

Pinpoint's Annual Survey Report

October 2025



Summary Headlines

There remains a low uptake of our annual survey with only 50 responses despite offering a prize as an incentive to take part. There remains a low levels of engagement from professionals to advertise the survey. We do know that the Ofsted ASEND Inspection had an exceptionally high uptake of parental responses and our survey results still largely mirror those heard by Ofsted. We offer regular opportunities throughout the year for parents and carers to tell us what is working and not working and so, perhaps an annual survey is not a high priority for parents and carers who have already had their voices heard in other ways. We also hear that parents are frustrated that although they offer their voice regularly, they do not recognise any tangible change to on the ground services that results.

Of those who did respond, the overall sentiment remains mixed, with many families reporting continued challenges accessing and co-ordinating support across education, health and social care, which is broadly similar to the end of year survey in April 2025. There are concerns about the messages we are hearing from those who do not report satisfaction with their experiences of the SEND system in Cambridgeshire. The free text comments demonstrate high levels of dissatisfaction across the board but it is important to embed this in the context that as a forum we are more likely to hear from those for whom things are not working smoothly.

We continue to hear predominantly from parents and carers of school age children and a few whose children are in the early years and secondary school age brackets. This supports the work that we know Cambridgeshire are keen to achieve to identify needs of children and young people earlier and to get them the right support at the right time. However, it is concerning that even those who are early on their journey appear to be struggling to get the needs of their children met. Those who have young people in the Preparing for Adulthood stages are overwhelmingly negative about their experiences. This sits within the context that the majority of parents and carers that we hear from have young people who attend mainstream settings and we know that Preparing for Adulthood is not working well for that cohort.

The survey results offer an opportunity to look at what quick wins can be taken to support parental resilience and to help children and young people to get their needs met earlier in their journey. We know that those in the system are working hard to address these concerns which will not be a surprise to any of them. We also know that there are systemic flaws which are being exacerbated by an extreme lack of capacity. We also know that some measures have been taken to address these systemic issues, but the impact is not yet being felt by children, young people and their families.

The issues raised by the survey have already been raised by Pinpoint over the last 12 months and are well known to the Local Authority and Health – there are no surprises and the areas identified by Pinpoint and this survey have been agreed as priorities: compliance, Preparing for Adulthood/transitions and improving SEN Support.

Key messages

Free text commentary predominantly reflects frustrations and disappointments – it is rare that we get positive feedback from this section of the survey. The key message is that parent carers are feeling

more dissatisfied and feeling that services have got worse for their child or young person since April 2025. The main themes here are outlined below:

Nearly everyone told us it is quite or very challenging to ensure their child/young person's needs are met.

Statutory Assessment team communication and compliance with timescales continue to be a concern with parent carers using words such as battle and fight.

Preparing for Adulthood continues to cause concern in terms of those cliff edge finishes for young people. There is variable understanding of the offer and it is inconsistently experienced with gaps outside of the education pathway.

Parent carers are concerned about the siloed working of professionals and systems meaning that they regularly have to explain their situation repeatedly. Joined up working across services remains a top concern, with repeated storytelling and hand-offs cited by families.

There is cause for concern about a lack of social care support for children and young people with SEND.

Waiting times for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments, diagnostic assessments and mental health support are too long and there is a lack of support for those who are waiting, often without communication about how long the wait might be.

Many parent carers are seeking private support but this creates a divide for those who have the means to be able to do this, and those who do not. Those who get a private diagnosis then face difficulties when this is deemed to need to be ratified before further help can be given.

Parental resilience is exceptionally low with parents talking about burnout in themselves as well as their children and young people. This raises concerns about their ability to be able to continue in their caring role and the additional pressure that this has the potential to add to an already struggling system. Families describe ongoing 'battles' for support and communication gaps whilst waiting.

Priorities and Quick Wins

Improve communication and support while families are waiting.

Strengthen co-production and consistent parental involvement across SEND support and EHCP processes.

Focus on joined up working across the local area partnership.

Clarify and broaden the Preparing for Adulthood offer beyond education and for a larger majority of the cohort.

Provide clearer expected timescales and regular updates for families on waiting lists.

Make sure the support whilst you are waiting offer is strengthened and widely known about.

Share simple, parent facing guidance on who does what across the service and demonstrate how they interconnect.

Promote inclusive our of school opportunities with reasonable adjustments and accessible information.

Review by questions

- Parental confidence about their engagement has decreased since April, however 46% of parents stating that they were not adequately involved with 4% of those stating they were not asked for their views at all, even in statutory processes.

94% of the parent carers who responded are confident that they do understand their child's needs well. However, 76% of parent carers state that they have not been given any help to understand their child's needs.

Alarming, over half of parent carers that responded do not feel that professionals working with their child or young person have a good understanding of their needs.

Worryingly, 96% of those responding told us that it is challenging to get their child or young person's needs met.

- The number of parent carers who told us that they have had to rely on legal means in order to get needs met has remained the same as April 2025 at 13%.

More than half of those we heard from have an Education, Health and Care Plan in place for their child or young person suggesting that things are difficult for families even with this high level of support in place.

- The legal requirements are either poorly understood and inconsistently implemented or are unknown and non-compliant in some cases.

Just over 1/4 report that they had no involvement in SEND processes and more than half are not satisfied with the ongoing monitoring and assessment of their children's needs. This is a decrease in satisfaction since April 2025.

- There remains work to be done to ensure all services are considered to perform well and work together around the family.

Nearly 3/4 of parent carers are dissatisfied with how well services work together. This is higher than April 2025.

Around 3/4 of the respondents told us that they are unhappy with the service they receive from education, with around half of respondents being unhappy with the service that they receive from health. Nearly 2/3 of respondents were negative about the support that they receive from social care.

There is a decrease in the number of children only accessing school on a part time timetable but still 10% who are not accessing any education.

- Only 28% of people we heard from have had a positive experience with searching for information on the SEND information hub (Local Offer) and, 16% of people told us that they have never heard of it.

80% of respondents told us that it is not easy to get information that they need about their child’s needs.

- 56% of respondents told us that their children and young people do feel included in out of school activities which is an improvement since April 2025. those who cited that there children do not feelin included gave a variety of reasons and suggestions for improvement that can be found within this report.
- ·Preparing for Adulthood remains a priority – it’s not universally known by the target group and what is known does not fully reflect an offer beyond that of education.

70% of those we heard from reported a negative experience at age 14+ with 40% having not heard of Preparing for Adulthood. More than 3/4 of those we heard from told us that their experience at 18+ was negative and they were not well informed or not informed at all.

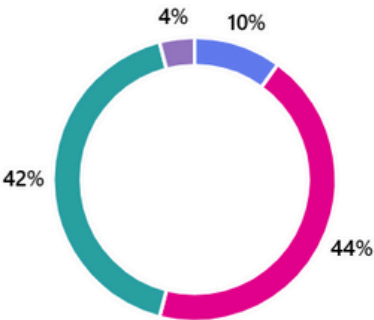
The numbers of parent carers who felt they had been given information about Preparing for adulthood topics is low, and nobody told us they had received information about independent living options or wills and trusts.

Just under 1/4 of respondents told us that their experience of social care at age 18+ was positive.

Question responses

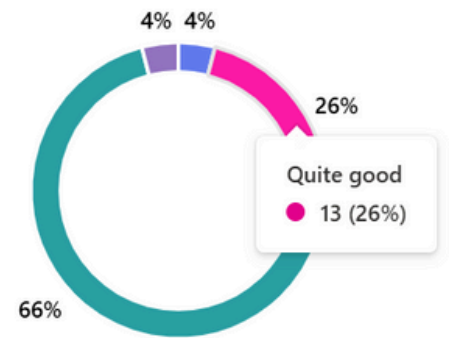
Please tell us how well your views were taken into account to support your child/young person when your child/young person's needs were identified?

● Very well	5
● Quite well	22
● Not very well	21
● I was not asked my views	2



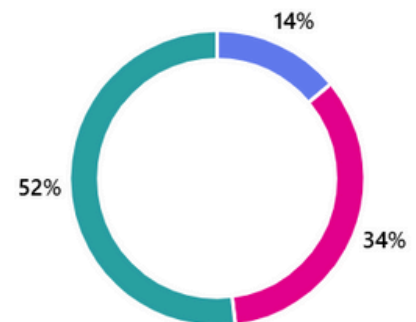
Please rate the support you have received from education services

Very good	2
Quite good	13
Not very good	33
Not applicable	2



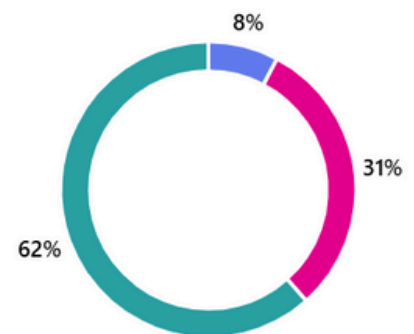
Please rate the support you have received from health services

Very good	7
Quite good	17
Not very good	26



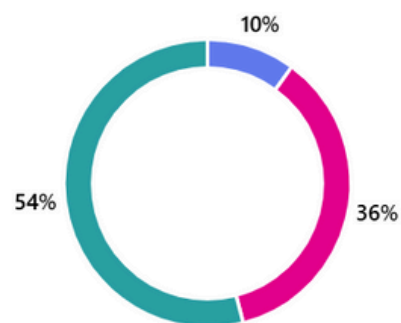
Please rate the support you have received from social services

Very good	3
Quite good	12
Not very good	24



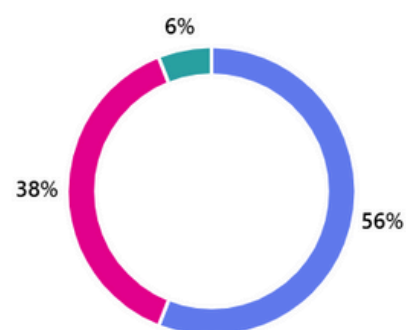
How well do you feel professionals who support your child/young person understand their identified needs?

Very Well	5
Quite well	18
Not very well	27



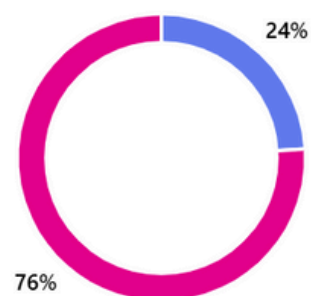
How well do you feel you understand your child/young person's needs?

Very well	28
Quite well	19
Not very well	3



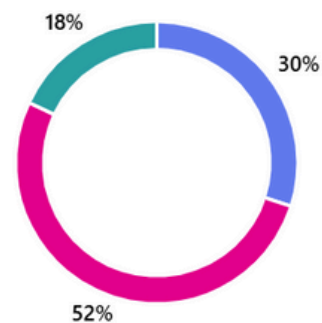
Once your child/young person's needs were identified, were you given any support to help you understand them?

Yes	12
No	38



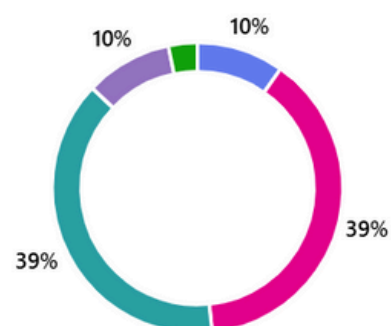
As a result of identifying your child/young person's needs, are they receiving any of the following support with their education?

● SEN Support	15
● Education, Health and Care Plan	26
● No additional support	9



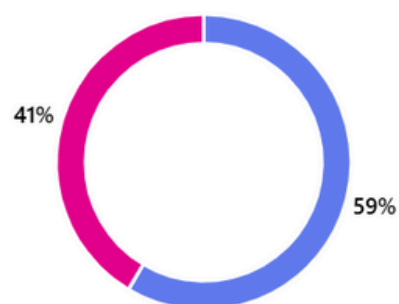
If your child/young person has ECH Plan, was the Plan issued after:

● Transfer from a statement	3
● A new assessment	12
● Annual review (already have an EHCP)	12
● Mediation	3
● Tribunal	1



If your child/young person has SEN Support or an EHC Plan, does their education provider involve you in identifying and/or reviewing any support they receive?

● Yes	24
● No	17



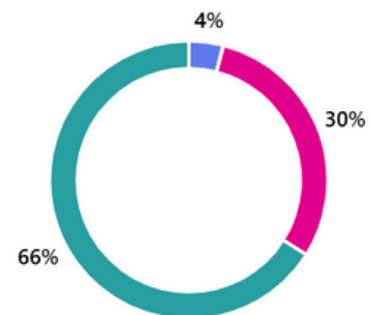
Does your child / young person feel included in out-of-school activities with their peers?

● Yes	28
● No	22



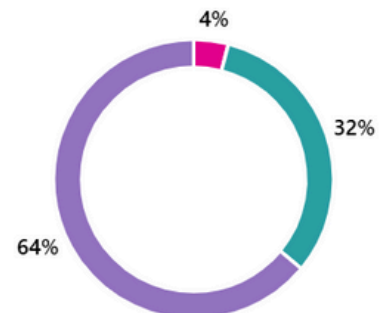
How satisfied are you with the ongoing monitoring and assessment of your child/young person's needs?

● Very satisfied	2
● Quite satisfied	15
● Not very satisfied	33



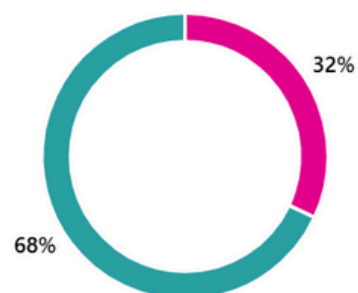
Did/do you find it challenging to ensure that your child/young person's needs are met?

● No, I do/did not find it challenging	0
● Not very challenging	2
● Quite challenging	16
● Very challenging	32



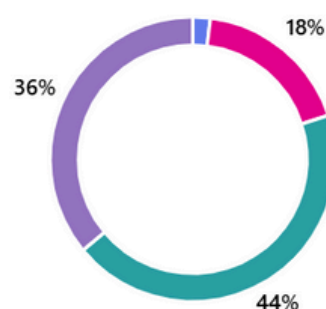
In your opinion, how well do services and professionals work together to support your child/young person?

Very well	0
Quite well	16
Not very well	34



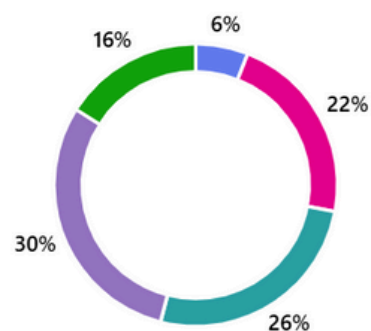
How easy do you find it to get information about what services are available and what they do?

Very easy	1
Quite easy	9
Not very easy	22
Difficult	18



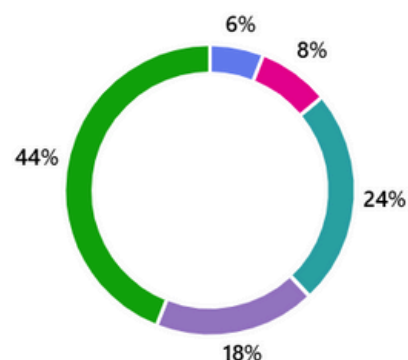
If you have used the 0-25 SEND Information Hub (Local Offer), how easy was it to navigate? Please choose the most appropriate statement.

I found what I needed easily	3
I found what I needed after some looking	11
I couldn't find what I was looking for	13
I have never used it	15
I don't know what the SEND Information Hub is	8



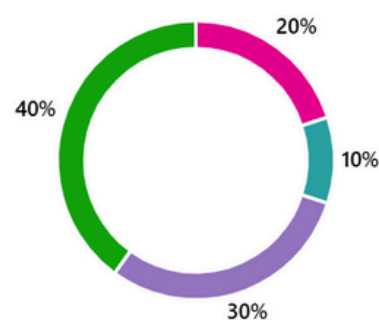
If you've used the SEND Information Hub (Local Offer), how would you rate the information?

Very good	3
Quite good	4
Ok	12
Not very good	9
Have not used it	22



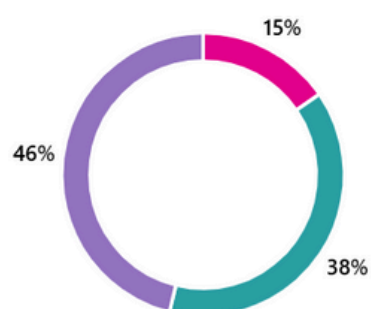
If your young person is older than 14, what has been your experience of the support for Preparing for Adulthood?

Very good	0
Quite good	4
Ok	2
Not very good	6
I have not heard of Preparing for Adulthood	8



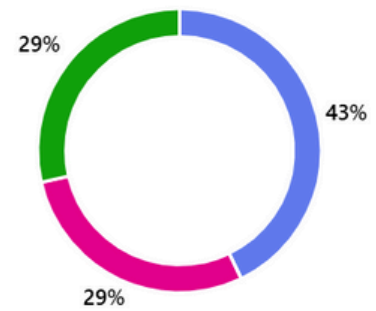
If you have a young person over 18 years old, how well-informed do you feel about how you can support them?

Very well informed	0
Quite well informed	2
Not very well informed	5
Not informed	6



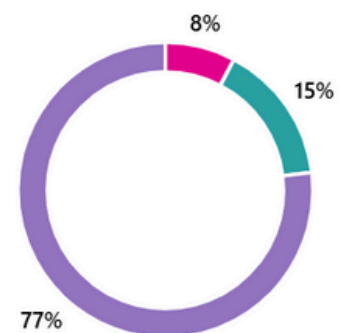
If your young person is 16 and older, have you/they received information on the following:

Further Education options	3
Adult Social Care Support options	2
Independent Living options	0
Wills and trusts	0
Benefit and finances	2



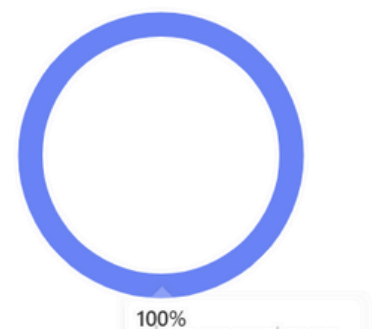
If your young person is older than 18, how well supported are they by Adult Social Care?

Very Well	0
Quite well	1
Not very well	2
Not applicable	10



Which of these best describes your role?

I am a parent carer	50
I am a carer in kinship	0
I am a foster parent	0
I am a supportive relative	0



We asked what would make a difference for your child or young person to feel more included in out of school activities

Just to have his needs identified and for people to know how to deal with him and his needs.

Her energy levels are usually too low to participate in after school activities, her peers have stopped inviting her. They assume she won't go/attend, but they will talk about the events in her presence.

She feels it's insensitive and not inclusive. As she would still liked to be asked, on the rare occasion she can.

The existence of suitable activities in suitable (and secure) environments, with an appropriate number of children attending to meet my child's needs; understanding and solid training on ND for those running out-of-school activities; subsidies to ensure the cost of attending a group that needs to be smaller to avoid overwhelm (otherwise cost is prohibitive); 1:1 support organised by the group, not the parent.

My child needs parental support to access out of school activities, most activities don't allow this. There aren't many activities that my child enjoys doing.

Small quiet groups.

Clubs where they understand his needs and are equipped and resourced to meet them.

There are no clubs for him to go to.

Needs more support in unstructured settings.

My son is currently finding it very difficult to leave the house so he cannot access out of school activities.

Activity providers to have a greater understanding and acceptance of SEMH needs including behaviour support. 1:1 support to be available for activities.

He was kicked out of the local football club at 7 years old. He had been going as train only as he did not cope with matches and the coach was only interested in making a winning team, despite us having been clear about his difficulties and the difference attending was making to him. He now won't play football as he sees himself as not good enough. An inclusive attitude would have made the difference. The activities he is able to access some of the time are the ones with inclusive coaches who accept him and make him feel liked and accepted.

More services that include mainstream and send children to mix.

I don't know - they keep getting excluded from normal groups as they say can't meet his needs.

If school would put on any activities and include him.

Easier to access activities, more interest based rather than physical, with smaller groups and support to access.

Being invited to join others to the park/for play dates.

An education.

Short breaks help pay for football club coding club and 121 swimming lessons. Without this son would be isolated. School do want to include him in after school or school sporting teams.

More groups specifically for SEN children which are less overwhelming but also where other parents understand what you are going through.

Same, familiar staff every time that have knowledge & experience of autism and ADHD.

Small group size (e.g. 5 or less).

Non-school setting (suffers from school-based trauma, so school based activities are a non-starter).

Authorise emotional co-regulation with a parent-carer present, or service animal/pet therapy.

Authorise bringing own snacks and drink.

Authorise bringing transitional object.

Pairing up with other neurodiverse children: i.e. avoid double empathy problem.

Pairing up with older or younger children (i.e. receive support from older child, or develop confidence and independence by supporting younger child). See for example,

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5ypm4z19myo>

Flexible payment options (i.e. per session, or monthly): paying up front for a full year or full term is prohibitive given that there is a high likelihood of our daughter finding that she cannot cope with the activity and dropping out after just a few sessions. Where low demand avoidance is an issue (esp. PDA), then the pressure to attend in order not to waste the money invested, can be enough to trigger non-attendance.

Some of the free text comments

Sendiass very helpful.

I have found them very unhelpful unless your child goes into a course or education other than that they don't help at all.

It's a fight. It's exhausting.

The SA Team delays are completely unacceptable and ruin children's and families lives. The current system where a child must first be broken before receiving the support they need is barbaric.

At every stage there are delays and parent blame. The system is set up in an adversarial way. My child doesn't fit into the boxes of support that the LA provides, they fall through the gaps. Nobody seems to know how to help my child, so they delay, pass them on to someone else to deal with or blame parents or the child. I am exhausted dealing with the system.

CCC is a nightmare. No case officer since May and by the sounds it we aren't expecting one any time soon. The case worker we had in January to May didn't reply to any emails. The senior staff both above who we should have is off. We have no replies to emails and no one will talk to us about our child who's struggling in mainstream. Social care we filled out short breaks assessment form over the phone with CCC they lost that. I just don't feel I can face doing all the paperwork again.

It has been over 6 months since our annual review and for the second year in a row we still don't have a finalised plan back from the SAT team. It was decided by school, other professionals and parents at the AR that mainstream cannot meet need any more and that the child should move to specialist. We are still waiting, with very little communication from the team. The SENCO and I are constantly chasing but with little response. I really don't want to put in a formal complaint, because it is so much more admin and stress, but I don't think I have any choice anymore. Why is it that they only respond when you complain. It just turns the whole working relationship sour and makes it so much harder for us to work together for the child. There is also very little oversight into if schools are

implementing the provision for an EHCP, but no where for parents to turn for help in enforcing this. Surely the LA want to know their money is actually being used for what it was supplied for?

We are struggling to find mental health professionals that can help an autistic young person with his anxiety and not just see it as part of the autism. His school keeps referring him for mental health support. His school took him to the Preparing for Adulthood event in Burgess Hall and that was very beneficial for him, the school and us as parents. Thank you for putting it up.

I have been told for the past 2 years that an EHCNA was needed but that they needed to wait for a diagnosis. This I now know is false information. The school fails to meet need, leadership lack oversight of the SEND provision in the school and this contributes to poor educational provision whilst increasing low self esteem and poor well being.

The thing we are most disappointed in is that everyone was so convinced that a mainstream school would be appropriate and he was suspended within the first 8 weeks of joining and continues to have incidents where needs cannot be met. Now we have no hope of getting him special provision for the next few years as there are no places.

SAT team are appalling. Still out of statutory timescales. Still no communication. Child in crisis in a mainstream setting who say they can't meet need and yet no response from SAT about consultations which started in June! And no final plan issued so I have no idea if they have even agreed that specialist is required and therefore can't start the appeals process if necessary. But when you phone up for information they tell you they are busy and have a headache! This is not my job, this is my life and I don't expect to be told their problems - the legal timescale is still there and still not being adhered to. My problem is my child's needs, not their headache.

CAMHS insisted on ratifying his diagnosis so they could offer support from the neuro team. They didn't want me in the room, but due to anxiety that was the only way he would engage. After me arguing, they agreed. Having now sat in on the assessment, I was appalled - it was geared at a much younger child (maybe 5) and my son wouldn't engage because he felt patronised. He was diagnosed with situational mutism and then offered CBT - which is not going to work and is also harmful to autistic people. He is now in a fantastic school who support him well after the trauma he went through in mainstream where nobody believed me that there was a problem. He is in his GCSE year and we have literally been given no information about post 16 options or deadlines. I have had to scour the internet to try to find out what might be available in terms of A levels and T levels which feels like a full time job in itself. We have had no contact from the ANT team. No PfA has been mentioned or put in place. There is no support.

Very hard to access any support - needs not listened to / heard via state school. Had to pull child out to small private school to get support and also use private speech therapist. Due ASD assessment via RTC next week. School sendco laughed at me when I said explained needs at home and in other settings. No conversation or understanding. Because child is bright repeatedly told they wouldn't qualify for EHCP. Private school are now monitoring needs. State school wouldn't support to transition out of school safely at end of day or meet basic support needs around encouraging child to eat. We proactively moved schools to preserve well being - it feels as though the current set up only supports once the child has failed and hit crisis. It's too late then. CAMHS told us the child should be in a specialist school. No joined up thinking or overview of the child...

Disregarded and left to deal with everything on my own. Out of school for a year and no one cared.

My son became very unwell in February 2025. He turned 18 in June 2025 and due to not yet being 18 when he fell ill, we had several months COMPLETELY UNSUPPORTED because he was waiting to access adult services. LDP and Social Services have been brilliant now we can access them, but we were in crisis six months ago!!! It really should be seamless and there should be SOMETHING in place of you hit crisis point near to turning 18.

Adoptive parents need proper respite care to be provided. Service professionals are great at holding meetings but they never actually provide any useful support. Waiting lists for assessments, therapy etc are too long and too difficult to access. EHCP updates take months - we are still waiting for a finalised report 37 weeks after the annual review was held. Schools need to stop suspending and excluding SEND children and need to actually support them with their needs. There needs to be more specialist school places.

Woeful. The professionals working with my child are great. The SAT team are awful. We reviewed an EHCP which wasn't even finalised.

Despite child being in crisis it has been impossible to access any therapeutic support for him, everything has been based on me as a parent. The timeframe for getting an ADHD and autism assessments are not good enough and child went into crisis waiting. We got a diagnosis privately but are now having to look at private for medication as the wait will be too long and he is not able to access education due to his ADHD. EHCPs take too long and despite being told we were being prioritised we still have not heard back from the ed psych allocated to give us an idea of how long it will be. My worry is my child will be fully out of school by the time he is assessed and that we won't be able to get him back in, even to a specialist placement. There isn't the funding for support needed and there is not enough funding for SENCOs. Children end up in a queue waiting for their referral to be made and paperwork completed as there are limited hours SENCOs can be funded for by schools due to their finances. It feels like early intervention is something that can only be dreamt of.

It's impossible to access any OT support. We keep being rejected. The EHCP procedures took well over a year and a half. We are still on the 3 year waiting lists for ADHD and ASD assessments.

Currently feeling very despondent about the level of services - we have been battling for a year to get him seen by occupational therapy (ended up going private) and in the EHCP process for over two years I am worried that existing support will be cut and that this will have an impact on his ability to attend school and my ability to work as he grows.

Not good at all.

The biggest single thing keeping me informed and my moral high is Pinpoint and the support the team offer.

Trying to find how to get an assessment is hard. Trying to get schools and LA to communicate is hard. Private assessment is too expensive. Support is stretched and there is no money because it's wasted on inflated salaries, taxi's who over charge and Provision that is taking advantage of the whole of this sector.

School have not acted and met objectives in the plan, senco and Headteacher sent a EHCP AR to SAT that was objected to by parents and our views ignored. School didn't acknowledge LA EP ROI from AR. LA have taken months to start to resolve after using advocacy.

Awful, dismissive, delaying and uncaring.

Education system let my son down know end , ended up going to 4 primary schools due to exclusions, 3 attempts to get a EHCP , education system completely let my son down up to the age 12/13.

School said issue. So had to go along with assessments. Then he was diagnosed ASD.

I feel like the wait for an EHCP is ridiculous. My 4 year old started reception in September and is on a reduced timetable of 1 hour a day yet I've been told it's likely another 22 weeks before we even get an EP (applied in May). I've had to give up work and we are selling our house due to lack of support meaning I need to stay home as my child isn't in school.

About the respondents

Location

Fenland 4%

East Cambridgeshire 10%

South Cambridgeshire 42%

Huntingdonshire 36%

Cambridge City 8%

Gender of child

Male 60%

Female 36%

Non-binary 2%

Prefer not to say 2%

Age of child

0-4 years 10%

5-10 years 46%

11-15 years 30%

16-18 years 8%

19-25 years 6%

25+ years 0%

Ethnicity

White British 84%

White European 2%

White Gypsy or Irish Traveller 0%

White Other 0%

Mixed Ethnic Background 4%

Asian 0%

Asian British 4%

Black British 2%

Black African 0%

Black Other 0%

Arab 0%

Prefer not to say 4%

Other 0%

Current placement by school/institution

Nursery / Pre-school 6%

Mainstream Primary 46%

Mainstream Secondary 8%

Special School 2%

Cabin or other provision within a school 0%

Pupil Referral Unit 0%

Independent School 4%

Independent Special School 10%

Alternative provision 6%

Out of County placement 0%

Elective Home Educated 0%

Out of school/ not receiving education 6%

Hospital School 0%

Further / Post 16 Institution 10%

Finished Education 2%

Timetabled provision

Full time timetable 70%

Part time timetable 20%

Not in school 10%

Need ranked by times reported by those completing the survey

Autistic spectrum condition/disorder (ASC/ASD) 22%

Sensory processing disorder 14%

Social and Emotional Mental Health needs 13%

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder/Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD/ADD) 11%

Specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia 8%

Speech and language impairment 8%

My child/young person's needs have not yet been identified 5%

Moderate learning difficulties 4%

Global Developmental Delay 3%

Hearing Impairment 3%

Medical needs / Complex health needs 3%

On the early help pathway 2%

Physical disability 1%

Severe learning difficulties 1%

Visual Impairment 1%

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder FASD 1%