

Survey results: Families' experiences of Alternative Provision in Hertfordshire (2023)
Hosted by HPCI (Herts Parent Carer Involvement)

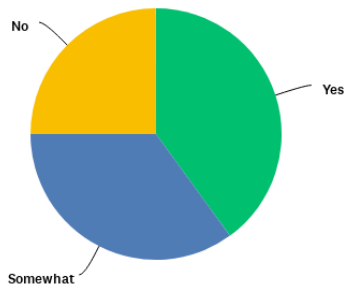
HPCI ran this survey to make sure that we understand the views and experiences of families whose children or young people (aged 5-18) with SEND are using or have accessed Alternative Provision (AP) within the last six months. 21 parent carers completed this survey and their responses related to children and young people (CYP) across the 5-18 range (the majority falling into the 12-16 category) and across a range of needs, with the most frequent being Autism, Anxiety and ADHD. We had hoped to receive a greater response to this survey, although we received feedback that some families felt disinclined to respond as officers from the council were also telephoning families to talk about AP.

Some headlines:

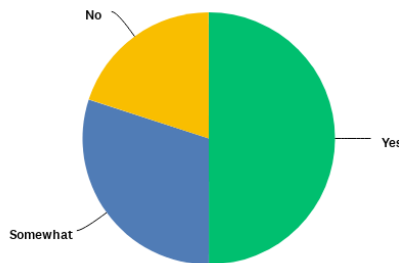
- The majority of CYP had an EHCP in place (66%).
- 24% had an EOTAS package in place.
- The type of AP package varied, with examples including online learning, tutoring, and farm therapy.
- The length of time at their AP placement ranged, with 38% less than 6 months but 29% over a year.
- The vast majority of respondents said that their CYP had only had one episode of AP.
- In nearly all cases, the reason given for why a CYP required AP related to schools not being able to meet need / not having an appropriate placement.
- Most families (55%) said that they were given a choice about whether their child should access AP.
- In many cases (38%) families said that no services other than schools had been involved with their CYP before they accessed AP. And a further 14% said the only services involved had been ones that they paid for privately.
- 75% of respondents said that their CYP did not have a clear route back to school or college while in AP.
- And only 40% said that there was a plan for next steps (e.g., college or an apprenticeship).
- There was variation in the frequency with which the AP placement was reviewed – many were reviewed at least once a term, but a quarter said this happened either yearly or not at all.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that they had contact with or felt engaged with the AP provider.
- And the majority (55%) said they knew who monitors the AP provision.
- While many felt AP fully or partly met their CYP's needs, there were a number of comments that related to a lack of understanding for neurodivergent CYP, placements failing as they were not suitable for the needs of the CYP and also parents feeling that the responsibility to arrange a suitable placement fell to them.
- Only 20% said that they felt that accessing AP had not helped their child.
- The majority of respondents were positive or neutral about how the AP placement had supported their child's happiness, safety and progress (see chart below).
- Many respondents felt that meeting their child's needs had been affected by delays, either in agreeing a placement or agreeing payment responsibilities.

More detail on some key questions:

Do you think the AP provider understand and can meet your child's needs?



Do you think that accessing an AP has helped your child?



How would you rate the following for your child's placement in AP?



The survey findings – in quotes:

“It has been life changing for my son.”

“It was enormously beneficial for the period of time my child needed it.”

“Our child is making progress, is happy and is now learning in a way that suits them in a predictable, safe environment. There is no way they would be able to cope/attend, let alone learn in a school due to their needs.”

“The tutor I recruited has built a good relationship with my son and he has regained many of the skills he lost following his mental health crisis.”

“If it hadn't taken so long to be actioned it would've been great but a majority of the academic year had passed before we got started and it put my child behind and ran into the next academic year meaning the next level couldn't be started on time. We're now a year behind which should've been prevented.”

“Too much arguing about payment so the tutors couldn't start. Should not be another fight after agreed by judge.”

“We are awaiting panel for a specialist provision. ETOS, wasn't offered and [XX] has been out of education for a year now.”

“The whole thing is horrendous. He has had no teacher input the last six months just TAs delivering lesson plans online. We are paying for a private... tutor.”

“I'm beside myself I can't work and it is hugely affecting my daughter who doesn't understand why her brother is at home. He wants to be in a school he is not a school refuser.” (parent of a CYP who receives 1 hour of online tuition a day)

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