

SEND Strategy 2025-2028

Consultation results

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Purpose of consultation

The consultation on the draft SEND Strategy for 2025-2028 was published on the council's website on 10 July 2025. This included a summary of the drafted new SEND Strategy, which outlined our plan for improving outcomes for children and young people up to 25 years old with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It included six priorities which covered how the council would support children and young people with SEND from 2025 to 2028. It is for all children and young people with SEND including those with emerging needs, to those supported through SEN support, and those with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).

The consultation process

The consultation ran from 10 July 2025 to 1 October 2025. Parent carers, local residents and other stakeholders were encouraged to comment on the draft strategy by completing a short online survey. Paper response forms were also available on request.

Activities included:

- Press release, which was picked up by Bedford Today on 11 July 2025.
- Inclusion in all SEND newsletters during the consultation period
- E-bulletins:
 - E-mail 1 – sent to 32,969, with a 55% open rate
 - E-mail 2 – sent to 34,840, with an 56% open rate
 - E-mail 3 – sent to 22,812, with a 55% open rate
- Social media
 - Central Bedfordshire Council Facebook – 9 posts with 90 engagements
 - Local Offer Facebook – 13 posts with 14 engagements
 - Central Bedfordshire Council Twitter/X - 9 posts with 38 engagements
 - Central Bedfordshire Council Instagram - 9 posts with 20 engagements

*engagement is the number of interactions the content received from users - likes, comments, shares, saves, etc.

Feedback on the proposals

In total, 110 responses were received for this consultation.

How they accessed the questionnaire:

- 55 (50%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through a pc/laptop
- 52 (47%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the mobile version
- 3 (3%) respondents accessed the questionnaire through the tablet version

- 0 (0%) paper copies were received

To make sense of the feedback received, we have employed two types of analysis. We have looked at the headline quantitative measures, followed by coding of the free text comments to help understand the sentiment behind respondents' agreement or disagreement with the order. The codes we generated identified frequently mentioned comments and concerns. The findings of the consultation are set out in the next section of this report.

When summarising these consultation findings in other reports please ensure that the findings of this report are quoted accurately, and that a link to this report is provided.

Please note, all quotes are shown as received, so may contain spelling mistakes, and percentages shown in the charts may not total 100% due to rounding.

The findings

Executive summary

Overall, respondents were broadly satisfied with the strategy, with consistently strong support for the vision, values, outcomes and priorities. Comments throughout identified:

- the need to see action
- consider the needs of the child
- comments about funding, noting that SEND needs to be adequately resourced but aware that there isn't enough money to go around
- the importance of early intervention
- the importance of the right provision for the child
- how will change happen?
- there needs to be better communication, listening and joined-up working
- the need for accountability and transparency

Effective use of local resources

Respondents were clear in the need to improve communication and invest in staff – including numbers of, experience and training for staff.

Overseeing the delivery of the strategy

Respondents commented that the governance included a lot of boards, and that accountability and transparency are crucial.

Analysis of response

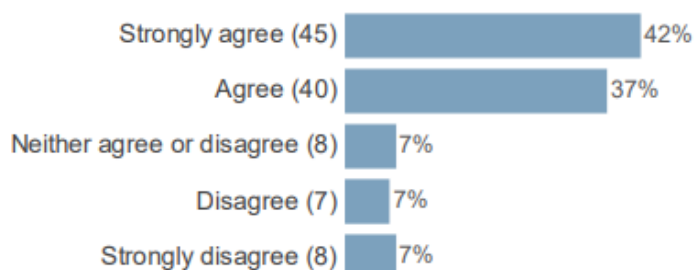
The vision

In Central Bedfordshire, we want every child and young person with SEND to have the best possible start in life and a childhood that is rich in opportunity. We want them to feel included and valued for who they are, in their families, schools and communities, and to grow up with the right support to fulfil their aspirations.

We believe that all children and young people should be supported to thrive in education, live as independently as possible, enjoy meaningful friendships, and make confident transitions into adulthood. Whether their needs are supported through SEN Support or an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), our vision is that every child receives timely, person-centred, and accessible support, at the right time and in the right place.

We will work in genuine partnership with families, schools, health, and care services to ensure our systems are inclusive, responsive, and focused on outcomes that matter. This means listening to lived experience, investing in provision, and holding ourselves accountable for delivering real improvements.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed vision for SEND in Central Bedfordshire?



108 respondents chose to answer this question. 79% of those agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed vision for SEND in Central Bedfordshire. Respondents were most likely to be positive about the vision but had some concerns. 68 provided comments and they have been summarised below:

Theme	Number of comments
Supportive of the vision but voiced concerns	23
How? What actions?	22
Too many children in unsuitable provision / not getting support needed	20
Invest in staff including wages and training (this also includes school teachers)	13

Theme	Number of comments
Comments about trust / CBC failing	12
The council needs to work with / support families	12
How will it be funded? Needs to be funded properly	10
Improved communication / listening is needed	7
More SEND provision / places are needed (ARP, Special Schools)	5
Accountability / transparency is important	4
This doesn't relate to actual experience of SEND families / schools	4
Too many saying their child has SEND / some aspire to have SEND	4
This needs a national change - not local	2
Other	5

Some examples of the comments received are:

Supportive of the vision but voiced concerns

"The proposed vision seems fine on paper but will it actually work?"

"It looks great in theory, but will it work out practically being held back with lack of finances and/or staff. Just thinking of a great nephew of mine who was 3 years behind in education by the time he went to a special school instead of a high school. He was autistic and his environment at school was not tailored to suit him."

How? What actions?

"All seems very high level with little tangible "to-do's" beneath it"

"I think a lot of things you put in your strategy are outcomes that you would like to achieve but there is no actual milestones or targets for us to view i.e. how many further provisions are you going to put in place? There is nothing detailing the actual physical measures that you are going to Outline from this outcomes or strategy we want to see figures of how long it's going to take us to access the services." – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Too many children in unsuitable provision / not getting support needed

"Access to a full education must be central to this. I am a specialist SEND teacher who supports children who have dropped out of school - generally they are all ASD, often with a PDA profile, with ADHD and sometimes dyslexia, but they are all articulate and bright. What

they all have in common is that they find large classes, large schools completely overwhelming. Unfortunately, there is currently nothing for them in the area, other than dropping out of school and needing a specialist tutor. The children I see could be really useful to society if they are given the right education for them. Unfortunately, all the parents I speak to talk about fighting for their children to have any kind of education. I would like to see the vision supporting these children, rather than fighting against them and their families.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

“Mainstream schools are unable to deal with children with additional needs and there are lack of school places for children who don’t fit in the box for mainstream or whose needs are not high enough for specialist provision.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Invest in staff including wages and training (this also includes school teachers)

“Schools need much more training on send being a parent of 2 send children in secondary school many staff do not have a clue about send and iv heard it said that autism should be left at the school gates, everyone with send needs to be understood and not pushed aside”

Comments about trust / CBC failing

“All sounds a reasonable, thought out, considered approach. As a parent of a young person who has been let down repeatedly by CBC and it's services since a young child, I truly hope this document will make a difference and be adhered to, despite forecast decimated budgets re government formula funding. It pains me that the word GENUINE needs to be mentioned and stressed throughout regarding future actions being adhered to. Inclusion' access to services and Independence needs to happen at the child/young persons pace and wishes' not at the convenience of staff, professionals involved and tailored or refused due to constraints of an insufficient budget. Please have people in charge of important departments accessed by the most vulnerable in society by staff and executives who are sensitive, have understanding and up to date knowledge of issues involved and situations the service users are likely to face. 9/10 for the planned initiative, but please let the actions come to fruition in a realistic timetable.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

The council needs to work with / support families

“We welcome the vision’s ambition and its focus on inclusion, opportunity, and partnership. It would be strengthened by explicitly recognising the role of community and voluntary organisations, ensuring that timely support is a reality for families, and making sure that children and young people’s voices directly shape delivery. We would also encourage clear measures of success that go beyond statutory processes to include wellbeing and family satisfaction.”

How will it be funded? Needs to be funded properly

“It all looks fine on paper, who could disagree? But as you well know, decent public servicing needs proper financing, and this has not happened for years. Instead we have seen public services pared to the bone, so that they operate in a constant state of crisis, and at the whim

of political pressures. SEND has been particularly affected by huge underfunding and hence so much least worst operational work. All very well then to produce such worthy plans, and give us an apparent democratic voice, but it is ineffective unless you get proper finance”

Improved communication / listening is needed

“You need to make communication a huge part of this plan. As it stands nobody communicates well and families end up having to repeat themselves over and over again which I can imagine must be infuriating.”

More SEND provision / places are needed (ARP, Special Schools)

“There needs to be more places for children whose send needs are not able to be met in mainstream. There are children who are not accessing mainstream and there seems to be more children with more challenging needs ending up in mainstream”

Accountability / transparency is important

“I support the proposed vision—it is clear, inclusive, and sets the right ambition for children and young people with SEND. I particularly like the focus on person-centred and timely support, as well as the commitment to partnership working with families and services. However, I think it is vital that this vision leads to real, measurable change. I would like to see clear accountability and regular updates on progress so that families can see the difference this strategy is making in practice.” - Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

This doesn't relate to actual experience of SEND families / schools

“It's a great vision, but that is all it is and has no relation to the reality of what is happening for SEND families in CBC.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Too many saying their child has SEND / some aspire to have SEND

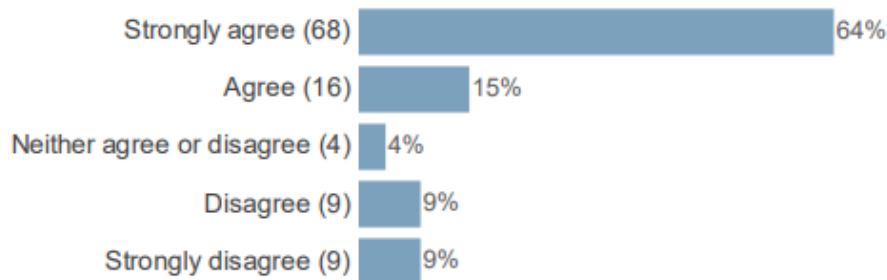
“My concern is more about how teachers are supposed to support ALL children when there is so much focus and pressure in terms of SEND. My child is SEND and his teachers do what they can. Where is more funding for education full stop instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul and ending up with a low performing and disheartened youth. There are kids in their class who aspire to have SEND to get attention. That by saying they struggle means that they get given toys and time out of classes to play. How has SEND become aspirational amount primary children... Who wish to have special needs just so that the teacher comes when they have thier hand up.”

This needs a national change - not local

“I support the vision but it must be reflected at Government level to ensure a consistent approach nationally”

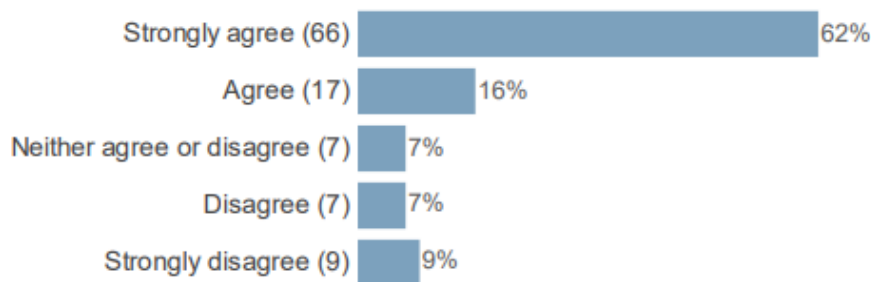
Professional values

How far do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the following proposed professional values? (**Children and young people are at the centre of all that we do** - We will always act in the best interests of children and young people, ensuring that their needs and aspirations are at the heart of everything we do. Their voices will be upheld, and their lived experiences will shape the way we plan, design, and deliver support.)



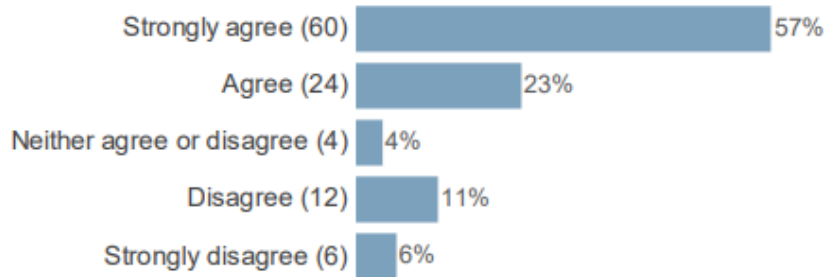
106 responded to this question. 79% agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the proposed professional value of children and young people are at the centre of all that we do.

How far do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the following proposed professional values? (**We are transparent and accountable** - We will share information clearly and proactively, ensuring families and partners can see the progress we are making against our commitments. We will be open about the challenges we face and work together to find solutions.)



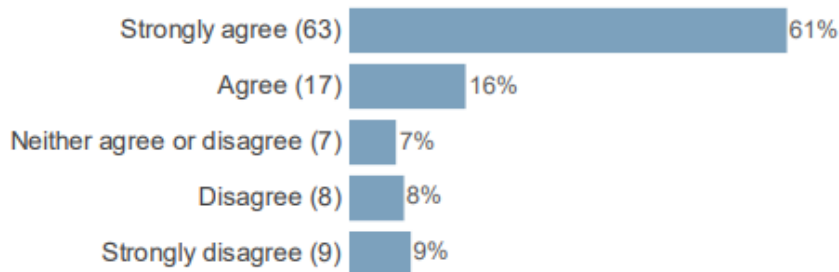
106 responded to this question. 78% agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the proposed professional value of being transparent and accountable.

How far do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the following proposed professional values? (**We are reflective and committed to learning** - We are committed to learning from both our strengths and our mistakes, using feedback to drive improvement. Across all services, we will foster a culture of continuous reflection and development.)



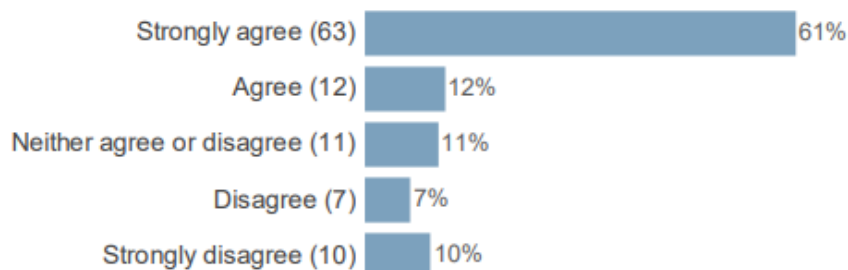
106 responded to this question. 80% agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the proposed professional value of being reflective and committed to learning.

How far do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the following proposed professional values? (**We work together to overcome barriers** - We will strengthen collaboration between education, health, care, and community services to ensure support is joined up and accessible. By reducing duplication and complexity, we will help families navigate the system more easily and receive coordinated support.)



104 responded to this question. 77% agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the proposed professional value of working together to overcome barriers.

How far do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the following proposed professional values? (**We listen to families and work in partnership** - We will listen to parents and carers in the process, recognising the insight, expertise and lived experience they bring. Through honest, open, and respectful conversations, we will build shared understanding and stronger relationships.)



103 responded to this question. 73% agreed or strongly agreed with the inclusion of the proposed professional value of listening to families and working in partnership.

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about the proposed professional values. 61 provided comments and they have been summarised below. They were most likely to be concerned about if they were false promises and the need to see action:

Theme	Number of comments
These are false promises / need to see action / how will you do it?	22
Communicate / listen	16
Supportive of the professional values	13
Need for collaboration with other organisations and families / work together	8
This should be happening anyway / essential	7
Be accountable/ transparent	6
SEND needs to be funded properly	4
The council doesn't show these values	4
Need to follow the law	3
Stop fighting families	3
Wider cultural shift is needed	2

Theme	Number of comments
Need to have consideration of all children and young people with SEND	2
Other	11

Some examples of the comments received are:

These are false promises / need to see action / how will you do it?

“You need to implement these, because so far is lacking in action.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

“You cannot disagree with these intentions. The important part is the how it will be delivered.”

Communicate / listen

“Please listen to families..they do not want judgments” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Supportive of the professional values

“These are great values, but how do you ensure these values are stuck to?” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Need for collaboration with other organisations and families / work together

“These values are very good and reflect the right priorities. Please make sure they are put into real practice, with clear ways to show accountability and partnership with families.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

This should be happening anyway / essential

“Everything above is just restating the obvious and should be happening anyway.”

Be accountable/ transparent

“We strongly support the proposed professional values. In particular, we welcome the commitment to listening to children, young people, and families, and to working collaboratively across education, health, care, and community services. We would encourage the Council to also explicitly recognise the role of voluntary and community organisations in this partnership, as they are often key to reducing barriers and providing accessible, flexible support for families. Clear accountability measures will be essential to ensure these values are consistently applied in practice.”

SEND needs to be funded properly

“The proposed values are not only appropriate—they are necessary. For too long, the voices of children and families have been overlooked or only partially acknowledged in the SEND

system, often resulting in frustration, inconsistency, and missed opportunities for support. These values show that Bedfordshire is listening and taking real steps to shift the culture toward one that is genuinely child- and family-centred. This strategy lays out a mission that, if executed well, could be transformative. It reflects a clear commitment to transparency, collaboration, and continuous learning—things that have too often been missing from previous approaches across the country. Bedfordshire appears to be getting this right by recognising the importance of working together across services and learning from those with lived experience. What matters now is ensuring these values are upheld in practice, consistently, and with enough investment to make meaningful change on the ground. This includes valuing the professionals who work closely with families and trusting in their ability to help shape a more joined-up, respectful, and responsive system.”

The council doesn't show these values

“Children and young people at the centre should be an obvious - you're working with them day in, day out. The fact you have to say it is slightly concerning that it might not be happening now. Collaborative learning, listening and communicating, again are no brainers - are you doing this now? If not, why not? Transparency and accountability is becoming more and more important - especially with councillors blaming/shaming parents and not being accountable.”

Need to follow the law

“If you can actually follow your own rules or the law then it would be great” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Stop fighting families

“All parents I know of children with send have to constantly fight. Ehcps are slow to be returned. Some have not been finalised in over a year, so our sendco has have to updated the unfinalised report from previous year”

Wider cultural shift is needed

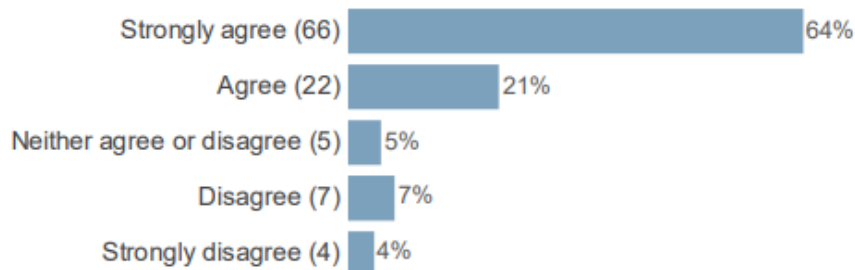
“Please do actually listen to parents, and don't treat them like you have done up until now. Treatment from CBC has been appalling, there needs to be a cultural shift in how you interact with families.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Need to have consideration of all children and young people with SEND

“Whilst there are strong voices criticising the LA send team / council these have helped push towards change. The councils decision not to invest everything in one specialist school is a good one and reflects a commitment to the wider Sen community not just those with the loudest voices.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

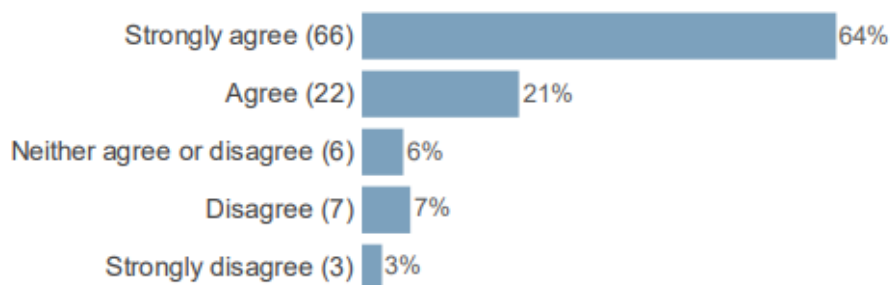
Joint Outcomes

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed five outcomes below?
(Safety - Children and young people with SEND will feel and be safe in all areas of their lives.)



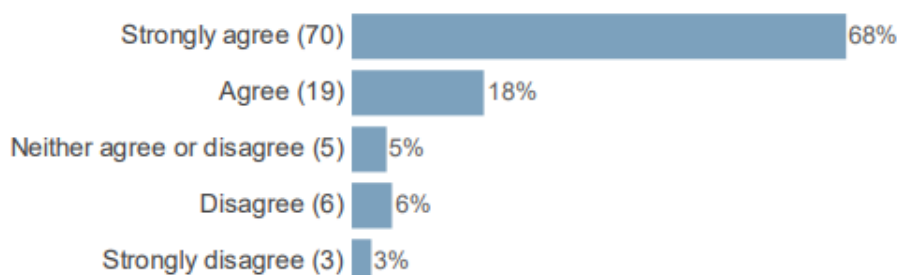
104 responded to this question. 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed outcome of safety – children and young people with SEND will feel and be safe in all areas of their lives.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed five outcomes below?
(Health and wellbeing - Children and young people with SEND have healthy outcomes and feel valued, with a sense of belonging.)



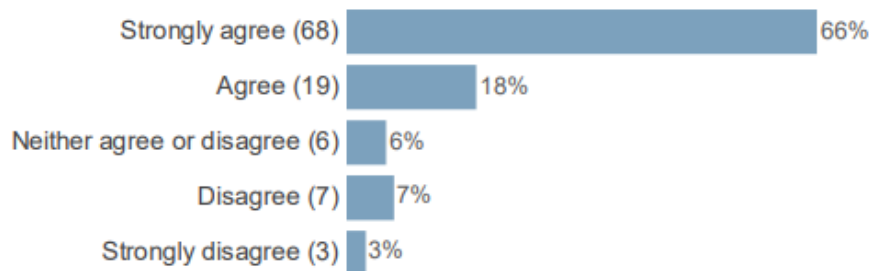
104 responded to this question. 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed outcome of health and wellbeing – children and young people with SEND have healthy outcomes and feel valued, with a sense of belonging.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed five outcomes below?
(Aspirations - Children and young people with SEND will learn and develop their confidence to reach their full potential.)



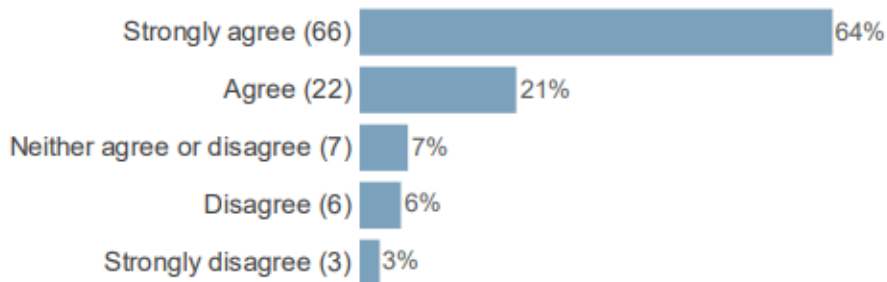
103 responded to this question. 86% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed outcome of aspirations – children and young people with SEND will learn and develop their confidence to reach their full potential.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed five outcomes below?
(Independence - Children and young people with SEND will have opportunities to maximise their independence.)



103 responded to this question. 84% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed outcome of independence – children and young people with SEND will have opportunities to maximise their independence.

How far do you agree or disagree with the proposed five outcomes below?
(Involvement - Children and young people with SEND will have access to their community and have opportunities to influence the services that support them.)



104 responded to this question. 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed outcome of involvement – children and young people with SEND will have access to their community and have opportunities to influence the services that support them.

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about the proposed outcomes. 54 responded and their comments are summarised below. They were most likely to want to see action, or be supportive (whilst voicing concerns):

Theme	Number of comments
Get on with it / do it / act / how?	17
Supportive of these but voiced concerns	17
Lack of funding / resource is problematic/will impact on achieving the outcomes	9
Communicate / collaborate	8
Importance of right provision / placement / educational opportunities	7
Look at child as an individual	7
Safety / safeguarding is crucial	5
Should already be happening	5
Need to balance costs / concern about costs	4
Consider children and young people without SEND	2
Other	9

Some examples of the comments received are:

Get on with it / do it / act / how?

"I don't think anyone would disagree with these being good principles, but delivery is key. Don't just say, do." – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

"The five outcomes are good and very important. Please make sure there are clear plans and real actions behind them so families see genuine improvements, especially for safety, wellbeing, and involvement in services." – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Supportive of these but voiced concerns

"All important outcomes to strive for but a lot needs to be done to get there" – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

"It would be lovely if all these were met, but I fear they won't"

Lack of funding / resource is problematic/will impact on achieving the outcomes

"All these outcomes sound wonderful but realistically have you looked at the bigger picture on how you are actually going to achieve these because the lack of funding, school placements and the fight you have to go through to get anything for a child with additional needs is absolutely diabolical." – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Communicate / collaborate

"I am not sure these questions are helpful. Of course we agree that all of these things should be happening. The question is where do you need to start, and that is with the SEND service itself which is chronically under staffed, under funded and struggles to create positive relationships with those who struggle to attend. There is a problem with the collaboration between SEND teams and those trying to address attendance and negotiate the best support for the child at that time. Feedback from families I have supported is that they have never met their SEND officer except online. The SEND officer has never met the child and families simply do not understand this approach when these officers are making decisions about their child's educational support and provision."

Importance of right provision / placement / educational opportunities

"It would be nice to see functional skills exams in maths and English rolled out into all mainstream schools. This would ensure those SEN children who don't reach GCSE pass level leave with a certificate and skills in key educational areas." – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Look at child as an individual

"I hope you can achieve all these values for our young people. I've left Education in a SEND school because I felt it was a business which didn't treat the learners as individuals. One size does not fit all."

Safety / safeguarding is crucial

"I think safety is a high priority from my experience in schools, a lot of SEN children are not being kept safe enough due to the lack of support for schools. This is also leading to staff members and other children not being safe. I'm glad to see it's mentioned that children need to have access to their community but I think it's important they have access to the right education for them, and if this isn't happening in their current mainstream school what are the next steps for that child? Where can they get the right education for them to ensure they thrive to their full potential. Are parents supported enough with finding the right learning environment for their child?"

Should already be happening

"This shouldn't be a strategic plan going forward it should already be happening and is not."

Need to balance costs / concern about costs

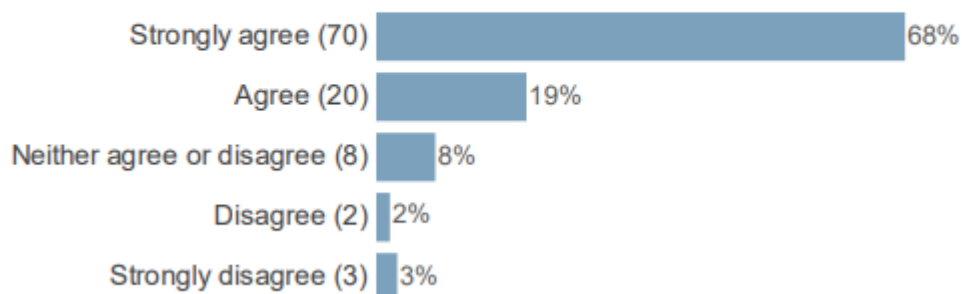
“This is all very good but CBC really does not have the money. These sort of projects are great if there is money to spare but with the £150.000.000 debt, roads in a dreadful state and general maintenance not being it is not the time to be so wasteful with money.” – Parent carer of a child with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Consider children and young people without SEND

“Joint outcomes are brilliant but also need to align with the needs of other children and ensure they also have these outcomes. So teachers aren't so overwhelmed by need that the children who have no SEND don't suffer”

Priority – person-centred and locally available education provision

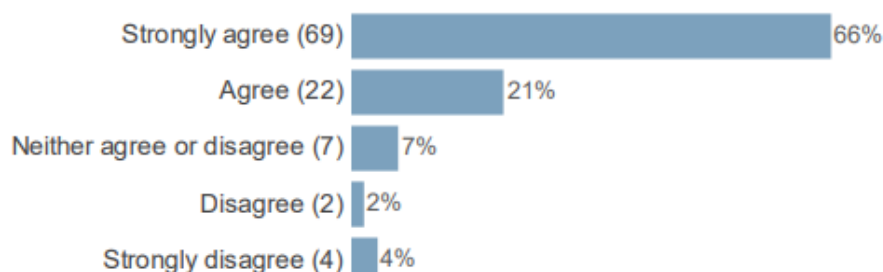
How far do you agree or disagree that 'person-centred and locally available education provision' should be one of our priorities?



103 respondents answered this question. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that person-centred and locally available education provision should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision?

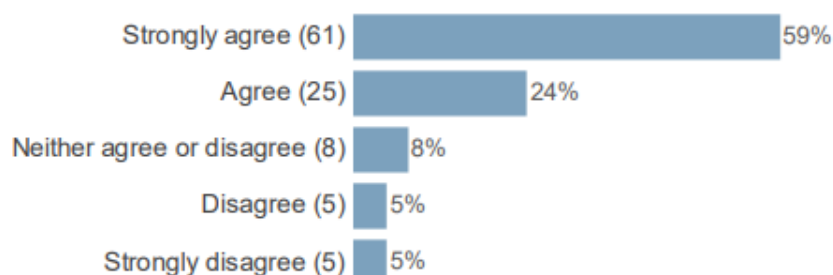
This means that we will ensure that education provision is tailored to the individual needs of children and young people, and that support is available locally whenever possible (A sufficient number of specialist school places and Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) so that children can learn close to home.)



104 respondents answered this question. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that having a sufficient number of specialist school places and ARPs so that children can learn close to home would help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision?

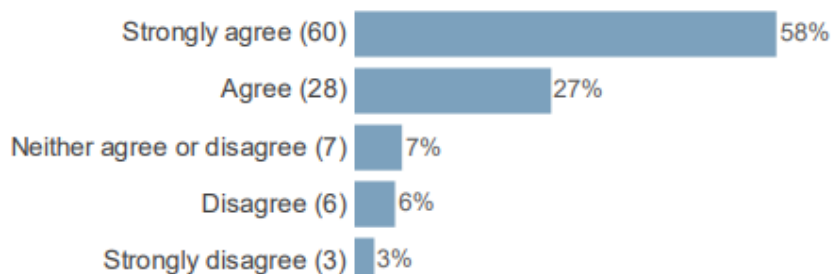
This means that we will ensure that education provision is tailored to the individual needs of children and young people, and that support is available locally whenever possible (Inclusive, well-resourced mainstream education, with the right training for staff to support children as soon as needs are identified.)



104 respondents answered this question. 83% agreed or strongly agreed that inclusive, well-resourced mainstream education with the right training for staff to support children as soon as needs are identified would help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision?

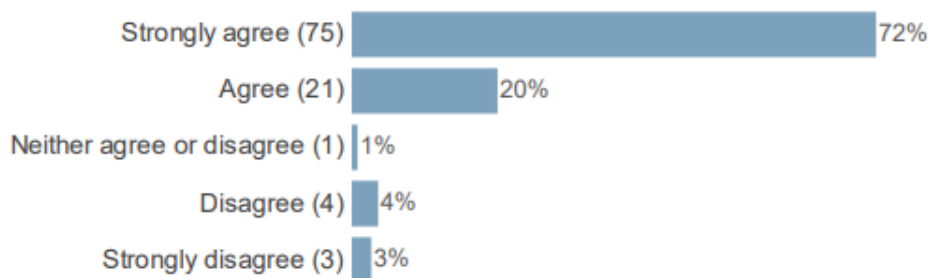
This means that we will ensure that education provision is tailored to the individual needs of children and young people, and that support is available locally whenever possible (Quality assured alternative provision which supplements mainstream education.)



104 respondents answered this question. 85% agreed or strongly agreed that having quality assured alternative provision which supplements mainstream education would help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision?

This means that we will ensure that education provision is tailored to the individual needs of children and young people, and that support is available locally whenever possible (SEN Support, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and provision that adapt as children's needs and aspirations change.)

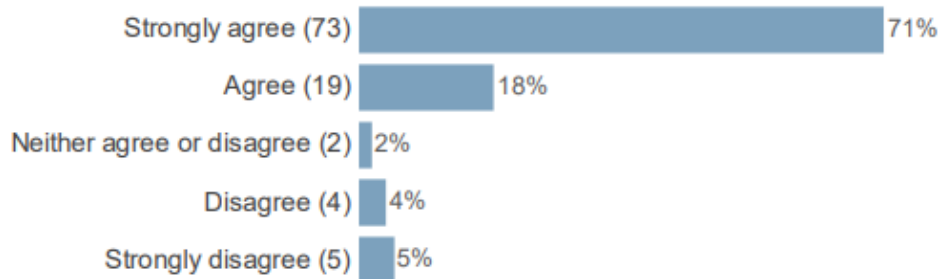


104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that having SEN Support, Education, Health and Care Plans, and provision that adapt as children's needs and aspirations change would help to deliver person-centred and locally available education provision.

Priority – a local partnership that works well together

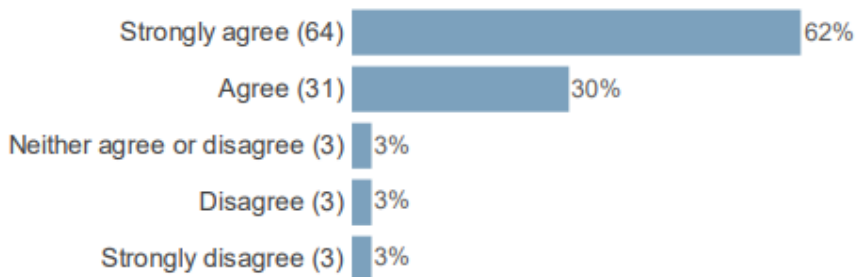
How far do you agree or disagree that 'A local area partnership that works well together' should be one of our priorities?

This means that we will continue to build a strong, joined-up system that works collaboratively across education, health and social care.



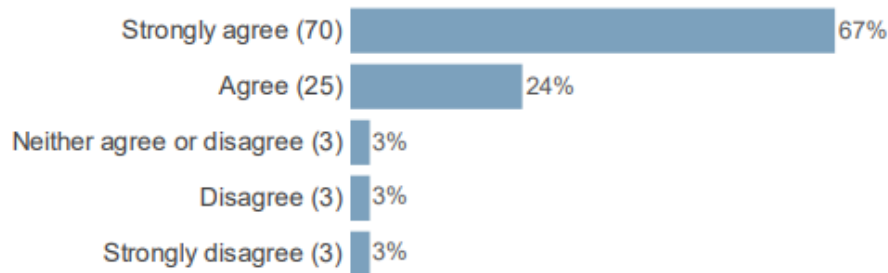
103 respondents answered this question. 89% agreed or strongly agreed that a local area partnership that works well together should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together? (Clear roles, responsibilities and communication pathways to avoid duplication and create effective systems.)



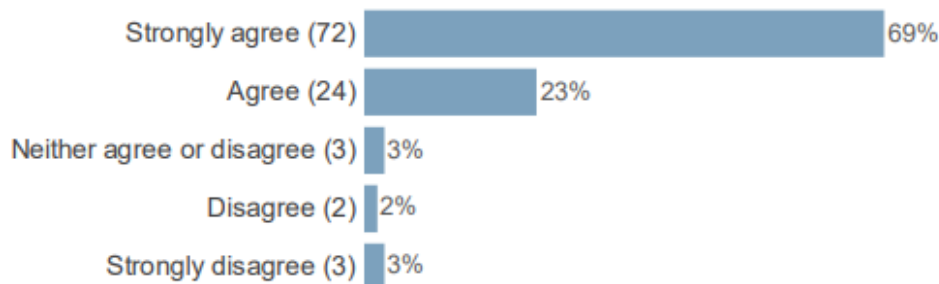
104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that clear roles, responsibilities and communication pathways to avoid duplication and create effective systems would help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together? (Holistic, high-quality EHCPs that are co-produced with children, families and professionals.)



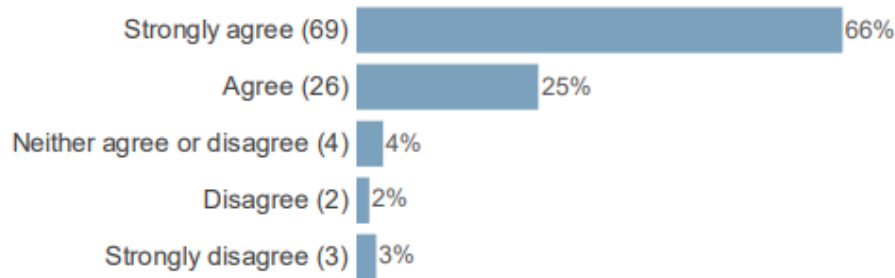
104 respondents answered this question. 91% agreed or strongly agreed that holistic, high-quality EHCPs that are co-produced with children, families and professionals would help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together? (Transparent and timely communication so families only need to tell their story once.)



104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that transparent and timely communication so families only need to tell their story once would help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together.

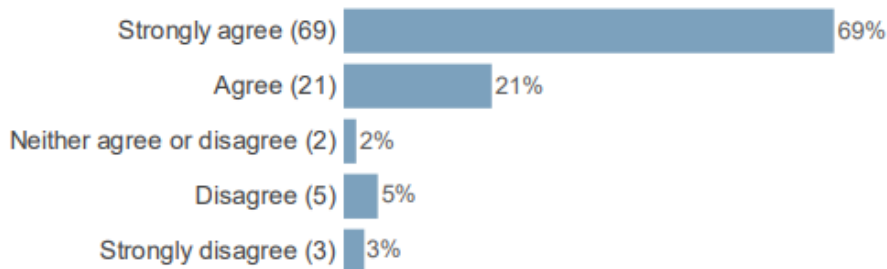
How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together? (Respectful partnerships with families, with lived experience informing all areas of work.)



104 respondents answered this question. 91% agreed or strongly agreed that respectful partnerships with families, with lived experience informing all areas of work would help to deliver a local area partnership that works well together.

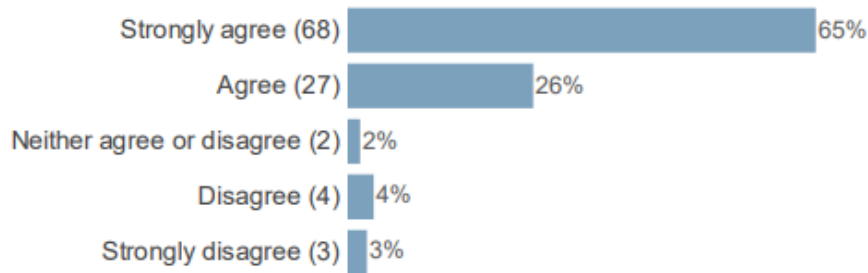
Priority – a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community

How far do you agree or disagree that 'A skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community' should be one of our priorities?
This means that we will continue to build capacity and understanding across the local area to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.



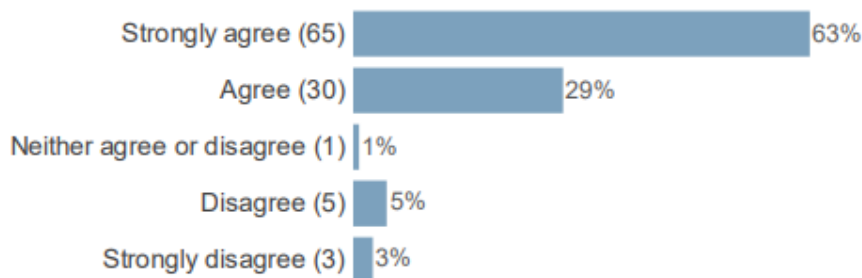
100 respondents answered this question. 90% agreed or strongly agreed a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community? (Training and support for staff across all services and sectors, including mainstream schools.)



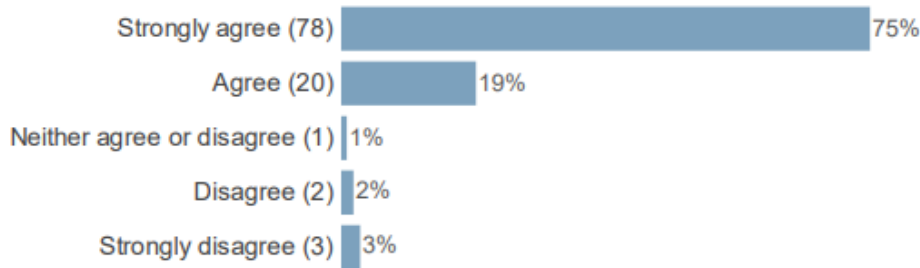
104 respondents answered this question. 91% agreed or strongly agreed that training and support for staff across all services and sectors would help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community? (Practical tools, advice and coaching to ensure training is embedded into everyday practice.)



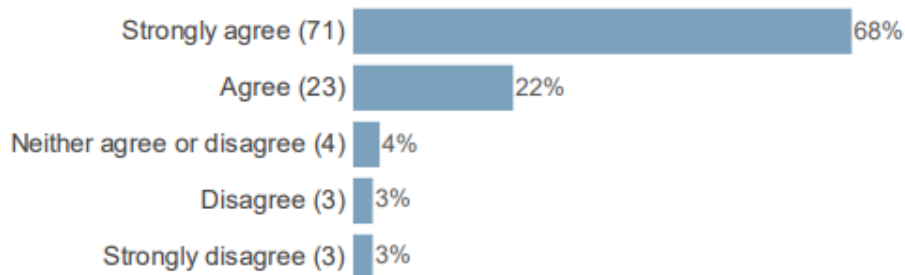
104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that practical tools, advice and coaching to ensure training is embedded into everyday practice would help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community? (Support for parents and carers to understand systems and navigate SEND services)



104 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that support for parents and carers to understand systems and navigate SEND services would help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community? (Promoting professional confidence, wellbeing and retention, especially for SENCOs and specialist staff.)

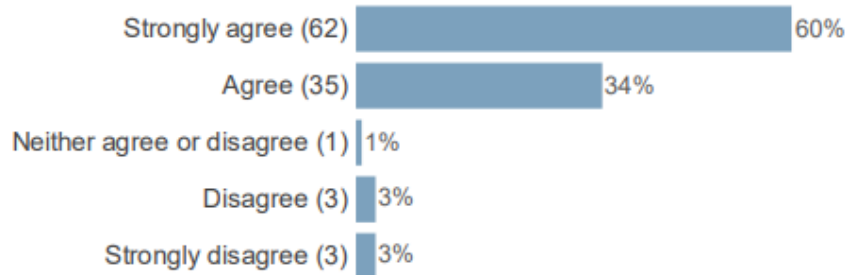


104 respondents answered this question. 90% agreed or strongly agreed that promoting professional confidence, wellbeing and retention, especially for SENCOs and specialist staff would help to deliver a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community.

Priority – clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions

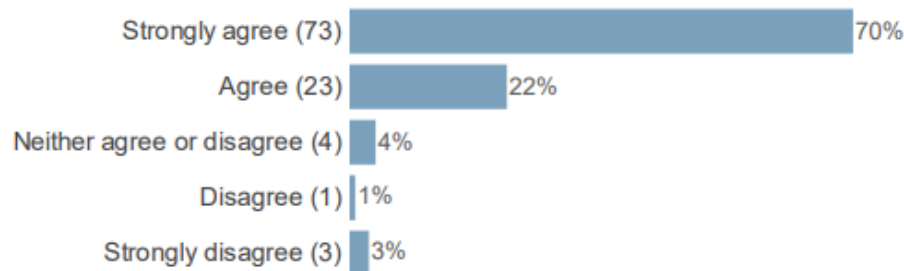
How far do you agree or disagree that 'Clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions' should be one of our priorities?

This means that we will develop and promote clear, joined-up pathways for support, with a particular focus on key transitions.



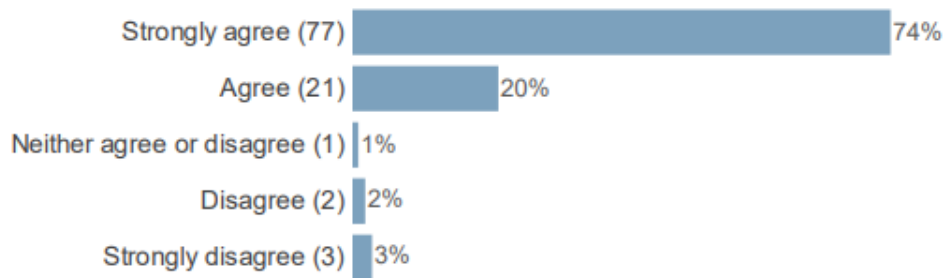
104 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions? (Support that is consistent and accessible throughout a child's life, with transitions between stages clearly supported.)



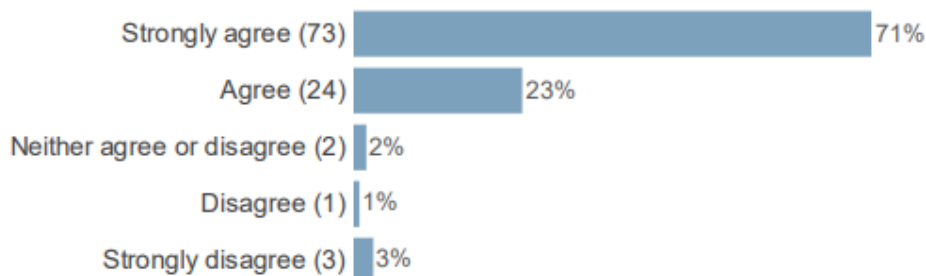
104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that support that is consistent and accessible throughout a child's life, with transitions between stages clearly supported would help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions? (A system that supports young people to move successfully into adulthood.)



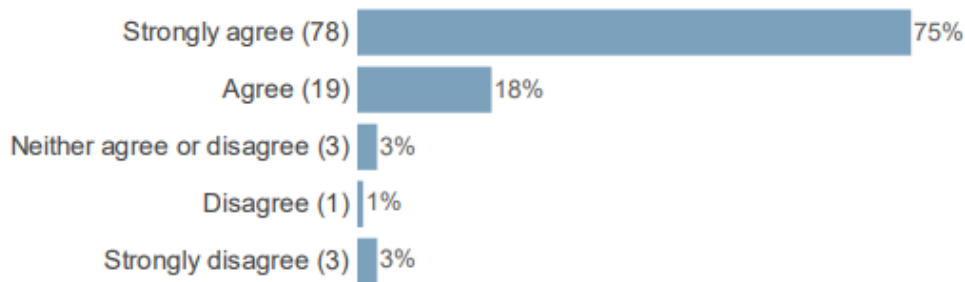
104 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that a system that supports young people to move successfully into adulthood would help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions? (Seamless planning between services so that transitions do not result in gaps or duplicated work.)



103 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that seamless planning between services so that transitions do not result in gaps or duplicated work would help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions? (Families and young people knowing what to expect and when, with visible pathways and consistent information.)

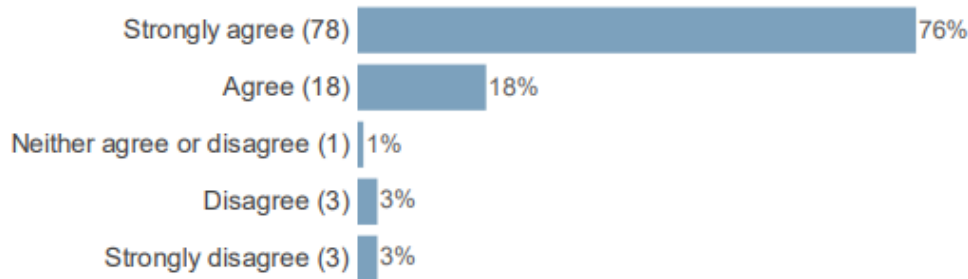


104 respondents answered this question. 93% agreed or strongly agreed that families and young people knowing what to expect and when, with visible pathways and consistent information would help to deliver clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions.

Priority – children and young people receive the right support at the right time

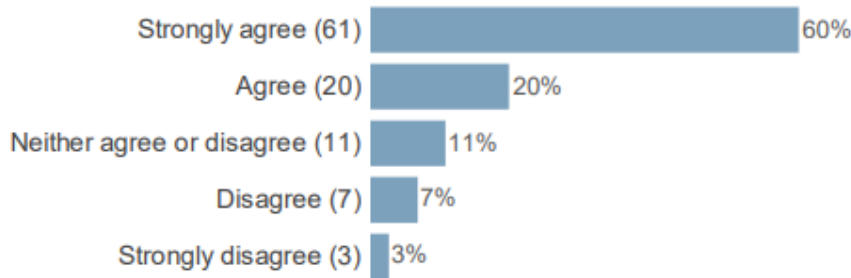
How far do you agree or disagree that 'Children and young people receive the right support at the right time' should be one of our priorities?

This means that we will ensure that support is timely, effective, and reduces the need for escalation or crisis.



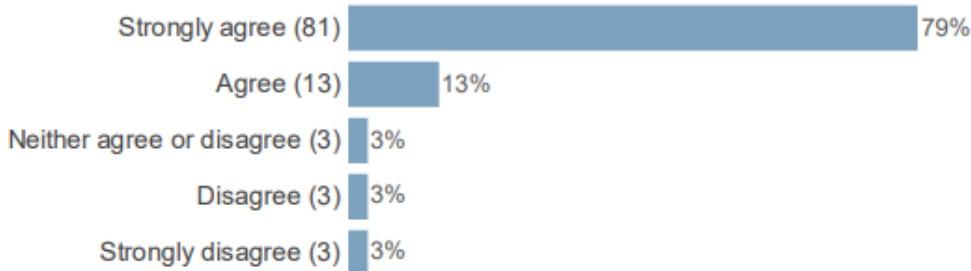
103 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that children and young people receiving the right support at the right time should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time? (A strengthened graduated response in mainstream schools.)



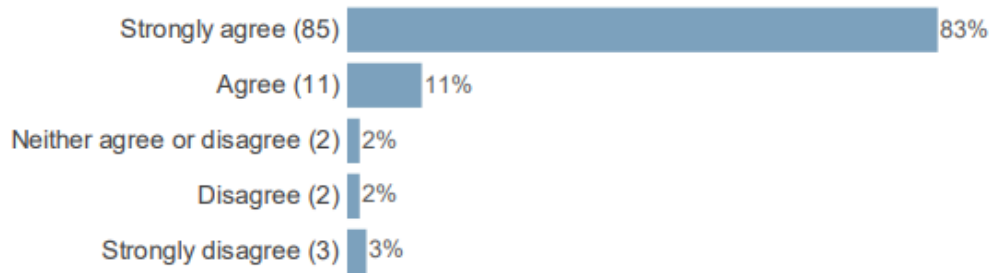
102 respondents answered this question. 80% agreed or strongly agreed that a strengthened graduated response in mainstream schools would help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time? (Early identification and intervention supported by accessible services.)



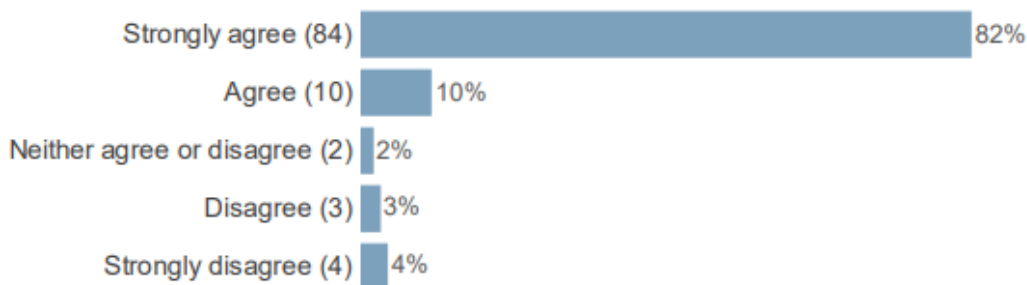
103 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that early identification and intervention supported by accessible services would help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time? (Timely access to assessment and diagnosis across health, education and social care.)



103 respondents answered this question. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that timely access to assessment and diagnosis across health, education and social care would help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time? (Ensuring that support reflects real demand and is not held back by thresholds or delays.)

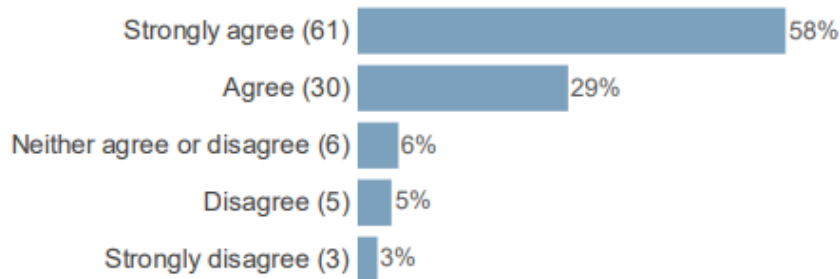


103 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that ensuring support that support reflects real demand and is not held back by thresholds or delay would help to deliver children and young people receiving the right support at the right time.

Priority – inclusive and accessibly community opportunities

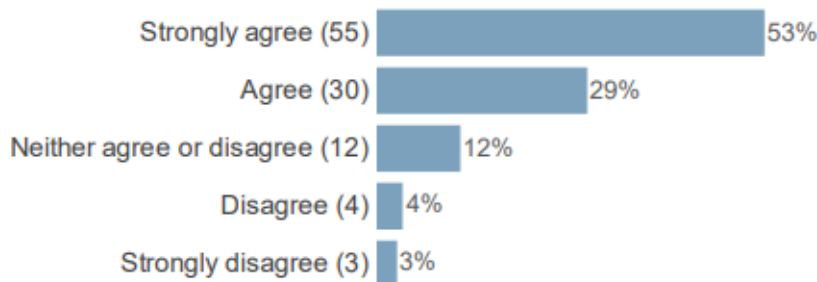
How far do you agree or disagree that 'Inclusive and accessible community opportunities' should be one of our priorities?

This means that we will support children and young people with SEND to access and participate fully in their communities.



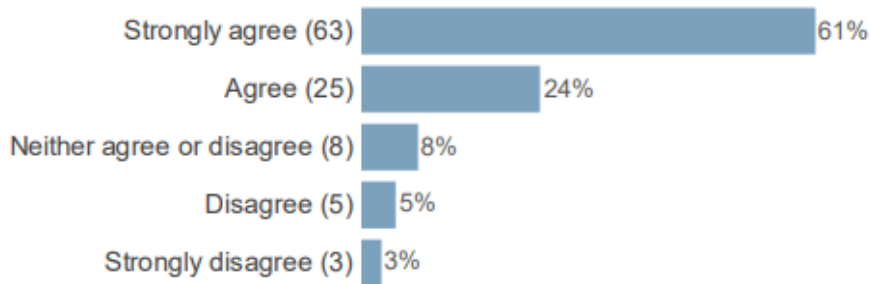
105 respondents answered this question. 87% agreed or strongly agreed that inclusive and accessible community opportunities should be one of our priorities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities? (Commissioned services and leisure activities that are co-produced, inclusive and responsive to needs.)



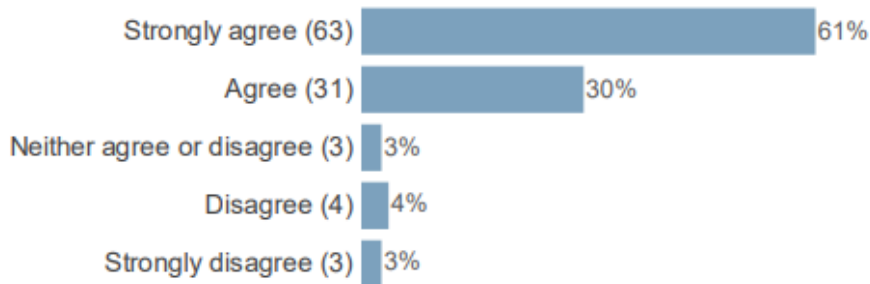
104 respondents answered this question. 83% agreed or strongly agreed that commissioned services and leisure opportunities that are co-produced, inclusive and responsive to needs would help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities? (Removing practical and financial barriers that prevent participation.)



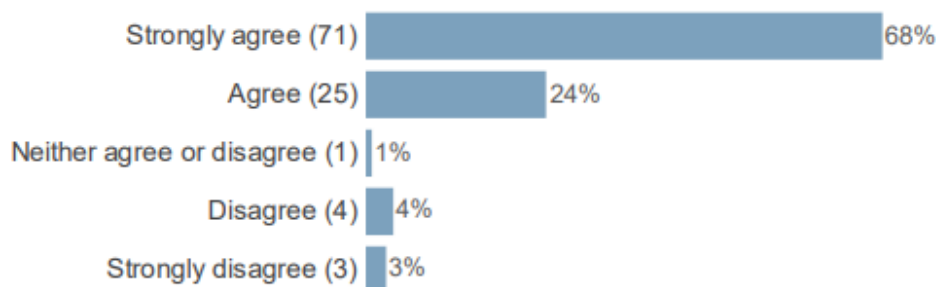
104 respondents answered this question. 85% agreed or strongly agreed that removing practical and financial barriers that prevent participation would help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities? (Making sure the Local Offer reflects the full range of opportunities for children and young people.)



104 respondents answered this question. 91% agreed or strongly agreed that making sure the Local Offer reflects the full range of opportunities for children and young people would help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities.

How far do you agree or disagree that the following will help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities? (Supporting transitions into adult services, post-16 education, employment and social opportunities.)



104 respondents answered this question. 92% agreed or strongly agreed that supporting transitions into adult services, post-16 education, employment and social opportunities would help to deliver inclusive and accessible community opportunities.

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about the priorities. 56 responded and their comments have been summarised below:

Theme	Number of comments
Supportive / all are important	15
Central Bedfordshire Council is failing / lack of trust in the council	10
Need to improve communication / ensure use of inclusive communications	10
Long wait times / thresholds are an issue	9
How?	7
More SEND provision is needed both locally and wider	7
Need to look at the child's needs / it isn't one size fits all	7
This should already be happening / get on with it / act	7
Measurement of achievement is important	6
There is a need to be realistic with budgets / no money / how will you afford this?	6
Early intervention is crucial	4

Theme	Number of comments
Importance of community opportunities	3
More support is needed for parents	2
Moving towards adulthood transitions are crucial	2
Need to invest in staff	2
Statutory deadlines need to be met / follow the law	2
Other	8

Some examples of the comments received are:

Supportive / all are important

"I strongly believe all of these priorities will have their benefits. I think each child's pathway can affect which priority will be for each parent/ carer. I know that the likelihood of them all being approved is slim. So any improvement on any of the areas is great."

"I agree with the principles but there is no explanation of what will change for school, families and children to address the current issues"

Central Bedfordshire Council is failing / lack of trust in the council

"As we said this is all just your strategic objectives. I have seen nothing in the past three years that has shown any new provisions that have opened or been made available to the growing number of autistic kids in central beds. You've done nothing to prove that you have made any developments in this area so right now your strategy is just words not action" - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Need to improve communication / ensure use of inclusive communications

"The priorities are well chosen and reflect real needs. Please make sure there are clear actions and regular updates so families see real improvements, especially in local provision, partnership working, and support during transitions." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Long wait times / thresholds are an issue

"Waiting lists for assessments need to be shorter, transitioning from child to adult needs an overhaul, it is non existent."

How?

"This all sounds fantastic! I think what you need is a plan of how to achieve it." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

More SEND provision is needed both locally and wider

"I have seen so many families stressed, traumatised and completely let down by the SEND provision. It is not acceptable and is counterproductive. It must improve, especially with the rise in awareness of SEN - cases aren't necessarily rising but we are becoming more aware of what SEN looks like meaning more places are needed. We should be ready for that - we need MORE SEN schools."

Need to look at the child's needs / it isn't one size fits all

"I do think there's a balance to be found - we know there's no money. But putting children in the wrong provision is detrimental to all involved - the child, other children, parents and teachers. Surely having more local provision, and looking at the child's needs (not square peg, round hole and expecting it to work) would make massive improvements?"

This should already be happening / get on with it / act

"These are principals and priorities that should already be in place - time and money need to be urgently injected into the system that is currently not in line with any of these principles."

Measurement of achievement is important

"These priorities require the development of measurable targets in appropriate timescales. Delivery is key and requires the complete commitment of the LEA and the engagement of sufficient resources in all areas."

There is a need to be realistic with budgets / no money / how will you afford this?

"These are great aspirations but costs are a significant barrier. Care must be taken to avoid and "at all cost" approach."

Early intervention is crucial

"Supporting children early is key. As a reception teacher, I could always see who needed help and who would need help in the future, but often the threshold hadn't been met this early or the gap between the child and their peers wasn't wide enough yet. I would have loved to have put in the support for all the children who needed it, but I didn't have enough staff to run interventions and still run a full reception curriculum with free flow learning. Schools need to be better funded in early years with extra specialist support - I can spot the children who are likely to be dyslexic in reception, get support in early and the gaps don't appear. Children will then think that they are valued and can succeed - their self esteem is more likely to be high and hopefully then they don't drop out of school later on. Every school, needs a small, well funded with specialist teachers, unit that can support neuro diverse students and those with high anxiety." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Importance of community opportunities

"The focus on inclusive community opportunities is also essential, as children and young people thrive when they can participate fully in their communities. We would encourage

greater recognition of voluntary and community organisations, who are often best placed to provide flexible, locally accessible activities and to support families at key transition points.”

More support is needed for parents

“One of the priorities that is missing currently and in the proposal, is the support for parents and young people once a diagnosis of a neurodiversity has been made. I am a lucky parent in that I work in an environment where I am able to access training in the line of my job and this will allow me to support my young person appropriately should that diagnosis come - I have the knowledge I need. Currently, once a diagnosis is made there is little to no ongoing support for parents to understand what that might mean for them and how to adapt their parenting - there are webinars/workshops, but these one offs are not enough. What support is in place is currently targeted at 0-12, but we are seeing a high number of later diagnosis in teens where there is a startling lack of support for either the young person or the parents in how to proceed, around unpicking the experiences they have faced already and helping them understand why this is the case. Often CAMHS thresholds are not met and we are expecting these people to find out by themselves.”

Moving towards adulthood transitions are crucial

“This is the only time in the strategy where post-16 education, employment and social opportunities is mentioned - there is nothing about how post-16 education and preparing for employment will be supported or clear links with adult service provision; or how this supports/is supported by your Future Ready guide”

Need to invest in staff

“The diagnosis time is far to long currently at 3 years it’s far to long for those struggling with send, more diagnosis centres are needed and staff training” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Statutory deadlines need to be met / follow the law

“A further priority should be for departments (especially the EHC Team) to adhere to statutory deadlines and for this to be actively monitored and reported on.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Effective use of local resources

We will use local resources to ensure we support children and young people with SEND well. This means providing the right help at the right time, making the most of public money, and keeping services running for the future. We will focus on:

- Investing in local schools and support services
- Using information and real experiences to guide decisions
- Improving how different services work together
- Reducing the need to send children to expensive places far away

- Making sure we have enough skilled staff and resources

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about the effective use of local resources. 55 provided a comment and they have been summarised below.

Respondents were most likely to discuss the need for better communication and joined-up working, and the need to invest in staff.

Theme	Number of comments
Communicate better / work with families /better joined up working	12
Invest in staff (including skills, training and amount of staff)	12
Look at needs of the child	10
More information/support is needed	9
Importance of local SEND provision	8
More ARP/SEND provision generally	7
SEND needs to be resourced/funded better	7
Sometimes local resource is just not possible	7
Supportive of using local resources	6
Act / do what you say you will/ should	5
There is no money / the council should look to save money	5
Suggestions of empty buildings to use for SEND provision (Sandye Place Academy & Beech Road)	2
This isn't inclusive	2
Other	4

Some examples of the comments received are:

Communicate better / work with families /better joined up working

“Investing in local schools and support from EYS team is essential. Ensuring all support links communicate and share observations so it is not down to the parents to repeat findings from each meeting. All teams should be briefed on other support specifics so they can direct parents or carers in the appropriate channels, rather than pot luck if they are suggested at

another. Sen groups are amazing and have been a helpful step in our journey as a family. Perhaps even making them slightly longer to allow the staff to not feel rushed on a busy group day to see everyone. Increasing team members at the sessions so carers and parents feel heard when it's busy."

"We support the focus on making best use of local resources. Investment in local schools and services is vital, but we would encourage equal recognition of the voluntary and community sector, which often provides flexible, cost-effective support for families. Using lived experience to guide decisions is very welcome, and we would suggest ensuring that family and community provider voices are routinely included in resource planning. We also strongly support the commitment to building a skilled workforce, which underpins sustainability."

Invest in staff (including skills, training and amount of staff)

"Number one priority for all SEN is to ensure that schools have enough staff. We are finally understanding how tailored education needs to be, old models of big classes are no longer appropriate. SEN should be taught to school children too, to support each other."

"Mainstream schools need much more funding for staffing and to be able to provide appropriate resources to enable the child to learn and achieve including infrastructure like rooms, as well as staff and equipment"

Look at needs of the child

"Using local resources is great if they are suitable, timely and fit for purpose. Mainstream schools need to have good resources, flexibility, excellent training for the types of difficulties and conditions that the pupils/students may have, who pass through their doors. Too many families have experienced their child/ young person being a square peg in a round hole, and sadly too many of us live with the lasting damage and consequences of late or not good enough intervention." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

More information/support is needed

"At present I feel that there is a complete ineffective use of resources and a drive for targets eg EHCP within certain timelines even if it does not meet the needs of the child. If a child needs to go to a resource centre a distance away and that is right for the child that should be possible. Please eliminate the need for parents to have to fight for everything. Also capture the background once. Please stop referring persons to websites for information - it can be overwhelming and one often needs that port of call who can take a parent on the SEN journey." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Importance of local SEND provision

"Children must have local places so they don't have to travel and able to feel safe as they are not far from home in their community"

More ARP/SEND provision generally

"More specialist send school places are needed"

SEND needs to be resourced/funded better

“Achievement of the Strategy's objectives will be dependent on the effective deployment of sufficient resources. Adapting the journey for SEND children in mainstream settings will be dependent on the number of available spaces, and the recruitment of high quality staff - at present there are significant problems with the recruitment of suitable Learning Support Assistants. The development of ARPs to act as local hubs is critical, and progress on these appears to have been limited in recent years.”

Sometimes local resource is just not possible

“This cannot be at the expense of any child's education. If you need to build specialist schools but aren't ready the child should still go wherever they need to go.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Supportive of using local resources

“This is a good priority. Please make sure decisions are based on real experiences and that there are enough local places and skilled staff to meet rising demand.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Act / do what you say you will/ should

“Schools are under a lot of pressure. As parents we are struggling with constantly fighting for basic provision that according to your graduated approach should be in place.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

There is no money / the council should look to save money

“I think it is important that travel distances are kept realistic and sometimes this means people have to go to school far away from home to get the facilities that best support their personal development. Extensive expenditure on daily travel is not sustainable and can sometimes cause children distress.”

Suggestions of empty buildings to use for SEND provision (Sandye Place Academy & Beech Road)

“There has been a purpose built school on Beech road that has been sat empty for years, this has been left to rot, this should have been utilised as soon as The Chiltern school moved out. Far too many children have been let down due to no school places for SEN when beech rd should have been opened up and used.”

This isn't inclusive

“This line is certainly not “inclusive” Reducing the need to send children to expensive places far away. Surely where the child will thrive the most is where they should go regardless of cost. In regards to this, Making sure we have enough skilled staff and resources Sitting through a one hour session learning about SEN and the law doesn't make you skilled. You need parents who are living the experience, dealing with a child with additional needs every single day. Meeting one child with additional needs is only one child. Every persons needs are different but that is never taken into consideration.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Overseeing the delivery of the strategy

We are proposing that the following governance boards will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategy:

- SEND Local Area Partnership, which is accountable for the delivery of the SEND strategy
- SEND Programme Board, which will co-ordinate the delivery of the strategy
- SEND Improvement Group, which will drive forward individual actions on the SEND Action Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Board & Children’s Leadership Board, which will provide strategic alignment across wider local priorities
- SNAP Parent Carer Forum, which plays a joint role in co-production and engagement

Respondents were asked if they had any comments about overseeing the delivery of the strategy. 41 provided a comment and they have been summarised below. Respondents were most likely to note that there are a lot of boards involved:

Theme	Number of comments
There are a lot of boards	11
Accountability / transparency is crucial	10
Supportive of proposed governance	7
Information must be shared across groups/boards and communicate well	6
Comments about the make-up of the boards/groups	5
Comments about if the boards/groups cost money / take away from actual SEND resources	3
The boards must make things happen	2
Consider staff wellbeing / workload	2
What's the point? Should be happening already?	2
Other	7

Some examples of the comments received are:

There are a lot of boards

“Why so many groups? Surely one group could deliver and create simplicity”

Accountability / transparency is crucial

“Accountability should be at the core, with complete transparency on what actions will be taken for failings.”

Supportive of proposed governance

“agree with all of the above”

Information must be shared across groups/boards and communicate well

“There seems to be a lot of boards and groups - I'm hoping they will all meet and work with each other and be held to account.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Comments about the make-up of the boards/groups

“Who will be on these? Actual parents with SEND children who see how you are performing?”
- Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Comments about if the boards/groups cost money / take away from actual SEND resources

“You spend more money on governance than you do on SEN itself. If your paying all those people to sit on boards why can't that money actually be used to implement some of your strategies.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

The boards must make things happen

“The proposed governance structure appears thorough, and it's positive to see an emphasis on accountability, alignment across boards, and the continued role of the SNAP Parent Carer Forum. However, successful oversight depends on more than structure—it requires transparency, diverse voices at the table, and clear follow-through. It's essential that governance boards don't just review progress, but actively engage with families, professionals, and young people at regular intervals. Reporting should be accessible, honest, and shared with the wider community—not just internal stakeholders—so families can see how their input is shaping delivery. To strengthen governance further, it would be valuable to include rotating representatives from frontline providers and practitioners, not just high-level professionals. Those delivering support daily often have critical insight into what is and isn't working and how services interact in practice. Finally, to build trust and sustain momentum, there must be clear, measurable outcomes tied to each priority, with regular public updates. Governance must ensure that strategy delivery remains dynamic and responsive—not just a static plan reviewed in fixed cycles.”

Consider staff wellbeing / workload

“Good luck, I hope you follow through with all of your promises. Look after the staff that are looking after these wonderful children. There is a massive staff turnover because they get treated like second class citizens, especially the t.a's who have more input with the SEND

children than the teacher's but don't actually get given the information they need to support the children fully."

What's the point? Should be happening already?

"This should already be place and is not"

Finally

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the draft SEND strategy. 43 provided comments and they have been summarised below. Respondents were most likely to highlight the need to see action and wanting to know how change will happen:

Theme	Number of comments
How?! / need to act / see change / these are just words	16
Communicate / listen better	8
Supportive of the draft strategy	8
SEND needs to be funded properly	6
Need to speed up processes – e.g. EHCPs, diagnosis and access to support	6
There's no money at the council for this	6
Children are being failed	5
Early intervention is important	4
Accountability / transparency needs to happen	3
Inclusive childcare / respite / support is needed	3
More training/support for staff / improve staff	3
Must be child focused / look at needs of the child	3
Importance of the right education settings	2
Mainstream schools should work for children with SEND	2
Other	8

Some examples of the comments received are:

How?! / need to act / see change / these are just words

"It's great to reassess strategies but let's call this what it is - nice words to describe and hide the terrible choices that have left SEND provision in an absolute state and will likely make things worse." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

"I do hope this time change actually occurs!!"

Communicate / listen better

"Listen to families that are living it they are your best source of information. Don't forget about the non SEND children, they seem to be falling behind, there needs to be a balance."

Supportive of the draft strategy

"This is a good, clear strategy with the right priorities. Please make sure it leads to real, measurable improvements and keeps families involved throughout delivery." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

SEND needs to be funded properly

"It's great having a consultation but as with all CBC consultations they will do what they like and SEND has and will continue to be underfunded and under resourced no matter who comments or fills in the consultation!"

Need to speed up processes – e.g. EHCPs, diagnosis and access to support

"The timelines for EHCPs are shocking, leaving many children without an education, and left for months or years. This then increases issues like mental health issues and makes it much harder to integrate back into a school setting." - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

There's no money at the council for this

"The whole strategic SEND resourcing level needs to be reduced to save public money."

Children are being failed

"I do hope that these idealistic principles underpin a HUGE and much needed overhaul of a completely broken system. Young people's lives have been significantly impacted by the ineptitude of this vitally important service, a crucial period of their lives."

Early intervention is important

"The strategy needs to be put in place URGENTLY as currently basic duties of local authorities are failing in providing support to children when the need is the most which is at the beginning of their education. The successful education will ensure independence in the future"

and ultimately will save government money on potential support to adults. Mainly unemployment support.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Accountability / transparency needs to happen

“You are missing an entire section on accountability. Please change the 'learning and reflection' to 'holding individuals accountable for their performance, with significant consequences and complete transparency.' It currently appears that you have absolutely no plan for consequences if individuals and teams fail to deliver on the strategy.”

Inclusive childcare / respite / support is needed

“To have Carers available in the local Central Beds community to support families with respite during school or college holiday periods and/ or weekends. There have been no Carers available for direct payments and respite for a long time. You are relying on parents/ carers to source Carers themselves which is not acceptable as it is often the case that they do not know anyone who could be a Carer for their child with significant special educational needs. This should be the responsibility of the Children with Disabilities team. More respite provision for under 18s may reduce the need of children going into care.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

More training/support for staff / improve staff

“This strategy is a strong step in the right direction and clearly reflects lessons from past lived experience. It recognises many of the barriers families and professionals have been raising for years—lack of joined-up working, long delays, inaccessible provision, and a need for a more skilled and supported workforce. The challenge now is in delivery. Families have heard many promises before, and while the intentions here are excellent, trust will only be rebuilt through visible, consistent action and honest communication. It’s crucial that this strategy doesn’t just focus on what’s ideal, but also addresses the practical gaps that currently force many families into crisis—such as the lack of inclusive childcare and holiday provision, the disconnect between health and education services, and the real difficulty many schools still face in supporting behavioural needs that stem from trauma, neurodivergence, or unmet support. True inclusion can’t rely on policy alone—it needs sustained investment in people, time, and training. That means valuing the professionals who support SEND children, investing in bespoke development, and creating conditions where children can be safe, understood, and included both in and outside of school. Bedfordshire has already made progress by listening more closely to families and involving a broader range of voices. Continuing to build on this with transparency, flexibility, and true partnership will be key to turning this strategy into lasting change.”

Must be child focused / look at needs of the child

“Strategy must be child focussed. Spend resources of what is right for each child not follow targets blindly to the detriment of the child.” - Parent carer of a child/children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities

Importance of the right education settings

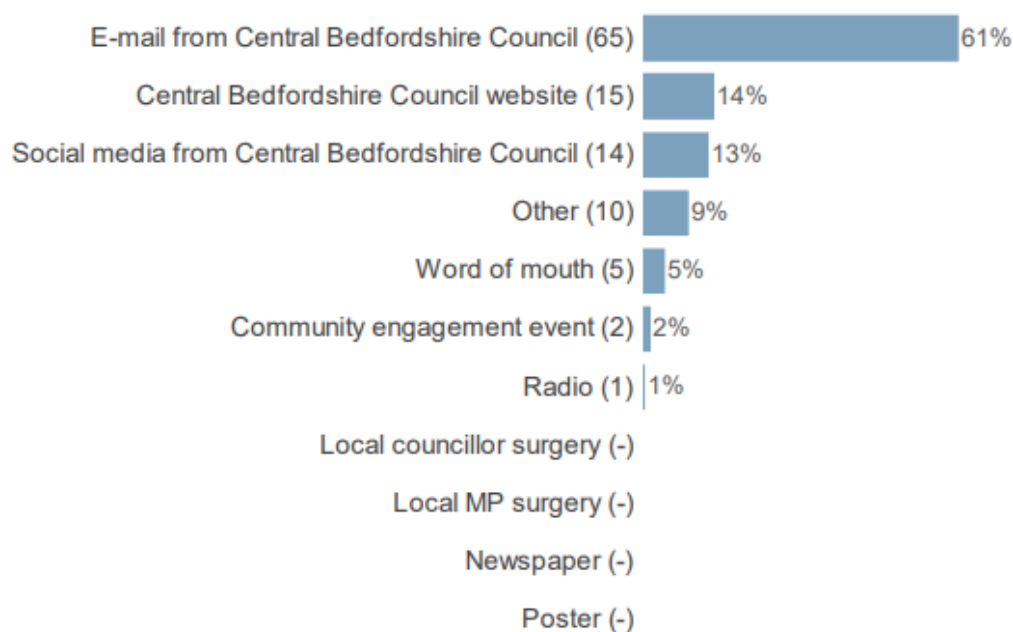
“Ensuring that our SEND pupils are in the right setting for them should be a top priority, ensuring that they get the right support for them to thrive not just survive.”

Mainstream schools should work for children with SEND

“Community is vital to supporting our young people, and mainstream schools should, where appropriate, be the default setting for pupils with special education needs.”

How you heard about the consultation

How did you hear about this consultation?



Respondents were most likely to have heard about the consultation through an e-mail from the council (61%).

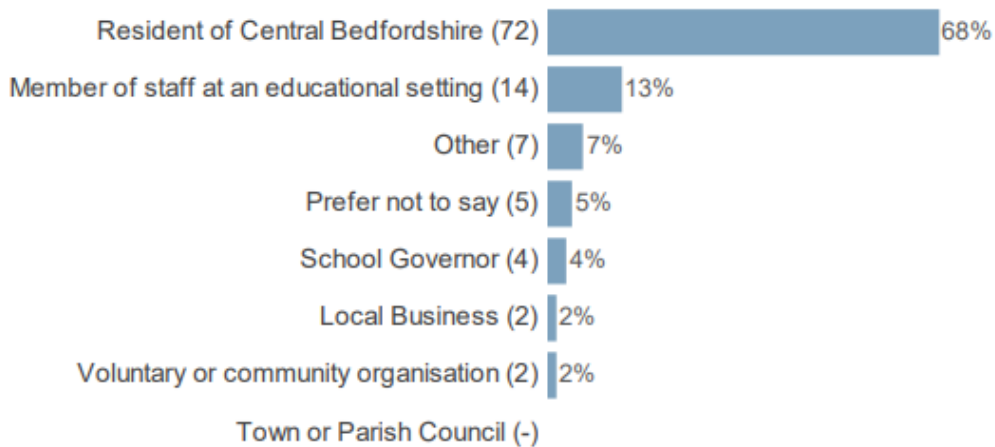
If social media, please tell us which one:



Of the 14 respondents that heard about the consultation through social media, 13 found out using Facebook.

Demographics

Are you responding as: (please select one)



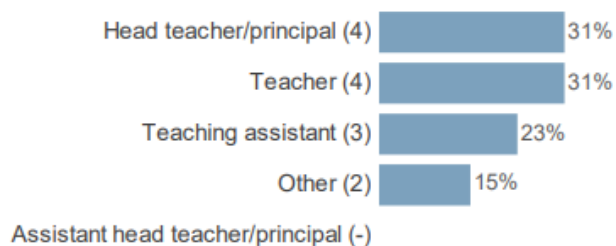
106 respondents answered this question.

Of those that stated 'other', 2 provided further details:

“Individual volunteer” and “SEND Parent outside of Central Bedfordshire.”

Members of staff at a school or educational setting were asked the following two questions:

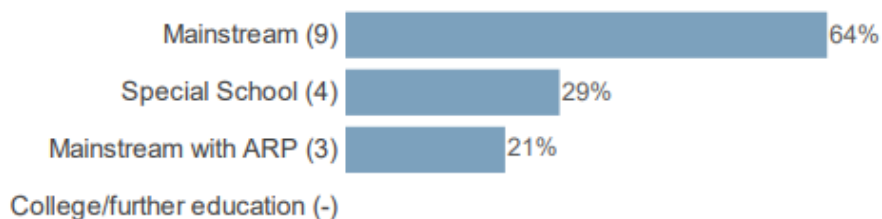
If you are a member of staff at a school or educational setting, please tell us your role.



13 responded to this question. The respondents that stated 'other' provided the following information:

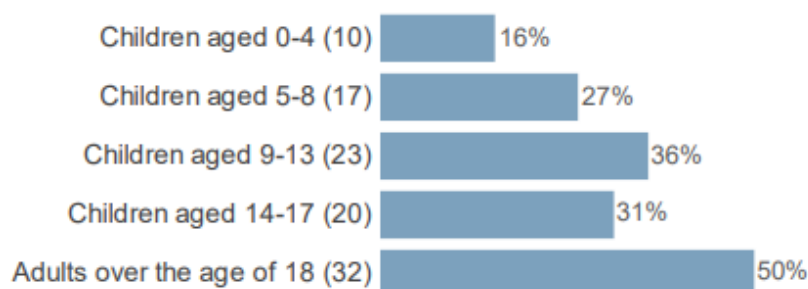
"Deputy Head /SENDCo" and "Tutor/Mentor."

What type of educational setting?



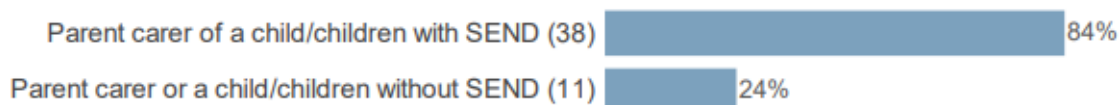
14 respondents answered this question. They were most likely to be a member of staff at a mainstream school (64%).

Which of the below groups can be found in your household?



Residents of Central Bedfordshire were asked which groups can be found in their household. 64 provided a response and were most likely to have adults over the age of 18 (50%), or children aged 9-13 (36%).

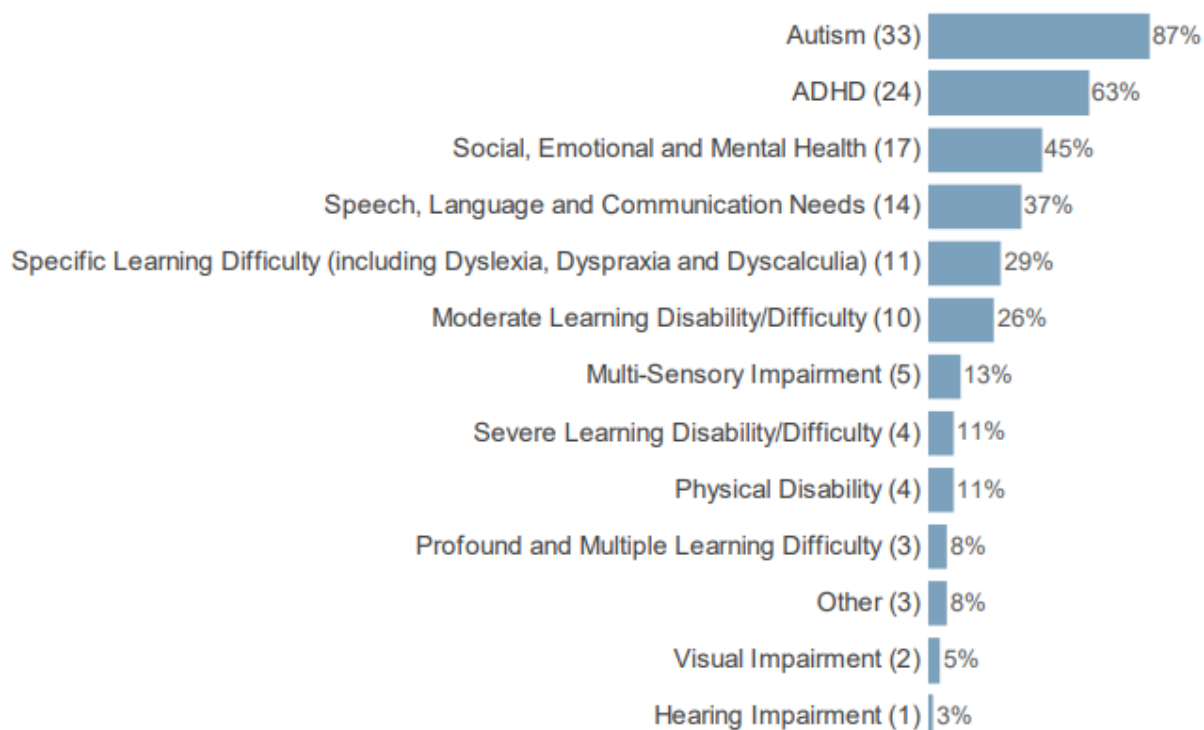
If you have children in your household, please select which of the below are relevant to you:



45 respondents answered this question. 84% were a parent carer of a child with SEND.

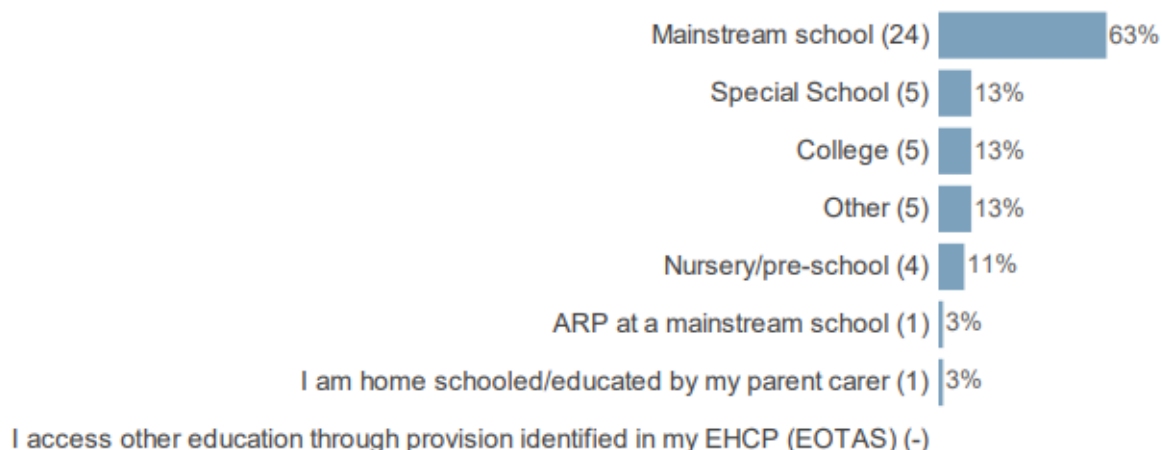
Which of the below special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities does your child(ren) have?

Please note - your child does not need to be diagnosed by a professional for you to select the need or disability at this question.



38 respondents provided details about the type of special educational need, additional need or disability that their child has. They were most likely to state their child had autism (87%) or ADHD (63%). Of those that selected 'other', two identified epilepsy, and one identified selective mutism.

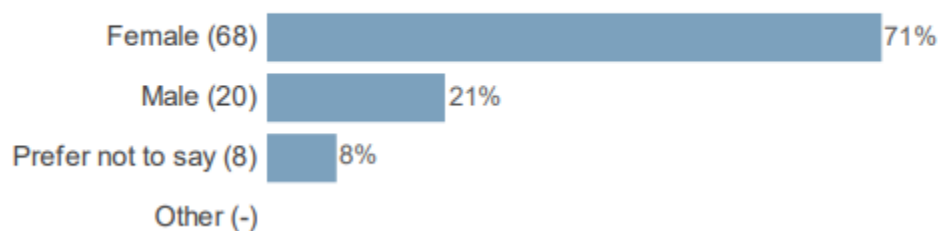
Which educational setting does your child or children with special educational needs, additional needs or disabilities attend?



38 answered this question. Respondents were most likely to have children attending mainstream school (63%). The ‘other’ responses provided the following information:

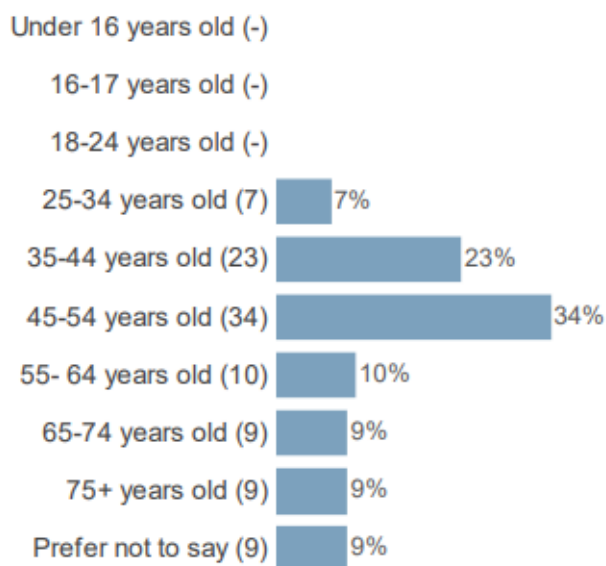
“University,” “medical needs tutoring”, “Medical needs,” “As a result of the LA apparently having no staff to talk to us since October 2024. my son has now got no provision for September 2025. Yet we are aware of another child who is attending the same preferred provision. The LA are doing what they want all whilst destroying a young persons aspirations and getting the education they deserve in their chosen pathway” and “20yr old living at home, but unable to work/education due to my mental health.”

Are you: (please select one)



96 respondents answered this question, and they were most likely to be female (71%). This follows the pattern of response that we usually see for surveys and consultations relating to children and education.

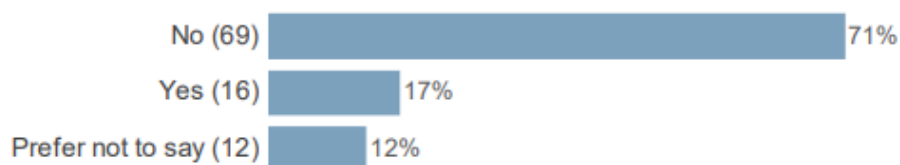
What is your age? (please select one)



101 respondents answered this question and they were most likely to be aged between 35 and 54 – this follows the pattern of responses we see for surveys and consultations relating to children and education.

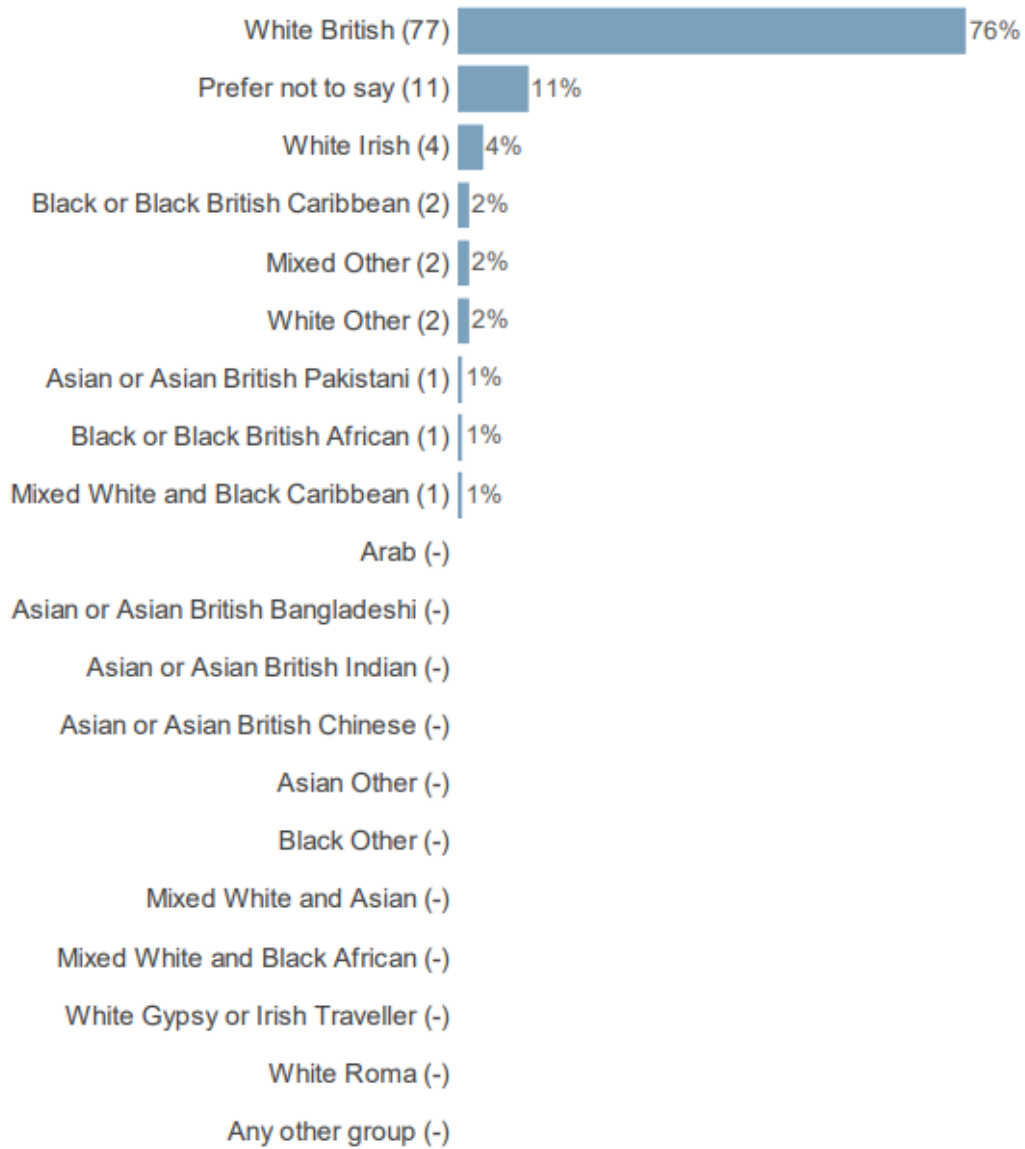
Do you consider yourself disabled? (please select one)

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.



97 respondents answered this question and 17% of them stated they were disabled. The percentage of those stating that they have a disability is similar to the population identified in the 2021 Census for Central Bedfordshire.

To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (please select one)

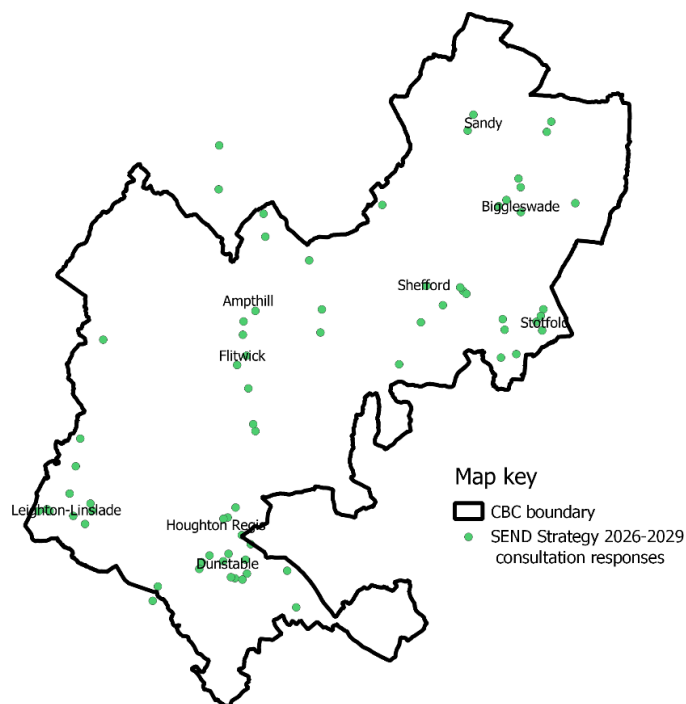


101 respondents answered this question. Respondents were most likely to be White British (76%). The percentage of respondents that are from an ethnic minority group is similar to the population in the 2021 Census for Central Bedfordshire.

Postcode analysis

A review of postcodes indicates that respondents were from across the Central Bedfordshire area.

SEND Strategy 2026-2029 consultation responses



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Acorn analysis

Broad divisions	Respondents with usable postcode	% of respondents with usable postcode	% of all Central Bedfordshire households
Higher income	17	25%	19%
Middle income	44	64%	63%
Lower income	8	12%	17%
Total, with usable postcode	69	100%	100%

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Just over half of all respondents provided a valid postcode within Central Bedfordshire. The number was too small to draw firm conclusions although it did suggest that responses were received from a range of different households.

Conclusion

Overall, respondents were broadly satisfied with the strategy, with consistently strong support for the vision, values, outcomes and priorities. Comments throughout identified:

- the need to see action
- consider the needs of the child
- comments about funding, noting that SEND needs to be adequately resourced but aware that there isn't enough money to go around
- the importance of early intervention
- the importance of the right provision for the child
- how will change happen?
- there needs to be better communication, listening and joined-up working
- the need for accountability and transparency

The vision

79% of respondents supported the vision, with comments also stating support, but the need to see action. They also identified that too many children were in unsuitable provision and/or not getting the support they need.

Professional values

Within the professional values, respondents were strongest in their support (80%) for being reflective and committed to learning, with comments identifying the need to communicate (and listen), and questions about how they will work towards the priority.

Joint outcomes

The joint outcomes saw between 84% and 86% support, with respondents commenting on the need to see action.

Priorities

87% of respondents felt that person-centred and locally available education provision should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support (92%) for having SEN Support, Education, Health and Care Plans, and provision that adapt as children's needs and aspirations change.

89% of respondents felt that a local partnership that works well together should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support for clear roles, responsibilities and communication pathways to avoid duplication and create effective systems (92%) and transparent and timely communication so families only need to tell their story once (92%).

90% of respondents felt that a skilled, supported and inclusive workforce and community should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support for helping parents and carers to understand systems and navigate SEND services (94%).

94% of respondents felt that clear pathways for support and meaningful transitions should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support for a system that supports young

people to move successfully into adulthood (94%) and seamless planning between services so that transitions do not result in gaps or duplicated work (94%).

94% of respondents felt that children and young people receiving the right support at the right time should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support for timely access to assessment and diagnosis across health, education and social care (94%).

87% of respondents felt that inclusive and accessible community opportunities should be one of our priorities. Respondents were strongest in their support for supporting transitions into adult services, post-16 education, employment and social opportunities (92%).

Effective use of local resources

Respondents were clear in the need to improve communication and invest in staff – including numbers of, experience and training for staff.

Overseeing the delivery of the strategy

Respondents commented that the governance included a lot of boards, and that accountability and transparency are crucial.

Respondent groups

Respondents were most likely to be female, aged 35-54. This is similar to the pattern that we see for other surveys and consultations for children and education. The percentage of response from those with disabilities, and ethnic minority groups was similar to the population of Central Bedfordshire.

Responses were received from across Central Bedfordshire, and responses were received from a range of different households.

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