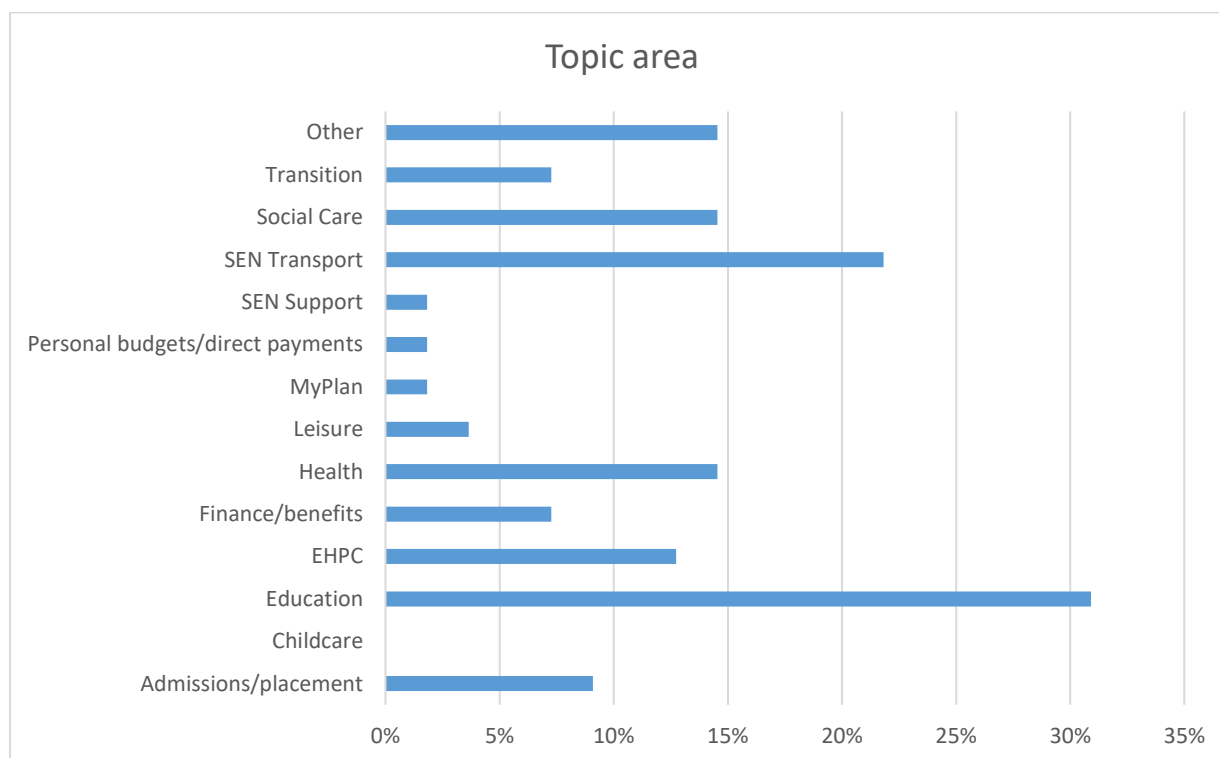


Feedback from parent carers in Sheffield

April – September 2018

This report summarises feedback from approximately 150 parent carers.



Summary of issues reported

Topic	Key issues
Admissions	Several parents have reported issues with the process of agreeing a specialist placement. Examples: took four panel meetings to decide on placement; special school named on EHCP which had not been considered or visited by parents; no suitable placements for some pupils, e.g. academically able pupils with complex mental health needs.
Education	General concerns about the inclusiveness of mainstream schools, particularly secondary schools. Examples: lack of vocational and nurturing provision, lack of staff expertise, insufficient transition support in Y7, exclusions.
	Concerns that alternative provision is not always properly monitored by schools.
	Very positive feedback about outreach from special school to mainstream
	Lots of feedback about the impact of school funding cuts, particularly on TA support. Out of 42 parents who responded to our Facebook poll, 76% said that support in school for their child with SEN had been reduced recently.
EHCP	Non-implementation of provision set out in EHCPs is an ongoing issue. Parents report that schools and the LA argue about whose responsibility it is to fund provision. Some pupils are on part-time timetables due to provision not being made.
	There is no process for establishing and recording if a young person aged 16+ lacks capacity to make decisions about their EHCP.
	There is no process for establishing and recording parents' communication needs.

	Annual reviews: The LA is taking too long to issue decision letters and implement amendments.
	Some parents report improved communication with the SEN Team, but relationships are affected by high levels of staff turnover.
	Parents have expressed doubts about LA figures showing that only 3 EHCP conversions were still outstanding at end of conversion period.
Finance/benefits	Several enquiries from parents looking for help with benefits applications and appeals (DLA, PIP, Carers Allowance).
Health	Many parents and some GPs are not clear about pathways for accessing health assessments and support (e.g. for dyspraxia, sensory issues, mental health issues, behavioural issues).
	Mixed feedback about SLT, specific to individual therapists
	Waiting time for SAANDS is over 39 weeks. Parents report that the service is only dealing with those who are in crisis and cannot offer any ongoing support or signposting.
MyPlan	Parents report that some schools agree to draw up a MyPlan, but are then extremely slow to action this
	Several parents have reported that provision set out in their child's MyPlan is not being made.
Transport	The consultation about changes to SEN transport policy was too short and done during the school holidays. Some parents felt the wording of the letter announcing the changes was misleading. They expressed concerns that the changes could mean that young people are forced into independent travel training before they are ready. Parents feel they are best placed to decide when their child is ready, not a travel panel.
	Parents have reported a range of communication issues: - Messages not passed on to taxi driver by transport office and/or taxi company - Poor communication between SEN transport and Staniforth Road, e.g. both sending out copies of TIF - The offer of independent travel training is not communicated well to parents, e.g. just told that their child will have an assessment for ITT - Letters with photos of driver, escort and vehicle are appreciated by families, but in some cases these contained incorrect information - Confusion about eligibility for post-19 SEN transport and how to apply, information not included in Post-16 Transport Policy - Parents confused by question about claiming parental reimbursement on travel support request form
	Concerns raised about length of time primary school children are travelling on minibuses
	Feedback on post-16 travel charge: - No reminders sent that termly payment is due - Payments demanded before bursary applications processed - Vulnerable student bursary far higher than requested - Fairness: not fair to charge when education now up to 18, not fair that charges are not pro rata (e.g. for those attending 3 days/week, school leavers) - Parents told by some providers that the discretionary bursary will only cover the price of a 16-18-year-old's weekly pass for term time, which is less than £540
	Issues with sickness cover: different drivers turning up at different times, often arriving late
	One-off incident where new driver turned up far too early and would not wait, young people had to be taken in by their parents or were left in college waiting area for an hour
	Several enquiries from parents whose application for SEN Transport had been refused

Social Care	<p>Comments about the short breaks consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not clear that Direct Payments were included in this - The consultation document did not make it clear that the LA was planning to implement ALL of the changes. Some parents felt the wording was deliberately misleading. - Parents felt that their responses had not been considered when making the decision – they felt it was a done deal. - Several parents said they would no longer be able to have a holiday. - Families earning just over £21k said they would struggle to pay the contribution to short breaks clubs.
	<p>Comments about the letter announcing the changes:</p> <p>Many parents found the letter confusing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several parents asked if families who have an income above £21k but get child tax credits would be exempt. - Several parents asked if they would have to pay the full cost of 1:1 tuition (e.g. climbing lessons) if their child cannot access group activities due to their disability
	<p>Some parents mentioned that they had missed out on the short breaks grant due to not knowing about it or being given incorrect information about eligibility criteria</p>
	<p>Ongoing issues with treating families with disabled children as if there were safeguarding concerns. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent contacted SCC asking for help with behaviour management, safe restraint training. Was distressed when called back by someone from the Safeguarding Children Team. - Child in Need visits: not clear why these are done more frequently now, or indeed what the frequency should be
	<p>Professionals make judgements about parenting capacity based on where families live - parents in deprived areas more likely to be offered parenting courses than those in affluent areas. Some parents said the parenting courses they were offered were not very relevant and too time-consuming, and that they would prefer to attend a short SEND-specific course.</p>
Transition	<p>We have received numerous comments highlighting issues with provision at the Sheffield College. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents are not happy with the change from four to three days per week for students on Personal Progress courses. Not clear who is responsible for funding provision on the 4th and 5th day and how to apply for this - Provision that was promised is not being made for students on PP courses (drama and dance) - Concerns about lack of ambition, e.g. students working below the level they had attained when leaving school - Staff refusing to use Makaton - Poor communication with parents, e.g. refusal to write in home/school book, parents not informed about days when college closed to students, college slow to inform parents about timetable for next academic year, which means parents can't plan package of care - Students who are supposed to be learning until 4pm are put on busses at 3pm - Peaks campus is more suitable for students with SEND, but all the Personal Progress courses are at Hillsborough campus - No TA support for students on Maths and English GCSE courses-
	<p>Parents are concerned that adult social care assessments are not completed on time before young people turn 18, leading to gaps in services</p>

Information requests

Admissions	Do you need an EHC plan for an IR placement?
Education	<p>What types of needs do our special schools cater for? Do they have admission policies?</p> <p>What is the remit of nurture groups? Do they follow a specific therapeutic approach, or is this more of a catch-all term?</p> <p>How do you get your child assessed for dyslexia?</p> <p>Who can support parents at a meeting with school governors about a possible permanent exclusion?</p> <p>Who can support parents at a SEND tribunal hearing?</p> <p>Who can provide information and support for home educating parents?</p>
Finance/benefits	How do you get a Blue Badge for a child who can walk but is not safe?
Health	<p>How do you get your child assessed for dyspraxia?</p> <p>How do you access support around sensory issues?</p> <p>What happens when a young person with ASD / LD / ADHD is discharged from Ryegate? What services are available to them?</p>
Direct Payments	How do you apply for direct payments?
Social Care	Who can help with housing issues, e.g. neighbour complaining about noise made by disabled child?
EHCP	<p>Can the LA make changes to an EHCP plan that have not been requested by the parents, <u>after</u> they have issued a draft plan?</p> <p>How do parents find out who their contact is in the SEN Team?</p> <p>Annual reviews: What can easily be updated, and what needs new report/evidence?</p> <p>Does an EHC plan cease when a young person moves into higher education?</p> <p>What help is available at university for students who struggle with self organisation and life skills?</p>
Leisure	<p>Does Sheffield have a Max Card scheme?</p> <p>Where can you find information about holiday clubs?</p> <p>Where can I find inclusive arts and crafts clubs?</p>

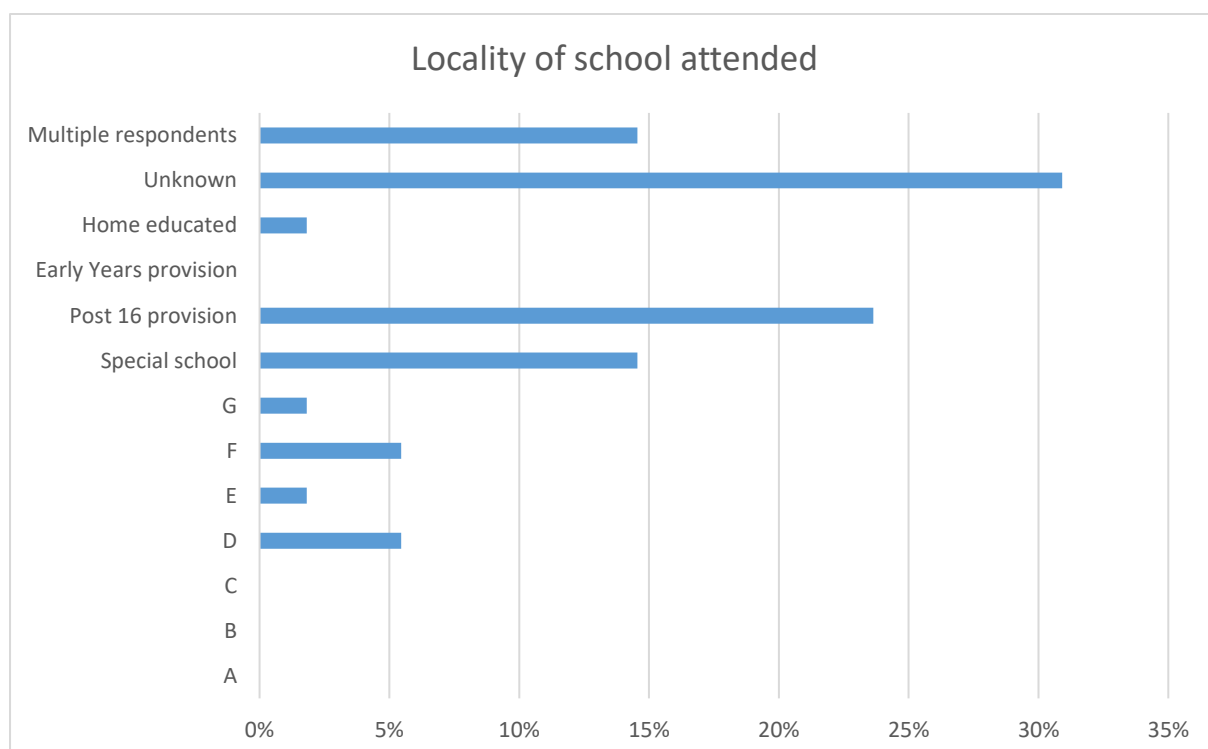
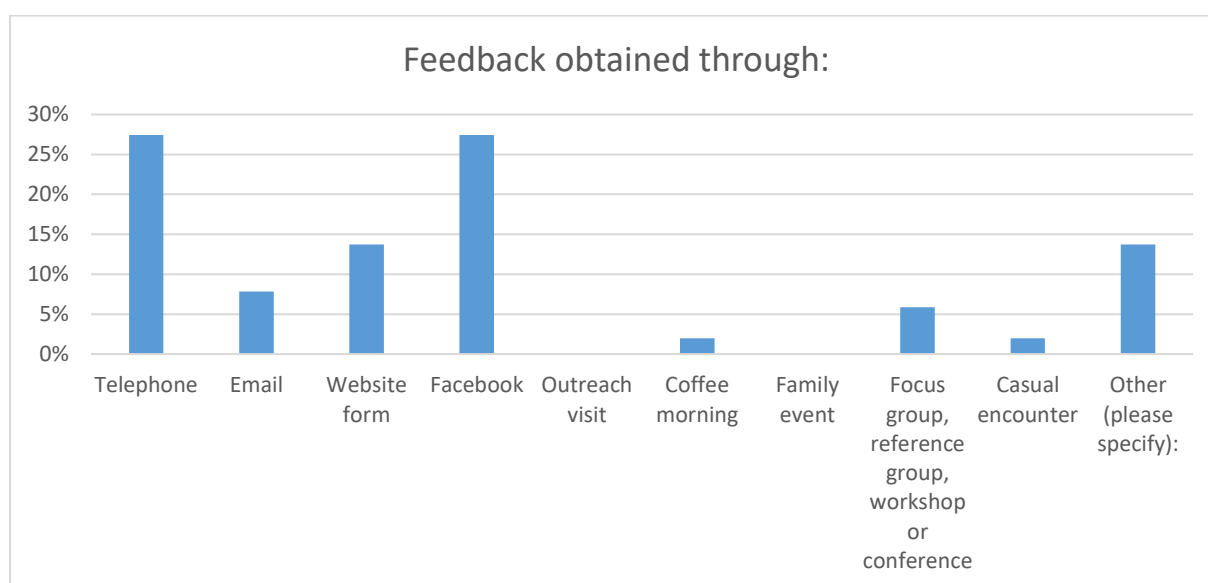
Statistics

Please note: We have identified a number of issues with our statistics.

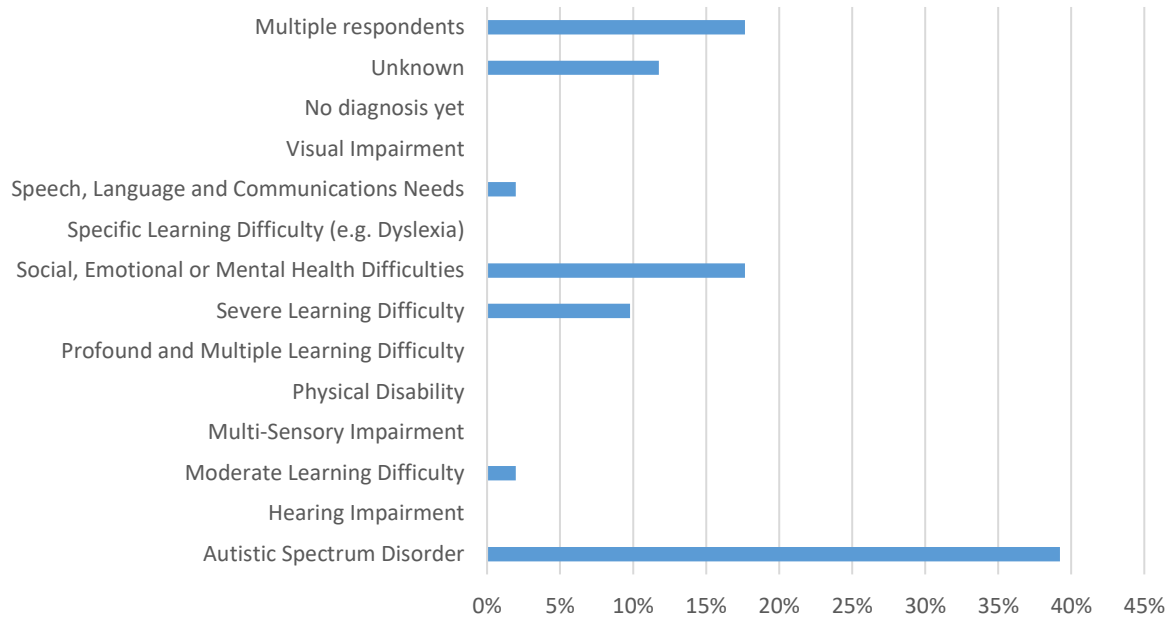
Following requests from volunteers, we changed our online form to allow volunteers and staff to submit feedback from several parent carers in one go, using just one form. These responses do not record locality or primary need, as these vary from person to person. In the statistics, responses from multiple parents recorded on the same form carry the same weight as feedback from one parent.

We have also found that there are many situations where it would be inappropriate to ask a parent about their child's primary need and/or their locality, e.g. when talking to a distressed parent over the phone, or as part of a group discussion.

For these reasons is likely that groups that appear to be underrepresented are, in fact, included in the large number of "unknowns" and "multiple respondents".



Child's main impairment



Type of activity

