



Parent Carer Forums Survey 3: - Implementation of the SEND Reforms

Parent Carer Forums Survey Responses in November 2014

January 2015

Parent Carer Forums Survey 3: - Implementation of the SEND Reforms

Report on the Survey Responses

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1. Introduction

On behalf of the Department for Education, Contact a Family and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums ran a third 'Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) implementation survey' in October 2014 in order to gather parent carer forums' views on the implementation of these reforms in their local areas. The responses from forums are summarised in this report. This follows on from two previous surveys run in February and May 2014, which gathered parent carer forums' views on their local area's readiness for implementation of the reforms.

The Department for Education (DfE) have requested this information to consider parent carer forum views alongside the opinions gathered from Local Authorities. NHS England also wanted to seek views from forums about how health commissioners and providers are implementing the reforms. The results will provide some insight into the impact since the Children and Families Act was implemented and guide the DfE's plans in assessing and determining where further support and challenge was required for local areas.

The questions put to the forums in the third survey were more closely aligned to those put to the local authorities for better comparison. As with the first and second surveys, the Chairs and leads for each forum were invited to make a single response on behalf of their forum and were asked to consult their membership for input where possible.

It is important to acknowledge that the questions asked in this survey are in places significantly different from previous versions and so comparison is not always possible. The difference in questions relates in most part to the need to establish a different line of inquiry now the reforms have become law and implementation should be happening in all local authorities.

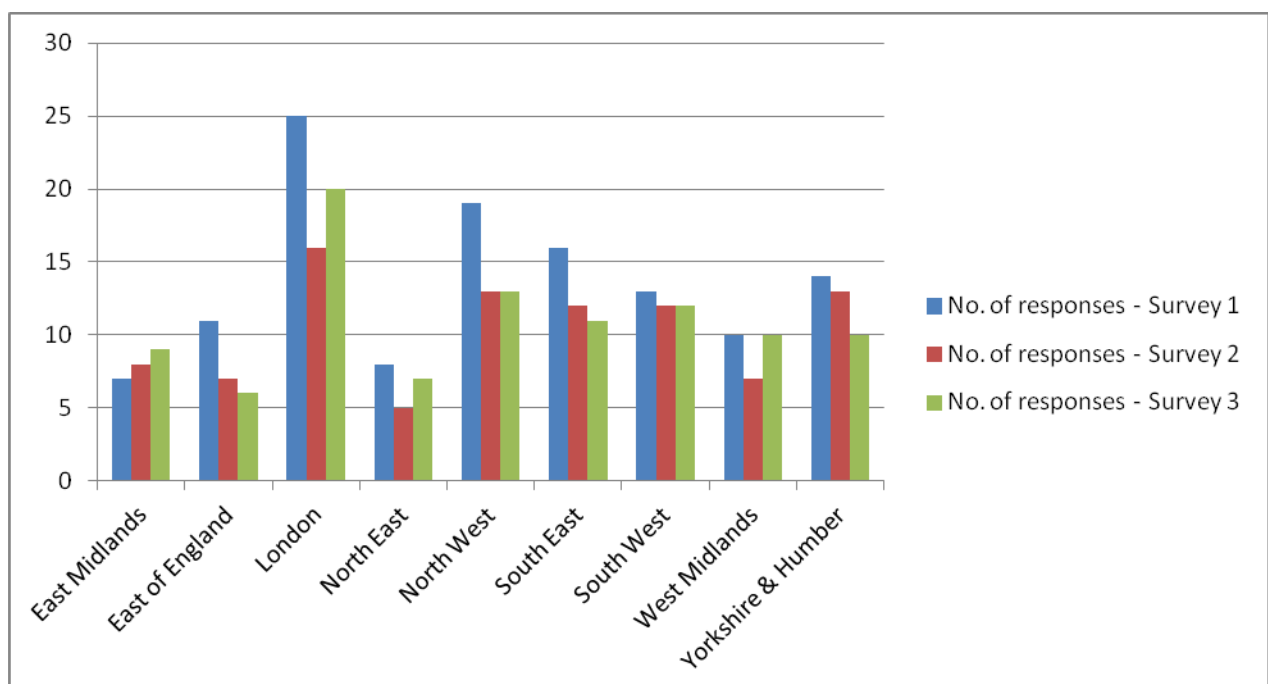
For most of the questions we have provided the England wide response, and the regional response, although there is no individual identifying data. Where appropriate we have included additional comments from forums. Due to the large number of individual comments we have included an example from each region and have tried to ensure that these have been representative of the overall feedback.

We would like to thank the many parent carer forums who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback has made a real difference in enabling the Department to understand progress in local areas and make sure that areas are receiving the appropriate support and challenge as they continue to implement these reforms.

2. Response to the survey

98 parent carer forums (65%) made a response to the survey out of the 151 areas which are able to apply for the Department for Education parent carer participation grant across England. This is a higher response rate than the second survey, but less than the first survey. However given that the forums had just two weeks to respond and only a week's grace period over half-term, the level of engagement and response is still very positive.

Region	No. of forums invited to respond	No. of responses - Survey 1	No. of responses - Survey 2	No. of responses - Survey 3	Response rate by region - Survey 1	Response rate by region - Survey 2	Response rate by region - Survey 3
East Midlands	9	7	8	9	78%	89%	100%
East of England	11	11	7	6	100%	64%	55%
London	32	25	16	20	78%	50%	63%
North East	12	8	5	7	67%	42%	58%
North West	23	19	13	13	83%	57%	57%
South East	19	16	12	11	84%	63%	58%
South West	16	13	12	12	81%	75%	75%
West Midlands	14	10	7	10	71%	50%	71%
Yorkshire & Humber	15	14	13	10	93%	87%	67%
Total	151	123	93	98	81%	62%	65%

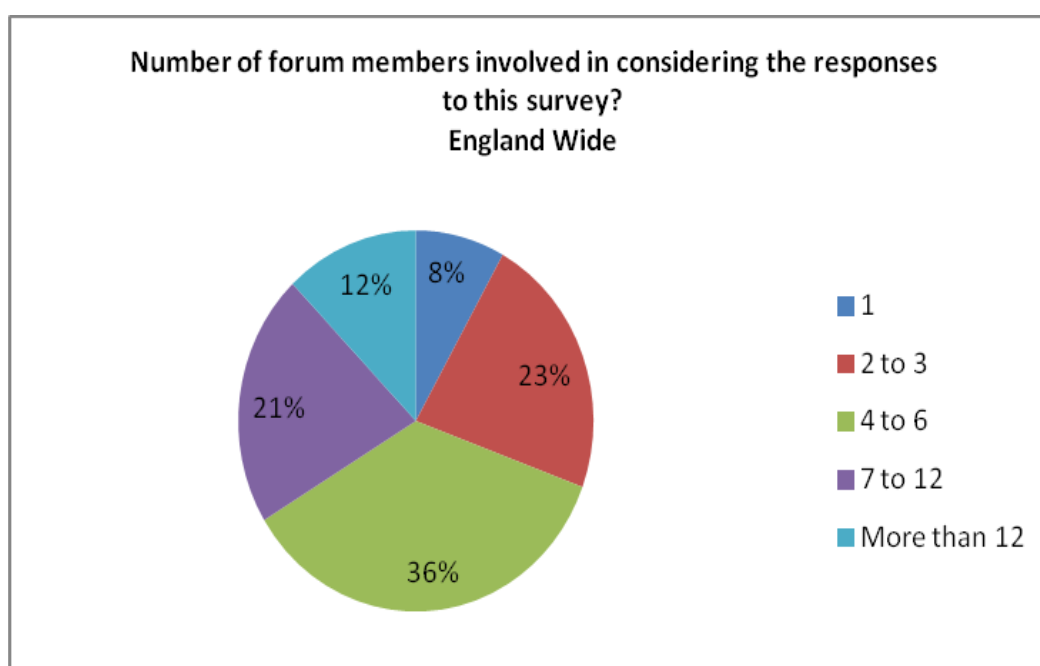


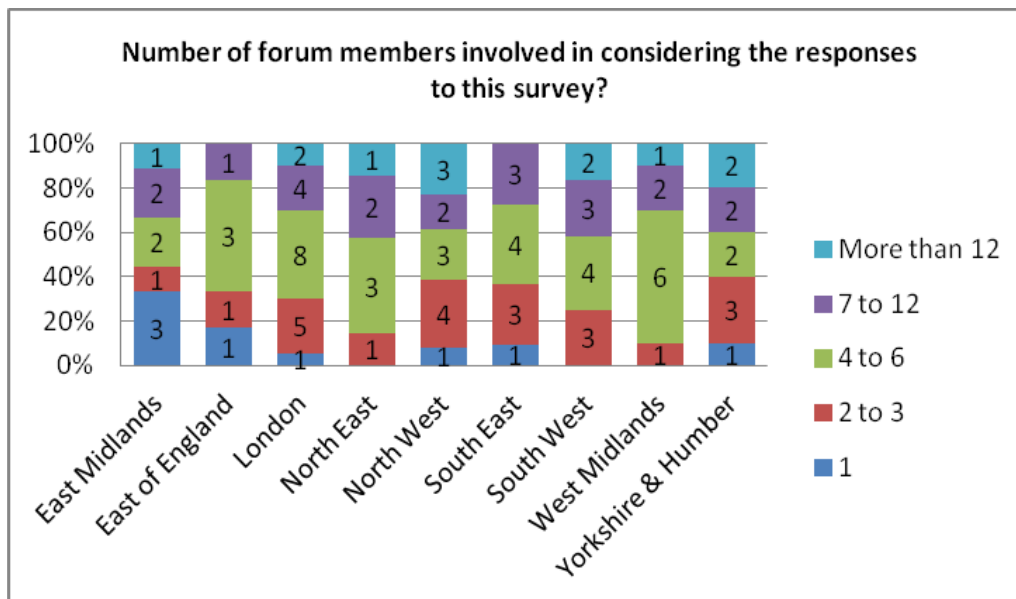
Non respondent forums

There were 54 forums who did not respond to the SEND Reforms, compared with just 28 in the first survey and 58 in the second survey. As before, City of London was not invited to make a response as they do not have an established parent carer forum due to their population and size. Some other areas are also experiencing difficulties in their structure and capacity which meant they were not able to take up the opportunity to participate in the survey at this time.

3. Number of forum members involved in considering the responses to this survey?

Number of forum members involved in considering the responses to this survey?	1	2 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 12	More than 12	Total
East Midlands	3	1	2	2	1	9
East of England	1	1	3	1		6
London	1	5	8	4	2	20
North East		1	3	2	1	7
North West	1	4	3	2	3	13
South East	1	3	4	3		11
South West		3	4	3	2	12
West Midlands		1	6	2	1	10
Yorkshire & Humber	1	3	2	2	2	10
Grand Total	8	22	35	21	12	98





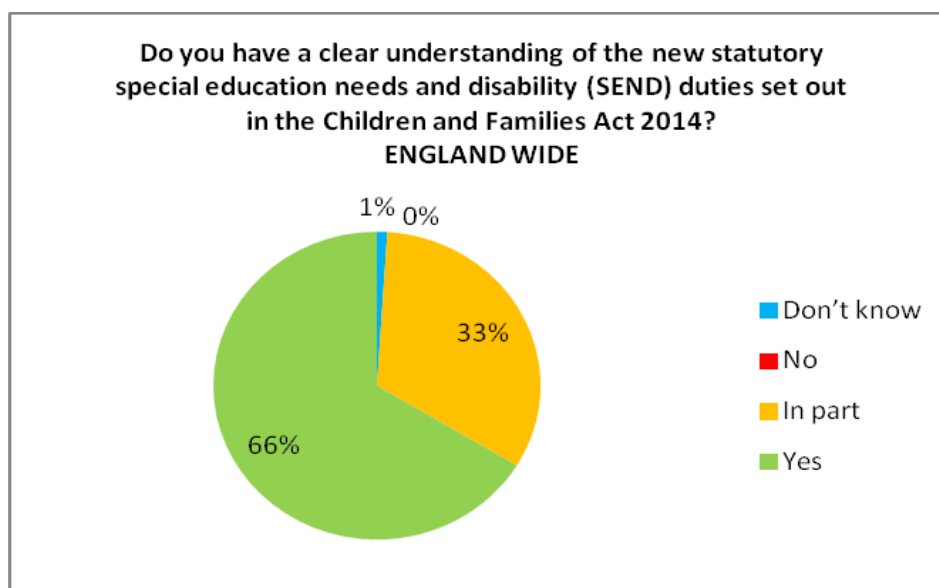
4. **Headline findings**

- 2/3 of survey responses included the views of 4 or more parent carers
- 66% of respondents felt they had a clear understanding of the new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) duties in the Children and Families Act
- 82% of respondents felt either very or fairly confident that the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment pathway in their local area was fully compliant.
- 1/3 of forums were either very or fairly confident that schools in their local area did have a clear system in place for identifying and responding to SEND.
- Worryingly only 23% of forums said that their Local Authority's Local Offer included information on the local authority's accessibility strategy, whilst 71% of forums said their Local Offer included information on leisure activities.
- Only 30% of forums said their Local Authority had appeal arrangements in place.
- 70% of forums are very confident or fairly confident that staff implementing the reforms in their local area have embraced the required culture change.
- 86% of forums are aware of the EHC transition arrangements in their local area but only 71% are confident they will be achieved.
- 58% of forums have low confidence that individual parents understand what is being done to transfer and review statements.

5. **Responses to questions**

Below are the detailed responses to the questions asked throughout the survey. Where possible and appropriate we have also included additional comments from parent carer forums.

Q5. Do you (as a parent carer forum) have a clear understanding of the new statutory special education needs and disability (SEND) duties set out in the Children and Families Act 2014?



Region	Don't know	No	In part	Yes	Total
East Midlands	0	0	6	3	9
East of England	0	0	0	6	6
London	1	0	6	13	20
North East	0	0	2	5	7
North West	0	0	5	8	13
South East	0	0	5	6	11
South West	0	0	2	10	12
West Midlands	0	0	5	5	10
Yorkshire & Humber	0	0	1	9	10
Grand Total	1	0	32	65	98

It is very encouraging to see that 66% of responding forums reported having a good understanding of the new statutory duties for SEND in the children and families act and that a further 33% feel they understand them in part.

Further comments from forums included:

This is still early days in getting to know and fully understand the COP, even though we are a Pathfinder. It will become more easy and understandable the more we use and refer to it.

As a Forum we have a clear understanding of the new statutory special educational needs and disability duties set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, but as individuals within

the Forum there are different levels of understanding dependent upon areas of engagement. Our membership has been kept up to date with current legislation nationally and locally, and we are running SEND Reforms events for all Parents and Carers.

There are cohorts of parents who have been part of the pathfinder work, but for those not involved understanding is low.

Some of it is still confusing for example personal budgets.

The communication to parents by the LA is very general and is not easily understood. There is no system in place to directly inform parents. The only communication seems to be to those parents attending the Forums.

Forum members have had regular information over the past year about SEN reforms and have a good understanding. We are now receiving many enquiries from non-forum members receiving our information via schools who have little or no understanding of reforms.

We have been involved in lots of work around the process, but feel that until the process really beds in, we feel that even the professionals involved are at various stages of understanding.

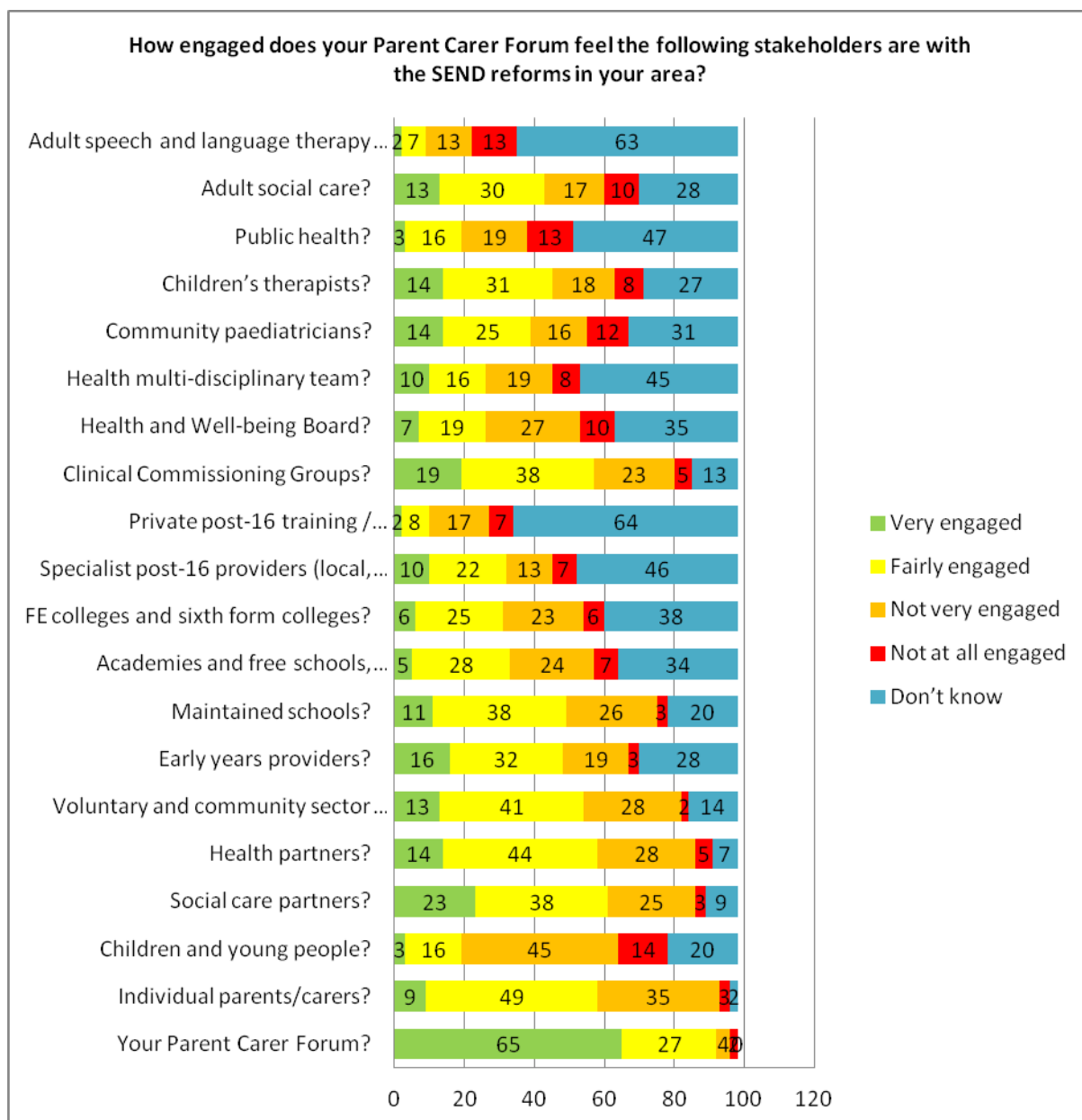
Engagement of Parent Carer Forums

In the second SEND Reforms survey we asked forums 'to what extent has your parent carer forum been engaged in' preparing for the statutory requirements (the same 7 deliverables as we asked about in question 4 on readiness). In this survey we asked '**How engaged does your Parent Carer Forum feel the following stakeholders are with the SEND reforms in your area?**' the first option of which was 'Parent carer Forum.'

Question 6 How engaged does your Parent Carer Forum feel the following stakeholders are with the SEND reforms in your area?

This was the first time this question had been included in the survey and gave some very insightful information about how engaged parent carer forums feel certain cohorts of professionals and parent carers and children and young people are. Forums almost universally perceive that parent carer forums and individual are more engaged than any group of professionals but worryingly only 19% think that children and young people are either fairly or very engaged.

England Wide response



Further comments from forums included:

This is a mixed response. There are some examples of good knowledge and understanding and embracing the reforms and others where knowledge and engagement is lacking. This can be said for most of the groups above. The LA has primarily worked with the parent carer forum as a means of reaching individual parent/carers. Engagement was slow with Health but more recently this has improved considerably. Some excellent work has taken place within our specialist early year's provision but still work to be done with universal settings.

Some stakeholders are not engaged with parents hence their not reporting any engagement. Engagement from schools is mixed and variable depending on the school. Engagement by children and young people is small. A small number are part of a young leader participation project.

Not sure the above is very meaningful, since there are certain individuals in all groups who are very aware and engaged, however, this does not mean that their whole teams are....there's awareness and buy in, in most areas but not by all or most individuals. This includes parents

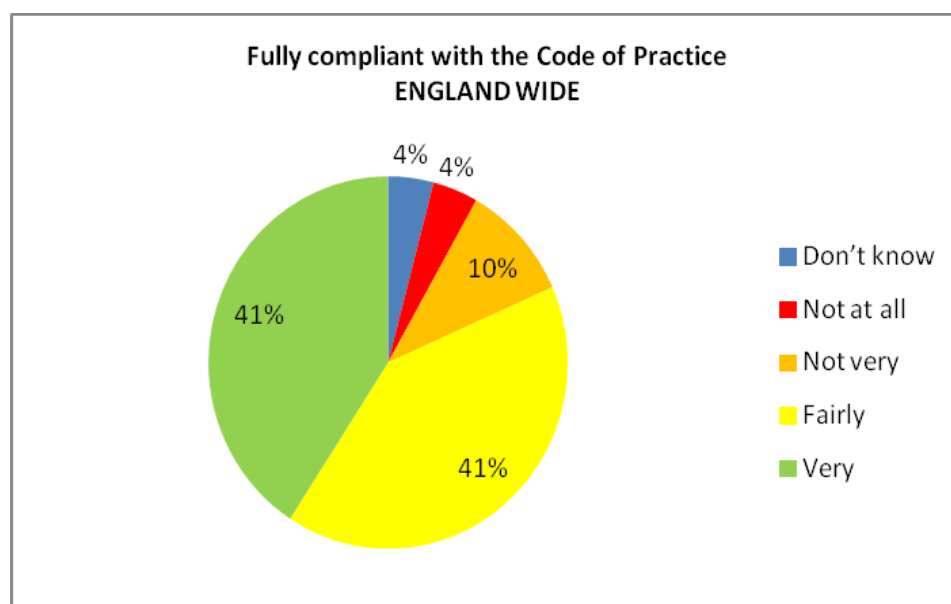
We have a strong partnership with Adult social care and the CCGs and they support the Parent Forum regularly through events and Board meetings. The early years team have not really set up any strategies to implement the SEND changes as of yet. Opportunities to be involved with the Health & Wellbeing boards are in their early stages.

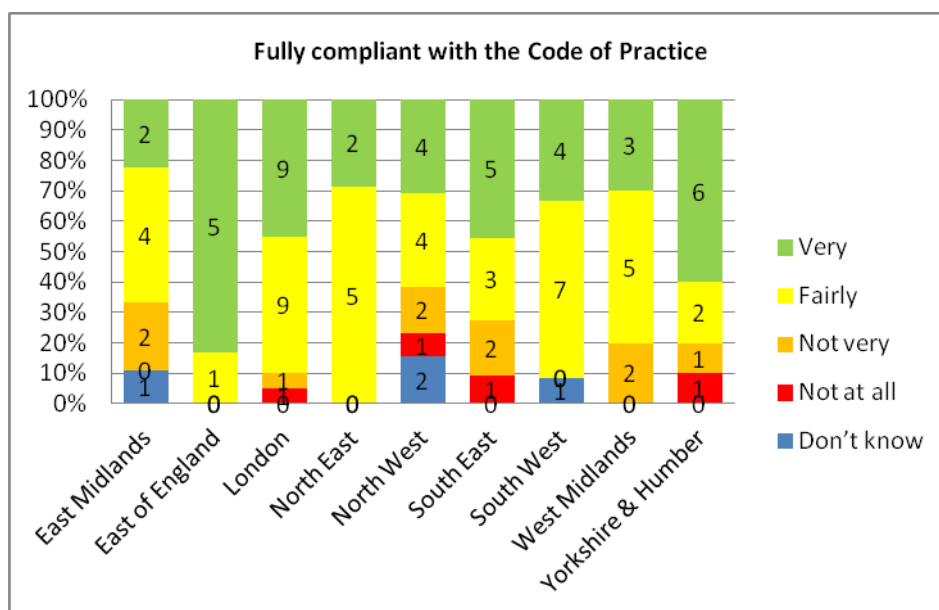
We have put don't know to a large number as there is very little communication or feedback to service users about their services.

Question 7. Please assess your local authorities progress in implementing the statutory duties in the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice. How confident are you that the education, health and care assessment pathway that you have developed with parents, young people and partners is fully compliant with the law and will meet the 20 week statutory timeline?

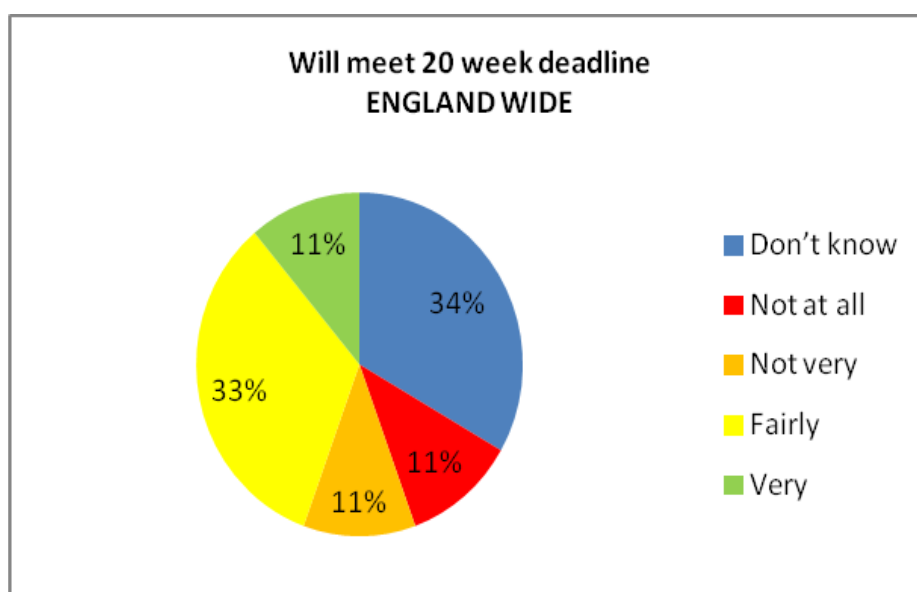
Whilst 82% of forums were either fairly or very confident in their authorities EHC assessment pathways were compliant with the code of practice, only 44% had the same confidence that it would meet the 20 week deadline. Only 45% had the same confidence that all parents and young people with an existing statement or LDA know the likely date when it will be reviewed, and know that it will have a full ECH plan assessment.

Fully compliant with the Code of Practice





How confident are forum the local authority will meet 20 week deadline



Further comments included:

At present our authority has 5 SEND coordinators now after a review of future needs, staff has increased to 7 and then next year 12. So there will be additional social workers, career advisers, admin support and data support all within the EHC team by 1st April 2015.

There is a strong vision to keep to the 20 week deadline. As we are at the early stages of conversion information, we know year 11 families have been contacted but we aren't confident that ALL parents know as yet.

The Transition Plan has been published and the LA, Schools and Parent Forums have been communicating as much as we can about this but we are unclear yet the impact of this since it's so early into the change

This is probably where the most working with parents has taken place with the local offer. Including testing the LO online before it went live. Suggestions from parents and young people were taken on board and amendments made. Letters went to all families with statements & non statutory single plans with full information about transitions. There was also a chance to contact ourselves and LA to discuss further. I am not sure however if letters went to parents or young people who have LDAs

Our LA are very competent in following things by the book. They are also very good generally at communication & relations between the departments. This is all quite new to everyone and apart from assessing the new EHC plans I would be surprised if any area has everyone's date of review sorted out.

Our authorities transition plan has been published and as a Forum we have shaped this document into a user friendly and accessible tool with the LA. The challenge is to ensure that all parents, carers and young people can access this information, but we are confident through our network that parents, carers and young people's knowledge of the transition plan will start to grow.

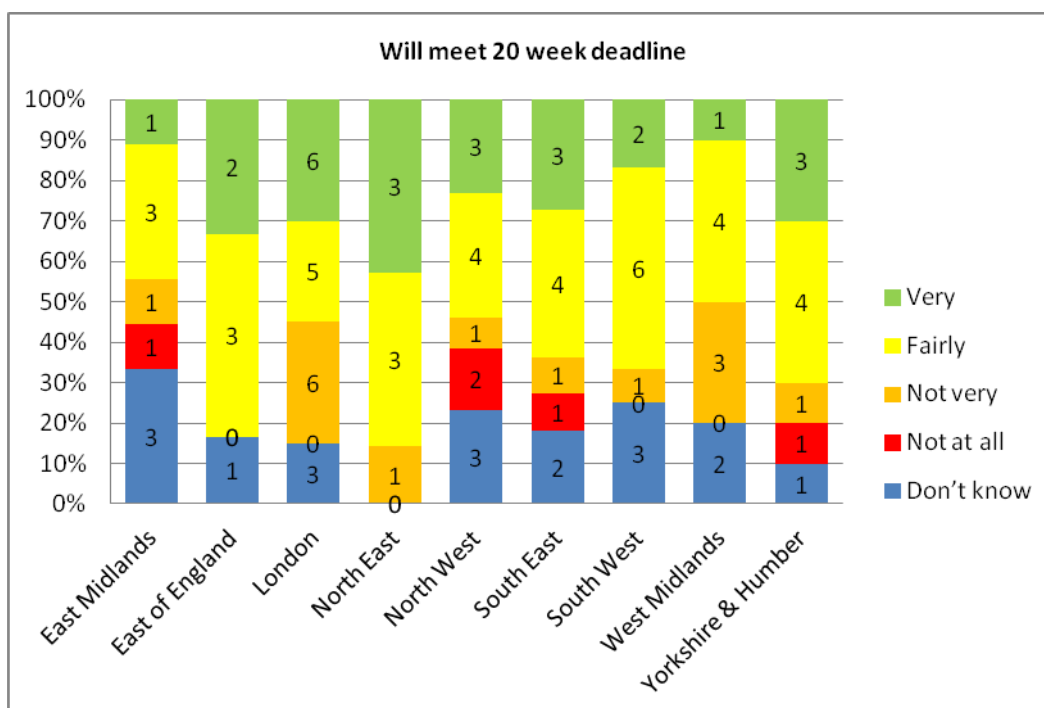
The local authority has contacted all parents of children or young people with an existing statement and advised them of the transition arrangements, but has not provided any specific per-case transition dates. In transition cases e.g. Y11 to Post-16, the authority has confirmed that the transition will take place during the current academic year.

Due to the high number of Statements that need to be converted and the relatively low level of LA staff, whilst we appreciate that the LA will do their best to meet the 20 week deadline we do not believe that this deadline will be met for all. Seeing as the transition plan has not long been published, we are currently unable to say how likely we feel parents and young people will know when their Statement will be converted at this stage.

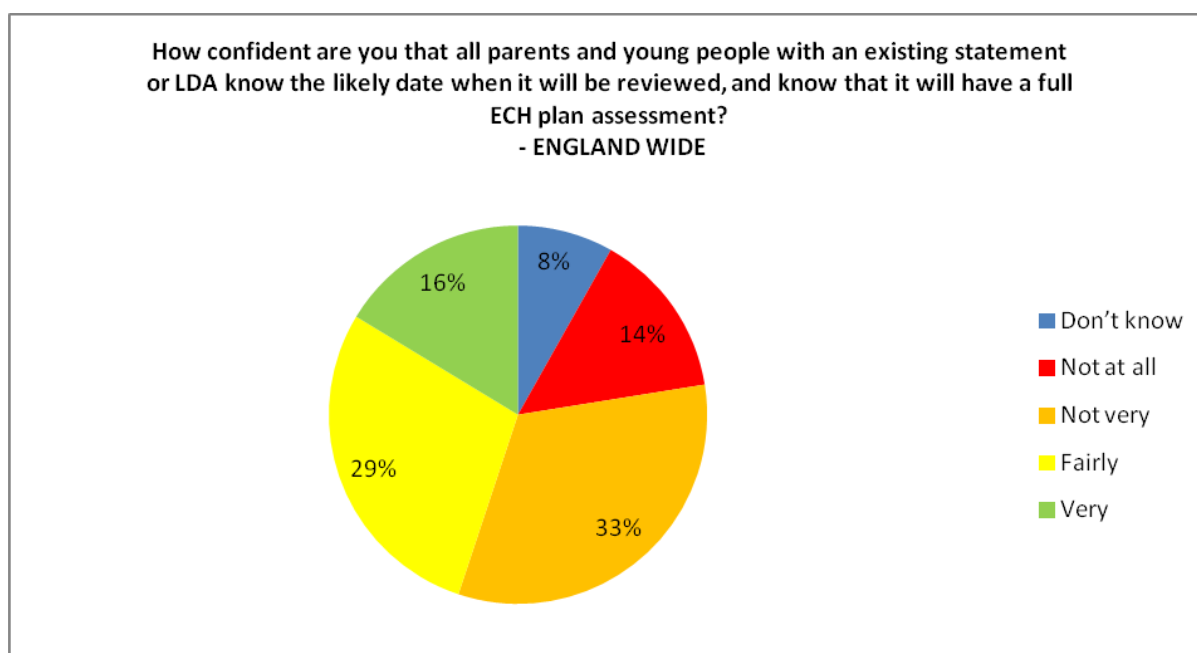
We feel that there has been every effort made to inform parents; however as with statements some parents will not engage or in some cases understand.

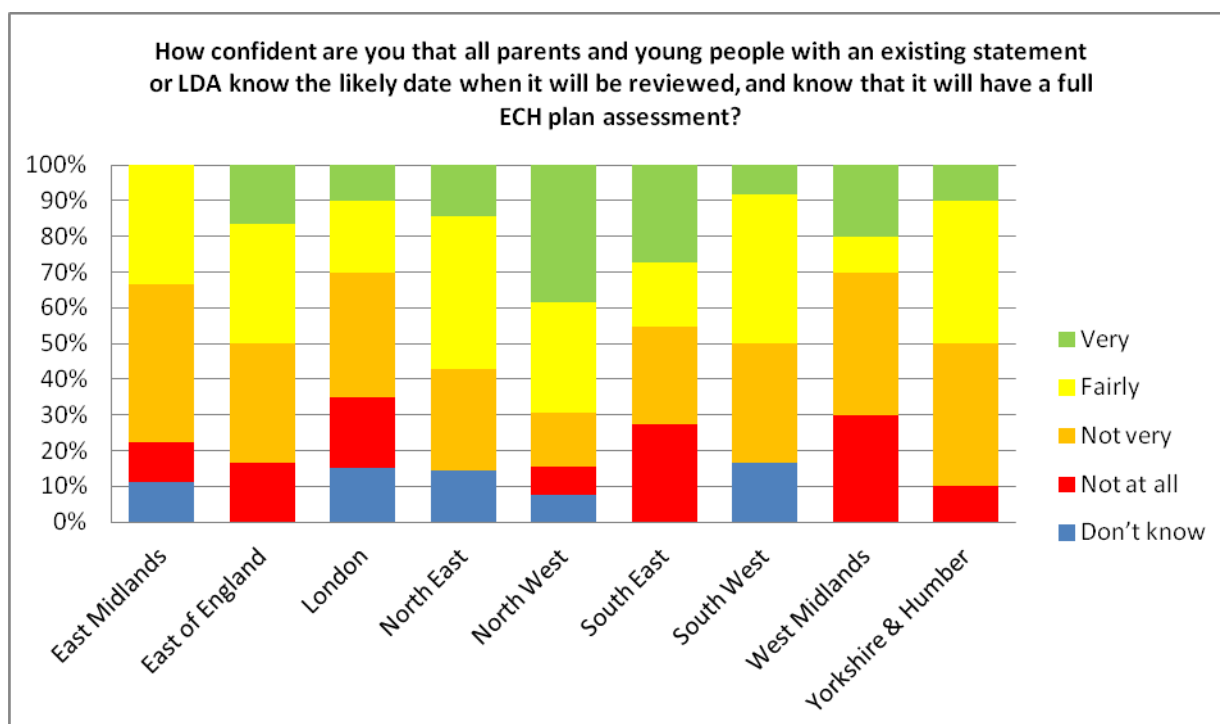
There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that a significant number of parent carers have not yet been given dates for transfer reviews.

The statutory timescales are already being broken. Assessments being refused despite comprehensive evidence, further local protocol being introduced that creates barriers to the process and builds in extra timeframes. This is not legal and we are gravely concerned about it. The information presented to parents was flawed and biased.



Question 7. The SEND Code of Practice requires LAs to publish a local transition plan (following consultation with education, health and care partners, parent carers and young people, families and professionals) setting out how all children and young people with statements and LDAs will be transferred to the new system. How confident are you that all parents and young people with an existing statement or LDA know the likely date when it will be reviewed, and know that it will have a full ECH plan assessment?



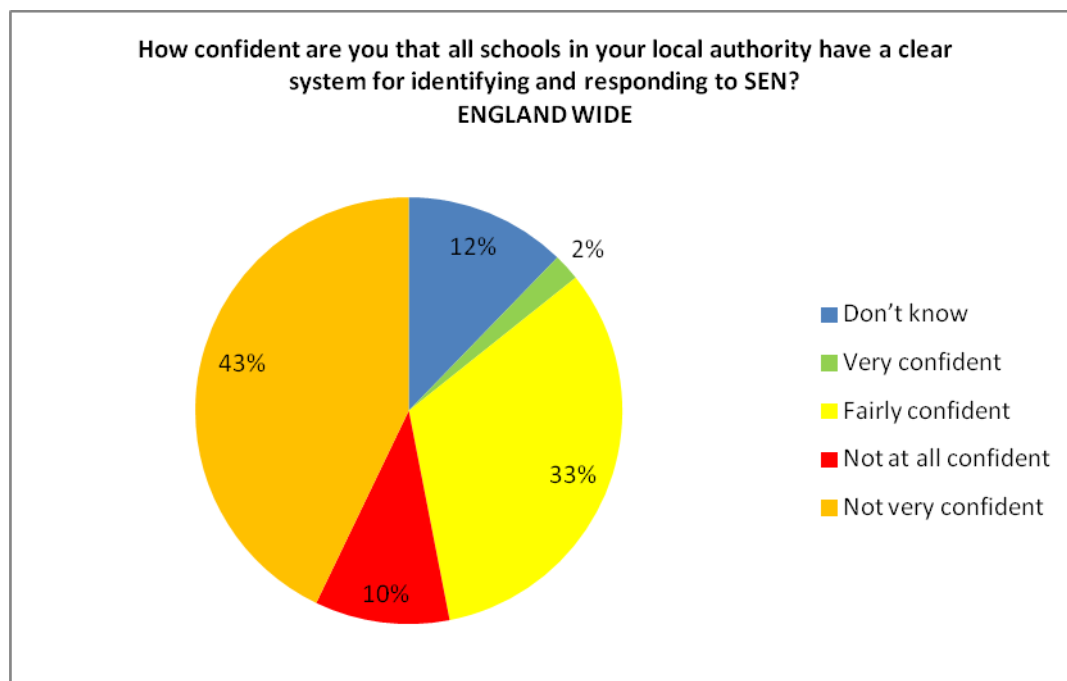


The SEND Code of Practice requires LAs to publish a local transition plan (following consultation with education, health and care partners, parent carers and young people, families and professionals) setting out how all children and young people with statements and LDAs will be transferred to the new system. How confident are you that all parents and young people with an existing statement or LDA know the likely date when it will be reviewed, and know that it will have a full ECH plan assessment?

Region	Don't know	Not at all	Not very	Fairly	Very	Total
East Midlands	1	1	4	3	0	9
East of England	0	1	2	2	1	6
London	3	4	7	4	2	20
North East	1	0	2	3	1	7
North West	1	1	2	4	5	13
South East	0	3	3	2	3	11
South West	2	0	4	5	1	12
West Midlands	0	3	4	1	2	10
Yorkshire & Humber	0	1	4	4	1	10
Grand Total	8	14	32	28	16	98

Question 8 How confident are you that all schools in your local authority have a clear system for identifying and responding to SEN?

Just 35% of respondents are very or fairly confident that all schools in the local authority have a clear system for identifying and responding to SEN, whilst 53% have little or no confidence.



Further comments included:

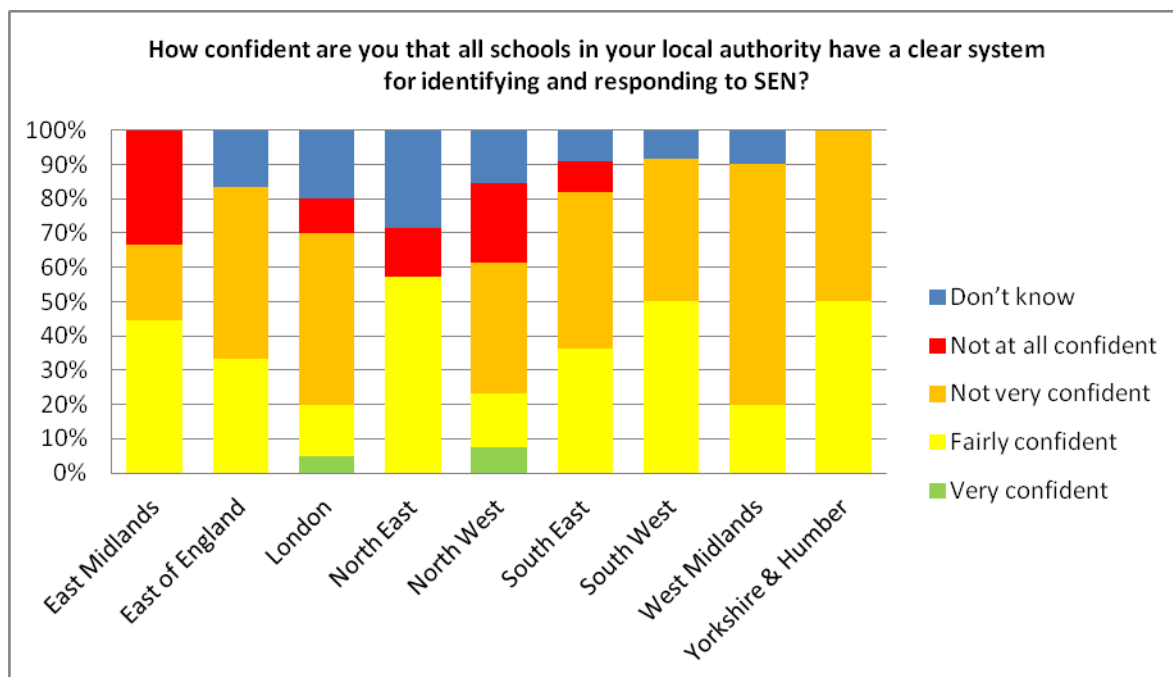
Parents and carers have worked with the Head teacher seconded to the 0-25 programme and regular newsletters are sent out to all education establishments.

There are good systems in place within the local authority to assist schools, but it is difficult to assess how well they respond on an individual basis. We have mixed experiences reported by parents. It will be interesting to see if the new culture of working with families makes a difference. We are also aware that all schools have completed and published their information regarding SEN.

Some schools that were already renowned for having a good reputation on recognising and supporting children and young people with SEND have embraced the changes. However we are very concerned that the majority of schools need further guidance and that someone within the LA should be responsible for ensuring all schools are being compliant.

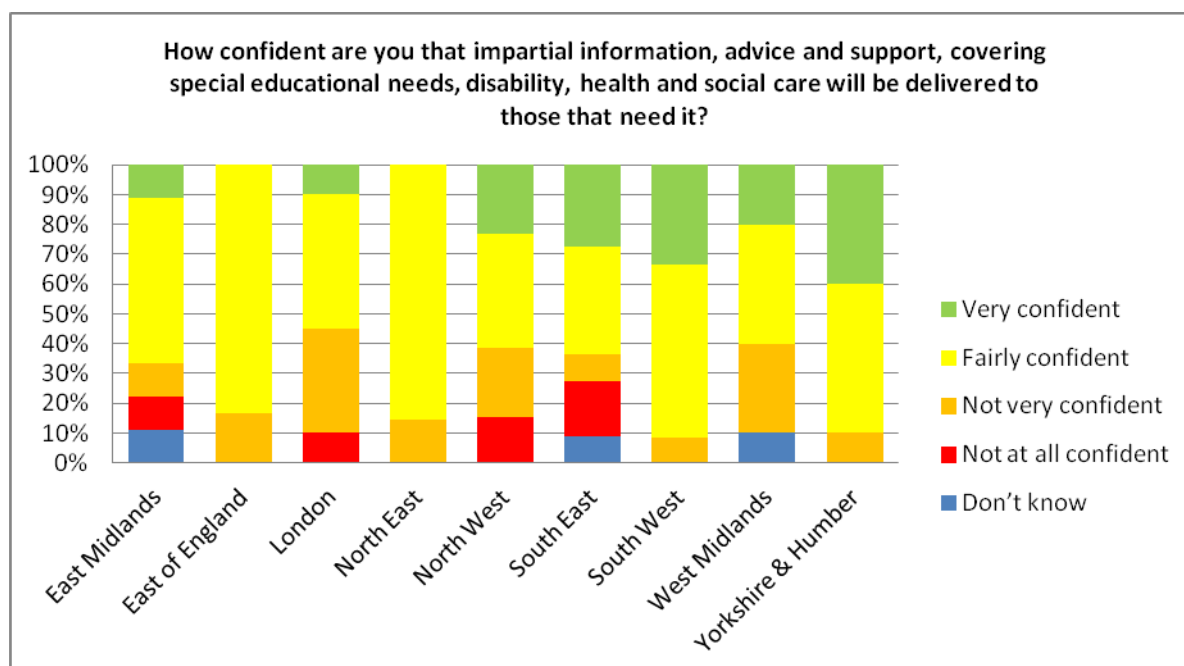
Our conversations with parents and with SENCOs suggest that in many cases parents are more knowledgeable about the reforms.

Schools are receiving insufficient support and advice from the LA and many children are being denied access to support due to local policy of single conversations with schools that are designed to limit their interaction with support services. Schools are frustrated with this system as they are having to decide which children to prioritise which is damaging others.



Question 9 How confident are you that impartial information, advice and support, covering special educational needs, disability, health and social care will be delivered to those that need it?

An impressive 70% of respondents are very or fairly confident that information advice and support will be delivered to those who need it.



Further comments included:

The consortium is working with the IS attached to the IAS in our area and is beginning to develop links with the external provider IS.

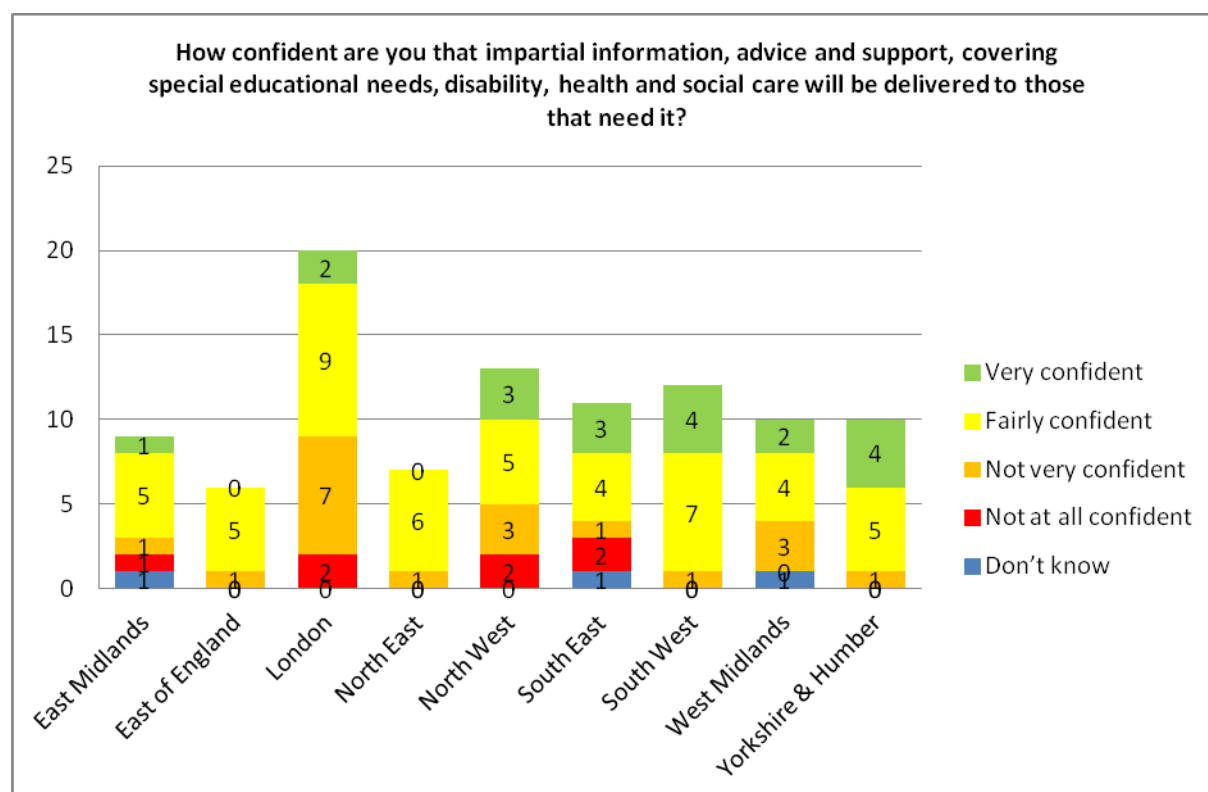
We are working closely with local independent supports lead to ensure this is in place.

We have confidence in our local SEND IAS provision and work closely with them in this endeavour.

The parent forum is involved in the Independent support service and we work in partnership with SENDIASS

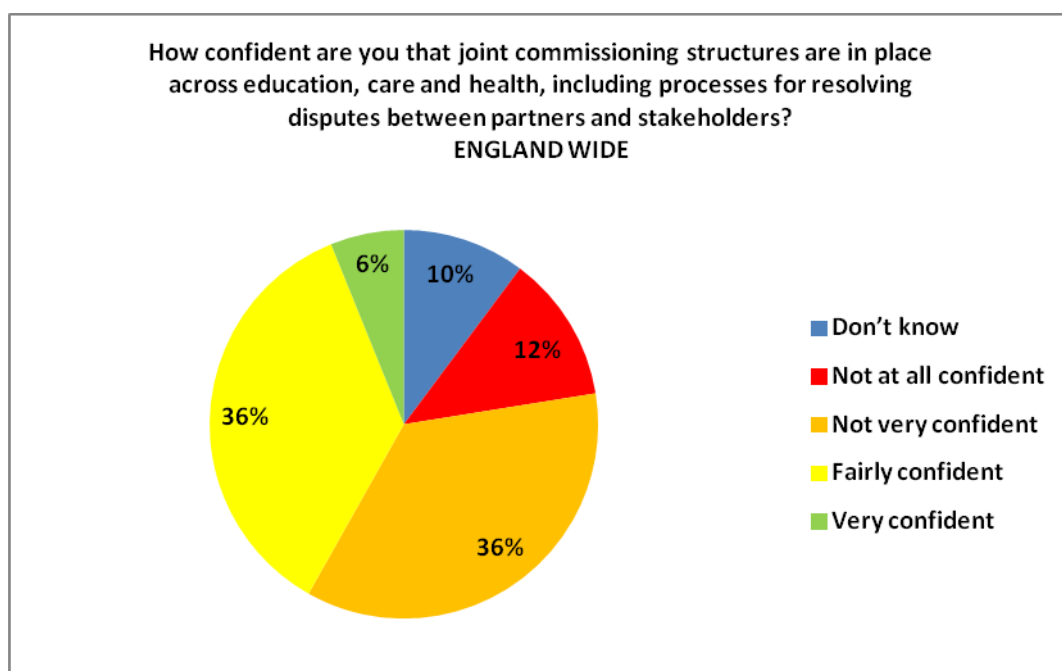
Confident but concerned as no mention of a re commissioned service as parent partnership 0-19 has become SEND information advice and support 0-25 practically overnight. The remit and job spec, we are sure will have changed significantly and in effect it has just been re branded. How are they covering the health and social care element as well as the 19-25 category as traditionally this was not their remit?

Changes are still happening, it is taking a while to role this out, there should have been more involvement from an earlier stage



Question 10. How confident are you that joint commissioning structures are in place across education, care and health, including processes for resolving disputes between partners and stakeholders?

42% of respondents are very or fairly confident the joint commissioning is in place to resolve disputes between partners and stakeholders, whereas 48% are not very or not at all confident.



Further forum comments included:

Major change in commissioning arrangements currently being consulted on. To utilize the prime contractor model. However, not yet confident that dispute resolution etc. is 'sorted'.

No evidence exists that processes are in place. No information has been received regarding dispute resolution

Significant progress has been made but much of the work is still at the draft stage.

As parent forum thank full to receiving updates from XXX we managed to make contact with the LA and CCG commissioners. But there are serious gaps in information being filtered down and understanding of parent participation in decision making and planning.

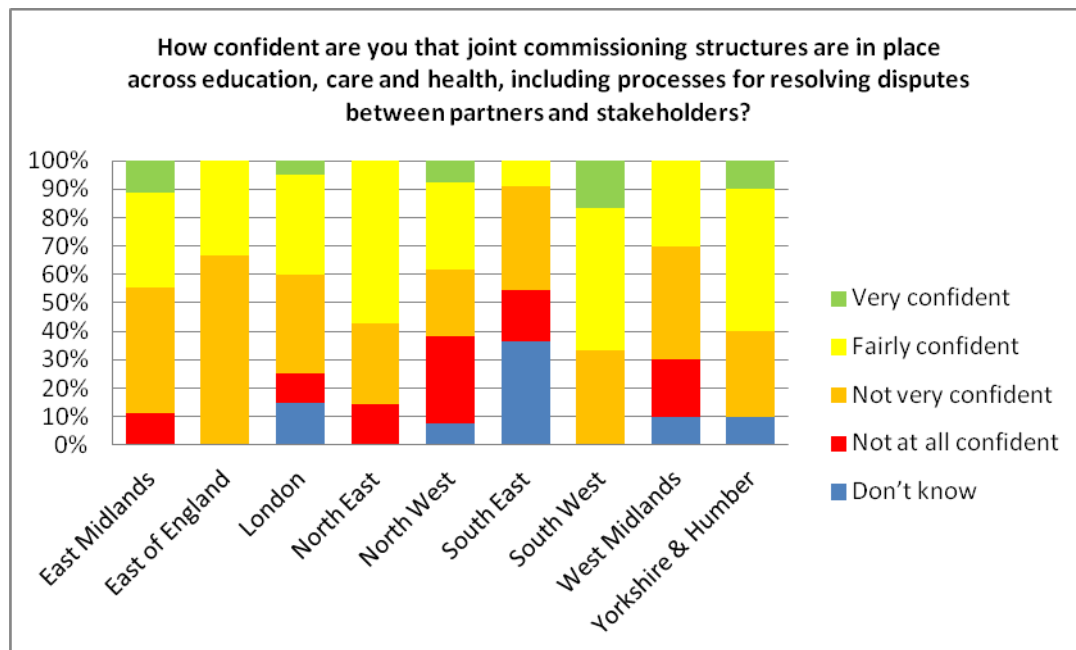
We have very little knowledge of the joint commissioning arrangements and we are concerned that this most likely stems from a lack of such arrangements rather than our exclusion from them.

This is a recognised piece of work within the L.A that is now being undertaken

There is a strong willingness to make this happen and appears to be building momentum

There is a massive amount of work being done on this and it is not yet coherent but we are confident that answers will be found.

Joint commissioning task and finish group still very much in early stages but at least all parties are on board

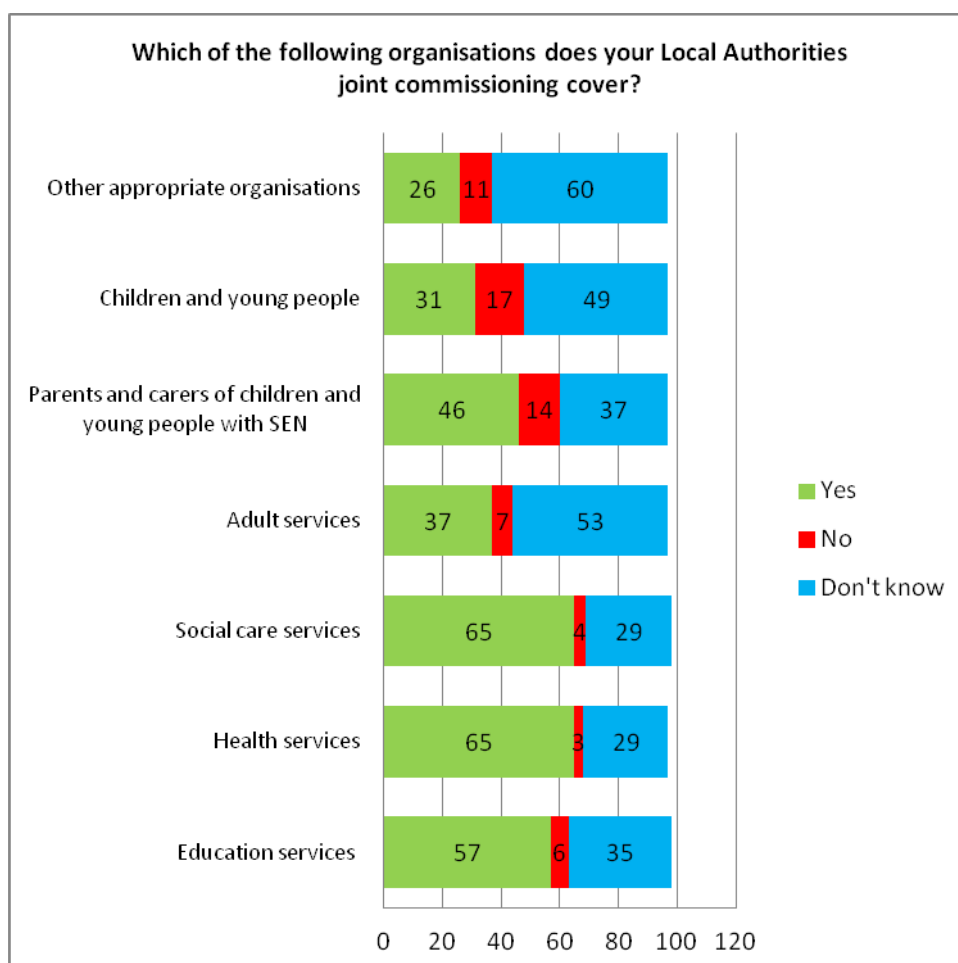


Question 11 Forums were asked which of the following organisations does your Local Authorities joint commissioning cover?

Organisation	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Education services	57	6	35	98
Health services	65	3	29	97
Social care services	65	4	29	98
Adult services	37	7	53	97
Parents and carers of children and young people with SEN	46	14	37	97
Children and young people	31	17	49	97
Other appropriate organisations	26	11	60	97

England wide results suggest that many respondents are unaware of their Local Authorities Joint Commissioning arrangements. It would suggest that this is an area which still needs

significant development, or transparency from authorities in how their joint commissioning works.



Forum comments included:

Joint commissioning is in its infancy. We are working on a long term strategy to fully develop it.

Our forum has had no information or involvement with any of the discussions surrounding the above issues. Parent Carer involvement has been minimal within the borough and, from what we have been able to ascertain parents involved have been employed by the borough and service providers 80% of steering group have major concerns around the fact that we have had no engagement with regard to these reforms

There are grave issues around commissioning of therapy services in Education. Services are cut without any consultation with service users, if there are any attempts to consult or offer participation often it unfriendly times for parent carers with no support for out of pocket expenses.

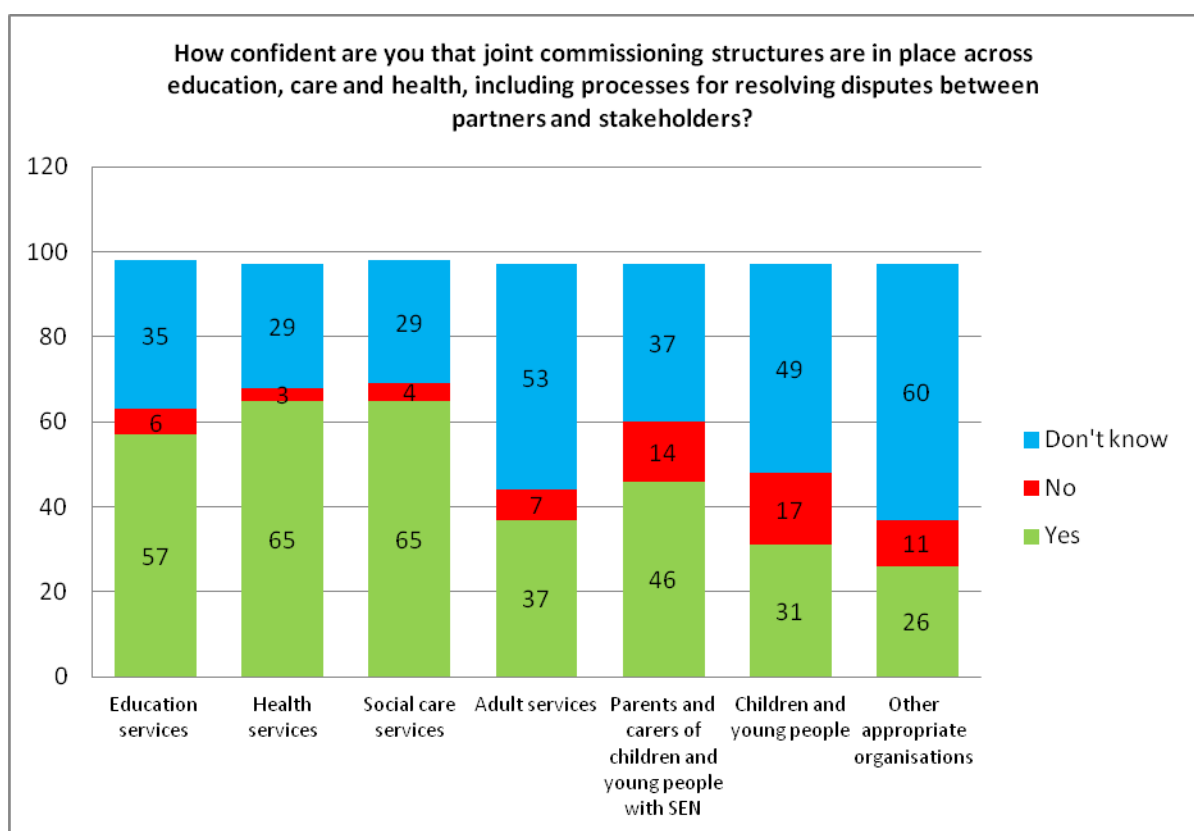
The forum has not been involved in strategic joint commissioning to date.

A Joint commissioning unit is in place to ensure all areas of service are addressed

New concept which is complex and too full of jargon.

As above there is a multi-agency panel which includes, Health, Education, Social care and adult and children's services but would not consider this as joint commissioning...

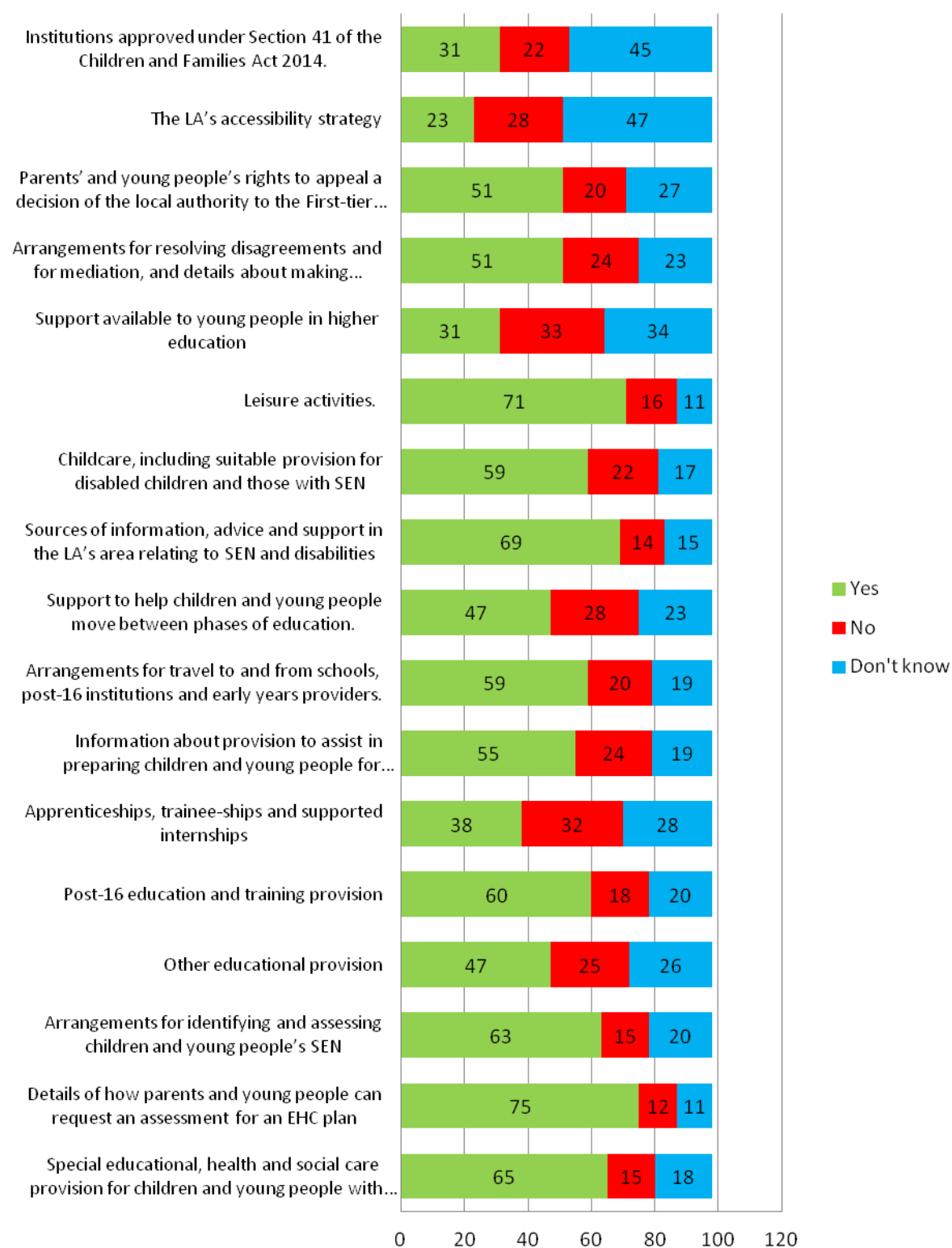
No idea what it covers – we attend a joint child health commissioning meeting once a month but are only allowed to attend the first hour. It seems to cover education, health and care, but to be honest very little is actually discussed in this meeting and it doesn't seem very strategic

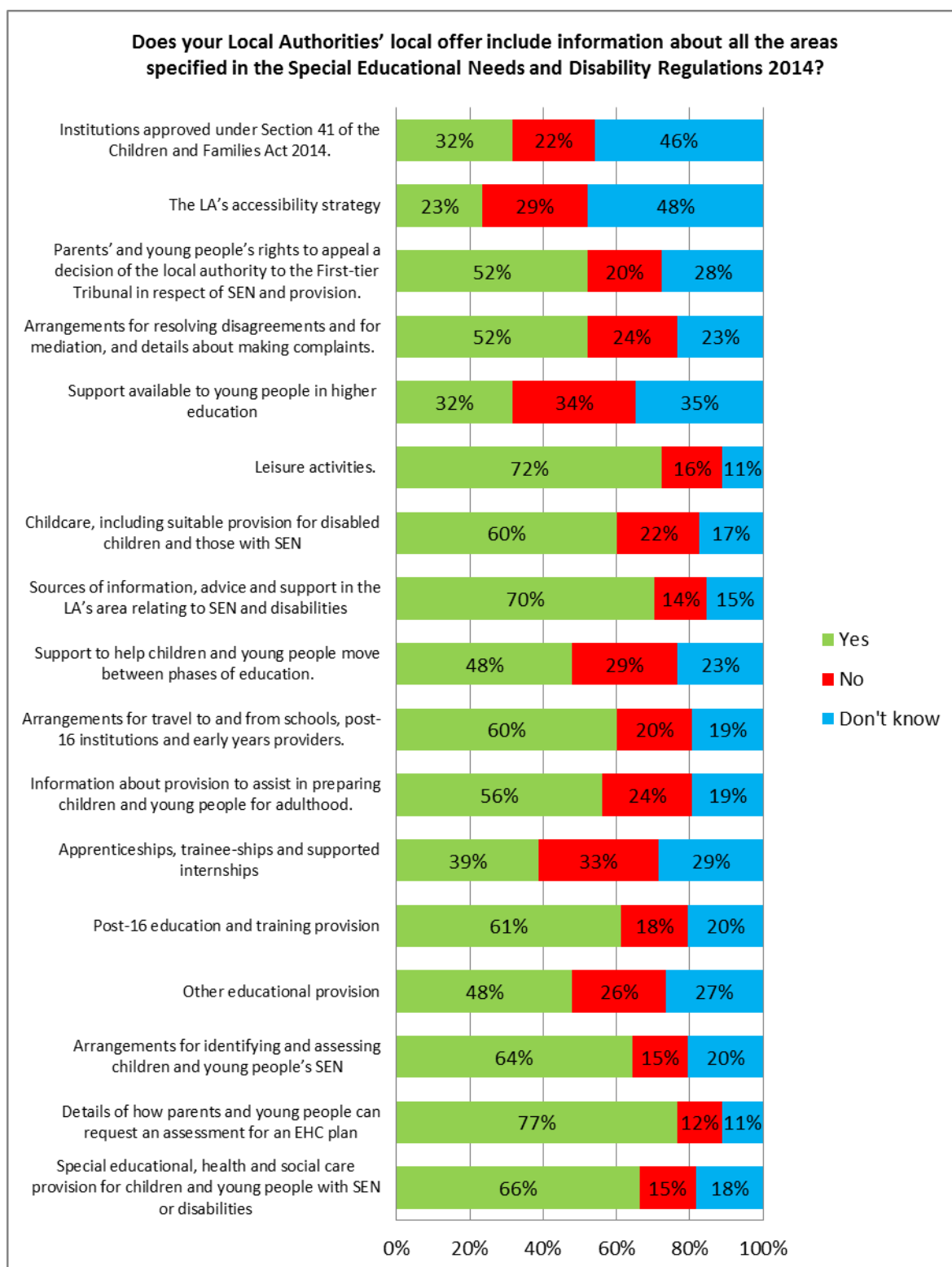


Question 12

Does your Local Authorities' local offer include information about all the areas specified in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014?

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There was a wealth of information provided by forums about the development of their local offer, and the range of compliance with statutory guidance can be seen from the response to the specific questions asked above. Forum comments included:

Even where information has been published this is still scant. Some of the areas where we have answered no, there is a little information of the Local Offer but it is poor. The Local Offer is currently only published on an adult social care website which is not commonly

known to parents. Its content does not yet reflect the amount of work undertaken to date and is a work in progress. Parents and Young People have not found the website user friendly and the Young Adviser's report has requested more easy read pages.

The Local Offer has been an area of considerable coproduction and whilst information is still being gathered and the output tested we are confident that the Local Offer will deliver its stated aims.

We are in talks with LA on this issue as we feel we have not been listened to at all!!!

Development of the Local Offer is ongoing but we are fully involved

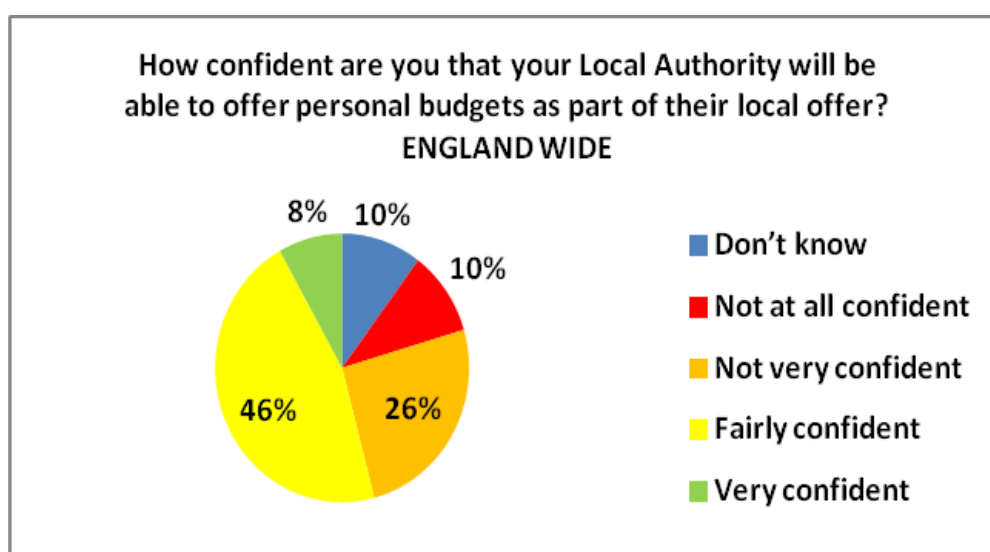
We believe there is an element of all the above in the Local Offer, but it is still developing so are not sure how complete the information is

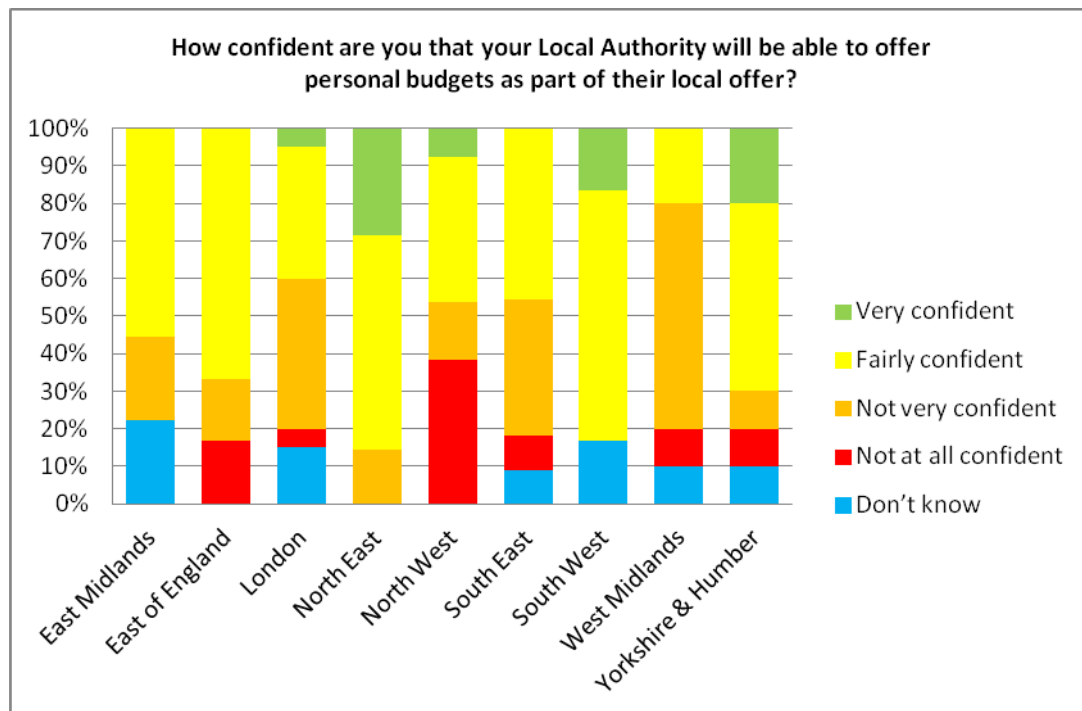
The forum has highlighted this week the lack of information on our local offer. This has been due to staffing changes. We have been told the matter will be addressed with 20 days.

Although some things are not there, we know of some plans for this to be populated very soon – by January at the latest. However, there will be some significant gaps and we do not feel that it will ever be complete or up to date.

Question 13 How confident are you that your Local Authority will be able to offer personal budgets as part of their local offer?

54% of forums are very or fairly confident that their Local Authorities will be able to offer personal budgets as part of their local offer, with 36% being not very or not at all confident. There are however a range of concerns and issues raised by forums about their meaningful participation in developing personal budgets and also the practical challenges for local authorities in implementing and promoting personal budgets.





Forum comments included:

Different parent carers are being given conflicting advice regarding Personal Budgets e.g.: no timeline to achieving personal budget, very few know how to ask for a personal budget, there is no standardised criteria cascaded to either social workers, self-directed support team or parent carers. No independent advisor identified

Our area have undertaken a large amount of work around Personal Budgets and a parent rep has been involved throughout this process, however, the challenges for delivery personal budgets (block contracts, head teacher's agreement etc.) means that parents feel that there will be limited opportunities to draw down a personal budget beyond short breaks, restricting choice and control. There is a draft policy on Personal Budgets in education which parents have had input into. Parents have been working closely with our Joint Commissioner and Manager of the Children Disability Team to agree a RAS for short breaks. This is still work in progress but parents have valued being involved.

This is an area that needs immediate further development. The reforms are all about choice and control for children young people and families, without this area being given considerable thought we are not confident this is a deliverable option at present.

But rapidly working towards...social care is working towards fairly.

There has been progress with this area, but a recent meeting at County Level highlighted that there is a lot more work to be done. It will be some time before this is working properly

Our area has a good history of Social Care PBs, having been a pilot authority, but there has been little progress around Education PBs for example. We are concerned that with LA finances under strain, PBs will be at risk and although they will be offered on paper... the reality may well be different.

We feel that a PB system is being foisted on parents with no consultation

The LA is concerned that they cannot offer personal budgets in the way that some parents would like albeit within the criteria allowed, because the LA is tied into contracts to deliver the services in question. Therefore, it appears that they will not allow this to be delivered through a personal budget.

Have already piloted social care PB's for over a year. Apparently, the barrier is block contracts that are in place.

The policy has been co-produced with families. There needs to be clear communications coming out now from the LA to families as next step

Q14

What services do your Local Authorities' personal budgets cover? Please list in the box below.

Forums provided a wide range of responses from "Don't know" to a comprehensive list of services. This indicates the mixed nature of readiness and understanding of what services personal budgets will cover, and how ready areas are to implement these. This is clearly an area that requires further scrutiny and support. Please see the below selection of response, which range from 'Don't know' to a comprehensive list

Forum responses included:

Don't know!

Not sure

Transport Short breaks direct payments Continuing care

Social care - Some therapies

This has not been clarified at the current time

Education – some specialist equipment, sensory integration, specialist dyslexia support, counselling, educational psychology therapeutic support, teaching assistant support, brokerage support (not yet in place). Health – Continuing healthcare packages, sensory integration, counselling, brokerage support (not yet in place) Social care – personal assistants, home care for children, adult private day care, adult short term residential care,

private domiciliary support via agency, social & leisure activities, transport for specific activity, brokerage (not yet in place)

We are unsure

SEN Transport

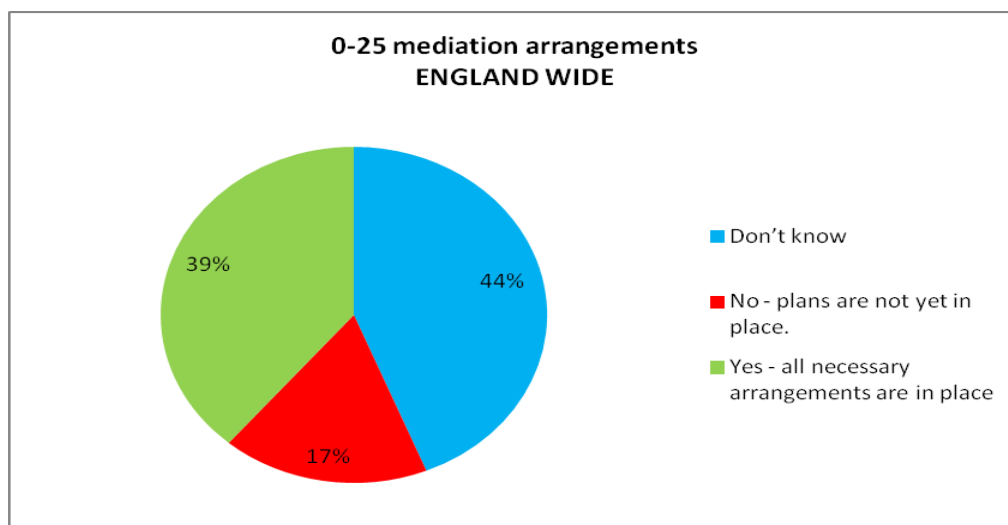
Currently Short Breaks only

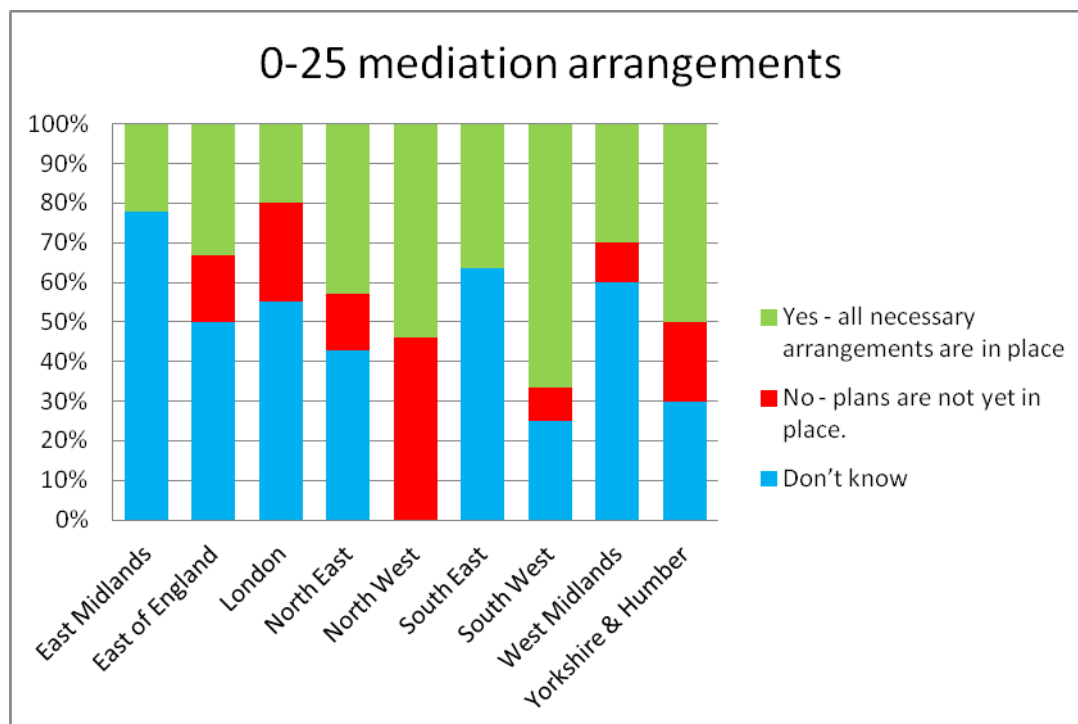
Don't know

Not yet decided.

Question 15 Local Authority 0-25 pre Tribunal appeal/ education, health and care plan mediation arrangements are in place.

44% of respondents do not know if 0-25 mediation arrangements are in place in their Local Authority, however 39% confirmed that they are. Similarly 54% of respondents do not know if 0-25 appeal arrangements are in place, however 30% of the remainder confirmed that they are.





Forum comments include:

The LA is still trying to find an organisation to support. At present we are unaware of what they are pursuing to do regarding the mediation as we haven't been told anything to date.

Arrangements are in place, but it is not 100% yet.

We believe there are some plans in place, but we do not know how robust they will be until they are challenged. We feel they will develop over time as concerns arise.

As far as we are aware, nothing is in the LO

I think this will be developed very soon

Mediation arrangements are process of being commissioned regionally.

This is an area of work we have had no involvement with and no information on. This has not been discussed at any of the SEND reforms working groups.

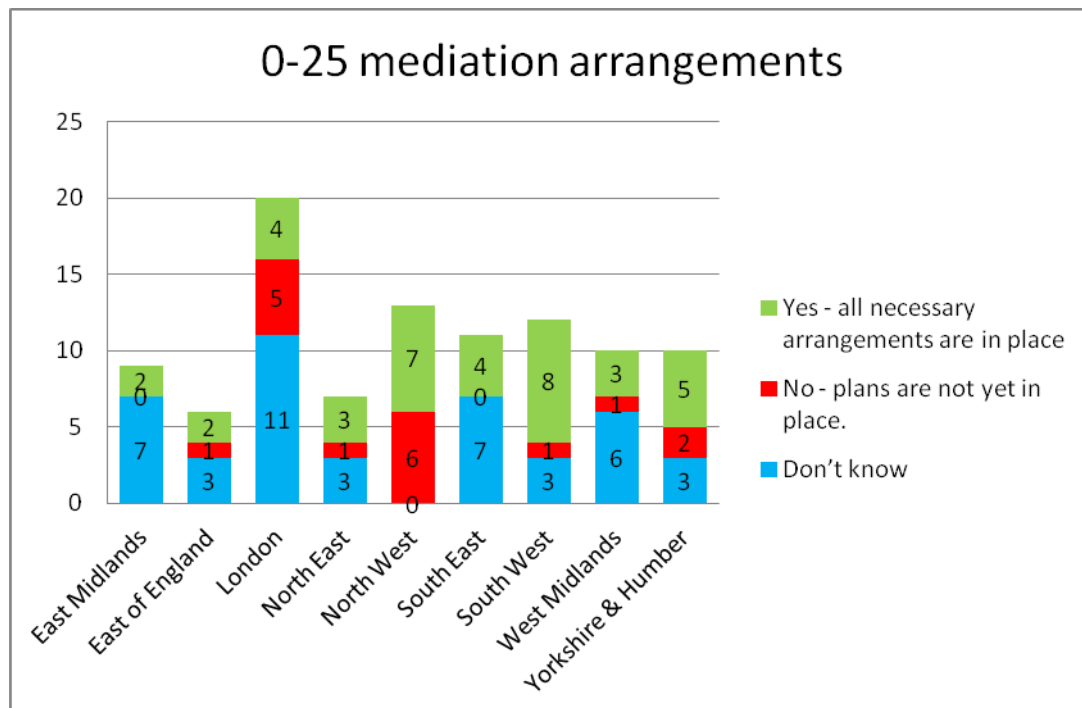
The Forum is aware arrangements were being made, but are unsure if they have been agreed.

There currently exists complaint procedures, Ombudsman and appeals process

I believe a tendering process for this service is under way.

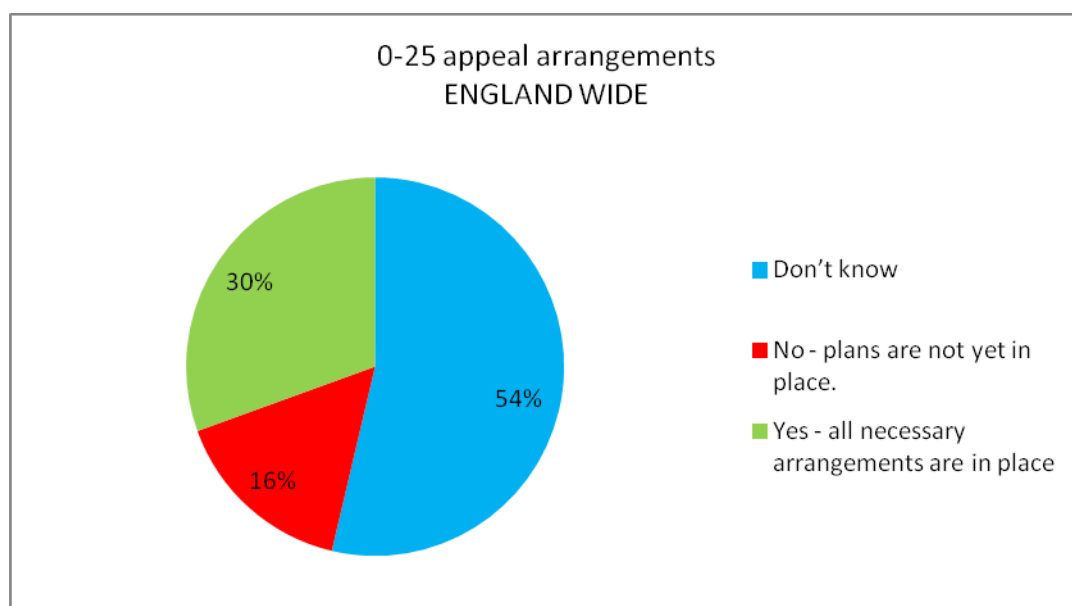
This was organized very quickly and seems to be a good choice.

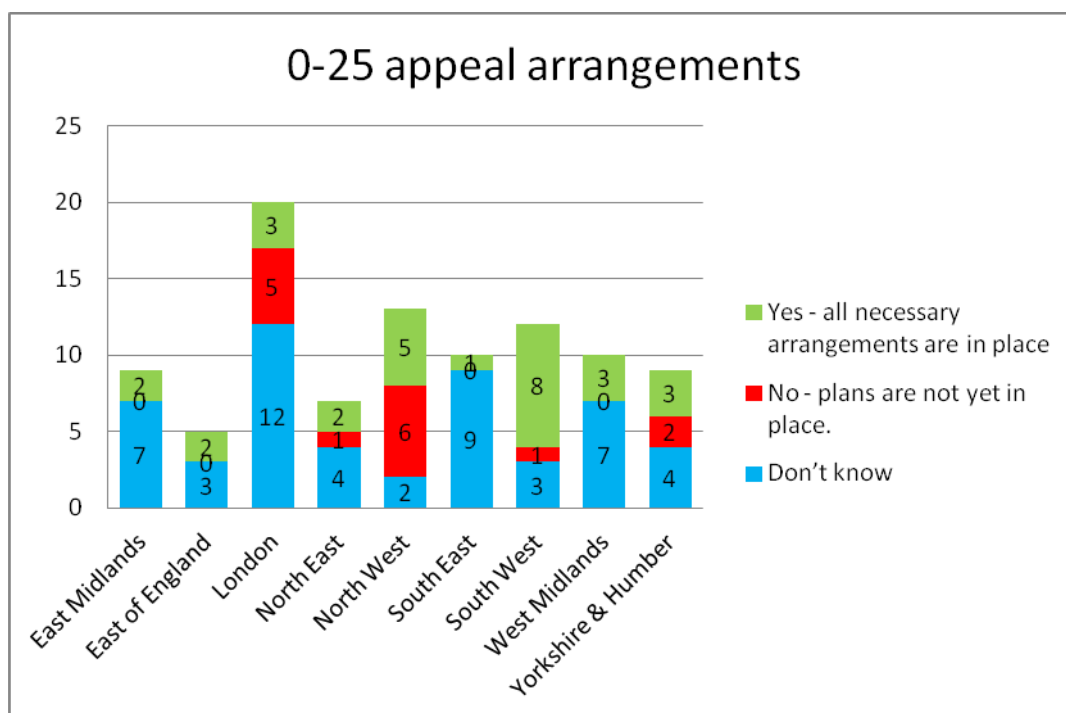
0-25 mediation arrangement responses by region:



0-25 appeal arrangements

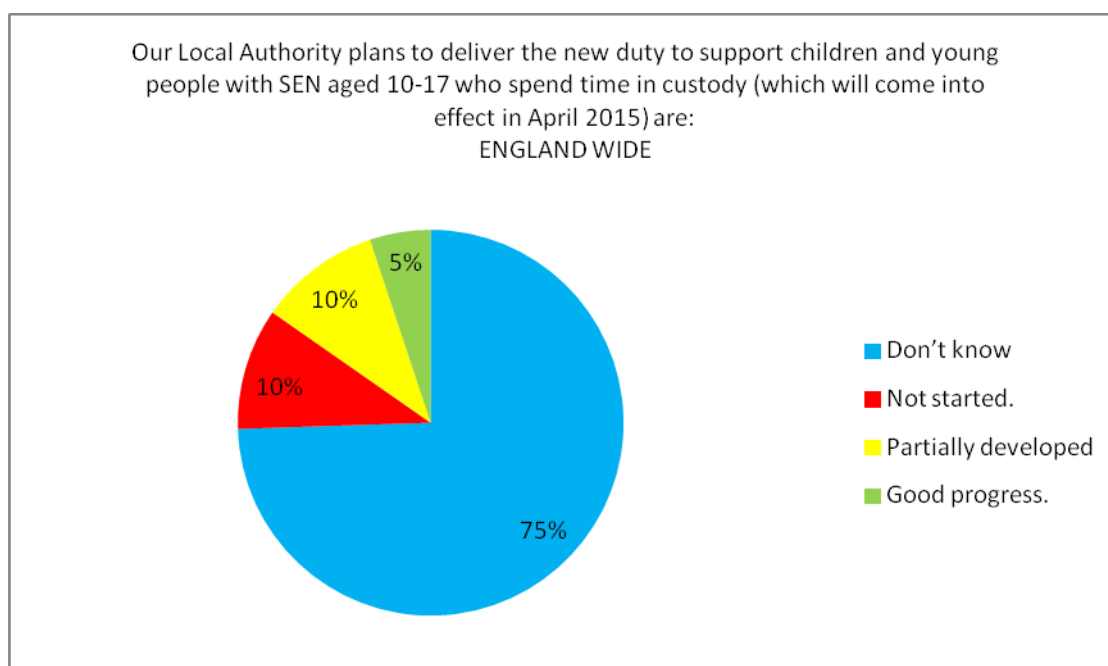
It is concerning to see that over 70% of forums responded that they either no plans were in place, or they did not know what these were.





Question 16: Our local authority plans to deliver the new duty to support children and young people with SEN aged 10-17 who spend time in custody (which will come into effect in April 2015) are:

75% of respondents England wide do not know if local authority plans are in place. Only 15% can report good or partially developed plans. This is perhaps unsurprising as these duties are not yet implemented.



Our area has a process for checking with children in custody - but they arise rarely. It's about getting them an education.

We understand that little progress has been made in this area, as numbers are low, and the timeframe is longer.

They are losing some members of staff at the SEN department.

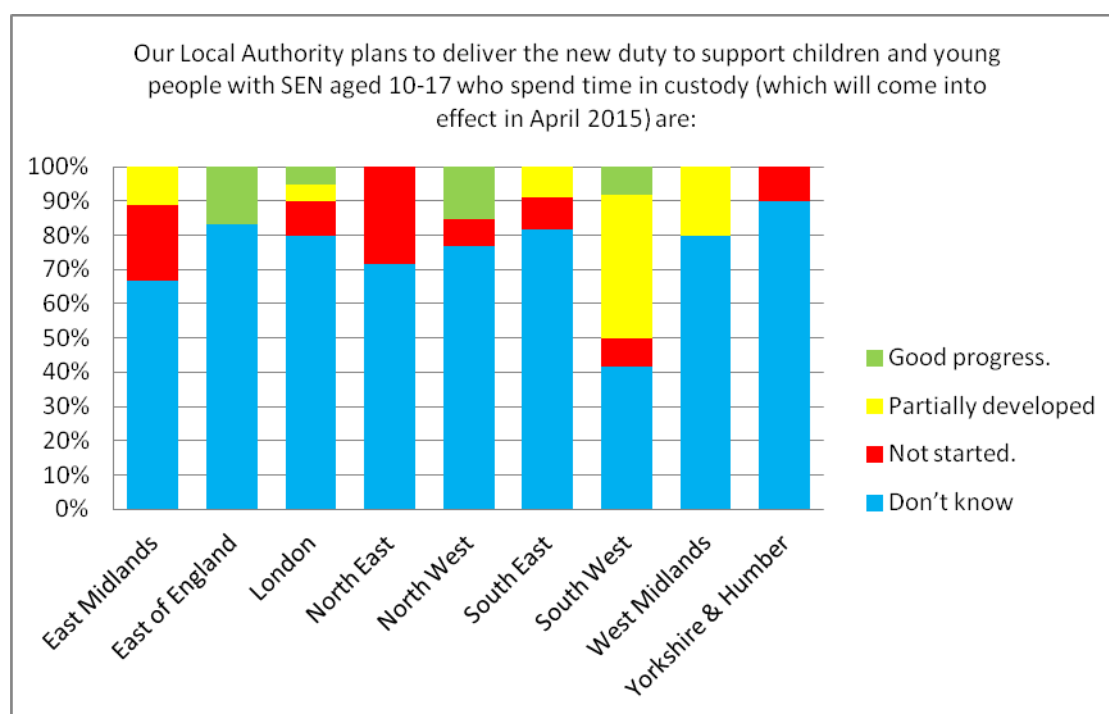
The relevant work stream did not involve parent carer reps

There has been work in this area, but we are not clear how developed they are.

I'm not sure this has been started yet as our area are awaiting final guidance on this I believe

I have heard this mentioned but not sure what is happening with it

Lots of discussions going on and meetings to look at this and scope further,

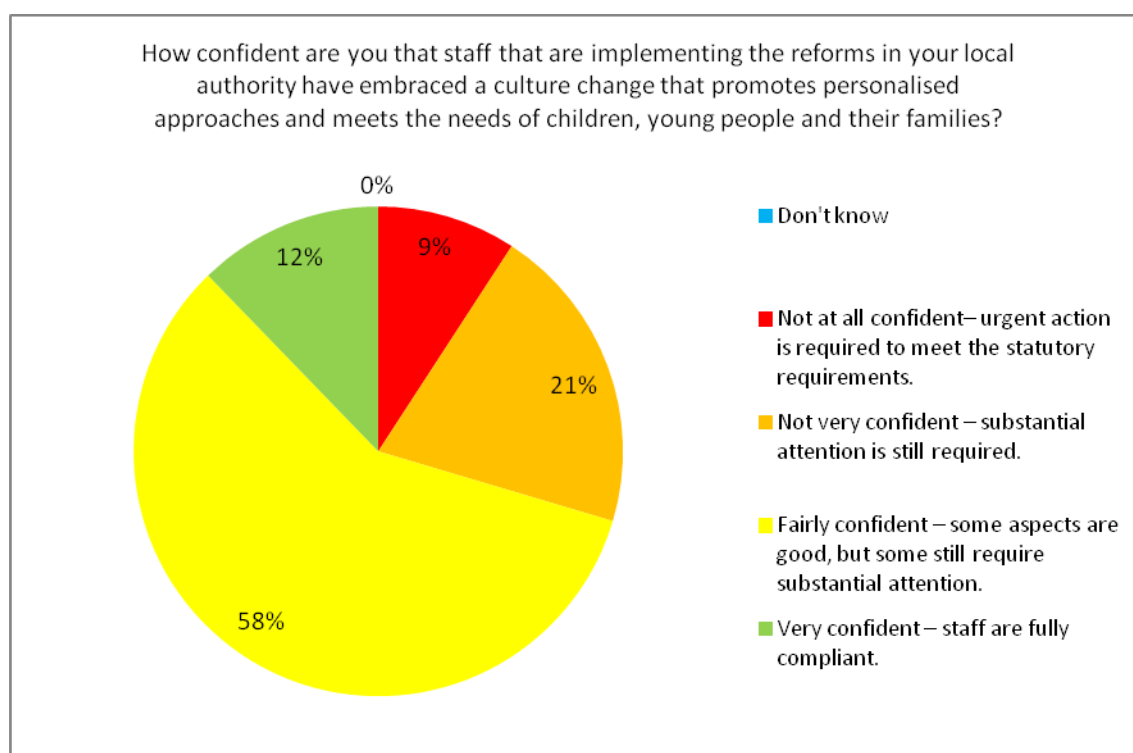


Region	Don't know	Not started.	Partially developed	Good progress.	Total
East Midlands	6	2	1	0	9
East of England	5	0	0	1	6
London	16	2	1	1	20
North East	5	2	0	0	7

North West	10	1	0	2	13
South East	9	1	1	0	11
South West	5	1	5	1	12
West Midlands	8	0	2	0	10
Yorkshire & Humber	9	1	0	0	10
Grand Total	73	10	10	5	98

Question 17. Please assess the planning and governance which supports implementation of the SEND reforms in your local authority.

70% of respondents are very or fairly confident that staff in their local authority have embraced the necessary culture change necessary. 35% are very or fairly confident that IT and administrative support systems are in place. 39% are very or fairly confident that systems are in place to measure the impact of the reforms. 73% are very or fairly confident that that their Local Authority is transferring existing statements and LDA.



Forum comments include:

There is a sense of willingness among many LA staff individually, but we feel that organizational change is taking longer than we had hoped.

Workforce development is underway. Capacity remains a real concern especially to carry out the EHC assessment as part of the transfer of existing statements and LDAs to EHC Plans both in terms of administration support, EHC Case Officers, key workers and Eps and Health professionals. Senior Officers have embraced the need for cultural change but this is

hindered by the direction of travel that Members have taken i.e. to meet statutory duties only and to become a commissioning only authority.

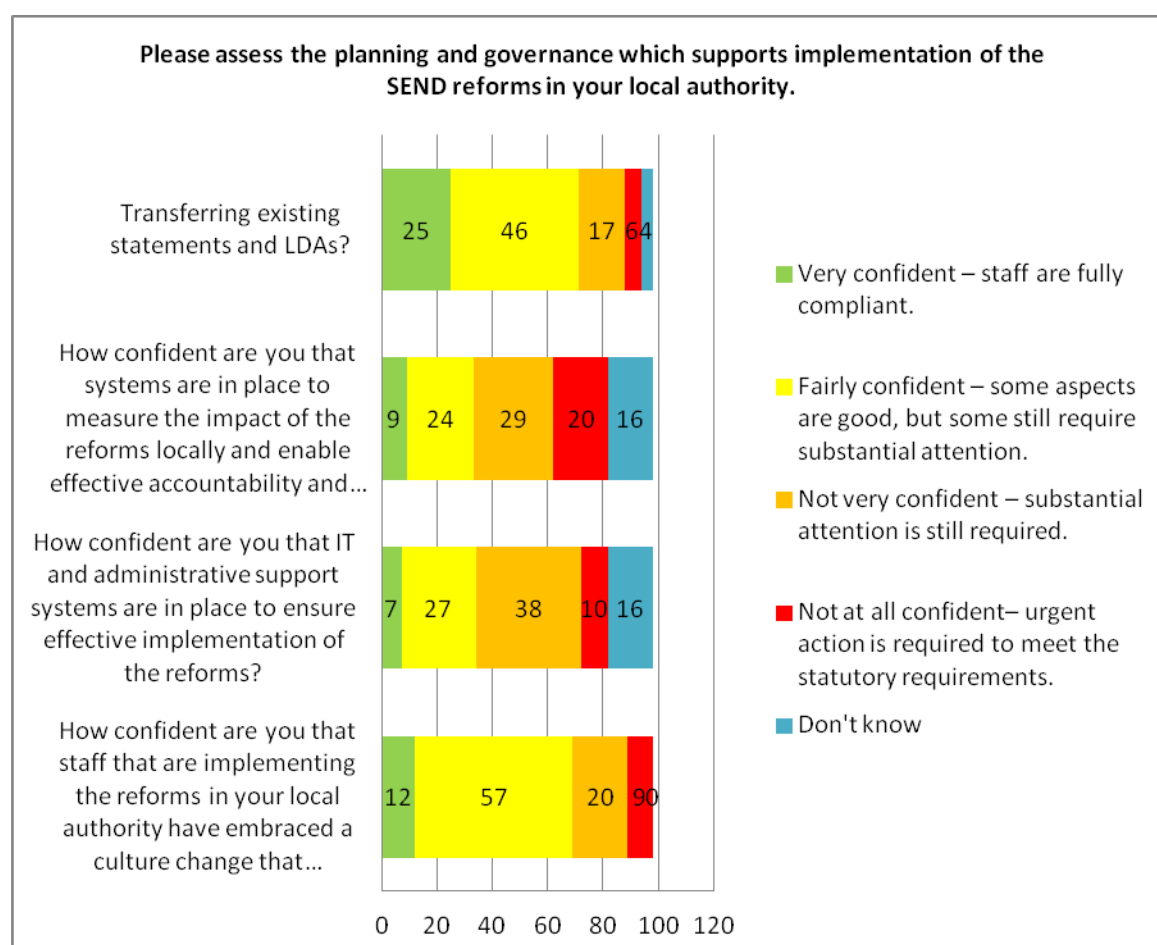
Our “fairly confident” rating reflects our pragmatism about the scale of the task that is being undertaken. The new system will take time to embed and it will also evolve. We are however very confident that we will be fully engaged in these developments.

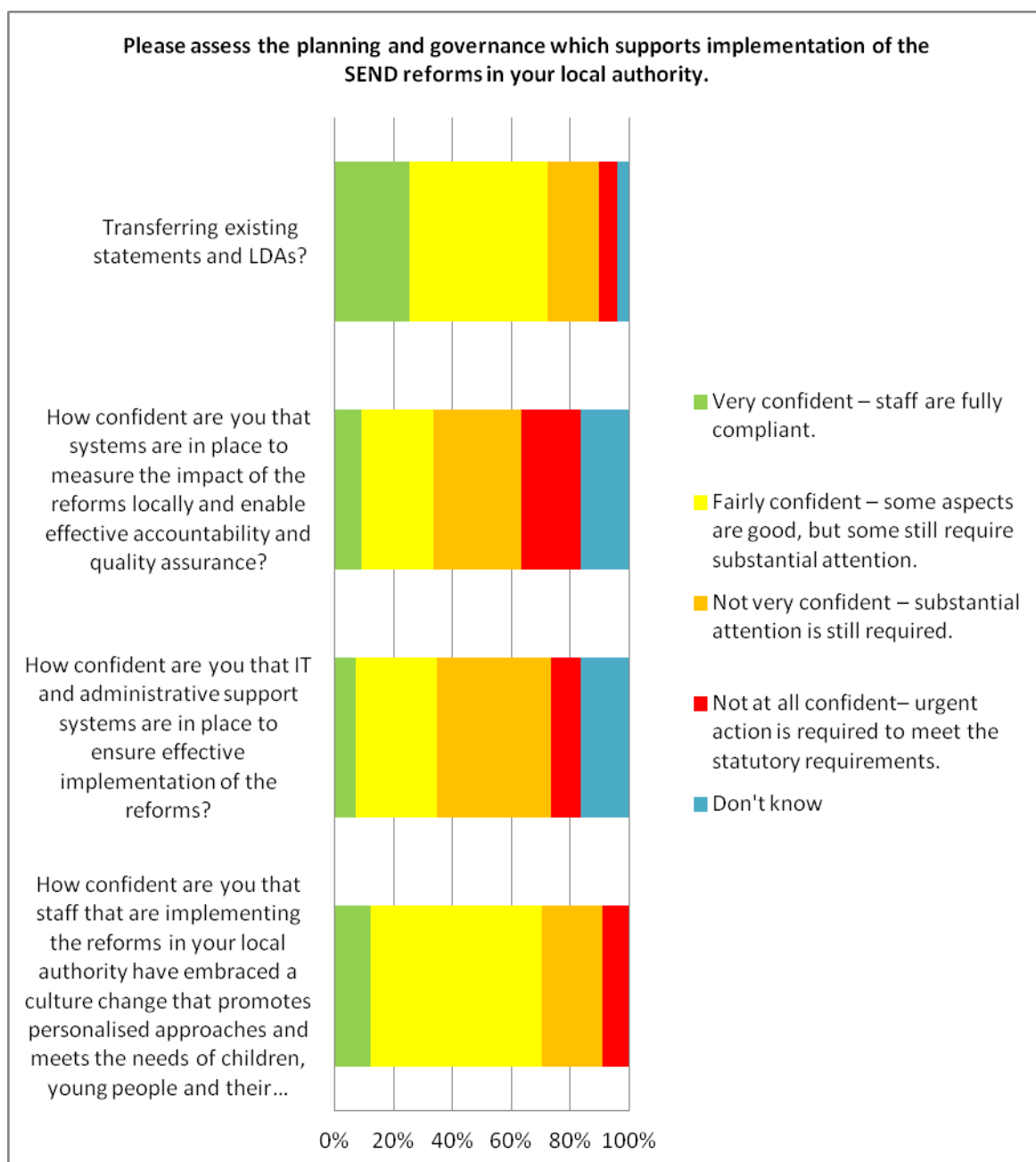
We as a forum have no doubt that statements and LDAs will be transferred but are not confident in terms of quality and choice and control for children young people and families. With little work around the personal budget strand and lack of information at present to share with children young people and families it is difficult to feel confident around quality assurance and benchmarking.

We feel we are still on a learning curve, that there is more understanding, but things are still changing so there is more to be done.

The culture shift is NOT happening. Our authority are trying to stay as close to the old system and old way of working as possible. Families will see very little change as far as we can tell. Co-production is taking a backward step

England Wide

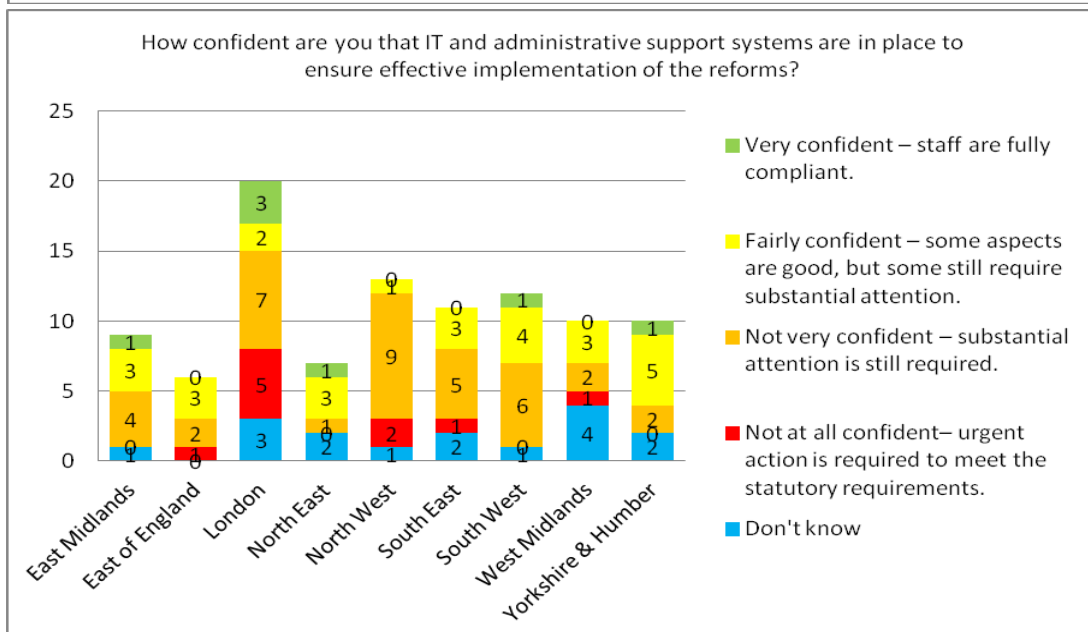
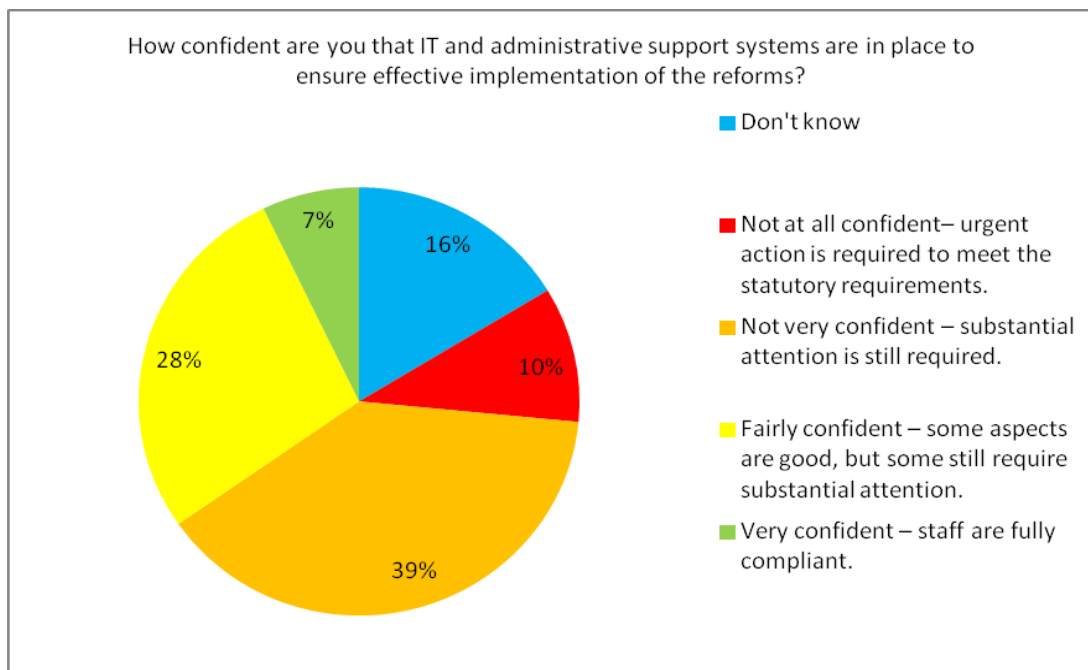
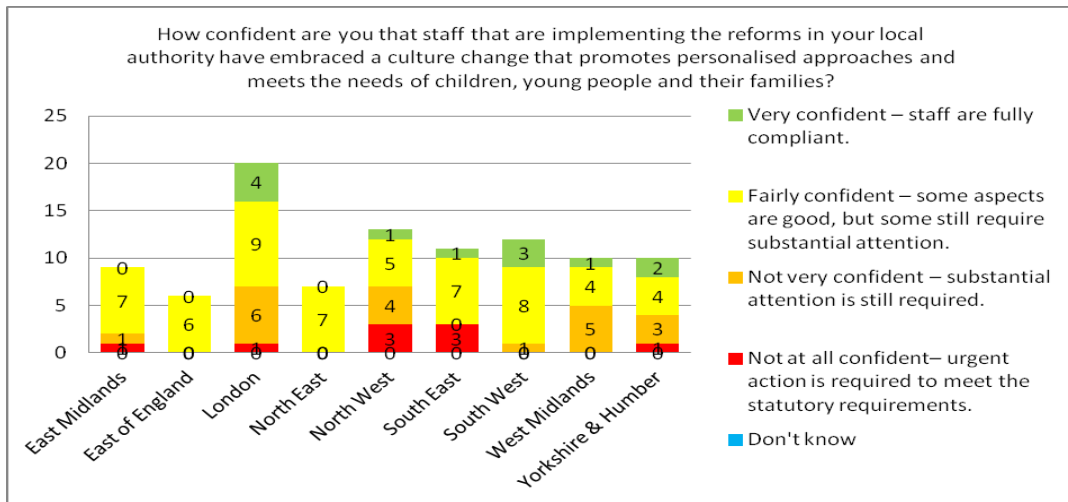


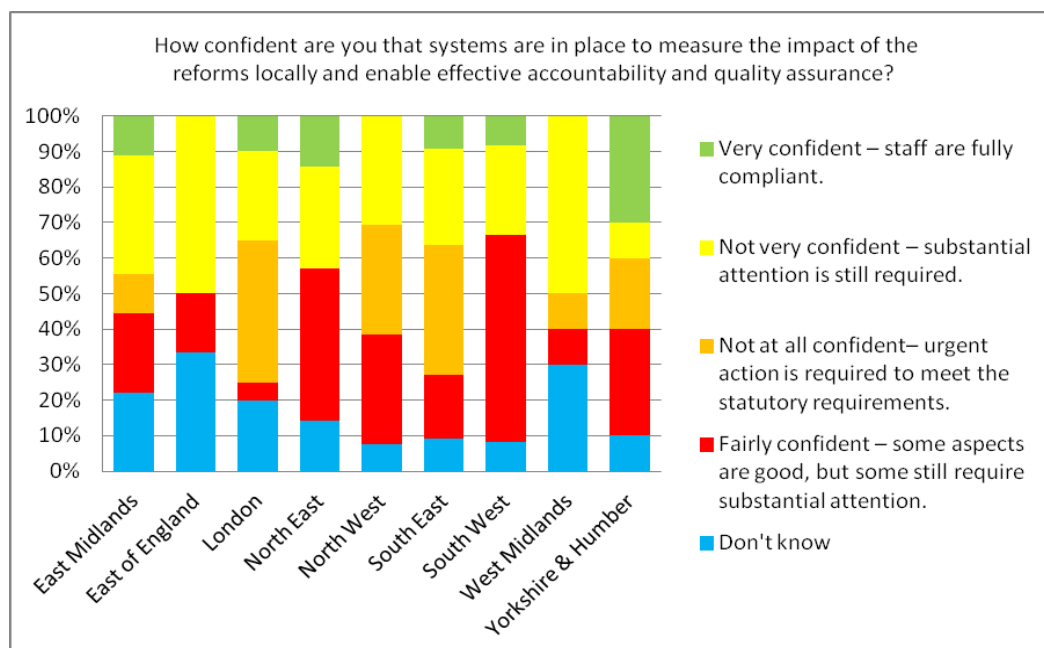
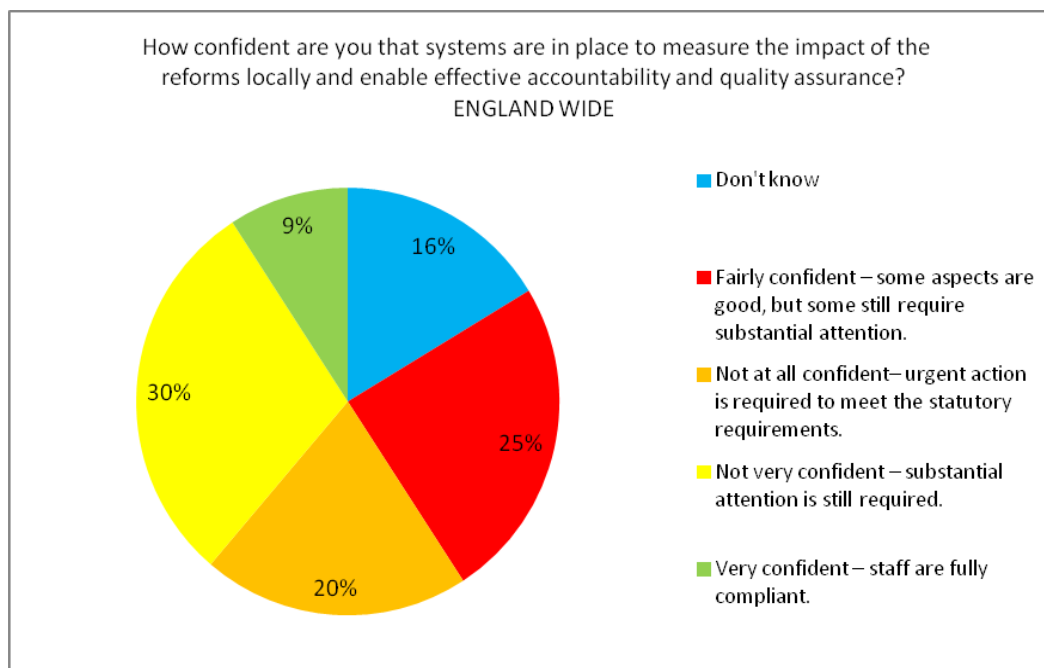


	Very confident – staff are fully compliant.	Fairly confident – some aspects are good, but some still require substantial attention.	Not very confident – substantial attention is still required.	Not at all confident– urgent action is required to meet the statutory requirements.	Don't know
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How confident are you that staff that are implementing the reforms in your local authority have embraced a culture change that promotes personalised approaches and meets the needs of children, young people and their families?	12	57	20	9	0
How confident are you that IT and administrative support systems are in place to ensure effective implementation of the reforms?	7	27	38	10	16
How confident are you that systems are in place to measure the impact of the reforms locally and enable effective accountability and quality assurance?	9	24	29	20	16
Transferring existing statements and LDAs?	25	46	17	6	4
Total	53	154	104	45	36

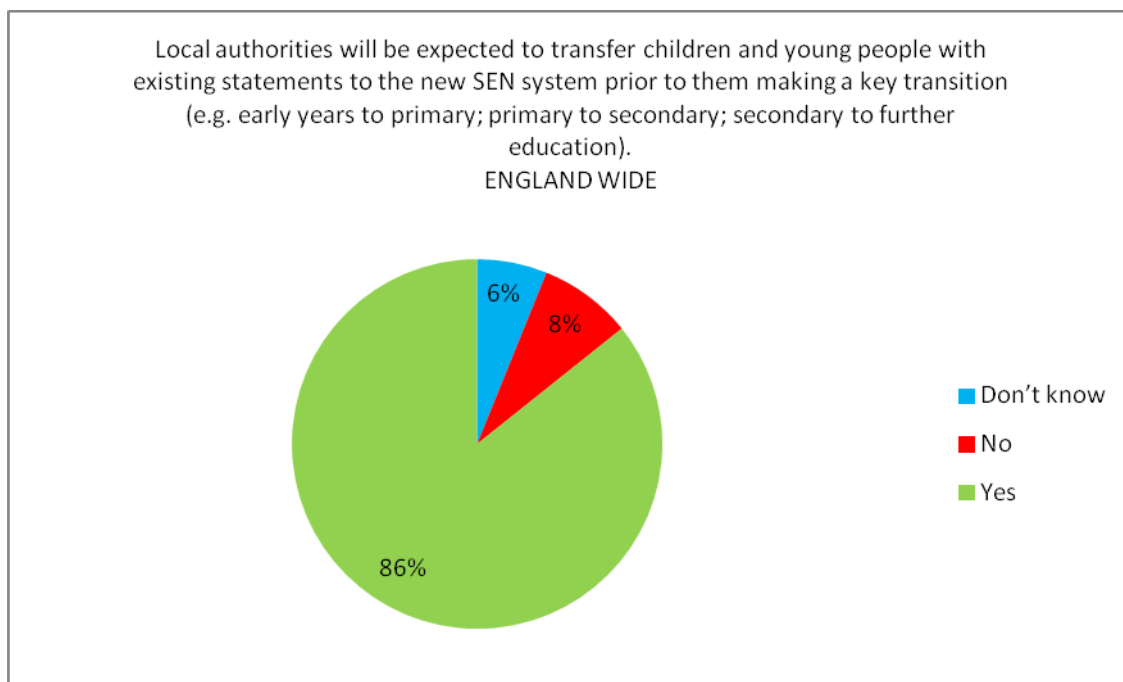
By Region:





Q18. Local authorities will be expected to transfer children and young people with existing statements to the new SEN system prior to them making a key transition (e.g. early years to primary; primary to secondary; secondary to further education). LDAs should be phased out by September 2016, and statements should be phased out by April 2018 – although this can happen more quickly if desired. Does your forum know which groups of children and young people will transfer to EHC plans this year?

86% of respondents were able to confirm that they do know which groups of children and young people will transfer to EHC plans this year.



Forum comments included:

We coproduced the plan.

A timeline was produced and sent out as a SEND Update for school/colleges and parent/carers to access

The transition plan was shared with the forum for feedback and questions.

Not all will know yet, but can easily find out, information filtering through.

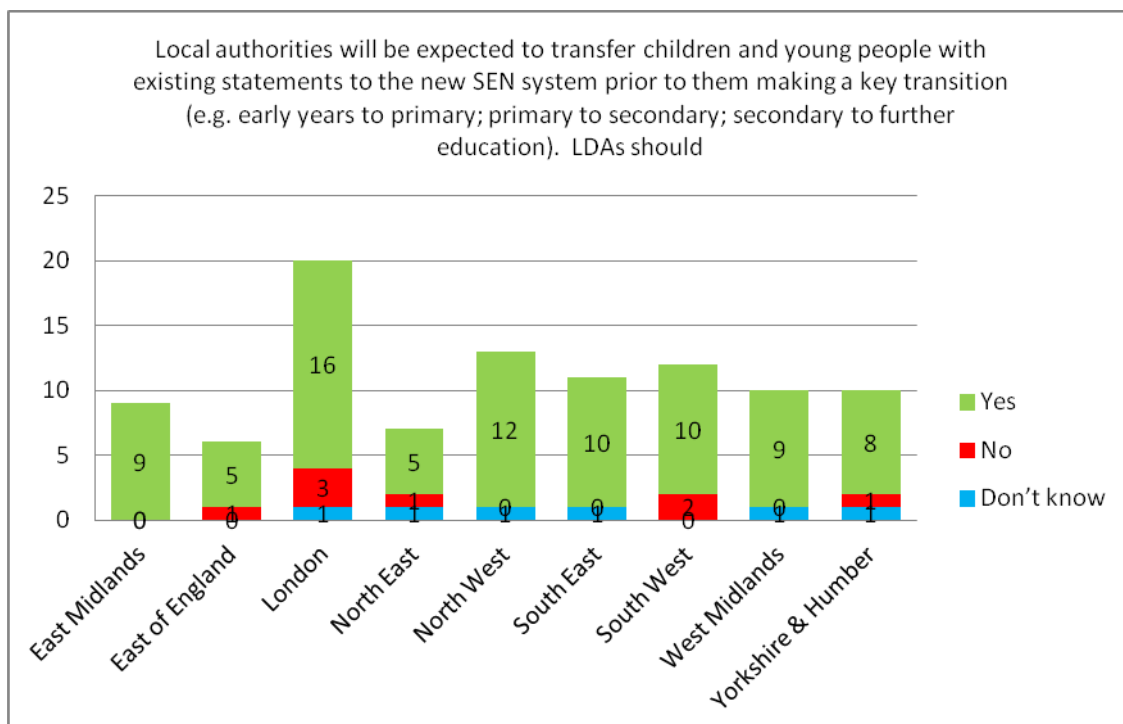
It appears that the process has not yet been determined.

We are fully aware of which groups of children and young people will be transferring each year

Transfer plans have been distributed widely

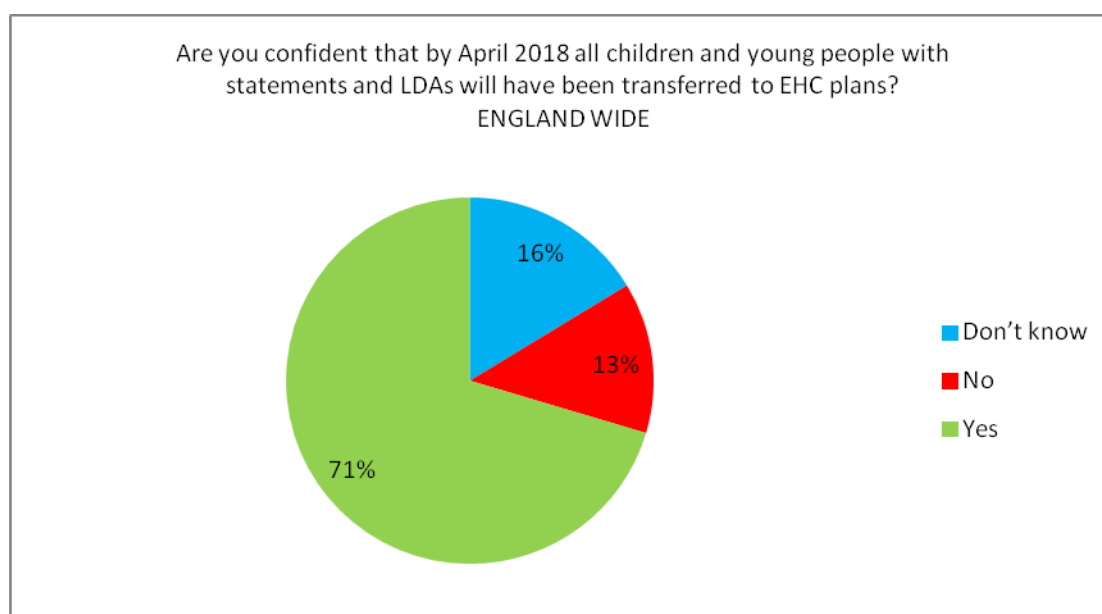
And we have, and are, communicating this to as many families as possible. It's a source of relief to many to know when their transition review is scheduled to take place.

The forum was made aware of this when the Co-Chairs met with the head of SEN over the summer.



Q19 In the view of your forum are you confident that by April 2018 all children and young people with statements and LDAs will have been transferred to EHC plans?

71% of respondent forums felt confident that by April 2018 all children and young people with statements and LDAs will have been transferred to EHC plans.



fairly confident although comments have been heard that any young people coming up to 23 years of age will not be tackled. Also not sure about those on a 139A or IPRA

We can predict what we don't know but at present we wish that this would be done as effectively as possible for all families that are concern

We are concerned that some children and young people who currently have statements will not meet our areas threshold for an EHC Plan.

We see no reason to doubt that the plan will be delivered

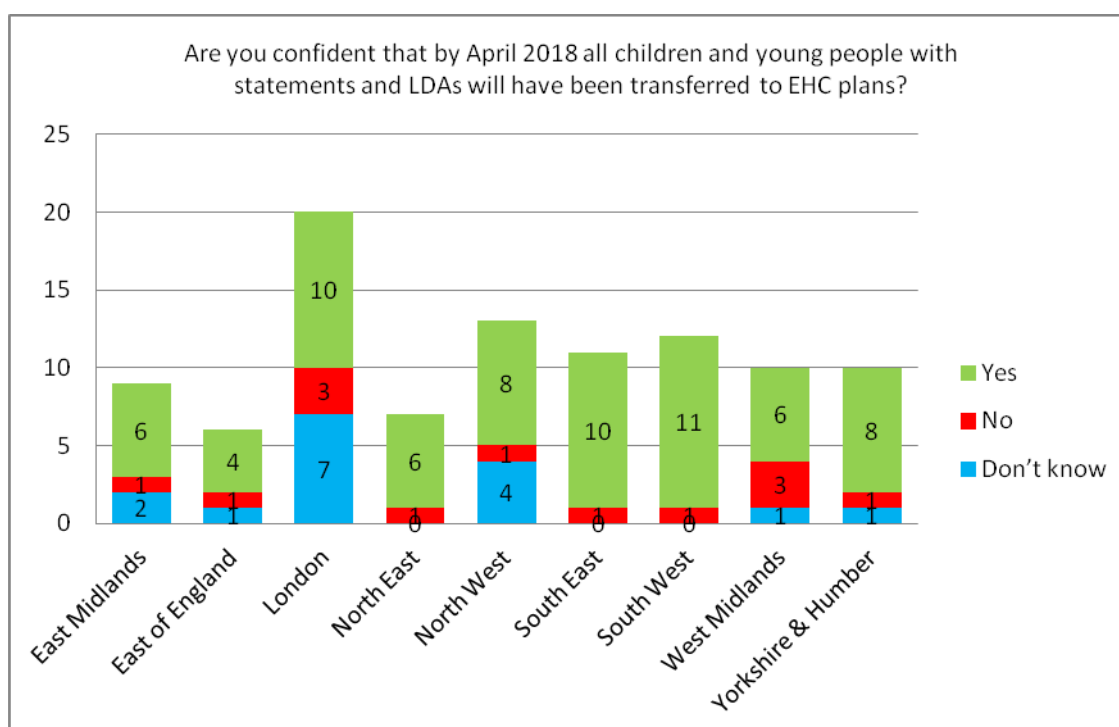
We would like to feel that this will happen with the current progress that is being made

Although the changes have yet to be embedded into all processes, as a forum we would hope the transition timetable was manageable. We would hope we were kept in the loop in terms of updates and progress in this area. Until we have some figures from the first cohort of transfers it is difficult to state whether this is achievable.

We have got a Template for an EHCP but it is still in draft form, we have not seen one filled in as an example, I think it should have a nationwide template then we would all be the same.

Perception is that targets will be met.....but the child / young person may not be at the centre of the plan.

We are confident because we are there to ensure this happens.



Q20. Local authorities will be expected to transfer children and young people with existing statements to the new SEN system prior to them making a key transition (e.g. early years to primary; primary to secondary; secondary to further education). LDAs should be phased out by September 2016, and statements should be phased out by April 2018 – although this can happen more quickly if desired.

64% of reported that they are very or fairly confident that their Local Authority will have completed a transfer review for all children and young people moving from school (including sixth form) to further education and training by 31 May 2015, as set out in the transitional guidance.

38% of respondents report that they are very or fairly confident that parents and young people in their authority understand what is being done to review the transfer statement and LDAs to EHC plans.

76% of respondents reported that they are very or fairly confident that their Local Authority will be able to continue implementing the SEND reforms and embedding the new way of working.

Forum comments include:

We have agreed a phase 2 SEND implementation plan with our local authority to ensure progress is maintained until April 2018.

Parents and young people are aware of when the transfer review will take place but it is still not clear as to what the process will be. Market testing and financial constraints are the reasons why the forum feels that the LA will struggle to implement the SEND reforms and embed the cultural change set out in the Children & Families Act 2014.

There is still a long way to go and we would like to have confidence in the system and that all officers see it is a clear time for change. New legislation will aid the forum to work closely with the local authority and help further shape and develop service provision for families in Coventry.

Confident of the Local Authority's commitment.

Because we are key stakeholders across all implementation groups, we have the opportunity to keep the focus on the new way of working and to assist in getting it embedded.

We are confident that transfer reviews will be completed on time, and that Parents know when this will happen, but we don't feel that the processes are being made clear... to Parents or professionals. We will be watching closely to help ensure that the new way of working doesn't get lost in the ether of budget cuts and personnel changes!

We are constantly talking to parents about the changes and also running free workshops for them but we find many are still unaware.

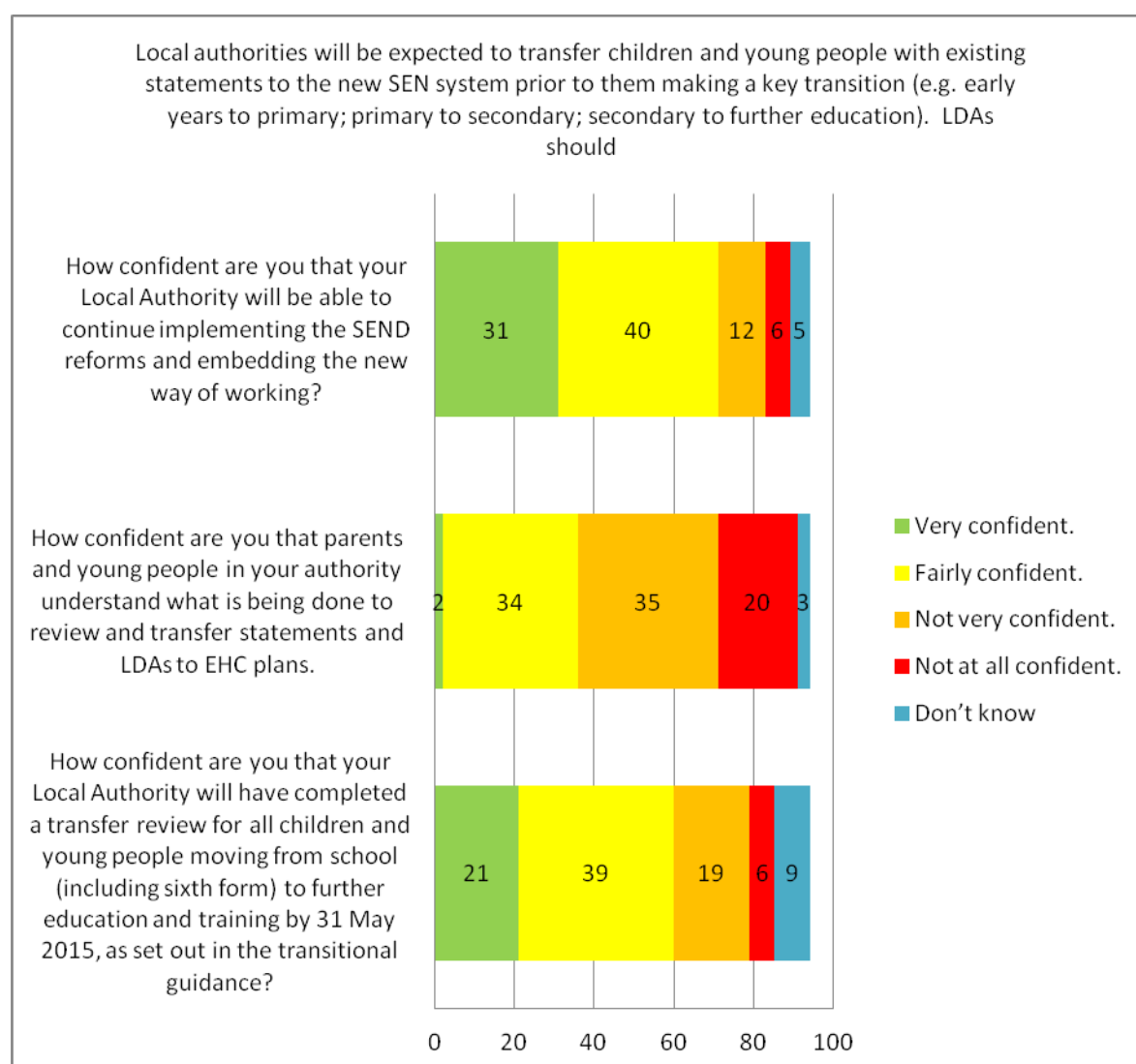
The only reason why the LA are implementing the reforms is due to the parent forum and other partners who are having to push the LA to embed them.

Apart from our forum trying to inform parents we don't feel enough has been done to ensure parents are aware of changes and what it means for their children

Communication with families about transfer reviews needs to be improved

There is a willingness to work with the Parent Forum which is great and it would be good to extend this across other departments not just the 0-25. Some of these answers we will know more about once in due course.

England Wide



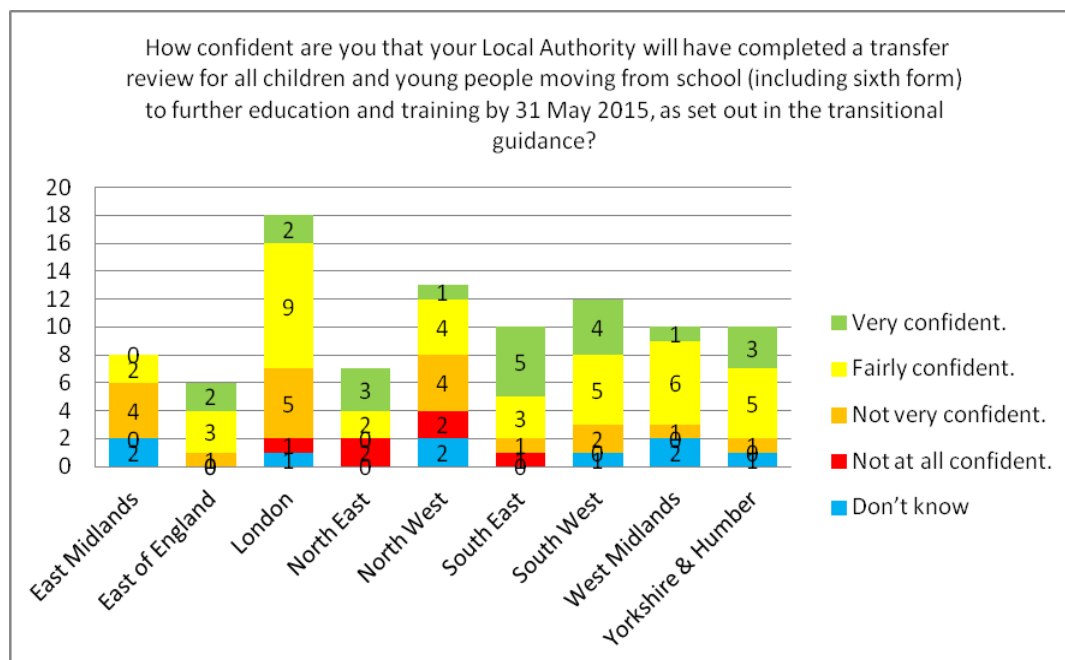
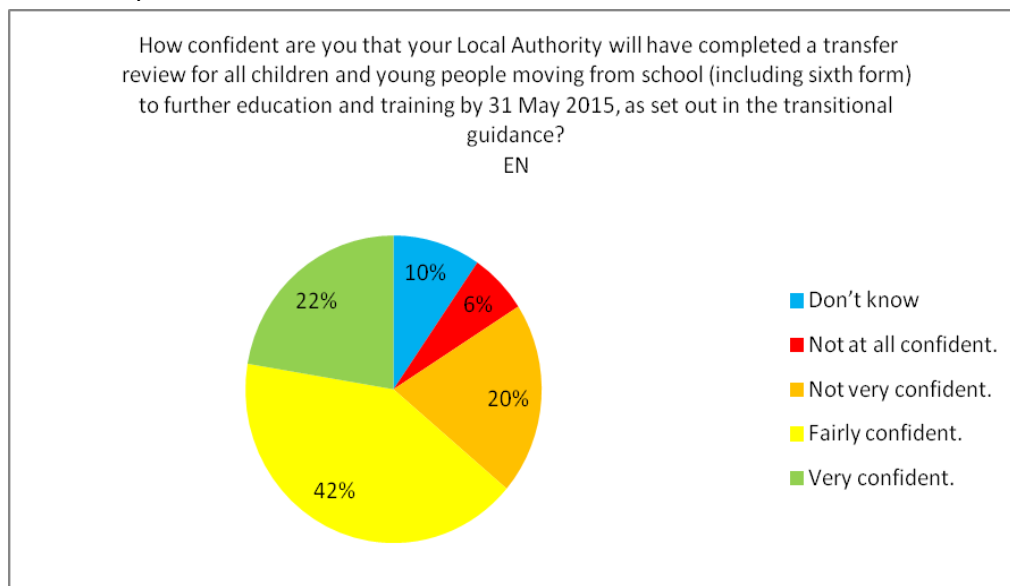
Regionally;

Local authorities will be expected to transfer children and young people with existing statements to the new SEN system prior to them making a key transition (e.g. early years to primary; primary to secondary; secondary to further education). LDAs should be

phased out by September 2016, and statements should be phased out by April 2018 – although this can happen more quickly if desired.

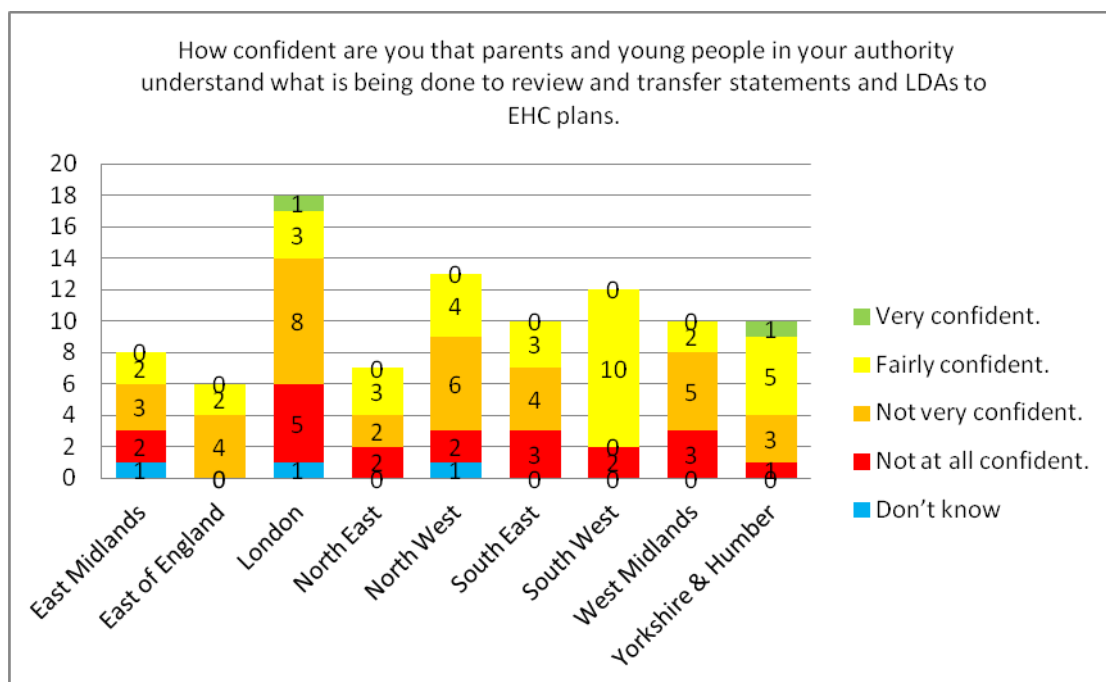
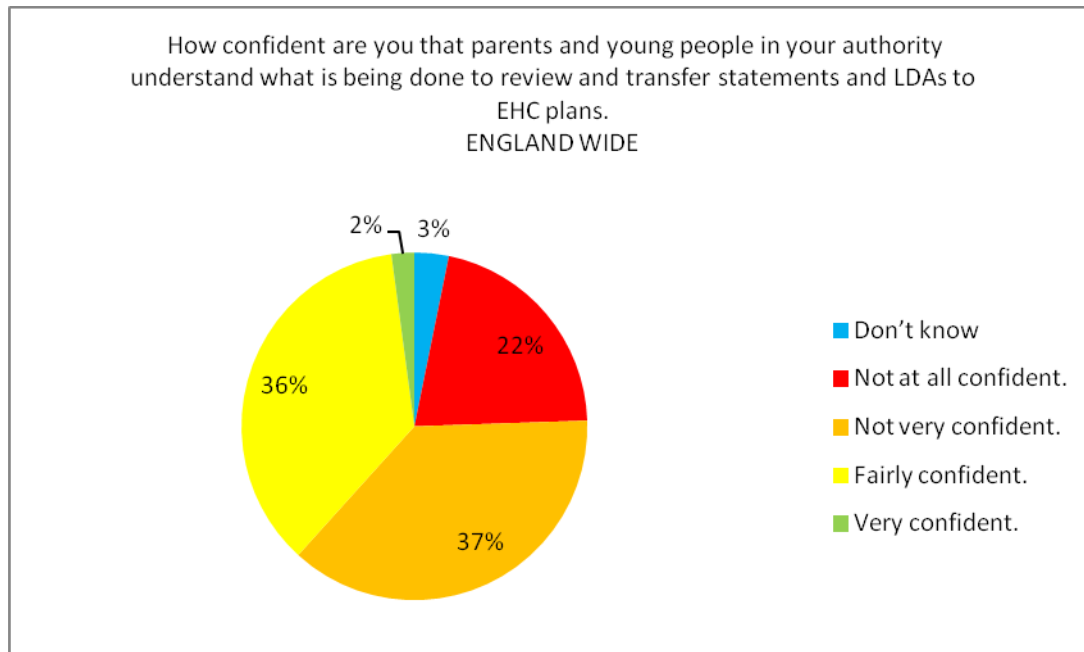
How confident are you that your Local Authority will have completed a transfer review for all children and young people moving from school (including sixth form) to further education and training by 31 May 2015, as set out in the transitional guidance?

England wide response:



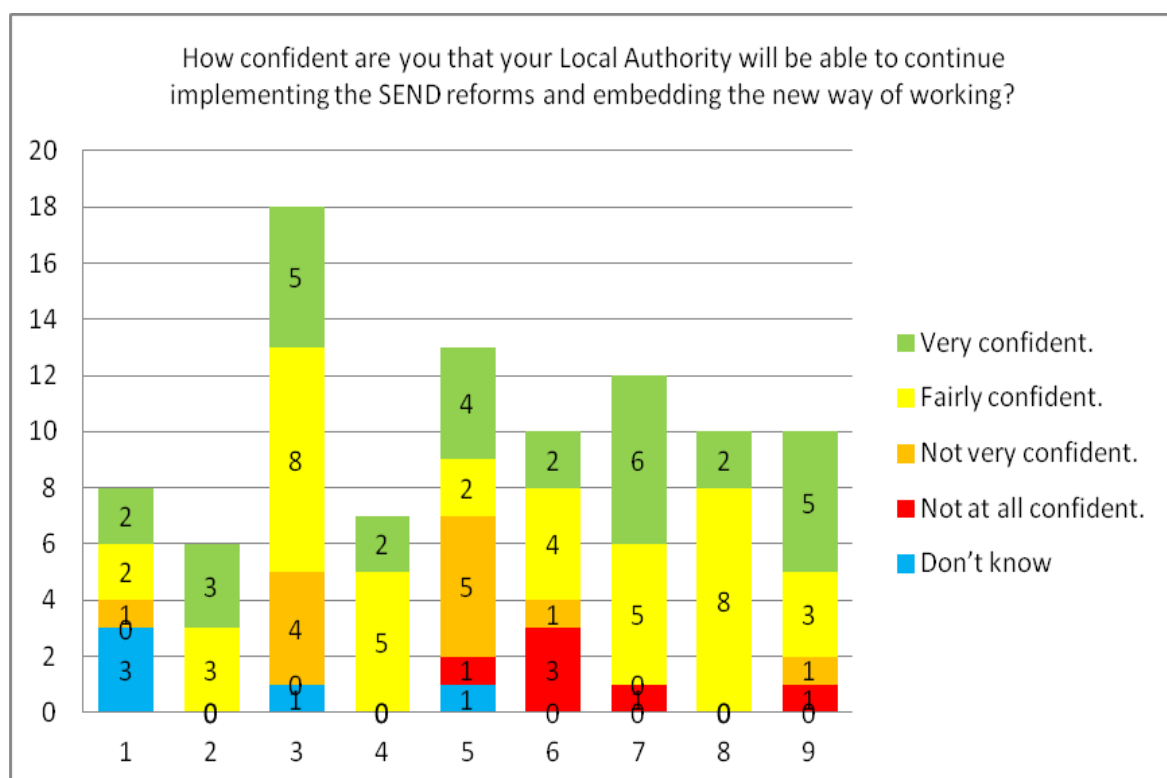
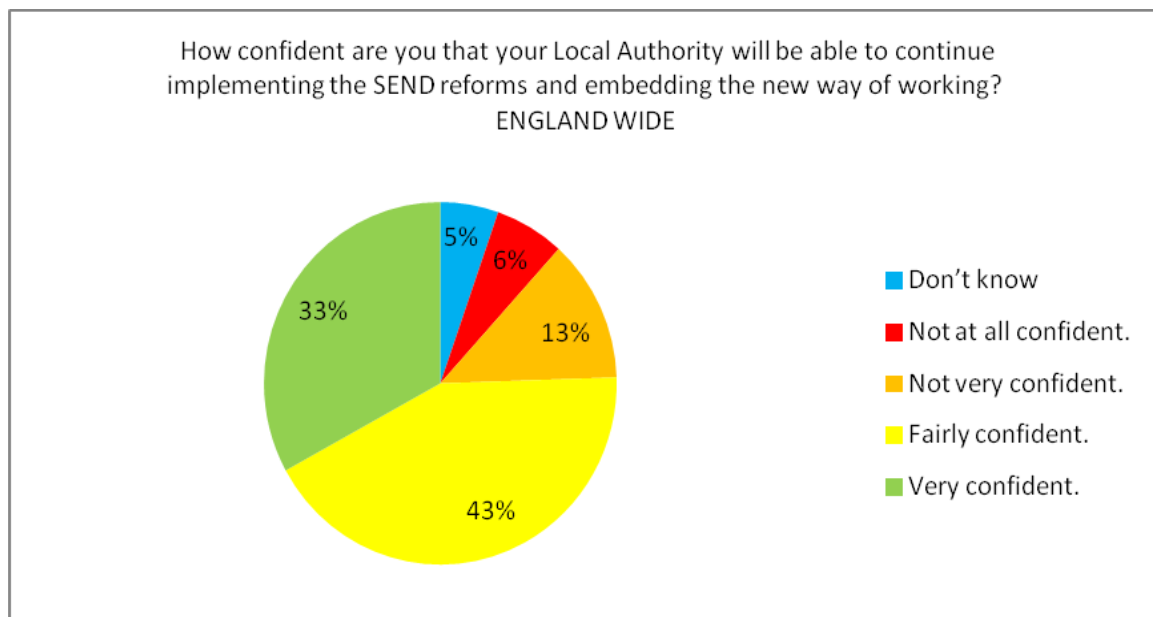
How confident are you that parents and young people in your authority understand what is being done to review and transfer statements and LDAs to EHC plans.

There was significant concern about how confident forums felt that parents and young people understood what was being done to review and transfer statement and LDA's to EHC plans in their local area. 64% responded that they were either not very confident, not at all confident or did not know.



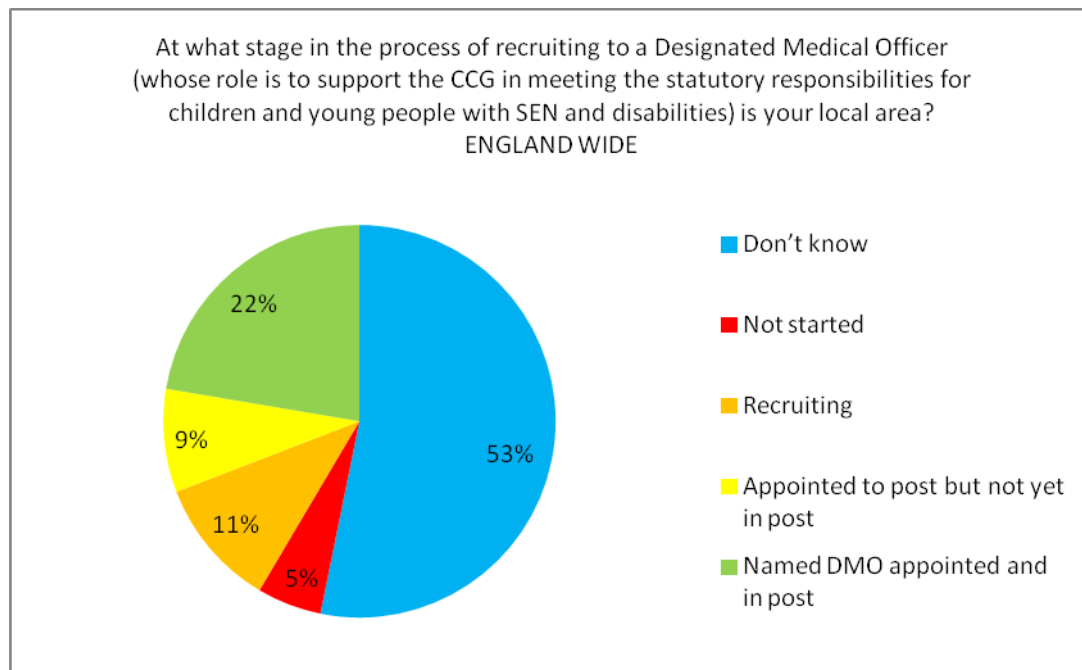
How confident are you that your Local Authority will be able to continue implementing the SEND reforms and embedding the new way of working?

76% of forums responded that they felt very confident or fairly confident that their local authority would be able to continue implementing the SEND reforms and embedding the new way of working.



Q21. At what stage in the process of recruiting to a Designated Medical Officer (whose role is to support the CCG in meeting the statutory responsibilities for children and young people with SEN and disabilities) is your local area?

53% of respondents are not aware of the progress of recruiting a DMO, whereas 31% confirmed that the named DMO is in post or has been appointed.



When we asked, we were informed there wasn't one – but a Dr was suggested who could be contacted.

Our understanding is that CCG has completed a survey for NHS and named their DMO

We haven't been told anything even when we are requesting this information

We have not been involved in any discussions with health

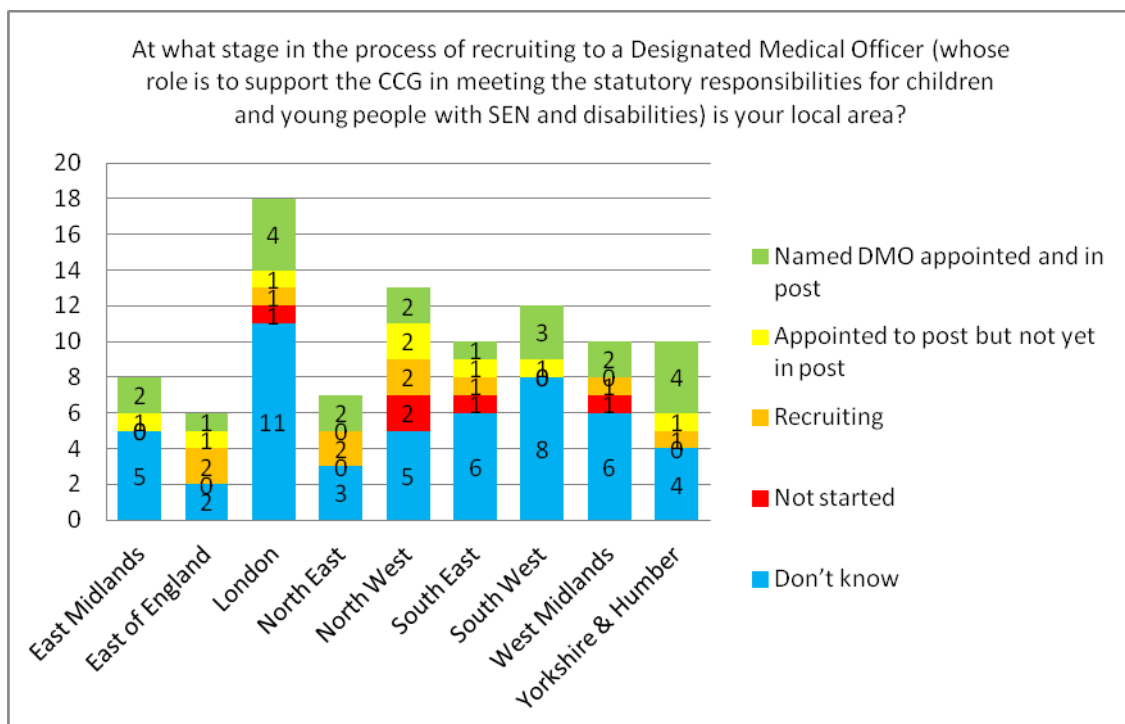
We have heard there will be lots of DMOs not just one. We have not been able to find out any more information from the health commissioners yet despite asking

Under review decision expected November 2014

A number of conversations have taken place locally as to who this will be however no firm decision has yet been taken.

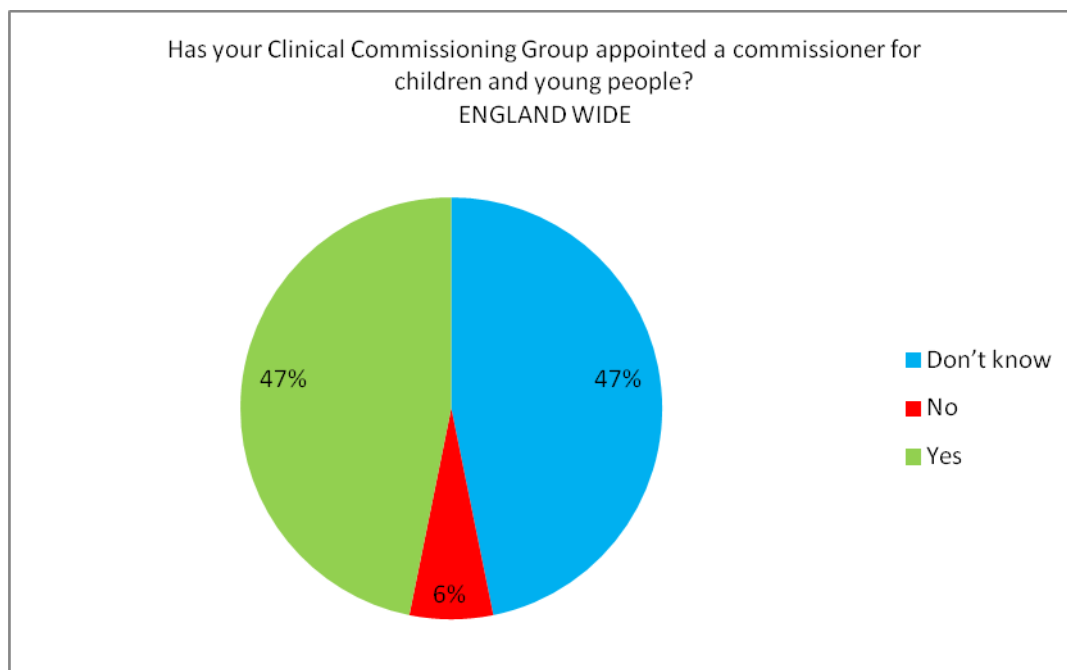
We are not aware of this

Job description written and agreed in consultation with families.



Q22. Has your Clinical Commissioning Group appointed a commissioner for children and young people?

47% of respondents are not aware of the progress of appointing a commissioner for children and young people and 47% confirmed that this post has been appointed.



Forum responses included:

The consortium has met with the CCG Children's commissioner once who is keen to develop this link

Unfortunately children and young people with SEND are competing with many other, more fashionable, sections of our population. Our families do not seem to be a high priority, yet they attract significant costs.... Not a good combination.

Clinical Commissioning group is completely disengaged from parent carer forum and we have seen little of them in our meetings.

I believe we have an interim children's health commissioner.

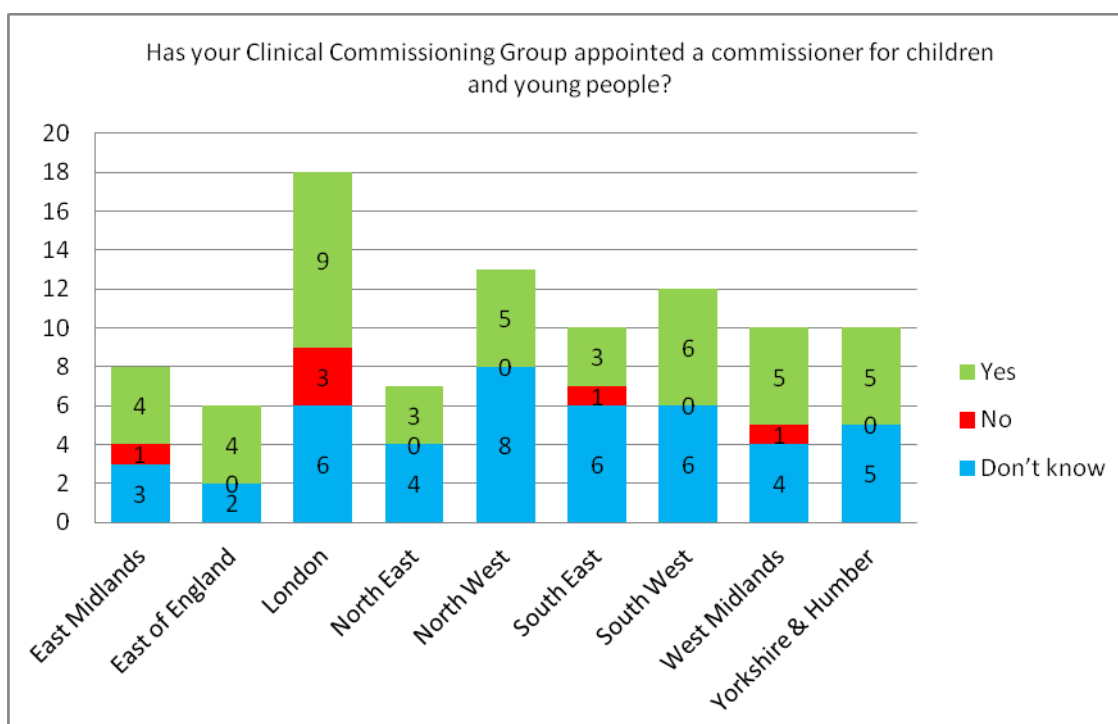
Very involved with reforms and works closely with Forum

We have a Commissioner, however from our knowledge their role is not within the SEND remit.

I wasn't aware of this but the project manager informed me of this when we went through this survey.

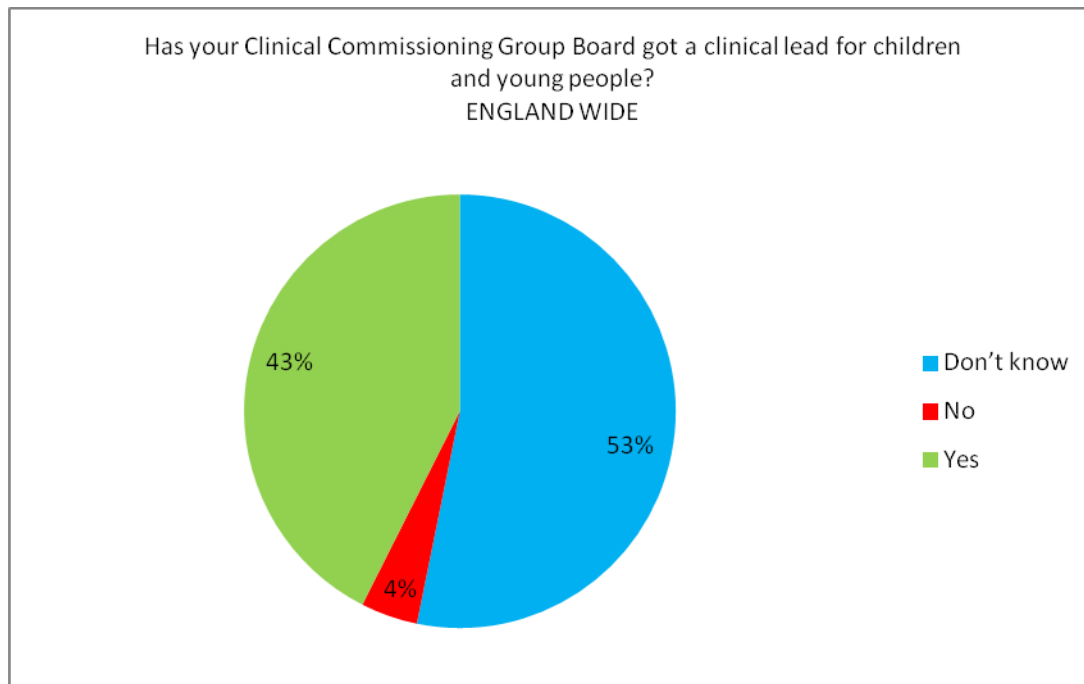
There is a person appointed but not in post, not sure if commissioner or clinical lead for children and young people

This post has been shared by a number of professionals within CCG – current post holder is part time.



Q23. Has your Clinical Commissioning Group Board got a clinical lead for children and young people?

53% of respondents are not aware of whether their clinical commissioning group board has a clinical lead for children and young people and 43% confirmed that there is a clinical lead.



We have not been involved in any discussions with health

The forum was invited to have a representative sit on the board of the redesign of CAMHS.

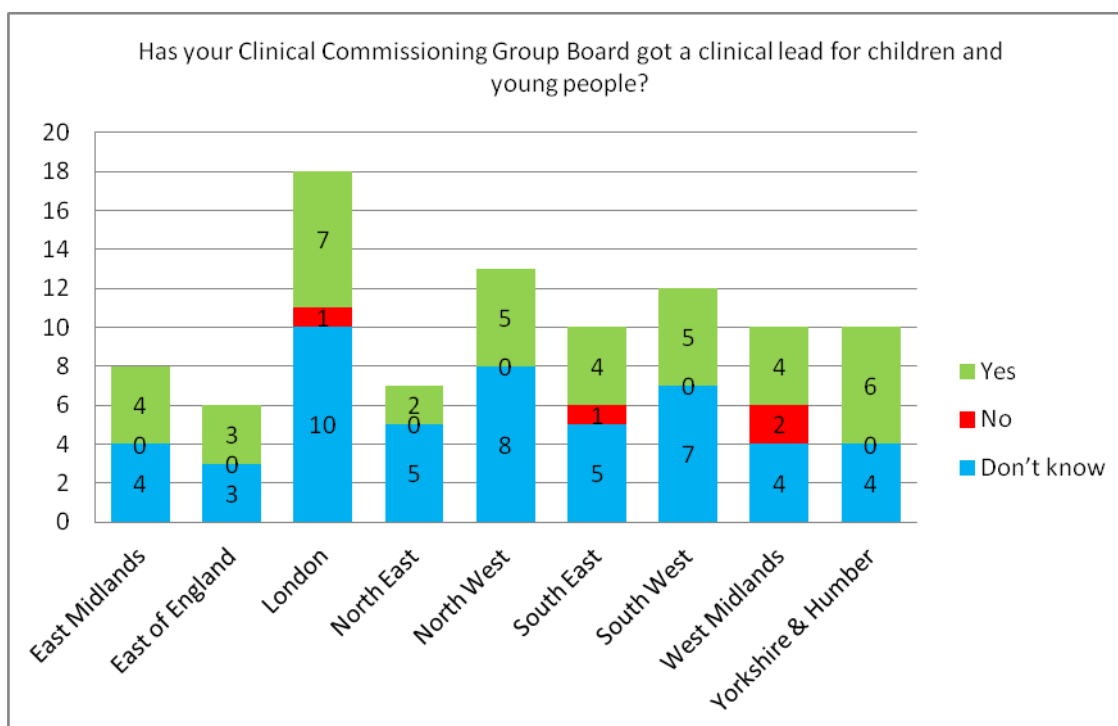
Each CCG has a clinical lead for children an YP we have wrote to them all but only had replies from 5 of the 7

We have been requesting to meet with the CCG directly for some time but have not been successful with this request. We are not aware of a clinical lead for C&YP

We have met the Clinical Lead

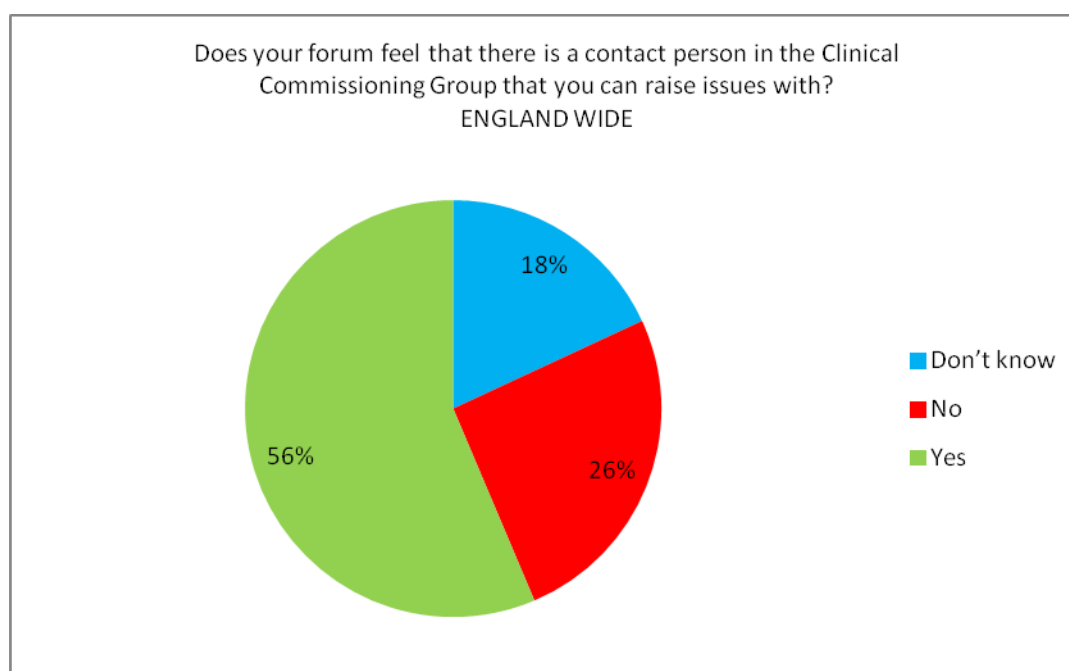
In theory all CCG Board members are leads for all areas so difficult to pin down a specific person for this area.

There is a person appointed but not in post, not sure if commissioner or clinical lead for children and young people



Q24. Does your forum feel that there is a contact person in the Clinical Commissioning Group that you can raise issues with?

56% of respondents confirmed that they felt that they have a contact person in the clinical commissioning group, whereas 26% felt that they do not.



Forum responses included:

He was invited to our last meeting in September and didn't turn up - but I am told he will be at our meeting in November,

We have made some individual contacts through working parties, conferences and other forums, for which the CaF resource book has been a useful guide. However, on a formal level we are still at the very earliest stages of developing these relationships but we are confident that they will grow.

The forum has a good working relationship with the CCG

We have contact, but questions cannot always be answered, we are not clear what stage the CCG's are at, but will be finding out!

We sit on the Critical Friends Board, which advises our CCGs, and we are a member of the H&W Board, however without a dedicated Children's lead, having an impact is rather difficult.

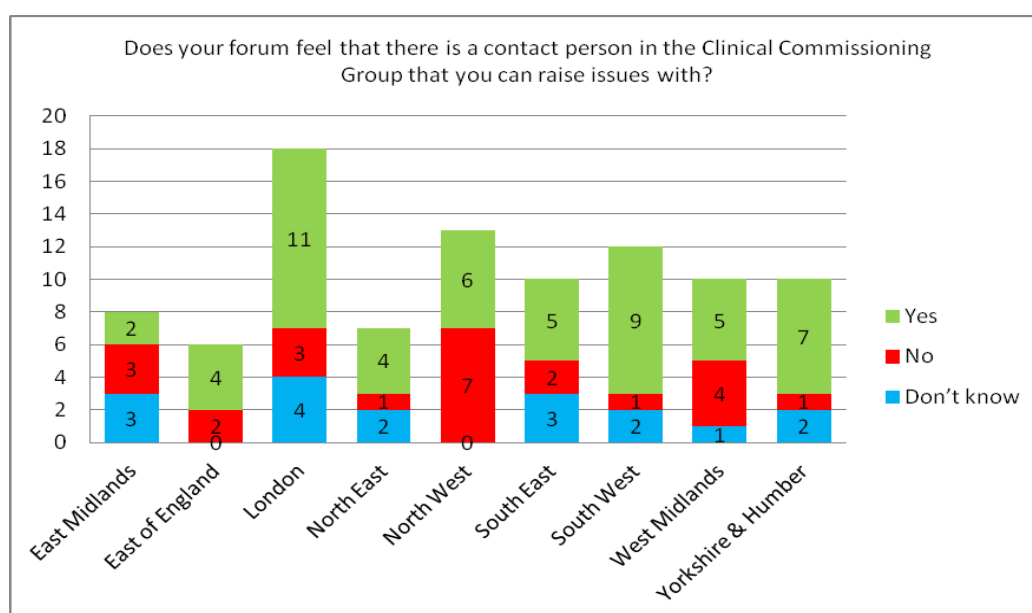
We know who the Commissioner is for Children and she is our contact with the CCG

Our CCG has a participation officer who I can contact very easily. I have attended any meetings the CCG have had to talk about their long term plans however I cannot contact any of the CCG direct it all has to go through the participation officer.

We do attend Healthwatch meetings and raise issues through this avenue.

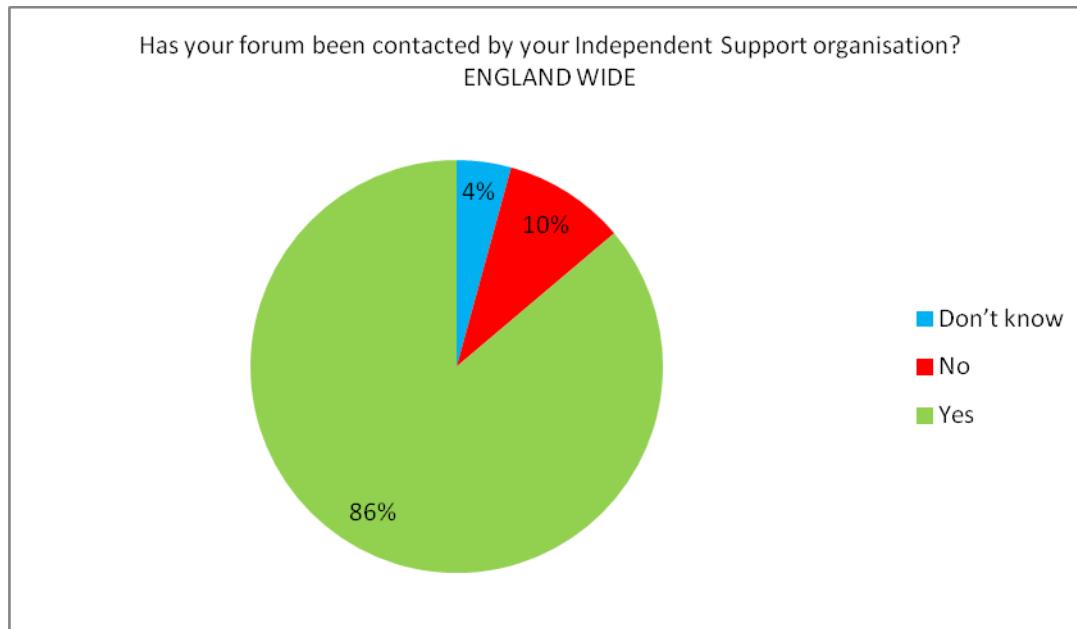
Absolutely no communications with the forum whatsoever

The Parent Forum have built strong relationships with the CCGs and we are confident we can raise any issue and be acknowledged.



Q25. Has your forum been contacted by your Independent Support organisation?

86% of respondents confirmed that they have been contacted by their Independent Support organisation.



Forum responses included:

They came to our September meeting and gave a presentation - and they will be coming back again in January to let us know of progress.

We have had a meeting but at our instigation. We helped them shape their publicity and are promoting their service.

It was initially difficult to contact the IS provider. IAS have taken the lead in this area, and we have had no real input. We are beginning to build links with the provider, but this is a slow process.

This contact was initiated by our parent forum.

We contacted them!

Work very closely with the Independent Support service

Yes Coordinator has been in touch.

We have had to chase them for initial contact and had to repeated had to chase them to be copied into emails as they were relying on LA to copy us into emails rather than informing us directly

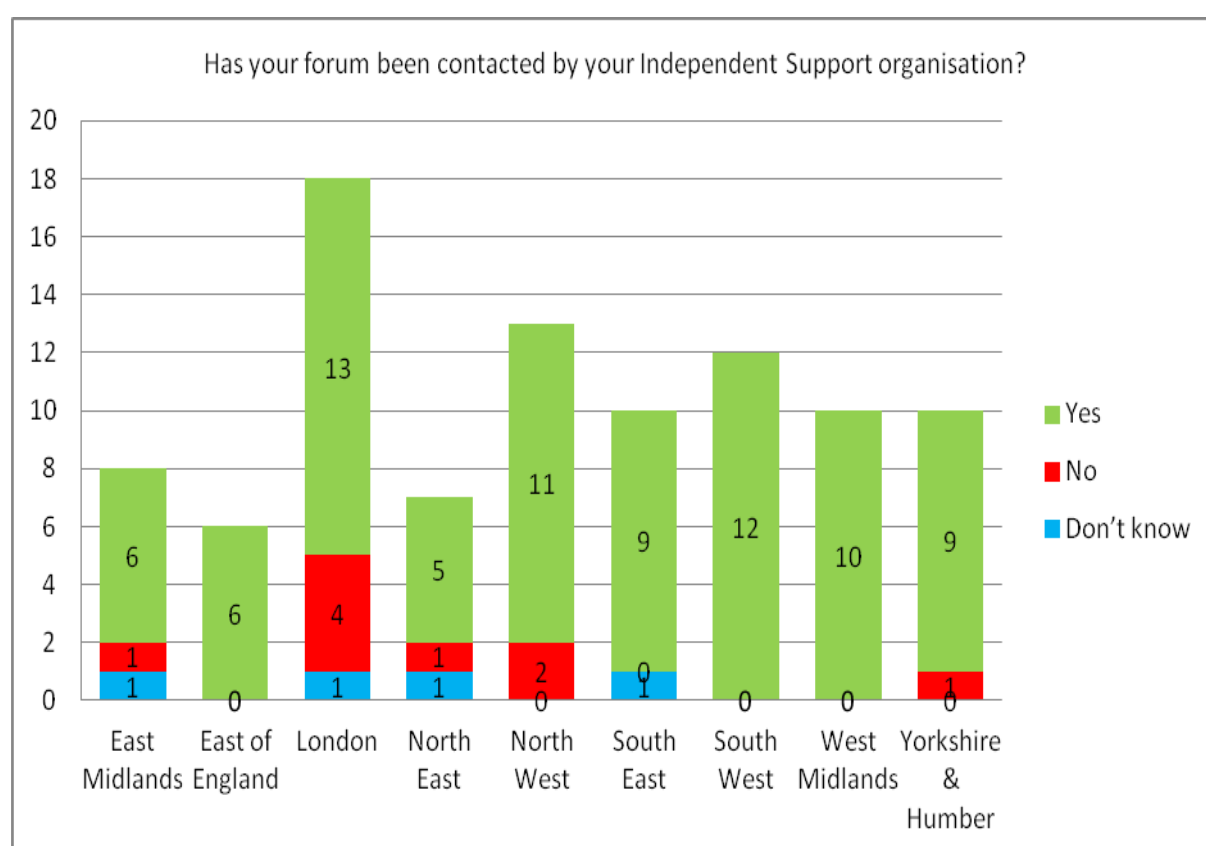
The forum is feeling quite annoyed with this as we have had no contact at all from the Independent support organisation that covers our area.

Attending a meeting with us. Good relationship with us.

We have had one visit and have been sent a Memorandum of Understanding to sign and are currently arranging another meeting to discuss the MOU further.

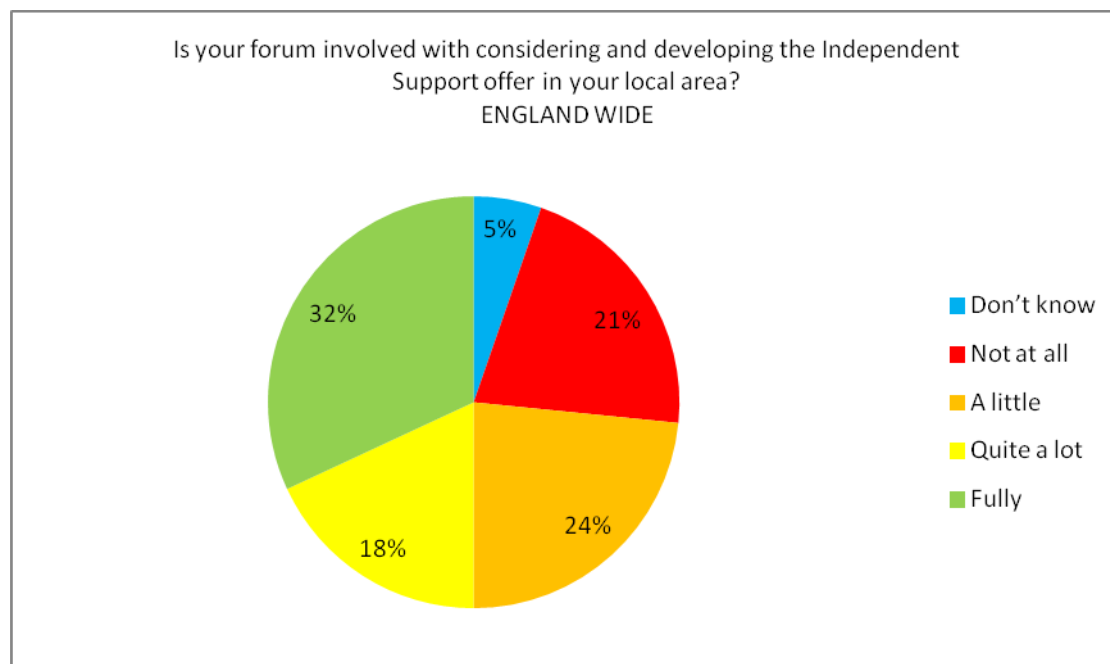
We have been involved with interviewing process and discussions around MOU will clarify our role in the service.

We invited them to our Forum to give information to Parents and Carers



Q26. Is your forum involved with considering and developing the Independent Support offer in your local area?

50% of respondents confirmed that their forums are fully involved or quite a lot involved in developing the Independent Support offer in their area, whereas 21% were not involved at all.



Forum comments include:

Only really because two of the forum provide a keyworker role to parents with the EHC Plans so in that context we had some input. We have not as a forum been invited to be part of the development of the Memorandum of Understanding – despite offering our input!

We have good links with the IS from IAS and are beginning to develop links with the external provider.

We have been involved in the scoping and delivery projects

We as a forum have been part of the meetings to discuss the memorandum of understanding. We have also been asked to assist in the recruitment/interviewing of the XXX independent support roles.

We have a meeting planned- which has already been moved once. We do have some historical problems in this area, which need to be overcome, we do hope to be more involved with this.

Really pleased with the positive approaches to working together with the new IS, the SENDIASS we have always had a strong partnership with in its previous life as PPS. This is expected to carry on.

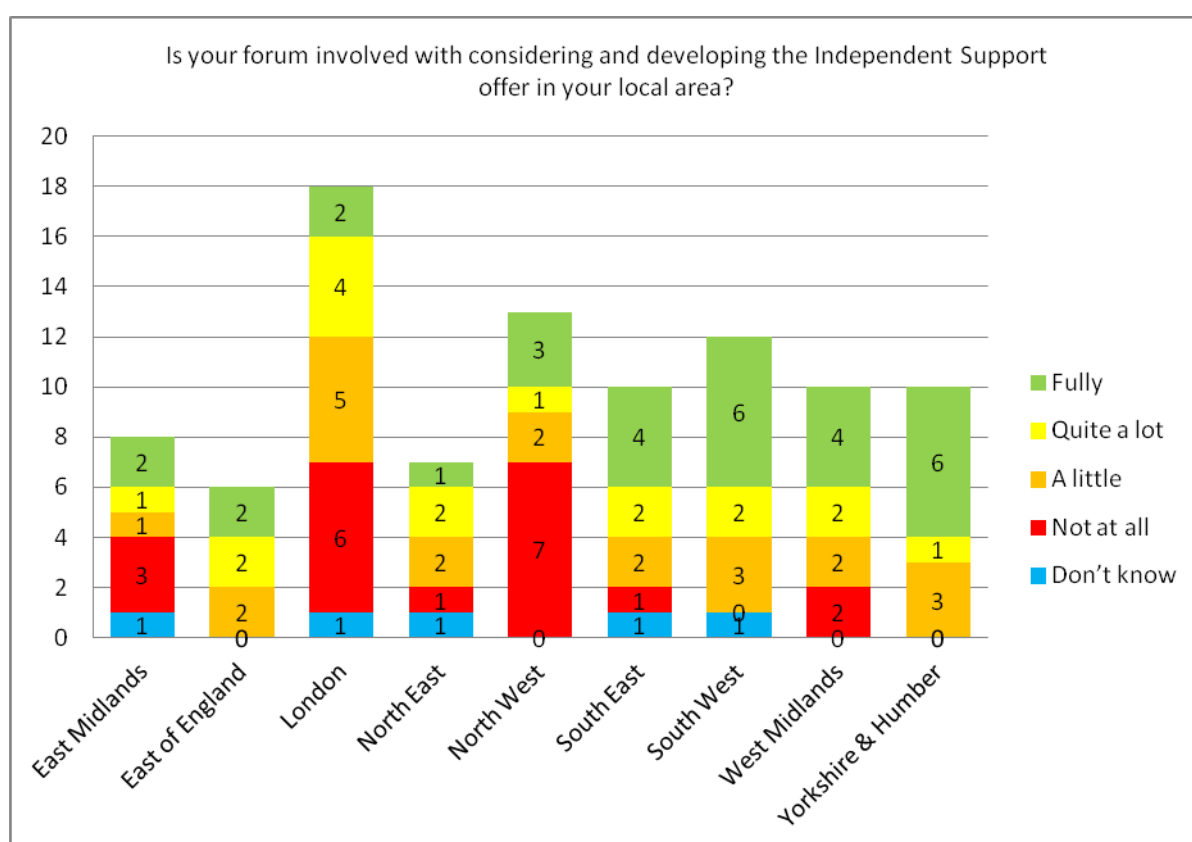
We are concerned that the IS offer will be limited to a small number of families, and that IAS does not have the capacity to manage the remainder. We are part of the IS governance group, and sit on the IAS SG.

We have been involved but there is a new manager who has just joined and not sure the relationship will remain the same - we are yet to see what happens

We are involved with considering and monitoring but not delivering. One member of our steering group is going to be a paid IS

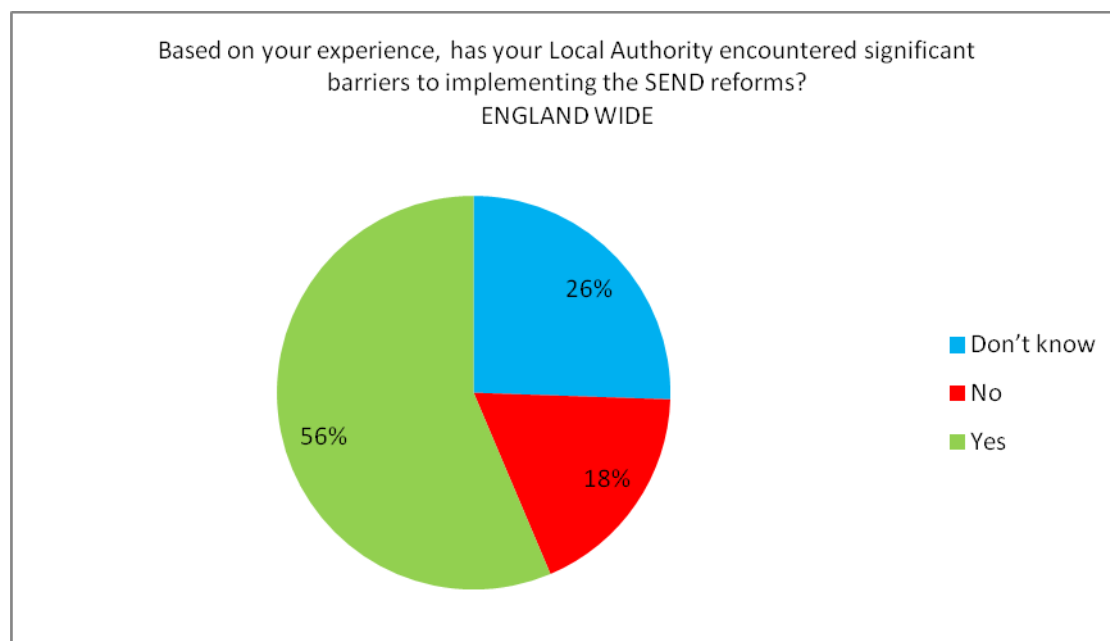
The Forum has a good relationship with our local provider, we are discussing areas of joint training to support parents within our area and promote each other roles.

We weren't consulted with prior to the tendering either which is of concern as we are unsure how the need was assessed and by whom.



Question 27. Based on your experience, has your Local Authority encountered significant barriers to implementing the SEND reforms? If so, please provide further detail.

56% of respondents report that their Local Authority did encounter significant barriers to implementing the SEND reforms. Respondents were asked to provide further detail. Please see the below examples of responses;



From our viewpoint, the authority faces the dual challenge of a health structure that is in change and difficult to engage with, alongside competing priorities for change in schools and the Council.

People below senior level were initially not committed to the project. Health are not co-operating.

Sheer volume of work to be done. Difficulty engaging with health and social care

The main barriers appear to have arisen from health partners and lack of involvement at the start of the SEND reforms this has now been addressed

No consultation - the only consultation undertaken with the Forums was an overview of the reforms nearly 12 months ago and a small consultation regarding how the Local Offer web page would be formatted

We are not aware of any significant barriers but as a forum we have been concerned around working to timescales and the involvement of stakeholders at all levels. The LA were receptive to increase the membership from 2 to 3 reps on the SEND project board which is a positive step forward. We would also hope the development of the SEND engagement group will further strengthen links between health education and social care as well as building links with parent's children and young people.

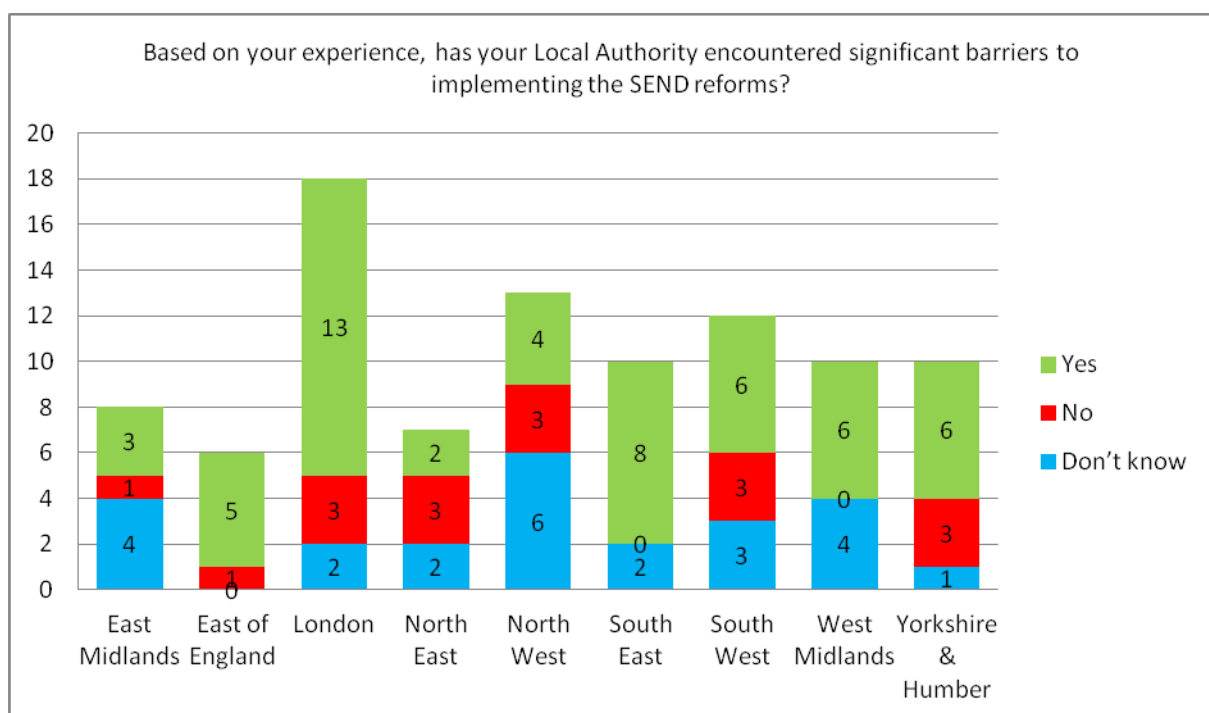
Very little guidance and extremely short timescales from the government, not enough support from the government, very small capacity within ground roots social workers to cope with the transitions process.

There have been problems, we would not like to try to highlight any examples, we do believe problems are being overcome

We are a large County and there are 3 LA's, it was decided that there would be a joint approach to SEND Reforms, however as we start implementation this has proved not to be working in some of the key areas .

LA reliant on good will of schools to inform parents and also engage with training/learning about reforms. Health seems very disengaged.

Failed to appoint key staff early enough. Did not review what was good about the old system. Employed one person to do too much and did not seem to mind too much when he failed to meet key deadlines



The Department would like to share examples of good practice with local authorities to help with implementation. If there are any areas where you think you have particularly strong examples of practice to share with others.

Independent Advisors to help parent carers with impartial advice with SEND

We are co-producing the strategic plan for the implementation of SEND reforms between now and April 2018. This includes a vision of the target state for April 2018. We have been commissioned to write the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for our Borough. We have worked very closely with the local authority to produce the local offer website, deliver workforce development training and the template for the EHCP.

The LA agreed to fund a local SEND brochure which was drafted by the parent and carer consortium and supported by the LA. The LA has agreed to fund an interactive website

which we feel will be extremely helpful to families in our area. The LA allowed parental input into all the send briefings offered in Sept to start the process of the changes.

We think that communication and participation is vital for LA to work with their parent carer forum and not used the forum as a token gesture.

Our parent forum reps have been part of local Childrens development board, and through building strong relationship at strategic level with health we have been able to successfully voice parent carers views in shaping and delivery of services.

Good co-working with the local offer, some participation with the transition arrangements from statements to EHCP's

The parent forum has worked in full coproduction with all services throughout the SEND reforms; the forum has been involved in every meeting regarding the reforms and has played an active role in all areas. Parent/carers have felt respected and feel their voices have and continue to be heard

Good communication and continuous involvement within developing and implementing SEN reforms with local parents, agreed regular reviews and further consultations and conferences, training for parents and professionals being scheduled and delivered shortly. LA also recognises the value of the Parent Forum and is drawing up an agreement of co-working effectively with the parent forum.

Our LA is now in talks with members of the forum on the development of the Local Offer, due to hundreds of unhappy parent carers complaining on social media. These complaints were sent to the LA which the LO contacted the Chair of the forum to arrange meetings to feed back what our parents and young people would like to do to improve what is already been set up, so it works for us.

Key working in partnership to support families to co-ordinate the participants of EHC meetings. Young Leader participation - to increase the involvement of young people in having their views listened to.

6. Is there anything else you would want the Department for Education to be aware of?

This was a free text field. Below are a range of examples of responses.

Again, we would like to thank the Department of Education for sending out this survey for forums to complete, as it helps to show the importance of parent carer forums and the need for us to be working in partnership with the local authority on the SEND legislation. Now we have a host of council officials wanting to come to our meetings to engage with parent carers.

The lack of meaningful engagement at a strategic level is very frustrating and demonstrates the issues around organizational change. Individual LA staff have generally been quite willing to engage with parent carers, however their efforts are hampered by the lack of organizational change. Our chairperson was invited to a recent DfE meeting but was unable to attend and we did not receive a response to a request to send an alternative representative. When the DfE came to our area the chairperson was at the National event in London, she asked the SEND lead if someone else could attend in her place and she never received a response so no one represented the parent carer consortium, we have finally managed to receive a copy of the report which we feel has very little feedback on engaging parent and carers – as this group hasn't yet started

DfE needs to ensure robust monitoring of the funding given to local authorities and the CCG around Send reforms, We would like to suggest that their monitoring form and any funding application to be signed by DfE approved and supported parent forum for each local area.

We still feel that there still remains a difference of opinion about what is meant by co-production. There is a gap between the vision that the DfE have and parents share. The gap is the LA and CCG. Many officers get it but at director/assistant director level it is still viewed as a luxury rather than a necessity.

Parents still anxious about the changes due to lack of CLEAR info Personal budgets not worked out properly

More notice required for response to future surveys. Communication from Government Departments needs to be more joined up

It is not clear how the reforms are going to be monitored. How will the forums be involved?

Urgent Action needed now or else the current deplorable state of affairs will continue to worsen with long term and dire consequences.

We feel this is a great area of change for many services, parent/carers and young people. There still appears to be a lot of learning to be done and the DfE must take this into consideration when wishing to make any further changes as at times timescales appear to have originally been very tight for these reforms and put services and families under pressure

7. Conclusion

Whilst the responses from forums show a mixed picture of implementation, there are some encouraging messages about embedding the culture change that the reforms seek to bring. However, there are several areas where parent carer forums are clearly less involved with, or where local areas are struggling with implementation. This feedback, combined with the self evaluation provided by local authorities helps to identify areas of national challenge, and to enable more bespoke support and advice for areas as required.



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- Promoting Parent Carer Participation
- Ensuring the voices of parent carers are heard nationally with departmental and strategic partners across education, health and social care
- Empowering and supporting parent carer participation developments across England
- Working with Regional Parent Carer Forum Networks across England
- Producing information and updates for Parent Carer Forums
- Producing responses to national consultations based upon the views of the membership.

contact a family
for families with disabled children

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Campaigning

We campaign for rights and justice for all families with disabled children.

Freephone helpline

Our freephone helpline for parents and professionals across the UK is staffed by trained parent advisers. It provides information and advice on a wide range of issues including welfare rights, education, short breaks, local services and local support.

Publications

We produce a wide range of publications including newsletters, parent guides and research reports, helping parents and professionals to stay informed.

Linking families

We put families in contact with others whose child has the same condition for support. We link them through existing support groups, our online social networking sites or using our one-to-one linking service.

Medical information

Contact a Family has information on hundreds of conditions, and details of support groups where possible. Visit www.cafamily.org.uk/medical-information, or call our freephone helpline for anything not listed on our website.

One-to-one support groups

We offer practical and emotional support on a one-to-one basis to families with disabled children, through our family support service, volunteer parent carer representatives and through our local offices.

Local, regional and national offices

Contact a Family has a number of offices around the UK providing local newsletters, information, workshops and support.

Parent carer participation

Contact a Family supports the involvement of parents in shaping services (health, education and social care).