

SEND and Inclusion Strategy – Formal Consultation Report

May 2025

Purpose of the Report

To share the results and feedback from the SEND and Inclusion Strategy consultation.

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Purpose of the consultation

To engage with local people, communities and partners to understand their views on the refreshed SEND and Inclusion Strategy for 2024-27, and to use these views to help shape the final Strategy. This included confirming agreement to the draft SEND principles, ensuring the Strategy reflects what works well and the barriers and challenges for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire, and that the priorities identified within the Strategy are the right focus for improvement activity to be overseen by the Leicestershire SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board over the next 3 years.

Method of engagement

Who

The consultation aimed to seek the views of local people, communities and partners working with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

How

Online: All visitors to the council's website during February to April 2025 were invited to complete the consultation survey which was visible on the 'have your say' page of the Council's website.

Paper: A paper copy of the survey was made available upon request to ensure all local people wishing to take part in the consultation were able to.

The media: Multiple media releases were sent out which were picked up by a number of media outlets (via television, radio, and newspapers) to encourage local people to provide their views.

Social media: Messages encouraging people to take part in the consultation were sent out via the Council's Local Offer and County Council's Facebook pages

Targeted communications were sent to:

- The SEND Hub, Leicestershire's SEND Parent and Carer Forum
- Head Teachers across Leicestershire for onward circulation to parents and carers via school newsletters
- Health and Social Care partners for onward circulation to colleagues working with children and young people with SEND
- Elected Members. All elected members received an email on 12 February 2025 advising them of the start of the consultation. In addition the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee received a report as part of the consultation exercise at its meeting on 21 January 2025 inviting them to comment on the Strategy.
- Internal staff. Employees of the County Council were made aware of the consultation through the March 2025 edition of the Director of Children and Families Update e-newsletter
- All were invited to comment on the Strategy via the survey link or to request a paper copy of the survey.

Questions asked within the survey:

Q1 Which of the following best describes the role you are replying to this consultation? (list of options)

Q2 Do you have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)?

Q3 Are you a parent / carer of children aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) in any of the following settings? Please tick all that apply (list of settings)

Q4 In which setting are you a teacher/ governor/ trustee/ or other employee of a school? (list of options)

Q5 If you indicated that you represent an organisation, business, community group, school/other educational establishment, please provide your details.

Q6 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?

Q7 Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our SEND principles?

Q7a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider within our SEND principles?

Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q8a The draft strategy describes what currently works well for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire

Q8b The draft strategy describes the barriers and challenges that children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire currently face

Q8c Why do you say this? Is there anything missing from what works well or the from the barriers and challenges?

Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme – Identification and assessment of needs. We will improve early identification and timeliness of needs assessments across partners)

Q9a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme – Attendance and inclusion. We will focus on supporting attendance and inclusion, particularly in mainstream settings.)

Q10a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme - Commissioned services. We will focus on commissioning the most appropriate educational places and short breaks, as well as making best use of joint commissioning arrangements.)

Q11a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme - Engagement, coproduction, feedback and voice. We will improve how we capture and use the voice of children, young people and their families to help shape and improve services.)

Q12a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme - Strategic Leadership and Improvement. We will work more closely with partners

across the system to improve join up between services, sharing data and making the system easier to navigate.)

Q13a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q14 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme – Transitions. We will focus on supporting successful well-planned transitions between educational settings and through to adult services.)

Q14a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority? (Improvement theme - Outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We will focus on helping children to achieve good outcomes and support their preparation for adulthood.)

Q15a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority?

Q16 Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27?

Q16a Why do you say this?

Q17 Do you have any other comments about the draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy?

Q18 What is your gender?

Q19 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth? If you're aged under 16, please skip this question.

Q20 What was your age on your last birthday?

Q21 In which local authority area do you live?

Q22 Are you a parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under?

Q23 If yes, what are the ages of the children in your care?

Q24 Are you a carer of a person aged 18 or over?

Q25 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

Q26 What is your ethnic group?

Q27 What is your religion?

Q28 What is your sexual orientation? If you're aged under 16, please skip this question.

When

The opportunity for local people, communities and partners to share their views on the SEND and Inclusion Strategy was available from Wednesday 12 February 2025 until Tuesday 8 April 2025, via the method outlined above.

Findings from the Consultation

60 surveys were returned during the consultation period. All were submitted online. During the consultation period, there were no requests for paper versions of the survey or for the Easy Read version of the Strategy document.

About respondents

The majority of respondents were:

- Female (84%)
- Aged 25-64 (97%)
- A Leicestershire resident (92%)
- A parent or carer of a child or young person aged 18 or under (84%)
- Had children aged 11-15 in their care (66%)
- Not a carer of a person aged 18 or older (79%)
- Did not have a long-standing illness or disability (53%)
- White ethnicity (95%)
- No religion (62%)
- Straight/heterosexual (91%)

13 respondents provided their organisation's official response to the consultation.

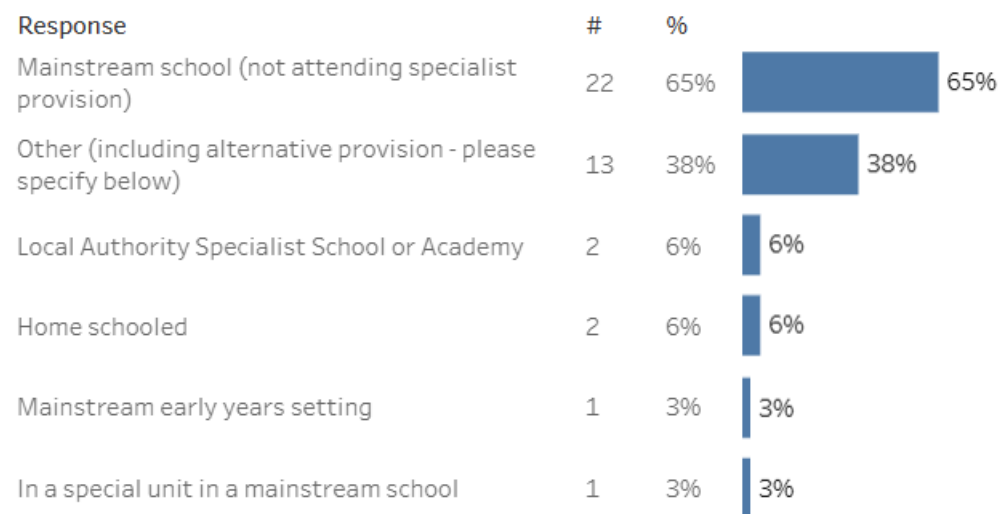
Responses to 'Your role' questions

Q1: Which of the following best describes the role you are replying to this consultation?

Select a response in this chart to filter the other charts in the dashboard



Q3: Are you a parent / carer of children aged 0-25 with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) in any of the following settings?



Q4: In which setting are you a teacher/ governor/ trustee/ or other employee of a school?



Q6: Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?



Responses to 'About you' questions

			No. of responses	% of total responses to question
Q18	Gender	Female	31	84%
		Male	6	16%
Q19	Gender identified with the same as sex registered at birth	Yes	36	100%
Q20	Age	25 - 44	18	53%
		45 - 64	15	44%
		65 and above	1	3%
Q21	Local authority area	Blaby District Council	6	16%
		Charnwood Borough Council	8	21%
		Harborough District Council	5	13%
		Hinckley and Bosworth District Council	2	5%
		Melton Borough Council	10	26%
		North West Leicestershire District Council	4	11%
		Rutland County Council	3	8%
Q22	Parent or carer of a young person aged 17 or under	Yes	32	84%
		No	6	16%
Q23	Ages of the children in your care	0-4	1	3%
		5-10	15	47%
		11-15	21	66%
		16-17	2	6%
Q24	Carer of a person aged 18 or over	Yes	8	21%
		No	30	79%
Q25	Illness or disability	Yes	18	47%
		No	20	53%
Q26	Ethnic group	White	35	95%
		Other ethnic group	2	5%
Q27	Religion	Christian (all denominations)	14	38%
		No religion	23	62%

Q28	Sexual orientation	Gay or Lesbian	1	3%
		Straight/ Heterosexual	32	91%
		I use another term	2	6%

Responses to questions around the draft Strategy based on respondent profile

Support for our SEND Principles:

All respondents

Q7: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our SEND principles?



Base: 59

Response ■ Strongly disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to agree ■ Strongly agree

Parents and carers of a child or children with SEND

Q7: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our SEND principles?



Base: 33

Response ■ Strongly disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to agree ■ Strongly agree

Teachers, governors, trustees or other school employees

Q7: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our SEND principles?



Base: 15

Response ■ Strongly disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to agree ■ Strongly agree

Interested members of the public

Less than 5 responses

Representatives of voluntary and community organisations

Less than 5 responses

Other stakeholders

Less than 5 responses

Leicestershire County Council employees

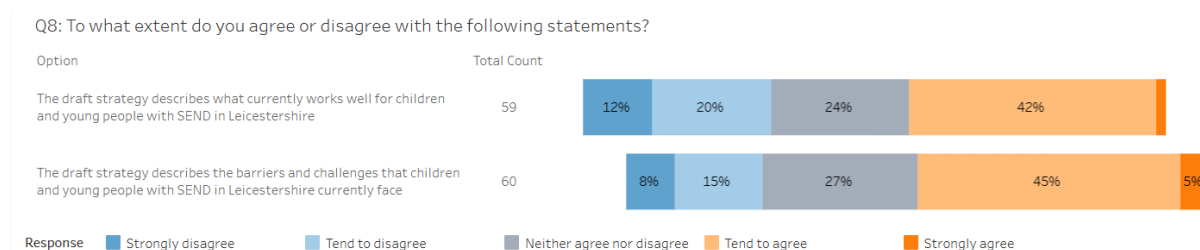
Less than 5 responses

Other

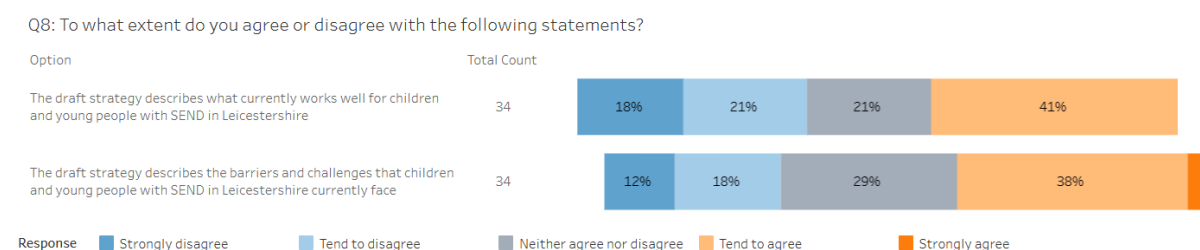
Less than 5 responses

The strategy describes what currently works well and the barriers and challenges for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire

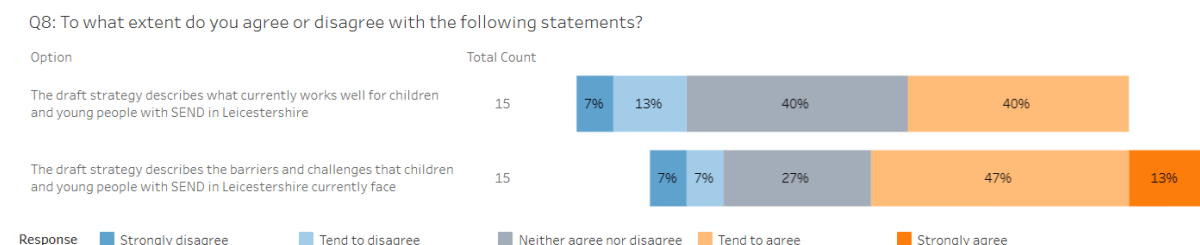
All respondents



Parents and carers of a child or children with SEND



Teachers, governors, trustees or other school employees



Interested members of the public

Less than 5 responses

Representatives of voluntary and community organisations

Less than 5 responses

Other stakeholders

Less than 5 responses

Leicestershire County Council employees

Less than 5 responses

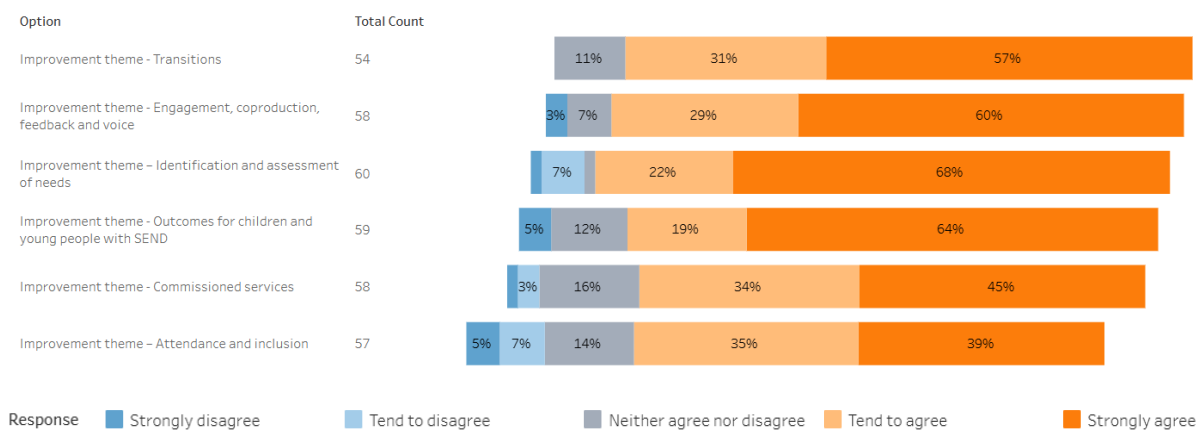
Other

Less than 5 responses

Agreement with the improvement priorities set out in the Strategy

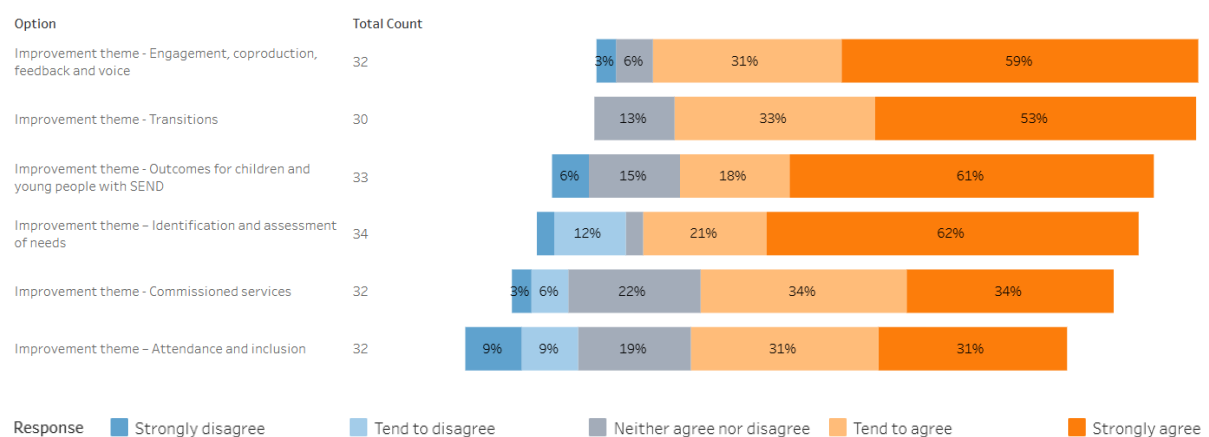
All respondents

Q9 - Q15: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?



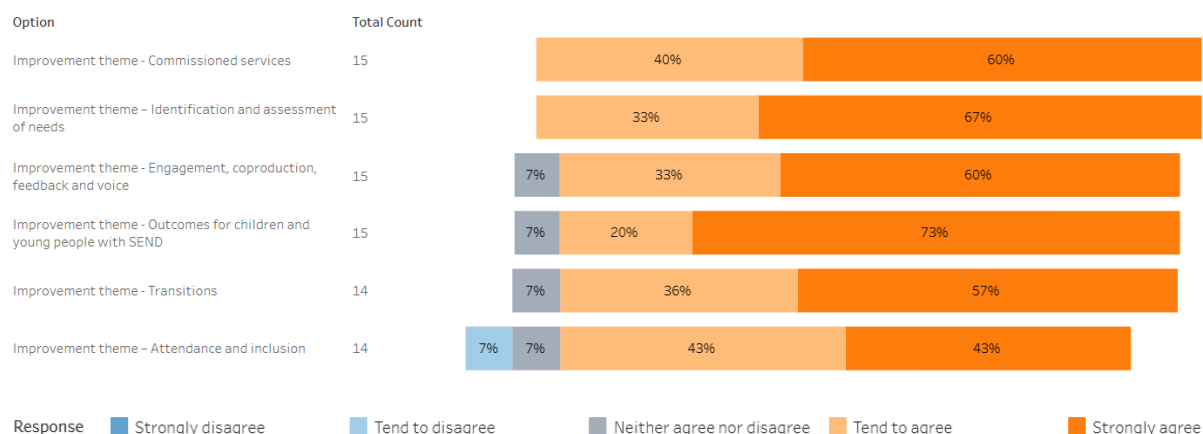
Parents and carers of a child or children with SEND

Q9 - Q15: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?



Teachers, governors, trustees or other school employees

Q9 - Q15: To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?



Interested members of the public

Less than 5 responses

Representatives of voluntary and community organisations

Less than 5 responses

Other stakeholders

Less than 5 responses

Leicestershire County Council employees

Less than 5 responses

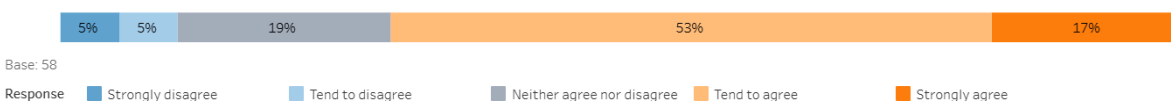
Other

Less than 5 responses

Overall agreement with the draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27

All respondents

Q16: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27?



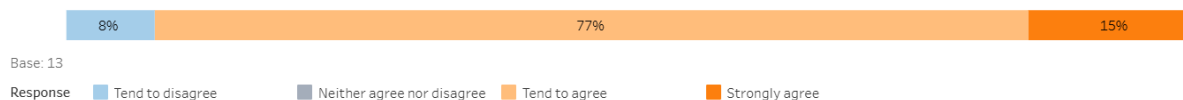
Parents and carers of a child or children with SEND

Q16: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27?



Teachers, governors, trustees or other school employees

Q16: Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27?



Interested members of the public

Less than 5 responses

Representatives of voluntary and community organisations

Less than 5 responses

Other stakeholders

Less than 5 responses

Leicestershire County Council employees

Less than 5 responses

Other

Less than 5 responses

Summary of themes from open comment questions

Below is a summary of themes observed from responses to open comment questions within the survey.

Q7a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider within our SEND principles? (Following Q7 - Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our SEND principles?)

34 responses

- Overall general agreement with the principles although many qualified this sentiment with concerns e.g.:
 - Ability to implement and uphold the principles in practice

- Communication - with parents/carers, schools and other stakeholders including not feeling listened to, understood, or receiving timely updates
- Other concerns:
 - Criticism regarding the ability to meet statutory obligations aside from principles
 - Support available for parents/carers and children (particularly whilst awaiting further action)
 - Need to recognise the unique and independent needs of each child.
 - Negative experiences – current or past, with several references to delays within in the service.
- Suggestions / missing elements:
 - Open communication with education settings and other stakeholders.
 - Improved collaboration with partners.
 - Trust, understanding, empathy and relationship building highlighted as key qualities for consideration alongside principles
 - The view that the principles could go further
- Other comments:
 - Concern and/or suggestions regarding the priority order of the principles

Q8c Why do you say this? Is there anything missing from what works well or the from the barriers and challenges? (Following Q8a and Q8b)

37 responses

- References to challenges related to mainstream provision including:
 - Concern about a focus on meeting needs in mainstream schools and that some children may be negatively impacted by this
 - Need for further training, resources, support, and funding for mainstream providers
 - Concern over the wider impacts of an increased focus on mainstream settings e.g. mental health of children and staff
 - Concern that the strategy is not representative of a mainstream setting
- Other barriers and concerns:
 - Delays at various points e.g. assessments, diagnosis, annual reviews, mental health support
 - Issues specifically related to the system, including the length of assessment documents, appeals, closed panel hearings, lack of SENA involvement in reviews, lack of joint working, joined up thinking and/or communication.
- Criticism of the local authority and its ability to deliver the service
- In referencing the above points, several respondents including parents / carers and other professional stakeholders mentioned specific examples and personal experiences
- Some support for how the strategy reflects barriers and challenges but a couple of comments suggesting that it was not clear what is working well
- Other comments and suggestions on aspects missing from the strategy:
 - Health challenges and what has been done to address these
 - Gaps in support for specialities e.g. sight loss
 - Mental health – more of a barrier
 - Recognition of the wider impacts on children and families
 - Support for young people transitioning from compulsory education
 - The need to be more realistic whilst recognising the positives

- The need to highlight that schools offer SEND provision but address funding and delays

Improvement theme – Identification and assessment of needs

Q9a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q9 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

34 responses

- Many in agreement with this priority and reflecting the view that this is essential.
- Several comments expressing concerns over delays with reference to personal experiences, including those related to collaboration with the council, schools and the NHS
- Concern as to whether the priority can be delivered and sustained given the challenges, including the need for additional support and funding
- Other concerns include:
 - Universal support dilutes specialisms
 - Language used is not motivating enough
- Suggestions include:
 - Need for early identification
 - Increasing awareness and improving communication channels
 - Accept findings of Educational Psychologists employed by school trusts
 - Improvements in the assessment process to ensure it is empowering for children

Improvement theme – Attendance and inclusion

Q10a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q10 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

39 responses

- Concern about whether this priority can be met along with comments highlighting the need to address current issues around capacity, resourcing (including wider support such as CAMHS) and funding.
- Concern over a focus on mainstream settings and that they are not always suitable or have sufficient resources.
- The need for a shift in focus from penalising parents/carers to supporting them
- Suggestions include:
 - Adjust to and celebrate diverse environmental learning needs of children
 - More training and support - for schools, parents and those educated at home
 - Improved coordination, partnership working, including attendance partnerships
 - Share good practice between schools / settings
 - Embed emotional literacy in the curriculum

Improvement theme - Commissioned services

Q11a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q11 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

22 responses

- Several comments highlighting the need to meet needs in the right setting along with appropriate support
- Other concerns regarding delays and funding the delivery of this priority
- System issues including consistency with placements and the high expense of independent specialist providers.
- Suggestion that there is a lack of awareness and understanding around this priority
- General criticism of the priority
- Suggestions for further consideration include:
 - More places in local communities
 - Hybrid model of SEND units and mainstream provision
 - More therapeutic provision
 - Include timeframes e.g. for when sufficient places will be available in the county
 - Widen participation for activities / breaks outside of school term

Improvement theme - Engagement, coproduction, feedback and voice

Q12a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q12 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

31 responses

- Overall agreement with priority
- Concerns regarding how voice is captured (including approaches used), also whether voice is captured and used effectively
- Need to consider schools views also
- Value of both the children's and particularly the parents/carer's voice highlighted
- View that there are bigger issues
- View that the statement is not challenging enough

Improvement theme - Strategic Leadership and Improvement

Q13a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q13 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

29 responses

- General agreement that improvement in this area is necessary, with several comments referencing benefits of working to this priority along with the view that it is obvious and should be expected.
- General concern over how it will be delivered in practice
- Issues with the current service highlighted include:
 - Data quality
 - System is confusing
 - Delays and communications, particularly responses to queries and messages
 - Funding and lack of resources
- Other areas highlighted as needing particular focus for progress in this priority:
 - Schools as key partners to work with and listen to

- Transition to adulthood
- Working environment for staff

Improvement theme - Transitions

Q14a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q14 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

28 responses

- Agreement with priority, although some concern about the details and how it will be delivered.
- Several consequences / risks of not meeting this priority highlighted, including:
 - Settings unable to meet need
 - Distress for families
 - Lack of progress for the child / young person
 - Young people not in education, employment or training and vulnerability to wider risks e.g. exploitation
- Issues with current service highlighted include:
 - Support and funding for settings
 - Communication and consultation during the transitions process
 - Scope of the current transition offer for neurodivergent and post-16
 - Timescales
- Suggestions include:
 - Re-direct funding where needed
 - Create more employment opportunities
 - Review requirements for post-16, including eligibility for home education and further funding
 - Increased support from specialists during transition period
 - Re-word priority e.g. we will ensure every child transitioning will be supported
- Other responses included the view that there are bigger issues for the local authority to focus on

Improvement theme - Outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Q15a Why do you say this? Is there anything else we should consider about the detail in the strategy for this priority? (Following Q15 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with this priority?)

26 responses

- Uncertainty regarding the reality of delivering the priority, whether it can be achieved and how it will be measured
- Concerns and issues raised about current experiences related to this priority e.g.:
 - Quality of EHCP and inclusion of this priority
 - Insufficient funding and annual funding cycle
 - Local authority involvement, delays, and inconsistencies
 - The need to be in the right setting
- Concern that support will be reduced or that focus will not be on longer term outcomes
- Suggestions include:

- Widen the curriculum, provide support with further education and training, including more vocational courses
- Include further detail in the strategy such as the number of supporter traineeships, timescales, funding sources, and accessibility improvements
- Ensure staff are skilled and knowledgeable about opportunities
- Review how this priority is reflected in EHCP wording

Q16a Why do you say this? (Following Q16 - Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-27?)

34 responses

- Positive / overall agreement with the strategy including areas of focus and anticipation for its delivery
- Some doubts expressed around whether it can be implemented successfully
- Concerns regarding funding and support available to deliver the strategy
- Other concerns include delays within the service and the focus of the strategy on inclusion within mainstream settings
- Suggestions for inclusion within the strategy and / or views on missing elements e.g.:
 - Transparency about timeliness and likelihood of improvements
 - Further detail about how aims will be achieved e.g. action plan
 - Increase in support needed, including outside of school
 - More accountability - both for schools and for the delivery of the strategy overall
 - Capture more feedback and share good practice

Q17 Do you have any other comments about the draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy?

19 responses

- Suggestions for further consideration within the strategy include:
 - Sharing learning and good practice
 - Focus on the individual and transition into adulthood
 - Support needed for schools to be inclusive, including training
 - Further investment in early intervention
 - More local authority SEND placements
 - Focus on communication with parents and continuous consultation on the strategy
- Doubts around whether the strategy can be implemented successfully in practice
- Criticism of strategy document e.g. corporate language used, insufficient detail, accuracy of current position, outdated data.
- Negative personal experiences of the service, including delays

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