

SEVENTH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY FOR PARENT CARER FORUMS JUNE 2016

In June 2016 the seventh SEND survey was carried out with local authorities and parent carer forums to gauge how effective they feel the implementation of the SEND reforms is in their local areas nearly two years into the new system, and 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 107 parent carer forums responded to the survey, representing a 70% return, a 1.6% increase on the November 2015 survey (68.4%).

66% 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 slight reduction from SEND survey 6, as 69% of SEND Survey 6 responses contained the views of 4 or more members.

45% of parent carer forums discussed their responses to the survey with their local authority; this is an upturn from the 6th survey when 33% discussed with their local authority.

Key findings:

62% of forums feel that parents are largely or fully engaged in strategic planning with their local authority. This is a slight drop from 64% in the 6th survey. These figures are much lower when considering the engagement of children (6%) and young people (16%).

Forums report that only 22% of children (up from the 6th survey which was 14%) and 23% of young people (up from the 6th survey which was 18%) are either fully or largely involved in making decisions about their own SEND provision. Whilst 49% of parents are largely or fully involved in decision making around their child or young person's provision (again up from the 6th survey which was 40%).

With regards to the Local Offer, 86 forums report that they had been involved in the further development of their local area's offer, 84 forums said that their Local Offer has a feedback page, and 43 areas have held focus groups with parent carers. Forums reported that only 26 Local authorities had held focus groups with children and young people.

60% of forums feel that training and development opportunities are offered to Early Years providers; 48% state that their Local Offer gives clear information about what Early Years providers are expected to make available through SEN support, and 64% of forums say that Area SENCOs and other specialist services are provided to support Early Years settings. There are lower figures when asked if the local authority had published guidelines about the threshold for an Early Years ECH assessment with 38% of forums stating that this had happened in their area, though a high percentage (36% did not know).

In response to questions relating to effective SEN Support systems in Schools and Academies 83% of forums said that their local authority facilitates regular SENCO forums, but only 37% of forums are aware that their local authority monitors the availability and quality of School Information Reports.

53% of forums report that their Local authority is changing the nature or eligibility to Short Breaks provision in 2016-17 and 48% confirm that families have been consulted on these plans. 22% report that they do not know if there will be changes to Short Breaks provision. However, only 5% of forums report that the planned expenditure will be more than in 2015-16, whilst 30% report it is staying the same and 22% report that it will be less. A total of 43% do not know what the planned expenditure is in comparison to the 2015-16 expenditure.

Only 2% of forums say that post-16 providers in their area are reorganising provision to meet the needs of all young people with SEND, helping them to meet the Preparation for Adulthood outcomes. 8% of forums say that there has been no reorganisation by post-16 providers at all.

When considering how well local authorities are working with other agencies to provide a continuum of provision for young people with EHC plans, results were very mixed and many forums simply do not know. 16% of forums say that the LA in their area is working very well with local colleges; 14% are working very well with specialist post-16 institutions; only 1% of forums report that their LA is working well with housing associations, but 58% don't know how well they are working together.

28% of forums say that there are more post-16 supported internships than a year ago.

Only 2% of forums report that joint commissioning is fully in place, whilst 44% say that this is in place to some extent.

Only 5% of forums report that their local authority has fully implemented processes to evaluate their use of feedback, data and intelligence for improving delivering and measuring progress and success, whilst 40% have done this to some extent.

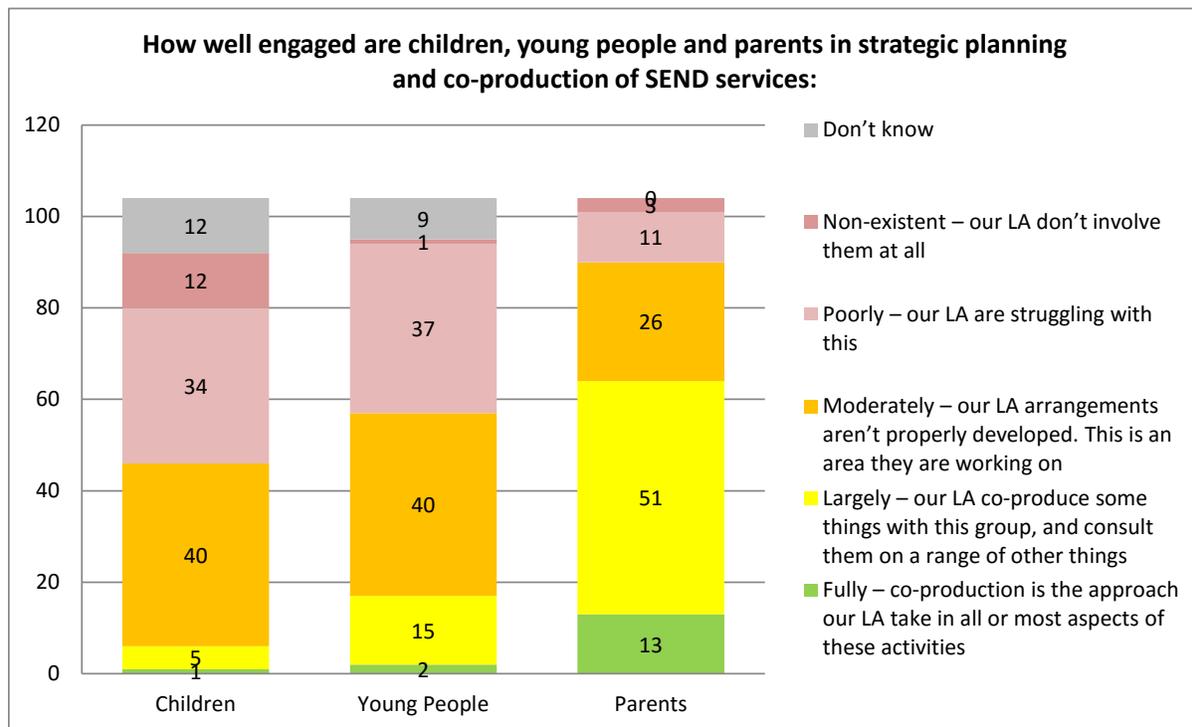
Forums' perceptions of the top three greatest barriers to local authorities completing the EHC plans within 20 weeks are: gathering information from health professionals within 6 weeks of

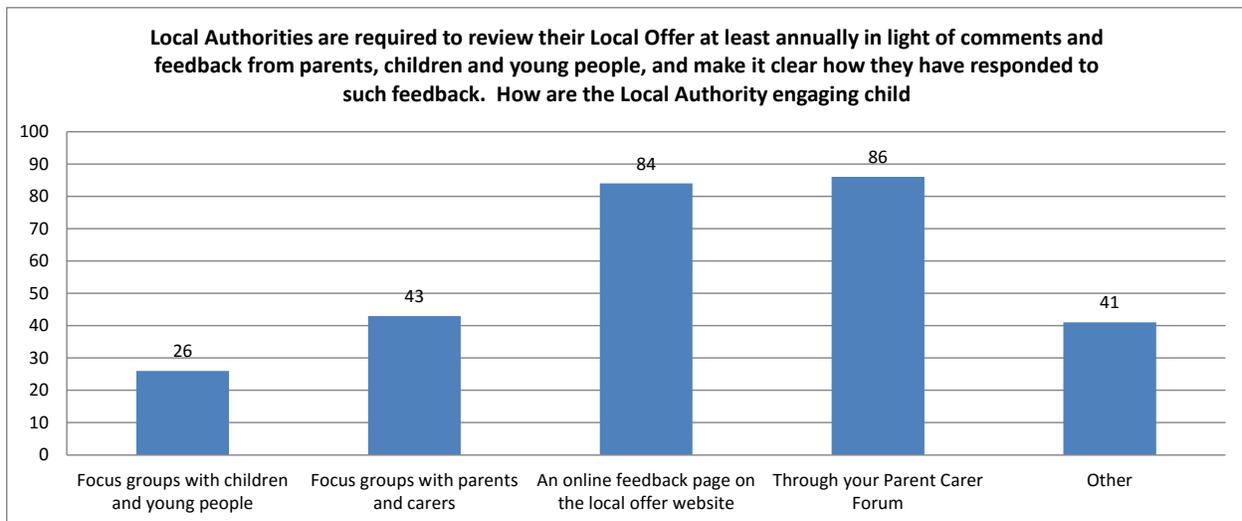
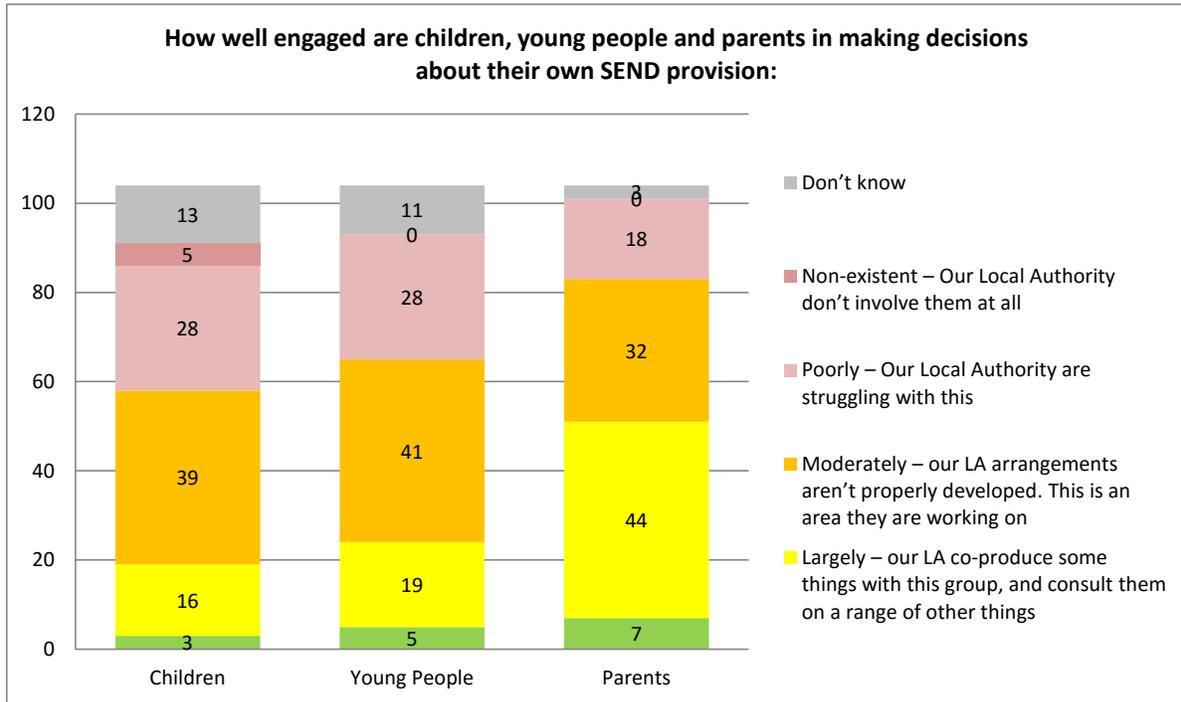
the LA request (67 forums); Local authority capacity (60 forums); Gathering information from care professionals within 6 weeks of LA request (57 forums).

Only 19% of forums are very or extremely confident that their local authority will have completed LDA transfer reviews by the end of August 2016, with 25% very or extremely confident that all statements will be replaced by April 2018.

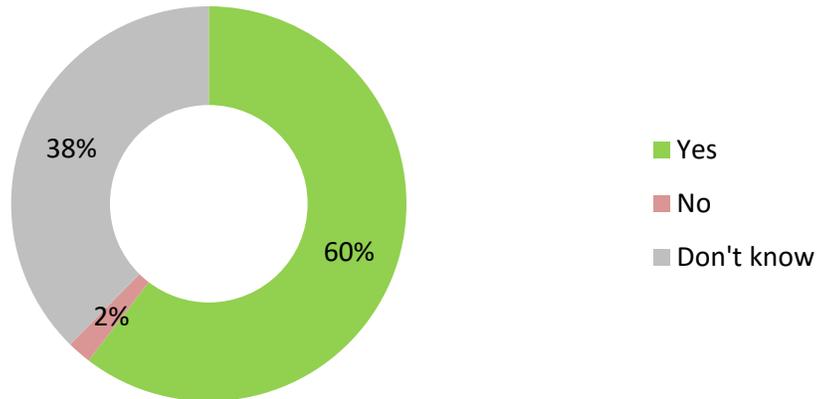
The resources or training for forums found most helpful in relation to the implementation of the SEND reforms and supporting good practice were: Contact a Family (59% felt were crucial); occasional themed workshops (51% felt were crucial); Council for disabled Children (42% felt were crucial); SEND Advisers (31% felt were crucial).

Sample graphs to illustrate some key responses:

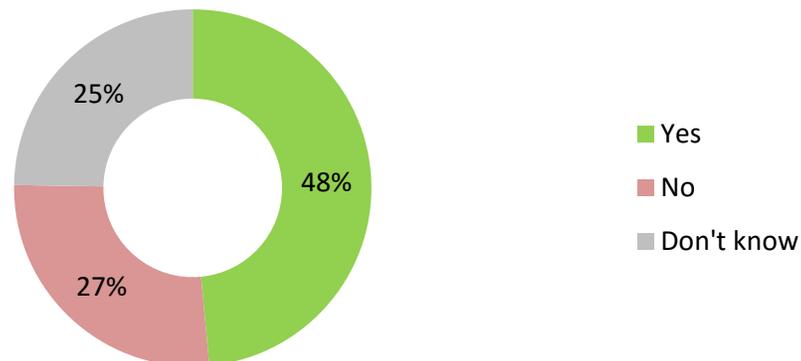




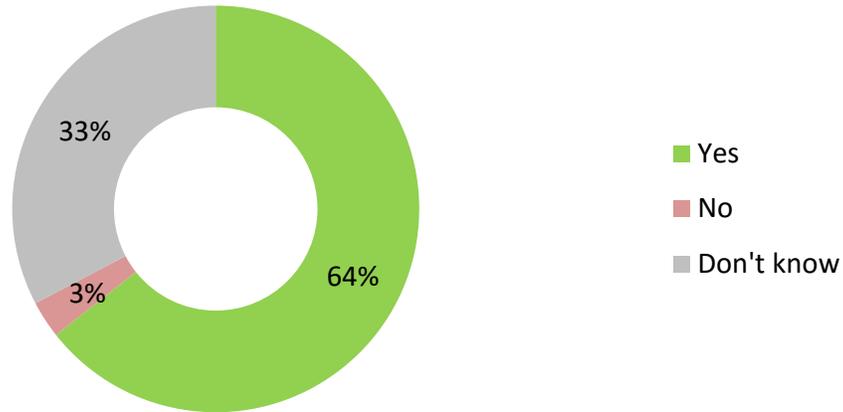
a) Training and workforce development opportunities are offered to Early Years providers, including PVI's .



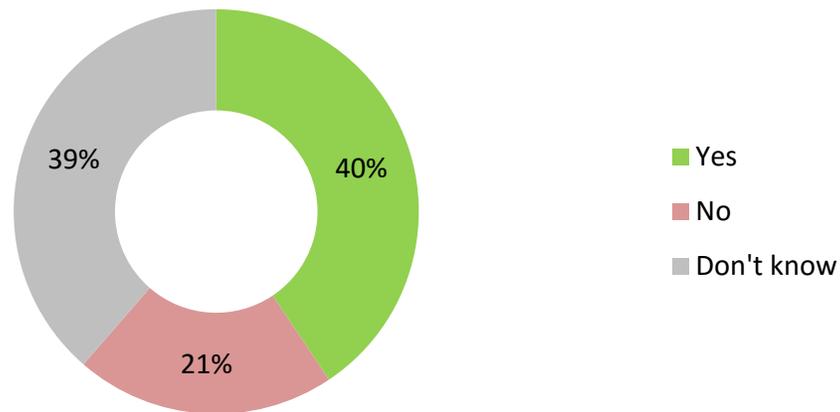
b) The Local Offer has clear information about what Early Years providers are expected to make available through SEN Support.



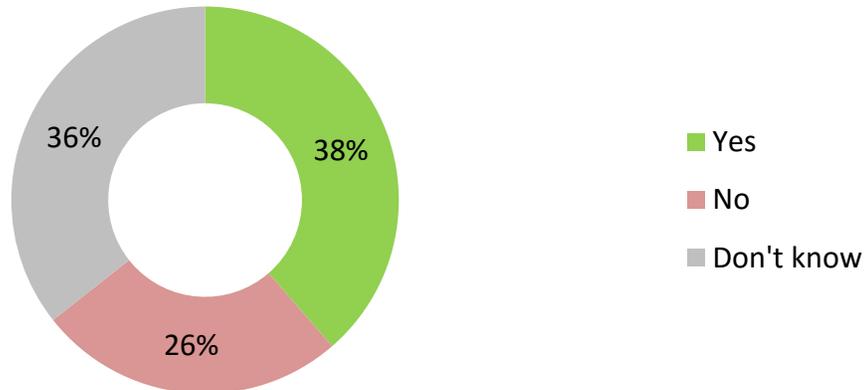
c) Area SENCOs and other specialist services are provided to support Early Years settings



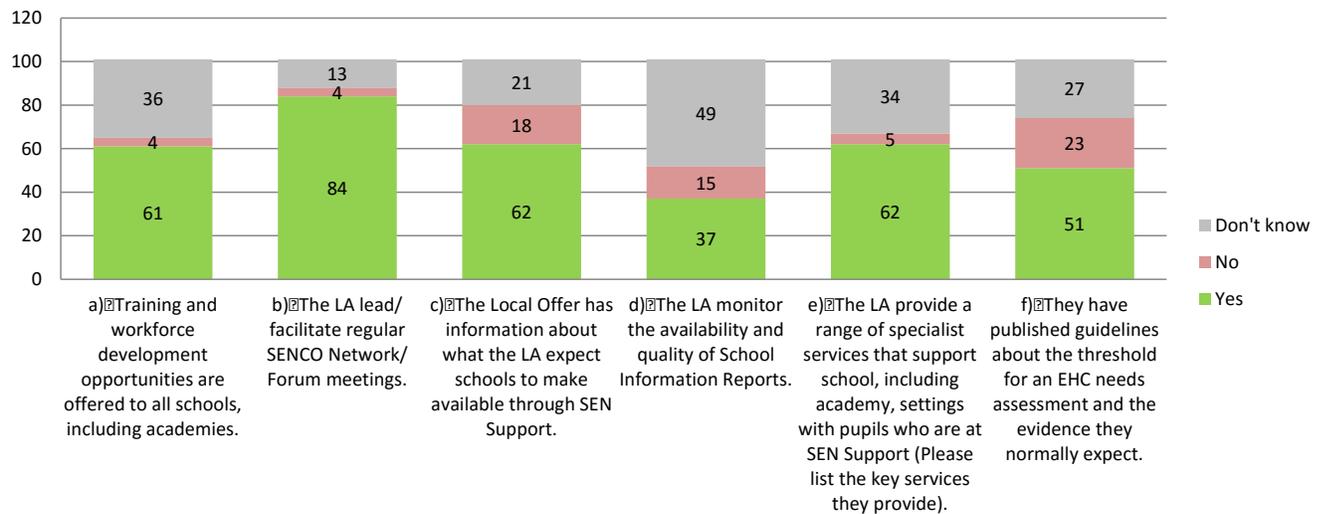
d) It is clear how Early Years providers can access high needs funding where appropriate.



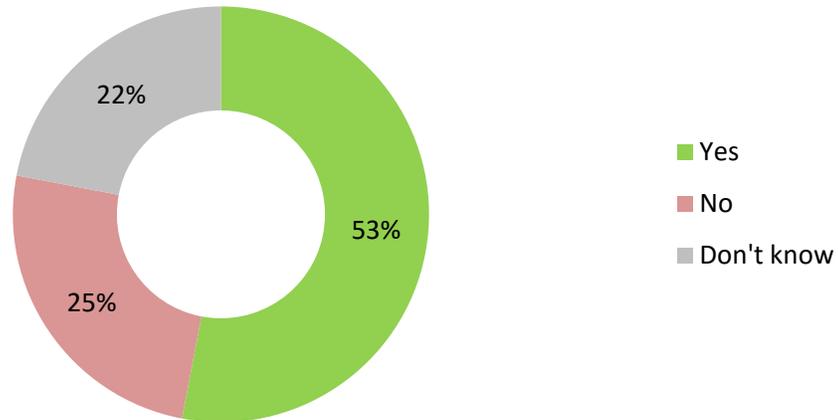
e) The Local Authority have published guidelines about the threshold for an early years EHC needs assessment and the evidence they normally expect.



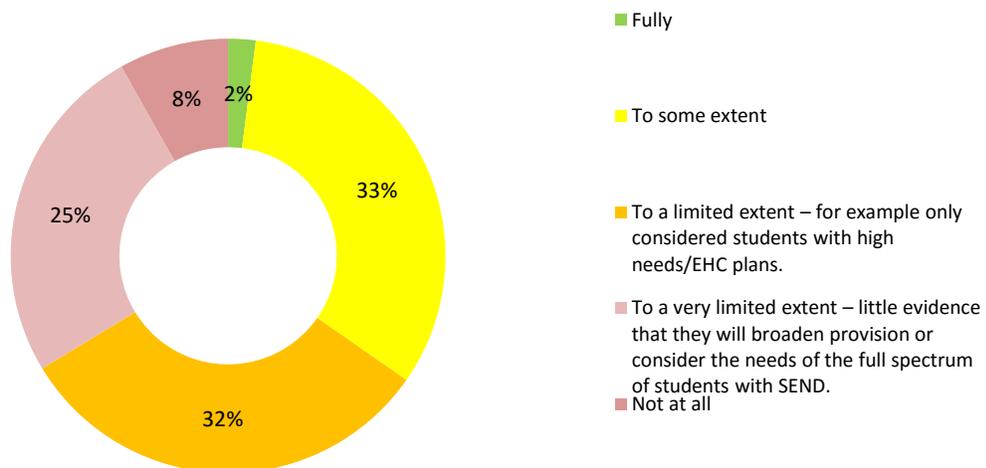
If known do the LA do any of the following to develop and maintain effective SEN Support systems in schools, including academies:

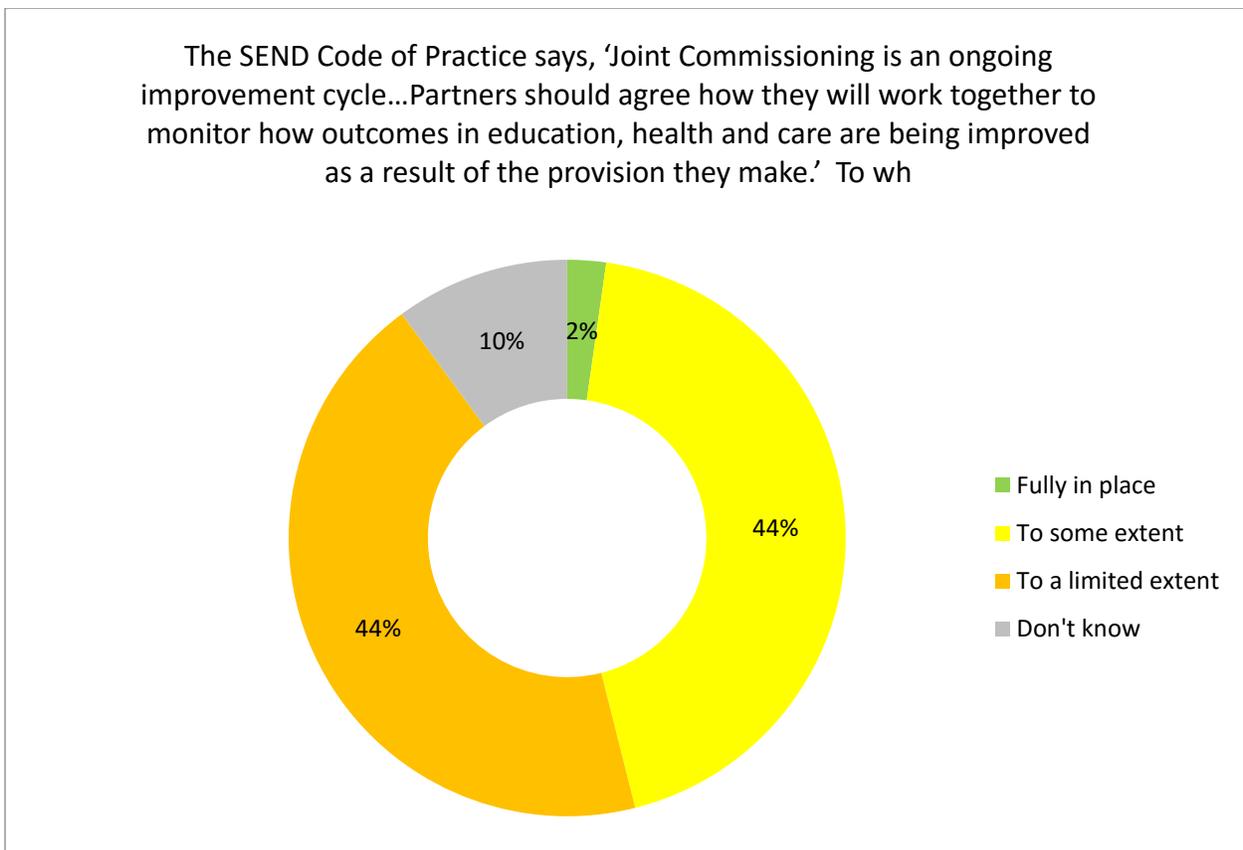
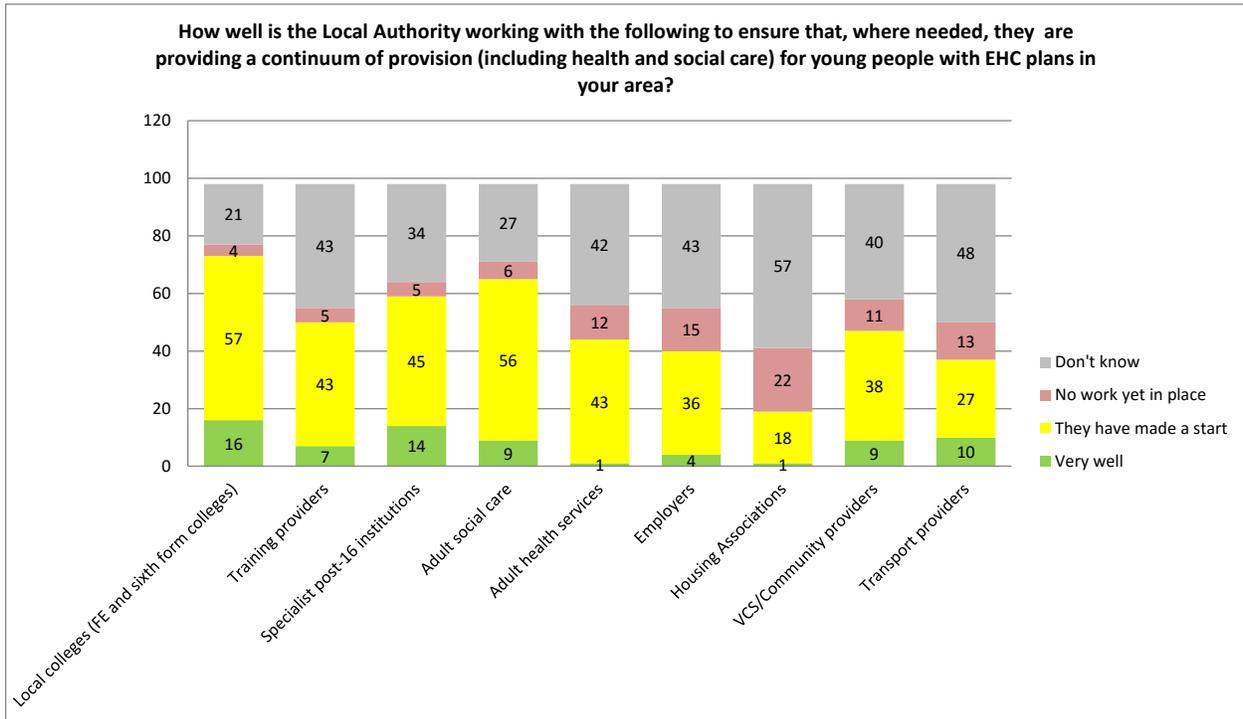


Are the Local Authority making any changes in the nature or eligibility to your Short Breaks provision in 2016-17?

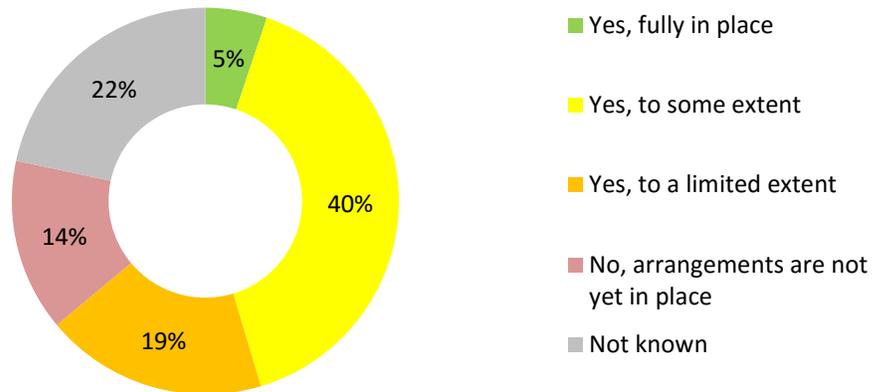


How far are post-16 providers in your local area re-organising provision to meet the needs of all young people with SEND, helping them to reach the Preparation for Adulthood outcomes - in achieving employment, independent living, health and community part

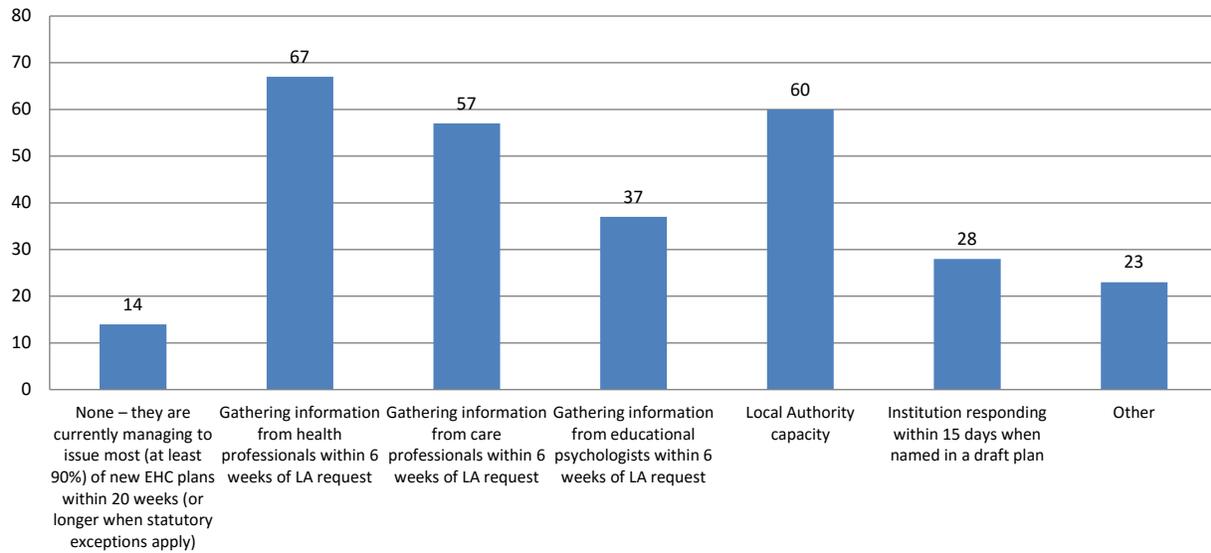




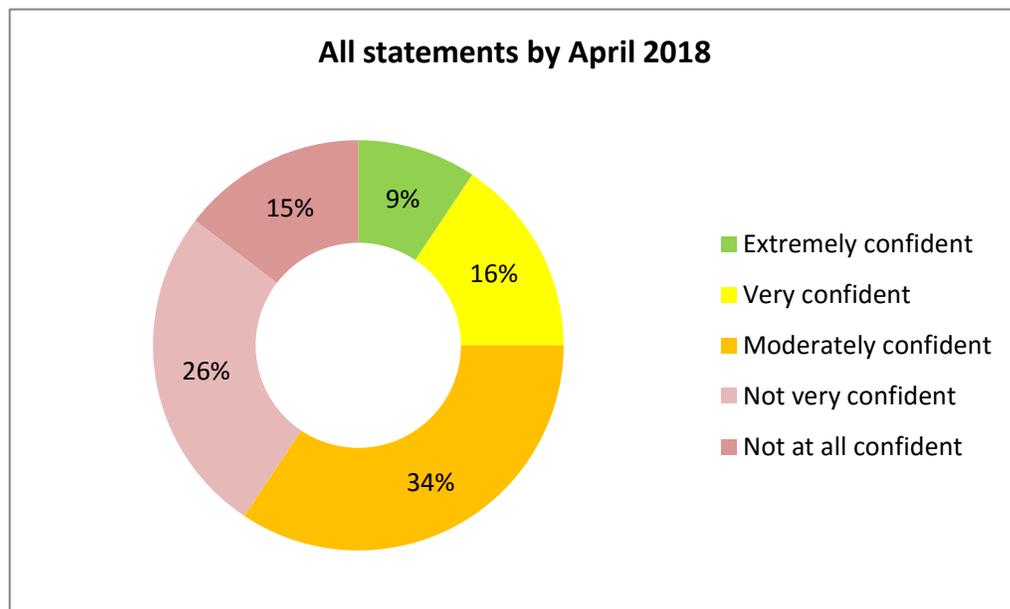
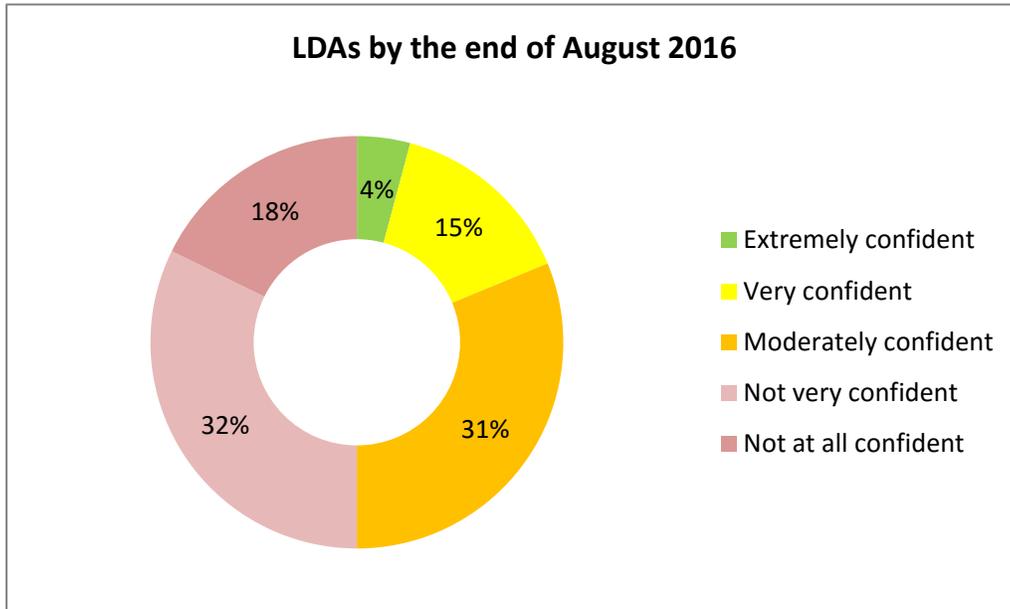
Have the Local Authority put in place processes to evaluate their use of feedback, data and intelligence in improving delivery, measuring progress and success?

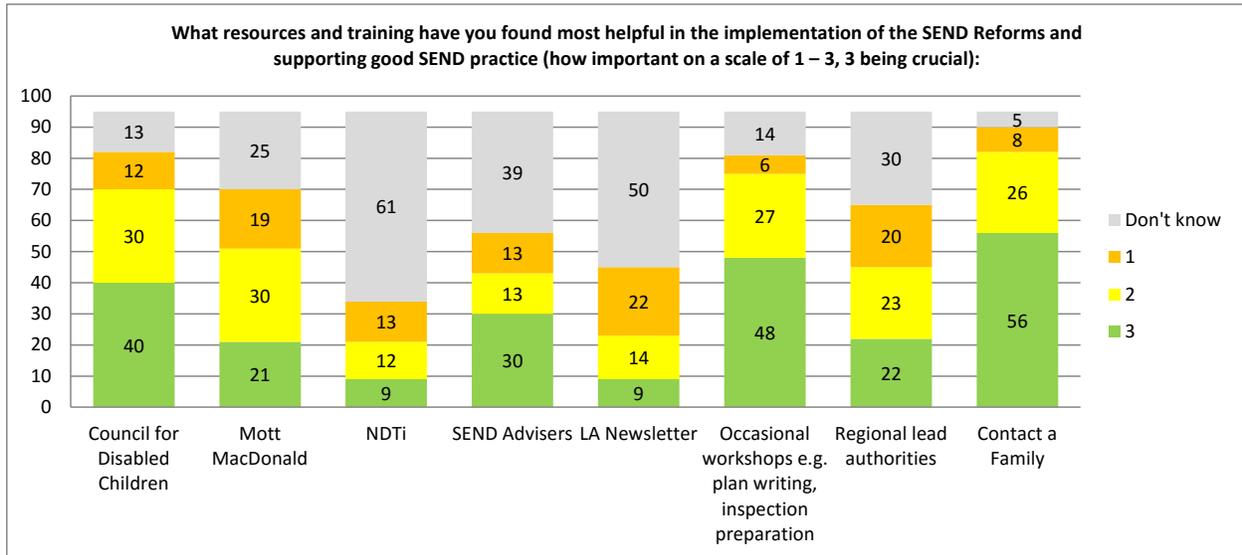


What barriers to completion of EHC plans in 20 weeks are the LA facing? Please tick all that apply.



How confident are you that the LA will complete Transfer Reviews by the relevant statutory deadlines?





Below is a small selection of the answers provided for the narrative questions:

'What further support would you find helpful to implement the SEND Reforms fully?'

Understanding EHC Plan - we are finding that the plan is as good as the person writing down the information.

Examples to share with parent carers of "well written" EHCPs that show the level of detail expected.

A commitment to fund the LA, us and IS through to 2020, since it is clear that the reforms are not going to be fully established by 2018.

Full comprehensive training for all staff within the SEN Team so that they know what they are doing and can embrace the culture change that the new legislation had hoped for. Stop thinking in terms of budgets and how many plans still need to be completed and look first and foremost at the children and young people's needs and how to help overcome them.

Pragmatic, sensible expectations from the DfE in terms of timescales and capacity of service providers. Harmonising Health & Social Care statutory timescales with those of Education. Clear guidance when young people would be eligible for an EHCP, post 19 in particular. Clear guidance (and examples) for post-16 providers on their duties regarding creating new provision. Local authorities need ongoing financial support to facilitate the implementation of the Children and Families Act.

Greater accountability for the LA, CCG, Health Providers and Schools to engage with Parent Carer Forums and families on an individual level.

Improve coordination between health, social and education service providers

Ring fencing the additional SEND funding. Ring fencing the additional CAMHS reform grant funding and preventing LA removing already allocated funding if grant won.

More engagement with Regional lead authorities for forums would be very beneficial; Our own LA links have improved considerably in the last 6 months and working together on the SEND Strategy has been a definite improvement and opportunity for parent carers to directly influence the strategy. Regular meetings with LA/Health partners must continue.

'Is there anything else you would like the Department for Education to be aware of?'

Parents have questioned why there wasn't just a nationwide EHC Plan template, instead of every LA having different styles. For example, on transfers from one area to another - it would have been much simpler. We often hear complaints 'there's no money'. So why waste resources?

Schools are required to meet performance targets which are academically driven and are the basis of the Ofsted Inspection Framework. This is in direct conflict with providing support for children and young people with SEND whose academic progress maybe limited but who are working towards achieving better life outcomes. We would like to see the DfE work with Ofsted to develop a process for schools to be able to measure both academic progress and wider outcomes.

1) Still concerns regarding getting EHCP's complete for post 16's in time for college placements. 2) The ethos and point of child/young person centred plans must not be lost - LA's need to be reminded at CYP are at the centre. Otherwise it's a missed opportunity.

There are significant workload pressures, combined with an inexperienced workforce, and Health remains disinterested, which means plans are not being completed as they should.

The lack of understanding of the significance and relative importance of the Parent Carer Forum as the focus of work with parent carers remains a concern.

There is no aspirational thinking for our children and young people. The experience for those converting from a statement is no different from the old system, there is no visible health input, the SEN team have had little or no training as clearly reflected in the EHC plans and there has been hardly any attendance of the workshops that have taken place. Schools have had insufficient training and many are not sure what they should be doing – there is no consistent approach. This is not the parent and child centred experience we had hoped for and is disappointing as we had believed in the reforms

Many transfers from statements are happening without a full needs assessment having been carried out and with advice that is more than 2 years old. Parents do not realise that assessments need to be done in full. We are also concerned that specification is being removed on transfer and therapies are being put into Health (section G) instead of Education (section F) provision.

It is very difficult to see how the LA can ensure that the provisions/resources for the children and young people are actually being enforced within the schools when they have no authority there! They can only advise the schools, which seems an impossible task for the LA when they are duty bound to ensure provision is provided. How can that possibly work if the school does not comply.

The Local Authority appears to be aware of where improvements need to be made and have recently shared their action plan with us. However, progress is extremely slow and frustrating for parents. Our forum has also co-produced an action plan with commissioners and heads of services which will be reviewed termly.

There is a battle between the need to get things in place quickly to support SEND and the capacity of the LA. Co-production involves time and although individuals want to do this effectively time pressures with pending OFSTED and CQC inspections makes this challenging.

Due to a change in structure and responsibilities in the Local Authority, there seems to be a slowing down in engagement.

True co-production in a county going through major transformational change (across the LA and Health) is a huge challenge with our 'workforce' of parent carers who are often in crisis/having to cope with unpredictable daily lives. We are having to move to a far more sophisticated model of co-production in order to sustain the forum. In some ways we are victims of our own success in that we have helped identify issues across the whole of the SEND system which the LA is keen to address through a fast-paced and comprehensive transformation programme.

Parents are still finding the process a challenge, the paperwork can overwhelm families who have a learning difficulties or English as a second language. The changes to the National Curriculum levels is also causing a lot of confusion to families

It is increasingly difficult for some parents to appreciate the benefits of participation and coproduction when so often discussions are initiated because of government budget cuts and the negative impact these have on services, children, young people and their families. National investment was needed to initiate and maintain the parent participation programme; for local areas to be able to truly 'up their game' and engage with young people with SEND at the same level, there needs to be a similar national initiative supported by appropriate government funding. Aiming Higher?