

HPCI Parent Carer Survey 2024

Headline findings



HPCI SEND Survey - Background

- In 2024, Herts Parent Carer Involvement ran its third annual survey for all families with a child or young person aged 0-25 with SEND in Hertfordshire. The survey closed in November 2024.
- Families were asked about their experiences during the 2023/24 academic year, to gauge how well local services identify need, help meet that need and support the improvement of outcomes for children with SEND.
- The questions asked were in line with the Ofsted / CQC Inspection framework to help inform future monitoring, and to help track year-on-year changes.
- We received 1,414 analysable responses from families across Hertfordshire, which is an increase of over 50% from last year. While we do not claim that this data is fully representative of the experiences of all families in Hertfordshire, the scale of responses and the detail provided clearly demonstrate how important this topic is to parent carers in the county.
- We are truly grateful to all those families who took the time to complete the survey.

HPCI SEND Survey – Understanding the data

- The following slides set out the key findings from the survey.
- It is important to note that respondents only see questions that are relevant to them and the services they receive (based on the answers they give) – the survey automatically skips sections that are not relevant. For example, if the family says their child does not have an EHCP, the survey will skip to the next section. So, when looking at the percentages, it is important to also note the number of responses.
- While these slides set out the headlines, if you want to look at the summary of responses to individual questions, these can be found by clicking [here](#).
- If you have any queries about the data or feedback to inform our next annual survey, please do email contact@hertsparentcarers.org.uk

What did we learn? – findings on one page

- There continue to be clear levels of dissatisfaction with the SEND system overall and concerns about the outcomes that are delivered for children and young people.
- The ratings for individual services have generally improved, although there is still clearly more to do. When asked about perceptions of whether services had got worse or better, most respondents said that they had seen “no change.”
- EHC Coordinators and/or EHCP administration continue to be the area of most concern for families. This is followed by Children and Young People’s Mental Health services (as it was in 2022/23) and the Community Paediatric service (which includes neurodiversity assessment/diagnosis).
- Many families continue to struggle to find information and support and they report difficulties navigating the system.

Overall levels of satisfaction

- Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with SEND services in Hertfordshire: **this averaged as a satisfaction rate of 3.5/10.**
- This compares to a satisfaction rate in 2022/23 of 3.2/10.
- There were very small differences in satisfaction rates based on the age of the child or young person – only 0.6 of a point between highest and lowest.
- Geographical differences were lower than in 2022/23, with less than a point difference between those most satisfied (parents in DSPL 4 averaged 3.9) and those least satisfied (parents in DSPL 7 averaged 3.1).
- Looking at educational setting – those with a child in a Hertfordshire special school scored an average of 4.5, those in mainstream scored an average of 3.3 (those with a child on SEN support were slightly more satisfied than those with an EHCP). Those whose child was excluded, or home educated (but not by choice) both scored below 2.

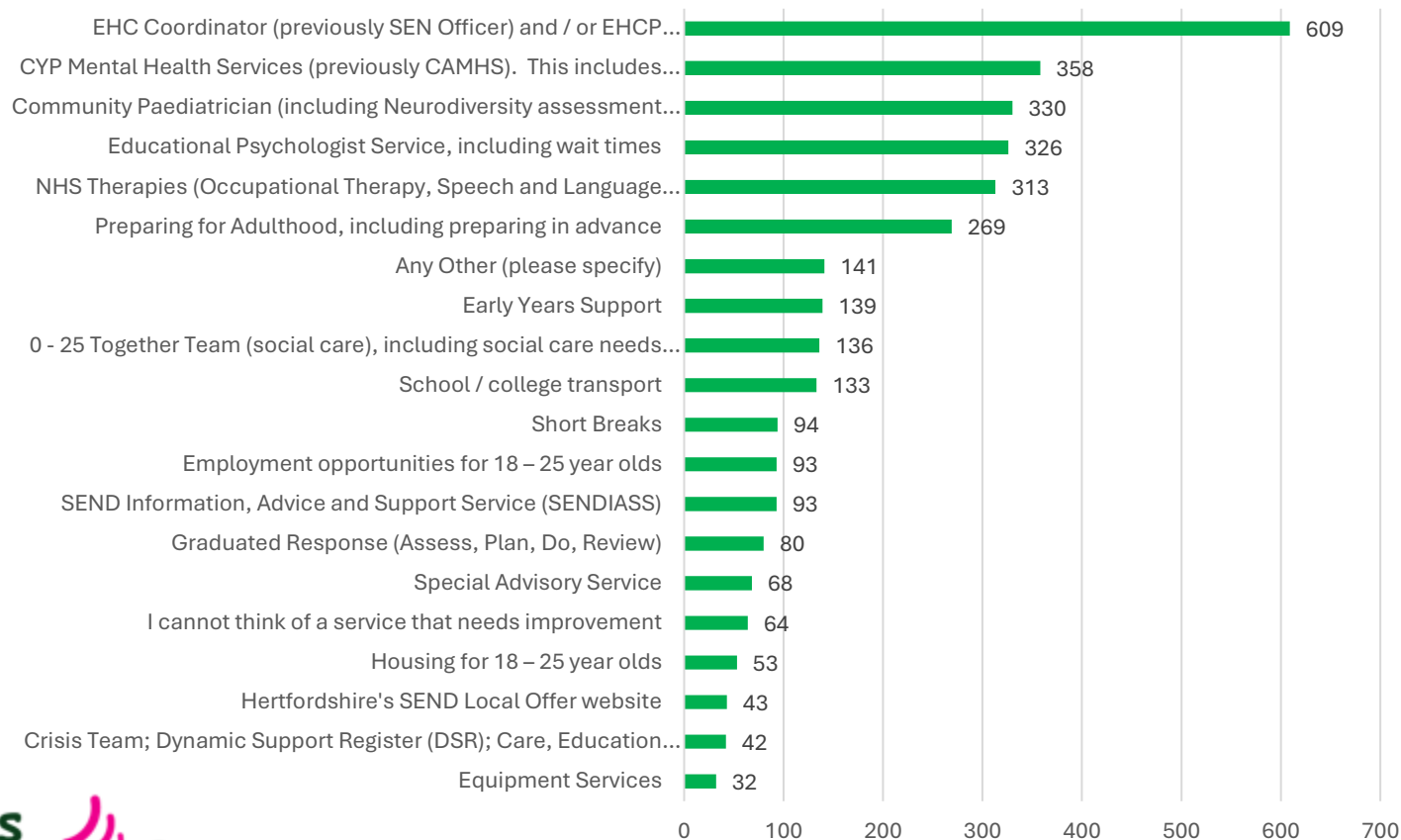
Services most in need of improvement

In order to gauge how services are performing, respondents were asked to identify the top three service areas they believed to be in most need of improvement. 1,220 responses were received and the top five service areas identified were:

1. EHC Coordinator (previously SEN Officer) and/or EHCP content, delivery and annual reviews.
2. CYP Mental Health Services. This includes PALMS and CAMHS.
3. Community Paediatrician (including neurodiversity assessment/diagnosis).
4. Educational Psychologist Service.
5. NHS Therapies (Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy etc.).

Services in need of improvement – a fuller picture

Families were asked “Which three of the following Services do you feel need the most improvement or are you most worried about?”



Families were asked if they had other services that they felt needed improvement. Their suggestions included:

Housing

GPs

Services for Young People

Wheelchair service

Sensory support

After school clubs / leisure activities

Respite

Support for specific learning difficulties

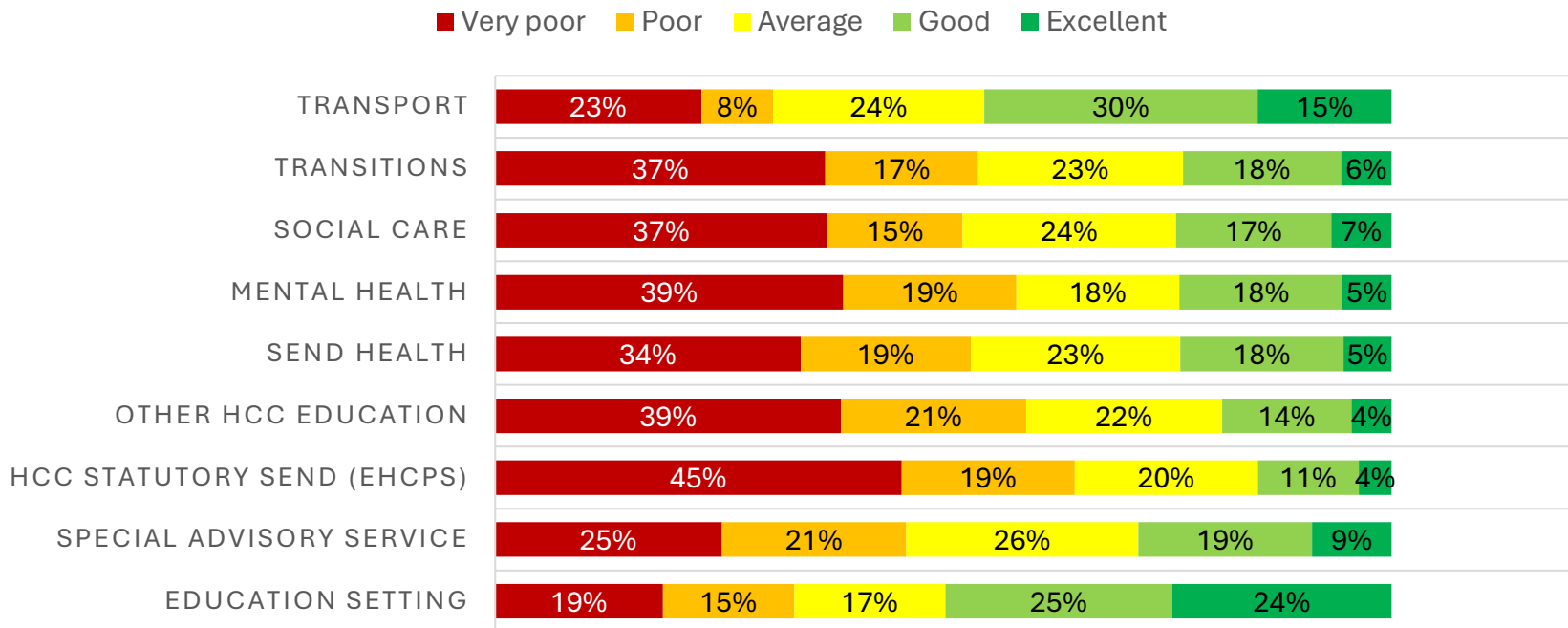
Rating services

Families were asked to rate a range of Hertfordshire SEND services.

- **Staff in education settings** were scored highest, with 50% of responses providing “good” or “excellent” ratings (1%↑ from 2022/23)
- **Herts school/college SEND transport service** – 45% rated “good” or “excellent” (10%↑)
- **Special advisory service** - 28% rated “good” or “excellent” (1% ↓)
- **Social Care 0-25** - 24% rated “good” or “excellent” (12%↑)
- **Herts NHS Mental health practitioners** - 24% rated “good” or “excellent” (6%↑)
- **Herts SEND health services (e.g. therapies, special school nurses)** - 24% rated “good” or “excellent” (6%↑)
- **Managing transitions (e.g. to new education/health setting or a change in support)** - 23% rated “good” or “excellent” (4%↑)
- **Other HCC education support services** - 19% rated “good” or “excellent” (6%↑)
- **HCC Statutory SEND (EHCPs)** – 15% rated “good” or “excellent” (this was not asked last year)

Rating services – the data at a glance

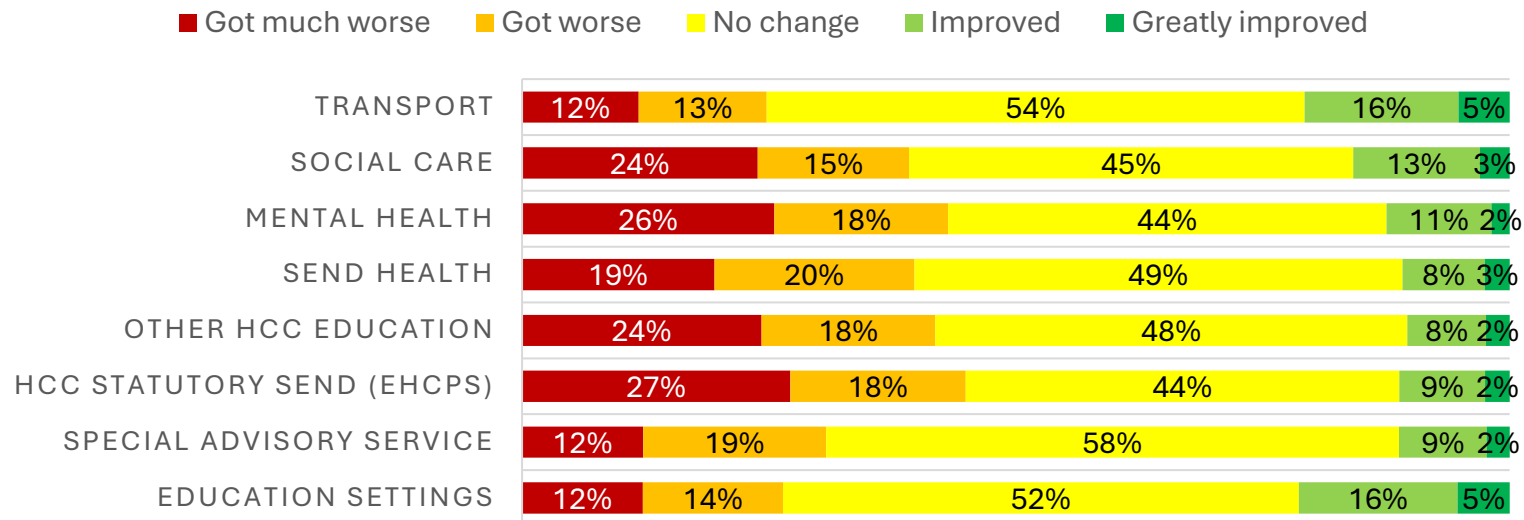
Families were asked to rate a range of Hertfordshire SEND services¹.



¹Between 1,282 and 1,298 responses were received for this section's questions, although many reported that the question was not applicable (N/A). These N/A responses have been removed in the analysis above. After removing N/A, 1,181 responses were received rating staff in education settings. The Statutory SEND (EHCPs) rating is based on 871 responses.

Service levels – moving in the right direction?

- Respondents were asked if they were aware of any change in service levels between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. Across all questions, ‘no change’ received the biggest proportion of responses.
- Education settings and transport had the most ‘improved’/‘greatly improved’ responses.
- HCC Statutory SEND (EHCPs), Mental Health, Other HCC education and SEND Health all had over 40% of respondents report that they had changed for the worse from 2022/23 to 2023/24.



Working together

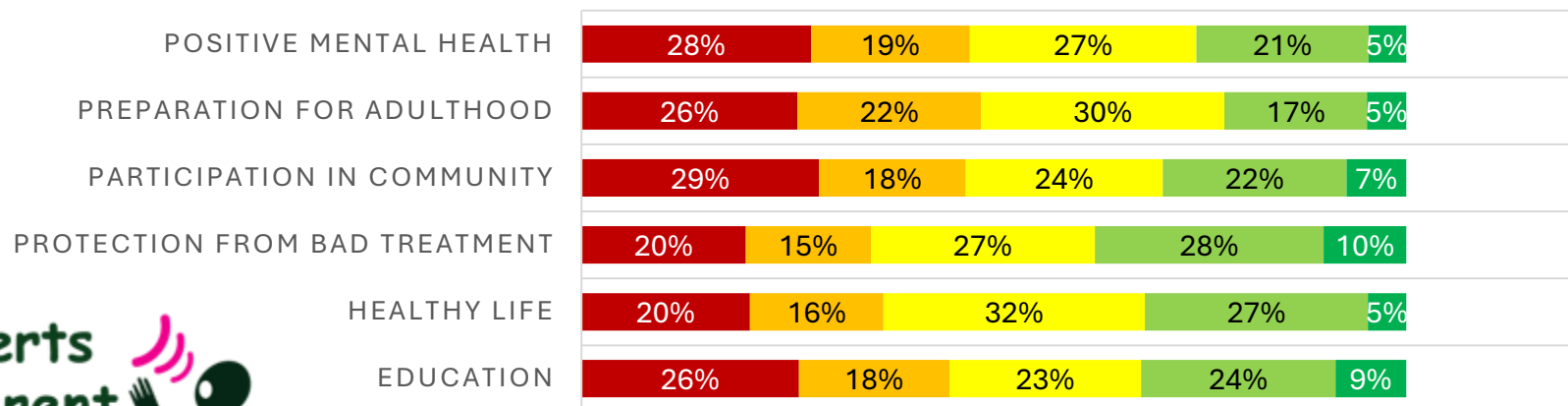
- Respondents were asked about how well they think different Hertfordshire SEND support services work together (i.e. schools, Hertfordshire County Council, Health Services)
- 20% rated working together as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’ (of 1,390 responses).
- In 2022/23 this figure was 17% (of 708 responses).
- Respondents had the option to leave comments as well. None of the comments focussed on how well the support services work together, but there were some positive comments about individual services being supportive.

“There are so many different services and processes it is super confusing for parents to navigate, particularly when already trying to navigate a neuro-diverse child.”

What does this mean for outcomes?

- Families were asked how good Hertfordshire SEND support services have been at helping their child reach their full potential across a range of issues.
- 38% of respondents thought that services were good or excellent at protecting children and young people from bad treatment (e.g. bullying).
- In 2022/23, respondents rated educational progress, community participation, preparing for adulthood and good mental health, as between 19% and 25% 'good' or 'excellent.' Response numbers for each question ranged between 526 and 737.
- In 2023/24, the scores for 'good' and 'excellent' in these areas was between 22% and 32%. Response numbers for each question ranged between 844 and 1213.

■ Very poor ■ Poor ■ Average ■ Good ■ Excellent



Support in Education Settings is generally positive, but families report significant impact when needs are not met.

- More than half (51%) of 880 respondents regarded schools as good/excellent at **identifying** a child or young person's SEN need(s).
- Over half of 878 respondents (53%) rated staff as good/excellent at **understanding** their child's SEN need(s).
- Just under half (46%) of 876 respondents believed that staff were good/excellent at **meeting needs**.
- The survey asked families with children aged 5-18 if their child was able to access their school or setting for all the hours they should attend, and 12% of 936 respondents said that they were not, for many reasons such as anxiety, emotionally based school non-attendance, and the setting being unable to meet needs.

“My child suffers with exhaustion and burnout from coping in an environment that does not meet her needs”

Education, Health and Care Plans

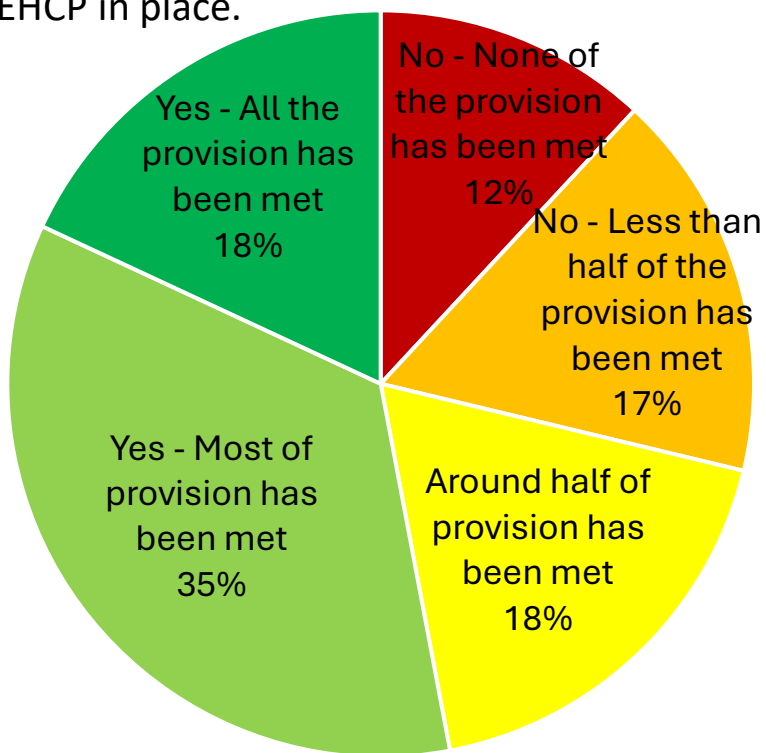
534 respondents said their child had a current EHCP in place.

Meeting Deadlines?

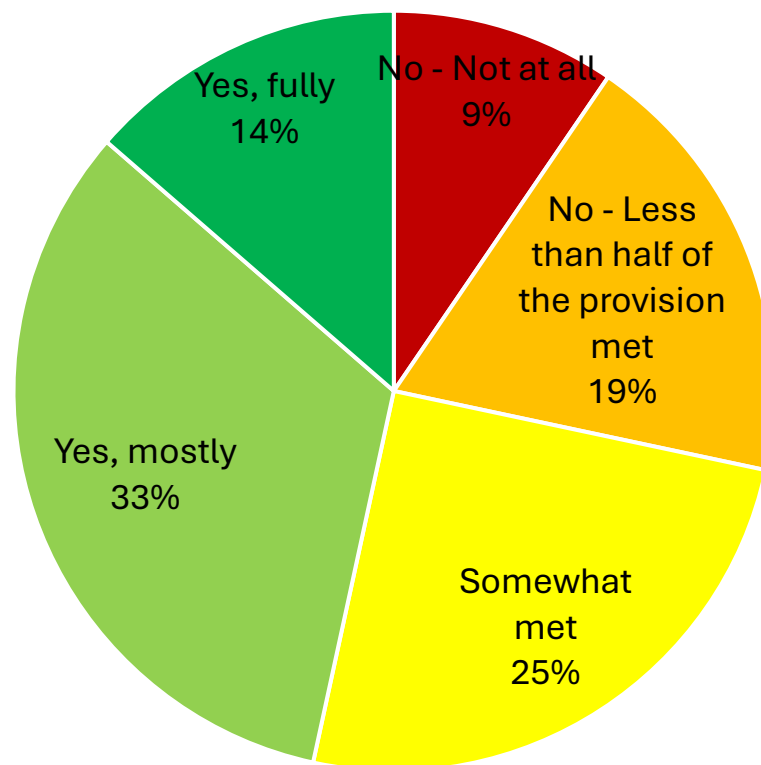
- 24% of the 380 responses to this question reported annual reviews not being carried out within statutory deadlines.
- In 2022/23, this was 32% of 106 responses.
- Where amendments to the Plan were needed, 40% of the 250 respondents said that the final version of the Plan was issued within the statutory deadlines.
- In 2022/23, this was 25% of 352 responses.
- 118 respondents told us that the statutory deadline for a final version of the Plan was missed. 50% said they then waited over six months for the final version to be issued.
- The comments received were very similar to 2022/23. They suggest it's often the next annual review that prompts the previous year's EHCP to be issued. There were many comments again about updates only being issued after complaints or as part of a more formal process.

Education, Health and Care Plans

534 respondents said their child had a current EHCP in place.



Has the provision set out in the child's EHCP been met in full?
2023/24 data - 487 responses



Has the provision set out in the child's EHCP been met in full?
2022/23 data - 367 responses

EHC Co-ordinators (previously SEN Officers)

- 59% of 520 respondents had tried to contact their EHCCo and of those respondents, 18% rated the response time as 'good' or 'excellent.'
- 23% said they did not receive a response at all.
- Of those respondents who did get a response, 37% of 297 respondents reported that it was within 10 working days.
- 19% of 520 respondents said they didn't know who their EHC Co-ordinator was.

“We have had turnover of 4 different coordinators in the last year. We have found responsiveness to be very individualized.”

“Send officer who was excellent left and I wasn't told. New one excellent so far but just unfortunately couldn't/didn't communicate so for a long time emails were going unanswered.”

EHC Co-ordinators (previously SEN Officers)

- 19% of 524 respondents rated the communication from their EHCCo in the 2023/24 academic year as 'excellent' or 'good.' 17% said it was average. 40% said it was 'poor' or 'very poor.' 24% had received no communication at all.
- 21% of 288 respondents rated the usefulness of replies from the team as 'good' or 'excellent.' 55% had concerns about the usefulness of the replies.
- Many comments noted a useful response for basic queries but less helpful responses for more complex issues.
- The survey asked about the HCC process of escalating issues where families haven't received a response, and how well this is being followed. Of the 164 respondents who had escalated their issue to a Team Leader, 77% said they received a response within 4 working days.
- When issues were escalated further to Senior Management, 15% of the 128 respondents said they received a response within 2 working days.

Health services

- The time spent waiting for assessment, treatment and services continues to be a significant area of concern for families, as it has been in previous years. Other areas of concern mentioned included feeling forced to “go private,” challenges in transitioning to adult services and problems faced when living near a border. Some positive experiences were mentioned where families said that they felt listened to and supported.
- 68% of 501 respondents reported that health services were average, good or excellent at meeting their child’s medical needs.
- Of the families who received an assessment or diagnosis within the 2023/24 academic year, 80% had been waiting for over a year (59% over two years). This is a slight increase on 2022/23. Those on the waiting lists for Autism, ADHD or a Community Paediatrician in general waited longer than those on other lists.
- Of those who started treatment during 2023/24, 50% had waited over a year (this is a decrease from 2022/23).
- 31% of respondents said that they received guidance, support or signposting while waiting for treatment or therapy – this is very similar to 2022/23.
- 60% of those whose child has an EHCP or was being assessed for one, said that they did not receive clear reports from Health to inform the plan.

Understanding needs

- Parent carers generally felt they have a good understanding of their child's needs, with 87% (of 1413 respondents) stating their understanding is “good” or “excellent”.
- There were interesting findings in terms of where families highlighted that they considered their child to have an undiagnosed need or condition.
- 336 respondents said that their child had undiagnosed ADHD and there are also high levels of undiagnosed anxiety (316 respondents) and autism (303 respondents).
- The survey also asked about private diagnoses – the conditions most frequently diagnosed outside the NHS were Autism, ADHD and Specific Learning Difficulties (which includes Dyslexia).

Social Care (0-25 Together service)

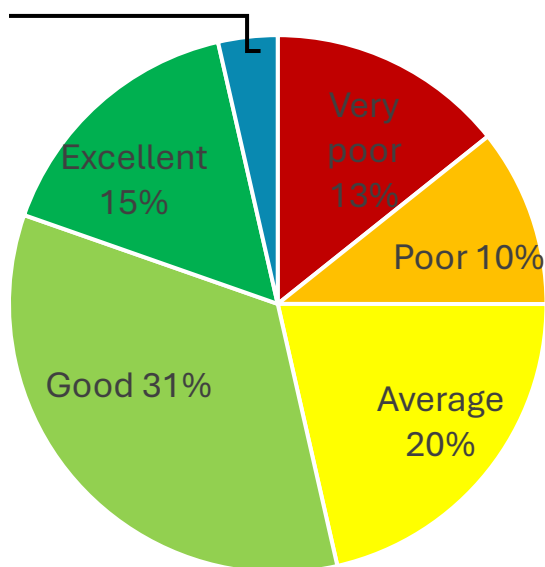
- In 2022/23 the 0-25 Together service received one of the poorest ratings from families. This year they were fifth out of the nine service areas.
- 28% of 416 respondents said their child had social care needs related to their SEN and/or disability that were being met by support such as respite care, Short Breaks, direct payments, day care opportunities etc.

“Our 0-25 practitioner has been amazing ”

“SBLO very limited for SLD & PMLD young people. Same if you have HI &/or VI needs plus learning disability, nothing suitable”

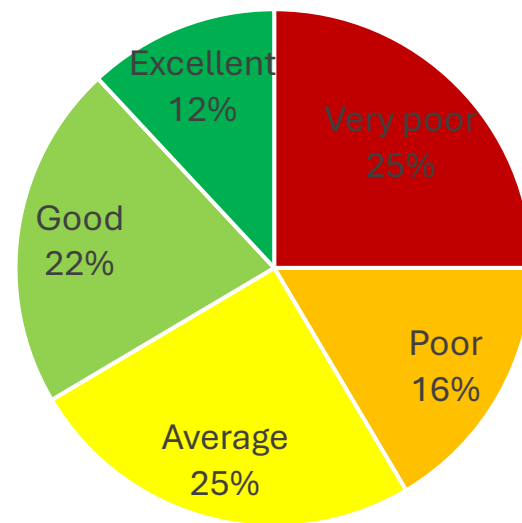
Social Care (0-25 Together service) – identifying and meeting the needs of children

Child has had a support package for a year+ but no review 3%



How good was the 0 – 25 Together Service (social care) at **identifying / reassessing** (reviewing) your child’s additional needs?

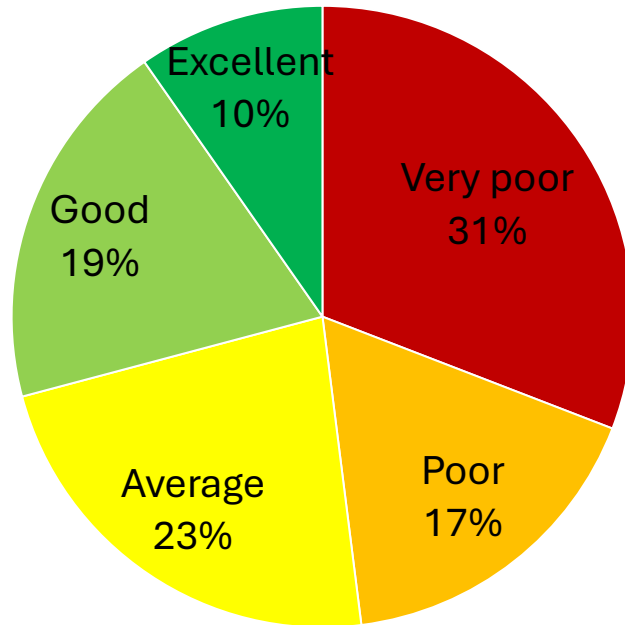
112 responses



How good were practitioners in the 0 – 25 Together service (social care) at **meeting** your child’s needs?

176 responses

Social Care (0-25 Together service) – meeting the needs of the whole family



How good were practitioners in the 0 – 25 Together service (social care) at meeting the needs of your whole family during the last school year?

175 responses

“The whole family's needs are not considered”

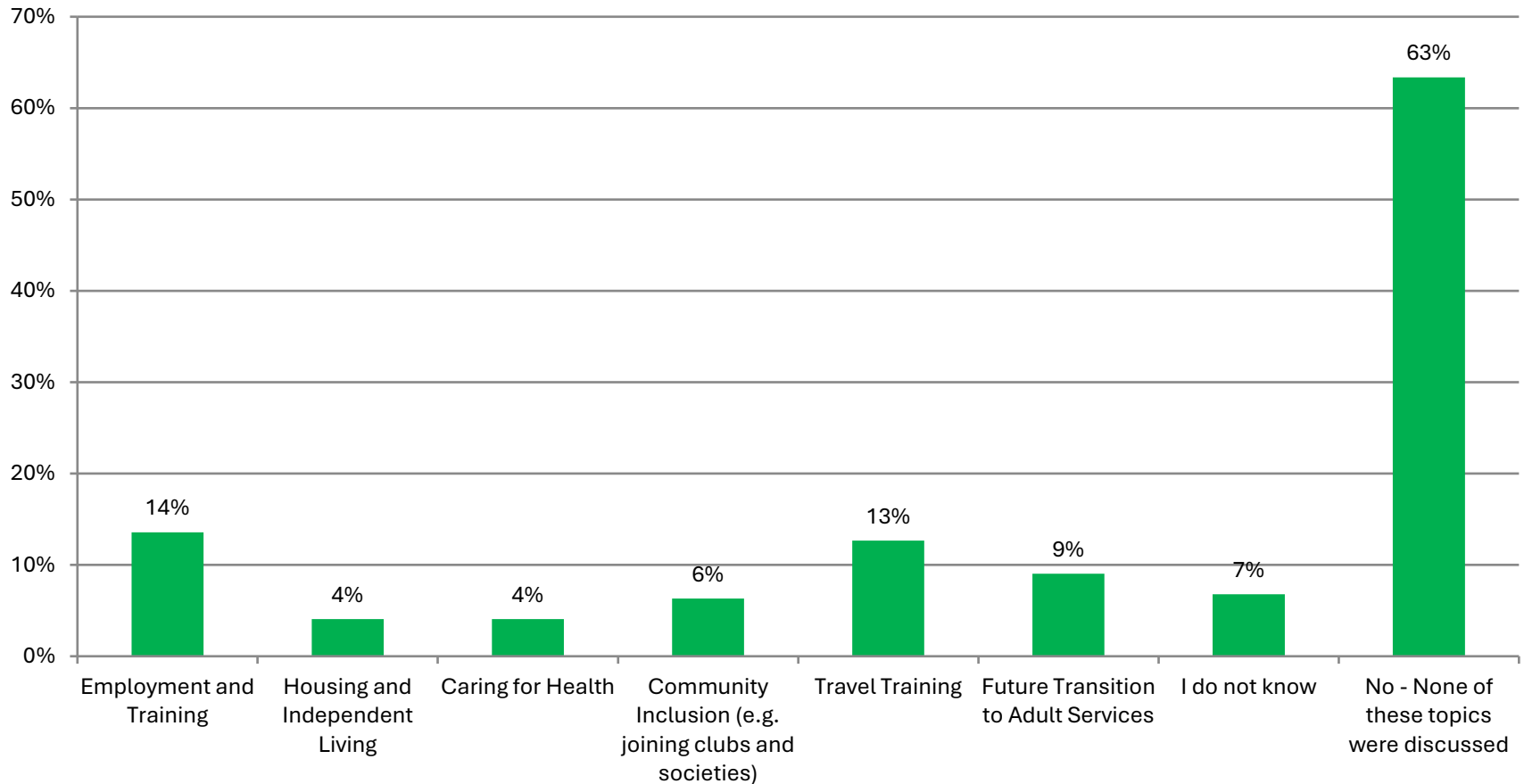
“My 0-25 worker is very good but her hands are tied. There isn't the breadth of provision of short breaks required that are suitable for my son. We receive Direct Payments for his care but finding good and reliable carers who we are prepared to leave him with is incredibly challenging.”

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

- Parent carers were asked, “Did you know that starting to plan for your young person’s transition from school to their next phase should happen by Year 9 (age 14)? This is often called Preparing for Adulthood or PfA.” 52% of the 225 respondents said that they did.
- Parent carers were asked, “In the last school year, how good have **any Hertfordshire SEND support services** (school, Hertfordshire County Council, Herts NHS health services) been at helping your child reach their full potential in getting ready for adulthood?” 22% of the 844 responses said it was ‘good’ or ‘excellent.’ 24% said it was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor.’
- When asked to rate the PfA advice and support their young person received from **all sources**, 35% of 65 respondents said it was 'good' or 'very good.' 32% said it was 'poor' or 'very poor.'

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

Did you or your young person discuss or get advice on the following areas at their EHCP annual review in the last year? (tick all that apply)



Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

- When parent carers were asked if the discussion or advice about support to learn the Skills for Adulthood was written into their EHCP (or into a PfA "Transition Plan" or "One Page Profile" to go with their EHCP), 16% of the 69 respondents said yes, it had been included for the first time.
- 19% said it had been updated. 29% said that it had not been included. 36% didn't know.
- Nobody said their young person didn't need these skills included in their Plan.
- With regard to the quality of the discussion or advice, there were multiple comments saying that the advice feels quite generic and/or not suited to the individual child.
- There was also feedback suggesting that it would be helpful to get advice on how to work towards achieving their goals for the future (e.g. job or living independently).
- Parent carers were also asked questions about transition support after school/college, and about accessing information and support about Housing and Independent Living. As we received very few responses to these sets of questions, they have not been included in this summary report.

Understanding where to find support

- Only 14% of responders found it 'very easy' or 'easy' to find information about how to get help (a 1% decrease on 2022/23).
- However, 53% reported that it was 'difficult' or 'very difficult' (of 1,022 responses).
- 61% of respondents said that they had heard of the Local Offer, which is a decrease of 11% from 2022/23.
- Of those who had used the Local Offer website (474 responses), 69% said that they were able to find what they were looking for, although most said it took a bit of searching.
- 31% said that they felt more able to support their child after using the website (which is an increase of 11% from 2022/23).
- 1,084 respondents answered the question about which information sources they use – with the most popular responses being:
 - Google / Search Engine
 - Other parent carers
 - Facebook
 - School teacher / SENCo
 - Friends / Family

Listening to views

- Comments on the survey make it clear that families want to be heard. And the Ofsted/CQC inspection report commented on issues around capturing the voice and experiences of children and young people with SEND in Hertfordshire.
- **Education settings:**
 - 72% of 548 respondents said that staff were 'good' or 'excellent' at listening to their views. In 2022/23, this was 80% of 361 respondents.
 - 49% of 547 respondents said that staff were 'good' or 'excellent' at listening to the views of their child (where the child was old enough, willing and able). In 2022/23, this was 58% of 361 respondents.
- **Social Care:**
 - 46% of 147 respondents said that social care staff were 'good' or 'excellent' at listening to their views. In 2022/23, this was 33% of 89 respondents.
 - 27% of 147 respondents said that they were 'good' or 'excellent' at listening to the views of their child. In 2022/23, this was 21% of 92 respondents.

Interventions that help

- Families were asked for any examples where interventions by school, college or Herts County Council had really helped to support their child.
- Many responses related to the impact of individual people “going the extra mile”.
- There were lots of examples where small adjustments in schools had had a positive impact – relating to changes to the environment, classroom placement, “soft starts,” etc.
- A number of respondents mentioned the positive impact of support during transition (e.g. moving from primary to secondary, or onto college)
- Inclusive and accessible activities were highlighted, both outside school / college, or within it such as music or play therapy.
- The voluntary and community sector was also mentioned, both in terms of supporting children and their parent carers.
- Some specific teams were mentioned, including the Mental Health in Schools Team, SENDIASS, Specialist Teachers, and CAMHS.
- Some responses identified positive interventions, but said that they had to be privately funded.
- It is of note that nearly a third of the 612 written responses said that they could not identify any positive support, with many saying that they felt their child had not had the support they need.

Views on HPCI

- In 2023/24, 66% of 1082 respondents had heard of HPCI prior to this survey. In 2022/23, this was 46% of 688 respondents.
- Of the 366 respondents who *had* heard of the forum prior to this survey, 47% found the communication of our priorities to be 'good' or 'excellent.'
- 64% of 362 respondents felt that the information they received from HPCI was the same or better than in 2022/23.
- 35% couldn't remember receiving any information from HPCI. However, parent carers pointed out in the comments section that there is so much information given by so many organisations that it is hard to remember where it all comes from.
- Some respondents suggested that HPCI could increase social media communication on sites such as Facebook to improve our reach, which is feedback that we have taken on board.

Using our survey findings

- We have already begun to share the findings of this survey with SEND services across Hertfordshire.
- The 2021/22 survey information was used extensively as part of the Ofsted / CQC Local Area SEND inspection, and we will use this survey's data to inform future monitoring.
- We will also draw on the feedback about HPCI itself, to help us understand how we can best represent Hertfordshire parent/carers of children and young people with SEND.

To find out more about HPCI and free membership, please [visit our website](#).

For any queries, please email contact@hertsparentcarers.org.uk