Comprehensive Review of SEND Provision in North Northumberland

Office of David Smith MP

Serving the people of North Northumberland

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NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

Contents

1 - Executive Summary

This report provides a detailed overview of the current state of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision in North Northumberland, drawing upon recent consultation feedback and local area data.

The findings reveal a system under significant strain, characterised by widespread parental dissatisfaction, lengthy waiting times for assessments and support, inadequate funding, and a critical shortage of trained staff and specialist provisions.

While there are instances of good practice and dedicated efforts by some schools, the overall picture suggests a system that often fails to meet the legal entitlements and fundamental needs of SEND children and their families, frequently pushing them into crisis situations and forcing them to exhaustingly advocate for essential support.

Key themes include the arduous EHCP process, insufficient mainstream support, limited specialist school placements, and significant challenges with transport and family support.

The report takes into account the view of 130 families in North Northumberland whose children have SEND needs between June and August 2025.

Demand for SEND services has increased by 92% in the last 4 years, while funding has only increased by 16%.

This report will be sent to Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education to feed into her SEND consultation. It will also be used locally to work with Northumberland County Council and Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust to see what direct changes can be made to improve the current landscape.

2 - Demographics

North Northumberland is the third largest constituency in England, spanning from Berwick-upon-Tweed in the north to Morpeth in the south; it is bordered by Hexham constituency to the west. North Northumberland is rural in nature and its wealth and income demographics range from highly affluent to pockets of severe poverty.

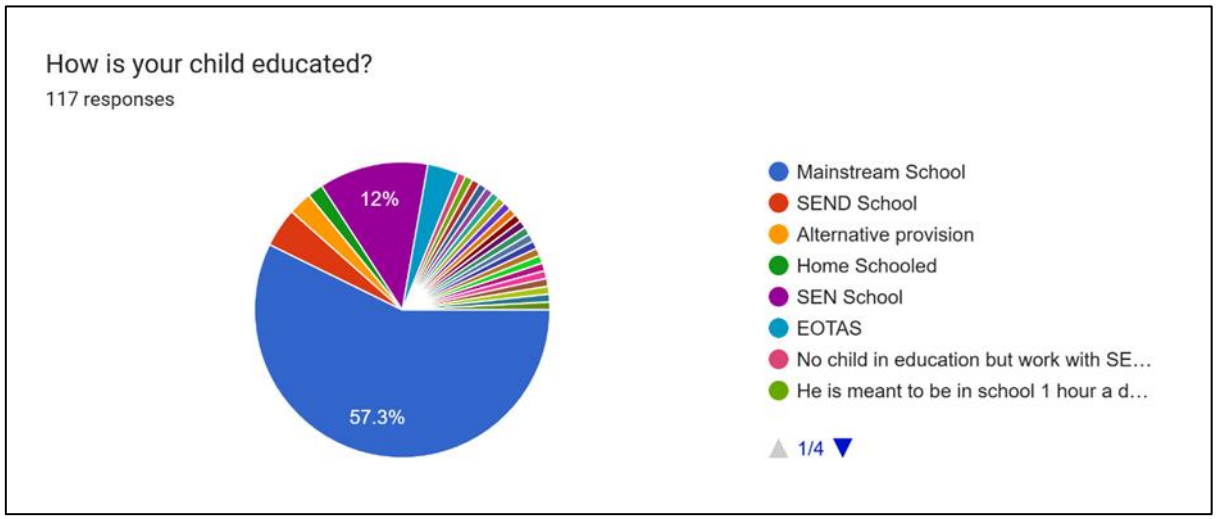
The House of Commons Library & End Poverty Coalition believe that between 22% to 26% of children in North Northumberland live in poverty. This is just below the national average.

Information from House of Commons library show that 5% of residents claim PIP and 6% ESA, both slightly above the national average.

The average age of a North Northumberland constituent is 55.6 years

46% of pupils with an EHCP in Northumberland LA are eligible for free school meals, slightly higher than the national average (44%). This indicates a significant overlap between SEND and socioeconomic disadvantage

3 - Overview of Educational Settings for SEND Children



North Northumberland has a higher percentage of children with EHCP than the national average. House of Commons Library data suggests that 7.1% of pupils (808) in the constituency's state-funded schools had an EHCP, compared to 5.2% nationally.

Children attending special schools is also higher than the national average: 3.9% of pupils in North Northumberland attended state-funded special schools, compared to a national average of 2.0%.

Of those who responded to the consultation, the majority (58%) are educated in mainstream schools. A smaller but significant proportion attend SEND schools (12%) or receive SEND provision (12%). Home-schooled children account for 3% of respondents.

Satisfaction with SEND support in mainstream schools is low. Only 5% are "very satisfied," with this provision and 15% are "somewhat satisfied." A concerning 45% are "very dissatisfied," and 24% are "somewhat dissatisfied." This indicates a significant issue with the quality and adequacy of support within mainstream environments.

Some of the comments on the service include:

> *"My son's mainstream school do not provide the appropriate support as set out in his EHCP but claim the finances for this."*
>
> *"Mainstream schools are unable to meet all my child's SEN needs because of lack of funding lack of staff, lack of support."*

Satisfaction with SEND support in dedicated SEND schools or alternative provisions is significantly higher, with 18% "very satisfied" and 21% "somewhat satisfied."

However, a notable proportion still report dissatisfaction (16% "very dissatisfied," 15% "somewhat dissatisfied"), suggesting that even specialised settings face some challenges.

4 - Challenges in Accessing SEND Support

A striking 90% of respondents reported encountering difficulties accessing SEND support for their child. The most frequently cited challenge were long waiting times for assessment and support (69% of respondents), and a lack of trained staff (65%).

Below are several representative comments:

> *“The referral process is very arduous. Often those parents with the most ability to negotiate the system get support but their children are not always the neediest."*
>
> *"Just get signposted everywhere and go round in circles with no one wanting to deal with issues until they are too big to deal with. Feel like it’s almost like people are waiting for something bad to happen before they act."*
>
> *"I have been waiting over 2 years for CYPS we are now enrolled but still no assessments. My child is being failed."*

Respondents repeatedly mentioned a clear lack or resource and funding, which they said leads to inadequate 1:1 or 2:1 support in classrooms, even with an EHCP.

> *"In classrooms there are often children who are in desperate need of 1:1 and sometimes 2:1 support and they don’t get it because of the lack of funding."*

Parents often feel unheard and dismissed, with schools and authorities reluctant to acknowledge needs until a crisis point is reached.

> *"It took for my child to have a breakdown [and] get medically signed off school before they listened."*
>
> *"[The] Failure to identify SEN needs, and untrained staff have created sensory trauma for my child."*
>
> *"Teachers labelled my son as naughty they refused to refer him for assessment, I knew he was neurodiverse. They delayed his assessment by not listening to parents."*

A significant majority described the system as "overloaded," "arduous," and characterised by a lack of coordination between services (e.g., CYPS, NHS, schools). Parents often felt they were going around in circles with no one taking ownership to provide help for their child.

Parents clearly share a perception that there is pressure on schools to avoid identifying certain conditions due to cost; this leads to delayed support and escalation of needs as well as poorer outcomes.

5 - EHCP Experience

Of those surveyed, 44% of children had an EHCP, while 21% did not. Another 9% are currently in the process of trying to secure one.

A significant portion of respondents rated the EHCP experience as negative: 22% said it was "very negative" and 19% said it was “somewhat negative." Only 6% said it was "very positive.":

One parent commented that:

> *“[The EHCP process] was absolutely pointless, and my girls do not get anything near the help they should."*

The consultation asked at what stage an EHCP was granted. 65% of EHCPs were granted on the first application. However, a majority proportion of EHCP applications take over thirty weeks; only 16% were completed within the twenty week guideline.

> “[It] *Takes far too long from starting to actually getting the full EHCP. Think it’s actually 5/6 months we have waited."*

Satisfaction with the final EHCP reports were mixed, with 33% satisfied with the final EHCP and 24% not satisfied. A further 20% either didn’t know or were in the middle of the process.

Respondents agreed that the the process often ignored the specific needs of the child and focused on the needs of the school. The EHCP process is a medical path not an education focus, and respondents felt that it acted a gatekeeper of funding, not a provider of support. Many expressed that the EHCP did not adequately reflect the child's needs or was not properly implemented.

> *"It isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on. The LA is failing young people, parents and carers, families and schools."*

> *"EHCPs [are] not updated to present an accurate and up to date representation of the child, their needs and how this need will be met (vague at times especially in the termly review planning)."*

The application process was also described as *"complex and difficult,"* "*designed to make people give up,"* and as involving *"multiple obstacles."* One parent described how *"The LA initially refused to COSA, [so] I skipped mediation and opted for tribunal, two weeks before they cancelled and agreed to proceed."*

Many found schools unwilling or unequipped to initiate EHCP applications or provide necessary evidence.

> *“The school didn't want to apply for it."*

> "*Senco didn't know the process, so we did parental apply and it wasn't a great experience and basically told we did it at the wrong time of year as son was transitioning to secondary*."

A recurring concern about assessments was that they did not accurately reflect a child's needs, or that professionals were not meeting the child in person.

> "*EP report wasn't specified or quantified, advice wasn't sought from OT or SLT. His EHCP doesn't reflect need at all."*

Parents may instead seek to go to tribunal. The tribunal process is long and hard, with parents often having to wait over 12 months for the tribunal to be heard.

> *"It took all of my energy and wits and a huge amount of research to complete all the forms etc."*

> *"We are now going to tribunal and paying thousands of pounds for solicitors help in hopefully getting a special provision schooling."*

Nationally, SEND tribunal rates increased by 36% in 2024/25; local figures with 2024/25 were not available. Northumberland County Council has a lower tribunal *appeal* rate (0.5% in 2023) compared to the national average (2.5%)

6 – Schooling

The consultation received repeated calls for more special schools and specialised colleges in both North Northumberland and the North of England. (There are currently four special schools in North Northumberland.)

"We do not have enough special schools in Northumberland, in northern England, in the UK."

"More special schools; less school transport needed."

Parents said that a lack of a learning space for neurodivergent children in mainstream schools put them at a huge disadvantage. We know some secondary schools have all but scrapped their pastoral care, with inevitable consequences on those children who need them most.

A common theme was that teachers (especially in mainstream settings) require comprehensive training in neurodivergence, and schools need more funding for qualified staff and resources to implement EHCPs effectively. *"Mainstream schools need specialist training to understand additional needs especially autism. Their lack of training impacts on children's mental health."*

Many comments highlighted a poor understanding of SEND, particularly neurodivergent conditions like autism and ADHD, among teachers and school staff; this was generally aimed at mainstream schools.

Another recurring theme is the need for authorities and schools to genuinely listen to parents' concerns and experiences, rather than dismissing them. Parents do not feel believed or listened to. "*Parents need to be listened too, and teachers need to understand neurodiversity isn't a problem and it isn't going away."*

Many respondents believe the current "Victorian" education system is not fit for purpose for neurodivergent children and requires a complete overhaul, not just minor adjustments and that "*The education system is extremely outdated, there has been no changes for decades."*

7 - Home-Schooling

There was a striking significant trend that showed around 25% of respondents indicated they have home-schooled their child(ren) due to a lack of suitable provision.

> "*Parents pull their children to protect them. There is not a real desire to educate at home but a strong notion that their children are not being best served [by] and, in some cases, damaged by school."*
>
> *"[There is] No appropriate school or educational setting available to meet complex needs."*

Two other significant reasons for home-schooling were a decline in a child's mental health and school refusal. Respondents stated that childrens' mental health was severely impacted by mainstream settings, leading to anxiety, meltdowns, and refusal to attend.

> *"Child wasn't able to attend school for a number of mental health reasons."*
>
> *"My child's mental health declined so much because his nursery was unable to meet his needs, he started harming himself when he realised the route to nursery."*

A number of respondents commented that children often did not feel safe in school, experiencing bullying, or not receiving necessary support in school with one parent saying that her: *"Child was unsafe in school (attacked 8 times in 4 months)."*

Respondents were keenly aware of the possible consequences of this on later life

> *"I really worry about the future of my children in schools now. My 9y old will not get accepted into a special school so when time comes for high school she won't be going there as I know she won't cope so I will be home schooling her what support do we get then?"*

Currently, Children and Young People's Services appointments can require over a 2 year wait. This combined with difficuluty accessing the right support in school is likely to severely impact young people as they move into adulthood.

Further study is needed to explore a possible link between these situations and the high incidence of young adults currently on sickness benefits. It is clear that early interventions for the right support in school settings is key.

8 - Special Transport Arrangements

Of the 23% of respondents who said their children require special transport arrangements, half shared concerns around these arrangements.

Most concerns were about around drivers and escorts lacking proper training in SEN.

> *"There needs to a better way of background checks more in-depth. Most of these children are non-verbal"*

> *"More trained Escorts no smoking escorts and well trained escorts and driver"*

Long travel times were also an issue, with 26% of respondents' children travelling more than 10 miles to school. 7% of respondents said their child travelled over 30 miles each day. This can be complicated by frequently changing drivers/escorts, which negatively impacts routine-dependent children.

> *"Excellent driver but journey 60 miles each way."*

> *"The council seem to go for the cheapest way and can chop and change companies. These children need routine and having the same driver and escort is more important as some children can't deal with change."*

Some parents report being refused transport despite clear need and distance: *"both of my girls need transport but don't get it as their school is out of area: I have long term health issues and struggle to get them in."*

National data shows 9% of children aged 5-10 and 18% of children aged 11-15 in England travel 5 miles or more to school. This suggests that long journeys are a reality for many, which is compounded for SEND children. Our rural location and lack of SEN schools compounds this problem even further.

9 – Impact on Parents' Employment

Many parents (57%) have had to adapt their working arrangements to accommodate their child's SEND needs with many parents, particularly mothers, reducing their working hours or moving to part-time roles. Some were able to leverage flexible working or work from home.

> *"My husband had to retire 3 years early and I have had to reduce my full-time hours to part time."*
>
> *"I've had to reduce number of clients and work in the evenings to catch up."*
>
> *"Had to give up a 21-year career as a teacher and nursery manager to home educate 3 complex needs children due to being unable to have needs met in school. now on benefits."*
>
> *"I am constantly travelling up and down the a1 back and forwards to school sometimes 6 times a day..."*
>
> *"I had to give up work as there's no childcare provision after 5 years that will take SEN children."*

Some respondents have had to leave their jobs due to the intensity of care required or lack of suitable childcare/provision. Many SEND schools do not provide wrap-around holiday care for children. This impacts economic activity for families who have SEND children.

10 – Exclusion

Exclusion data supplied by Northumberland County Council shows a near doubling of temporary exclusions from 2018/19 to 2024/25 (3490 to 6228). Permanent exclusions have also significantly increased from 83 to 123. Many respondents suggested that the large number of exclusions is due to a lack of understanding and training from teachers on SEND issues.

EHCP and SEN Support pupils make a disproportionately high – and growing - amount of temporary and permanent exclusions in recent years.

Of all those excluded in 2024/25 - both temporary and permanent - around 50% had SEND needs, despite making up a small minority of the total student population.

Exclusion and PEX data							
	Permanent Exclusions			**Pupil population**	Temporary Exclusions		
	Total	**EHCP**	**SEN Support**		**Total**	**EHCP**	**SEN Support**
2018/19	83	3	24	39,684	3490	180	769
% of total		4%	29%			5%	22%
2019/20	50	0	15	39,795	1696	112	391
% of total		-	30%			7%	23%
2020/21	44	0	12	40,070	2144	172	642
% of total		-	27%			8%	30%
2021/22	92	1	26	40,059	4027	372	1100
% of total		1%	28%			9%	27%
2022/23	105	0	38	40,036	6148	981	1687
% of total		-	36%			16%	27%
2023/24	140*	9	62	41,899	6102	1170	1817
% of total		6%	44%			19%	30%
2024/25	123**	13	45	39,878	6228	1262	1908
% of total		11%	37%			20%	31%
* Includes 12 primary PEX of which 6 had EHCP's ** Includes 15 Primary PEX of which 7 had EHCP's							

11 – Conclusion & Next Steps

The data and qualitative feedback gathered by this consultation paint a concerning picture of SEND provision in North Northumberland.

While there are dedicated individuals and some pockets of good practice, the overarching system is failing many children and families. There are recurring themes of insufficient funding, lack of trained staff, arduous bureaucratic processes.

This report highlights the immense pressure on schools (behaviour, parental pressures for Section 19 support instead of EHCPs) and the need for a review of teacher training frameworks to address the increased percentage of children with SEND.

There is a real lack of health services support, especially around capacity to meet demand, worsening family experiences and impacting school attendance and child progress. This has a detrimental effect on wider life outcomes.

There is concern around the number of children with SEND needs who are excluded from education, whether this is temporary or permanently. Work needs to be done to support children with needs to stay in school.

The situation faced by children struggling to stay in education contributes to poor mental health and worse later-life outcomes. We know that the number of young people leaving school on sickness benefits is increasing just as the support in schools is decreasing.

Turning this trend around and ensuring young people are not subject to a future of poor mental health and benefits requires a fundamental change to our system to ensure the right support, the right school, and the right education is there for every child.

With this in mind, there is a need for a full review of the SEND Code of Practice that supports a localised Northumberland Plan.

There is also a need for a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to tackle issues at all areas of the system, including:

- Increased investment
- Increase in the quantity of SEND provision
- Targeted staff training (especially for those working within mainstream education) and for Council staff who work on EHCP and SEND.
    - There are appropriate courses (including online) that are used by foster carers and adopters and which are run by NCC. Could these be used for teachers and for appropriate office staff/taxi firms?
- Improved SEND transport with more trained staff.
- Streamlined EHCP processes.
- A review of the CPYS referral and diagnosis process
- An expansion of specialist provisions

- A fundamental shift towards a more responsive and parent-centred support system.
- Better support for children with SEN needs so that they are not excluded from education, whether temporarily or permanently.

This report has been sent to the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, to feed into a national SEND consultation ahead of expected Government changes to the SEND process. These changes, when announced, will be voted on in the House of Commons before becoming law.

The office of David Smith MP will arrange meetings with the Directors within Education at Northumberland County Council, as well as with the Chief Executive of Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust in order to share this report with them.

We will be seeking opportunities for NCC to deliver immediate improvements to the SEND system in North Northumberland, as well as asking the NHS Foundation Trust what improvements have been made since the last meeting with them

Appendix A - Comments

All comments have been taken directly from the consultation document, word for word as written by those who completed them.

Any further information around accessing SEND support for your child?

- *Referral process is very arduous. Often those parents with the most ability to negotiate the system get support but their children are not always the most needy. A small quick spend to support can alleviate needs further on in education.*
- *Lack of knowledge on a school level vs a Council level*
- *I have been waiting over 2 years for CYPS we are now enrolled but still no assessments. My child is being failed.*
- *SEN support within Northumberland is different from anywhere else in the country because of the area of Northumberland and how special educational needs children are often living far away from the main provision. Which is why you need good Taxi service services.*
- *It took for my child to have a breakdown get medically signed of school before school listened she is now in correct school which supports her needs but took years, some children with send cannot cope with big schools yet county hall still refuse to help only time they help is when child and family in proper crisis (how can they think it's acceptable to put a send child outside on their own in corridor with wet coats all day including dinner time, its cruel and makes the child suffer a lot more) county hall need to stop refusing to help send kids and actually help the kids who struggle all us parents want is to see are children achieve like other children more send schools need to be built and more support for us families (at the moment I've been refused social services disability help time and time again even though my child is aggressive toward me and her siblings its disgusting how us families are treat at times we cry for help and get let down and failed by the system) there is 2 special need girls in my house and myself am I autistic and im a single mum the excuses I get no I'm not entitled to support and my respite is apparently when kids are at school bearing in mind my girls special needs schools not close by so I have to take them*
- *My only wish is that Wansbeck hospital peads are shocking my sons been left undiagnosed now for 7/8 months and it's disgusting behaviour he's now likely to be seen in September if they don't cancel their clinics like they have with August! It's just shocking and feel the NHS can do more just like the school has done everything for my boy.*

- *After getting your diagnosis for ASD you are sent an email with a course and then discharged, we come from Berwick I feel like we are forgotten when it comes to groups and activities for Sen children in the summer.*
- *System is overloaded. Not enough money in the budget for SEN. Feels like it's easier to get rid of Sen than bother with it.*
- *Just get signposted everywhere and go round in circles with no one wanting to deal with issues until they are too big to deal with. Feel like it's almost like people are waiting for something bad to happen before they act.*
- *In classrooms there are often children who are in desperate need of 1:1 and sometimes 2:1 support and they don't get it because of the lack of funding. Even once there is an EHCP in place, the funding is insufficient to make actions viable without detracting from the needs of other pupils. For a lot of pupils, schools attempt to say that they can't meet need, and this is almost always overturned without any extra support provided to help need be met. For my own child, who is always meeting / exceeding academic age-related expectations, the lack of effective provision and the stretched classroom support stops him from achieving his full potential as he is achieving 'enough'. The SEND provision (from the point of view of a parent and a teacher) is in crisis. Every teacher wants to support and nurture each and every child, but we are not given the tools or funding to do so effectively (leading to a teacher retention crisis) and it's way beyond breaking point. If you really want to make a change, you need to have several diverse working groups from each county, from every aspect of education and from those who access the support to identify a method to totally overhaul of the system.*
- *Having to move our child to a Scottish school to get some SEND support.*
- *I have 2 autistic girls who have been absolutely failed by the education system and have lost a combined 7 years of full time effective and supportive education.*
- *Now my child is thriving at his SEN school mainstream he was bullied and left due to staff and lack of correct training.*
- *Failure to identify SEN needs, and untrained staff have created sensory trauma for my child.*
- *I have waited over one year for a case worker to be assigned to my daughter to being the process of assessing her for ADHD.*
- *Schools roll out a one size fits all approach which is inappropriate.*
- *An utterly appalling situation we were in when my son was in Reception at Swarland First School back in 2020, they wouldn't do anything to help until I had a diagnosis, no one would help me, I wasn't eligible for Early Help until I cracked up in front of the Health Visitor. My son was traumatised from his time at that school. I moved him to Thropton before the end of the school year. They were fantastic with the little help they got from LA. It was clear during the lengthy EHCP process, we had to start from scratch because Swarland hadn't filled in*

the paperwork correctly, that Mainstream wasn't the right place for him. He was rejected from Collingwood. With the help of my solicitor friend, I managed to get him a place. He's just finished his third year there and is thriving. This is a short version of a two-year horror story "getting an EHCP".

- *Things had to get really bad to be seen or believed.*
- *My child received full support at his mainstream primary, however, he still struggled to cope, therefore, it is very apparent he needs the resources of a SEN school moving forward and this has currently been denied to him.*
- *My son's mainstream school do not provide the appropriate support as set out in his EHCP but claim the finances for this. He has accessed a Hub classroom all year which is now being removed despite the increase in his funding and the acknowledgement that he cannot manage in the main classroom Some Teaching staff use punishment for behaviours he cannot help which impacts his mental health significantly.*
- *My son had suspected autism and cyps won't see him because he is coping in school at the moment, my daughter has suspected adhd and autism and is failing at school and still hasn't been seen we are still waiting to be seen it's almost 2 years now and speech and language still haven't been to see her, she struggles really badly with her speech and people struggle to understand what she is saying*
- *I was told he would be on 2 pathways one for mental health and the Autism spectrum. I have had only a text to say he is still on the list after 12 weeks. Mental health shouldn't take so long as it's now affected my mental health and although school has helped to complete assessments, they are understaffed to complete 1-2-1 support when my son is struggling.*
- *I am answering as a family carer, former charity trustee, retired SENCo and special needs teacher: schools have been put under pressure to avoid the identification and diagnosis of autism, ADHD, ADD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, speech and language difficulties, short term memory problems, sensory integration difficulties, auditory perception and processing difficulties, visual perception and processing difficulties, moderate learning disabilities, etc, etc as a short term cost saving measure especially when primary schools have been forced into academy trust status. In some cases, it is clear Government Ministers over several years and across several parliaments, possibly senior civil servants, Ofsted, CQC, Directors of Education in dioceses of the Church of England, some teaching unions, Capita, etc, etc have been colluding in the cover-up: the pretence of school improvement by Academy Trusts has often been achieved by dumping SEND pupils from the school roll and therefore a perverse incentive has been encouraged to avoid their identification / diagnosis in the first place. Children, especially with conditions such as autism, ADHD, often now known as neurodivergent conditions, who do not get the SEND*

support required early are at increased risk of also developing a mental illness. Young people who did not get the diagnosis and educational support at school for their SEND condition, are now frequently the young people on NHS waiting lists for mental health support / on the NEET list. A few more wheelchair access ramps and Cognitive Behaviour Counselling sessions are not going to solve this crisis; nor will an expensive top-down reorganisation of the entire Special Educational Needs and Disability SEND System (S.E.N.D.; not Send as seems to be creeping into messaging from Ministers for some unexplained reason). We do not have enough special schools in Northumberland, in northern England, in the UK. SEND provision and funding in mainstream schools is inadequate. Inclusion includes special schools. Mainstream and special schools are essential parts of the same continuum of provision. The SEND crisis is not going to be solved by closing down by stealth the special schools and other specialist provision needed. Class sizes in mainstream schools are too large. We do not have the staffing with the training, experience or expertise to cope now. Mainstream only SEND provision is extremely expensive and inefficient because it mean every school will have to have its own specialist staff, its own dedicated speech and language therapist, etc, etc, We do not have enough educational psychologists, physio and occupational therapists, specialist advisory teachers with experience / expertise in autism / ADHD / dyspraxia / dyslexia; we do not have enough NHS Consultant Paediatricians with the training, experience and expertise to act as lead professionals in the multi-disciplinary assessment process for conditions such as autism, ADHD, etc. Many children with autism also have the characteristics of dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language difficulties (e.g. semantic pragmatic language disorder), an eating disorder, digestion and toileting difficulties, sensory processing, sensory overload and integration difficulties, difficulties with proximity to others requiring a wide range of therapists - most ordinary mainstream schools do not even have a staff room large enough or enough staff toilets to accommodate the staff required let alone the required teaching and therapy space. There is not enough central government money in the system, Government is allowing Academy Trusts, Ofsted, etc, etc to undermine the system - changing the system without changing / abolishing the Academy Trusts / Ofsted / CQC means nothing will improve or change for the better.

- *A barrier to accessing services, particularly from the SEN dept acknowledging the needs of child and appropriate education required, the wait times and delays preventing the timeliness of delivery of services and resources to help children and their families. Little support for families around the SEN child, except from support groups run by others (and parents with lived experience). The process of getting a child into an appropriate provision.*
- *Teachers seem settled on their current poor knowledge of SEND.*

- *Classrooms are too big not enough trained staff to support my child.*
- *Local Authority is understaffed and overwhelmed*
- *I found the assessment process through cyps very difficult due to a lack of trained staff, a very dismissive attitude from multiple clinicians and an unwillingness to listen to my experience of my child. When my child was very unwell, it very quickly became apparent that he would receive no mental health support from the NHS. It took about 6 years from my first expressing concerns about my son before he received his final assessment from the NHS (his diagnosis from the NHS does not describe his greatest need)*
- *In all honesty I find this very difficult to respond to. I know schools are doing the best they can with what they have. I have a 15-year-old in ms with EHCP doing ok but I know their support is significantly diluted by the needs with those without formal support. I also know my youngest (in ms) is appeased with a screen due to lack of resources and not accessing the full curriculum. I'm not interested in blaming schools.*
- *The lack of support is shocking. There's very little. There's webinars on toby Henderson trust- which I struggle to access due to work timings. A couple of autism group meetings at family hub- but again it's not very regular and I'm at work when they are on.*
- *Had to go private as Y9 and could not wait 2 years for an assessment, it would have broken our family and made school life unbearable.*
- *I have had to complain to school governors as the right level of support has not been in place for my sons increased needs resulting in him being suspended. The lack of support and understanding should never have got so low that we've ended up here.*
- *Untrained staff*
- *I think parents have to fight for every bit of support for their child, often being declined for many services and support which ultimately just prolongs the timeframe in which your child can access support. Meaning children are becoming further behind from their peers in terms of their education. Some parents do not have the knowledge, or the ability to fight for their child's SEN needs which means the child is at a disadvantage.*
- *Main stream schools need more support to do EHCPs and fulfil the requirement in them and then if you need to go to a special school having an EHCP will help this process without one you won't get a place in a special school you'll need additional help in mainstream which you won't get without one!*
- *Mainstream schools are unable to meet all my child's SEN needs because of lack of funding lack of staff, lack of support.*
- *Speech and language support being pushed onto teaching assistants who aren't properly qualified to deliver and who already do enough.*

- *Our son's current mainstream first school has been incredibly supportive and has worked hard to implement appropriate plans and provisions. However, the limited funding available has made it difficult for the school to deliver the level of support he requires consistently throughout the day. To bridge this gap, we have had to rely heavily on private occupational therapy and specialist input to advise on the right strategies and provisions for his needs. This has been essential, but it also highlights the shortfall in publicly funded support. Due to the complexity of his needs and the level of provision required, he will not be able to attend a mainstream middle school. Instead, he will transition to a specialist setting, where we hope he will receive the tailored support necessary for his development and wellbeing.*
- *Lack of funding*
- *My child has a statement of special educational needs from Northern Ireland. I am concerned whether he will receive the required level of support when he begins school in Northumberland.*
- *My child is transitioning from primary to middle and the SEN support in middle/secondary schools is poor. They don't receive adequate training around autism and ADHD. There is not enough support for those children who have SEN need, but specialist provision isn't suitable and mainstream doesn't quite meet need either.*
- *Sadly, I see parents who need 'a label' to access support for their children at school, and beyond. Sometimes what are required is actions by parents. Unfortunately, some parents aren't prepared to accept responsibility for their offsprings upbringing.*
- *I am moving my child from Swansfield Primary to St Pauls due to the head having a lack of empathy and concern for my child. The Head of Send was very slow to follow up on my concerns and took ages to do anything. I was extremely frustrated and disappointed with them. But the family liaison guy in school was much better.*
- *Utterly disgraceful in Northumberland*
- *Once my child got her diagnosis you are on your own. And need to find support that works for you and your situation.*
- *There is none no support whatsoever ever and parents are on the knees. The constant fight. Northumberland county council are a disgrace. Constantly cover things up.*
- *Took over a year once referred to be assessed. Took until year 6 of asking to be referred to be assessed.*
- *The school is willing but not resourced sufficiently to support our child.*
- *My child is well supported but the schools aren't.*
- *The fight is real until the school excepts and begins to help start the process. That takes months. Not as straight forward as it sounds.*

- *I have heard amazing things about his new school. But am a little disappointed in SALT who were giving weekly support. But this has stopped since the support staff left, and she was not replaced. Also, SALT is overworked and is struggling to keep up with demand.*
- *EHCP kept getting knocked back, support for! child was not giving in school, she refused to go now has 1 hour a week in eotas*
- *Need to meet send co teacher as only met the TA.*
- *School would not acknowledge my son had additional SEN needs as he was a high achieving boy. This resulted in him being pushed into burnout and has not left his room in over 1 year. We then had to start EHCP process ourselves with no support.*
- *I have had to request help with exams. School did not offer. I am also paying privately for a tutor for GCSE maths*
- *Services blaming each other which means you end up going around in circles*
- *It took me FOUR YEARS of begging and crying for help to get neural diverse assessments for them both. I tried FIVE different channels. Exhausting and demoralising*
- *The system failed my daughter, at the age of 10 she tried to kill herself twice and cut her arms and legs due to the pressures of mainstream, her behaviour was extreme and unmanageable, not my little girl anymore. No one accepted how serious it was other than primary Mental health. We had to fight for an EHCP. She masks at school, but this also meant she didn't talk or socialise, she was quiet. She did battle teachers going into school. Primary school tried to help, high school left us all with no hope and no life, pushing her out the door. Staff on the floor were great, staff higher up just offered no to little support. Health visitors failed her at a young age, and I was left feeling like I was the problem. High school them massively failed her and my daughter was out of school for year.*
- *After echp waited 8 months for 1 to 1 now waited since Feb 25 for our yearly review still awaiting on county council*
- *My son needs to go special school where he can get the extra help*
- *Schools are inconsistent even within one school. Our school has slashed its pastoral team, no specialised support for ND kids, LSA's are not enough and there aren't enough of them. Wait times for assessment, meds following assessment. No additional support from CYPs following diagnosis*
- *Schools just aren't set up to cope with additional needs*
- *There are no provisions to assist him I have fought since Sept 2024 and nobody is willing to help*
- *I don't require that much support but am aware that when I do, resources are tight, and it takes a while for some things to be done.*

- *I moved from a different LA which were far worse for SEND support. However, it has still taken 5 months for my son to start receiving AP. His AP is currently about 2 hours a week and he has been out of education for 2.5 years so is significantly behind. The LA aren't proactive in arranging AP and seem to offer the bare minimum.*
- *We are regularly asked to provide support to allow our child to access school activity's including school swimming lessons, beach days, out of school events. Whilst we willingly support to ensure are daughter can participate there is a distinct lack of knowledge around the need for adaptations to be made by the school in order to ensure she can access the curriculum and activities. Similarly, the school have very limited Knowledge around SEN and we feel like we are permanently supporting/ educating and resourcing the school to enable the staff around our children to help our daughter at school. This has included sourcing private OT training and advice, resources to be used at school by our daughter etc. There are many children in the school with EHCP but the school seem very unprepared and in some instances ill-informed around SEN needs of children in school and the support/adjustments that the children are entitled to enable them to access education like any other neurotypical child.*
- *Huge waitlists for ASD and ADHD assessment and diagnosis*
- *We waited with no schooling for 18 months while a suitable provision was found!*
- *Teachers labelled my son as naughty they refused to refer him for assessment, I knew he was neurodiverse. They delayed his assessment by not listening to parents. Teachers saw him as a problem they didn't care about him or many children like him they don't care about children anymore and just want an easy life.*
- *Appropriate social groups and holiday club provision*
- *School do their utmost but school are chronically underfunded. We need more trained staff to be providing specialist support for the children that struggle to access mainstream yet are 'not disabled enough' to need an SEN school.*
- *We were allowed to complete my sons ehcp for 3years thinking we were doing it right only to be told near to transition to high school that he was reading as a mainstream child. This is not the case*
- *My child has ASD and struggled socially in mainstream primary to the point of saying he wished he didn't exist. This was in part due to lack of support and understanding from undertrained staff. I was advised he would not be granted an EHCP his teacher. I have chosen to move him into the private sector where his needs are better met and his mental health is much improved. I strongly believe that our local secondary would not meet his needs and due to the rural location and boundary between two and three tier systems there was no alternative state option. This is a huge stretch financially, exacerbated by the addition of VAT on school fees. By not using the state system we are saving the*

government money and it feels unfair to be paying additional tax. If the revenue from this tax was going into state education it would be easier to stomach (our younger son is struggling at state school due to heavy SEN needs of other pupils in his class and under resourcing) but Kier Starmer's recent statement that the revenue is actually going on housing has just rubbed salt into the wound.

- *Lack of knowledge outside of SEND staff that are aware of condition and how to deal with child in class or unstructured times*
- *I couldn't even get my child into a mainstream without fighting. No one wanted her without an ECHP but I couldn't get one until she went to school. So, I couldn't do anything and went around in circles for a long time.*
- *It is vital that support can be provided whilst waiting for a diagnosis as waiting times are incredibly lengthy (2.5 years on ASD pathway). All support my child has received (SALT, OT, wheelchair services etc.) I have had to research and ask for myself - I have not been offered any services.*

Any further information about the EHCP Process

- *The process often ignores to specific needs of the child and focuses on the needs of the school. It is a medical path not an education focus. It is a gatekeeper of funding not a provider of support.*
- *Takes a long time but helps the school know my child's needs*
- *Legal entitlement to EHCP may seem like a good idea. However, the way these children are singled out from other mainstream children has a two tier education system within schools. This may seem like a good way of levelling up and making things fair but what is actually happening is some people are able to thrive while others are misunderstood.*
- *We fought and fought after excuses saying she will catch up from 5 till 8 which by then she had voices to hurt herself and others!! The council caused this as they should of helped sooner then maybe she wouldn't of been as bad as she was as because of the lack of help she ended up with 1 hr a week eotas while she waited for special school ….. if they had of acted sooner this could have been prevented*
- *SENCo didn't know the process so we did parental apply and it wasn't a great experience and basically told we did it at the wrong time of year as son was transitioning too secondary*
- *Waited quite a long time for the last EHCP report*
- *It was absolutely pointless and my girls do not get anything near the help they should*
- *long wait to request a SEND place for it to be heard at panel*
- *Staff at his SEN are fantastic and assist in filling in and the support from Local SENCo at his present school outstanding*
- *There was a lack of help at his 1st school by the SEND to put him forward for the EHCP he was absolutely useless we had to push and push until he agreed that our grandson needed help we were chasing around him to get paperwork and the application in it was done in the last week of his last term at Stobhill 1st school this guy is now headmaster there god help to children who needs SPEN support he is useless and should not hold a position like he has due to his lack of ability*
- *Started the process of an ehcp then was excluded from mainstream*
- *Local Authority do not follow the law. They do not meet timeframes and they do not provide appropriate support, until you're in crisis position.*
- *Only positive due to the fact I know the process now. Had I not educated myself and know our legal rights, I know the LA would have tried fobbing us off.*
- *See above, no one ever answers the phone, rejection emails sent at 4.55 on a Friday is a dirty trick they play. This is in SEN team staff at County Hall I'm referring to here.*
- *It was very simple for me to get an EHCP for my son, I did not encounter any difficulties however I had paid for private occupational therapy assessment to accompany the application and had an already very good understanding of*

his needs which helped me when speaking with educational psychologist who assessed without seeing him

- *More info*
- *By the time it has been put in place, you have had to take many days off school and any app attended go towards an unauthorised absence, which is not helpful*
- *It isn't worth the paper it's printed on. The LA is failing young people, parents and carers, families and schools. Waiting times are ridiculous, wrong information is on plans, EHCP officers have no time to meet families and young people. People know what is needed but nothing is done.*
- *EHCPs not updated to present an accurate and up to date representation of the child, their needs and how this need will be met (vague at times esp in the termly review planning). Constant to-and-fro with the Council SEN Dept asking for the EHCP to be corrected and accurate, which in turn delays the termly objective planning by school so the child's needs are not being met and she is not emotionally supported in school. The communication process between parent, school and SEN dept is distant and the ability to speak to the council SEN team re EHCPs is very much at arm's length, delays in answering emails etc. Trying to get the correct provision is a constant battle and it should not be like this. Systems need to be robust yes, but currently they are a push back, push back approach which is having an adverse effect on the child's education progress, is harming to their emotional wellbeing, confidence and opportunities to grow and meeting their potential. Educational and Health need to take cognisance in the EHCP process. The two are inextricably linked. If the child has SEND then the education side must take this on board and they should listen to recommendations from specialists when it comes to advice around learning and emotional challenges of children. Some children find they don't fit into the one size fits all model.*
- *It takes too long and still after 3 attempts no place for a special school for my daughter*
- *Turned down initially but ongoing use helpful*
- *Schools don't know how to run them*
- *I felt that multiple obstacles were put in our way to prevent us from obtaining this. The whole process seemed unnecessarily difficult and complex. Thankfully school provided him with help despite all this.*
- *It's complex and difficult, I have the resilience to fight but the language is designed to avoid argument. I know from my job that the system is stacked against those who don't have the resources to fight. The LA caved without school input in 15 minutes when I fought for my child at mediation, they made no counter arguments! Only because I was strong and had the resources…every child should get what they need regardless of parent ability or effort. My child gained 26 hours of support when the LA rejected anything! That's insane given the initial response was rejection! If I hadn't fought, they'd be in year 11 at home, I'm convinced! It's not the parents in these cases; it's the school and support package.*

- *Cannot comment about the process, but apparently there's also timing issues because you can only apply at start of year. His first school was going to apply but thought it would be better to leave it until middle school. Now I'm not sure why there is a delay with middle school. Probably all the upheaval with the switch to 2 tier.*
- *We are now applying for highest level. It's not well noted you can apply for different levels, and also the school have not kept us up to date in this first year of where we are with it*
- *I worry that if a child has an EHCP, is there enough correct provision to meet their need, especially if they stay in mainstream. Again, the EHCP process is difficult for parents to navigate and a lot are declined even though there is a clear need.*
- *A struggle with the local authority to get what your child needs and is entitled to access education*
- *declined twice for an ehcp on the grounds of my child "'making progress" despite clear SEN needs, two years developmentally delayed, unable to be toilet trained, complex developmental needs, complex language issues, sensory processing issues, eating disorder, sleeping disorder, learning difficulties. Complete refusal to acknowledge the desperate situation my son is in every single day! Being forced to go to school without adequate support having a significant impact on his mental health and ability to enjoy and thrive within his education.*
- *Quick to get into place, I think we were lucky, but the waiting times for the annual updates are a disgrace. Ten months waiting on the updates to be typed up by county hall (two years in a row). And they would only take about half an hour to an hour maximum. What's the point even having one if they're always one year out of date….*
- *We have found the EHCP process to be both emotionally and administratively demanding. While we understand the need for thorough assessment and evidence, the process has felt lengthy and, at times, overwhelming—particularly while also trying to support our child's daily needs. One of the main challenges has been ensuring that all professionals involved are on the same page and that their input accurately reflects our child's needs. We've had to chase reports, follow up on timescales, and repeatedly advocate to ensure his voice and experiences are properly represented.*
- *Very slow. Was told diagnosis makes no difference to getting EHCP. Application for ECHP failed. Got diagnosis. Successful application for EHCP*
- *I am concerned that changes may be brought in that affect my son while his EHCP is in process*
- *I haven't applied for an EHCP - mainly due to other families telling me how challenging it is to get one. SEN families are made to jump through hoops when they are already struggling to access support*
- *The school didn't seem to be in a hurry to get something in place*
- *LA initially refused to COSA, I skipped mediation and opted for tribunal, two weeks before they cancelled and agreed to proceed. Recently 2024 I was in tribunal as the LA tried to use a blanket statement from an EP to remove*

children's 1:1 supports, stating they were detrimental instead of an honest this is a fiscal response to our budgeting crisis

- *But wishy washy did have much meat to it until we asked for a review*
- *The first school filled this out so I don't know the process but indi was rejected*
- *Just a fight to get trying to tell me he would be fine in mainstream*
- *Currently pursuing mediation and appeal process.*
- *It took all of my energy and wits and a huge amount of research to complete all the forms etc*
- *Easygoing*
- *It takes far too long from starting to actually getting the full Echp. Think it's actually 5/6 months we have waited and that's a review to full Echp hard copy*
- *Staff in school need to understand the EHCP process, in my situation this is the Headteacher. If he had explained his intentions for completing the ehcp Cosa and communicated with us as parents instead of being defensive, then we would have been able to work together to ensure the right provision was accessed for my child. The head said he only applied for the ehcp as we asked for this level of support, and he felt he could meet my child's needs without offering any evidence-based knowledge around my child's abilities. I believe my child who is nonverbal does need an ehcp for many reasons, the school has never acknowledged social and emotional needs let alone academic needs for reasons for an ehcp. Schools needs to be clear in their intentions and work in partnership with parents in this process.*
- *We had to appeal initially, we were told by his SENCo that he didn't need an EHCP, the school didn't support the application. When we won the appeal, we then had to appeal for him to attend a special school. Caused a lot of time and stress. He has been let down by the LA. He is more than capable but, missed two years of school due to bullying because he was in the wrong provision, with teachers who blamed his behaviour for the reason he was bullied. They didn't know how to manage his learning disabilities. He has left his provision with no qualifications as the only school we could get him in does not carry out GCSE's. He is going to be starting pathway 2 , Northumberland skills in September which is a provision for young people with EHCP's in place.*
- *1 child needs an EHCP but awaiting diagnosis which delays the process*
- *My son's assessment in 2022 involved face to face assessments. My daughter's in 2024 didn't. Even the Educational Psychologist only asked her questions over the phone which was ridiculous as she doesn't speak to strangers never mind over the phone!*
- *Initially she was refused, until I spoke with a lovely lady who said there was no way it was getting refused and ensured we did not have to go to mediation or appeal.*
- *1st time was extremely quick but then had to wait 8 months for child to get the support that was awarded. Now waiting since Feb for yearly review. We still don't know if he will have his one to one next school year*
- *Very long and cumbersome*

- *It is in place but mainstream state they cannot meet his needs and specialised school states they also cannot meet his needs so EHCP is useless*
- *EP report wasn't specified or quantified, advice wasn't sought from OT or SLT. His EHCP doesn't reflect need at all. I have tribunal in November so it would have taken me 2.5 years to get an accurate EHCP in place after applying summer 2023.*
- *The school have adapted some of their practices but are ill informed as to the legal status and the support it requires them to give to children. Similarly, they are not aware of the support / funding that it precludes and in our instance have been underfunded in their support for our daughter due to a lack of support / guidance from the county council.*
- *Declined repeatedly by school as apparently daughters needs not significant enough.*
- *Teaching staff said he didn't need one so I applied as a parent. Teachers couldn't handle my son in mainstream school (state or independent) or weren't prepared to invest time in him but refused to apply for EHCP.*
- *We have a plan to apply for an ECHP but are acutely aware of how difficult the process is and have witnessed children who absolutely need one, be turned down.*
- *Very unhelpful, lack of/non-existent council involvement*
- *Long waiting times*
- *We didn't have to 'fight' for an EHCP as my son has severe and obvious needs but we did have to wait a ridiculous length of time at every juncture. My son is almost 6 years old and a lot of the reports used his EHCP were written based on him at 2.5 years old and there is no provision to update them as part of the review process (e.g. Educational Psychologist). His latest annual review took over 7 months to be added to his EHCP by the County Council, rendering it effectively useless.*

What (if any) challenges did you face during the EHCP process

- *Long process*
- *Long wait times for completion*
- *(Child name) has complex SEN across a number of areas dyslexia, dyspraxia, undiagnosed ADHD (in process but CYPS are letting him down due to time frame), dyscalculia. Arty needs help. Is disgusting how CYPS are letting these children down.*
- *Wait times, although ours appeared quicker than had first been indicated*
- *Long waiting lists, lack of provision, lack of infrastructure.*
- *Same excuses little help*
- *SENCo not understanding the process so it was like blind leading the blind*
- *Waiting time for final report*
- *Waiting*
- *LA don't follow the law. Have to threaten with judicial review before appropriate actions are taken.*
- *not completed within timescales*
- *Lack of understanding in mainstream school*
- *Being told he doesn't require one even though he was diagnosed as Autistic and suffering with ADHD*
- *Failure to assess, threaten with judicial review, failure to provide education and therapies.*
- *The LA initially named the mainstream setting that my child couldn't access due to being traumatised by untrained staff and ableist attitudes*
- *The school didn't want to apply for it*
- *Long waits between stages.*
- *What a performance just to get help for your child in school. Headteachers not knowing how to fill forms in. SENCos with no training, no idea what they're doing. The whole system is a nightmare.*
- *There were no problems my child was granted an EHCP as soon as he was attending full time school*
- *Time taken. Staff failed to submit on time.*
- *I had problems being allocated a named school with my EHCP stating just SEN Provision*
- *I was a SENCo and it is designed to make people give up.*
- *As above. I have copied this information into here too but added more detail in the second paragraph. EHCPs not updated to present an accurate and up to date representation of the child, their needs and how these needs will be met (vague at times esp in the termly review planning). Constant to-and-fro with the Council SEN Dept asking for the EHCP to be corrected and accurate, which in turn delays the termly objective planning by school so the child's needs are not*

being met and she is not emotionally supported in school. The communication process between parent, school and SEN dept is distant and the ability to speak to the council SEN team re EHCPs is very much at arm's length, delays in answering emails etc. I submitted the change of provision request (for specialist school places) as part of EHCP annual review in Oct 2024, to be told in Jan 2025 that the school had not sent it to the SEN team, to then have an EHCP issued in Feb/March that wasn't accurate and didn't contain the up to date reports re my child (reports that were sent to school and the SEN team) to then being told, via an email, that my child's application for specialist school had been rejected on the last day of the school year (18/07/25) with little explanation why, even whilst the specialist provision agreed they could meet her needs and accepted her. Trying to get the correct provision is a constant battle and it should not be like this. Systems need to be robust yes, but currently they are a push back, push back approach which is having an adverse effect on the child's education progress, is harming to their emotional wellbeing, confidence and opportunities to grow and meeting their potential. Educational and Health need to take cognisance in the EHCP process. The two are inextricably linked. If the child has SEND then the education side must take this on board and they should listen to recommendations from specialists when it comes to advice around learning and emotional challenges of children. Some children find they don't fit into the one size fits all model.

- *School's desire to pass the buck onto the council.*
- *With not being able to get a special school placement for my daughter who has a speech problem and probably autistic/adhd a special school placement they keep saying in 2 years time bit she's very behind with her work and works way behind others in same year she's in year 5 Sep but her English level is level 1/2 her maths is year 3*
- *NCC don't know their legal responsibilities. Had to pay for advice from a specialist barrister to highlight this to them. They take ages to respond and then only give you a few days to follow up. They don't provide the support as detailed in the EHCP*
- *Schools don't implement section F as they don't know what they are doing.*
- *Difficulty in understanding the process*
- *Mediation, LA decided without meeting my child that needs were being met despite them not accessing lessons due to massive anxiety. Schools need more support with this!! As a teacher I know this is massively impacting schools and becomes more infectious if not addressed*
- *Knocked back initially.*
- *Lack of support from professionals other than charities*
- *Local authority not attending review meeting with 6 professionals present delaying future education plans*

- *None to be fair during the actual process.*
- *We faced significant challenges throughout the EHCP process, starting with delays to the initial needs assessment, which went well beyond the statutory timeframe. Despite repeated attempts to engage with the local authority (LA), there was little urgency or accountability. It wasn't until we raised a formal complaint with the Director of Children's Services, involved our local councillor, and began judicial review proceedings that the EHCP was finalised—remarkably, just four days later. This highlighted how broken the system can be, and how easily families are left to fall through the cracks unless they escalate matters forcefully. The challenges didn't stop there. Every annual review has missed legal timescales, and the resulting plans have often been poorly written. One plan was even issued as final while still containing tracked changes. We've had to submit an additional formal complaint due to repeated failures to meet statutory deadlines. The annual review process itself has been deeply flawed. We've never received papers in advance of the meetings, nor have all relevant professionals been invited—particularly from health and social care. As a result, our son's EHCP has focused almost entirely on educational needs, with little to no recognition of his broader requirements, despite medical evidence being available. Following a confirmed diagnosis and a significant change in our son's health, we requested a reassessment of his needs. This was declined by the LA, and we are now preparing to challenge this decision through the SEND Tribunal. Overall, the process has been frustrating, exhausting, and unfair. We've had to push at every stage just to secure what should be a lawful and child-centred process.*
- *Getting support for my daughter wait time is unacceptable*
- *Unprofessional EHCP workers, schools and LA members that do not know the basic facets of SEND law*
- *Constant denial*
- *The time it takes and how much you have to fight to get what is required.*
- *First time the application was made by the school SENCo and an EHCP wasn't granted. Second time as my child wasn't in school, I applied myself. It took a lot of research, energy and time. I feel this is not open to everyone and would prohibit many parents being able to make an application. Originally the second application was turned down but I had chosen to go to appeal which was daunting and it was then granted.*
- *Actually making the school see how much your child is struggling and needs a lot more help than what's on offer at the moment*
- *Staff at school unable to complete the paperwork with evidence based information and a clear focus on my child's needs. Barriers from staff at school (headteacher) in listening to my experience and professional knowledge base. Paperwork being sent half completed and with no evidence base as to my*

child's needs. Therefore, the cosa was declined. I worked with an amazing advocate however due to the Headteachers attitude and unprofessional manner in a meeting they pulled out as the head said he could meet my child's needs. When challenged on why he sent in the cosa he was argumentative and unprofessional and this response put us at the start of the process again as we had no evidence from school as to exactly where my child is meetings his early years goals.

- *Taking things out to make her fit into an unsuitable school which the school admitted they could not meet her needs,*
- *Just the length of time it takes*
- *We had good evidence that we sourced privately from eg. consultant psychiatrist, CBT Therapist, CYPS etc. If we hadn't sourced this ourselves, I have no doubt my son would not be receiving the support he is current getting.*
- *Not being able to get passed the first hurdle*
- *My son's EHCP went through easily but has clear, complex needs but I expect my daughters won't be easy as she has so far managed in mainstream*
- *Poor assessments and delays.*
- *Initial refusal due to school information.*
- *Very long-time frame*
- *Had to push the whole way*
- *It means nothing, wouldn't think it was a legal document*
- *Refusal to assess conceded just before tribunal, poor LA expert reports, OT and SLT advice not sought, EHCP not reflecting need so can't be used for consultations, everything just takes so long*
- *We had a relatively seamless route but we undertook a huge amount of work and sourced much of our supporting evidence privately so as to ensure our daughter's case was as though as possible.*
- *Applying as a parent the process was smooth*
- *It is wrong that the person who has the final say on a child's future has never met them in person or even spoke to them. Paired with little to no guidance could have catastrophic outcome. My son is a very vulnerable young person and if it weren't for the fantastic SEN experienced headteacher at his school we would have struggled even more*
- *The waiting times, and lack of updates and progress reports during this time. The lack of transparency throughout the whole process.*

Please add any further information on how satisfied you were with the final EHCP granted.

- *The EHCP may have given my child entitlement but the delivery of it was subject to school budgets which is constantly cut, so it is just a paper policy.*

- *The last one with Northumberland Skills was very thorough*
- *First EHCP was worthless. Done on purpose by LA. Second year, after having sought advice and training was more worthwhile and measurable.*
- *they are worth the paper they are written on school take out the recommendations from ed psych*
- *We are now going to tribunal and paying thousands of pounds for solicitors help in hopefully getting a special provision schooling*
- *First EHCP wasn't worth the paper it was written on. LA didn't make is measurable on purpose, so your child does not get the appropriate support, so nothing really improves. It is only when you education / train yourself that you're finally able to hold LA to account.*
- *LA have listened to our suggestions, probably because they know us, and know we self fund where possible.*
- *The EHCP was written in such a way that mainstream would get the money for a 1:1, when Collingwood read it they didn't want him. This has all changed now we're at Collingwood and the yearly reviews are thorough.*
- *EHCP took into consideration all the relevant reports and featured my views significantly*
- *EHCP denied and no guidance given to school, so school unable to support my child.*
- *More information added at each review*
- *This was done very quickly as we were moving counties*
- *I was initially but now I've learnt more it should have been different*
- *It wasn't adhered to causing further barriers to accessing school*
- *A lot of work to get it right and local authority slow*
- *Detailed before lack of detail for health and social care needs and solely concerned on education needs.*
- *It meant we could ensure my daughter gets help*
- *Ok after we asked for it to be reviewed*
- *The lack of strategies for my child*
- *One child has an ECHP which seems to be ok but fighting for a child who clearly should have one but can't even apply is exhausting*
- *Originally the named provider said they couldn't meet the provisions listed. In desperation we've mortgaged our house and choose our own provider in the private sector. NCC said they wouldn't fund this … but they did a U-turn thanks to an exceptional individual within the council who put our case forward at a time when I felt I had no fight left.*
- *Once granted I was happy, but the school didn't provide her with the hours she was supposed to get and her assistant was used elsewhere in school. I moved her two years ago to a private school in Newcastle, sadly I have had no choice and this is the nearest school to us that can meet her needs. Currently I am driving Romilly to Newcastle to school. Dropping off and picking up, which takes nearly four hours out of my day. I have to juggle my time as I have a younger daughter at Whittingham Primary and two older daughters at Duchess High, Alnwick.*

- *You have to be up front make your choices known to what you want on it from a parent's perspective*
- *Again due to lack of ability in completing the cosa with evidence based information the cosa was declined Andy not processed any further. All due to lack of knowledge from a Headteacher who is practising as a Senco without a qualification.*
- *the school didn't follow her ehcp,*
- *Very satisfied in the end, it took going to court but was very satisfied when the judge listened and gave us everything we had been fighting for.*
- *It went through fine however this was during covid so his Ed Pysch consultation was done over zoom. They never met him.*
- *It wasn't tailored to her needs. Obviously rushed with generic content.*
- *Am happy my son got one but its taking to long get place in into special school*
- *School lost original application, lied about it then pulled out all of the stops when threatened with a complaint. Not really worth it in the end as school couldn't afford to implement most of it.*
- *Totally unsatisfied. It is an unusable document*
- *Although didn't go to the panels did feel our views listened too*
- *We received an email asking us to accept (Child name)'s ehcp (which was the one commented on as reading as a mainstream child) which caused great upset after being told we were granted an extension. We were then told "no this is last years"…*
- *My child's EHCP was very vague*
- *The outline of the EHCP was satisfactory and as expected but there was little 'meat on the bones'. It was, and still is, very general and thus easy to say it is enforced and provisions provided when that isn't always the case.*

Why did you feel the need to home-school your child(ren)

- *Child wasn't able to attend school for a number of mental health reasons*
- *Failure to support and lack of support mental health seriously affected by lack of support at mainstream and council even eotas i had to take her I yet again refused transport*
- *They won't go to school as they are so under supported*
- *Child wasn't safe in SEND school.*
- *Had no choice as main stream would not take her during Covid and still didn't have her confirmed place in special*
- *Due to no support from north Tyneside EDUCATION and his main stream School*
- *Not yet if special provision is not in place he will not cope in high school. And we feel he will not attend but will not except home schooling as essential due to his condition so he will lack education skills he is 4yrs behind now*
- *Child was unsafe in school (attacked 8 times in 4 months).*
- *Unable to leave home due to severe mental health episode. Autistic burnout.*
- *School are funding academy 21 after burnout from school environment currently going through ebsa*
- *Home school is when child is on roll. Home education is what we do when we take on the education!!!!!!!!!!*
- *As it was too difficult to get my son to attend school and he was lashing out at myself.*
- *My child was at risk of permanent exclusion due to unmet needs*
- *Working as SENCo in Cumbria and as charity trustee contacted by parents in Northumberland, Newcastle upon Tyne, South Tyneside, Sunderland it was clear parents were forced to home school because the provision needed did not exist in their own area or they had tried the available provision locally and their child / they as a family had had a very bad experience from the school / local authority.*
- *My autistic daughter aged 13 I deregistered from high school as they can't help kids with sending that need it they don't follow pupil passports or ehcp there isn't enough resources or staff for this and mainstream far too busy and noisy for her even in quiet room at lunch she self harmed last summer suffers from anxiety mental health sleeping problems bit primary mental health will not accept her saying her mood swings are just her autism and I can tell its more too many knock backs from services that our children need they won't give her a ehcp I'm tired and worn out so very with 2 kids with sen that carnt get the support they need so homeschooling my 13y autistic daughter.my 9 year old is in mainstream with ehcp and thinking of changing school for her*

as one she's in has really gone down hill since it changed into an academy and has a new head teacher

- *it was needed to prevent exhaustion*
- *Esba prior to help following a correct diagnosis*
- *School insisted*
- *School was causing so much stress, anxiety and heightened sensory processing disorders*
- *We had no choice the local main stream school was useless and unwilling to help our daughter was on a pathway to killing herself by not eating obsessive exercise because the local main stream school wouldn't recognise she needed help as she masked many difficulties in school and didn't believe her parents and it was 10 months until a place was available in a suitable special school 50 miles away and now 75 miles away.*
- *My child's mental health declined so much because his nursery were unable to meet his needs he started harming himself when he realised the route to nursery, I had to force him to go and hand him over mid meltdown because he couldn't cope with the environment and lack of ability to meet his needs. He was unable to attend his full hour entitlement. He became very unwell, dysregulated, flared his reflux up from enduring continuous stress.*
- *Safer at home and could meet needs better, personalised learning*
- *It's something I have considered due to the lack of support in mainstream school*
- *Not enough support, still on waiting lists 18 months later, 4 years old non verbal, not potty trained declined access to direct payments under social work as "not diagnosed" - unlawful but I haven't the energy to fight that one yet. Have had to beg bully and threaten to get any support which is still extremely limited*
- *Anxiety, school refusal and an acknowledgment by the school setting that attending school was detrimental to their health.*
- *Because she was so overwhelmed i could not get her up in mornings*
- *Had no other choice*
- *Autistic burnout. Unsupportive school. Lack of EHCP therefore he legally wasn't entitled to help. Don't believe the line that diagnosis is not needed, same with EHCP, if it's not written down, it doesn't exist.*
- *Because school kept sending my daughter home, she was battling teachers to the ground to not go in. She was not accessing education. School tried to get me to home school officially but I ensured she stayed registered with them. I was left with no choice if I wanted my daughter to stop harming herself and attempting to end her life.*
- *Nobody would help*

- *Pressure from school over attendance when my son was in a mental health crisis. I felt forced to deregister him to avoid being prosecuted. He was too unwell to engage in education. He wasn't eating and couldn't get out of bed. This mental health crisis went on for a year with no help from services.*
- *The system is not fit for purpose with untrained staff, massive classes, under resourced school environments and a curriculum that is not fit for purpose for any child never mind a neurodiverse one. We are reliant on a Victorian system with Victorian style teaching echinus which is poor at best and criminal at times at worst.*
- *There was no suitable provision for him*
- *Child suicidal in school. He kept being suspended and it was clear they wanted rid of him from mainstream school they didn't support him and wanted him out. We were contacted at work constantly and they kept trying to gas light us as parents- we had to take control as parents and remove him from school*
- *I will have to home school if not offered a safe provision for high school*

Does your child have a personal budget, if so, for what

- *He has money for things that he wants to buy and trips away*
- *1-1 online maths English and science. (Child name) online gaming. Animal therapy. Horse riding. Art class. Gym/Swim pass. Learning support assistant x 10 hours per week. Duolingo. Craft supplies. Social group.*
- *one to one online maths, English and science lessons, horse riding, social groups, (Child name) online gaming / mentoring, one to one learning support assistant, swim / gym membership, animal therapy, art class, duo lingo, art & craft supplies, printer ink & paper.*
- *1-1online maths English and science. Gym membership*
- *She gets pupil premium as fathers a veteran*
- *Yes but I don't know what it's used for?*
- *Should have for teaching assistant support but still waiting for this to be put in place*
- *No .. but I think he should but again never explained to us.. he has very high needs*
- *Never heard of a personal budget.*
- *Support worker, enabler in school holidays*
- *Personal assistant*
- *No one has any idea! When asked the school are unsure!*
- *(Child name) currently gets £8,000 from the local authorities. I am at present paying all her school fees plus payment towards her teacher assistant. I would like some advice on making (School name) a named school for (Child name).*
- *Not that I'm aware of up to date (4 years)*
- *Special Education*
- *Yes 1 to 1 every day other than one afternoon*
- *He doesn't*
- *One to one support which wasn't implemented*
- *Yes but unaware*
- *I'm not sure, he has AP and doesn't have a named school so he probably does have a PB. He has 2 hours of animal therapy a week and starting with another provider soon (nudge education)*
- *One to one TA, movement breaks, assistance with planning and regulation after meltdown*

Any further information on school transport

- *Hoping for my son in September he keeps the same taxi company that takes him to school and I hope the people that arrange the taxi company take into account most children become used to the same people and any change will upset my son*
- *Child has council run school transport and because no EHCP in place can be difficult*
- *(Firm name) taxis whilst (Child name) was at Collingwood. Formal complaint made to NCC regarding inappropriate behaviour around young people with SEND. Keith's taxis apologised but kept their contract with NCC.*
- *My children need it and do not get it*
- *Never needed to use. My child would not use this.*
- *long way*
- *My experience of the staff who are on the transport -driver and escort have been amazing. Getting the transport in place, like other SEND matters is a hurdle and barriers are put up instantly.*
- *Excellent driver but journey 60 miles each way*
- *Costing the local authority an absolute fortune private taxi firms benefiting from huge contracts and then deliver sub-par services*
- *It's done on lowest price and not looking at best taxi firm for the job and taxi firms dump the contracts leaving no transportation when they realise its not worth their while when they have to go at least 300 miles a day to fulfil a return trip for our daughter because they live so far away.*
- *How long it takes to find out who has the contract*
- *Had to fight for two to one support despite my son being entitled to it. To be told by PA she wasn't there for my son. Staff not trained.*
- *We had to drive our child when she was attending school*
- *I would like help with school transport for Romilly*
- *There needs to a better way of background checks more in-depth. Most of these children are non verbal and very valuable.*
- *Had an issue that involved reporting the chaperone to the police*
- *A good service for us. Youngest son is only on transport for a maximum of 20 minutes each way.*
- *Amazing staff, always on time. Really patient.*

Are there any improvements you would like to see on SEND school transport services?

- *No we have a wonderful transport service*
- *Properly vetting the drivers.*
- *Yes just because a mainstream closer said they can meet needs it doesn't mean they actually do so when moving them to a one further away to desperately try to get them an education and stay in school why should transport be refused even when a parent is struggling to get them in due to health conditions and distance*
- *More trained Escorts no smoking escorts and well trained escorts and driver. Who actually know the Child*
- *Trained in SEN Chaperones*
- *More special schools: less school transport needed.*
- *we were lucky with excellent taxi driver*
- *Under local authority control rather than private taxi firms.*
- *The provision to be there, he's currently refusing school bus as he's being bullied and doesn't have the coping mechanisms yet to manage the deregulation*
- *Get taxi firms near to where the child lives not 80 miles away that results in pickup delays of over an hours regularly. Must have training allow personal budget for train transport with travel trainers*
- *Just more funding in school*
- *Yeah same taxi driver same escort taxi staff trained*
- *For (Child name) to get SEND school transport*
- *Yes people need to want to do the job and much better checks taken on all escorts and drivers. The council seem to go for the cheapest way and can chop and change companies. These children need routine and having the same driver and escort is more important as some children can't deal with change*
- *I would say depending on the user keep to same driver and have and send staff member incase of meltdowns.*
- *No last minute changes*

Any further information on how you have had to adapt your working arrangements?

- *Increased staffing and training*
- *Looking at giving up work to make this manageable*
- *Applying for support, the constant chasing of all the various applications we have in, chasing CYPS - I have to do a lot of this during work hours. Luckily my work are very understanding but it takes a toll, not to mention the emotional toll it has on the family.*
- *I'm a full time stay at home mum to my two children*
- *Gave up a very successful job to be at home more for our daughter. This took the strain off my wife so we shared the workload better.*
- *Over the years to ensure he was escorted on/off the taxi. No wraparound care at Collingwood was an issue for us.*
- *Working from home*
- *I am constantly travelling up and down the a1 back and forwards to school sometimes 6 times a day if they have forgotten something: I work from home as I couldn't possibly go to work*
- *My husband had to retire 3 years early and I have had to reduce my full time hours to part time.*
- *I work around school times*
- *son is currently in mainstream and i work but need a sen school and there is no childcare provision they do not do out of school clubs*
- *Can only work minimal hours*
- *Husband had to take early retirement by 3 years. I have reduced from full time to part time hours.*
- *I've had to reduce number of clients and work in the evenings to catch up*
- *Reduced hours and work from home.*
- *I had to give up work as there's no childcare provision after 5 years that will take SEN children.*
- *Can't work the required hours as my son is home 7 days a week*
- *The school do not put the appropriate support in place and so have started sending him home on days such as sports day and nativity play at Christmas instead of supporting him appropriately*
- *none for now*
- *HAD TO GIVE UP A 21 YEAR CAREER AS A TEACHER AND NURSERY MANAGER TO HOME EDUCATE 3 COMPLEX NEEDS CHILDREN DUE TO BEING UNABLE TO HAVE NEEDS MET IN SCHOOL. NOW ON BENEFITS.*
- *I have to collect her from mainstream all the time and take calls constantly. The manage move means I have to start earlier drive her and then collect her and finish later. Making up missing time.*

- *I have later starts in the mornings, starting at 10am, completing Admin on an evening to catch up. Missing my lunch break so I am able to complete my visits faster so I can collect him/be home when he gets there*
- *Have had to resign, as flexible working hours were not granted; currently on Universal Credit as no jobs within the school-run.*
- *I don't work due to my health problems and have now been diagnosed with fibromyalgia due to the stress of trying to cope on my own with my 2 sen children and the meltdowns not wanting to go to school and sibling rivalry*
- *work from home*
- *I have reduced my hours to support my child and my husband has done the same*
- *I work during school hours*
- *I moved schools to bd where my kids are*
- *I cannot work full time- I have to be with my child at all times when he's not in school. I even have to be at school for collection up to an hour early so I can get a space he's comfortable with. He will not cope with others looking after him. Not even grandparents long term.*
- *Take 2 and from home every day loosing 4 hours a day for work, it's put a huge burden on myself as a single one income parent*
- *I've had to drop 1 day and most the days I do work i have to take calls and appointments*
- *Can only work on a Saturday as have to be at home to accommodate his online education*
- *I work from home so I am able to pick up rather than other family members or childcare due to her struggling to get through a day whilst masking, she struggles to attend after school clubs it's too much for her.*
- *Mum hasn't worked for five years and dad does very reduced hours to meet child's needs*
- *I had to give up work for a few years after adopting our daughter with SEND. Then I waited to find the right part-time job that worked around school hours. I couldn't go back full-time due to appointments for different medical/health issues. Plus, breakfast and after school clubs were too much for her.*
- *Flexibility to take time out during the day to attend meetings and interventions*
- *I didn't work for the first 11 years of my daughter's life. Well not paid work. I was helping her. Then went back to work part time as teaching assistant working with SEND pupils so I could spend more time at home and transporting my daughter to a school out of catchment that could meet her needs. Just resigned from this role because I am having to transport my daughter to her new school as council refused. It's fine for us because we are able to do this but many people cannot.*
- *Currently unable to work due to my child's needs*
- *I am unable to work*

- *We have 4 children with disabilities who require us to be present and able to take them to appointments, therapies, and need their parents. Working is incredibly difficult*
- *Asked work if I can be flexible*
- *I work during school hours so I can be there before and after school to support her needs*
- *Start late finish earlier*
- *Both parents need to work from home, one parent needs to work only part time*
- *I had to give up my job for several years and now my husband and I share school pick up and drop off and support which means we both work part time. I would estimate we have forgone up to £200,000 in earnings, not to mention sacrificing career progression.*
- *I have an SGO, I am single so now work less hours*
- *I am a volunteer so can come and go and if I and needed I will there for me kids (send and other ones).*
- *I've had to give up work, I have 4 children (all adopted) 2 of which have EHCP's I have had to give up work in order to support my children*
- *Along with early retirement for husband, i was already working reduced hours, I now have to work from home some of the time. Apart from the financial impact, this also impacts working knowledge, in that the NHS is losing 35 years experience because our child need more support than schools / education system can give them.*
- *I actually work at my son's SEN school so I can be flexible. There is no wraparound care offered. My previous employment I had to take a £15000 a year pay cut to go part time so I could attend his therapies/hospital appointments*
- *My contract was terminated as I needed to drop off and pick them up from school during working hours and they refused my flexible working request as they required me to be in the office 49 miles away.*
- *I have had to reduce my hours massively. There is no wrap around available in special schools but this is a small price to pay for my daughter to be happy. Also school to ensure I am here for her getting on and off her school transport. I also had to take a year out of work to be with my daughter when school were refusing her.*
- *Working from home if having a bad day. Originally went part time when we was awaiting 1 to 1*
- *A work part time. I am passenger assistant for send kids*
- *I am extremely fortunate to work from home but I frequently have to leave work to collect my son as he is struggling and he no longer has a support person he can go to*
- *Had to work from home and ask neighbours to assist*
- *I can't work as he is home 24/7 and has high care needs.*
- *I regularly have to leave work to assist / support my child before, during and after school as well as to access school activities and to ensure she is supported. She becomes exhausted and suffers burnout particularly in the*

winter months and this leads to periods that she cannot attend school and when I can't work.

- *Work shorter shifts through the day and back on in the evening as no out of school or holiday clubs for SEN children awaiting diagnosis*
- *Have had to leave work to go and pick my child up in escalation.*
- *Consultant anaesthetist - now work 5 mornings a week so I can home educate my son in afternoons.*
- *Like many parents I have had to give up full time working, the number of appointments, lack of holiday or wrap around provision and no family support makes it impossible to work full time. I became self employed.*
- *I do not work. I could not have the mental space to support my child if I worked full time. She needs to know I am there to regulate her when she gets home. Thankfully my husband's income enables this.*
- *I have had to take a local job with a reduced pay to be on hand just incase as Caleb is a flight risk*
- *I work 24 hours a week, there's know Sen Support available for after school clubs or wrap around care for parents to work longer.*
- *I can't work as they're only at school and hour a day if that's manageable*
- *I have had to leave a career I enjoyed as my son's previous provision, and only under 3 year old childcare in our area, couldn't 'cope' with my son for the time needed (only 20 hours). I have not been able to restart work as outside of school hours there is zero childcare options for SEND children in our area combined with no job opportunities flexible around school. I am a university graduate and feel heavily stigmatised to be out of the workforce due to lack of childcare provision for SEND children.*

Do you have any other feedback on SEND provision in North Northumberland?

- *The recent new Barndale School in Amble is a positive development although very problematic in implementation, with young people in the school for a week and then out for a month because the school wasn't really ready. Then no hot dinners for 5 months. Then poor provision of play areas. Then problems with a damaged roof. This is damaging to the young people if the NCC school build team do not focus on the needs of the young people. It is an example of saying one thing and making things look good but behind the scenes school staff are left to try and make do and manage. It is a metaphor of what NCC think they are doing for SEND and what is actually happening. The biggest challenge is to find quality, qualified staff and then pay them so funding does become an issue as always.*
- *1 have 1 child at Tweedmouth middle and as you can imagine the staff are doing best they can under the circumstances but that's not good enough and our children should not be suffering any more than they are with the upheaval of the schools and staff. I have 2 children at the grove school and this school is absolutely AMAZING and it's such a shame that they were not given the funding to create a magical school with outdoor space for our children I honestly believe this is something that north Northumberland needs and so do the children and staff. This school was given outstanding by Ofsted and I think you should go have a look at it and speak with the students and staff because they are amazing and deserve an outdoor play area with grass and space*
- *The diagnosis provision is sorely lacking. This government, the NHS and associated services are letting these children down. It is clear Arty needs help, but trying to access this is an uphill struggle. He is going into year 5 next year - two more years at primary school before High School and he is still struggling to read and write. We know he needs medicating in order for him to be able to concentrate and learn the basics, but feel he is being let down at every turn. It is truly heartbreaking as a parent to feel like you are letting your child down like this.*
- *It is more than just EHCP. It's about staffing, school transport and schools nearer to where these children live. Sitting in a taxi for an hour before and after school is far from ideal.*
- *No just sort Wansbeck hospital paediatrics out as they are absolutely shocking and disgraceful!*
- *Feel like the teachers need more training in neurodivergence every child is different and needs different types of support my child needs something for when he leaves school as i feel he will struggle with the responsibilities of real life ie budgeting, getting/ keeping a job , looking after a house , personal hygiene. If there was a vocational program where he could experience and learn how to develop skills needed to be an independent adult*

- *Absolutely awful. Very little if at all 1 to 1 intervention time. No safe space for a child having an autistic 'meltdown' and a severe lack of funding causing untrained staff.*
- *Feel that a lot of support focuses on school based information and doesn't listen to parents, when we are the ones that have to deal with our children and the melt downs/shut downs that come from being so totally overwhelmed by School days where they've had to mask (so the school never see the real them anyway)!*
- *It can't be limited to North Northumberland. A country wide overhaul is needed.*
- *Our first school was brilliant, well trained staff, tried and worked out strategies and what worked for our child. Middle school they are expected to be the same as their peers as they didn't go with a plan. Very minimal support offered for first 2 years, 3rd year some extra added but school still complains about ADHD traits, sits our child on their own during lessons.*
- *Not enough space in SEND schools*
- *No mental health support*
- *I would love to give you a report on how my children have suffered to to the lack of sen provision they have received: please contact me and il be happy to write something*
- *Extremely poor. Groups are over subscribed which is no good when we need quiet sessions. I have no faith in school system due to being gaslit for years.*
- *It needs help. Not enough services for our children*
- *there is no provision heavily rely on charity organisations*
- *Amazing Support from my child's school SENCo officers in school staff in school fantastic only issues are outside waiting times from treatments*
- *The time it is taking to go to tribunal is over a year which is disgusting the help from NCC is disgustingly they do not help they just put barriers in place all the time. They send incompetent people out to discuss your situation and they talk a load of rubbish thinking everyone is stupid and just except there answer and not do anything but we will take them to court and go to the tv and press to show how incompetent these people are. Mr David Smith has been 100% in helping us. I contacted the Secretary of State for education and no absolutely no one even replied to my email*
- *My daughter was permanently excluded for her Disruptive behaviour due to unmet needs and being totally misunderstood by staff*
- *There's not enough of it. Groups quickly become over subscribed when we need quiet sessions.*
- *Listen to parents, train your staff on process and schools need to stop parental blame (square peg / round hole analogy)*
- *Just wish it wasn't such a fight to get the basics. Parents need support, not more Hoops to jump through.*
- *Without Helen Sutherland and her team at NAS we'd be really lost up here in North Northumberland. Shout to Mark Tuff at Clarty Commandos. I don't*

think children from Berwick should be travelling to Prudhoe for 6th form, do better.

- *More alternative provisions need to be put in place to meet the needs of children that cannot deal with school environment and find it difficult to remain seated for 5 plus hours a day*
- *I feel we have been very lucky in my son's current school as he has had 1:1 provision from day one, however, now we are at the stage of transitioning to secondary school and I feel my child's needs have been totally ignored. After our appeal was launched my son has had observations from professionals who have agreed that he needs a SEND school, yet local authority continue to deny him a place. I have visited numerous SEND schools locally and further afield (none of which are at capacity) and he is still being denied the place he needs and deserves. Parents are put through extreme stress and anxiety about the welfare and education of our vulnerable children who are forced to go to schools that simply cannot accommodate their needs. From talking to other parents in similar situations it seems the local authority denies every child a SEND place on default without any research or physical observation of the child in their school setting, meaning all parents of special needs children have to go through a lot of turmoil having to fight to get our children to be educated in a suitable setting. There is clearly a massive increase in children with ASD they should really be redirecting the funding they plough into tribunals etc into researching why this is now a huge issue and ensure that children with ASD get the support they need by providing more SEN provision.*
- *Mainstream schools need specialist training to understand additional needs especially autism. Their lack of training impacts my son's mental health*
- *none for now*
- *We are new to it with our daughter and I feel there is little to no support*
- *Although the staff helpful at the school, I am no further forward than I was 4 months + my mental health is taking a hit and my son is still suffering at times with both and we are no further forward with THRIVE support in school. Emotional support and alternative working with children who may need a slightly altered routine*
- *There needs to be better support and trained staff in main stream schools*
- *Not enough special schools; not enough special colleges; no care villages / intentional communities for those who have left education and need housing with care support and a sheltered work environment to develop the skills for independence / healthy interdependence needed for a fulfilled life.*
- *It's appalling.*
- *Work with the family, support them, work with the school and the specialists. Please make it a more user-friendly system which is more timely. Thank you for asking for our views and feedback.*
- *Please can we have more special schools, special trained sen teachers and assistants keeping sen children in a mainstream school is never going to work! If more special schools can't be built they why not units separate on school grounds for our children who just cannot cope with big classes too*

noisy etc my youngest child is 9yrs who we think is autistic/adhd she struggles so much in mainstream but ehcp tribunal still a no for a special school it's all wrong she masks at school sometimes then comes home and blows and has melt downs it's not fair on us parents and families and our children to suffer this way and please please can something be done about primary mental health not accepting our children to help them and also cyps even if a long waiting list it's better to be on it then getting knock backs all the time I really worry about the future of my children in schools now my 9y old will not get accepted into a special school so when time comes for high school she won't be going there as ik she won't cope so I will be homes cooling her what support do we get then? NONE

- *mainstream and special schools are both stretched. A suitable provision for more able SEND pupils would also be beneficial*
- *The fundamental issue is EHCPs are working where implemented probably, however too many schools are not implementing them, or even reading them. Health rarely attend meetings or submit feedback and care is always minimal information. The LA should manage the EHCP rather than the school SENDCo and health professionals should be held to a higher standard in their responses*
- *No mainstream school would take my child on. I was told repeatedly to have the EHCP in place before they could attend or apply for a SEN school. Again, can't get in because we had no EHCP. I fought for 6 months to get my child 1 hour per day in a mainstream school.*
- *We are very lucky with the sendco in our school who has been absolutely fabulous. It is a shame that there is a lot of stigma and negativity about neurodivergence from within the NHS rather than promoting confidence and self esteem to recognise the gifts these children have. It is very difficult to find guidance whilst you are in the thick of these struggles I find there is little help in deciding which provision is going to be best for your child. Accessing specialist provision appears to be near impossible.*
- *We as a whole have nothing extra for send kids unless they are under the age if 14 my son is 15 and apart from 1 youth group there is nothing available for these kids to do so instead of mixing with others they are constantly at home*
- *My other son is deaf and he had a deaf support worker come into school regularly to advocate for him- make sure everything was correctly in place and any issues addressed etc. I feel this sort of service would be fantastic for ASD children. And some feedback on how they are progressing etc.*
- *Please don’t reduce it my son has ADHD Combined and the school have been phenomenal I fear for my son if it’s non mandatory or reduced. It’s already extremely hard to manage, less provision would be devastating for my child who is extremely intelligent*
- *I feel it needs more clearer guidelines and advise*
- *Shocking waiting times for any help.7 yrs in and no further forward*
- *The education system is extremely outdated, there has been no changes for decades. There are more and more children who have needs, school*

need to adapt to support these children. EHCP route needs to be more accessible, education around the process would be beneficial.

- *Mainstream schools need to continue to do EHCPs and have support, more special school provision is needed throughout the county traveling 3 hours a day to school is wrong*
- *For the last 16 months of my life I have been battling to get my Sen child an ehcp, I have been lied to by the local authority, staff covering other staffs mistakes, complete failure to acknowledge significant Sen need, the mental and physical strain myself my son and our family is disgusting, I have watched my sons mental health decline day after day and yet forced him into education to push for support in his diagnosis process for the rest of his life. There is no words to explain the damage this 16 months has done to my son! He is a shadow of the boy he was, Northumberland county council do not deserve to make decisions about the most vulnerable members of our community they all deserve to be held accountable for the damage they cause making decisions only based on penny pinching, and never considering the consequences of their actions.*
- *Yes I think it's all very vague and non specific. For example we got the EHCP 4 years ago now and we would love the educational psychologist to come back and assess our daughter again for high school to see if they still feel she needs specialist provision or not, but we don't know if we're entitled to ask for that again. Who pays for it? At the time the ed psych said she'd be lucky to manage to the end of first school in a mainstream setting…She's now going into Y5 in Sept and with a 2 year waiting list for specialist provision we aren't sure what to do as school say she's fine. Everyone seems to have a different opinion and outlook and for parents seeking advice that can be very conflicting. Plus, our daughters current school get paid for her to have 25 hours per week of one to one support, but she doesn't receive it because the head-teacher doesn't believe in the dependence it creates. There is one TA in the class who floats around so she does get support that way but not the one to one she's entitled to. So we aren't entirely sure what the funding is being used for…..presumably for the greater good of the school in general. It isn't very transparent.*
- *More funding is needed in schools and better use of resources. More training. More places at special schools*
- *There isn't enough support for children and their families. The process to access support can be complex and not made easy for parents. Staff need to be trained in autism and ADHD and other conditions to know how to support children correctly in school. I would like to see education providers being more inclusive for example, school uniform is not inclusive for those with significant sensory difficulties, flexibility to the school day for those who can't manage full time education and a lack of understanding for parents who are struggling.*
- *Hard to deal with and know who to contact*
- *In the middle school which I know is closing there is one SEN and that's not enough. She will be going to the high school next year where I hope the*

school is ready to take 3 different years from 3 different schools all at once. I hope they are prepared how much this can affect SEN children and I would like to think they are inclusive and not segregated. The school needs to make being a SEN child a normal reality and not something that is different and makes these children not feel included and different

- *It needs a complete overhaul. No support for our children at all. No one cares. Northumberland county council lie and cover things up. Just an absolute disgrace*
- *The lack of a learning space for neurodivergent children due to cost puts them at a huge disadvantage. Our child is autistic and academically able but cannot cope with mainstream school. For children like her there are very few alternatives, those are dependent on obtaining an EHCP. We are trying to do this but if we are unsuccessful then our child's academic future is very uncertain and definitely not supported within the mainstream education system.*
- *It is heavily weighted to the south of the county including all meetings with health professionals.*
- *They do a fantastic job with very stretched resources*
- *There is a huge lack of sen school placements. Mainstream cannot provide the care and education sen children need. Staff need to be trained to the ability to understand children not all children can't deal cope with mainstream and it shows. Mentally and physically in some children. There are more children year to year that needs specialist schools. Placements are very hard to get and children are suffering and so misunderstood. Half of them get the "bad behaviour" name. It's wrong these children are struggling to cope. Local Authorities need to realise that these struggles are real we don't fight for placement for the wrong reasons*
- *My child has apparently been seen y different consultants from the LA however I have never had any feedback on the observational visits or support inferred in school. I do know through a subject access request that the LA challenged the lack of information on the cosa with the Headteacher however I do not know the outcome of this email. This should have been taken into consideration at the panel and parents also asked before and informed of the lack of info on the cosa.*
- *I think It is the luck of the draw , depends on the school as to the sen provision and the SENDco*
- *We are experienced in mainstream, SEN school and Education Other Than At School if you'd like to speak with someone in more detail about our experiences.*
- *There is a huge lack of send support in mainstream schools that are rural and have minimal staff to pupil ratio. My daughter's school has only 3 teachers for Reception through to Year 6. They cannot meet her Sen needs effectively,*
- *DCHS has just made a lot of my children's 'trusted adults' SEN support staff redundant. There is no consistency. They rely heavily on support staff who*

don't know my children or read their pupil passports to understand their needs.

- *Absolutely amazing school, all the staff are fantastic. Life changing for us all!*
- *Takes to long get place into special school*
- *Train all mainstream staff properly and give schools enough money to meet ehcp requirements*
- *It is terrible*
- *The schools need more support, training and knowledge. Our children can and do flourish when in the right environment and society benefits from their super powers but we remain in a system where unless they fit in the 'perfect/normal' box are children are excluded rather than included. This is discrimination and whilst the law is supposed to protect them they are not being protected- the system is failing them.*
- *There needs to be more quality provision in the area and admin needs to be quicker*
- *Parents need to be listened too and teachers need to understand neurodiversity isn't a problem and it isn't going away. These children are highly intelligent but can't survive in old fashioned systems made for neurotypical conforming children. They need to be understood not mislabelled and thrown out*
- *More social groups for anxious asd kids. Mainstream school, no matter what provision, is not suitable for many of our children, please do not go down the route of removing ehcp route and reducing special school provision.*
- *I feel schools need much more funding to keep those that can be, in mainstream. This is much more cost effective than a 50 place setting like Barndale By The Sea being created. Specialist SEN teachers should have small groups of children to enable them to access the curriculum in a functional and meaningful manner. The EHCP process needs streamlined for parents and schools. I appreciate this is tricky as a lot of evidence is required but when appeals and complaints are made - time frames for responses are NOT upheld causing undue stress to everyone involved.*
- *There needs to be more provision NOW for highly functional academic young people with neurodivergence*
- *The lack of support and training in a mainstream setting is very poor, my child required a 1:1 five days a week. The lack of support from these teachers that are at arm length to try and provide the correct support is shocking. My child has struggled in mainstream school for 3 years with the lack of resources and qualified staff. The Sen system is an absolute battle. The fight parents have to go through to get the correct support is all wrong. I've been fighting the system and going head to head with the local authority to get my child a place in a specialist provision school since September, the Months you have to wait for just a response. Life is challenging with a special needs child but getting the correct support is 100% harder. Facing so many obstacles along the way, going through the most difficult and stressful time of my life. The sleepless nights writing statements, reports*

answering questions. Appealing against the Local Authorities, going through Mediation for the council to withhold their decision to find out it's still a No, they believe that my child needs could still be met in mainstream school, but all the professional going into school saying he's in the wrong setting is heartbreaking. Then appealing to go to tribunal to finally getting a date which was not until April 2026, another 10 months for my child to struggle through mainstream school. Luckily, they came to their senses and realised actually he can't go any further in mainstream school and they have allocated him a place due to start in September at a specialist provision school. But what I journey my family has been on to get to this point.