

Summary of feedback from the SEND Futures surveys in Kingston (June and July 2023)

Parents and Carers survey

Total respondents: 59

1. Quantitative data

1.1. Information on demographics

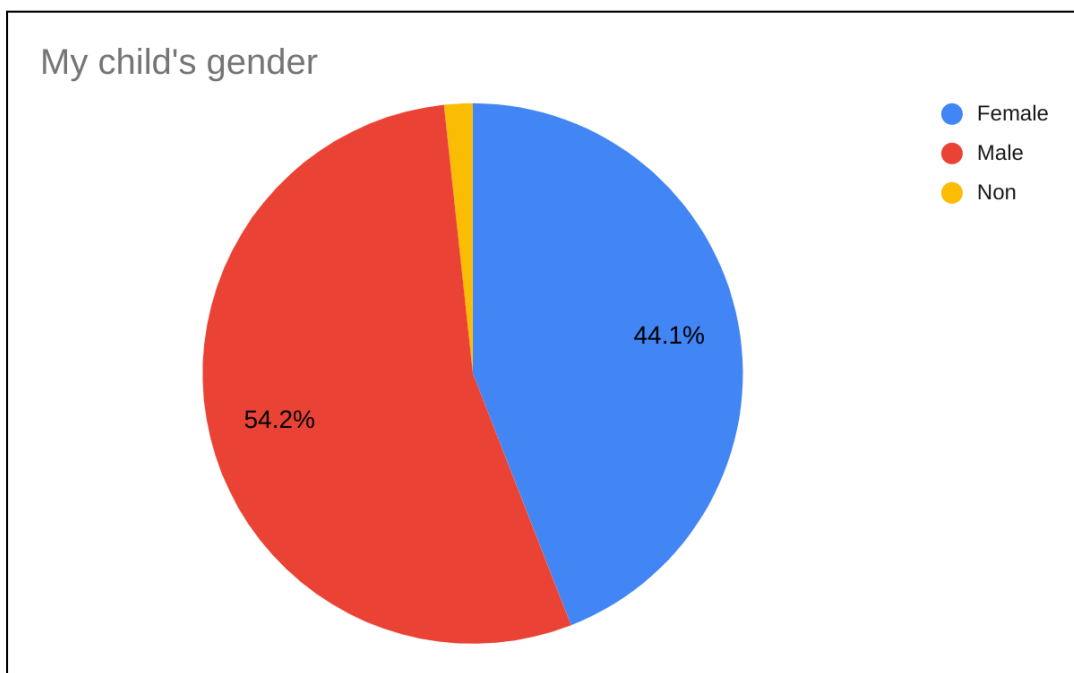


Figure 1: Pie chart demonstrating the gender of the parent/carer's child/young person

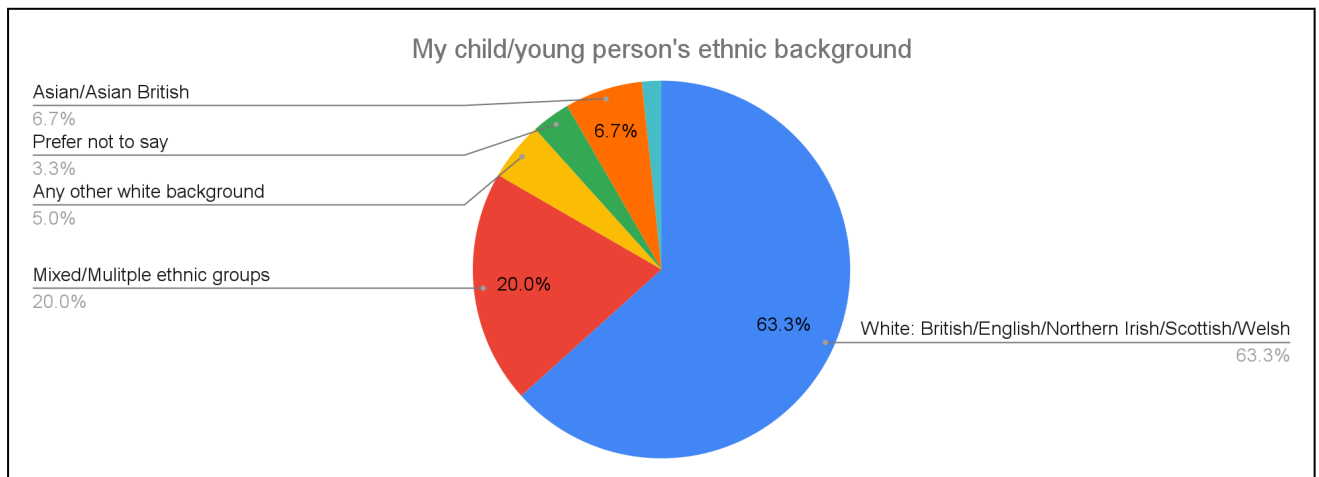


Figure 2: Pie chart demonstrating the ethnic background of the parent/carer's child/young person

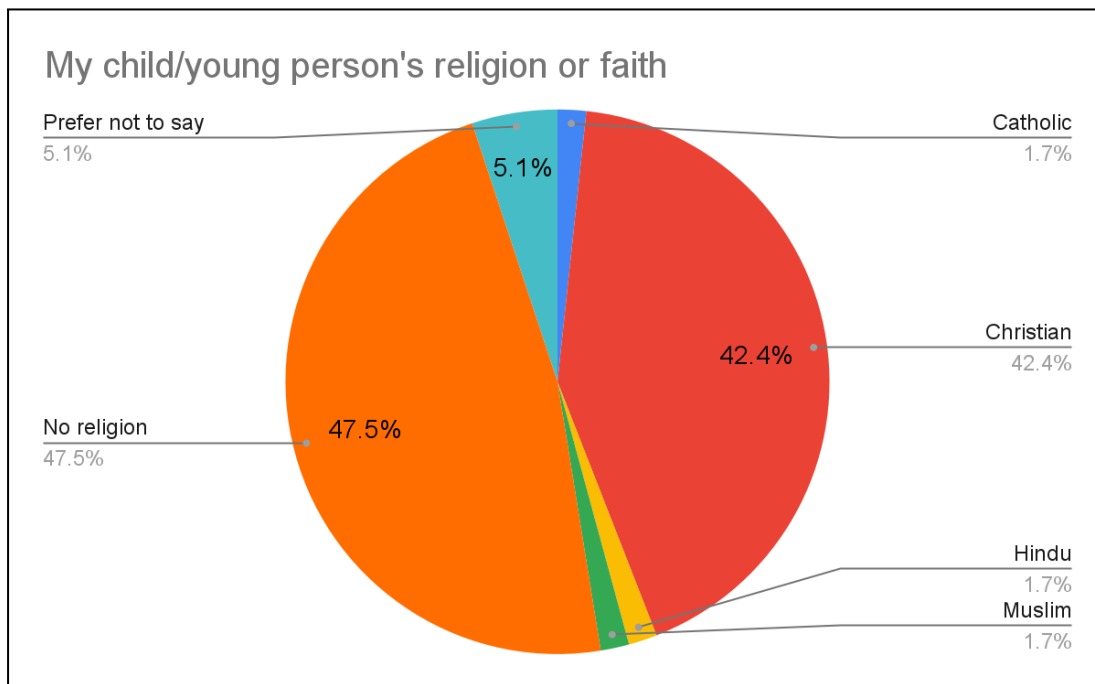


Figure 3: Pie chart demonstrating the religion or faith of the parent/carer's child/young person

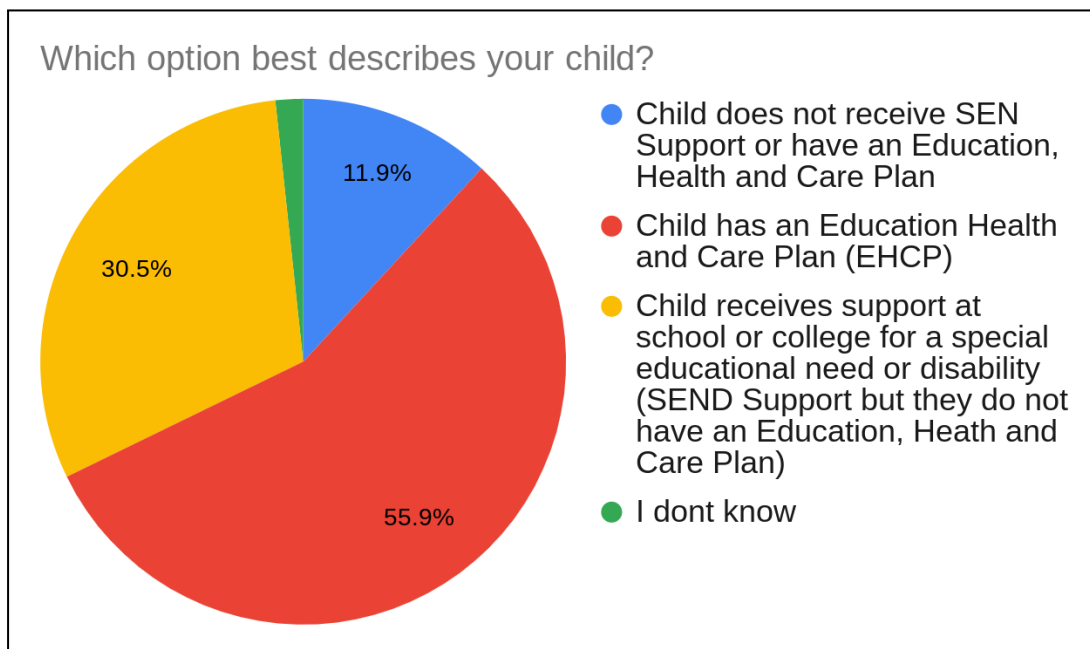


Figure 4: Pie chart demonstrating the percentage of parents and carers whose children and young people receive SEN support or have an Education Health and Care Plan

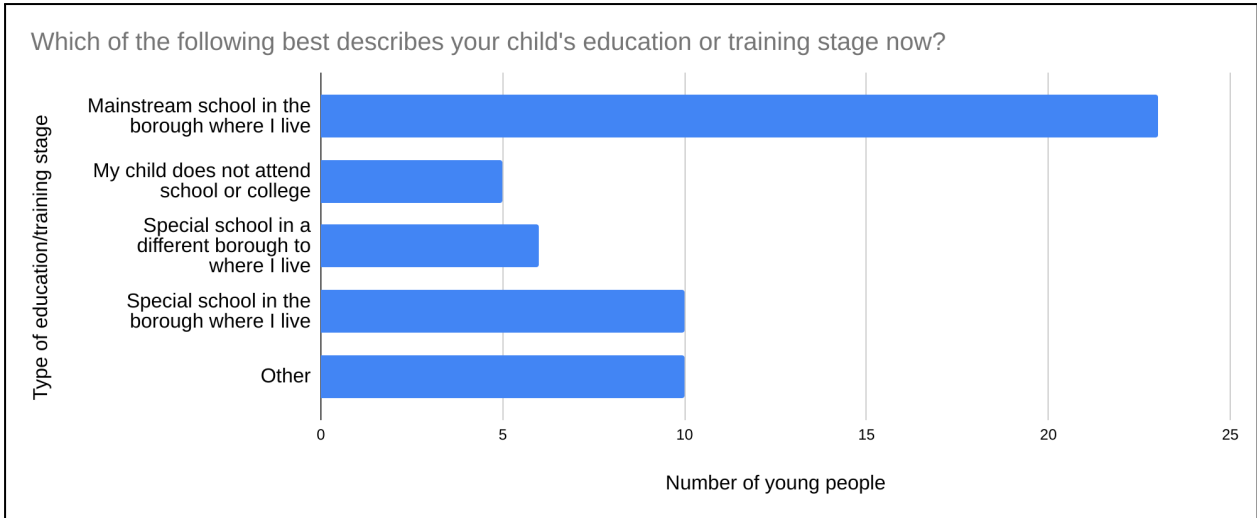


Figure 5: Bar graph demonstrating the education or training stage of children and young people with SEND

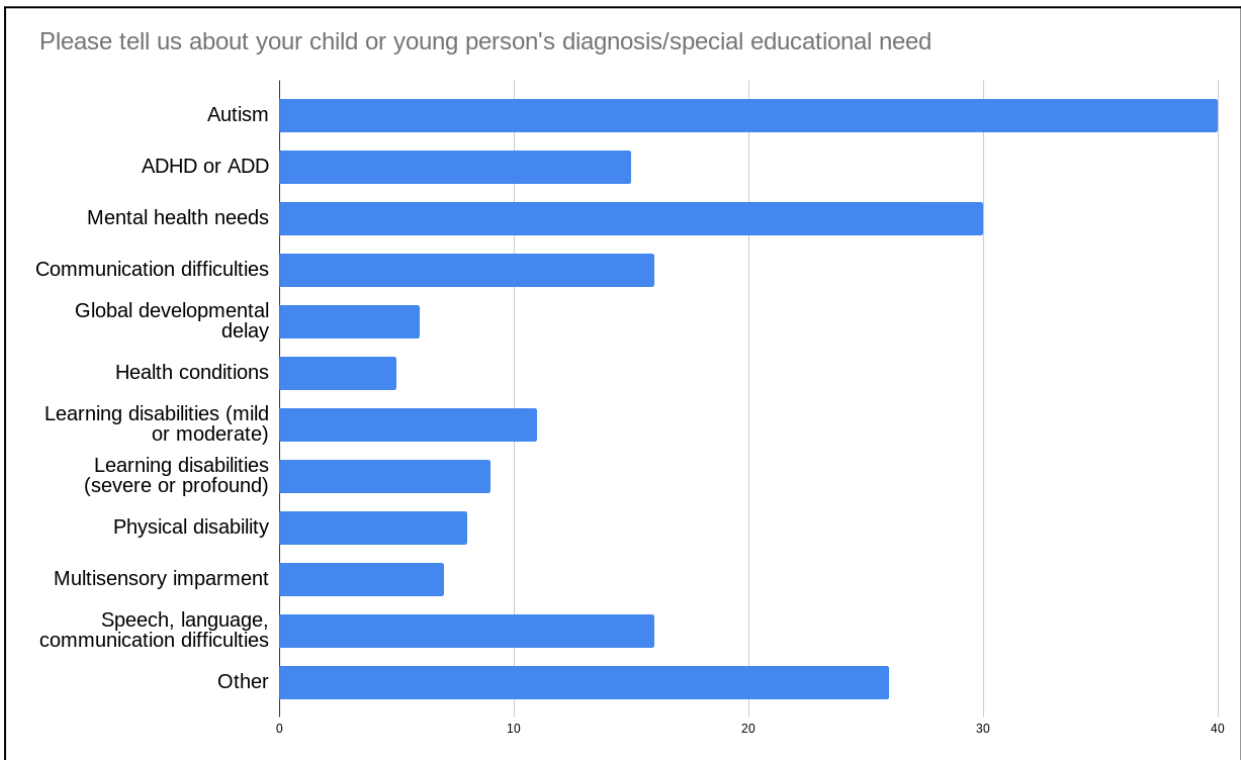


Figure 6: Bar graph showing the diagnosis/special educational need of children and young people with SEND
 Note: Parents and carers were able to select multiple diagnosis/need

1.2. Views on services

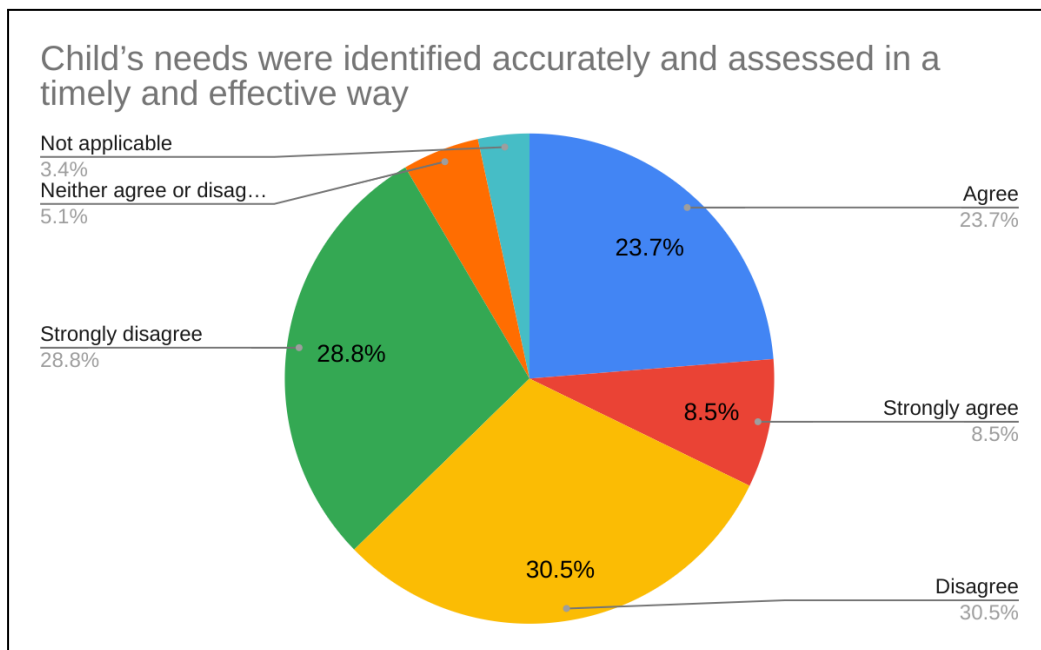


Figure 7: Pie chart demonstrating the percentage of parents and carers who felt their child's needs were identified accurately and assessed in a timely way

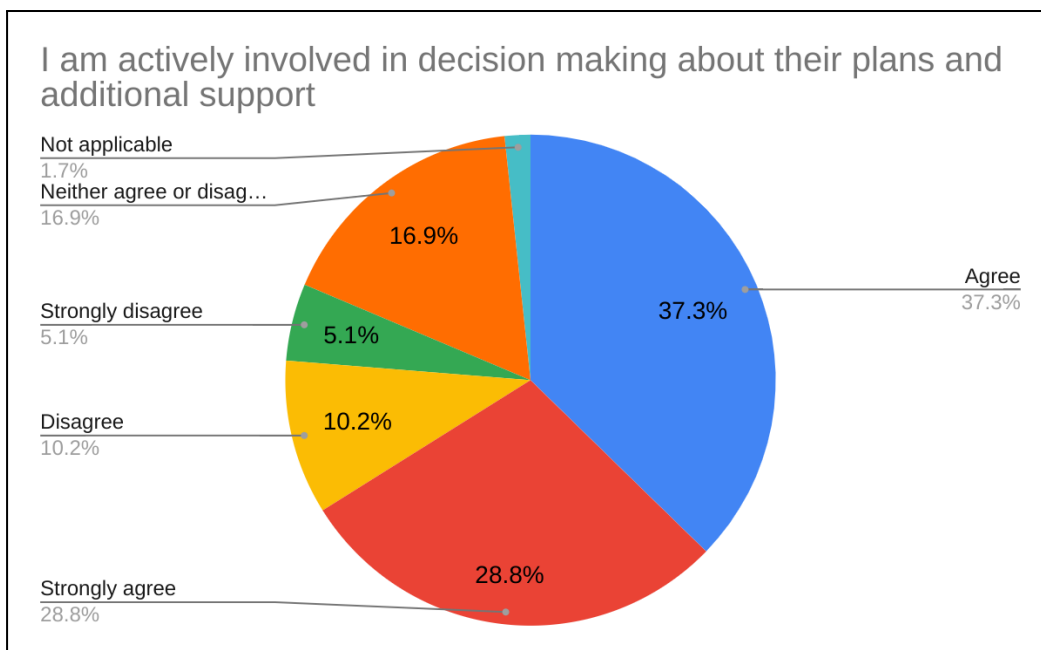


Figure 8: Pie chart demonstrating the percentage of parents and carers who felt they were actively involved in decision making about their child or young person's plans and additional support

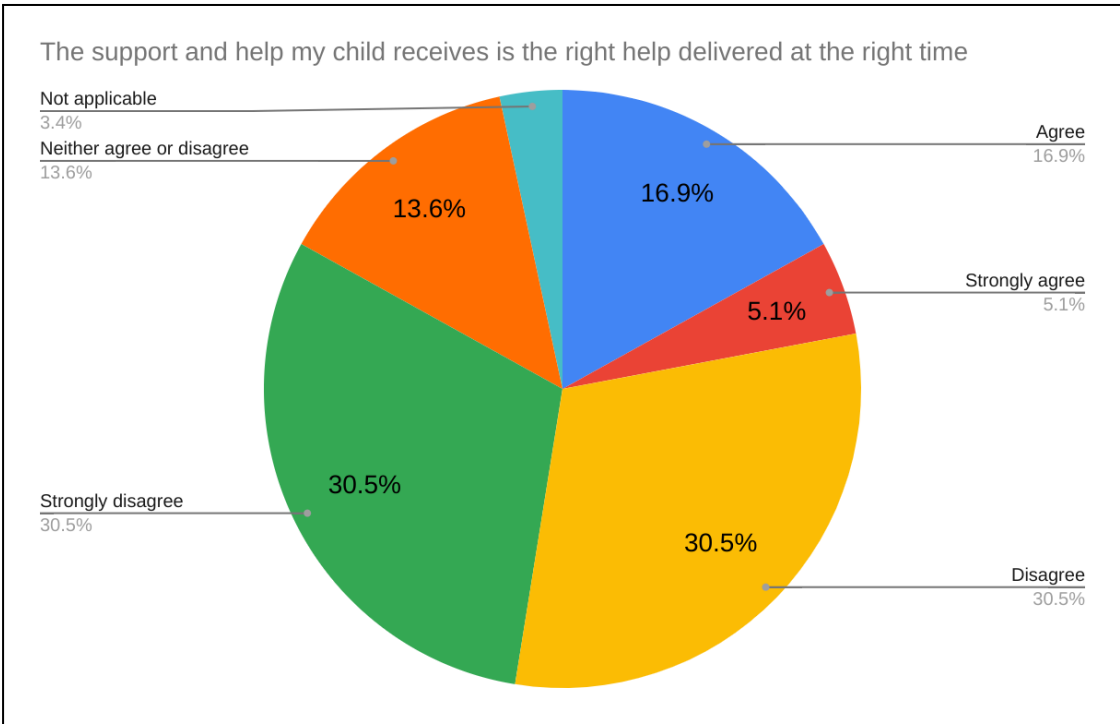


Figure 9: Pie chart demonstrating the percentage of children and young people who feel their child receives the right help delivered at the right time

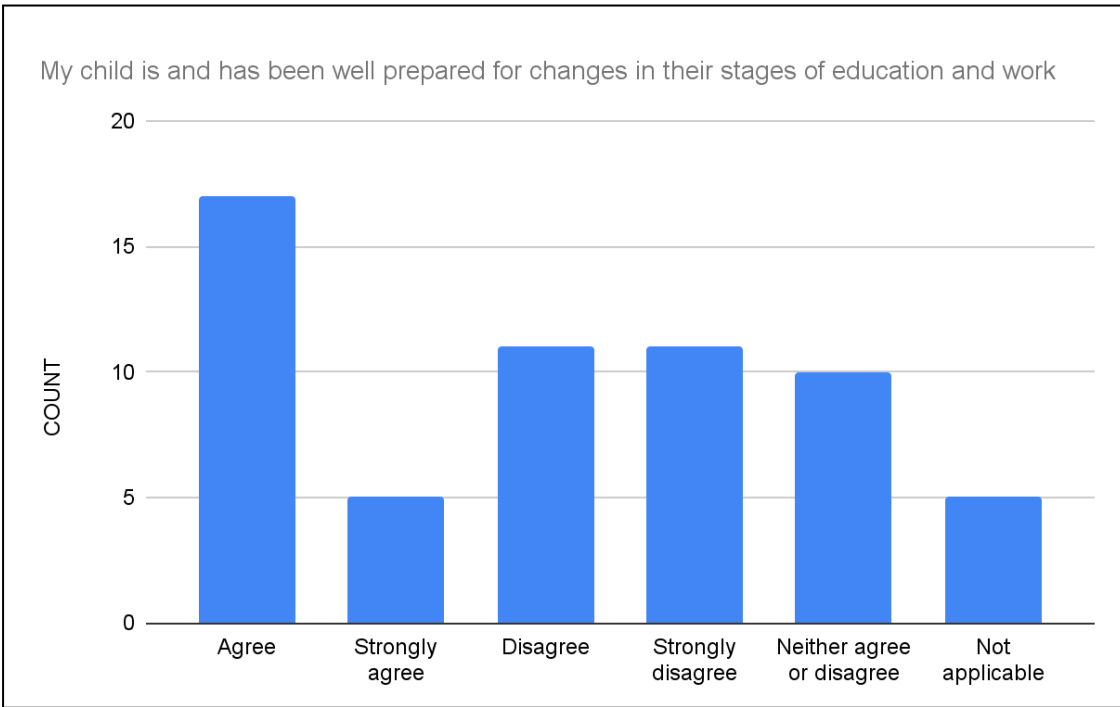


Figure 10: Bar graph demonstrating the number of parents and carers who feel their child or young person has been well prepared for changes in their stages of education and work

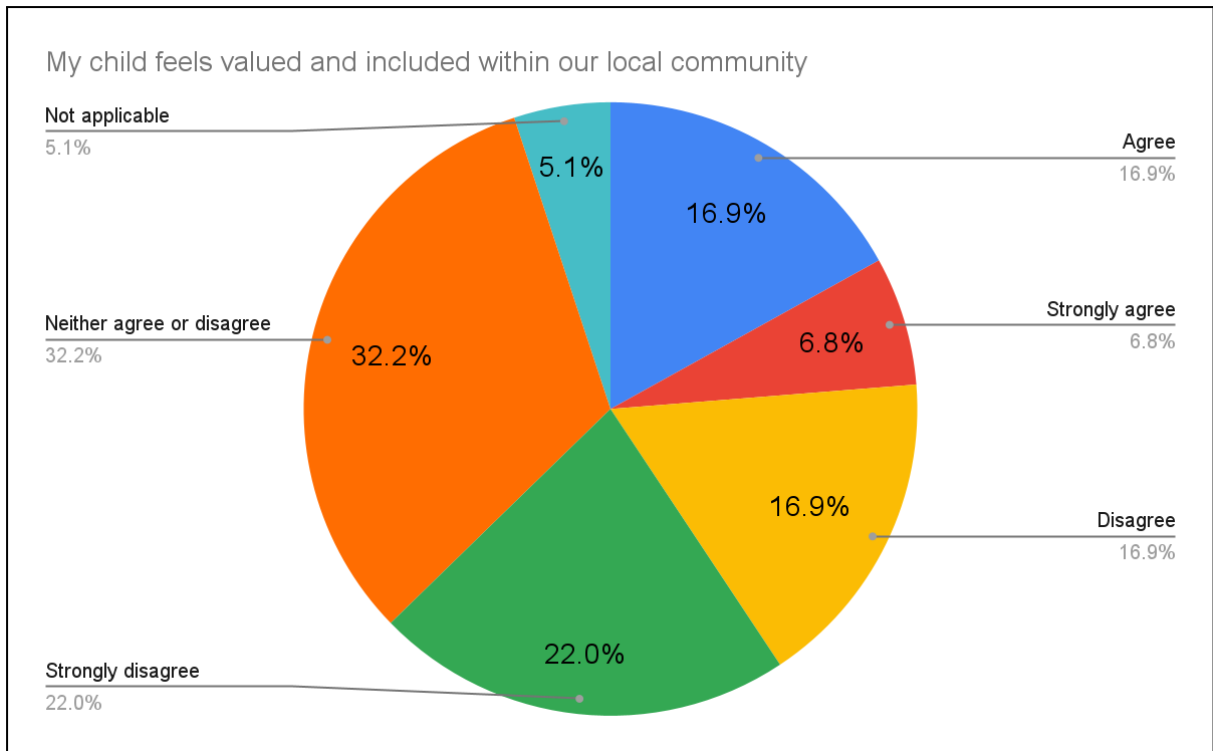


Figure 11: Pie chart demonstrating the number of parents and carers who feel their child or young person feels valued and included within their local community.

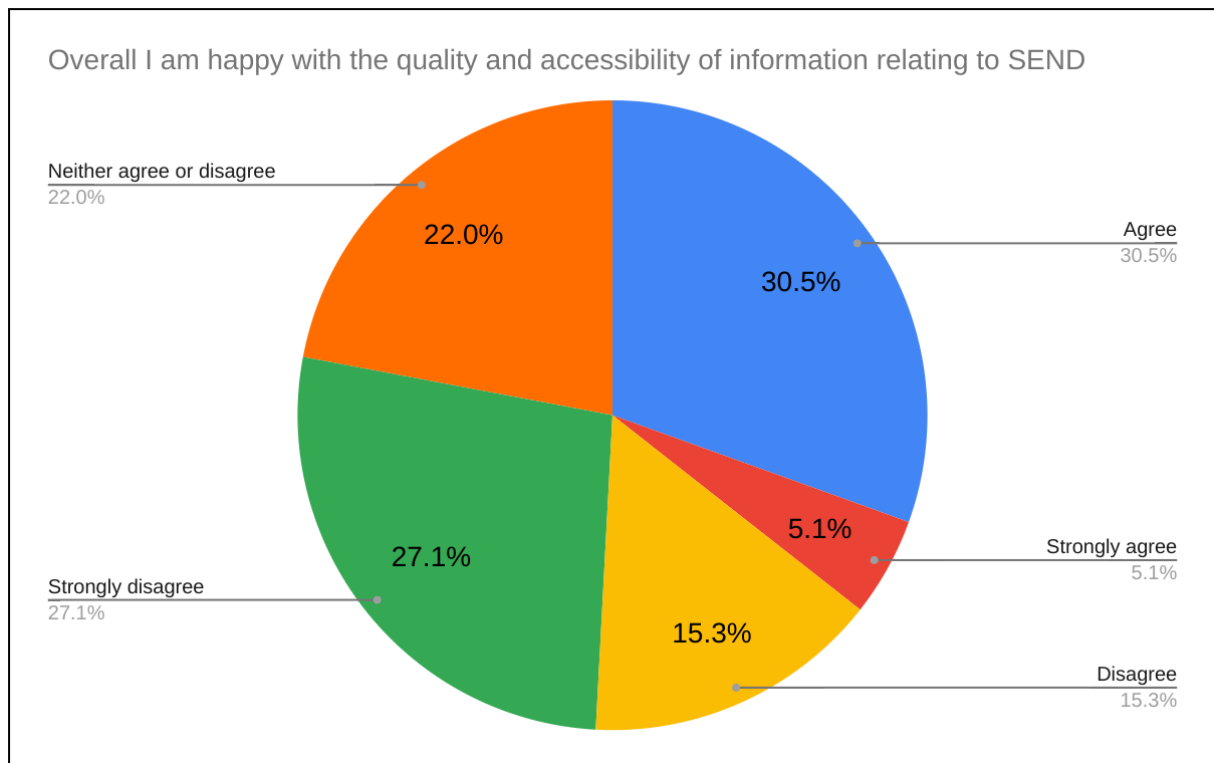


Figure 12: Pie chart demonstrating the percentage of parents and carers who are happy overall with the quality and accessibility of information relating to SEND

2. Qualitative data

Respondents identified areas of SEND provision that they felt were working well, in addition to a number of areas of concern and suggestions on how services could be improved. Some summary themes have been identified based on this qualitative data, evidenced by a selection of quotes. If you would like to see the complete spreadsheet of all responses, please let us know and we can provide this.

2.1 What's working well?

Involvement in planning and support - A number of parents and carers noted that they were involved in the planning for their child's provision of care, predominantly through communication with their child's school, in particular at primary school level. However, some parents and carers felt that although they were involved in the planning process, the correct professionals, e.g. OTs and educational psychologists, were not involved enough in the planning and review process.

'We have regular SEN review meetings and are invited to actively contribute to the SEN plan.'

'Currently the school are amazing at communicating with me but the worry is in secondary it won't be the same without an EHCP...'

'I attend regular meetings with the school and discuss his plan and his targets with them'

Voluntary agencies and short breaks provision - There were a number of voluntary agencies and short break offers which were highlighted by parents as being an invaluable support. Examples include TAG, which a number of parents described as an accessible, inexpensive provision for children with SEND, Crossroads Care, where parents described meeting fantastic staff, and Express CIC, which parents said was an amazing support. Parents also highlighted how useful it was when staff were able to signpost them to these provisions.

'The resources we have been pointed to have been really good - for example KITES, and also Express Cic. I would not have known about them otherwise.'

Schools and school staff - Although practice amongst schools varied according to feedback, a number of parents gave examples of great practice of school staff meeting their children's needs. One parent described their school meeting their child's needs through the SENCO's proactive approach to arranging meetings and referrals. Another parent described how their child's school was supportive both pre and post-diagnosis, and that the headteacher and SENCO were both engaged and took the matter seriously.

'The school had been exemplary in their dedication'

'Lucy's teachers have been very helpful and supportive. In the early (pre-diagnosis) days when pressing the case that Lucy needed to get support, the Headteacher and SEND rep' were still both fully engaged and gave us their time.'

'The staff are trying their best in constrained times.'

Transition points in education - Some parents and carers gave examples of good practice amongst schools in helping their children make the transition from nursery to primary school and from primary to secondary school as smooth as possible. There were also instances of secondary schools preparing young people for a transition from secondary school into employment.

'Transition from juniors to secondary worked well with a school tour and meeting staff.'

'My daughter is moving to secondary in September and I have been impressed that the new school SEN staff have been to visit her and other SEN children at their primary school to do Q&A session. She has also been offered additional SEN transition sessions above those offered generally to all year 6 children.'

'Excellent support from staff so far in discussing 16+ and career options with my daughter.'

2.2. What's a worry?

Identifying needs - A number of parents raised concerns that their child's needs were not identified or diagnosed early enough, which led to delays in getting support. Many parents noted that children mask their needs within school which can also lead to delays in getting access to support. It was suggested that better staff training in identifying needs would help to address this. In addition, some parents felt that they were not listened to by staff when expressing concerns about their child's needs at an early stage.

'It has felt like a real battle to gain support for my child as he was masking his disability'

'It took years for the paediatrician to refer us for an ASD assessment, despite very clear signs for 2/3 years. It took intervention from another health professional for the referral to be made.'

Waiting times for assessment and treatment of therapy provision and CAMHS- Many parents and carers highlighted the insufficient access to therapy and CAMHS. Parents recognised that resources were stretched, however felt that a number of key therapeutic and mental health services were understaffed and had long waiting times which needed to be addressed. A number of parents described having to privately fund therapy provision when told they would not be able to access this as part of their child's named provision. Some parents noted that delays in getting support have caused their children's anxiety/mental health to worsen.

'It was a stressful and long process to have my child assessed.'

'Too many waiting lists and too few staff'

'I had to fund an OT (occupational therapy) assessment privately and pay for sessions out of term time as the local authority were unable to provide it. '

Lack of therapy provision - In addition to waiting times for assessment, a number of parents spoke about being denied or unable to access therapy provision and instead having to pay for private treatment. Parents also spoke about therapy provision which was detailed in an EHCP not being provided.

'Had to fund an OT assessment privately and pay for sessions out of term time as the LA were unable to provide it.'

'There is insufficient therapy provision in special schools.'

Post-diagnosis support - A number of parents felt that there was not enough support post-diagnosis, which could lead to them feeling isolated and unsupported.

'Our daughter's Autistic Spectrum assessment took place and we then heard nothing for over 6 months'

Communication with parents - It was noted that there was a great degree of variability in terms of how parents and carers were communicated with by staff. Some parents felt frustrated that they were having to continuously provide the same information again and again to different organisations, and felt that there needed to be more of a multi-agency approach to information sharing. There were a number of parents who also felt ignored or not believed by medical professionals such as GPs, midwives and paediatricians. Other parents felt more communication was needed on what was available for their child at key points of transition, for example when moving into adult services, and what would be available for their children post-16.

'Every time I try and access services i.e. social care/ early help referral and parent carer needs assessment I have had to repeat my whole story'

'I feel my opinion is often ignored and my child's needs are dismissed.'

Access to information - Feedback on the accessibility of information on SEND varied. Some parents and carers felt that improvements had been made in being able to access useful information about SEND services. The Local Offer was described by some parents as 'very useful', with one parent noting that they found the keyword searches helpful. However, a number of parents and carers found it difficult to access information, with some stating the AfC website was 'confusing and unhelpful'. Given that there is such a vast amount of information,

parents who are new to SEND services noted that they don't know where to start or what to search for.

'It is difficult to access information on what support is available. It seems only if very specific questions are asked then information is forthcoming, and if you don't know the questions to ask, you have little chance of finding out the relevant answers. The special needs universe is complex and very difficult to navigate.'

'Website is hard to navigate unless you already know how the system works.'

Lack of access to mainstream clubs and activities - Some parents and carers noted that they were unable to access mainstream clubs and activities, due to a lack of inclusive practice and lack of staff who were able to support their child/young person.

'No clubs accept him due to one to one support...'

Preparing for adulthood - Despite some parents and carers feeling that their child's school helped to prepare them for adult life, there were also a number of parents who felt they did not have adequate information about their child's transition to adulthood and were concerned that their child or young person was not prepared for the future.

'The future is very concerning as I don't feel supported with what will happen next and what steps she should take after secondary school.'

2.3 What could be done differently?

Better and more tailored communication between staff and with parents and carers -

Parents and carers feel that teams need to communicate more effectively with each other about the children they work with. Some parents commented on the need for more training for caseworkers and SENCOs on clear communication with families and young people about their care.

'Provide more channels for parents to know where to find professional support if special needs are required.'

'It would also be lovely to have more opportunities to get together with other families of disabled children as it can feel very isolating.'

Support at SEN level - Parents have suggested more investment in services available to children on SEN support and early intervention, such as the Education Inclusion Service. Parents felt that meeting the need at the SEN Support level will help ease pressures in the system. A number of parents also noted that school staff should be given more information

and training on making reasonable adjustments for children and young people with SEND who are in mainstream schools.

'The Education Inclusion Service has done a wonderful job of supporting us through this really tough time. Their expertise needs to be shared as widely as possible with children out of school'

"I know you are limited by the funding so the lack of resource is not in your control, but there needs to be more push for additional support in schools for SEN children without pressure for parents to go privately for assessment or therapy."

Improving the transition process - A number of parents and carers suggested improvements that they feel could be made to the transition from children to adults services across health, education and social care. Parents suggested that the transition take place over a longer period of time, and that childrens and adult teams work in a more joined-up approach with strong communication links throughout.

'All teams need to communicate with each other to help create smooth transitions and create more positive results'

'Transitions need to be undertaken on multiple days'

More inclusive clubs and activities - Many parents and carers would like to see more clubs and activities in Kingston that are accessible for children with SEND. Parents report that a number of the current short breaks offers are non-inclusive and unaffordable. More information on how clubs and providers could apply for funding for additional support in order to provide SEND spaces would be useful. A number of parents described how they particularly struggled during the school holidays and felt that more inclusive activities for children with SEND during this time would be helpful.

'No clubs accept him due to [the need for] one to one support.'

Improve availability of health provision - Many parents were keen for the local area to find ways of being more flexible with therapy appointments for vulnerable children. One parent also commented that Moor Lane nursing team were an excellent support, and that it would be useful to have an out of hours staff member who could be on-call at night.