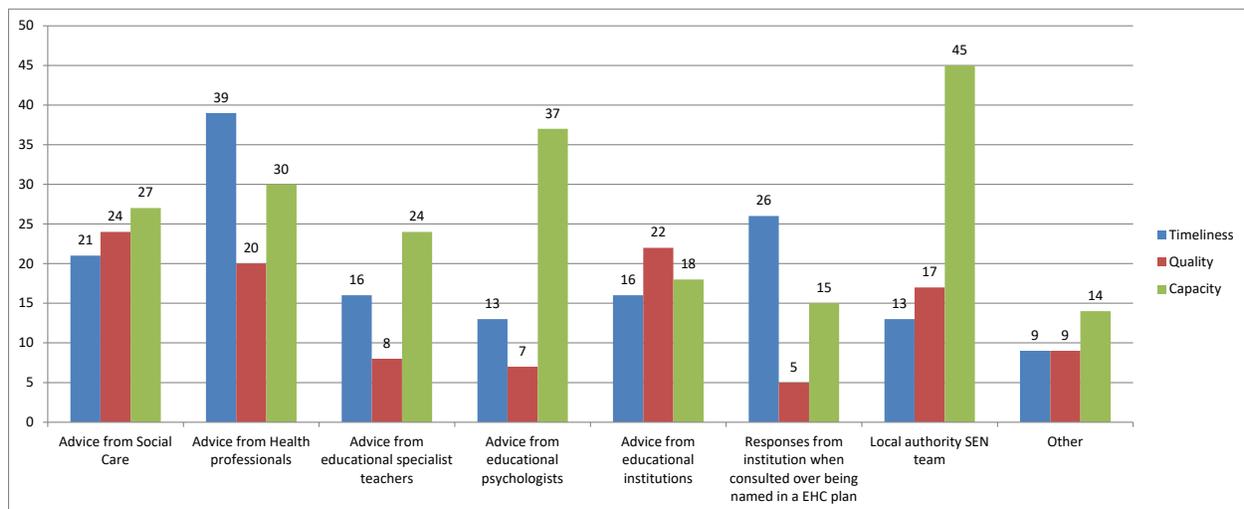
**Q24 Where you have indicated NO, what, in the opinion of your Parent Carer Forum, are your local authority's main barriers to completion of EHC Plans within the 20-week statutory timeframe? Please tick all that apply.**

The top five forum reported barriers to completion of EHC Plans within the 20-week timeframe were:

1. Local authority capacity (45 forums)
2. The timeliness of advice from health professionals (39 forums)
3. The capacity of Educational Psychologist's to provide advice (37 forums)
4. The capacity of health professionals to provide advice (30 forums)
5. The capacity of social care professionals to provide advice (27 forums)

The top two barriers are the same as in survey 7, but in reverse this survey. Capacity was the prevailing theme in all but one area. In the case of health, capacity issues may impact on the timeliness of their advice. Responses from institutions when consulted over being named in a EHC plan is also seen as an area of challenge when meeting timescales, by forums.

	Timeliness	Quality	Capacity
Advice from Social Care	21	24	27
Advice from Health professionals	39	20	30
Advice from educational specialist teachers	16	8	24
Advice from educational psychologists	13	7	37
Advice from educational institutions	16	22	18
Responses from institution when consulted over being named in a EHC plan	26	5	15
Local authority SEN team	13	17	45
Other	9	9	14



Other issues identified in the open-ended responses were expansions on capacity issues which had an impact on both timeliness and quality; the compromising of quality to meet statutory deadlines; gaining input from all agencies; staffing knowledge, workload and turnover; outsourcing of plans and general problems with implementation of the reforms.

**Q24b Where possible, please offer examples of factors that contribute to successfully meeting the 20-week deadline:**

Timing is highlighted as a key factor by forums to the success of meeting the 20-week deadline, this being the timeliness of assessments, information, advice and evidence, and reporting. Strong leadership and good communication are things that many forums deem to be crucial, as is the co-production of plans with all parties. Early engagement with well-informed families impacts on the quality of the final report.

**Q24c If the 20-week deadline is not being met in the majority of cases, please offer further examples of barriers/challenges:**

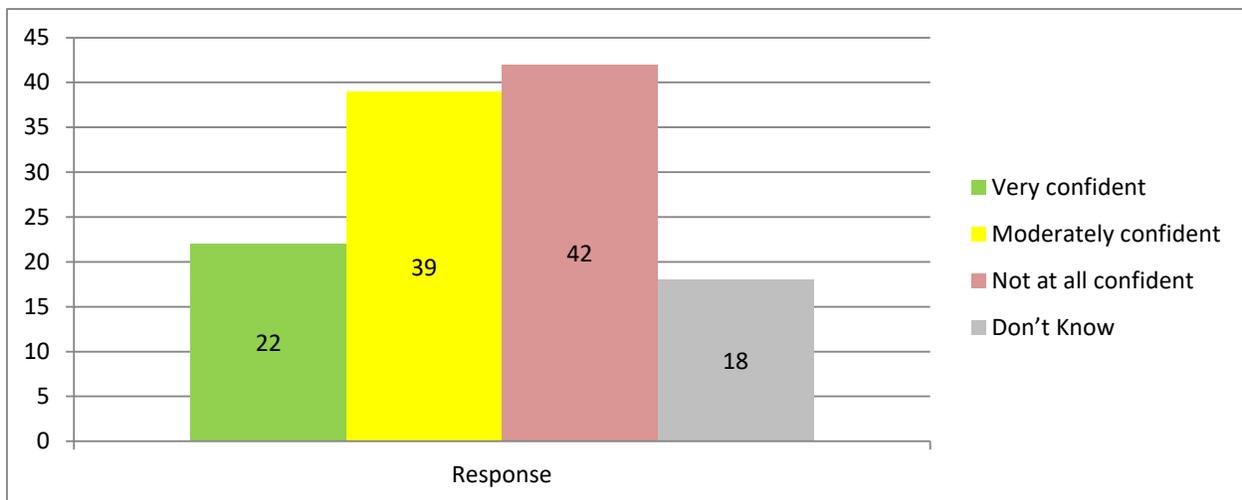
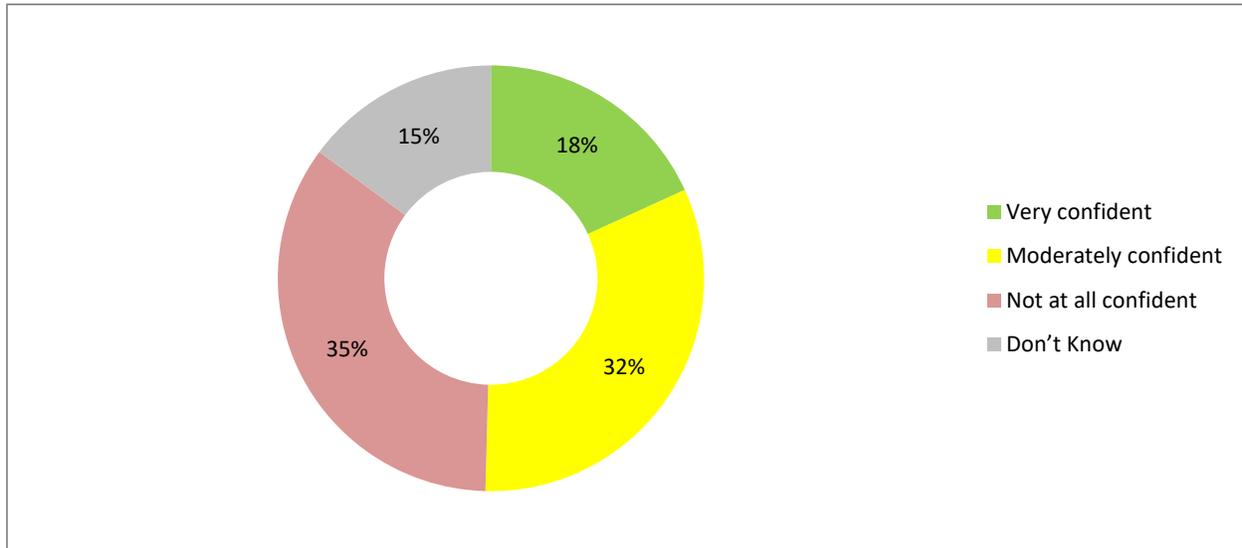
The timeliness and quality of reports/evidence from health (and other agencies to a lesser extent) was highlighted here by many forums; capacity, staff turnover rates and the workforce development of various teams was mentioned. Some forums state that meeting the 20-week timescale can compromise the overall quality of the EHCP. Another issue mentioned several times was the difficulty in finding suitable placements. Several forums noted that disagreement as to the content of plans can also cause delays.

**Q25 If known, how many Transfer Reviews for statements have been completed between 1 May and 30 September 2016?**

There was a mixed response from forums to the question about transfer reviews for statements. Over half of forums hold up to date figures; some did not receive them in the timeframe; for others, the information is shared during meetings with the LA. Other forums are not privy to this information or state that it is not shared with the forum.

**Q26 How confident are you that your local authority will have completed all of their statements transfers and issued final EHC plans by April 2018?**

When asked about how confident they are that their local authority will have completed the transfer of statements and issued final EHC Plans by April 2018, 18% are very confident that this will occur; 32% are moderately confident rising from 25% confidence in the last survey; and 35% are not at all confident. The remainder of forums (15%) are unsure.



**Q28 If your Parent Carer Forum were unable to answer a significant number of sections in this questionnaire, please tell us if there were any particular reasons why?**

Of the forums who responded to this question, the overwhelming response was that their local authority had not shared the statistical answers with the forum or that they had not got back to them, or had chance to meet before the survey deadline. Other issues were the capacity of forums, or that forums felt the form did not lend itself to them being able to give the response that they wanted to give, i.e. that some opportunities to respond were quite restrictive. Some forums felt that some questions were ambiguous and that some should have been directed to the local authority and were not relevant to them.

## Other feedback

Forums were asked to share examples of good practice from their areas and submit any further comments about anything they'd like the DfE to be aware of. All comments are with the DfE.

### Possible data quality issues:

The forum data is subject to a few caveats. In many instances forums reported that they did not know the answers to the data driven questions as their local authority had not supplied them on time; they had not managed to meet to discuss, or that their relationship was not such that the figures would be provide to the forum. Questions are open to interpretation and some for example, may be misconstrued if they are not specific enough. An example of this is Q19 where 10 forums reported that they were not aware of the parent carer forum survey that they were completing.