

SCHOOLS: SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN), ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN), ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING (ASN) AND INCLUSION

SURVEY REPORT 2025

Introduction

NASUWT conducted parallel surveys of members about their experiences of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in England, Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Northern Ireland, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales, Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Scotland, and inclusion. The surveys ran through February and March 2025. We received more than 3,300 responses to the surveys.

We have produced four reports that draw together the findings from those surveys. This report focuses on schools and support for learners with SEN, ALN or ASN. It addresses issues related to staffing, generators of workload, and difficulties that schools and settings are experiencing in securing specialist support.

We invited SENCOs, ALNCOs, Principal Teachers (ASN, Support for Learning (SfL)) and school leaders to respond to these questions. We received 591 to this set of questions.

The other three reports focus on:

- SENCOs, ALNCOs and Principal Teachers (ASN/SfL): Co-ordinating special and additional learning needs;
- Class teachers: special and additional learning needs and inclusion; and
- Teachers of special and additional learning needs and behaviour incidents.

The reports:

- summarise the main findings from the surveys;
- outline the voices and lived experiences of teachers; and
- highlight key issues and challenges facing schools.

The reports will inform our work with schools and settings, employers and education authorities and governments to secure changes to SEN, ALN and ASN systems and practices that both meet the needs of learners and protect the rights of teachers and leaders.

A separate *Issues and Actions* document outlines key issues raised in the survey reports and outlines some of the actions NASUWT will take to respond to the issues and challenges that teachers, leaders and schools are facing.

While teachers report they have more learners with SEN, ALN or ASN in their classes and that the needs of those learners have become more complex, there has been a significant decrease in the number of specialist staff employed by schools...

Our survey report, *Class teachers: special and additional learning needs and inclusion*, highlights the increasing pressures on class teachers as a result of having more learners with SEN, ALN or ASN in their classes and those learners having more complex needs – 94% of teachers in mainstream primary and secondary schools said that they had more learners with SEN, ALN, ASN in their class, and 95% of teachers working in mainstream and specialist settings said that the needs of the learners they teach have become more complex. Class teachers also reported that they are receiving less support to meet the needs of the learners they teach compared to five years ago.

We asked SENCOs, ALNCOs, Principal Teachers (ASN/SfL) and senior leaders whether the number of specialist teaching staff, specialist support staff and other support staff employed to support learners with SEN, ALN or ASN had increased, decreased or remained the same over the last five years.

Almost half of respondents said that there had been a decrease in specialist support staff and 'other' support staff (46%), and well over a third of respondents (39%) said that there had been a decrease in specialist teachers. Between a quarter and fifth of respondents said that staffing of specialist support staff (26%) and other support staff (22%) remained the same, while 42% of respondents said that specialist teaching posts had remained the same.

There was a significant difference between the findings for Northern Ireland and those for England, Scotland and Wales. Respondents from Northern Ireland were much more likely to report that there had been increases in staffing over the last five years, and significantly less reported that staffing had decreased. This was particularly true for specialist support staff and other support staff (with 54% of respondents from Northern Ireland reporting an increase for each).

SPECIALIST SUPPORT STAFF	INCREASED?	STAYED THE SAME?	DECREASED?
ALL	27%	26%	46%
ENGLAND	24%	27%	49%
NORTHERN IRELAND	54%	28%	18%
SCOTLAND	20%	13%	67%
WALES	12%	26%	62%

OTHER SUPPORT STAFF	INCREASED?	STAYED THE SAME?	DECREASED?
ALL	32%	22%	46%
ENGLAND	32%	18%	50%
NORTHERN IRELAND	54%	34%	12%
SCOTLAND	15%	23%	62%
WALES	14%	25%	60%

SPECIALIST TEACHERS	INCREASED?	STAYED THE SAME?	DECREASED?
ALL	19%	42%	39%
ENGLAND	17%	42%	41%
NORTHERN IRELAND	31%	45%	23%
SCOTLAND	25%	19%	56%
WALES	14%	43%	43%

Responses to the questions: Over the last five years, has the number of staff employed by the school to support learners with SEND/ALN/ASN increased, stayed the same or decreased?

With the exception of Northern Ireland, where responses were broadly similar across specialist and mainstream settings, respondents working in mainstream primary and secondary schools¹ were more likely to report that there had been a decrease in specialist support staff, specialist teachers and other support staff.

Excluding respondents from Northern Ireland, over half of those working in mainstream primary and secondary schools said that there had been a decrease in specialist support staff (54%) and 'other' support staff (55%), and almost half (45%) said that there had been a decrease in specialist teachers.

RESPONDENTS FROM PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND, WALES AND SCOTLAND ²	INCREASED?	STAYED THE SAME?	DECREASED?
SPECIALIST SUPPORT STAFF	21%	25%	54%
OTHER SUPPORT STAFF	27%	18%	55%
SPECIALIST TEACHERS	14%	41%	45%

¹ Includes middle schools in England.

² Includes middle schools in England.

Support staff posts are particularly vulnerable when budgets are being cut, but there are also difficulties recruiting and retaining support staff...

'It is really difficult to recruit support staff with the right skills. It's a very challenging and poorly paid job.' (SENCO, England)

'Difficult to employ LSAs on such low wages.' (Class teacher, England)

'Support that we had in school has been significantly impacted and reduced by staff shortages and [specialist] support being used for cover.' (SEN teacher, England)

'This is a worryingly increasing problem. Pupils with SEN are more complex and are being placed in mainstream provision. The EA [Education Authority] is completing statements with classroom assistants [to be allocated] etc., but [the] school cannot recruit due to recruitment and retention problems in the sector.' (Class teacher, Northern Ireland)

'Even when a child receives a statement allowing classroom assistant hours, qualified and experienced classroom assistants specifically trained in SEN are impossible to find. Therefore, we have dinner ladies and retail assistants with no prior classroom or childcare experience/training working in our classes to "support" children with complex needs and behaviours. In many cases, it adds pressure as the teacher then also has an inexperienced, unqualified adult to manage in the class as well as the 30 children with diverse needs.'
(Class teacher, Northern Ireland)

There are not enough specialist places, and learners who have been identified as needing a specialist setting remain in mainstream because the specialist setting is full...

'Even once the children have their EHCPs stating they should be in specialist provision, there aren't enough places for them. The system is broken.' (Teacher, England)

Almost three-quarters of respondents report that learners requiring specialist provision remain in their mainstream school because the specialist provision is full. This appears to be particularly acute in Wales and England, with 91% and 73% of respondents respectively reporting this as an issue.

Respondents indicating that the issue applies in their school

LEARNERS WHO REQUIRE A SPECIAL SCHOOL OR SETTING* REMAIN ON THE SCHOOL ROLL BECAUSE THE SPECIALIST SETTING IS FULL				
ALL	E	NI	S	W
71%	73%	54%	47%	91%

*Questions for England and Northern Ireland reference an EHCP and a statement naming a special school or setting.

...and because specialist provision refuses to admit them because of their behaviour

In England, almost half of respondents (43%) said that their mainstream school has learners who have been identified as needing specialist provision but that specialist provision has refused to admit the learner because of their behaviour. A smaller but significant proportion of respondents from Scotland (18%), Wales (14%) and Northern Ireland (13%) reported this to be the case in their school.

Respondents indicating that the issue applies in their school

WE ARE A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL THAT HAS LEARNERS IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING SPECIALIST PROVISION BUT SPECIALIST SETTINGS HAVE REFUSED TO ADMIT THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR				
E	NI	S	W	
43%	13%	18%	14%	

Schools appear to be making greater use of virtual Alternative Provision

We are aware that schools are adopting different strategies to manage the increasing complexity of learners' needs and behaviours. We asked respondents to indicate if their school was teaching learners who had been identified as needing Alternative Provision (AP) virtually and if this was undertaken by school staff or by an external provider. Across the UK, 16% of respondents said that learners identified as needing AP remained on the school roll and were educated virtually by school staff. However, more than a third (35%) of respondents from Scotland reported this to be the case.

Respondents indicating that this was an issue in their school

LEARNERS IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING AP REMAIN ON THE SCHOOL ROLL AND ARE EDUCATED VIRTUALLY BY SCHOOL STAFF					
ALL	E	NI	S	W	
16%	17%	9%	35%	14%	

Almost a quarter of respondents each from England (24%) and Scotland (24%) reported that learners identified as needing AP remain on the school roll and are educated virtually by an external provider

LEARNERS IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING AP REMAIN ON THE SCHOOL ROLL AND ARE EDUCATED VIRTUALLY BY AN EXTERNAL PROVIDER				
E	NI	S	W	
24%	2%	24%	8%	

SEN, ALN and ASN are significant generators of workload...

SEN, ALN and ASN are significant generators of workload. We asked respondents about some particular generators of workload.

Responses to the question: Do any of the following statements about workload apply in your school (tick all that apply)?

WORKLOAD OF TEACHERS AND LEADERS HAS INCREASED AS A RESULT OF PAPERWORK ASSOCIATED WITH HAVING MORE LEARNERS WHO HAVE SEN/ALN/ASN IN CLASSES	93%
THE WORKLOAD OF TEACHERS AND LEADERS HAS INCREASED AS A RESULT OF UNDERFUNDING OF SPECIALIST SERVICES FOR SEN/ALN/ASN	91%
THE NUMBER OF LEARNERS EXPERIENCING SCHOOL-BASED ANXIETY HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALY AND THIS IS CREATING SIGNIFICANT WORKLOAD FOR THE SENCO/ALNCO/ PRINCIPAL TEACHER (ASN/SfL)	85%
CO-ORDINATING MULTIAGENCY MEETINGS CREATES SIGNIFICANT WORKLOAD BURDENS FOR SCHOOL STAFF	73%

An overwhelming 93% of respondents said that the workload of teachers and school leaders has increased as a result of the paperwork associated with having more learners with SEN, ALN or ASN in their classes. Similarly, 91% said that the workload of teachers and leaders in the school has increased as a result of underfunding of specialist services for SEN, ALN or ASN.

More than four-fifths of respondents (85%) said that the workload of the SENCO, ALNCO and Principal Teacher (ASN/SfL) has increased significantly because there had been a substantial increase in learners experiencing school-based anxiety. Further, almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) said that co-ordinating multi-agency meetings creates significant workload for school staff.

Workload pressures arise because schools are taking on roles and tasks that could/should be done by others...

Almost two-thirds of respondents from England (63%) said that school staff are expected to take on the role of key worker, and almost half (45%) said that school staff were expected to write EHC plans for the local authority.

SCHOOL STAFF ARE EXPECTED TO TAKE ON ROLE OF KEY WORKER	63%
SCHOOL STAFF WRITE EHCPS FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	45%

...including roles and tasks previously done by other services

'Workload has increased because we are constantly having to fill the role that previously would have been children services or health, i.e. managing more complex safeguarding, supporting families, delivering specialist input such as SALT or mental health support.'
(SENCO, England)

'Specialists used to come into school to observe each new intake of P1 children and deliver the RISE First Steps programme. Since Covid, this has now somehow become my role – I am not trained in Occupational Therapy, speech and language or SBEW [social behaviour and emotional wellbeing] – I have not got the necessary skills or time!'
(Class teacher, Northern Ireland)

Bureaucratic and burdensome procedures and processes are adding to workload pressures...

Almost half of respondents from Scotland (47%) said that their local authority requires the school to implement ASN procedures that are unnecessarily burdensome and bureaucratic.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY REQUIRES THE SCHOOL TO IMPLEMENT ASN PROCEDURES THAT ARE UNNECESSARILY BURDENSOME AND BUREAUCRATIC **47%**

More than three-quarters of respondents from Wales (79%) said that the workload of school staff has increased as a result of the bureaucracy involved in preparing and maintaining individual development plans (IDPs).

THE WORKLOAD OF SCHOOL STAFF HAS INCREASED BECAUSE OF THE BUREAUCRACY INVOLVED IN PREPARING AND MAINTAINING IDPS **79%**

Across the UK, almost half of respondents (49%) reported that SENCO, ALNCO or Principal Teacher workload had increased significantly because of an increase in applications for access arrangements.

SENCO/ALNCO/PRINCIPAL TEACHER (ASN/SFL) WORKLOAD HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY BECAUSE OF AN INCREASE IN APPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS **49%**

Responses to the question: Do any of the following statements about workload apply in your school (tick all that apply)?

Authorities and specialist services are revising their approach to providing support and are implementing strategies to 'manage' access to assessments and support...

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71%) from England, Northern Ireland and Wales said that their school had experienced problems because the local authority systematically refuses initial applications for assessments or access to support and that the problem had either arisen in the last five years, existed five years ago but has got worse, or existed five years ago and remains the same:

LOCAL AUTHORITY SYSTEMATICALLY REFUSES INITIAL APPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENTS OR ACCESS TO SUPPORT	ALL	E	NI	W
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	71%	34%	37%	27%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE		27%	21%	23%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME		11%	16%	8%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	3%	3%	3%	3%
NOT APPLICABLE	26%	24%	23%	39%

Well over four-fifths of respondents (86%) from England, Wales and Northern Ireland reported that their school has experienced problems because the local authority requires additional information and evidence to be provided in order to manage applications for assessments and services and that the issue has arisen in the last five years, existed five years ago and has either got worse or remains the same.

LA REQUIRES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE IN ORDER TO MANAGE APPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICES	ALL	E	NI	W
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS		36%	48%	40%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	86%	35%	34%	31%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME		15%	7%	9%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	1%	1%	1%	0%
NOT APPLICABLE	13%	12%	10%	20%

Well over half of respondents across the UK (61%) said that specialist services allocate the school a set number of hours of specialist support, irrespective of the number of learners needing support and/or the support set out in EHCPs/statements/ plans. Over three-quarters of respondents from Northern Ireland (76%) reported this to be an issue in their school.

RESPONDENTS INDICATING THAT SPECIALIST SERVICES ALLOCATE THE SCHOOL A SET NUMBER OF HOURS OF SPECIALIST SUPPORT, IRRESPECTIVE OF NUMBERS NEEDING SUPPORT AND/OR SUPPORT SET OUT IN PLANS OR STATEMENTS				
ALL	E	NI	S	W
61%	57%	76%	41%	66%

Respondents provided many examples of the strategies being employed and the difficulties they are facing. For example:

'Speech and Language has an 18-week waiting list just to be seen. [If a student misses an appointment] they sign them off and we have to start again.' (Class teacher, England)

'Local authorities are reducing access to specialist advisors to virtual meetings rather than face to face, unless the child receives high funding. Often it is difficult to then request higher funding because you can't evidence external support as the advisor hasn't set eyes on the child and has only advised over a Teams meeting.' (SENCO, England)

'[The] local authority have introduced a non-statutory process for gaining an EHCP. It seems now that they want you to access this. It costs £1,500 per child.' (SENCO, England)

'[The] LA has put a "tier" of staff from all schools in place as a "panel" to meet monthly and decide who from schools in the area will be put forward for funding out of all the children asked for. If this is legally challenged, it is opening school SENCOs to legal action against them for making [the] decision as to why a child has "less" need than another, especially when the school wouldn't have asked for it in the first place if it isn't needed. It is a mechanism to prevent so many requests for funding and to whittle down the applications further.' (Deputy Head, England)

...thresholds for accessing support are being raised and amended...

'Support services are stretched to the limit, which means that pupils who previously would have met thresholds for intervention and support don't [now].' (SENCO, Northern Ireland)

'External services, [e.g.] health, recommends school seeks Ed Psych support, but our LA does not have EP hours available to buy. This causes friction between school and home. The referral process is constantly changing, with forms being revamped on a monthly basis.' (SENCO, England)

'[The authority's] inclusion support [team] have been instructed to stop working with children who live outside the borough. There is no support for these children, leaving the SENCO to support these children.' (SENCO, England)

It is difficult and sometimes impossible to get support for early intervention...

Respondents from England and Northern Ireland were invited to indicate if their school had experienced problems because the local authority does not fund support for learners who do not have an EHCP or a statement. More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) reported that their school had experienced problems and that these had existed five years ago and got worse (32%), or had arisen in the last five years (27%), or had existed five years ago and remains the same (18%).

THE SCHOOL HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DOES NOT FUND LEARNERS WHO DO NOT HAVE AN EHCP/STATEMENT (ENGLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND ONLY)	
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	27%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	32%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME	18%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	2%
NOT APPLICABLE	21%

Similarly, almost three-quarters of respondents from England, Northern Ireland and Scotland (73%) reported that their school had experienced problems because the local authority did not fund support for early intervention and the issue had arisen in the last five years (28%), or existed five years ago and got worse (31%), or existed five years ago and remains the same (14%).

THE SCHOOL HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DOES NOT FUND SUPPORT FOR EARLY INTERVENTION	
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	28%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	31%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME	14%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	5%
NOT APPLICABLE	22%

Funding is a huge issue...

Survey responses indicate that funding is a huge problem and that decisions about what support is provided are often driven by budgetary factors rather than needs.

In England, many local authorities use funding bands to determine the level of funding and support that learners with particular needs will receive. We have received reports that funding bands are being set at levels that do not cover the actual costs of meeting provision set out in EHCPs. In light of this, we asked SENCOs and leaders to indicate if their school had experienced problems because the local authority had set bands to determine funding for provision, and that funding did not cover the costs of meeting provision set out in the band. Nine in ten respondents (90%) said that there was a problem and that it existed five years ago and has got worse (52%), or the issue had arisen in the last five years (32%), or the issue existed five years ago and remains the same (6%).

THE SCHOOL HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SETS BANDS TO DETERMINE FUNDING FOR PROVISION AND FUNDING DOES NOT COVER THE COSTS OF MEETING THE PROVISION SET OUT IN THE BAND (ENGLAND ONLY)	
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	32%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	52%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME	6%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	2%
NOT APPLICABLE	9%

Respondents across the UK were asked to indicate if their school had experienced problems because the local authority has reduced the number of specialist settings or units in order to manage their high-need budget deficits. More than two-thirds of respondents (70%) reported that their school had experienced such an issue and that the issue had arisen in the last five years (33%), or that it had existed five years ago but had got worse (31%), or that it existed five years ago and remains the same (6%).

THE SCHOOL HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS BECAUSE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY HAS REDUCED THE NUMBER OF PLACES AVAILABLE IN SPECIALIST SETTINGS IN ORDER TO MANAGE HIGH-NEED BUDGET DEFICITS	
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	33%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	31%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME	6%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	2%
NOT APPLICABLE	27%

The cost of expensive independent provision is draining local authority budgets...

We asked respondents from England, Northern Ireland and Wales to indicate if their school had experienced problems because the local authority commissions expensive specialist provision from independent providers because it does not have specialist provision to meet complex needs locally. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents said that this was an issue that had arisen in the last five years, or that it existed five years ago and has got worse (28%), or that it existed five years ago and remains the same (5%).

RESPONDENTS FROM ENGLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND AND WALES INDICATING THAT THEIR LOCAL AUTHORITY COMMISSIONS EXPENSIVE SPECIALIST PROVISION FROM INDEPENDENT PROVIDERS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT HAVE SPECIALIST PROVISION TO MEET COMPLEX NEEDS LOCALLY	
HAS ARISEN IN LAST 5 YEARS	28%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND HAS GOT WORSE	28%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO AND REMAINS THE SAME	5%
EXISTED 5 YEARS AGO BUT IMPROVED	1%
NOT APPLICABLE	37%

Funding cuts and difficulties accessing specialist services mean that teachers are left to manage as best they can but learners' needs are not being met...

'I work with an incredible SENCO who supports me in teaching children with SEN. However, funding to provide resources and support (TA, OT SLT etc.) is non-existent so we have to try to do what we can ourselves.' (Class teacher, England)

'Reduced resources available from the council (but also at school level) mean we are all having to pick up more of the interventions.' (SENCO, England)

'Every agency around us has had cutbacks and everywhere I turn they say no role for us, but I need to keep supporting the young person. Caseload has increased with more children with complex ASN. We are expected to write Health Care Plans for children with medical needs with no medical training.' (Principal Teacher (ASN), Scotland)

'Hardly any SALT support [provided]. If you are lucky, you get one fleeting visit and are then sent stuff to do, but often the report arrives weeks/months later and is no longer appropriate.' (Teacher, England)

'I teach in a social communication SPIM [special provision in mainstream setting] unit. [The children have significant needs but cannot access behaviour support services]. They are referred back to community speech and language services. It is currently a one-year wait when they are referred back, [which brings] frustration and anger. I am an experienced primary teacher but I am not a speech therapist, OT or expert in behaviour. I try to do professional development that helps my teaching, but I cannot replace the other professionals my pupils need.' (Primary teacher, Northern Ireland)

The demands being made of teachers and schools are unrealistic and unsustainable...

'The SEND system is at breaking point. The turnover of SENCOs in my area is high. Specialist staff are leaving and we are losing their expertise. There is a severe lack of support from health and funding to deliver the programmes we need to [deliver]. Mainstream schools cannot keep absorbing more and more without support. It seems as if schools are on the frontline, struggling to cope and trying to do the jobs of other services.' (Teacher, England)

'Adequate time to provide support outlined in EHCP is not given. EHCPs are not updated by the LA, [meaning that] the provision outlined is outdated and not appropriate. The LA is unrealistic about the amount of time that can be dedicated for specific 1-1 interventions. How can 12 pupils receive different "targeted intervention" simultaneously with two members of staff in the room?' (SEN teacher, England)

National reforms and their impacts...

We asked respondents from England and Wales about some specific issues linked to policy reforms or anticipated policy reforms.

In Wales, teacher workload has increased because learners who would previously have been identified as having SEN are not being identified as having ALN...

More than four-fifths of respondents (82%) from Wales said that the workload of teachers in the school has increased as a result of having more learners who are NOT identified as having ALN but who would previously have been identified as having SEN.

THE WORKLOAD OF TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOL HAS INCREASED AS A RESULT OF HAVING MORE LEARNERS WHO ARE NOT IDENTIFIED AS HAVING ALN BUT WHO WOULD PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SEN ³	82%
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In England, local authorities are setting out what mainstream schools should be providing for learners, but many authorities are not consulting SENCOs or schools when determining such provision...

In England, there has been a focus on clarifying what mainstream schools should be providing for learners who have SEND and some authorities have produced guidance for their schools on 'ordinarily available provision' in mainstream. While this policy formed part of the previous government's planned SEND reforms, it links to wider expectations about inclusion in mainstream, meaning that it is likely to form part of the current government's SEND reforms. We asked respondents from England some questions about their authority's approach to determining what provision should be ordinarily available in all mainstream schools:

Half of respondents (50%) said their authority sets out clearly and transparently what all mainstream schools should be doing to meet the needs of learners who have SEND. However, less than half (43%) said that the local authority had consulted SENCOs as part of work to set out what provision should be ordinarily available in mainstream schools, and only a third (33%) said that the local authority has consulted schools as part of work to set out what provision should be ordinarily available in all mainstream schools.

³ Option only available to respondents completing the Wales survey.

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: PLEASE INDICATE IF YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY ⁴	YES
SETS OUT CLEARLY AND TRANSPARENTLY WHAT ALL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS SHOULD BE DOING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS WHO HAVE SEN AND DISABILITIES	50%
CONSULTED SENCOs AS PART OF WORK TO SET OUT WHAT PROVISION SHOULD BE ORDINARILY AVAILABLE IN ALL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS	43%
CONSULTED SCHOOLS RE PROVISION THAT SHOULD BE ORDINARILY AVAILABLE IN ALL MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS	33%

...and less than half of authorities in England have an early intervention strategy and less than a third are investing in services to support early intervention and prevention...

Early intervention and investing in services and support for learners who have SEND are identified as key to avoiding SEND support needs from escalating. We asked respondents from England to indicate if their local authority has an early intervention strategy to support learners who have SEND and if the authority is investing in the services and support it provides for early intervention and prevention. Less than half of respondents (42%) said that their authority has an early intervention strategy to provide support to learners with SEND, and less than a third (32%) said that their authority is investing in the services and support it provides for early intervention and prevention.

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: PLEASE INDICATE IF YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY ⁵	YES
HAS AN EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO LEARNERS WHO HAVE SEN AND DISABILITIES	42%
IS INVESTING IN DEVELOPING THE SERVICES AND SUPPORT IT PROVIDES FOR EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION	32%

⁴ Options only asked on respondents completing the England survey.

⁵ Options only asked on respondents completing the England survey.