



## Talking points

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The NNPCF is a membership organisation and our mission states that “we aim to empower our members to ensure that their voice is heard at a local, regional and national level.”

Working with our membership we have identified a number of key “talking points” - these are topics and themes that are the most important to our membership and the ones that have been prioritised by the NNPCF.

Based on feedback from our membership and from other partners and stakeholders, the “talking point” summarise:

- The lived experience of our members about each topic,
- What is working and what is not working, and
- What we would like to see changed.

The talking points have been created using a range of feedback which includes:

- Surveys (including the SEND surveys)
- Feedback from our annual conferences
- The topics raised at regional meetings
- Themes and topics raised by our membership on social media
- Face to face conversations with our membership

### The impact of resource constraints on SEND services

Parent carer forums are increasingly concerned that their local areas cannot deliver the legal requirements of the Children and Families Act with existing constrained resources. The demand and scope of services for SEND is increasing at a time when local authority finances are under ever increasing pressure

Recent restrictions on moving money between the schools’ block and the high needs funding block of the dedicated schools grant have exacerbated the pressures on SEND resources in many local authorities. This has an impact on children and young people in mainstream and special school settings alike.

In addition, the failure of many areas to make meaningful progress with joint commissioning has amplified this situation. What resources there are have not necessarily been deployed in the most effective ways.

### **There are significant additional pressures on SEND funding**

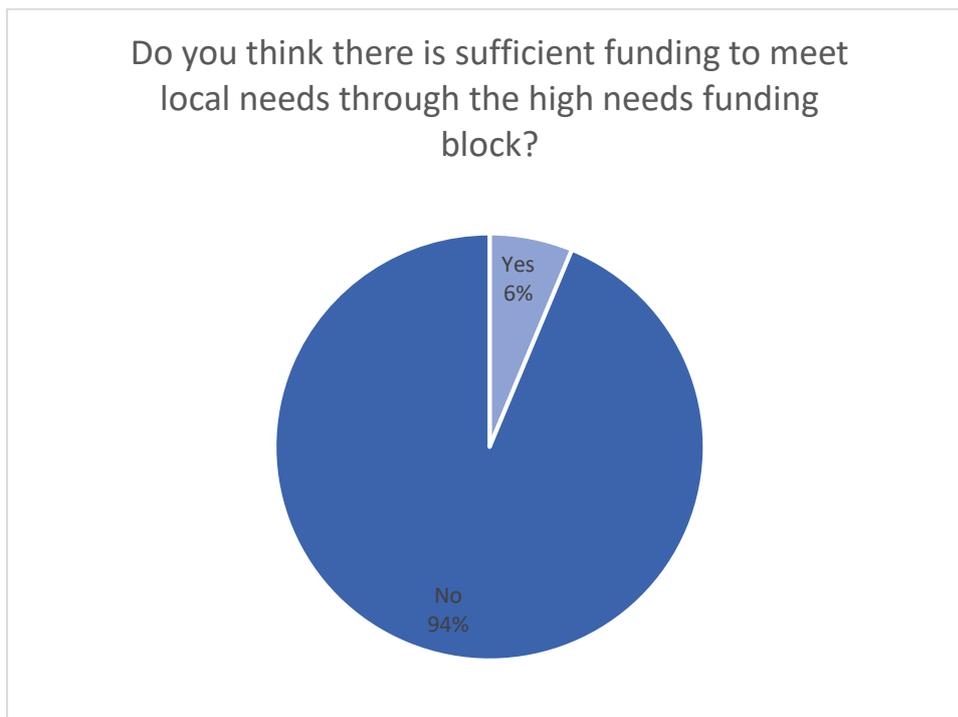
Forums report that there are significant pressures on services for children and young people with SEND. The SEC position statement titled “Unsustainable pressure on high needs funding” highlighted the following areas of pressure:

1. **There are more children and young people with the most complex needs**  
Between 2004 and 2016 the number of children with the most complex needs rose from 49,300 to 73,000.
2. **There has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan**  
the number of EHCPs and statements have grown by 82,000 to 320,000 between 2014 and 2018.<sup>ii</sup>
3. **More children are being educated outside of the mainstream system which costs more<sup>iii</sup>**  
In 2010 55% of children with a statement attended a mainstream school. In 2018, on 44% of school age children with an EHCP or statement attended mainstream school. The number of children with statement or EHCP in special schools has risen from 96,000 in 2010 to 127,000 in 2018<sup>iv</sup>.
4. **More children are being excluded**  
The number of children permanently excluded from school rose by 44% between 2012/13 and 2015/16 (from 4,630 to 6,685)<sup>v</sup>
5. **More young people with SEND are receiving support beyond the age of 16**  
Between 2010 and 2018 the number of children aged 16 or over who have a statement or EHCP rose from 20,000 to 84,000<sup>vi</sup>.

### The levels of funding for SEND services are not keeping up

There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that the level of funding for SEND services is not keeping up with demand. This includes

1. In a recent NNPCF survey, 94% of parent carer forums that responded stated that they did not think there was enough funding in the high needs funding block to meet local needs.<sup>vii</sup>



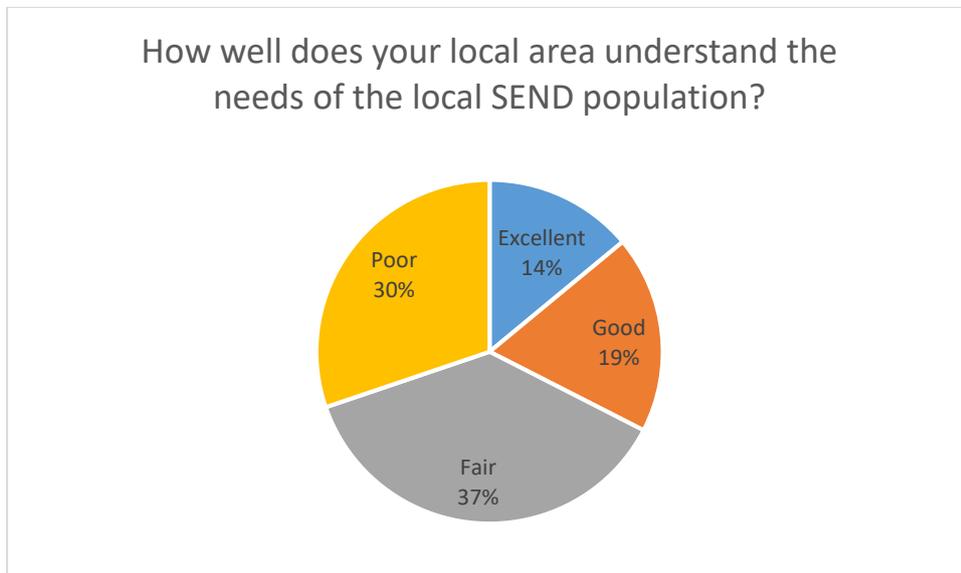
2. The Local Government Association estimates that the national deficit on the high needs funding block is in the region of £470m<sup>viii</sup>
3. The National Audit Office states that real terms government funding for local authorities has reduced by 49.1% between 2010 and 2017-18 and that the spending power of local authorities over the same period (government funding plus council tax) has reduced by 28.6%<sup>ix</sup>. Whilst local authorities have protected spending on service areas such as children's social care (which actually saw a small increase in real terms spending of 3.2%) this has not kept pace with demand.

In addition, recent restrictions on moving money between the high needs funding block and the dedicated schools grant have exacerbated the pressures on SEND resources in many local authorities.

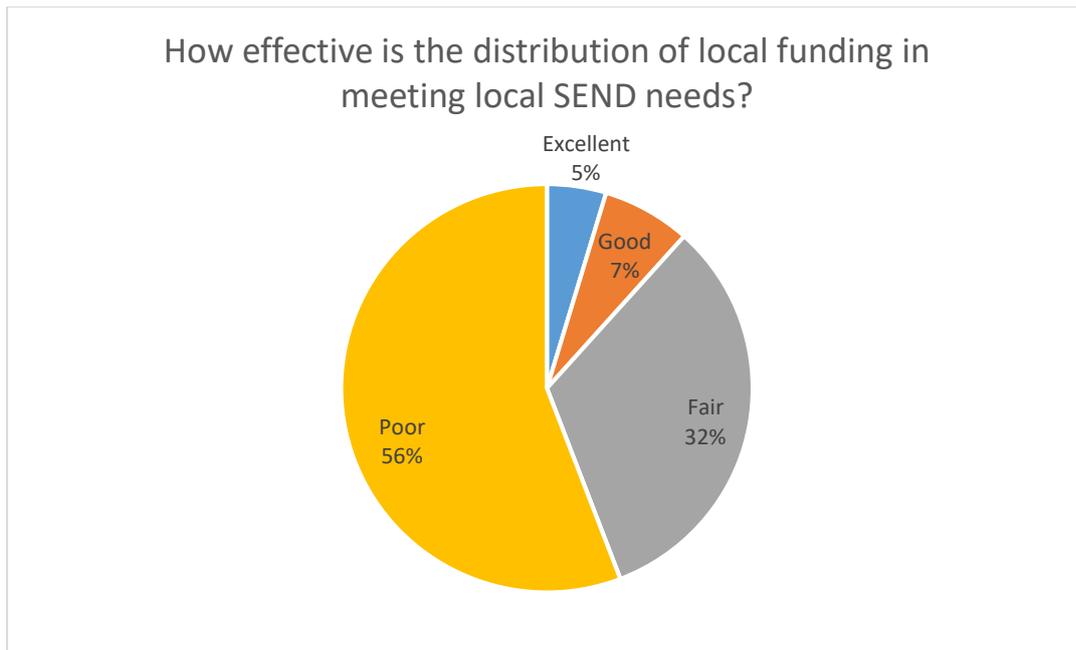
## The resources that are available are not being used in the most effective way

What resources there are have not necessarily been deployed in the most effective ways:

1. In a recent NNPCF survey, only one third of forums that responded (32.55%) that their local area had an excellent or good understanding of the needs of their local SEND population. 37% thought there was a fair understanding and 30% thought that the understanding of the needs of the local SEND population was poor. Without a good understanding of needs, resources cannot be deployed effectively.

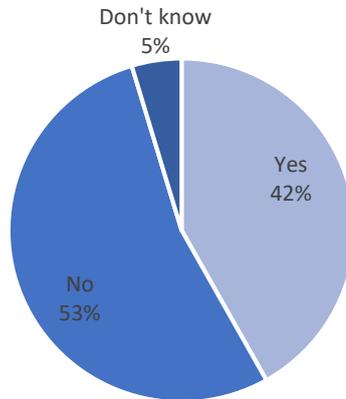


2. In the same survey, only 12% of forums thought that the distribution of funding in meeting local needs was excellent or good. 33% thought it was fair and over half, 56% thought it was poor.

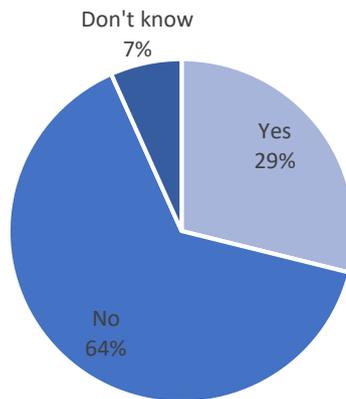


3. The failure of many areas to make meaningful progress with joint commissioning has amplified this situation. Our survey found that local needs did not inform jointly agreed priorities. In education local needs informed jointly agreed priorities in only 42% of local areas, in social care and health it was even lower at 30% and 23% respectively. Put simply, education health and social care services are not working together effectively at a strategic level. This is supported by evidence from local area inspection by Ofsted and CQC where many of the Written Statements of Action issued reference poor joint working and joint commissioning as a concern.

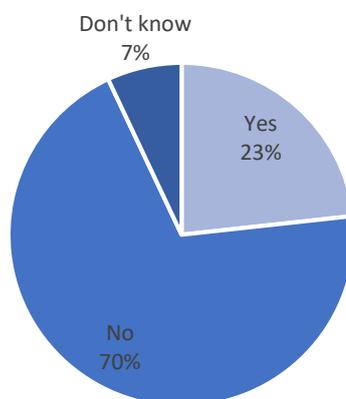
Do local needs inform jointly agreed priorities in  
EDUCATION?



Do local needs inform jointly agreed priorities in  
SOCIAL CARE?



Do local needs inform jointly agreed priorities in  
HEALTH?



### **This is creating a vicious circle of poor outcomes which put further pressures on funding.**

Many forums report that pressures on funding are causing local authorities to take short term decisions that impact the life chances of children and young people with SEND and create further pressures on resources. For example, forums report that:

- The experiences of children and young people with SEND in mainstream settings in deteriorating which in turn puts pressure on funding as parent seek EHC plans and special school places.
- Often failings in local provision mean that families are not able to access services that children and young people need and are entitled to (for example written into an EHCP) which means that parents ask for more expensive residential placements that can offer an extended curriculum or integrated therapies.
- Thresholds for receiving social care are being raised depriving many families of the early help they need. Many local authorities do not understand the stipulation in the Children Act 1989 that all disabled children are children in need.

### **What have the NNPCF been saying on this issue?**

The NNPCF have consistently raised these issues in our conversations with government over the last year:

1. Our meetings with the Undersecretary of State for Children and Families in January, May and October<sup>x</sup>
2. In our meetings with officials at the Department for Education throughout the year<sup>xi</sup>
3. In our meeting with the Minister of State for Care in April we emphasized the need for more joint working<sup>xii</sup>
4. We have joined the SEND sector in public statements on these issues through the SEC statement on high needs funding in May<sup>xiii</sup> and put our name to a letter to the Prime Minister and Chancellor in October.<sup>xiv</sup>
5. We have given evidence two inquiries into SEND services:
  - a. The House of Commons Education Select Committee on December 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 stating that the current financial climate made it difficult to deliver the reforms of the Children and Families Act 2014 and we further detailed our concerns in our written evidence to the committee.

- b. We have also responded to the National Audit Office Inquiry into the effectiveness of SEND funding.
6. We have shared examples of good practice to show that where local areas co-produce solutions with parent-carers and jointly commission services, this can lead to better services and outcomes. For examples see the NNPCF annual report. <http://www.nnpf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NNPCF-2018-Annual-Report-Med.pdf>

### **Secretary of State for Education's announcement of additional funding for high needs provision 16 December 2018**

We welcome the Secretary of State for Education's announcement on 16 December 2018 of additional monies for the high needs funding block<sup>xv</sup>. However, the extra £125m represents less than £1m for each local authority when many are running multi-million-pound deficits on their high needs funding block. The additional £100m of investment to create more specialist places in mainstream schools and colleges and the possibility of more special free schools will go some way to alleviating the pressures on specialist provision. This must, of course be supported by an increase in the number of specialist teachers, teaching assistants and therapists through recruitment, initial training and workforce development.

Ahead of the comprehensive spending review in 2019, we will continue to work with the Department for Education to ensure that they can make the best possible case to secure the resources our children need.

<sup>i</sup> SEC position statement – unsustainable pressure on high needs funding – May 2018 <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SEC-position-statement-on-high-needs-funding.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Department for Education: Statements of SEN and EHC Plans 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2018>

<sup>iii</sup> Ditto

<sup>iv</sup> Ditto

<sup>v</sup> Department for Education – Permanent and Fixed Period exclusions in England 2015 and 2016 SFR 35-2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2015-to-2016>

<sup>vi</sup> Department for Education: Statements of SEN and EHC Plans 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statements-of-sen-and-ehc-plans-england-2018>

<sup>vii</sup> NNPCF survey and call for evidence December 2018. [Insert link](#)

<sup>viii</sup> Local Government Association: Have we reached “tipping point”? Trends for spending for children and young people with SEND in England

<http://www.isospartnership.com/uploads/files/LGA%20HN%20report%20published%2012.12.18.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> National Audit Office: Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018 March

2018 <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/financial-sustainability-of-local-authorities-2018/>

<sup>x</sup> See NNPCF website

<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/nnpcf-co-chairs-meet-the-new-minister-for-the-department-for-education/>

<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/nnpcf-steering-group-meets-minister-nadhim-zahawi/>

<http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/minister-nadhim-zahawi-meets-parent-carer-forums/>

<sup>xi</sup> See NNPCF website <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/nnpcf-co-chairs-meet-with-officials-at-the-department-for-education/>

<sup>xii</sup> See NNPCF website <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/nnpcf-co-chairs-meet-with-caroline-dinenage-minister-of-state-for-health/>

<sup>xiii</sup> SEC position statement – unsustainable pressure on high needs funding – May 2018 <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SEC-position-statement-on-high-needs-funding.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> See NNPCF website <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/nnpcf-supports-ncbs-letter-to-the-prime-minister-and-chancellor/>

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<sup>xv</sup> New funding to support children with special educational needs  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-support-children-with-special-educational-needs>