


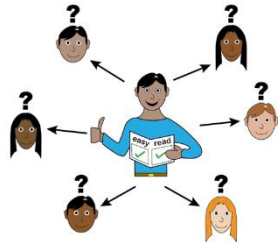


Torbay Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Annual Survey Report 2023



Easy read guide for Children and
Young People

Who is this guide for?

<p>understand</p> 	<p>This guide will be useful if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are a child or young person• Have a learning disability
<p>who for</p> 	<p>If you do not have a learning disability, this guide can still help you understand the survey results and what children, young people, parents, and carers think about the support available in Torbay.</p>

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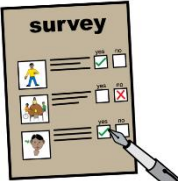



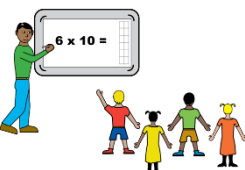

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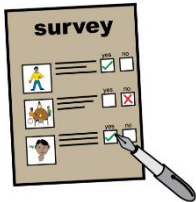




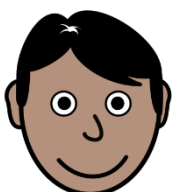

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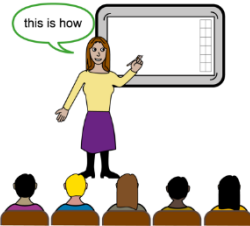
Summary

<p>survey</p> 	<p>A survey was completed in 2023 where people were asked what they thought of the support that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities were getting. We found that:</p>
<p>important to me</p> 	<p>Children and young people said that the most important thing was having good provision and positive relationships with the people around them.</p>
<p>unhappy</p> 	<p>Most parents and carers are not feeling heard and are let down by services.</p>
<p>help</p> 	<p>Parents and carers said that they must fight to get their children the help they need, they said:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was difficult to get help if their child was not diagnosed.• It is difficult to access health services and waiting times are long.• They had to repeat themselves and did not feel listened to.• They did not get the help they needed from social care, even though it was paid for.
<p>school</p> 	<p>Parents and carers felt that their child needed to go to a special school because the mainstream school they were at could not help them.</p>
<p>blame you</p> 	<p>Many parents and carers said that they did not trust the people who should be supporting their child or young person and that they felt shamed and blamed.</p>

Children and Young People’s Survey

<p style="text-align: center;">survey</p> 	<p>77 children and young people answered the survey, 65 of these were face-to-face with a participation officer from Children’s Services. Most children were visited at their school.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">our promise</p> 	<p>Children and young people were asked whether the professionals working with them were following the SEND pledge. This talks about whether they are honest, show they care, and are thoughtful, fair, kind, and friendly. The most common answer was Always (83%).</p>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;"> <div> <p>good</p>  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <p>all right</p>  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div> <p>bad</p>  <input type="checkbox"/> </div> </div>	<p>Children and young people were also asked ‘what has worked well for you’ and ‘what could be better for you’. There were two key themes highlighted in the answers; Relationships and Provision. There is a crossover between the two themes, where provision has been highlighted as an issue, this could sometimes be solved if relationships were better.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">best bits</p> 	<p>Some of the positive things that children and young people said...</p> <p><i>“They understand what I’ve been through and what I need”</i></p> <p><i>“Fidget toys to concentrate more”</i> <i>“Talking to my 1 to 1”</i></p> <p><i>“No need for EHCP as I’ve done so well with support”</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">worst bits</p> 	<p>Some of the things children and young people said could be better...</p> <p><i>“They’re swapping and changing all the time so I’m dreading the appointments...”</i> <i>“I want them to ask me what I need in meetings”</i></p> <p><i>“More Teaching Assistant’s at school”</i></p> <p><i>“Understand that I cannot physically sit in a lesson. I get distracted and hyper”</i></p> <p><i>“I get overloaded with work; wish I had my own room as I feel uncomfortable next to others”</i></p>

Parent and Carers' Survey

<p style="text-align: center;">survey</p> 	<p>89 Parents and carers answered the survey. They were asked 18 questions in total based on their experiences and an understanding of the needs of their children and young people. Most (74) of the children and young people went to a mainstream school. The biggest problem was the need for support.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">care for you</p> 	<p>Health</p> <p>Most parents and carers felt unsupported by health provision. There was a strong theme around finding it difficult to access the right services, leading them to pay privately. Many experienced delays and long waiting times. Some parents felt blamed for causing their child's difficulties. Others spoke about the lack of mental health support for their autistic children. Several reported on the services not working together saying:</p> <p><i>"I have to chase everything up. We seem to get lost in the system"</i></p> <p><i>"We have to wait constantly; nothing is ever simple and most of the time you must ask for things multiple times before it happens. I have found I almost need to be rude, and I demand something for it to happen which is not like me at all, but I have to do this to help my child"</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">school</p> 	<p>Education</p> <p>Only 44 parents and carers felt that the school could fully support their child's needs with 60 parents and carers thinking that they could not. Some of the comments were:</p> <p><i>"Brilliant education team and help getting him in the right school"</i></p> <p><i>"The counsellor at her secondary school was amazing and we really miss her post 16"</i></p> <p><i>"SENCO educational plan very slow process took quite some time for my daughter to get extra support in primary school"</i></p> <p><i>"She is recognised in school with SEN (Special Educational Needs) needs but not much support offered, and I think it is because there is no diagnosis"</i></p> <p><i>"No understanding of disability. due to lack of education. No qualifications achieved in 8 years"</i></p>

care planning



Social Care

19 of the 89 **parents and carers** said they have had or still receive support from **social care**. Most of the comments were negative about their **experiences** with some positive. These are some of what was said:

“The only help offered has been referral to parenting - these are over-subscribed anyway and there is no space allocated for those who have been invited”

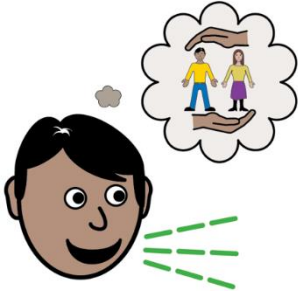
“I feel listened to and respected. Asked what level of support I would like once the daily care was in place”

“Frustrated. Going over and over the same information. Promises made that fade away”

“The social worker was supportive of our situation”

“Everything has been a continual fight, I’m exhausted, it’s impacted negatively on my mental health and my relationship with my spouse, family friends and work”

your say



SEND

Parents and Carers were asked what **worked well** or made a difference to them and their family over the last year and what has not.

What is working well

Themes identified were:

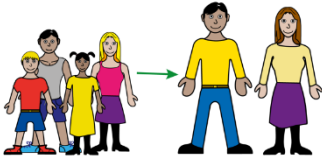
- The role of the SENCO and staff
- Provision and review of the EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan)
- Quality of support put in place
- Alternative provision or education other than at school (EOTAS)

What is not working well

Themes identified were:

- Delay in provision
- Lack of continuity
- Lack of joined up approach
- Accountability for funding within an EHCP
- Failure to deliver provision
- Lack of available specialist provision
- Communication and not feeling listened to
- Lack of training and understanding

transition



Transition

Key points were:

- **Negative Experiences** - Many parents reported poor transition processes, **lack of provisions** for adults with special educational needs, and feelings of **loneliness** among children.
- **Education and Training** - Suggestions included job provisions, supporting roles, and apprenticeships for **neurodiverse** young people.
- **Counselling and Support** - Need for counselling, holistic therapy, and local support groups for better coping skills.
- **Early Advice and Support** - Emphasis on **early help**, discussing options early, and providing support with paperwork and advocacy.

what i want



The needs of parents and carers

Parents and carers were asked if they felt their **needs** were **considered and understood**. The majority (89%) reported no. When asked where they get their support, most of them said from the voluntary sector and friends and family. When asked what would worry them about engaging with services, they said ‘being shamed and blamed.’

What can be done better to support parents and carers?

Parents and carers said:

- Listen and communicate
- Support us
- Counselling

What has been done? You said, we did

we have done



Children and young people told us that **good provision** and **positive relationships** with the people that help them were of greatest **importance** to them. They rated the professionals supporting them very highly. We have:

- Created the Point of You feedback service
- Created a new Ways of Working
- Set up the SEND Youth Forum group
- Torbay Hospital are running a 12-month Youth Forum pilot for 13–20-year-olds

Many **parents and carers** are not feeling **heard** and feel **let down** by some of the services that exist to **support** them. They report a lack of joined up thinking. We have:

- Reaching more parents and carers than ever with the SEND Newsletter
- Ran an engagement event for parents and carers
- SEND Family Voice providing support
- Bridging the gap workshops
- Autism and Us, autism and girls and demand avoidance parent programmes
- Social care has reviewed the complaints process
- Family hubs have been co-produced with parent carer panels

Parents and carers talked about the need to fight to get their children's **needs met**, having to chase up appointments and provision. We have:

- SEND Team have a new duty service responding to enquiries on the same day
- New Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) website has been launched with links to services and forms
- Family Hubs website as a one stop shop
- New portal for self-referral to Early Help

Many **parents and carers** felt that it was difficult to get **support** unless their child has a **diagnosis**. We have:

- Autism in schools training project
- SEND Family Voice to establish 3 autism community networks

- Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project
- NHS producing bitesize information videos
- Intention to launch a peer led support offer
- Neurodiversity graduated response toolkit
- A review of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) has been completed and NHS will work with Better Communication CIC to develop and implement the Balanced System Approach
- Detailed review of the Early Years SLCN offer
- Social Care reviewed their complaints process to offer face to face or virtual meetings

we have done



They described **difficulty accessing health services** and experienced unacceptably **long waiting times**. We have:

- Building knowledge and skills through Autism in schools and PINS
- Integrating systems to improve the experiences of children, young people, and families
- Learning from our Expert Reference Group of families with neuro diverse children, led by Devon Parent Carer Forum
- Understanding what additional resources are needed
- Setting acceptable assessment standards with private providers so that these are recognised, and families no longer need to wait on an NHS waiting list for a diagnosis
- New Neurodevelopmental key worker posts are to be recruited to pilot and test the role in providing direct support to children and young people waiting for an autism assessment
- Bringing together the resources available to promote 'Waiting Well' to children and young people and their families whilst on wait lists
- Community Pediatrics are working to streamline their referral pathway
- Mental Health Support Teams continue to provide early intervention support
- NHS Devon continues to work with NHS England, our local providers and partners on future opportunities relating to MHST

we have done



- Young Devon’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service offers early Intervention conversation by trained therapists
- A 12 month ‘test of change’ waiting list programme was devised, delivered and is now being considered

Parents and carers experienced **poor communication**, having to repeat information and did **not feel listened to**. We have:

- Children and Family Health Devon have a new electronic patient record. This should mean that families and young people tell their story once and experience more joined up health care
- We will be introducing the ‘Tell It Once’ Platform through the Family Hubs website to reduce the need for families to repeat information
- In future, step-downs from Child in Need planning to Early Help do not require a further Early Help assessment

Families that received appropriate levels of health and social care praised individual providers. We have:

- Feedback received from families is fed back to teams and is discussed in regular meetings by all our providers.

Some **parents and carers** described a lack of **provision of social care** even where funding was available. We have:

- Established a Short Breaks Task and Finish group, to focus on expanding the Short Breaks provision available in Torbay

Less than half of **parents and carers** felt confident that their child’s **educational setting** could meet their child’s **SEND needs**. Parents and carers feel that more **specialist provision** is needed. We have:

- SEND roadshow visited most of the mainstream schools in Torbay to talk about the new Graduated Response toolkits and supporting mainstream schools to meet need
- There has been local engagement in Dingley’s Promise training offer
- The Sufficiency project aims to ensure more complex needs can be met through more specialist skills and provision locally
- An improvement plan is being developed to support education settings with the identification and intervention 39 of Speech, Language and Communication Needs

- Autism and Schools and Partnerships for Inclusion of neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) offering training and support to improve the whole school approach including environment, workforce understanding and practice and links with parents.


Trust appears to be low, with **parents and carers** stating that they feel **unsupported**. Many parents and carers felt **shamed and blamed**. We have:

- Restorative Practice training has been taking place with staff across the SEND partnership
- We are preparing to launch the Restorative Language policy
- Feedback from the work we did in partnership with Torbay Medical Research Fund has been taken on board and integrated in other programmes of work
- Both the PINS and Autism in Schools Projects will help schools, and their families develop collaborative conversations to improve relationships
- Mental Health in Schools Teams (MHST) provide some support to parents and carers to help enable them to support the Children & Young People in their care
- Children and Family Health Devon have created 17 YouTube videos explaining each of the interventions provided by MHST's

we have done



What is next?

<p>next step</p> 	<p>Improvement work is now being delivered through five priority areas, which are overseen by a SEND Project Board and Executive Strategic Board. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Priority 1 – SEND is Everybody’s Business• Priority 2 – Early Intervention and Lived Experience• Priority 3 – Needs and Joint Commissioning• Priority 4 – Inclusion• Priority 5 – Becoming an Adult
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Read the full survey report: [SEND-2023-Participation-Survey-Report-Final.pdf](https://torbayfamilyhub.org.uk/SEND-2023-Participation-Survey-Report-Final.pdf)
(torbayfamilyhub.org.uk)

Glossary

CFHD Children and Family Health Devon

EHCP Education Health and Care Plan

EOTAS Education other than at school

LD Learning disability

MHST Mental Health in Schools Teams

NHS National Health Service

PINS Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools

SENDCO/SENCO Special educational needs and disability coordinator

SEND Special educational needs and disability

SENDIASS SEND Information and advisory support service

SLCN Speech, Language and Communication Needs