

**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**



# **Sensory Support Service Analysis of Public Survey Responses**

**June – November 2018**



## Background & Methodology

Since 1996 the former Avon local authorities - Bath & North-East Somerset (BANES), Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire have jointly commissioned a Sensory Support Service (SSS). This service has traditionally provided support to children with dual sensory impairment, hearing impairment and visual impairment from 0 to 19 to support their educational development. The service is provided by Bristol with the three other authorities contributing to the overall cost of £1.6m according to a formula agreed at the time of the original contract.

In November 2017 the commissioning authorities agreed to develop a new and revised service model. The service will continue to support those children and young people with the highest levels of need who have Education Health and Care Plans and support the early identification, assessment and provision at lower levels of need for children and young people up to the age of 25. A full and detailed plan for the new service and how it will work will be developed by December 2018. This plan will then be subject to a full formal consultation process for three months to gain the views of all stakeholders. The target date for the new service to begin is 1st January 2020.

It is very important that everyone involved had the opportunity to influence the development of the new service therefore a survey was launched which ran initially from the 4th June to 31st July. The views of children and young people, carers and parents and professionals and organisations were sought in two ways.

- Three electronic surveys were available – one tailored to the needs of children and young people, one aimed at carers and parents, and one for professionals and organisations.
- Consultation meetings took place in each of the four local authority areas – one in the day-time and one in the evening. These meetings were for carers and parents, professionals and organisations.

The results of the online survey are summarised in this document. Please note that to capture the widest range of views, many more 'free text' responses were permitted than usually seen in these surveys, to allow people to express themselves fully. The Joint Operations Group which has guided and supported this review has had regard to the full list of responses including all free-text comments. However, for the purposes of clarity and analysis, this document attempts to summarise the key areas noted in responses wherever possible. In some cases, questions were answered by very small numbers of respondents, and care has been taken to assure that they cannot be identified.

Names have been redacted in all cases for privacy reasons, though respondents can be assured that Commissioners and Service Managers will be aware of the many positive and constructive comments made about the people who support their children and young people.

## **Guide to acronyms within the document**

<b>BSL</b>	<b>British Sign Language</b>
<b>CYP</b>	<b>Children and young people</b>
<b>DLA</b>	<b>Disability Living Allowance</b>
<b>EHCP</b>	<b>Education Health Care Plan</b>
<b>EY</b>	<b>Early Years</b>
<b>ILP</b>	<b>Individual Learning Plan</b>
<b>SSS</b>	<b>Sensory Support Service</b>
<b>TOD</b>	<b>Teacher of Deaf</b>
<b>TOVI</b>	<b>Teacher of Visual Impairment</b>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Visual Impairment</b>
<b>HI</b>	<b>Hearing Impairment</b>
<b>QTVI</b>	<b>Qualified Teacher Visual Impairment</b>
<b>QTHI</b>	<b>Qualified Teacher Hearing Impairment</b>
<b>SEND</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs and Disability</b>
<b>SENCO</b>	<b>Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator</b>
<b>SI</b>	<b>Sensory Impaired</b>
<b>OT</b>	<b>Occupational Therapy</b>
<b>S&amp;LT</b>	<b>Speech and Language Therapist</b>
<b>SVI</b>	<b>Severe Visual Impairment</b>
<b>CVI</b>	<b>Cortical Visual Impairment</b>
<b>BCC</b>	<b>Bristol City Council</b>
<b>NSC</b>	<b>North Somerset Council</b>
<b>BANES</b>	<b>Bath and North East Somerset Council</b>
<b>SGLOS</b>	<b>South Gloucestershire Council</b>

## **Part 1 - Professionals, organisations and services response**

90 individual responses to the consultation were received, given the nature of the free-text questions posed in the survey, the number of responses recorded for such questions may not match with this number.

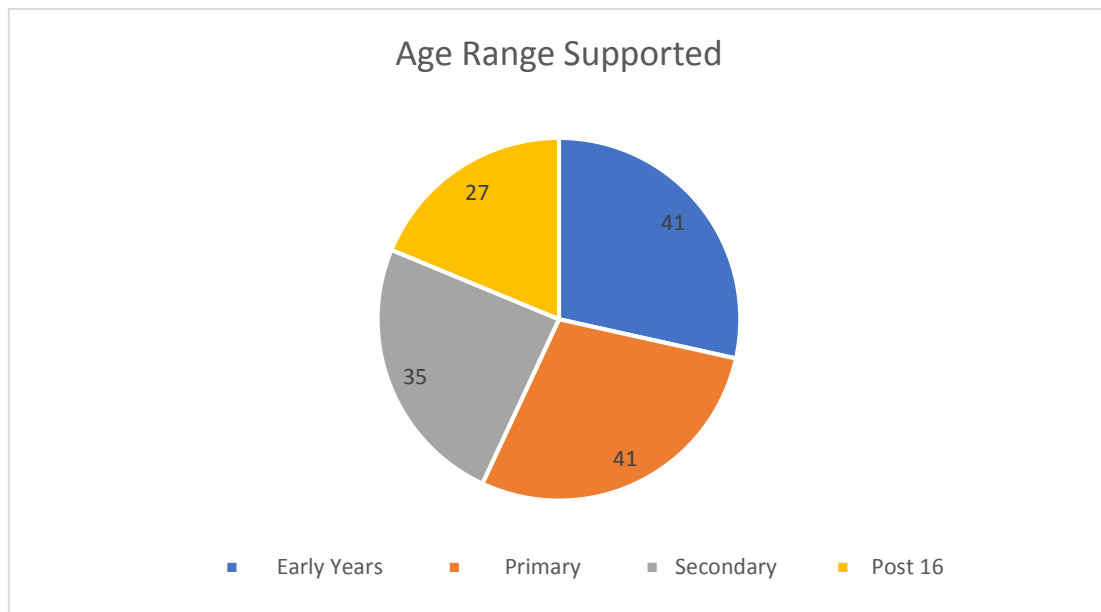
### **Question 1: Please tell us what is your profession and which service/organisation you currently work for?**

- Member of school staff such as a Head, Teacher or SENCO - 39
- Early Years representative - 6
- Sensory Support Service – 20
- Health representative – 9
- Others such as support organisations, and social care – 3

### **Question 2: What is the age range of children/young people you work with?**

Respondents may choose to select more than one age range for this question.

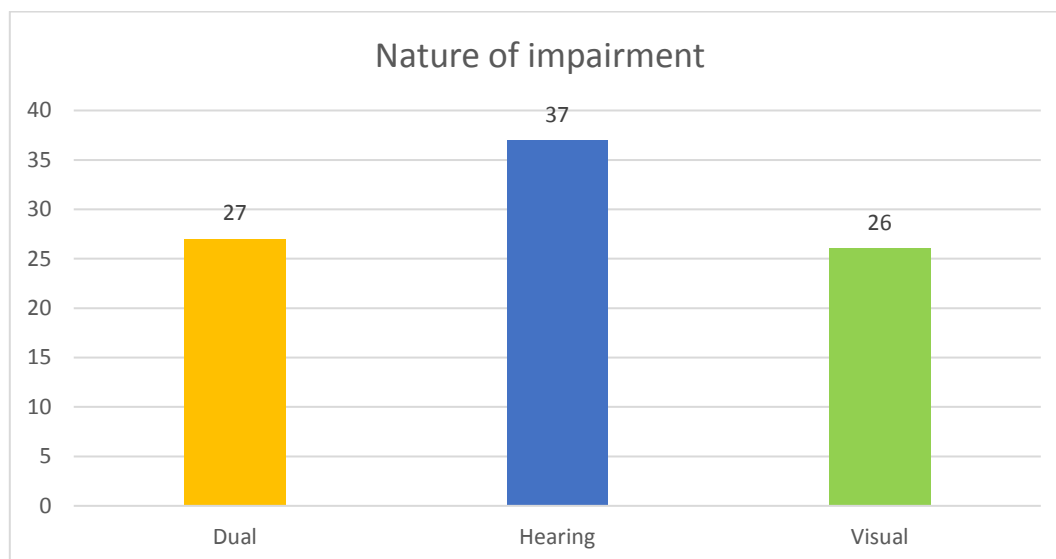
- Early Years - 41
- Primary – 41
- Secondary – 35
- Post 16 – 27



**Question 3 Please select from the list below the impairment experienced by the children/young people you work with?**

Respondents could choose to select more than impairment for this question.

- Dual impairment - 27
- Hearing impairment - 37
- Visual impairment – 26



**Question 4 What is your day to day role in supporting / working with children and young people with a sensory impairment?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 19 respondents were involved with providing support, advice or resources for children with sensory impairments or their families, including contributing to their EHC plans
- 12 respondents were involved in the assessment, provision and support for children using IT, aids or technology
- 12 respondents were involved in strategic leadership or planning of services and support
- 18 respondents were teachers for either all or part of the time, or provided support in the classroom
- 13 respondents provided advice, support or training for staff or colleagues
- 12 respondents were the SENCO in their school or setting
- 8 respondents working in nursery, play or Early Years settings
- 7 respondents worked in the health service or related areas
- 5 respondents provided Habilitation or Rehabilitation
- 3 respondents were involved in teaching Braille
- 7 respondents described their primary role as delivering assessment

A range of other responses were received in smaller numbers which included delivery of environmental audits, psychology, provision of registration services, work with adults with sensory impairments.

**Question 5 What has been the nature of your contact with the Sensory Support Service?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 12 respondents worked for the service
- 28 respondents had contact with the service via visits to their school or setting
- 8 respondents had contact with the service via EHCP meetings, planning meetings or annual reviews
- 3 respondents had contact with the service via visits to Early Years settings or nurseries
- 4 respondents had contact via training which had been provided by the service
- 4 respondents contacted the service to make or receive referrals

Other responses included contact on new diagnosis, through family support work or when planning transition to adult services.

**Question 6 If you work in a pre-school, nursery or school setting what support has / does the Sensory Support Service provide?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 8 respondents mentioned the provision of advice, guidance and liaison between the service and the setting
- 21 respondents noted the importance of 1:1 work with children and their families provided via the setting
- 6 respondents noted the provision of risk assessments, advice on reasonable adjustments and accessibility
- 6 respondents noted the provision of support around ICT, aids and technology
- 14 respondents noted the provision of training for setting staff received from the service
- 15 respondents noted the services' contribution to EHCPs, annual reviews, sensory profiles and other assessments

Other provision noted included environmental audit, transition planning and advocacy.

**Question 7 If you work in a health setting, what support has / does the Sensory Support Service provide?**

A small number of responses was received to this free-text question. The primary areas of provision noted were support on new or early diagnosis of impairment, advice on the impact impairment may have on learning, and support in understanding the learning environment.

**Question 8 If you work in a social care setting, what support has / does the Sensory support service provide?**

A small number of responses was received to this free-text question. The primary areas of provision noted joint working with social care staff, provision of pre-school support and assessment and ongoing teach in schools and settings.

**Question 9 What are the strengths of the Sensory Support Services in terms of the support you / your setting has received?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 9 respondents valued the flexibility and responsiveness of the service
- 30 respondents commented on the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience of the staff working for the service
- 12 respondents valued the training and advice offered by the service
- 7 respondents mentioned the consistency and ongoing or regular nature of the support as a strength
- 6 respondents remarked that the service was particularly supportive of staff and families

Other responses included the high quality of input into EHCPs and annual reports.

**Question 10 What are the challenges / weaknesses of the support you / your setting has received from the Sensory Support Service?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 15 respondents were concerned that resources available meant the service was not as responsive or available as needed
- 4 respondents felt that thresholds had been raised and criteria for receiving a service were not clear
- 4 respondents felt that the service offer was not clear, or did not understand what support was available
- 4 respondents were unhappy that the service relied increasingly on telephone contact rather than face-to-face meetings
- 3 respondents were concerned that the service sometimes did not recognise the complexity of delivering teaching in mainstream environments
- 3 respondents felt that the growing number of academies and associated funding changes were impacting the service

Other responses included noting the reduced service available due to the lack of a mobility officer, and an increased reliance on part-time staffing.

**Question 11 In terms of the new service what for you/your setting are the five key elements the new service must include.**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 29 respondents felt that continued regular visits to schools including 1:1 support and assessment must be included
- 16 respondents felt that ongoing liaison and support for parents and families was critical to the new service
- 10 respondents wished to see improved availability of QTVI and ToD in the new service
- 24 respondents felt that provision of training to schools and settings was a key role for the new service

- 13 respondents wanted to see clarity of thresholds, pathways and means of accessing the service improved
- 12 respondents felt that consistency of support, potentially via a named professional link for each school or child was needed in the new service
- 4 respondents wished to see the new service provide more support for rare conditions or low-incidence impairments
- 4 respondents mentioned a need to share good practice more widely
- 7 respondents felt that the new service needed to work more effectively with NHS services
- 10 respondents felt that consistent, high quality contributions to EHCPs was a priority area for the new service
- 5 respondents wished to see improved resources for Braille teaching
- 14 respondents wished to see an improved awareness of new technology, research of medical developments in the service.

Other areas noted included a wish to see no further changes or reductions, equity of funding across all local authority areas, increased budgets for equipment and provision of support groups across all areas.

**Question 12 Please use this space to add anything which you wish to say which has not been covered above.**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included an overwhelmingly positive range of comments. The responses below are broadly representative of these:

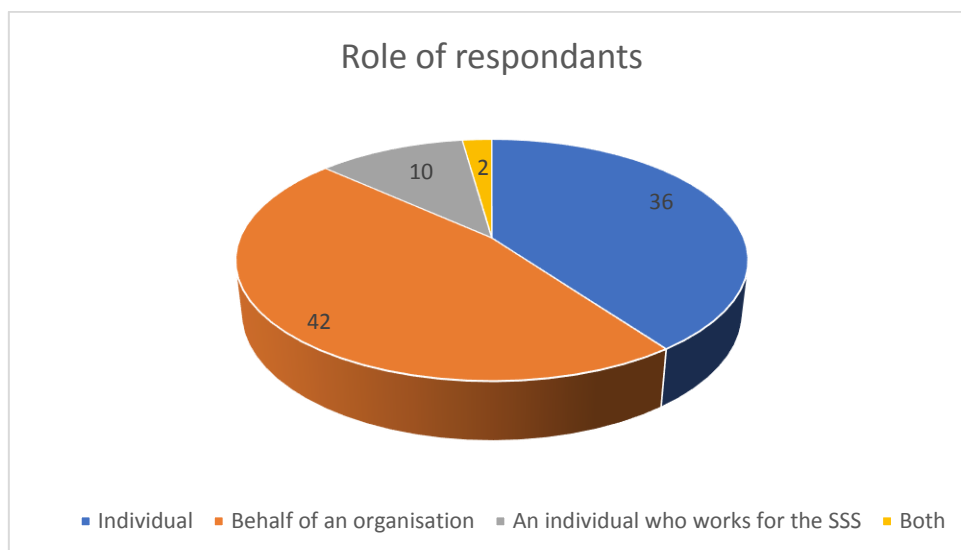
- *“The provision of this service is essential, and it must be appropriately resourced. Without this, hearing aids will not be used as much, families will struggle more, speech and language development will be delayed [...] it's worth the investment”*
- *“Thank you for all the work of hard of the Sensory Support Teachers to date”*
- *“An invaluable service”*
- *“We need to continue to receive support from the Sensory Support Team - without them we are going to be unable to provide the right support for our students with a visual impairment”*
- *“SSS have a crucial role in supporting children and their families with a sensory impairment. They are a huge support to me in my role as a speech and language therapist for children with a HI and I really value all they do”*
- *“The SSS provides an excellent service of which Bristol and surrounding areas should be proud”*
- *“Without the support of SSS, it would be hugely challenging for us to find appropriate information and be able to support our young people with hearing and visual impairments appropriately”*
- *“There is currently a lack of clarity about the provision of out of school support for 0-14 years and information about how such support can be accessed”*
- *“The strength of the SSS has been that we have supported many of the families since pre-school, this has enabled us as a Service to build trusting relationships with both the families and the pupils. We have built up a good understanding of their needs and how to best to support them both educationally and socially as they develop into confident independent young people”*



- *“the children for whom Sensory Support Service make the most difference in terms of outcomes are not necessarily those with EHC Plans - their needs are largely met. a small amount of timely intervention for children with even mild hearing loss can be a life changer”*
- *“Concerned Parents need to know they have the support of professionals who really understand their child's specific needs and how to access further help and support as they need it”*
- *“Early years groups can only function effectively when covering a larger geographical area”*
- *“A high level of support for pupils in schools who are blind enables children to be educated in their local communities and reduces expensive out of area placements”*
- *“The support and service are essential to the inclusion of VI/HI students. It is essential that this service continues”*
- *“There is a growing number of CYP with Cerebral Vision Impairment with good visual acuities and if these CYP are to be assessed and supported then there will need to be an increase in staffing to cover this increasing demand”*
- *“Especially impressive was a prompt response (in days) to an urgent request: visit and report within 5 days of referral”*
- *“In my experience sensory support sometimes provide long lists of recommendations which I feel are too much for families to follow. It would be more helpful to work with other professionals to coordinate recommendations and choose key things for families to focus on.”*
- *“Acorns group for pre-school deaf children is an invaluable support to parents/ carers and provides a peer group for deaf children”*

**Question 13 Please tell us if you have responded as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or service?**

- Individual – 36
- On behalf of an organisation – 42
- An individual who works for the Sensory Support Service – 10
- Both individual and service - 2

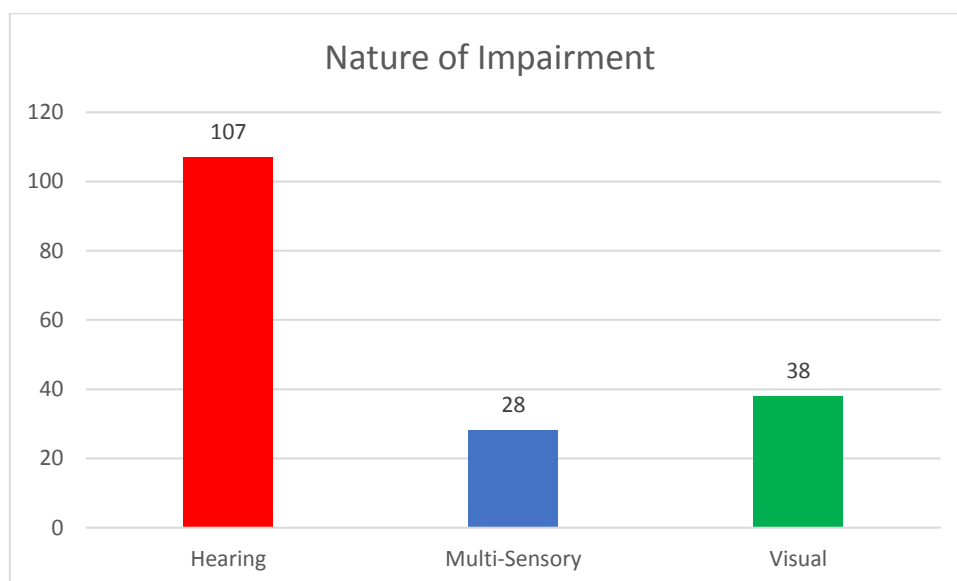


## **Part 2 - Parents' Responses**

90 individual responses were received via on-line questionnaire. Parents could tick more than one box in several questions to account for more than one child in their family.

### **Question 1 - What type of impairment does the young person have?**

Hearing – 107  
Multi-Sensory – 28  
Visual – 38



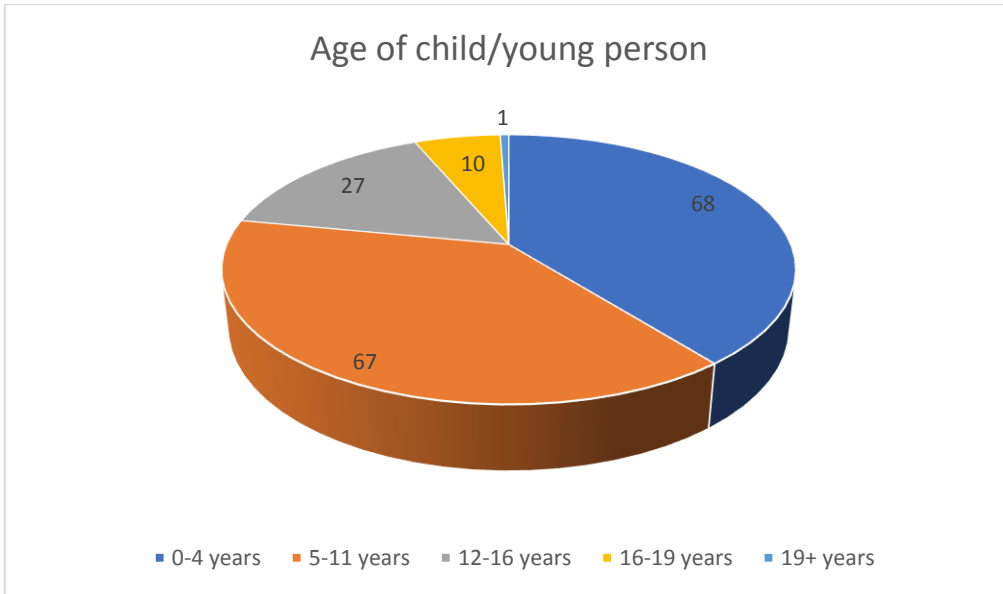
Question 1 also included a free-text box for parents to record any other specific impairments or multiple impairments. These included:

- 3 parents responded with ASD/ASC or Autism
- 2 parents responded with Cerebral Palsy
- 6 parents responded that their child had a learning difficulty

A range of other responses included bi lateral cochlear implants, epilepsy and chromosome deletion.

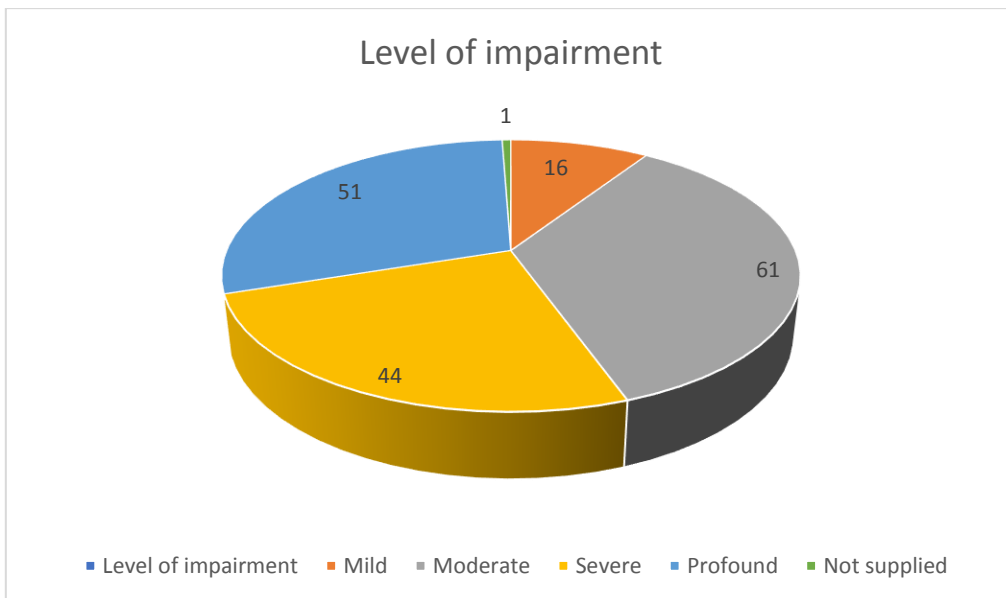
### **Question 2 How old are they?**

- 0-4 years - 68
- 5-11 years - 67
- 12-16 years - 27
- 16-19 years – 10
- 19+ years - 1



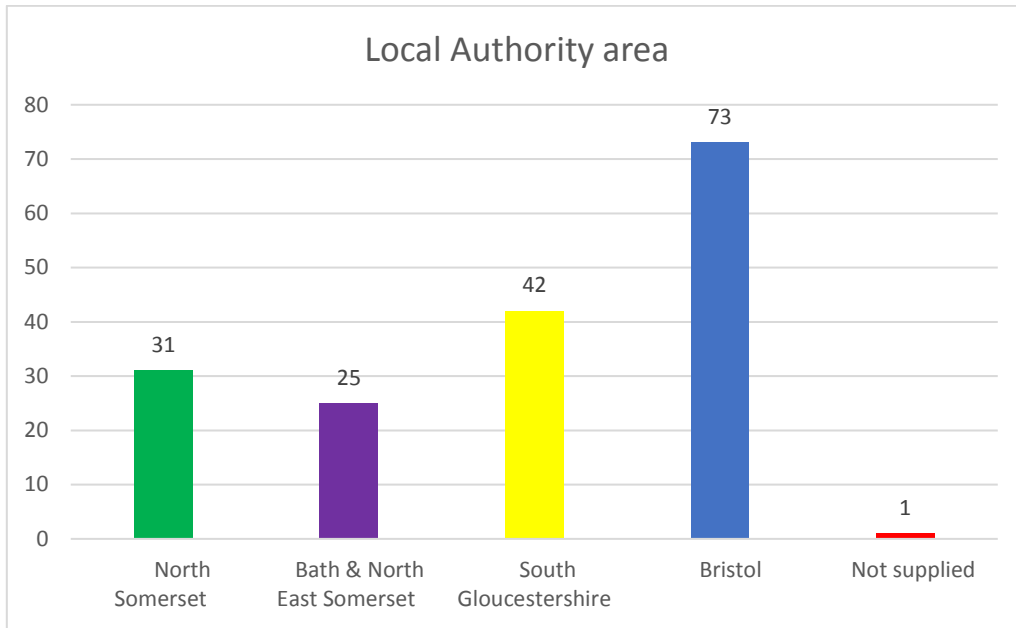
**Question 3 - What is the level of their impairment?**

- Mild - 16
- Moderate - 61
- Severe - 44
- Profound - 51
- No answer supplied – 1



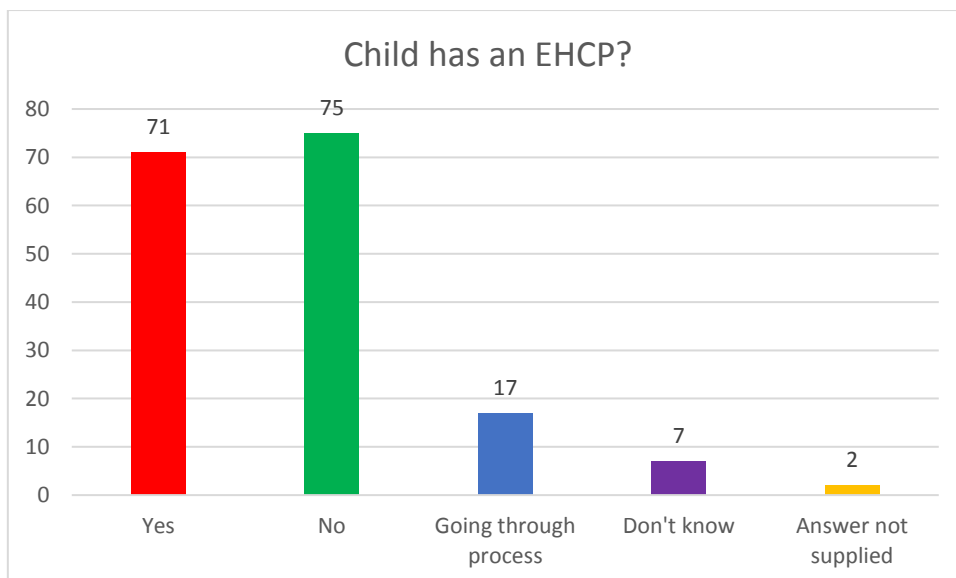
**Question 4 - In which Local Authority do they normally live?**

- North Somerset - 31
- Bath & North East Somerset - 25
- South Gloucestershire - 42
- Bristol – 73
- Not supplied – 1



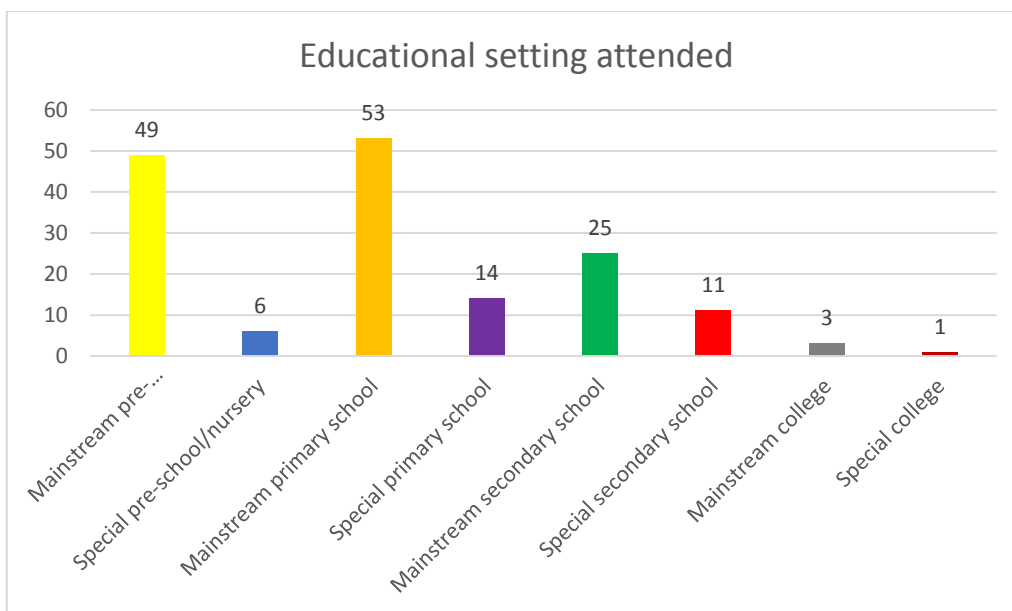
**Question 5 - Does the young person have an Education Health and Care Plan (formerly known as a Statement of Special Educational Needs)?**

- Yes 71
- No 75
- Going through process 17
- Don't know 7
- Answer not supplied 2



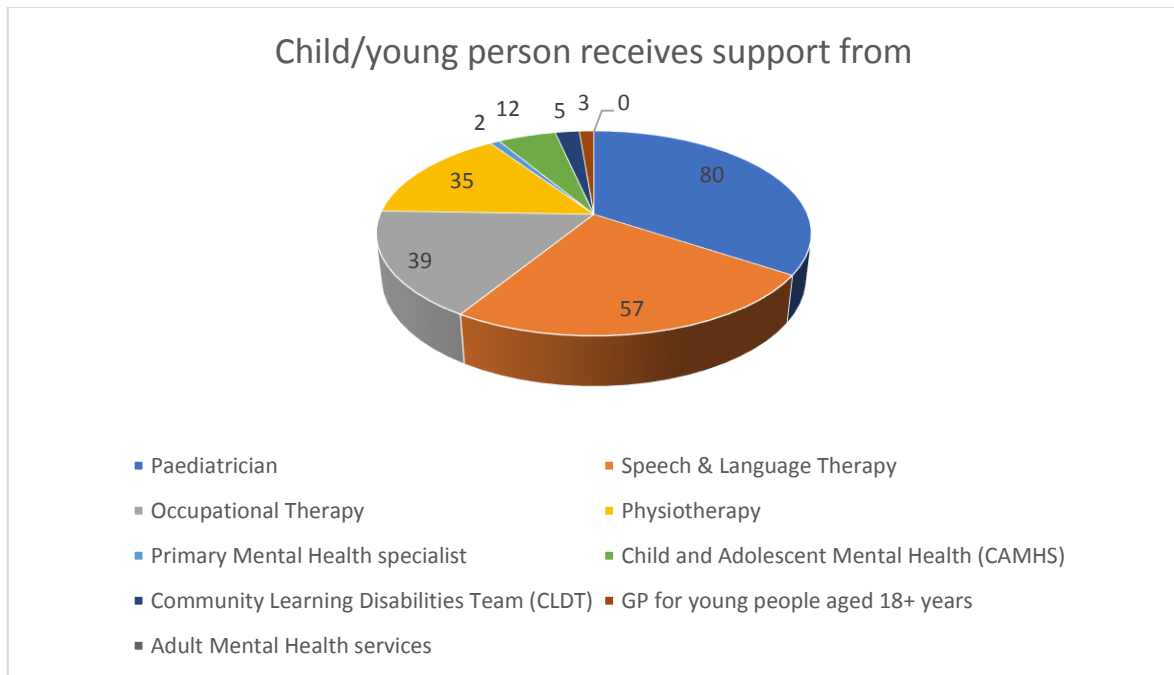
**Question 6 - Which type of educational setting does the young person attend?**

- Mainstream pre-school/nursery 49
- Special pre-school/nursery 6
- Mainstream primary school 53
- Special primary school 14
- Mainstream secondary school 25
- Special secondary school 11
- Mainstream college 3
- Special college 1



**Question 7 - Does the young person receive direct support from**

- Paediatrician 80
- Speech & Language Therapy 57
- Occupational Therapy 39
- Physiotherapy 35
- Primary Mental Health specialist 2
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) 12
- Community Learning Disabilities Team (CLDT) 5
- GP for young people aged 18+ years 3
- Adult Mental Health services 0

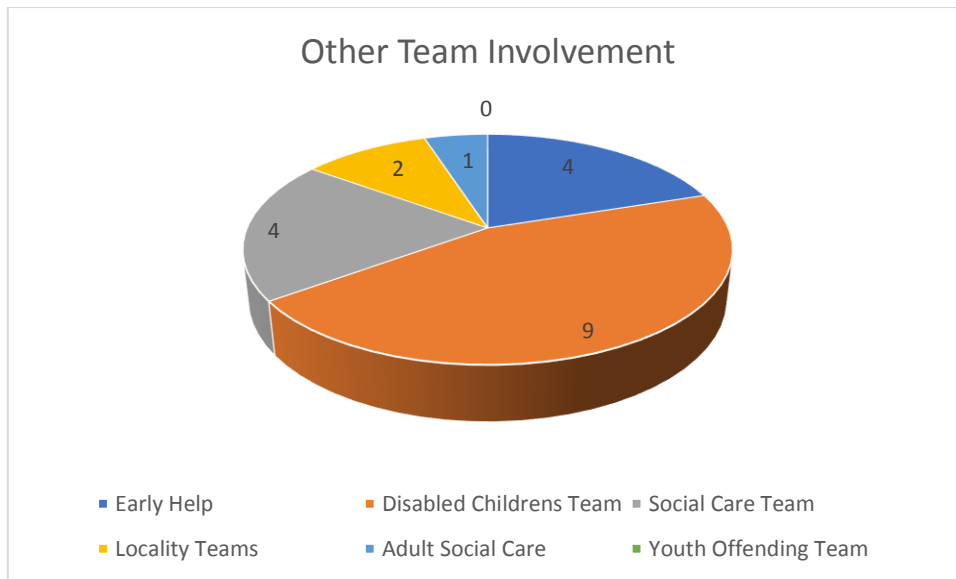


Question 7 also included a free-text box for parents to record any other specific services or professionals involved in their child’s care or provision. These included:

- Neurology 6
- Audiology 9
- Hospital/Health services 16
- Speech and Language 6
- Optometrist 1
- Psychologist 1
- Epilepsy Nurse 1
- Teacher of Deaf 7
- Sensory Support Service 4
- Guide dogs/mobility service 1

**Question 8 - Does the young person receive direct support from local authority Social Care services, if so which?**

- Early Help 4
- Disabled Children’s Team 9
- Social Care Team 4
- Locality Teams 2
- Adult Social Care 1
- Youth Offending Team 0



6 parents reported no other involvement, or that they were in a process of attempting to engage with other services or support.

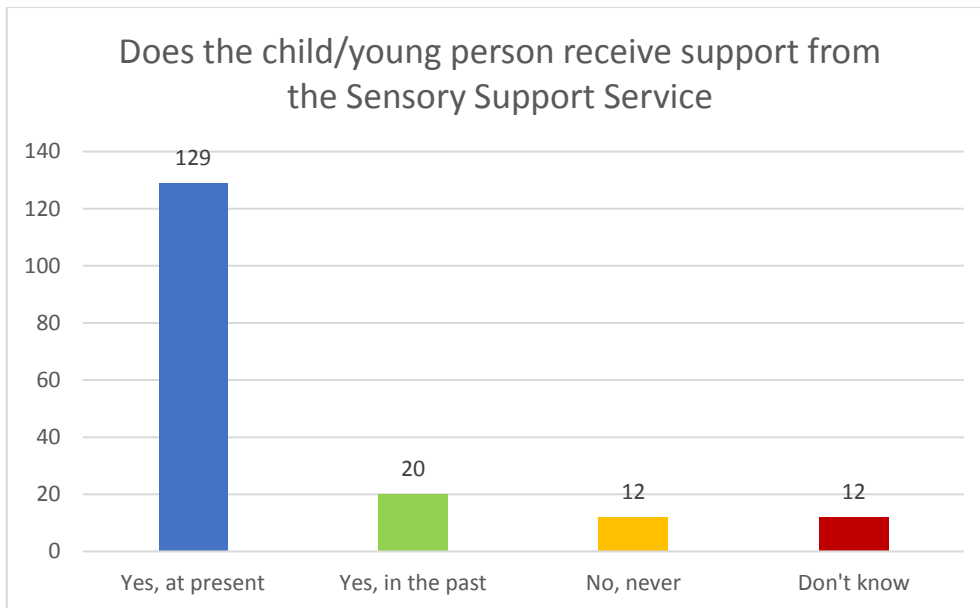
**Question 9 - Does the young person receive direct support from other local authority education services?**

- Educational Psychology 10
- Autism Team 7
- Learning Improvement Service 0
- Behaviour Improvement Service 1
- Hospital Education Service 1
- Alternative Learning Hub 0
- Hope Virtual School 2

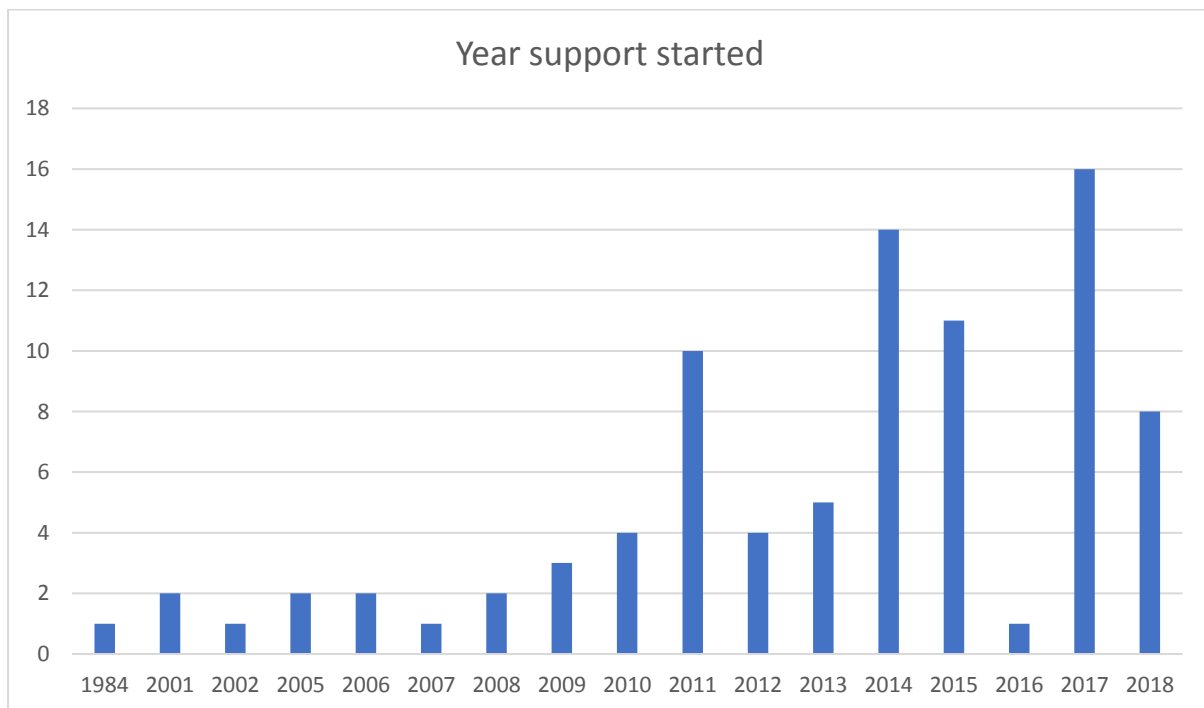
Other LA or Education services mentioned by parents included Portage and Hearing Impairment Resource Bases.

**Question 10 - Does the young person receive support from the Sensory Support Service?**

- Yes, at present 129
- Yes, in the past 20
- No, never 12
- Don't know 12



Parents were also asked when they first engaged with the Sensory Support Service. Responses are shown below:



**Question 11 - The Sensory Support Service provides different types of support to different children and young people. Can you tell us if you receive the following support?**

**11A) Training, advice and recommendations to educational settings to ensure Children and young people access the curriculum.**

- Yes 129
- No 26
- Don't know 12
- No answer supplied 6



**11B) Direct teaching of specialist skills and development of programmes of work within the specialist curriculum - communication, literacy through large print, Braille or Moon, using technology for access, social skills, independence, etc. Liaising with all involved to promote these skills.**

- Yes 53
- No 84
- Don't know 24
- No answer supplied 12

**11C) Technical and audiology support, such as hearing aids, assessment and fitting of radio aids, checking if equipment is providing the correct amplification in the setting, brailnotes, brailers and visualisers, etc.**

- Yes 111
- No 50
- Don't know 4
- No answer supplied 8

**11D) Specialist assessments: Information technology, literacy, language, etc.**

- Yes 71
- No 63
- Don't know 28
- No answer supplied 11

**11E) Contribution to statutory assessments, EHCPs, annual reviews or providing evidence for funding purposes.**

- Yes 106
- No 35
- Don't know 22
- No answer supplied 10

**11F) Developing children and young people's independence and understanding of their condition.**

- Yes 76
- No 64
- Don't know 22
- No answer supplied 11

**11G) Supporting transition between key stages and into Further or Higher Education.**

- Yes 57
- No 59
- Don't know 39
- No answer supplied 18

**11H) Carrying out Environmental Audits in educational settings.**

- Yes 87
- No 42
- Don't know 34
- No answer supplied 10

**11I) Multi-agency working and liaison, collaborative working with other professionals and including joint assessments.**

- Yes 80
- No 51
- Don't know 30
- No answer supplied 12

**11J) Initial assessment of sensory needs carried out by qualified specialist teacher, including language assessments, listening assessments, functional vision assessments, including impact on development.**

- Yes 126
- No 24
- Don't know 14
- No answer supplied 9

**11K) Provide home visits to support parents in promoting their child's development - concept development, alternative means of communication, technology and aids, independence, safety, signposting to other services when required.**

- Yes 98
- No 57
- Don't know 7
- No answer supplied 11

**11L) Liaising with parents interpreting medical information, assessment findings, updating on progress, and occasional home visits when in school to promote learning of child at home.**

- Yes 90
- No 62
- Don't know 11
- No answer supplied 10

**11M) Teaching of specialist skills and development of programmes of work within the specialist curriculum - communication, literacy through large print, technology (using technology for access), social skills, independence, etc.**

- Yes 57
- No 76
- Don't know 24
- No answer supplied 16

**11N) Providing opportunities for family learning: ACORNS and Explorers.**

- Yes 79
- No 67

- Don't know 17
- No answer supplied 10

**11O) Providing ear moulds for very young deaf babies.**

- Yes 49
- No 88
- Don't know 21
- No answer supplied 15

**11P) BSL teaching to families of early years children, provision of Deaf Children at home curriculum.**

- Yes 41
- No 104
- Don't know 15
- No answer supplied 13

**Question 12 - Where you have told us you received one or more of the services above, could you please tell us what has worked well for you and your child, and what could be improved?**

217 positive comments were received about the service and included:

- 11 parents commented on the support, advice and information the Sensory Service has offered them.
- 40 parents commented on Teachers of the Deaf and QTVIs, often giving very specific praise to individual members of staff
- 32 parents commented positively about support received at Acorns and other early years support
- 42 parents commented positively about the service visits to schools, liaising with school and early years settings and providing specialised training to staff and helping at point of transition.
- 2 parents commented positively about support around early identification of impairment
- 13 parents spoke positively about how the service assisted with technology – helping with aids, maintaining equipment and making adjustments.
- 9 parents commented on the quality of teaching of BSL
- 20 parents responded positively about their experience of home visits.
- 20 parents responded positively about the assistance they had received with Annual reviews, assessments, medical and funding forms and input into EHCP's from the service.
- 6 parents responded positively about peer to peer support they had received.

35 parents responded negatively to the service:

- 1 parent response was that there was poor practice by service
- 5 parents responded that the time spent with children and parents was not adequate.
- 1 parent responded that the annual report was out of date and not helpful.
- 10 parents responded that Teachers of the Deaf and QTVI visited schools but that there was no time to talk to parents. Parents were not informed of when these visits to school or settings would take place, and communication was poor.
- 2 parents responded to say that the support '*stopped too early*'

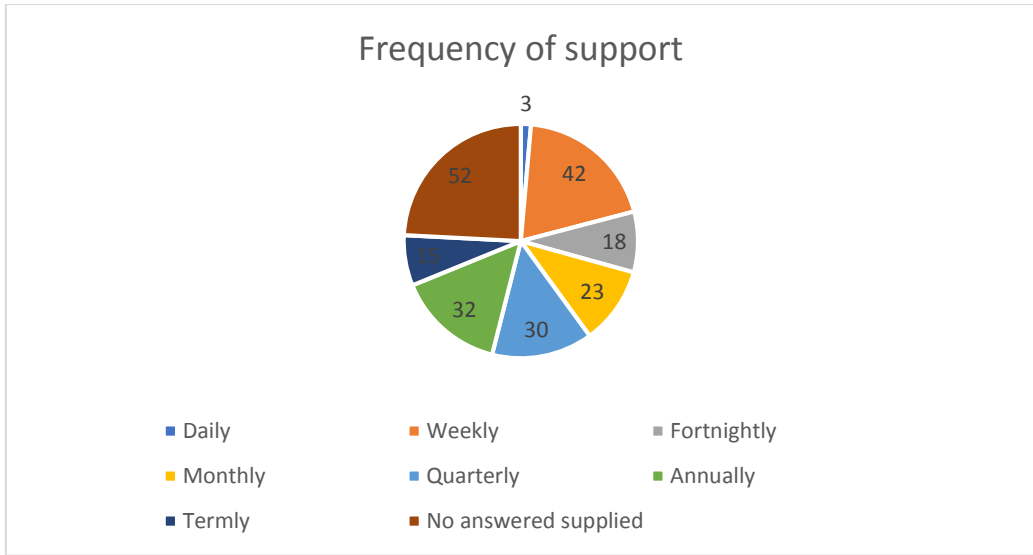
- 1 parent responded that Audiology contact was infrequent and response to issues was slow but recognised that this was due to a lack of personnel and resources.
- 1 parent responded that the service should ensure consistent support across all local authorities
- 6 parents responded that the service should be all year round rather than term time only
- 6 parents responded that the service had a high turnover of staff, that staff were not consistent and that this impacted on their child
- 1 parent responded that Acorns was not put on at a convenient day/time for them
- 2 parents responded that there was no support to access radio aids
- 1 parents response was the service was '*appalling*' but gave no specific information

Other comments from parents including suggestions of improvements:

- Videos could be used to share and educate on deaf awareness.
- More staff training within schools and early years to keep staff deaf aware
- More support around transfer from EY to school and primary to secondary
- Service should do more environmental assessments and recommendations.
- More assistance should be provided to teenagers as this is a difficult time
- Services should be more focused on tangible educational and social achievement
- There should be more than one Mobility officer for the whole service
- 2 parents wanted increased access to radio aids for children in early years
- More Braille learning and support for schools.
- A single point of contact for all support activities
- Earlier identification needed
- Better use of technology for staff at Sensory Support Service such as iPads to do assessments, with paperwork available online.

### **Question 13 - How frequent is/was the support?**

Daily	3
Weekly	30
Fortnightly	16
Monthly	19
Quarterly	28
Annually	26
No answered supplied	51

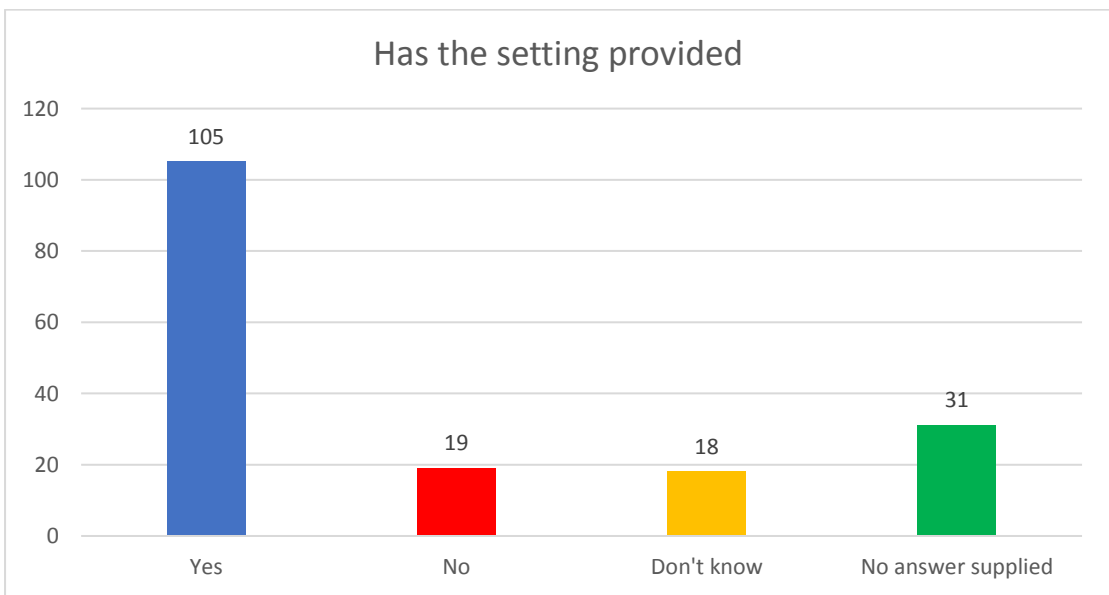


Parents could also provide free-text comments on frequency of support:

- Most parents receiving weekly support noted that this was due to accessing Acorns.
- Parents noted that the frequency of support changed depending on the situation of the child, with parents of younger children noting that they received more visits.
- When the child went to school the support changed to termly and once settled it reduced again.
- 2 parents felt that they could have support when required or requested.

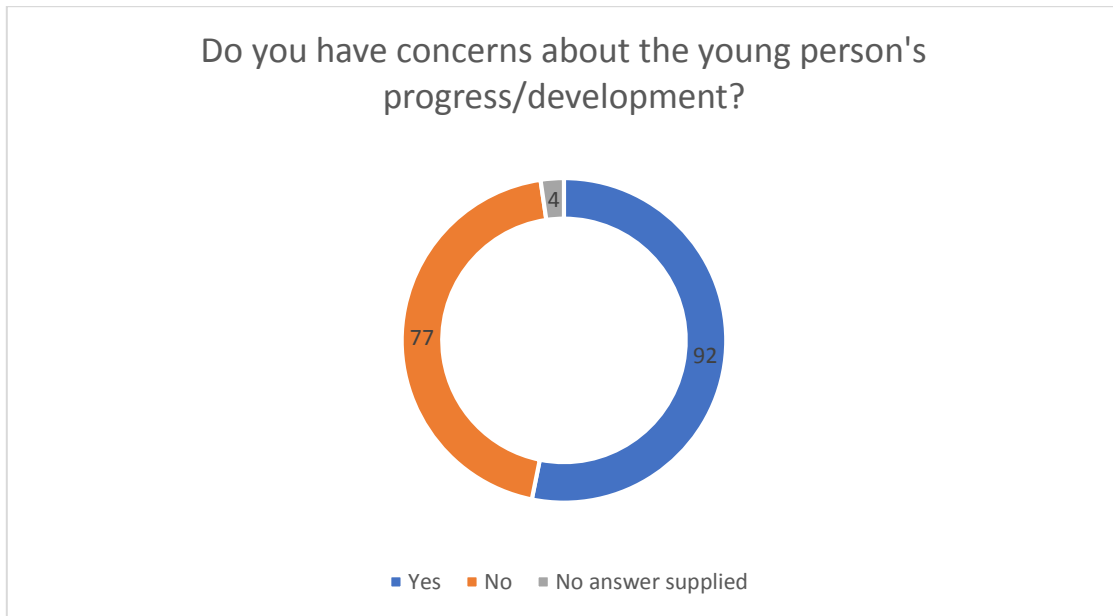
**Question 14 - If the young person attends a mainstream preschool, school or college, has the setting provided support for his / her additional needs?**

- Yes 105
- No 19
- Don't know 18
- No answer supplied 31



**Question 15 - Do you have concerns about the young person's progress or development?**

- Yes 92
- No 77
- No answer supplied 4



This was a free-text question for which parents provided very comprehensive answers, many of which were specific to their own children and circumstances. While parents can be assured that these have been reviewed by the service and provided in full to the Joint Operations Group, the answers have been analysed thematically as follows:

- 4 parents were concerned about the child learning how to become independent
- 7 parents were concerned about the child's social and emotional development and wellbeing
- 6 parents were concerned about transition from one setting to another.
- 6 parents had concerns about technology, and specifically if it was being used effectively at school and at home.
- 37 parents were concerned about their child's general development
- 11 parents were concerned about their child's speech and language delay
- 3 parents were concerned that there was not enough support for the child at school or pre-school.
- 3 parents were concerned that about the possible lack of support from the Sensory Support Service due to funding cuts
- 8 parents were concerned that staff within pre-schools and schools were not trained adequately or that the training was not kept up-to-date and that staff turnover meant that staff who had been trained were lost
- 4 parents were concerned about the environment in which their child was taught – including poor quality buildings and not enough funding to repair or adapt them appropriately.
- 4 parents were concerned about the general lack of resources/funding
- 1 parent was concerned about their child's potential social isolation

- 1 parent was concerned about parents and teachers not being able to influence decisions about resources or services
- 3 parents expressed concerns about children with MSI receiving insufficient support across all services.

**Question 16 - What do you think are the strengths of the current Sensory support service?**

This was a free text box and responses were:

- **Support for parents, schools and settings** – 59 parents reported that the service supported the parents, schools and early years providers with adjustments, hearing aids, language problems, and offering specialist support to all.
- **Acorns** – 5 parents reported that Acorns was a fantastic resource that they wanted to continue.
- **Treating children as individuals** – 9 parents reported that the service treated children as individuals
- **Training for other agencies** – 4 parents reported that the service offered training for other agencies such as schools and early years providers.
- **Technology** – 5 parents advised that the serviced shared information on technology such as hearing aids and other equipment.
- **Staff** – 51 parents advised that staff availability and attitude, helpfulness was exceptional. There is a good relationship between staff and parents. Dedication of staff. Staff were knowledgeable, qualified and experienced. Parents reported that they were flexible, patient and caring and were quick to share good practice.
- **Information for older children** – 2 parents reported that the service supported teenagers well.
- **Early Years support** – 4 parents advised that the support received at pre-school settings was good.
- **Assistance with medical reports and assessments** – 3 parents advised that the service provided advice and assistance with reports and attended meetings.
- **Responsive to needs** – 2 parents advised that the service was responsive to the needs of the family and child.
- **Home visits** – 2 families advised that the service received for home visits was excellent.
- **Objective and intelligent view of the young person's situation** – 1 parent mentioned this.

**Question 17 - Are there any ways in which you think the Sensory Support Service could be improved?**

This was a free text box and themes included:

- **Technology & Aids** – 10 parents suggested the following: provide radio aids for school, more support with aids to stop hospital appointments, more aids available at schools and pre-schools. More funding for aids, introduction of Tapestry and other technology as a means of assessing a child's progress, use of technology could reduce the time wasted of ToD travelling so much, improve technical knowledge, ToD to support Early Years settings with radio aids.
- **Training** – 6 parents suggested the following: Better trained teachers, more training of school staff, refresher on techniques, establish best practice and share with schools and settings
- **More power to the service, more evidence of impact** - 2 parents suggested this.

- **Teaching** – 9 parents suggested the following: More teachers, having the same teacher throughout the school journey, replacing teachers when they leave, do not let teacher's caseloads become overloaded
- **Location and times of support** – 20 parents suggested the following: Having local drop-in sessions, offering different days other than a Wednesday. Not being term time only provider, the 6 week holiday has a real impact on child, contact needed throughout the holidays. Parents visiting a central location. More frequent visits to school and home, more time at visits, more frequent checks. ToDs to do assessments all year, not just in academic terms.
- **Stage of intervention** – 2 parents feedback that the stage of intervention was not early enough.
- **Level of impairment** – 1 parent feedback that there should be more support for less severe needs etc
- **Partnerships & Commissioning** - 2 parents wanted to commission other providers
- **Sensory processing** – This was mention by 1 parent
- **Improve communication and information** – 23 parents comments were that communication for families and professionals needed to be improved and more contact with family, maybe a yearly review, less chasing appointments. Improve communication with children who have moved onto mainstream school. Explain how funding works. Explain how criteria works. Utilise other families who have been through this to offer support to newly diagnosed, peer to peer support. Having more of a parental viewpoint. Improve advertising of the service and more visibility of service
- **Support children with CV1 (cerebral Visual impairment)** – 4 parents feedback that continuation of support and support for children who have less server loss, and that there should be more support in general
- **No keep it as it is happy with service** – 24 parents reported that they were happy with the service.
- **Provide more funding and resources** – 17 parents reported that they would like activity days, improved opportunities, increase provision for students, more face to face time, more meetings with TOD
- **Improvement in reporting (EHC)** – 1 parent wanted this
- **Offer more guidance about hearing loss, develop toolkits and useful downloads** – 2 parents wanted this.
- **Look cross border** – 1 parents wanted us to what other LAs are doing and implement good practice
- **Emotional support for teenagers** – 2 parents wanted more support for teenagers.
- **OT** – 2 parents wanted access to OT
- **TOD consistency** – 3 parents wanted more consistency across the Teachers of Deaf
- **Young people's voice** – 1 parent wanted the voice of the young person to be heard.
- **Family learning**- 1 parent suggested family learning
- **More mobility officers/habilitation specialists** – 1 parents wanted more officers
- **More support for transitions** – 2 parents wanted more support for transitions

### **Question 18 - What would you like to see the redesigned service focusing and prioritising on?**

Parents provided a large number of highly specific responses to this question, often focused on their child's specific situation. The following themes occurred most frequently:

- 5 respondents wished to see the service remain the same, or mentioned a concern that budgets should either increase or remain as now.



- 16 respondents emphasised a need to sustain and develop direct support in schools and settings
- 5 respondents felt that the focus should be on training and support for teaching staff
- 2 respondents felt that a better response to MSI should be developed
- 14 respondents wanted to see sustained support in early years, and for Acorns
- 16 respondents wanted to see a more developed 'whole family' approach with more advice, peer-to-peer support and training provided for parents
- 3 respondents wished to see more BSL training
- 3 respondents felt that the service should respond more quickly to initial referrals
- 3 respondents felt a focus should be on identifying and deploying technology to support children with sensory impairments
- 3 respondents wished to see improved quality, consistency and robustness in reports for EHCPs written by the service
- 4 respondents wanted more accessible, accurate information on the service and how it can be accessed
- 2 respondents wished to see more support groups developed in areas outside Bristol

**Question 19 - Please use the space below to tell us anything else you wish to include relating to your views**

Parents provided many, overwhelmingly positive, responses to this question with some providing further ideas on how the service should develop. A representative selection is included below:

- *"I think the service needs to be wider, how discriminatory is it to focus on two senses when the body carries many, some children are being missed by the system and unsupported because of this"*
- *"We have been lucky to have the help we've received from the service since our daughter was a baby. It would be a travesty if it was pulled apart with job and budget cuts. All of the staff are experts and specialists in their fields and we have never had a complaint about the service provided"*
- *"The Sensory Support Service is crucial to us for our child's education and wellbeing. It is somewhere we know we can get the best advice and an agency that will liaise with school and be listened to and respected. The people who work for SSS are absolutely valued and much-needed by parents like me"*
- *"We have been very lucky to have the same Teacher of the Deaf, to support my son from the age of 6 until the present (age 18). She has transitioned with him from primary to secondary and has given advice and support for his next step to further education. I have always known and felt that help and advice was available at the end of the phone"*
- *"We have gained more experiences and opportunities through the Sensory Support Service which have been of great benefit. It has such an important role from birth through to 18, especially with school budgets being so diminished"*
- *"The ToD support through transition to EHCP was invaluable, ensuring that all of my daughter's needs were identified through assessment and observations and a thorough knowledge of her personality and cognitive abilities. This ensured that provision and outcomes were focused and achievable"*
- *"I am really grateful to the staff who have been involved with my child. Their guidance and support has been key in me feeling that my child is safe and supported within their setting. The staff have been key in helping me feel confident as a parent"*

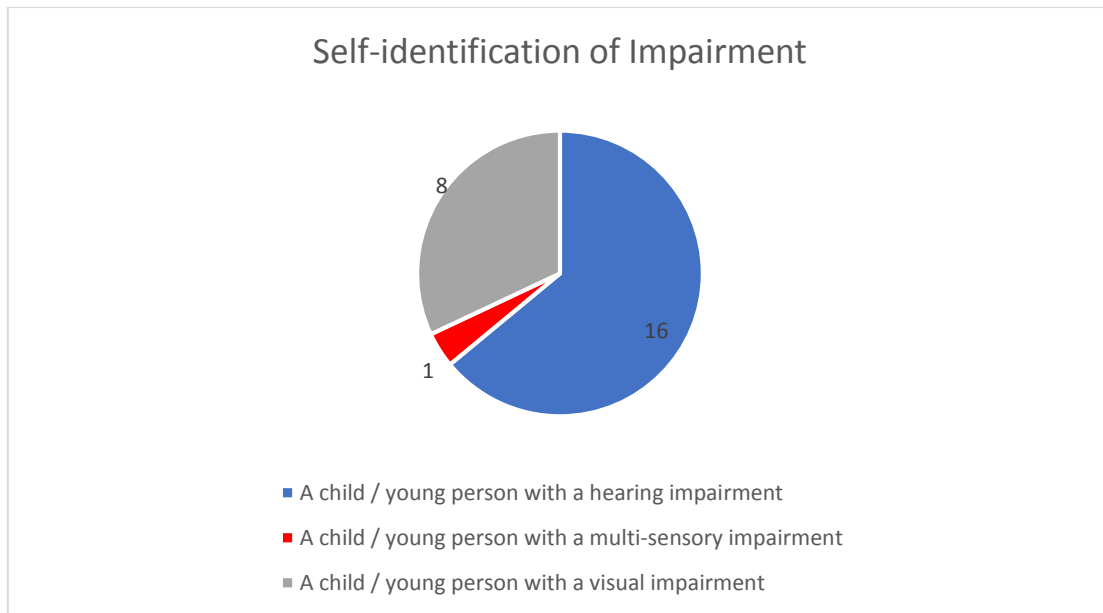
- *“The service should ensure they use the most up to date testing/recommendations such as SIPT when completing EHCPs”*
- *“It is a service I value and have been very grateful for the input”*
- *“The Sensory Support Service is absolutely essential in ensuring that some of our most vulnerable children receive the support they need to reach their potential.”*
- *“I want my child to do the same as everyone else, to have the same opportunities in life, without the sensory support service, he will fall behind. This worries me”*
- *“I am 100% certain that our family and children would not be doing as well as we are without it. It is a bit like having a 3rd parent.”*
- *“Getting to know other families in similar situations has also been fab so we can all help each other along in the journey.”*
- *“I also think it would be great to have some basic BSL lessons so those with no experience have chance to learn without perhaps paying to go to college.”*
- *“Possibility of maintenance contracts if parents buy their own equipment. It's a case of working together and saving money for all those involved”*
- *“The SSS should look to the latest research about interventions for deaf children and what works; what is less effective, in order to improve their services and steer what is provided for families with a deaf child.”*
- *“When I initially found out about my son deafness it was very isolating and daunting. The sensory support service made me feel empowered to want to give my son the best start in life and helped me understand that Eric wasn't the only one and what support networks are around. My son would be where he is today without this service”*
- *“We are very happy with the services we currently receive, but again more contact with the services would be useful in terms of understanding what we do/do not have access to”*
- *“For the new service to be fit for purpose for the future, it will be essential that the redesign seeks to maximise the potential benefits of new technology that will help to improve the efficiency, impacts and reach of the service.”*
- *“My child is a happy, confident child and has developed language to the same level as his hearing peers. This would not have been possible without the assessment and advice if the sensory support team. This included their monitoring and target setting within the nursery setting”*

### **Part 3 - Children and Young People’s Responses**

There were 25 individual responses from children and young people to the questionnaire. Given the nature of the free-text questions posed in the survey, the number of responses recorded for such questions may not match with this number. In several cases parents were clear that they had supported their children to respond.

#### **Question 1 Are you?**

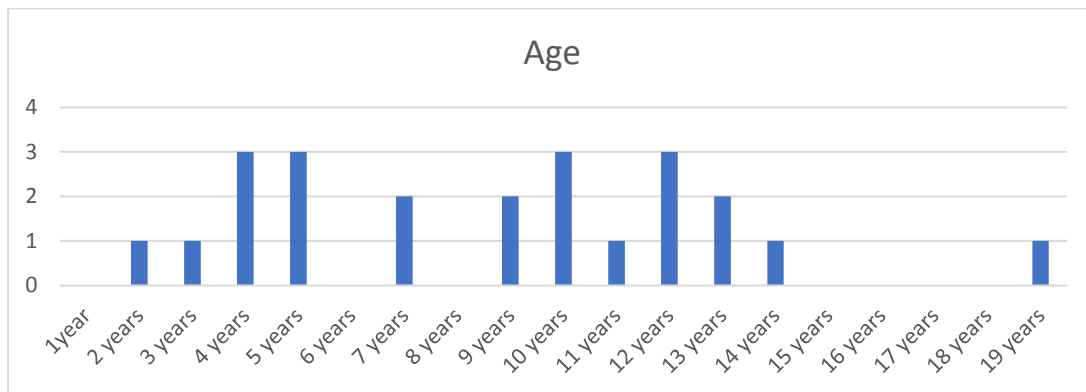
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|--|----|
| • A child / young person with a hearing impairment       | 16 |
| • A child / young person with a multi-sensory impairment | 1  |
| • A child / young person with a visual impairment        | 8  |



**Question 2. - How old are you?**

Answers recorded were:

- 5 years and under – 8
- 6 years to 10 years – 7
- 11 years to 16 years – 7
- 16 years+ - 1



**Question 3. What is the first part of your home post code?**

Answers provided were:

5 from South Gloucestershire, 6 from Bath & North East Somerset, 3 from North Somerset and 9 from Bristol. 2 did not provide a response.

Postcodes represented in the submissions were:

- BS32, BS34, BS37 - South Gloucestershire
- BA1, BA2, BA3 - Bath & North East Somerset
- BS20, BS22, BS23 - North Somerset
- BS3, BS4, BS6, BS7, BS14, BS16 - Bristol

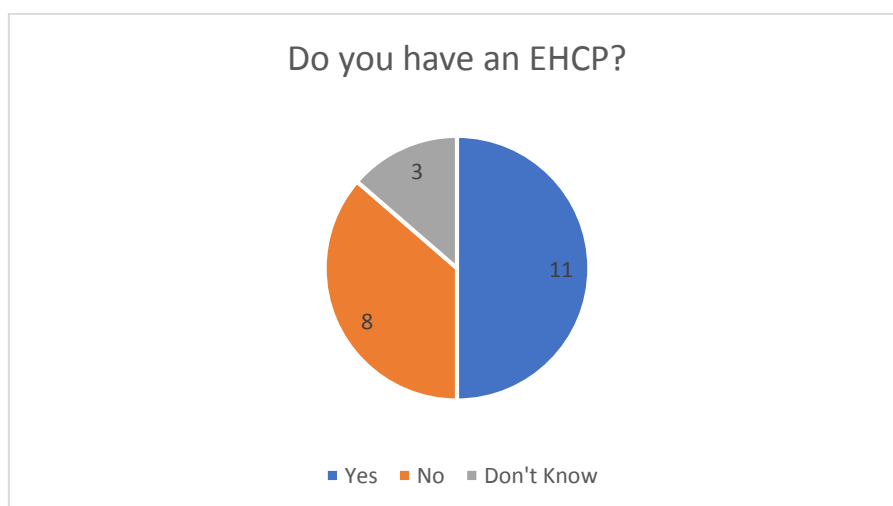
**Question 4. - Which school / college do you go to?**

This was a free-text question, and responses included:

- Meadowbrook Primary
- Combe Down
- Newbridge Primary School
- Chipping Sodbury school
- Portishead Primary School
- Stanbridge Primary school
- Redland Green School
- Ralph Allen
- Little Rainbows Pre-school, Bristol
- Ashcombe School
- T2 Academy
- Ashton Park School
- Ilminster Avenue
- St Michaels, Stoke Gifford
- Acorns nursery
- Southville Primary
- BSM
- Norton Hill school
- Westbury Park School
- Oldfield School
- Filton Avenue Primary School

**Question 5. Do you have a statement of special education need or education health and care plan?**

- Yes 11
- No 8
- Don't Know 3



**Question 6. Please tell us about the help and support you get from your Sensory Support Service teacher(s)?**

This was a free text box and the responses were:

- 6 responses mentioned regular visits, reviewing classroom work and support
- 6 responses mentioned training teachers to provide support
- 6 responses mentioned supporting the use of new equipment
- 4 responses mentioned undertaking tests or assessments
- 2 responses mentioned 'asking how I'm feeling?' or 'how I'm doing?'

Other responses included supporting transitions, providing advice or 'no support'.

**Question 7 - Which parts of the help and support from your SSS teacher(s) do you find most useful?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 3 respondents replied '*all of it*'
- 5 respondents mentioned '*getting my needs across to people who don't understand*'
- 2 respondents mentioned training their teachers to support them
- 4 respondents mentioned support with getting, using or understanding equipment, aids or technology
- 2 respondents mentioned tests and checking their progress, and that this helped them to '*feel good*' about school
- 1 respondent found none of the support helpful

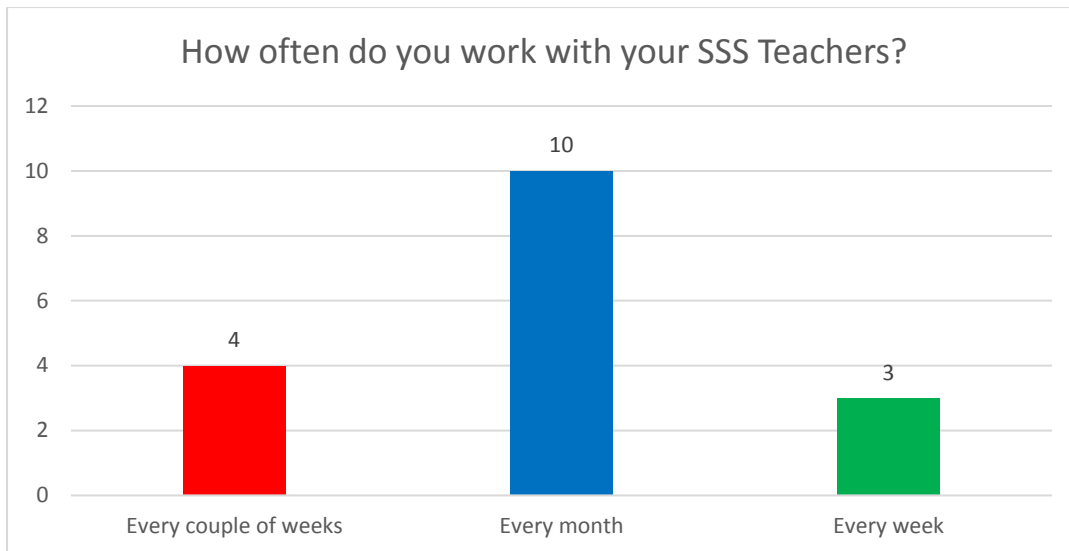
**Question 8 - Is there any help and support you receive from your SSS teacher(s) which you think could be improved?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 11 respondents felt that the service met their needs and could not be improved.
- 3 respondents mentioned that they felt more frequent or more regular visits would improve the service

**Question 9. How often do you work with your Sensory Service Support teacher(s)?**

- Every couple of weeks      4
- Every month                    10
- Every week                      3



**Question 10 - When did you start being supported by a SSS teacher? (which year / how many years ago.)**

- 4 respondents had been supported for 7 or more years
- 6 respondents had been supported for 3 to 7 years
- 5 respondents had been supported for 1 to 2 years
- 5 respondents replied: 'since I was a baby', 'since I was born' or similar

**Question 11 - Do you get help and support from other people as well as your Sensory Support Service?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 5 respondents were supported by teaching assistants, learning support assistants, the SENCO or others in the classroom
- 1 respondent attended a Maths Group during assembly time
- 5 respondents mentioned the support of hospital staff or health services
- 3 respondents mentioned other staff in schools
- 1 respondent mentioned support from an equipment technician

**Question 12 - Could you please tell us which parts of the sensory support service you think should be in the new service?**

This was a free-text question, and an analysis of the answers provided included:

- 8 respondents wanted the service to stay the same, or to keep all of it
- 2 respondents wanted to ensure that visits to schools continued
- 3 respondents mentioned continuing to work with their specialist teacher

Specific responses included:

*"Helping me talk about how I'm feeling at school and how the system works. More work on my feelings and socialising would help."*

*"Small classes let me get a bit more help - like my maths class last year"*

*"Maybe some more opportunities to do activities with other children with a vision impairment? Chance to meet other children and make friends?"*

**Question 13 - Please use the space below to tell us anything else you want to about the help and support you**

This was a free-text question, with overwhelmingly positive responses. A selection of responses which do not identify individual children or staff members included:

- *"I like my teacher, she helps me lots"*
- *"I need my sensory support teachers to help the teachers help me learn in the classroom and let my school know what equipment is best for me, where to sit in the class, how to manage in assembly, and everything else"*
- *"I really like SSS and the Humanware I use in class is a massive help, I could not do without it. It doesn't link with the whiteboard, but I can now read worksheets with it"*
- *"It's really important for me"*
- *"My teacher of the deaf helps me feel more confident in my hearing loss"*
- *"The reason I have put unsure in most of the questions, is that I work with my main primary school teacher as opposed to somebody from the sensory support service"*
- *"We really need the help and support that is provided by the sensory support service and long may it continue!"*

**Questions:14/15 - Did you get help filling in this questionnaire?**

- Yes – from parent/carer – 14
- Yes – other - 1
- No - 9