



Surrey  
Additional  
Needs and  
Disabilities  
Partnership

## Parents' Voices Matter Survey 2024



### Introduction

The Parents' Voices Matter survey was carried out by the Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Partnership in late 2024. The survey was designed to help the AND Partnership understand parents/carers' experience of accessing help and support for their children in relation to their Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey as their feedback will help improve local services that support Surrey's children with additional needs.

The survey responses highlight key areas where we have more to do to improve the experiences of families, particularly with regard to communication and trust between families and the services we provide. We are committed to working closely with parents to make these changes, building on the wide range of improvement work that is already underway.


### The Surrey Picture


About  
**229,700**  
children and young  
people live in Surrey



About  
**45,500**  
children and  
young people with  
additional needs and  
disabilities in Surrey

About  
 **16,230**  
statutory Education,  
Health and Care Plan

 **42%**  
of those with an EHCP  
educated in mainstream  
schools (national average  
is 41%)

 **71%**  
of those with  
an EHCP are male

2017



2023



In Surrey, the number of children and young people with an EHCP nearly doubled between 2017 and 2023

### Who participated in the survey?

**1,006 responses**,  
representing 1,304  
children and young  
people. This represents  
**2.8%** of the total  
number of children  
with AND in Surrey.

Of these respondents:

**47%** are autistic

**20%** have Social,  
Emotional, and Mental  
Health (SEMH) needs,  
including Attention  
Deficit Disorder (ADD)  
and Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity Disorder  
(ADHD)

**58%** have an EHCP

**22%** receive SEN support  
without an EHCP

## Where we are now

**1.1%**

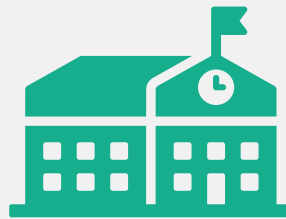
of all pupils in Surrey schools were assessed for an EHCP in 2023 compared with 1% nationally.



Non-maintained or independent (NMI) schools represent

**24%**

of schools in Surrey, compared with 10% nationally.



**14%**

of pupils in Surrey with an EHCP are placed in NMI settings, including specialist post 16 establishments, almost twice as many compared to the national figure of 8%.



Pupils with AND in Surrey achieve better outcomes than their national peers in almost all of the end of Key Stage assessments, by between

**0.24 and 9.1**

positive percentage point difference.

Surrey pupils have lower levels of overall absence at

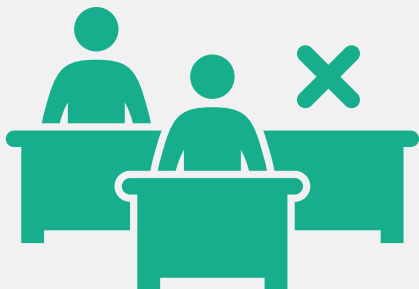
**6.6%**

compared to 7.3% nationally.

Surrey pupils also have lower levels of persistent absence at

**13%**

compared to 16% nationally.



The rate of Surrey pupils receiving a permanent exclusion in 2022/23 was

**0.19**

for those with an EHCP, and

**0.38**

for those receiving SEN support, both consistent with the national rate

The suspension rate for pupils on SEN support is

**24.0**

which is consistent with the national rate. However, the suspension rate for pupils with an EHCP is

**22.5**

which is slightly higher than the national rate of 21.6.

Surrey has a lower rate of children missing education at

**0.1%**

overall compared to the national rate of 0.5%.



# Key Findings

The results of the survey can be split into four key themes:

EHCP Process

Relationships and Communication

Making Progress at School

Mental Health/Health Therapies

## Theme 1: EHCP Process

Respondents whose child has, or has had, an EHCP, generally report low levels of satisfaction with the EHCP process overall.

Although we've made significant progress in meeting the 20-week deadline, most people who went through the process in the past won't have felt the impact of these improvements.

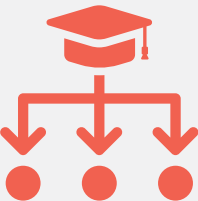


**58%**  
of respondents feel very dissatisfied with how well informed and 'kept in the loop' they are.

There are also some areas where satisfaction is relatively higher. Nearly half of respondents feel clear about the process to request an assessment and are satisfied with the accuracy of the process.



**58%**  
of respondents feel very dissatisfied with the timeliness of the EHCP process



**58%**  
of respondents feel very dissatisfied with the range of options available for their child's education

### EHCP timeliness

Surrey  
average  
timeliness  
January  
2024

**16%**



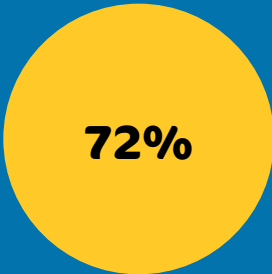
National  
average

**50%**



Surrey  
average  
timeliness  
September  
2024 –  
February  
2025

**72%**



**83%**  
of parents reported that their child's annual review meeting had been completed in the last 12 months



**46%**  
felt that assessments were accurate



**48%**  
felt that the process to request an assessment was clear

## Theme 2: Relationships and Communication

Building positive relationships and effective communication with families is vital for us and a central focus of our improvement work, and there is still work to do in this area.



**70%**

of respondents told us that they do not feel that they are kept up to date on the way forward for their child



**66%**

do not think their view – and

**64%**

do not think their child's view – is listened to

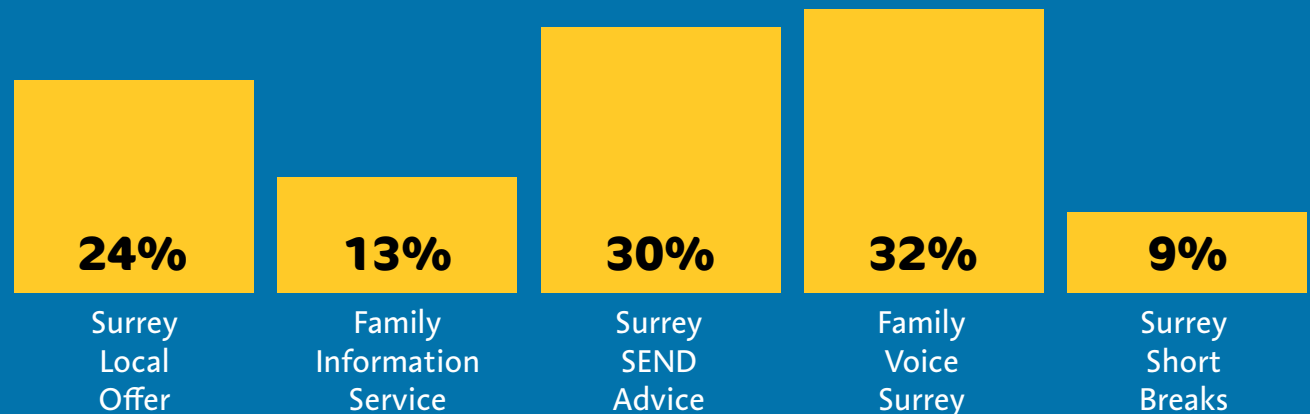


**52%**

of respondents of children with an EHCP told us that they do not have confidence that 'SEND Case Officers' will act in the best interest of the child.

This was lower than for other professionals, such as school SEND staff, GPs and Social Workers.

### Percentage of respondents who accessed available sources of advice and found them helpful or somewhat helpful



However, there are also a number of respondents who are not aware of these different information sources.

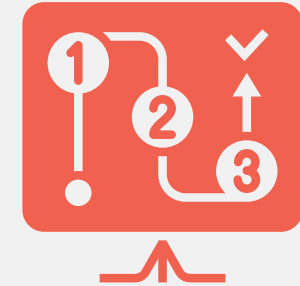
### Theme 3: Making Progress at School



**61%**  
of respondents  
told us that  
they are  
satisfied with  
their child's  
educational  
setting



Child's relationship with staff



Adjustments at school

These were the reasons most given by respondents for the progress made.

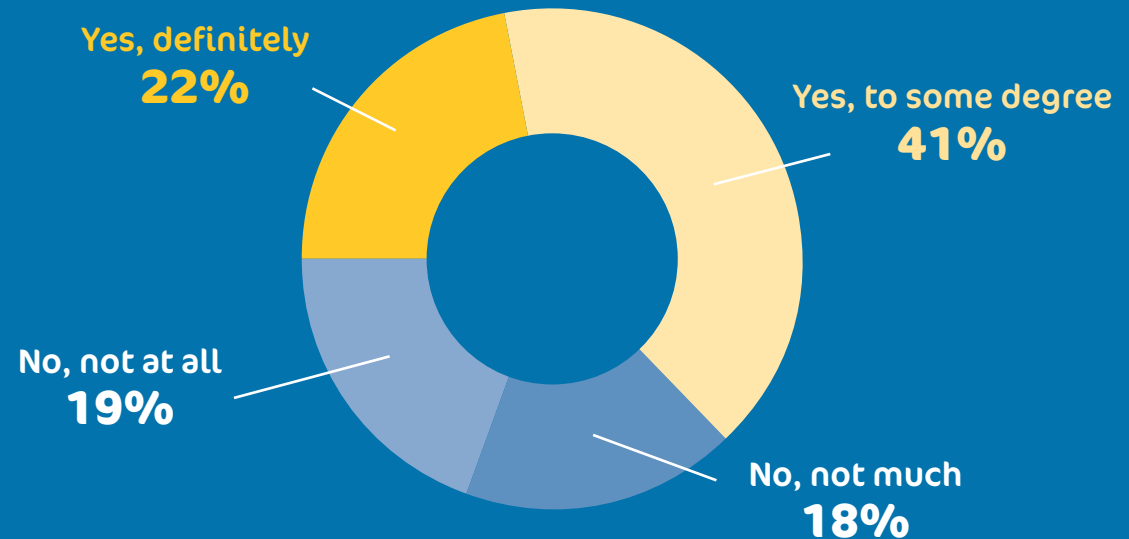


**Over 75%**  
of respondents report that  
their child feels they belong  
in their educational setting



Most respondents  
do say that the  
support their child  
is receiving is helping  
them to make  
progress at school.

Overall, support provided to children is helping progress in their setting



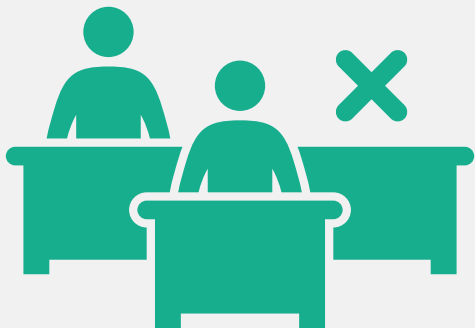
## Theme 4: Mental Health/Health Therapies



Almost  
**50%**  
of respondents confirmed that discussions about children's mental health and wellbeing take place regularly or sometimes

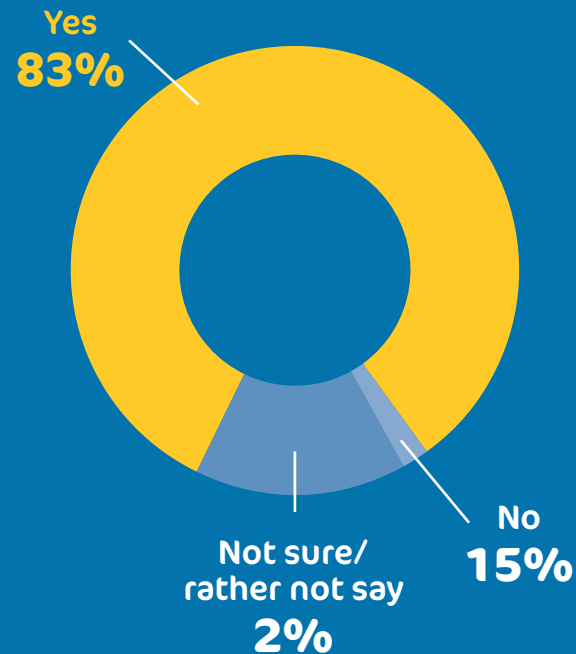


**18%**  
of respondents felt that these conversations do not happen, despite them considering it necessary



**31%**  
of respondents felt emotional and wellbeing issues were the reason for their child not attending an educational placement

**Over 80% of respondents say their child attends their setting regularly**



Emotionally based absence is a national issue, affecting 21% of pupils nationally in 2022/23, and is an increasing reason for children missing school.

The most frequently accessed health services were:

Speech and Language Therapy and support in School (16%)

Developmental Paediatrics (10%)

Parents were asked whether their child has experienced progress from support provided by community health services.



**53%**  
of respondents said that some of their child's health outcomes had been met  
**7%**  
said that all their health outcomes were met

# What is being done to improve families' experiences?

Here are some of the actions we are currently taking, and have planned, to make improvements to families' experiences of our services:

## Parents' Voices Matter Survey 2024

### 1. Enhancing Support for Families in the EHCP Process



#### Bookable drop-in sessions



New face-to-face and online drop-in sessions will allow families to speak directly with key staff for guidance.

This is following previous feedback we received from families who told us they wanted the opportunity for more regular face-to-face meetings with SEND Staff.

#### Quality of EHCPs

Our focus on the quality of EHCPs has led to:

 **97%**

of EHCPs completed in December 2024 being rated as satisfactory, good or outstanding, compared to 73% in January 2024.

#### Mediation and Dispute Resolution



A dedicated Mediation and Dispute Resolution team is now in place, working with families to resolve disagreements early.

This approach ensures children receive appropriate support as quickly as possible, as well as reducing stress for families and unnecessary legal costs.

#### Staffing structure review



A full review of staffing structures is being conducted to ensure the right staff are in place to deliver timely and high-quality services.

### 2. Improving Communication and Transparency



#### SEND Helpdesk

A dedicated helpdesk now answers enquiries regarding EHCPs and the needs assessment process, arranging a call back with a case officer if needed.



The latest data shows a **90%** call-back rate within two days.

#### Local Offer website updates

Improvements will continue to be made to the Local Offer website to make it more user-friendly and ensure parents can easily find the information they need.

#### Updated statutory letters

Letters related to the EHCP process have been reviewed with parent representatives to ensure they are clearer, easier to understand, and include signposting to additional support.

#### Monitoring communication

All telephone calls and emails related to EHCPs are being monitored to identify service improvements and ensure transparency.

#### New Parent Portal



Development of a new online portal is underway to allow parents to directly access EHCP-related information.

### 3. Strengthening Educational Support and Inclusion

#### Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) Guidance update:

We are working closely with schools to revise and improve guidance on how additional needs should be met in mainstream settings.

#### Investment in Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice (STIPs):



We have increased investment in specialist teachers to work with schools and families, ensuring better inclusion and achievement for all children.

#### Reception Inclusion Pathway Planning (RIPPL):

This new initiative is designed to support children with an EHCP transition from early years settings into mainstream reception classes. This improves families' experiences as each child receives a dedicated RIPPL who works with parents and the school to overcome barriers in supporting the child.



#### More information

You can find out more at [surreycc.gov.uk/parentsvoicesmattersurvey](https://surreycc.gov.uk/parentsvoicesmattersurvey)

All information correct as of May 2025



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### 4. Supporting Mental Health and Health Needs

#### MindWorks Resources:



New resources have been developed for parents, schools, and professionals to support children experiencing mental health challenges or anxiety-related school avoidance. In addition, 80% of schools will have access to a Mental Health Support Team.

#### Children's Community Health Services contract:

A new service contract that started in April 2025 will introduce proactive communication, digital tools, and enhanced support for families.

#### Support for children with long-term health needs:

Working with Surrey Youth Focus to update policies on the role of schools and the council in supporting children with long-term health conditions.

#### Neurodiversity inclusion:

The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme has successfully supported 41 schools to shape their whole school SEND approach for neurodiverse children. It provides early interventions, upskills school staff, and strengthens partnerships between schools and families. The programme will now support a further 30 schools.

