



Department
for Education

Evaluation of the Green Paper Support Contracts

Research report

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SQW

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Executive summary

In October 2012, the Department appointed SQW to undertake a high level evaluation of the Green Paper Support Contracts¹ (see Table 1). The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold:

1. To understand the appetite for, use and effectiveness of the current support offer to inform decisions on the funding and delivery of potential future support
2. To provide evidence of the range of starting points for local areas in relation to assess their preparedness to meet the forthcoming special educational needs (SEN) reforms.

Table 1 The Delivery Partner contracts

Support contract	Name of delivery Organisation(s)
Support for the delivery of short breaks	Impact
National support for Parent Partnership Services	National Network of Parent Partnership Services (NPPN)
Building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector in providing early intervention mental health support for children and young people (BOND)	Consortium led by Youngminds
Early support and key working training	Consortium led by the Early Support Trust and National Children's Bureau
Preparing for Adulthood	NDTi, Helen Sanderson Associates and the Council for Disabled Children
Parent participation though support for Parent Carer Forums	Contact A Family

Source: Department for Education

This report is based on evidence gathered through:

- Five tailored e-surveys disseminated to the main target beneficiaries of five of the six contracts (all undertaken in February 2013), i.e. all but the BOND contract
- 29 qualitative follow-up consultations with a small number of each set of survey respondents (undertaken in March 2013)
- A small-scale qualitative case study of the BOND contract (undertaken in March 2013).

¹ The commission formed part of an extension to an existing contract to evaluate the SEND Pathfinder Programme

Awareness of the Delivery Partner contracts

The Heads of SEN reported high levels of awareness across all the support contracts, with the exception of the BOND contract, as their activities had focussed on delivering in-depth support to a small number of local authorities. Take-up of the relevant activities on offer proved more variable (ranged between 38-53% across the contracts) and was likely to have been under-reported by the Heads of SEN, as much of the activity being evaluated fell outside of their service area. However, those that were aware that their local area had accessed the relevant support most commonly reported being either fairly or very satisfied with the delivery across all the contracts.

Early support and key working contract

Feedback provided in relation to the Early Support and Key Working contract was largely positive. This included at least 72% of the responding Heads of SEN reporting that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support they had accessed. Those that had accessed the key working training reported the highest levels of satisfaction, a large number of whom also stated that this had helped them to further develop key working in their area.

It was therefore evident that the support offered through the Early Support and Key Working contract had been well received and had contributed to the development of key working across the majority of areas that had accessed the support.

Support for Parent Carer Forums

Feedback on the support provided to the PCFs through the Contact a Family contract illustrated that the reach and take-up had been very high, with all but two PCFs from across England having accessed at least one of the activities offered. Furthermore, high levels of satisfaction were reported in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support that had been accessed (80% reported being satisfied with the delivery across nearly all the services offered). This was reported in turn to have translated into impacts in relation to ensuring the sustainability and building the capacity of the majority of PCFs. It is therefore clear that the activities had been well received in the main and were felt to have been effectively delivered by nearly all PCFs.

Support for Parent Partnership Services

Take-up of the support services provided by the NPPN was very high, with at least 80% of the responding PPSs reporting they had accessed at least six of the ten offered services. This indicated there had been a clear demand for much of what had been offered.

Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support that had been accessed was reported to be high with no service receiving less than a 77% satisfaction

rate relative to all three of the indicators. The evidence also illustrated that the support had been perceived by nearly all (94%) the responding PPSs to have been helpful in improving the quality of their service, and similarly the majority also felt that it had helped to extend the reach of their service to more parent carers.

It is therefore clear that the NPPN had delivered an effective support offer that had been well received by nearly all the responding PPSs.

Preparing for Adulthood contract

Nearly all (84%) respondents reported having accessed at least one of the services offered as part of the PfA support contract, thereby implying that take-up of the offer had been high. Satisfaction in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the services that had been accessed was reported to be largely positive, with at least 62% of respondents reporting that they were satisfied with each of the relevant services across the three indicators.

Looking across the findings, it was clear that the PfA team had made effective progress, especially in their targeted work with a small number of the pathfinder areas. Similarly, the activities delivered by the team were perceived to have had a positive impact on raising awareness of the PfA agenda, which now needed to be backed up with practical resources and a move towards putting the theory into practice.

Support for Short Breaks

Take-up of Short Break services was very high, with 99% of respondents having accessed at least one of the services offered. This was further evidenced by the finding that over three-quarters (78%) of respondents had accessed four or more of the six services formally offered through the Impact support contract.

Satisfaction with the services received was high in relation to their *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness*, with over 82% of all respondents reporting that they were satisfied with all the services they had accessed across all three indicators. Similarly, a large number of respondents reported that the support had been helpful in supporting the development and delivery of their statutory short breaks statement.

These findings suggest that Impact had correctly and appropriately identified the needs of their target audience and had subsequently delivered an effective suite of services to meet the required need.

The BOND contract

The small-scale contract had been effective in building a sense of shared purpose between commissioners and providers, despite the challenging time at which it had been delivered which had coincided with substantial changes to the commissioning landscape. The support had been most effective in those areas with a history of commissioning

CAMHS from VCISOs, however, interviewees also felt that even in those areas where these relationships had not been as strong, the pilot had helped to cultivate stronger links.

The changes in the commissioning landscape had led to significant uncertainty, and while there was frustration that partners had not been able to engage more school leaders/health commissioners, significant effort had been spent in trying to do so.

Those that received support over the course of the pilot were very satisfied with its quality, usefulness and relevance. The thematic workshops in particular were identified as a good networking opportunity and were felt to have been very useful in helping VCISOs navigate their way through the new commissioning landscape.

Overall, despite the challenging climate, the pilot was felt to have had a positive impact on the capacity of VCISOs in the three local authority areas to successfully bid for public sector contracts. However, until there was increased certainty over the commissioning landscape, there was concern that the benefits of this work were unlikely to be fully realised.

Awareness of the SEN reforms and potential areas for future support

Awareness of the SEND reforms was high across the Heads of SEN, parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short breaks and transition leads in February 2013², with between 78-98% of each type of respondent reporting they were either fairly or very aware of the reforms. Similarly, the majority of the Heads of SEN reported that they had either begun or were actively considering measures aimed at improving the readiness of their area to meet the reforms.

Most of the progress reported by the Heads of SEN had been achieved in relation to the development of a new integrated or single assessment process and similarly the subsequent education, health and care planning process. Conversely, the least progress was reported in relation to the development of the local offer, personal budgets and workforce development, which mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the first 18 months of the pathfinder programme.

Pathfinder areas were more advanced in their developments relative to non-pathfinder areas. Nonetheless, progress reported by the non-pathfinder areas was generally encouraging, with only a small number of areas reporting not having any firm plans in place to progress the various elements required to deliver the reforms.

The Heads of SEN suggested several areas where it was felt they may benefit from additional support to better meet the requirements of the SEND reforms. This most commonly included support to further develop:

² All surveys were undertaken in February 2013 and therefore the responses provided are relevant as of that point in time.

- Joint commissioning arrangements between the local authority and partner CCGs
- Personal budgets
- Governance structures to deliver the new assessment and planning process
- Workforce development
- Development of a new integrated assessment and planning process.

This mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, with the exception of the final bullet, which was suggested by non-pathfinder areas in the main.

Supplementary feedback gathered from the other surveys also identified potential areas of support, which differed in accordance with the needs of the relevant group. However, all four groups – the parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short break and transition leads – felt they would benefit from further clarification on the implication of the SEND reforms, signalling a potential need for continuing communication in this area.

Local areas will be asked to provide an update on their perceived readiness to meet the SEND reforms in both October/November 2013 and April/May 2014, as part of the extended evaluation of the SEND pathfinder programme. This will enable the tracking of readiness over time, where it is expected that subsequent surveys will show improvements as areas increase their efforts to prepare for the reforms.

Summary and recommendations

Take up of the support offered as part of all six contracts was high across the relevant target audiences. Furthermore, those that had accessed the support offers generally reported high levels of satisfaction in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the activities that had been delivered.

The support offered by all of the six Delivery Partners was perceived to have had some form of impact on their target audiences. This varied by Delivery Partner but could be divided into two types of impact: the first related to an improvement in general awareness of the relevant agenda and as a result had acted as a catalyst to further the thinking of areas; and the second related to more tangible results, such as improvements in the quality and capacity of a service. Although both types of impact were felt to have been valuable, future support should probably lean more towards achievement of the latter more tangible results as areas need to move from considering how to develop the new agendas to delivering these.

Despite the positive feedback received in relation to each of the contracts, there appeared to have been limited central coordination across the activities of the individual Delivery Partners. This included an absence of a single point of access for local areas to build their understanding of the range of support that was on offer from across the Delivery Partners and an absence of a formal interface for the Delivery Partners to provide better aligned support across the contracts. This therefore represented a

potential missed opportunity to deliver better marketed and more joined-up provision across the Delivery Partners.

Awareness of the SEND reforms was high across the board i.e. the Heads of SEN, parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short breaks and transition leads. The high levels of awareness translated into most areas (as reported by the Heads of SEN) reporting that they had either begun or were actively considering measures aimed at improving the readiness of their area to meet the reforms.

A range of potential future support needs were identified by the different respondents. The majority of these related to either specific infrastructure or change management requirements associated with the SEND reforms, and were therefore not mutually exclusive in their nature.

We would therefore recommend that any future support is:

- Focused on provision that leads to tangible results
- Commissioned as part of an integrated package of services/activities that draws together the relevant expertise and experience
- Coordinated and subject to strategic oversight by a central resource
- Underpinned by a common set of principles (e.g. to work across the 0-25 years age range, engender multi-agency working etc.)
- Complementary to support that has already been commissioned by the DfE, e.g. the pathfinder champions and recently commissioned 2013-15 VCS contracts.

1. Introduction

In October 2012, the Department appointed SQW to undertake a high level evaluation of the Green Paper Support Contracts³. The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold:

1. To understand the appetite for, use and effectiveness of the current support offer to inform decisions on the funding and delivery of potential future support
2. To provide evidence of the range of starting points for local areas in relation to assess their preparedness to meet the forthcoming special educational needs (SEN) reforms.

Context

The recent Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Green Paper⁴ and subsequent draft legislation on the reforms of the SEN system⁵, outline the Government's intentions to improve the current system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

The new proposals are being pioneered in 20 SEND pathfinder sites covering 31 local authority areas. This includes the development and delivery of an improved assessment process and an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan for use with children and young people from birth to 25 years. Pathfinder activity also aims to improve engagement with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and families and young people, as well as improving multi-agency working. In addition, pathfinder sites are developing specific activity in a number of optional areas including:

- Children's personal budgets
- Banded funding
- Different age ranges
- Support to parents
- Support to vulnerable children.

The pathfinders have been supported by a dedicated pathfinder support team since their inception in September 2011. A suite of Green Paper support contracts were concurrently commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to complement the activity of the pathfinder support team. Collectively, the organisations delivering these support contracts were termed the 'Delivery Partners', each of which was originally contracted to deliver their activities for a period of two years (i.e. up until September 2013).

³ The commission formed part of an extension to an existing contract to evaluate the SEND Pathfinder Programme

⁴ DfE (2011) *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*

⁵ DfE (2012) *Reform of provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs*

The Delivery Partners were tasked to offer a range of support to build awareness and capacity to deliver the complement of reforms set out in the Green Paper. In the majority of cases, this support was to be delivered across all local authority areas, however, some contracts also included specific support focused on the Pathfinder areas. The Delivery Partner contracts commissioned by the Department are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 The Delivery Partner contracts

Support contract	Name of delivery Organisation(s)
Support for the delivery of short breaks	Impact
National support for Parent Partnership Services	National Network of Parent Partnership Services (NPPN)
Building the capacity of the voluntary and community sector in providing early intervention mental health support for children and young people (BOND)	Consortium led by Youngminds
Early support and key working training	Consortium led by the Early Support Trust and National Children’s Bureau
Preparing for Adulthood	NDTi, Helen Sanderson Associates and the Council for Disabled Children
Parent participation through support for Parent Carer Forums	Contact A Family

Source: Department for Education

The evaluation

The aims of the Delivery Partner evaluation were as follows:

- Identify local areas’ use of, and satisfaction with, the activities of the Delivery Partners
- Assess the function and effectiveness of the Delivery Partners (i.e. perceived effectiveness of support)
- Identify the types of support that local areas require in order to implement the SEN reforms set out in Children and Families Bill
- Ascertain awareness of, and readiness for, SEN reform across local authorities.

Evidence to support these aims was to be gathered via a single England wide e-survey, to provide a ‘snapshot’ of the perceptions of local areas, and a small number of qualitative follow-up consultations, to understand why areas had provided particular responses. However, this methodology was modified following a short scoping exercise,

which identified that each contract had a different target audience and emphases of activity. As a result, individual tailored surveys were developed and disseminated in February 2013 to the main target beneficiaries (or the most appropriate contacts) of five of the six contracts, and a series of qualitative follow-up consultations were undertaken in March 2013 with a small number of each set of respondents. A qualitative case study approach was used to assess the effectiveness of the remaining contract in recognition that the context of their work with a small number of local areas would make a quantitative survey approach unsuitable (see Table 3).

Table 3 Description of the five online surveys

Target audience	Coverage	Response rate ⁶
Early Support and Key Working (and general awareness of the support contracts)		
Heads of SEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness and take-up of Delivery Partner contracts ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support delivered through the Early Support and Key Working contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform <p><i>NOTE: As the Heads of SEN were the original intended audience for the evaluation, this survey was broader in coverage than the other four surveys</i></p>	63% (95 Heads of SEN)
Parent Partnership		
Heads of Parent Partnership Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support delivered through Parent Partnership contact ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	73% (111 Parent Partnership Services)
Parent Carer Forums		
Chairs of Parent Carer Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the Parent Carer Forum contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	73% (111 Parent Carer Forums)
Preparing for Adulthood		
PfA leads in local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the PfA contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	51% (78 PfA leads)

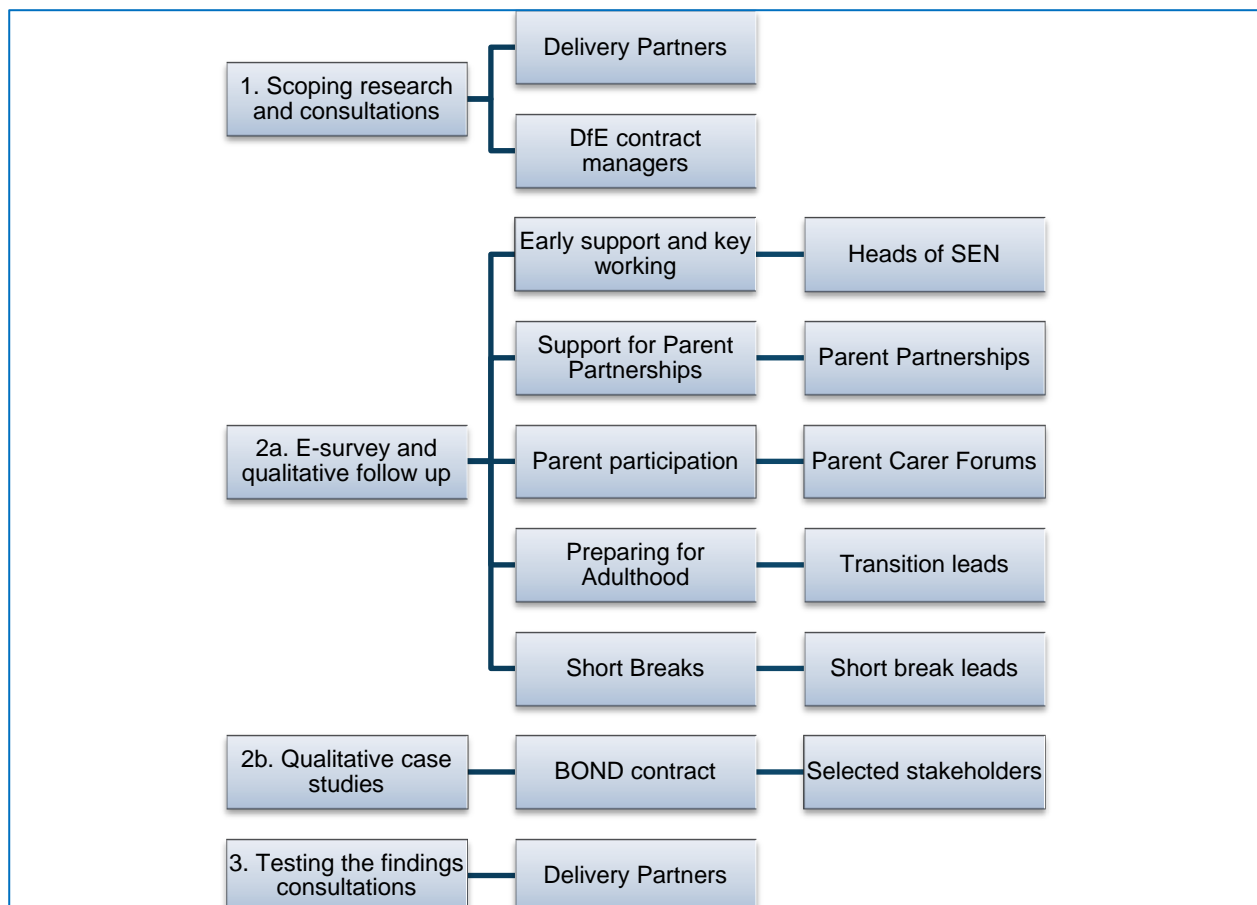
⁶ Base = 152 local authorities

Target audience	Coverage	Response rate ⁶
Short Breaks		
Short Breaks Leads in local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the Short Breaks contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	62% (94 Short Breaks leads)
BOND		
One of the five pilot areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the Short Breaks contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	N/A

Source: SQW

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Delivery Partner activity. It draws upon the results of five e-surveys, 29 qualitative follow-up consultations and a small-scale qualitative case study of the sixth contract. A summary of the evaluation methodology is illustrated in Figure 1 below, with more detail provided in Annex A.

Figure 1 Summary of the evaluation methodology



Source: SQW

Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapters 2-7: **Feedback on the Delivery Partners** – presents key findings on local area take-up of, and satisfaction with each of the Delivery Partner contracts
- Chapter 8: **Awareness of the reforms and suggested areas for future support** – summarises the baseline position of local areas with respect to awareness of the SEN reforms, and the support they may require in being able to implement these
- Chapter 9: **Summary and recommendations**
- Annex A: **Methodology** – sets out the approach we adopted in undertaking this evaluation.

Please note, the Delivery Partners are not an homogenous group and have delivered a wide variety of support and activities to different audiences. With this in mind we caution against making comparisons between each of the Delivery Partners. It is also important to recognise that the evidence was collected between February and March 2013 and therefore the findings presented are relevant to that point in time.

2. Awareness of the Delivery Partner contracts and feedback on the Early Support and Key Working contract

The first part of this chapter comprises a review of the findings from the Heads of SEN survey, in relation to their awareness of the Delivery Partners and take-up of support.

In the remainder of the chapter we summarise the feedback gathered about the Early Support and Key Working contract collated through the quantitative surveys and the qualitative telephone interviews. This is structured as follows:

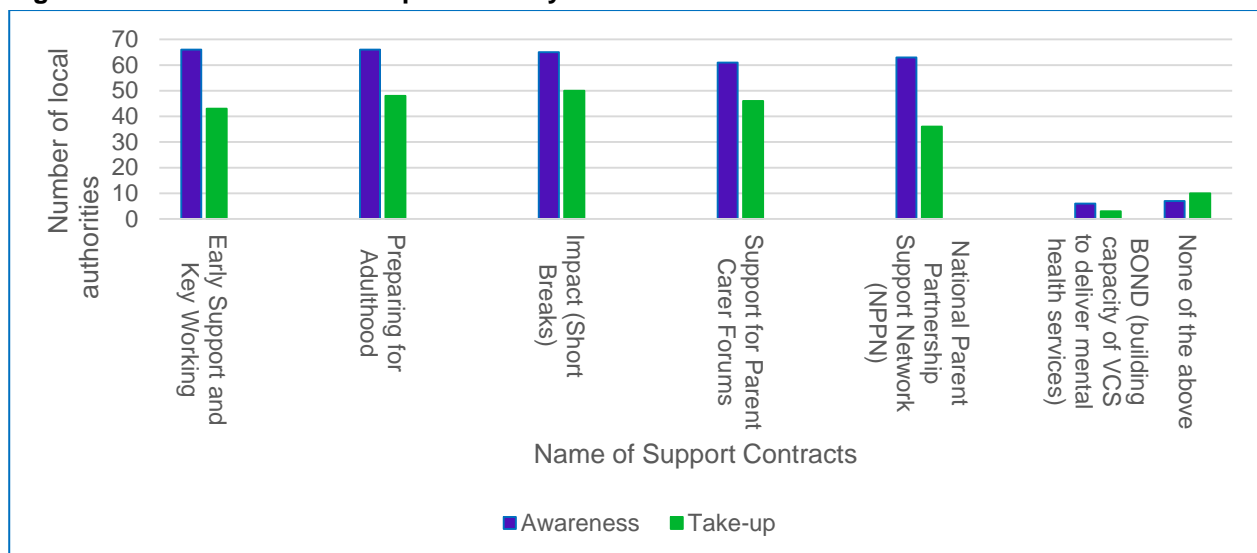
- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by a consortium led by the Early Support Trust and the National Children's Bureau
- Analysis of data on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

Ninety five out of a total 152 local authorities across England (63%) provided a response to the Heads of SEN survey⁷ in February 2013.

Heads of SEN – awareness of Delivery Partner Contracts

Heads of SEN were asked about their awareness of the SEN Green Paper support contracts and whether these had been accessed in their local authority area. The results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Awareness and take-up of Delivery Partner contracts



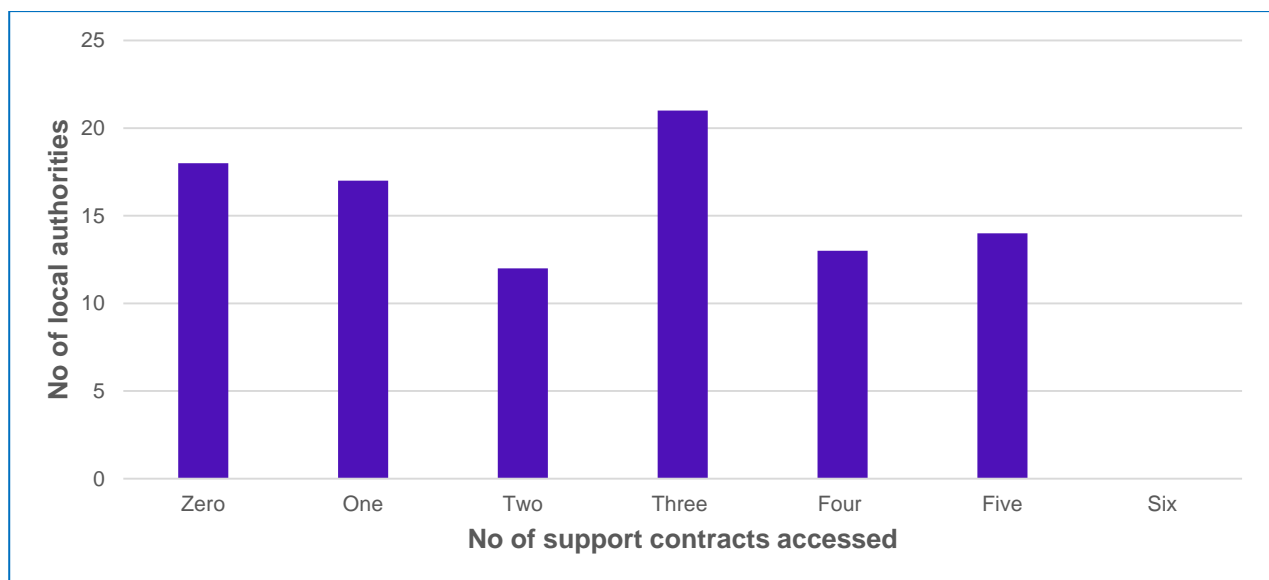
Source: Head of SEN survey (N=95)

⁷ Please note that the base numbers upon which each question has been analysed vary by question, as some of the responses received were partial in their nature, whilst others were dependent on routed questions and therefore only relevant to a sub-set of areas.

Awareness of the support contracts was high, with over three fifths of respondents aware of the Early Support and Key Working, Preparing for Adulthood, Impact, Parent Carer Forum and the NPPN contracts. Awareness of the BOND contract was much lower (6%), however this was not surprising given that the consortium had focussed on in-depth work with a very small number of local authorities.

Where Heads of SEN were aware of the support contracts, take-up of each contract was variable, ranging from 53% reporting take up of the Impact contract (Short Breaks) to 38% reporting they had accessed support from the NPPN. As shown in Figure 3, there was a high degree of variance between the number of support contracts that were reported to have been accessed by individual local authorities. That is, just over half (51%) of the local authorities reported having accessed three or more of the contracts, whilst just under a fifth (19%) reported that they had not accessed any of the contracts.

Figure 3 Number of support contracts accessed by each local authority



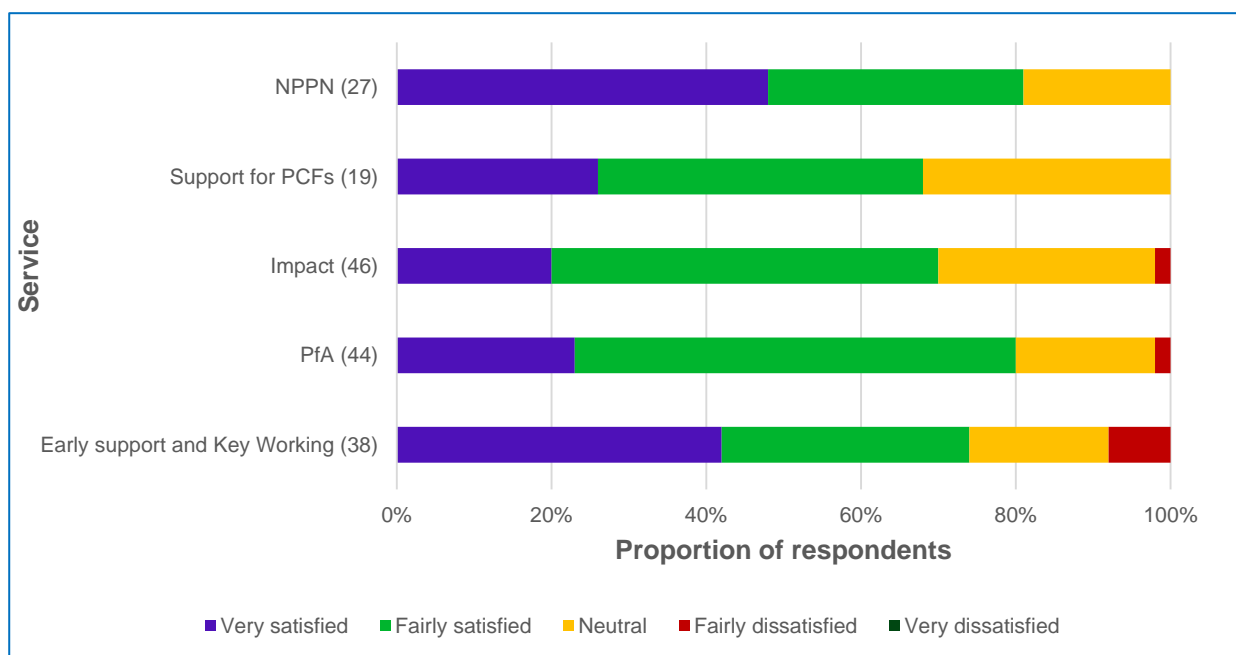
Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=95)

Comparison of the take-up reported by the Heads of SEN and the respondents of the other four targeted surveys illustrated that the Heads of SEN were likely to under-report their areas usage of the support contracts. Furthermore, evidence gathered from the follow-up calls undertaken across the surveys implied that many of the Heads of SEN had limited knowledge of the specifics of each of the support contracts. Therefore, the results drawn from the Heads of SEN survey in relation to the Delivery Partners should be treated with caution as much of the support being evaluated fell outside of their service area.

Satisfaction with Green Paper support contracts

Where support had been accessed, the majority of respondents (over two-thirds) reported being either fairly or very satisfied with the support on offer (see Figure 4). This included a comparatively high no of respondents reporting that they were very satisfied with the NPPN and Early Support and Key Working contracts (47% and 42% respectively). This implies that the support being delivered by the Delivery Partners had been well received by those that were aware their area had accessed it.

Figure 4 Satisfaction with support accessed via the Delivery Partner contracts



Source: Head of SEN survey (N in brackets)

Key working and early support

Contract Objectives and activities delivered

The objectives of the Early Support and Key Working contract, as set by the DfE, were as follows:

1. Develop and sustain Early Support training up the age range
2. Develop, deliver and sustain sector-led key working training to a range of professionals
3. Maintenance and development of early support resources
4. Strategic engagement with the SEN and Disability sector and parents to facilitate sector-led development of early support and key working.

These objectives were to be achieved through the delivery of a large variety of activities, which were grouped as follows for the purposes of the evaluation:

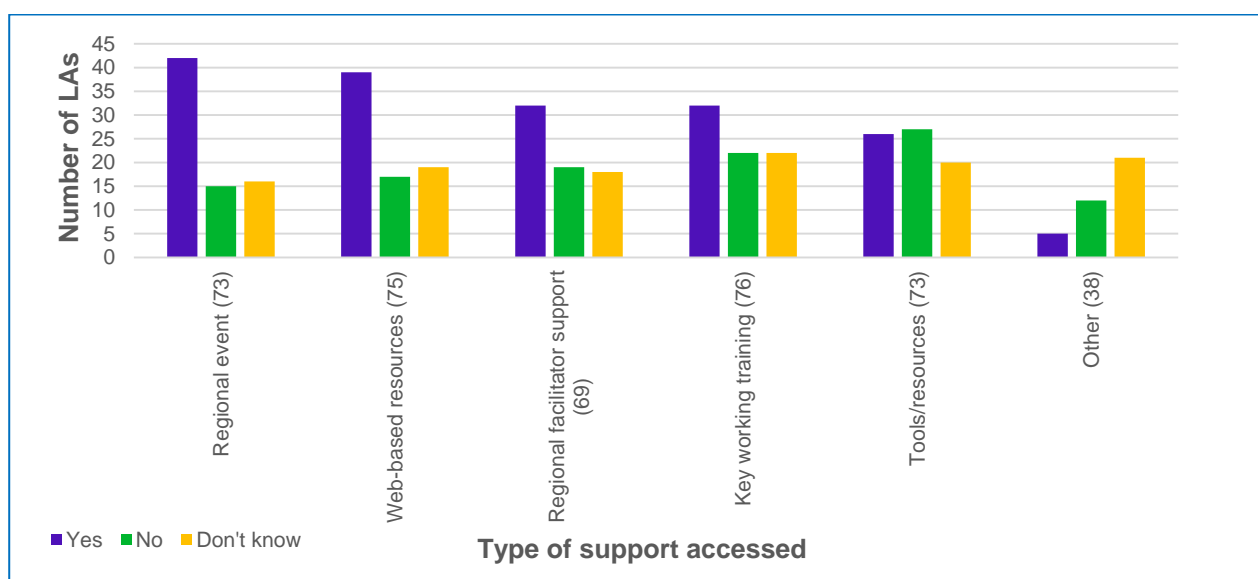
- Facilitation of regional events
- Development and dissemination of web-based resources
- Provision of regional facilitator support
- Provision of key working training
- Development and dissemination of tools/resources.

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

Figure 5 illustrates the take-up of different services offered through the Early Support and Key Working contract amongst local authorities that had accessed this contract. This showed that over half (58%) of the relevant local authorities had attended a regional event or had accessed web-based resources (52%), whilst 42% reported having accessed the key working training. Five respondents also indicated that they had accessed ‘other’ types of support as part of the support contract, which included feedback that they had attended ‘Train the Trainer’ workshops.

The data also showed that relatively high numbers of the Heads of SEN were unable to state which activities/support had been accessed as part of this contract (illustrated by the ‘don’t knows’ in Figure 5). This reinforces the earlier suggestion that many of the Heads of SEN were unaware of the specifics around what support had been delivered in their areas and again implies that the results reported here underestimate the reach of the various activities.

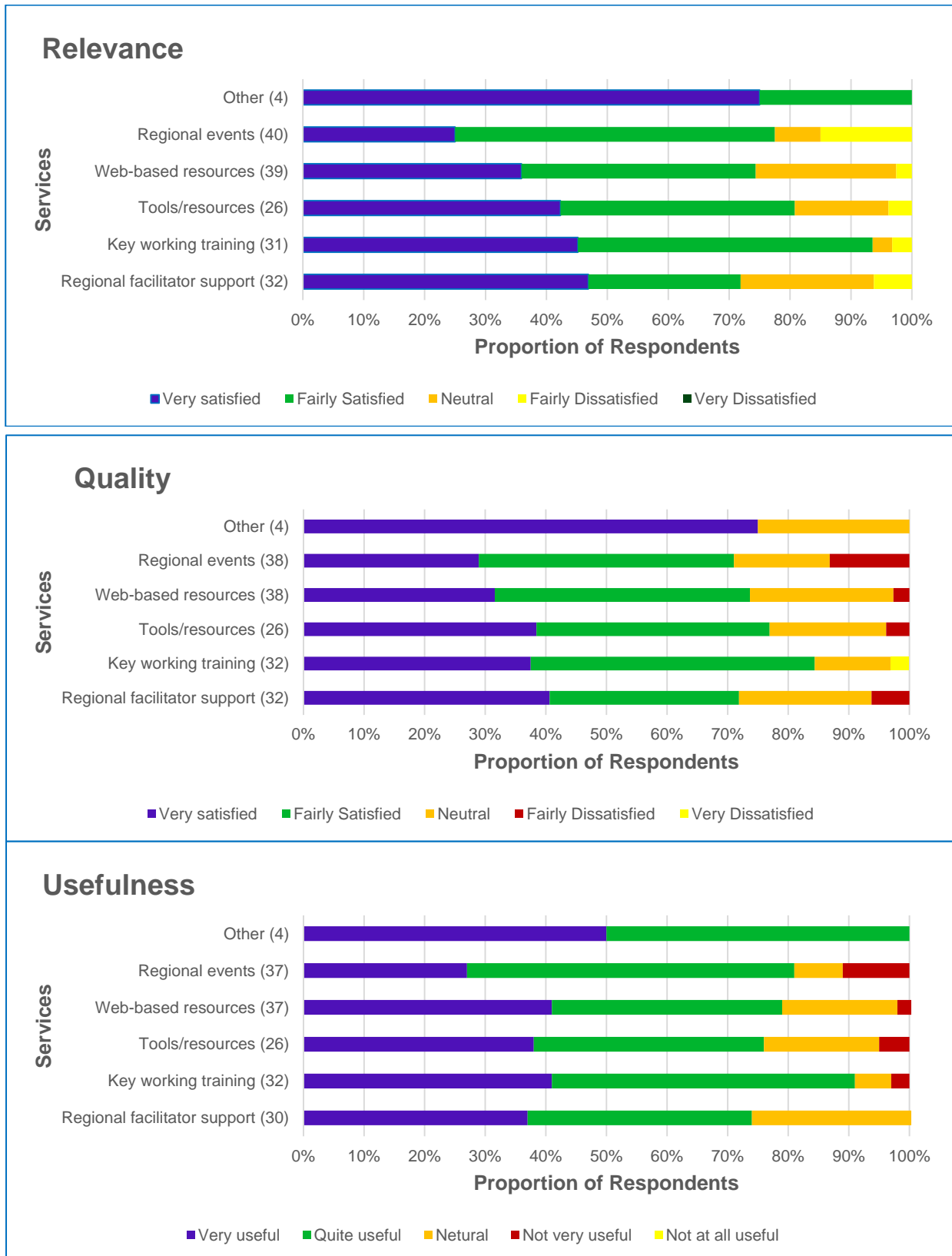
Figure 5 Early support and key working – types of support accessed



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= in brackets)

Figure 6 shows that satisfaction across all three indicators of satisfaction – *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness* - was high, with at least 72% of respondents reporting being either fairly/very satisfied, or very/quite useful across all the activities delivered.

Figure 6 Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support offered



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N in brackets)

Looking across the activities, the highest levels of satisfaction in relation to the *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness* of the support accessed, were reported by those that had accessed the key working training. This was supported by qualitative feedback gathered through the follow-up consultations, which illustrated that the key working training had been well received by the Heads of SEN, with a number consultees stating that the training had ably supported the roll out of a key working approach in some cases.

More generally, this feedback also showed that the majority of the activities that had been accessed had been of good quality and well received, with the most common comment being that areas wanted '*more of the same and some*'.

Levels of dissatisfaction reported were very low across the activities, and exhibited a similar pattern across all three indicators – *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness*. The highest levels of dissatisfaction were reported in relation to the regional facilitator support and events. Additional evidence from the survey and the follow-up consultations illustrated that the reasons for this dissatisfaction included:

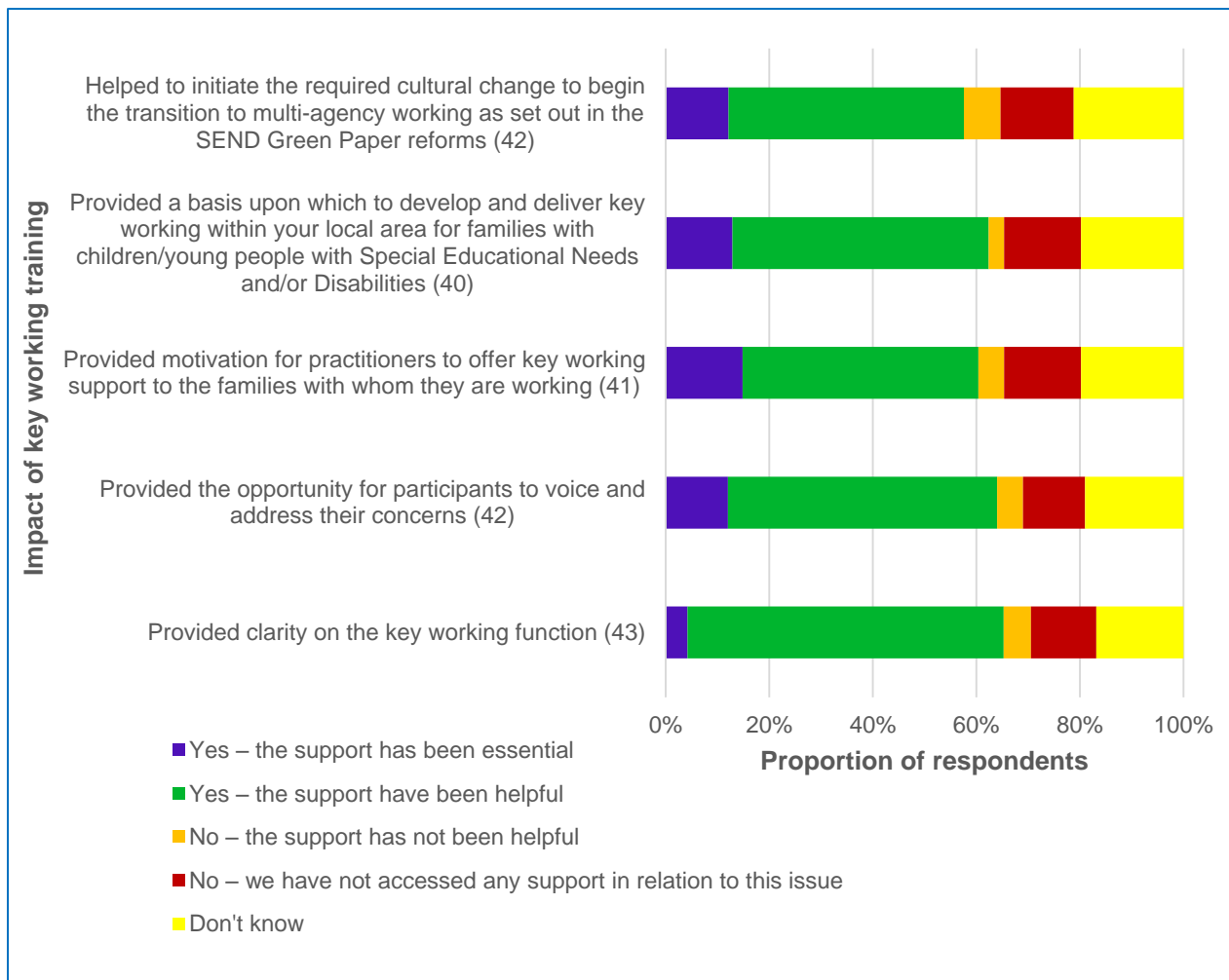
- A lack of sufficient depth in the content explored both by the regional facilitators and at the events - there was concern that the content underestimated the complexities of reforming service delivery in a large organisation. It was suggested that a more comprehensive approach needed to be taken.
- Some agenda items at events lacked relevance as they did not consider the differing starting points of the local areas attending the events - given the diverse nature of the local areas, this finding is somewhat inevitable, however, consultees added that it may be useful to offer a series of workshops (at each event) which could cater for differing starting points across local areas to minimise this issue.

Perceived impact of the key working training⁸

Figure 7 illustrates that just under two thirds of respondents indicated that the key working training had been helpful/essential in providing clarity on the key working function, an opportunity for participants to voice their concerns, and a basis upon which to develop and deliver key working within their local area (62%, 64% and 63% respectively). This provides evidence to support progress against the achievement of the key working specific Early Support and Key Working contract objective.

⁸ The impact of the other forms of support offered and accessed as part of the Early Support and Key Working contract were not formally assessed.

Figure 7 Perceived impact of the key working training



Source: Head of SEN Survey (N in brackets)

Evidence drawn from the qualitative follow-up consultations, illustrated that although the training had been valuable, it would benefit from a widening in scope to reflect the evolving SEN reforms. This would necessitate the inclusion of more materials relating to the use of both outcome-focused and person/family centred approaches, which were not felt to be sufficiently covered in the current training. A number of the areas consulted added that they had developed additional training locally to fill this gap, but that the ‘national model’ used by the Early Support and Key Working Delivery Partner should be extended nonetheless.

Summary

The Heads of SEN reported high levels of awareness across all the support contracts, with the exception of the BOND contract, as their activities had focussed on delivering in-depth support to a small number of local authorities. Take-up of the relevant activities on offer proved more variable (ranged between 38-53% across the contracts) and was likely to have been under-reported by the Heads of SEN, as much of the activity being evaluated fell outside of their service area. However, those that were aware that their

local area had accessed the relevant support most commonly reported being either fairly or very satisfied with the delivery across all the contracts.

Feedback provided in relation to the Early Support and Key Working contract was largely positive. This included at least 72% of the responding Heads of SEN reporting that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support they had accessed. Those that had accessed the key working training reported the highest levels of satisfaction, a large number of whom also stated that this had helped them to further develop key working in their area.

It was therefore evident that the support offered through the Early Support and Key Working contract had been well received and had contributed to the development of key working across the majority of areas that had accessed the support.

3. Support for Parent Carer Forums

This chapter presents a summary of the feedback gathered in relation to the Parent Participation through support for Parent Carer Forums (PCF) contract collated through a targeted quantitative survey and a small number of qualitative follow-up telephone interviews. This is structured as follows:

- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by Contact a Family
- Analysis of data on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

One hundred and eleven out of a total 152 parent carer forums across England (73%) provided a response to the parent carer forum based survey⁹ in February 2013.

Contract Objectives and activities delivered

The objectives of the Parent Participation through support for Parent Carer Forums contract, as set by the DfE, were as follows:

1. Strengthen and embed parent participation at both local and national strategic levels
2. Measure the progress and impact of parent participation
3. Provide and coordinate the quality assurance of grant applications and expenditure from parent carer forums in every local area
4. Maximise the learning from parent participation activities to help facilitate ground-level up and sector-led developments in effective parent participation
5. Support the continued development of the National Network of Parent Carer Forum.

These objectives were to be achieved through the delivery of a variety of activities, which were grouped as follows for the purposes of the evaluation:

- Communications via bulletins (1) and the website (2)
- Facilitation of (3) national and (4) regional network events, and events with local authorities and health (5)
- Provision of regional advisor support (6)
- Provision of training and learning and development sessions (7)
- Support to aid the completion of grant applications (8) and the monitoring forms (9)

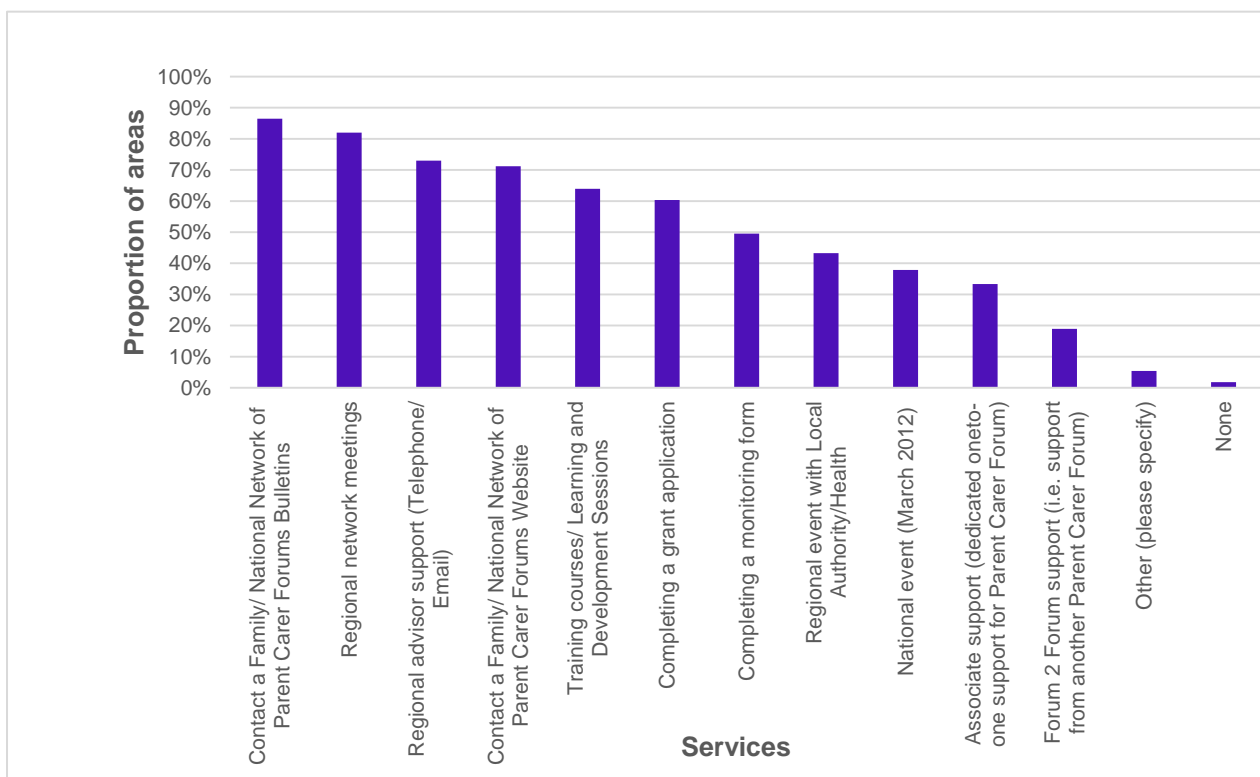
⁹ Please note that the base numbers upon which each question has been analysed vary by question, as some of the responses received were partial in their nature, whilst others were dependent on routed questions and therefore only relevant to a sub-set of areas.

- Dedicated one to one forum support (10)
- Forum to forum support (11).

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

Take-up of the support offered by Contact a Family to parent carer forums (PCF) was generally high. Figure 8 illustrates that PCF bulletins, regional network meetings, regional advisor support, and the PCF website proved particularly popular and accessible, as all were utilised by over 70% of respondents. This implied that information sharing through a variety of mediums of communication had been an important element of the support offer.

Figure 8 Support for Parent Carer Forums – types of support accessed



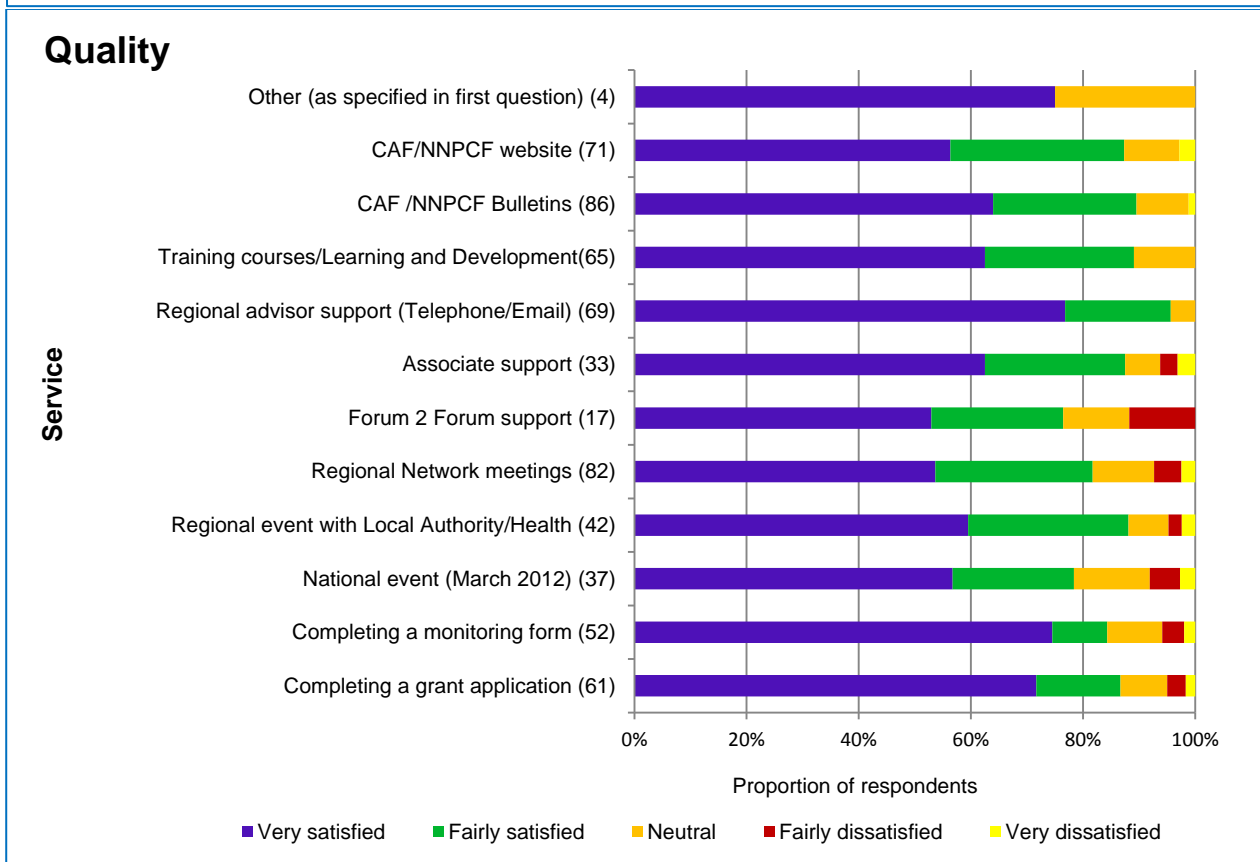
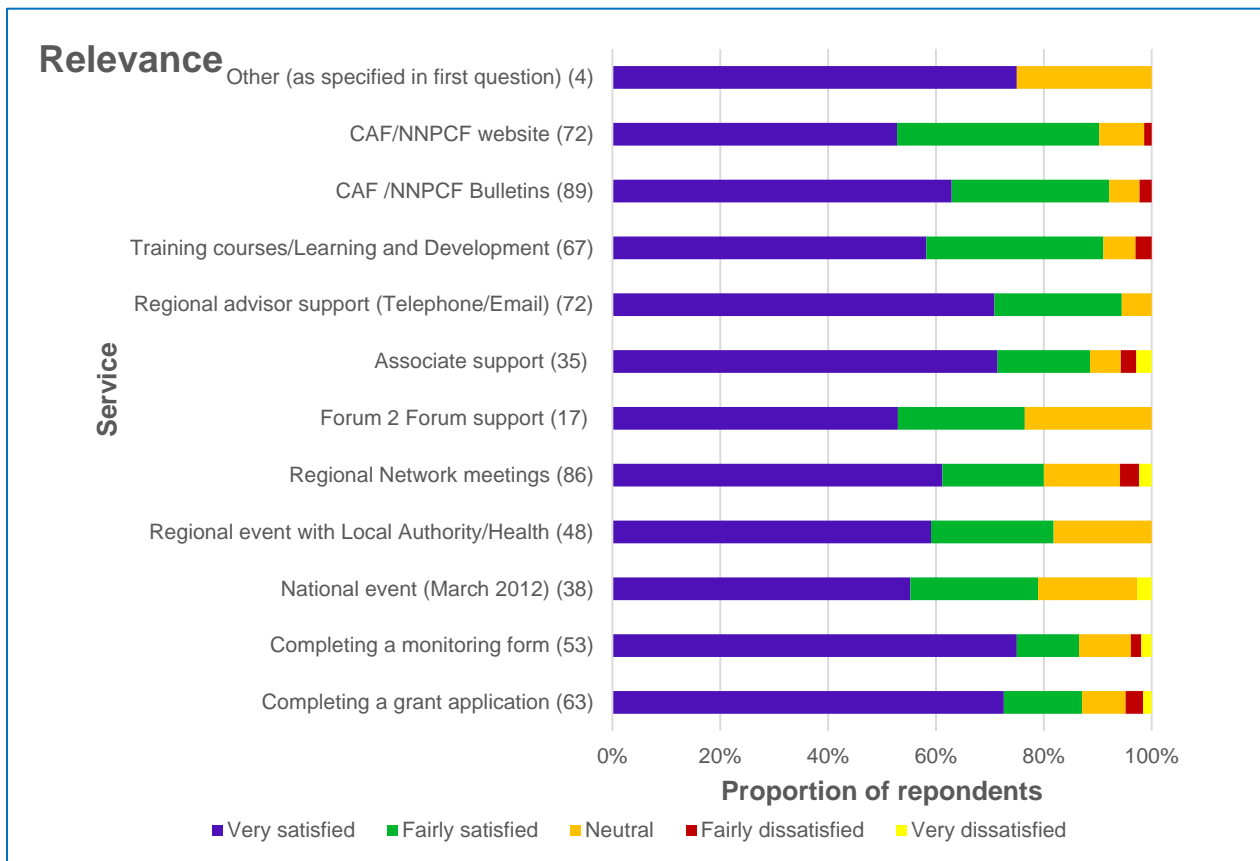
Source: Survey of Parent Carer Forums (N = 111)

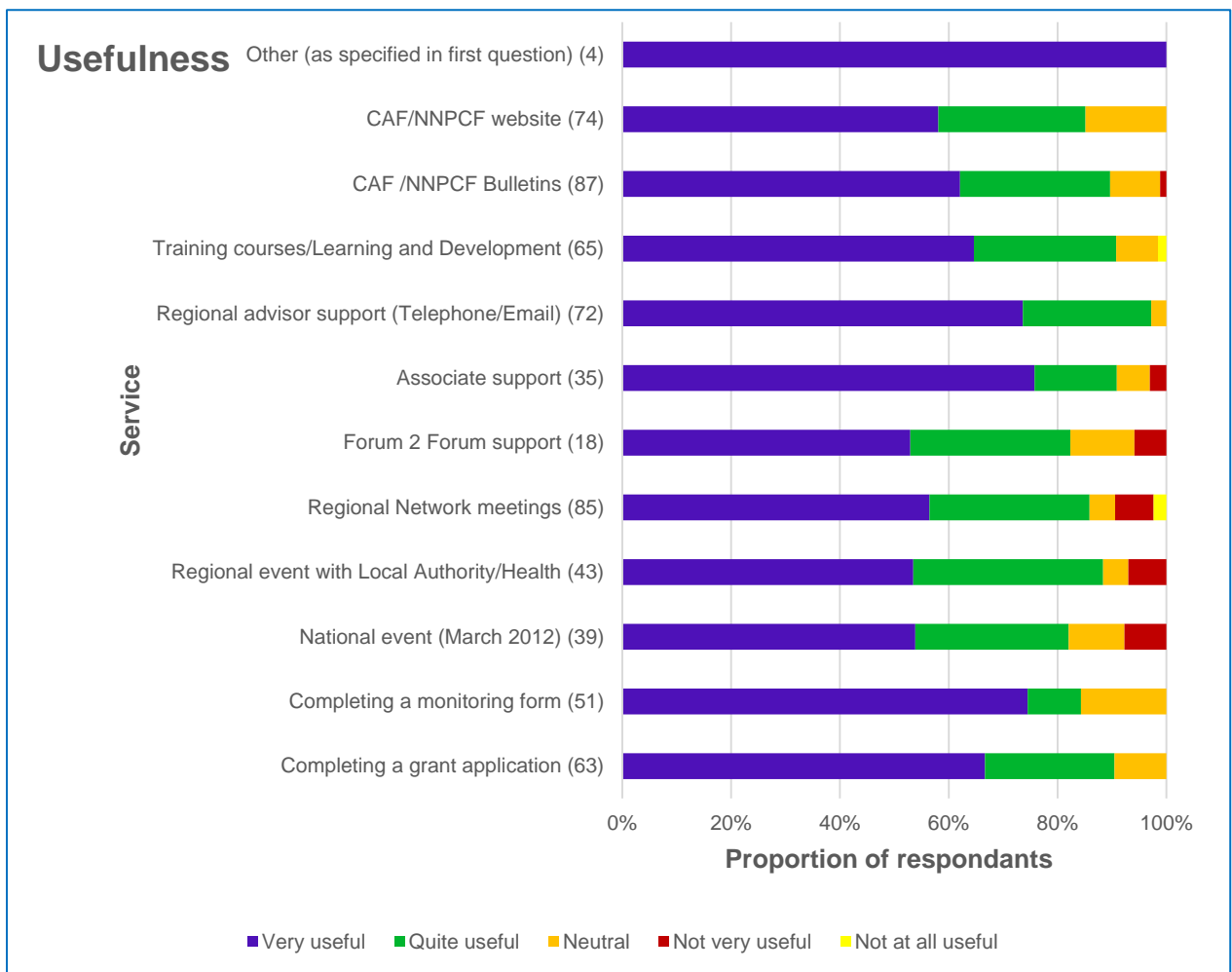
Looking at the breadth of services accessed by individual PCFs, the data illustrated that:

- Over four-fifths of PCFs had accessed at least four services from Contact A Family
- One fifth (21%) had accessed 9+ services offered by Contact a Family
- All but two of the PCFs (98%) had accessed at least one service via Contact A Family.

The reach and take-up of the services offered by Contact a Family was therefore very high, which implied good levels of awareness of this support contract. This was likely to have been supported by the nature of the contract, which included managing the grant funding offered to PCFs and the subsequent monitoring of their progress.

Figure 9 Satisfaction with the relevant, quality and usefulness of the support offered in the last 12 months





Source: Survey of Parent Carer Forums (N in brackets)

Responses concerning the *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness* of the support offered by Contact A Family were largely positive. Figure 9 shows that of the eleven formal services offered by Contact a Family¹⁰, over 80% of respondents reported either being fairly or very satisfied¹¹ with 10 (of 11 services) in terms of relevance, 9 (of 11) services in terms of quality and all 11 in terms of usefulness. Furthermore, although the responses exhibited variation in the levels of satisfaction across the services and three indicators, satisfaction was consistently high in relation to the regional advisor support function and the PCF bulletins. Levels of dissatisfaction across the services were very low. The only notable negative responses related to the regional network meetings, which were deemed as not very or not at all useful by 8 out of 85 respondents (9%), and forum to forum support, where 2 out of 17 respondents (12%) reported being fairly dissatisfied with their quality.

Taking these results in tandem with the qualitative feedback received from three PCFs, it appeared that one of the strengths of the services offered by Contact a Family had been their ability to address PCFs differing needs in a flexible and understanding manner. This open approach was felt to have added value to the delivery of the various activities. However, consultees added that the regional events would have benefitted from more

¹⁰ Excluding the 'other' category.

¹¹ Or that services had been very or quite useful.

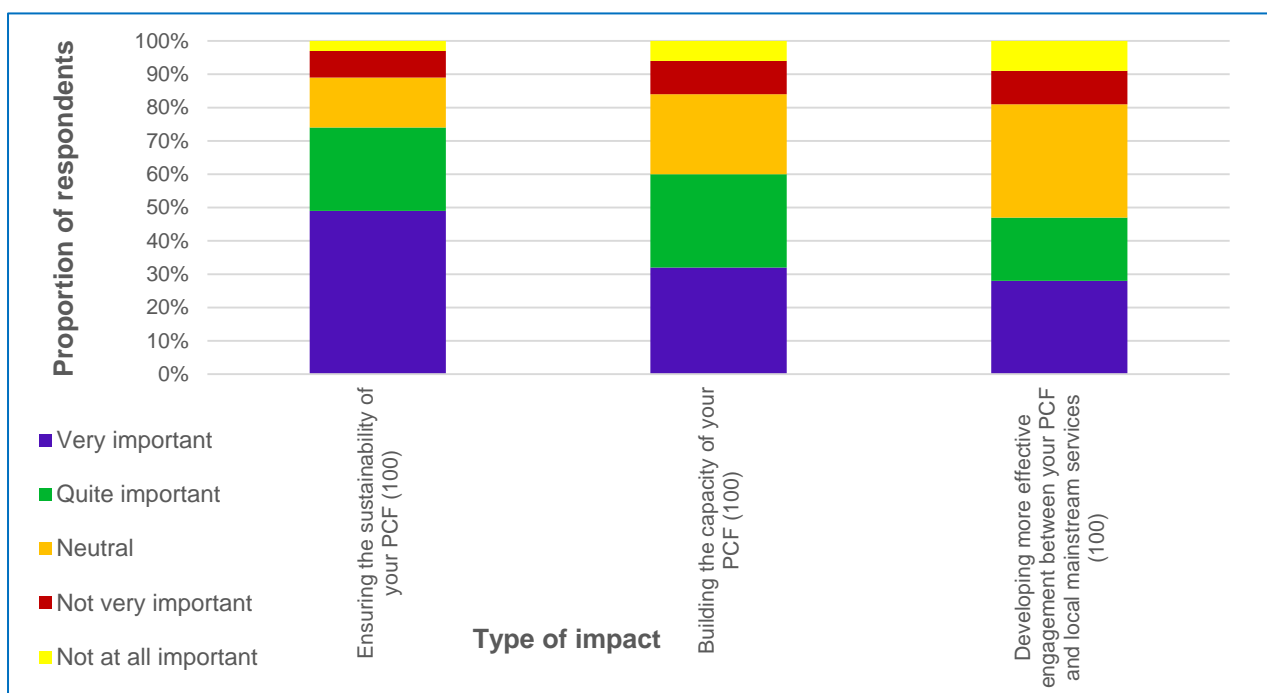
PCF led presentations and content, implying a potential need to broaden the agendas to accommodate this.

Perceived impact of support

Figure 10 illustrates that the services provided by Contact a Family were seen as having had the most impact in relation to PCF sustainability with 74% of respondents reporting this as either very or quite important. Sixty per cent of respondents also reported that they felt the support provided had either been very or quite important in relation to building the capacity of their PCF. This combination of findings aligns well with the objectives of the contract set between Contact a Family and the DfE.

Respondents seemed less convinced by the importance of the relationship between the provided services and the development of more effective engagement between the PCF and local mainstream services, as this impact measure received a neutral response in just over a third of cases. This is likely to reflect the fact that this was not one of the primary aims of the support contract.

Figure 10 Perceived impact of the support from the PCF contract



Source: Survey of Parent Carer Forums (N in brackets)

Summary

Feedback on the support provided to the PCFs through the Contact a Family contract illustrated that the reach and take-up had been very high, with all but two PCFs from across England having accessed at least one of the activities offered. Furthermore, high levels of satisfaction were reported in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support that had been accessed (80% reported being satisfied with the delivery across nearly all the services offered). This was reported in turn to have translated into

impacts in relation to ensuring the sustainability and building the capacity of the majority of PCFs. It is therefore clear that the activities had been well received in the main and were felt to have been effectively delivered by nearly all PCFs.

4. Support for Parent Partnership Services

This chapter presents a summary of the feedback gathered in relation to the National support for Parent Partnership Services contract collated through a targeted quantitative survey and a small number of follow-up qualitative telephone interviews. This is structured as follows:

- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by the National Network of Parent Partnership Services
- Analysis of data on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

One hundred and eleven out of a total 152 parent partnership services across England (73%) provided a response to the parent partnership based survey¹² in February 2013.

Contract Objectives and activities delivered

The objectives of the National support for Parent Partnership Services contract were as follows:

1. Supporting the development of innovative practice within Parent Partnership Services (PPS) and helping PPS to stay on top of national policy developments
2. Encouraging Parent Partnership Services to learn from each other
3. Promoting the role, value and expertise of Parent Partnership Services to learn from each other
4. Working co-operatively at national level with providers of services to parents and young people with SEN and disabilities.

These objectives were to be achieved through the delivery of a variety of activities, which were grouped as follows for the purposes of the evaluation:

- Communications via bulletins (1) and the NPPN website (2)
- Provision of support to undertake annual benchmarking (3)
- Facilitation of regional meetings (4) and e-forums (5)
- Provision of SEN legal training (6) and other training (7)
- Development of exemplifications (8)
- Provision of individual support (9)
- Facilitation of peer to peer support (10).

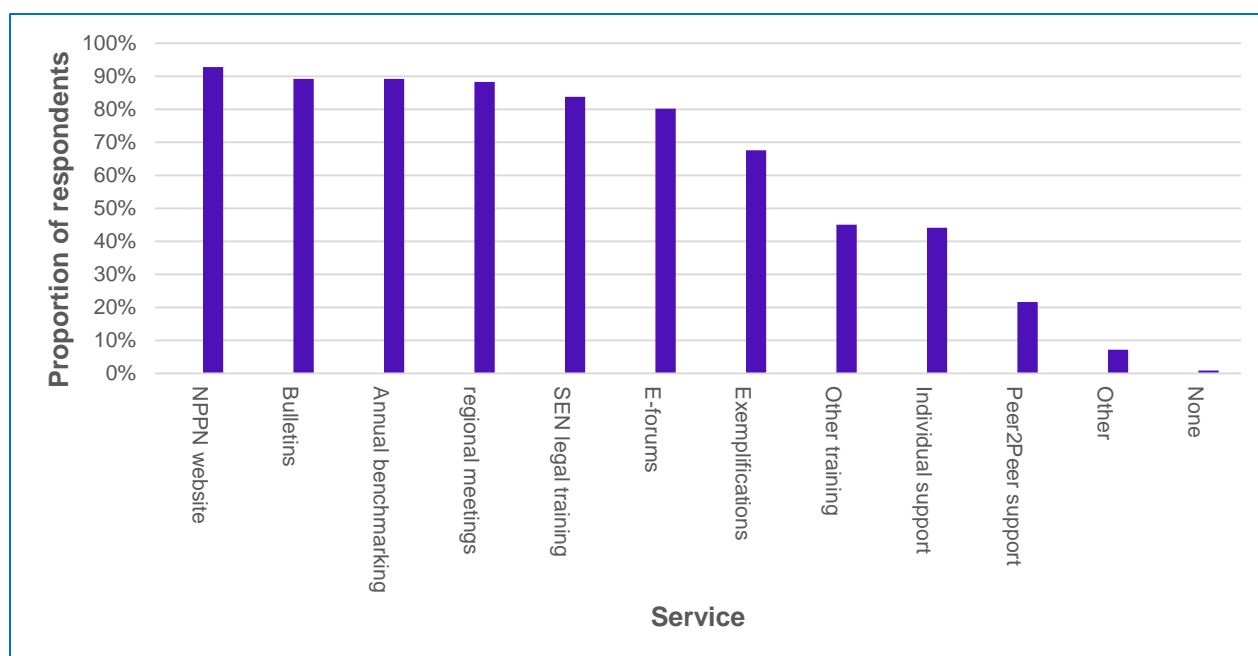
¹² Please note that the base numbers upon which each question has been analysed vary by question, as some of the responses received were partial in their nature, whilst others were dependent on routed questions and therefore only relevant to a sub-set of areas.

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

Figure 11 shows six out of the ten services offered had been accessed by at least 80% of respondents, and only one service (the peer to peer support¹³) had been accessed by less than 40% of respondents, illustrating high levels of take up of the majority of the services. The NPPN website (accessed by 90% of respondents), bulletins (89%), annual benchmarking (89%) and regional meetings (88%) were reported to have been the most commonly used of the services on offer.

Looking across the services offered, nearly half (48%) of respondents reported having accessed eight or more of the ten services offered by the NPPN. This reinforces the findings that take-up of the services had been high, indicating a clear demand for much of what had been offered.

Figure 11 Support for Parent Partnership Services – types of support accessed

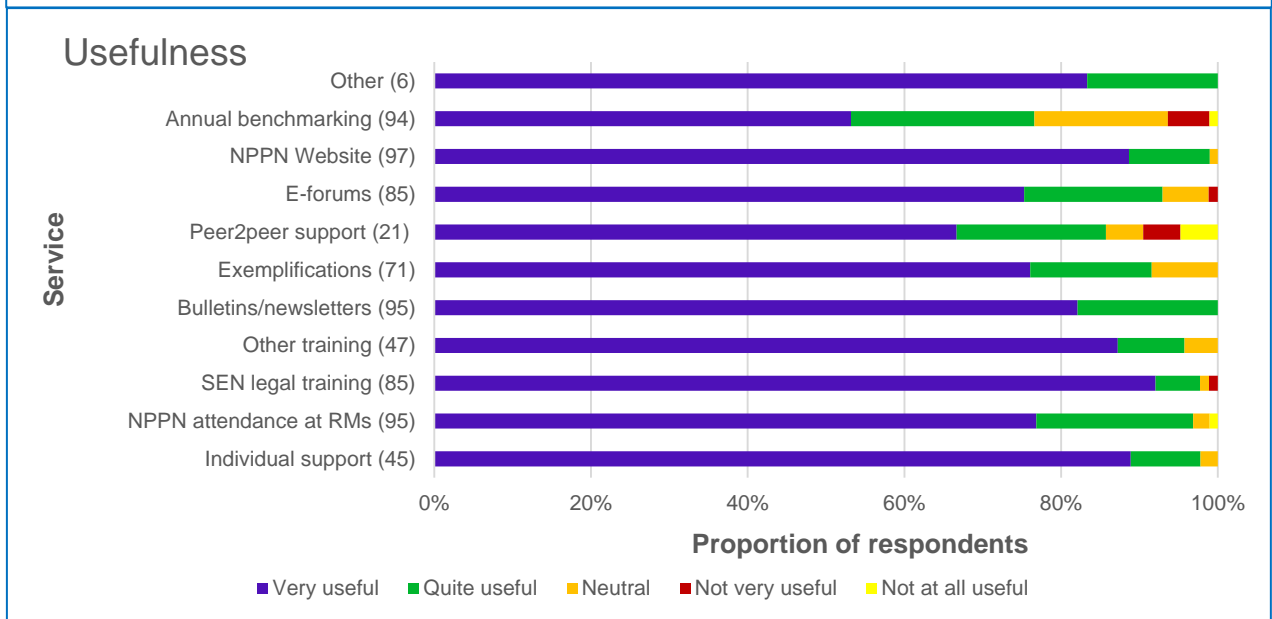
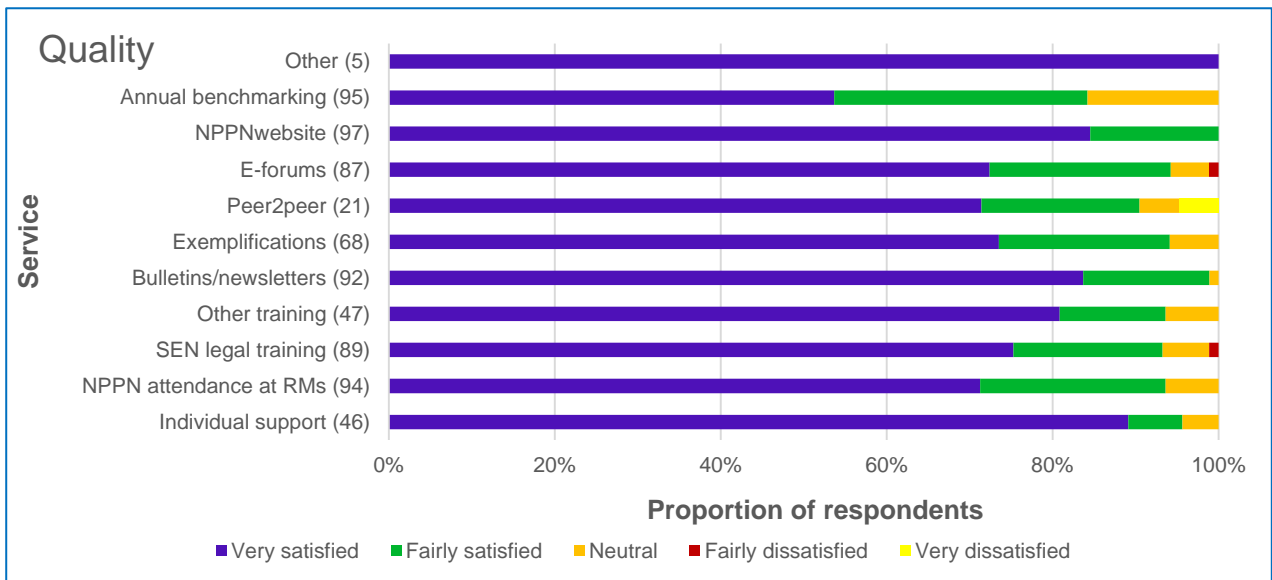
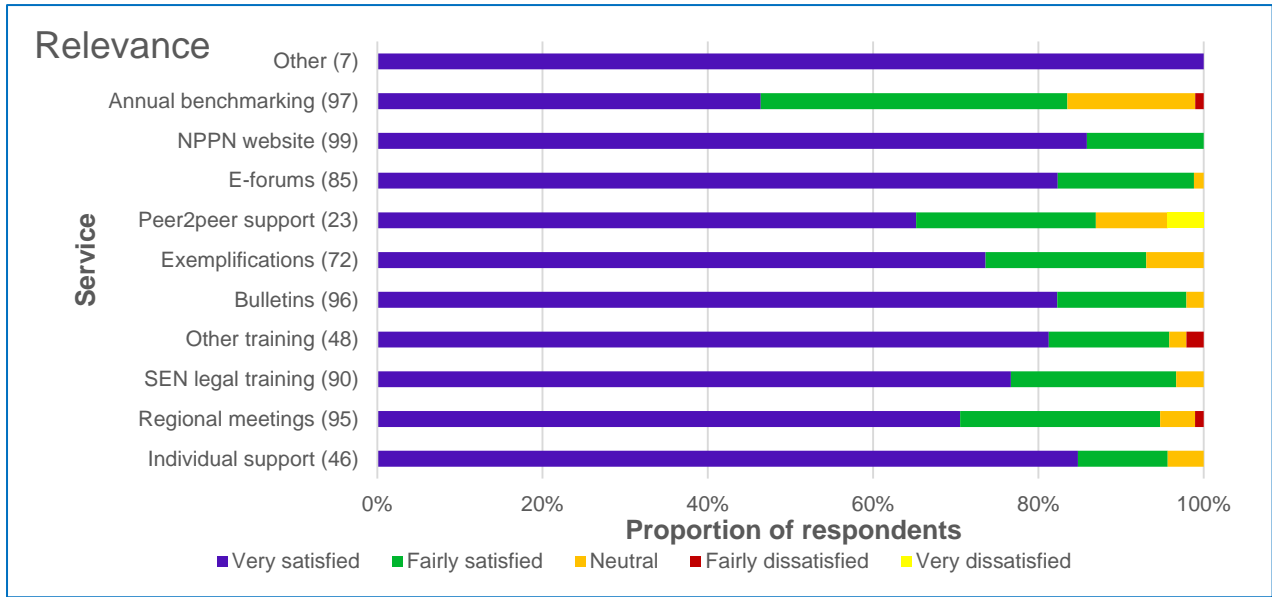


Source: Parent Partnership Survey (N =111)

Satisfaction with the *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness* of the support that had been accessed was reported to be high with no service receiving less than a 77% satisfaction rate (those reporting either being fairly or very satisfied or that the support had been either very or quite useful) relative to all three of the indicators. The NPPN website in particular appeared to be highly regarded, with all respondents reporting that they were either fairly or very satisfied with the service in relation to both *relevance* and *quality*. Both the bulletins and SEN legal training were also associated with high levels of satisfaction across the indicators. Qualitative feedback gathered through follow-up interviews indicated that the NPPN were felt to be responsive, knowledgeable and quick to provide updates, which supported these findings.

¹³ Qualitative feedback suggested that more local authorities had been sharing support and information than the 'peer-to-peer support' figures suggest. This may reflect difficulties in defining and identifying which actions constitute 'peer-to-peer support'.

Figure 12 Satisfaction with relevance, quality & usefulness of support offered in the last 12 months



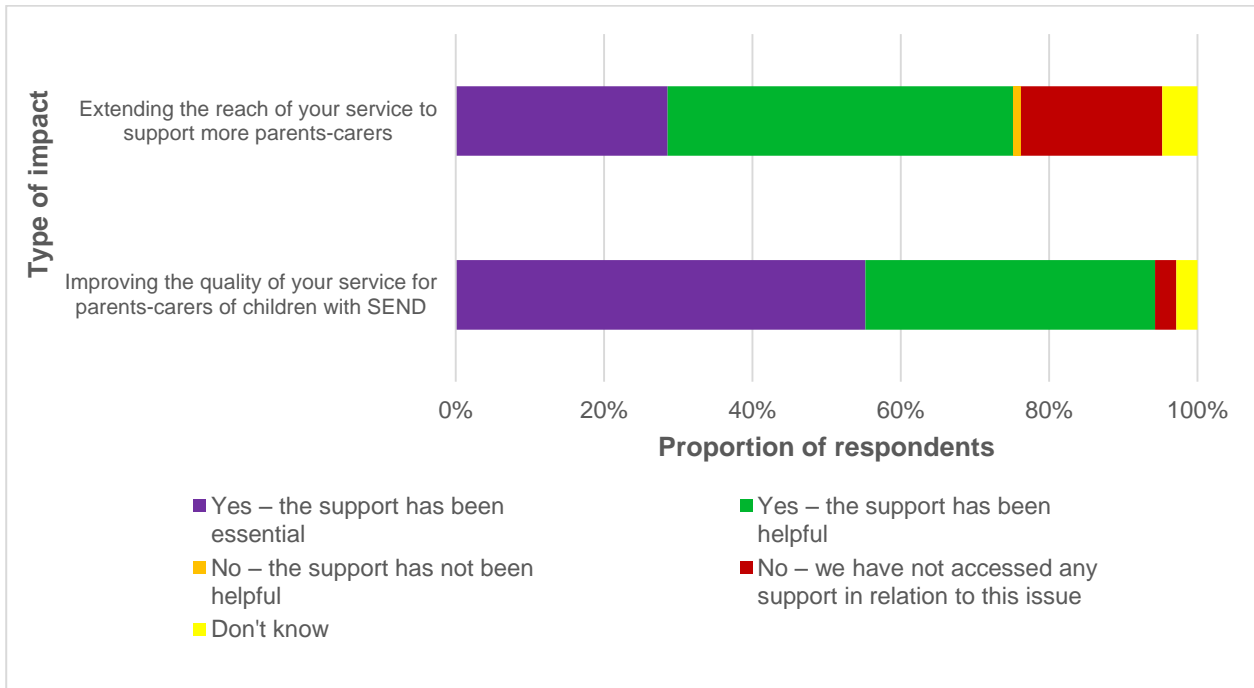
Perceived impact of support

Nearly all (94%) of the responding parent partnership services believed that the support they had received from the NPPN had been helpful in improving the quality of their service (see Figure 13). This included 55% reporting the support had been essential and 39% reporting it had been helpful in relation to the improvement of their service.

The feedback regarding NPPN’s role in facilitating the extension of services to more families was also positive. That is, 75% of respondents reported the services provided by the NPPN had been essential or helpful in relation to extending their services. It should also be noted that approximately one-fifth of respondents felt that they had not accessed any support in relation to this issue and therefore the NPPN may wish to consider how best to communicate and support this issue to support their progress moving forwards.

Findings from the qualitative follow-up interviews suggested that there would be a big gap in support if the NPPN contract was withdrawn. When considered in combination with the findings from the survey, this implied that the NPPN had effectively reached and supported their target group.

Figure 13 Perceived impact of support from the Parent Partnership Support contract



Source: Parent Partnership Survey (N=105)

Summary

Take-up of the support services provided by the NPPN was very high, with at least 80% of the responding PPSs reporting they had accessed at least six of the ten offered services. This indicated there had been a clear demand for much of what had been offered.

Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support that had been accessed was reported to be high with no service receiving less than a 77% satisfaction rate relative to all three of the indicators. The evidence also illustrated that the support had been perceived by nearly all (94%) the responding PPSs to have been helpful in improving the quality of their service, and similarly the majority also felt that it had helped to extend the reach of their service to more parent carers.

It is therefore clear that the NPPN had delivered an effective support offer that had been well received by nearly all the responding PPSs.

5. Preparing for Adulthood

This chapter presents a summary of the feedback gathered in relation to the Preparing for Adulthood contract, collated through a targeted quantitative survey and a small number of follow-up qualitative telephone interviews. This is structured as follows:

- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by NDTi, Helen Sanderson Associates and the Council for Disabled Children
- Analysis of data on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

Seventy eight out of a total 152 parent partnership services across England (51%) provided a response to the preparing for adulthood survey¹⁴ in February 2013. This represents a slightly lower response rate relative to the other targeted surveys, which reflects the more targeted nature of this contract, which sought to work intensively with thirteen of the pathfinder areas and then cascade materials through their website and workshops to other areas.

Contract Objectives and activities delivered

The objectives of the Preparing for Adulthood contract were as follows:

1. Draw together the best practice on preparation for adulthood from secondary schools onwards
2. Encourage local services for children and adults to share and learn from each other, to support better outcomes for young people
3. Promote the role, value and expertise of preparation for adulthood services at local and national levels
4. Encourage the development of co-operative arrangements between schools. Colleges, the VCS, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus and health agencies.

These objectives were to be achieved through the delivery of a variety of activities, which were grouped as follows for the purposes of the evaluation:

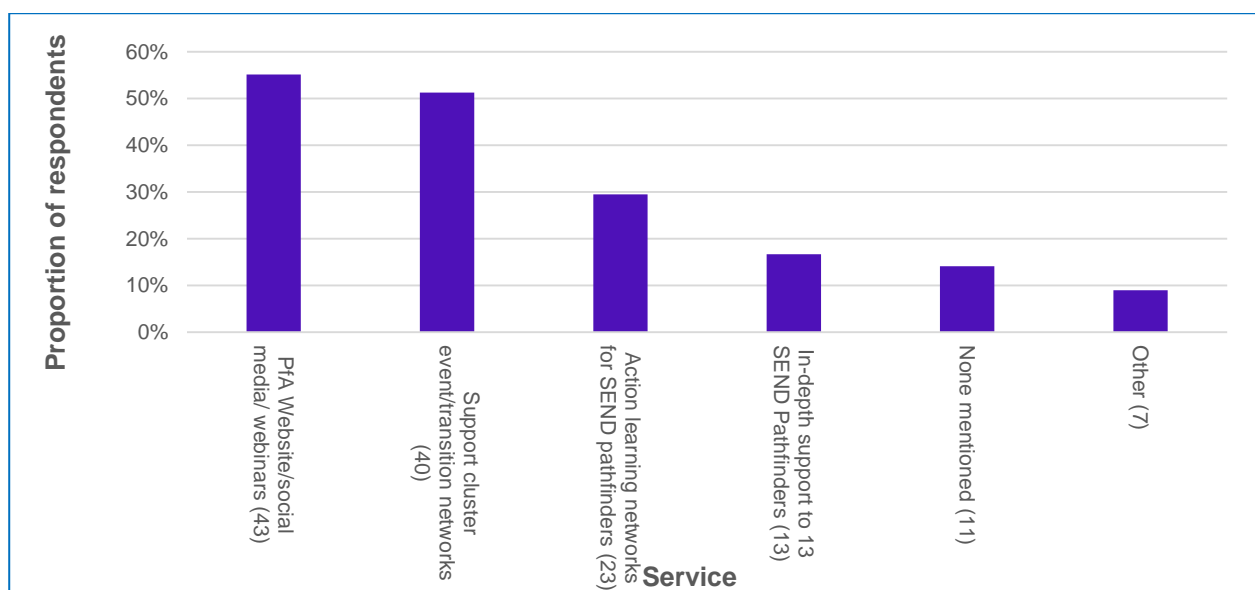
- Communications through the PfA website, social media and webinars
- Facilitation of support cluster events and the transition networks
- Facilitation of action learning networks for the SEND pathfinder areas
- In-depth support to 13 SEND pathfinder areas.

¹⁴ Please note that the base numbers upon which each question has been analysed vary by question, as some of the responses received were partial in their nature, whilst others were dependent on routed questions and therefore only relevant to a sub-set of areas.

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

Eighty six per cent of respondents reported having accessed at least one of the services offered by PfA, suggesting that nearly all had taken up part of the offer. The most commonly used services were the PfA website/social media and the cluster events/transition networks, both of which had been accessed by over 51% of respondents¹⁵. Furthermore, the targeted nature of the remaining two services (targeted at a small number of pathfinder areas) was also clearly illustrated in the responses, where 29% and 17% had taken up these services respectively (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 Preparing for Adulthood – types of support accessed



Source: Survey of PfA leads (N=in brackets)

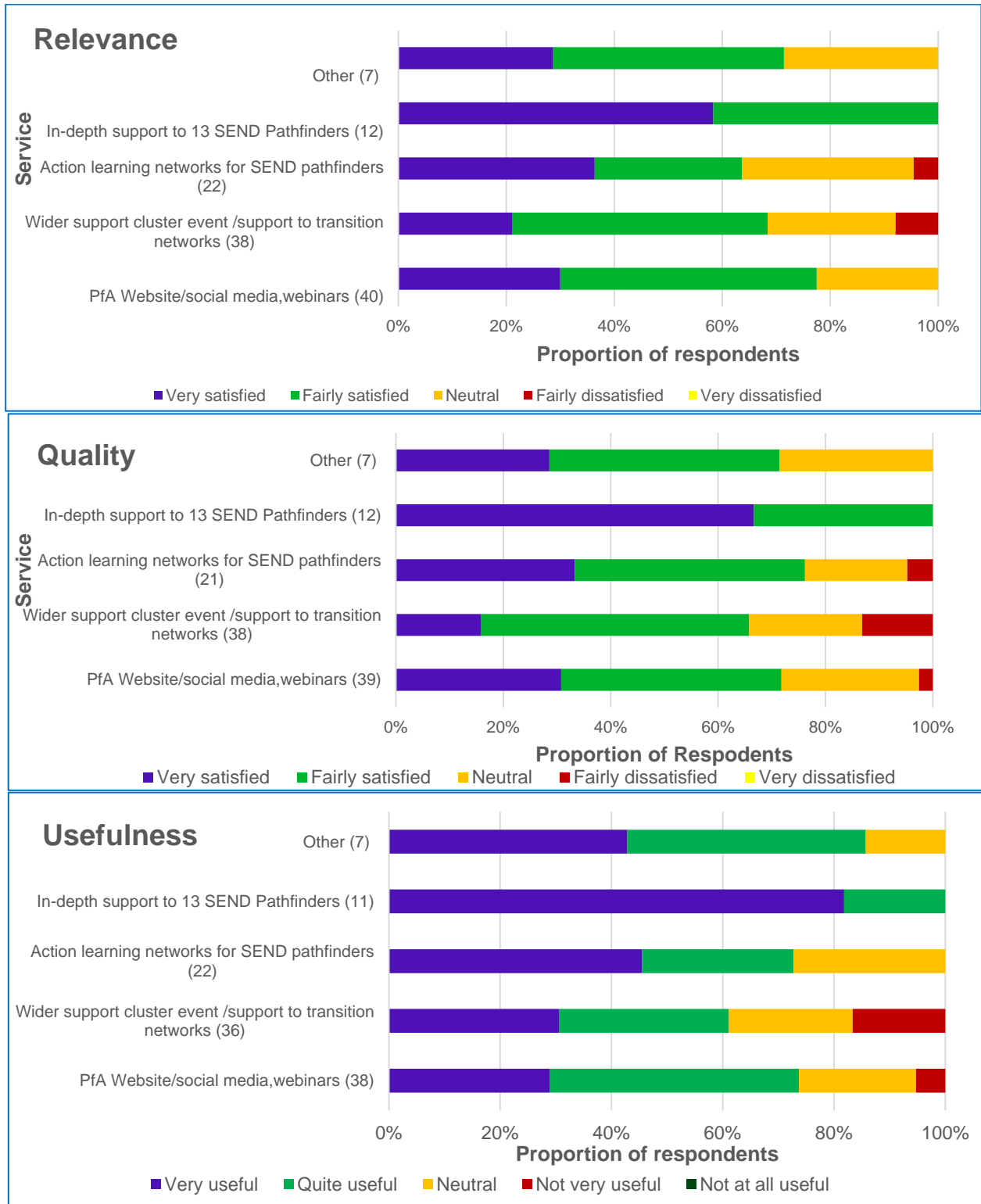
Satisfaction in relation to the *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness* of the services that had been accessed was largely positive, with at least 62% of respondents stating that they were either fairly or very satisfied with each of the relevant services (or had found the services quite or very useful) across the three indicators (see Figure 15).

Looking specifically at the in-depth support provided to pathfinder areas, it was clear that those that had provided a response had found the support relevant, of sufficient quality and useful. This was reinforced through consultation with a small number of the areas and illustrated that the targeted support had been well received and was being pitched and delivered at the appropriate levels. Feedback across the remaining services was also positive, albeit more variable due to higher levels of respondents expressing a neutral view in relation to the three indicators of satisfaction.

¹⁵ Feedback from PfA indicated that the number of respondents reporting attendance at cluster events presents an underestimate of the actual figures, as their attendance records illustrate the nearly all local areas had attended these events.

Dissatisfaction levels were low, with the highest levels being reported in relation to the cluster events/transition networks. Reasons for this dissatisfaction included local areas not being provided with sufficient notice of either the dates or agendas of the cluster meetings, which had made decisions around attendance difficult.

Figure 15 Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support offered in the last 12 months



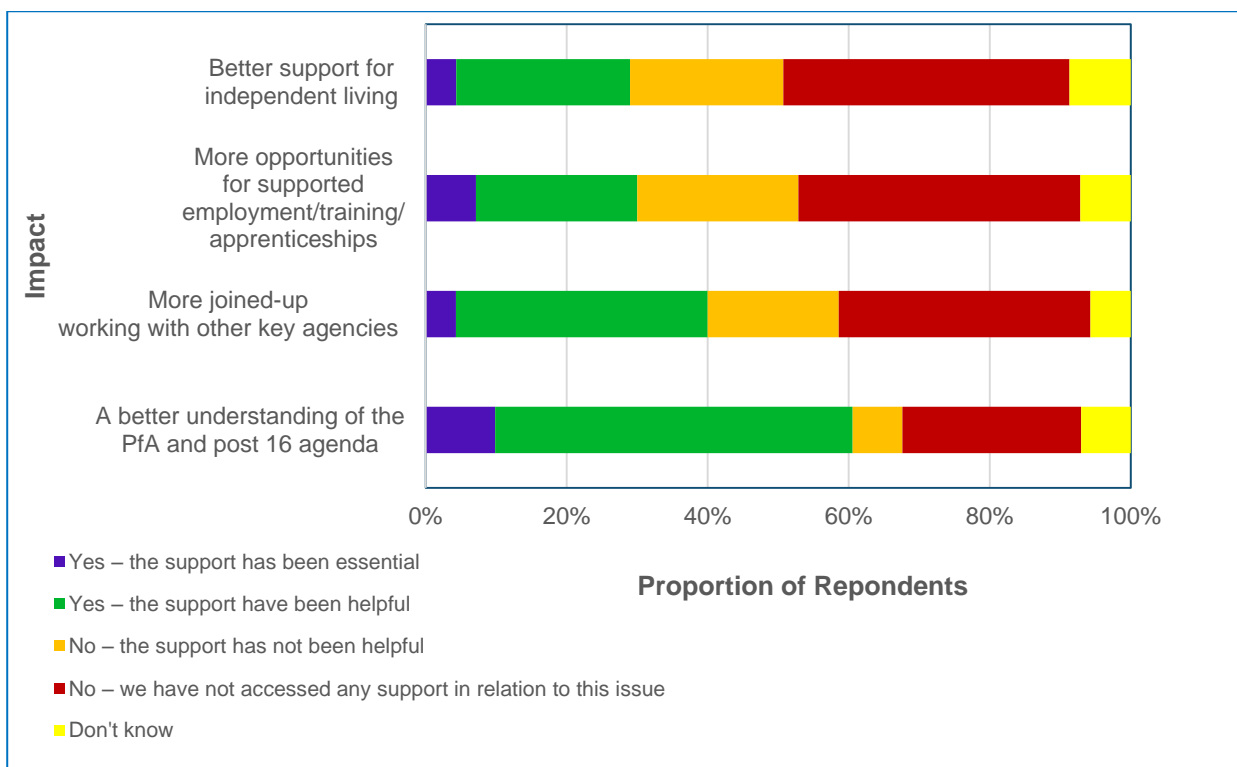
Source: Survey of PfA leads (N in brackets)

Perceived impact of support

Figure 16 illustrates that the largest impacts were reported in relation to the creation of a better understanding of the Preparing for Adulthood and post 16 agenda, with 51% of respondents reporting that PfA assistance had been helpful and 10% believing it had been essential. This finding was reflected in the qualitative follow up interviews, which indicated that the PfA team were well regarded, knowledgeable and committed to promoting the post 16 agenda.

The survey findings also illustrated a high number of both neutral and not applicable¹⁶ responses, which may reflect that only a small number of pathfinders benefitted from the more intensive targeted support. In addition, findings from the qualitative follow-up interviews also suggested that despite helpful support from PfA, many areas continued to experience uncertainty around the PfA agenda as they lacked practical examples of how to progress. They therefore added that they would welcome a move towards putting the ‘theory into practice’ over the coming months.

Figure 16 Impact of the support accessed through the PfA contract



Source: Survey of PfA leads (N in brackets)

¹⁶ Not applicable refers to the ‘No – we have not accessed any support in relation to this issue’ option

Summary

Nearly all (84%) respondents reported having accessed at least one of the services offered as part of the PfA support contract, thereby implying that take-up of the offer had been high. Satisfaction in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the services that had been accessed was reported to be largely positive, with at least 62% of respondents reporting that they were satisfied with each of the relevant services across the three indicators.

Looking across the findings, it was clear that the PfA team had made effective progress, especially in their targeted work with a small number of the pathfinder areas. Similarly, the activities delivered by the team were perceived to have had a positive impact on raising awareness of the PfA agenda, which now needed to be backed up with practical resources and a move towards putting the theory into practice.

6. Support for Short Breaks

This chapter presents a summary of the feedback gathered in relation to the *Support for the Delivery of Short Breaks* contract collated through a targeted quantitative survey and a small number of follow-up qualitative telephone interviews. This is structured as follows:

- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by Impact
- Analysis of data on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

Ninety four out of a total 152 short break leads across England (62%) provided a response to the short breaks survey¹⁷ in February 2013.

Contract Objectives and activities delivered

The objectives of the Preparing for Adulthood contract were as follows:

1. Provision of support for local authorities to deliver legal obligations to provide short breaks
2. The continued development and dissemination of good practice to facilitate sector and parent-led developments in how short breaks are provided, and build VCS capacity
3. Support and advise the Department and its partners to develop appropriate policies which could respond to identified gaps in service.

These objectives were to be achieved through the delivery of a variety of activities, which were grouped as follows for the purposes of the evaluation:

- Dissemination of monthly newsletters
- Facilitation of workshops and regional events
- Facilitation of regional cluster group meetings
- Communication through the Impact website and other web based resources
- Development and dissemination of toolkits
- Provision of one to one support.

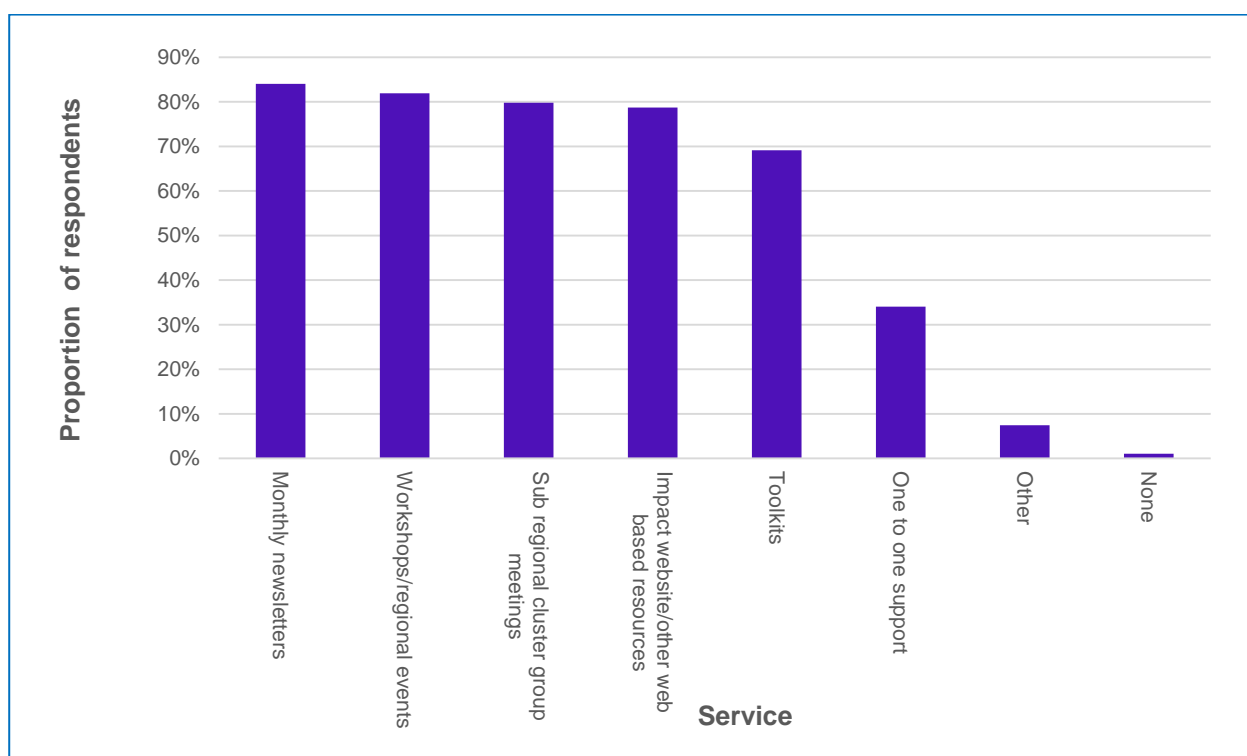
¹⁷ Please note that the base numbers upon which each question has been analysed vary by question, as some of the responses received were partial in their nature, whilst others were dependent on routed questions and therefore only relevant to a sub-set of areas.

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

Take-up of Short Break services was very high, with 99% of respondents having accessed at least one of the services offered. Figure 17 shows that monthly newsletters, workshops/regional events, sub regional cluster group meetings and the impact website had been accessed by at least 79% of respondents and therefore proved the most popular of the services offered.

Looking across the services, the data showed that over three-quarters (78%) of respondents had accessed four or more of the six services offered through the Impact support contract. This implied that take up across the board had been high and that there was demand for the mix of services on offer.

Figure 17 Take-up of support accessed through the Short Breaks contract

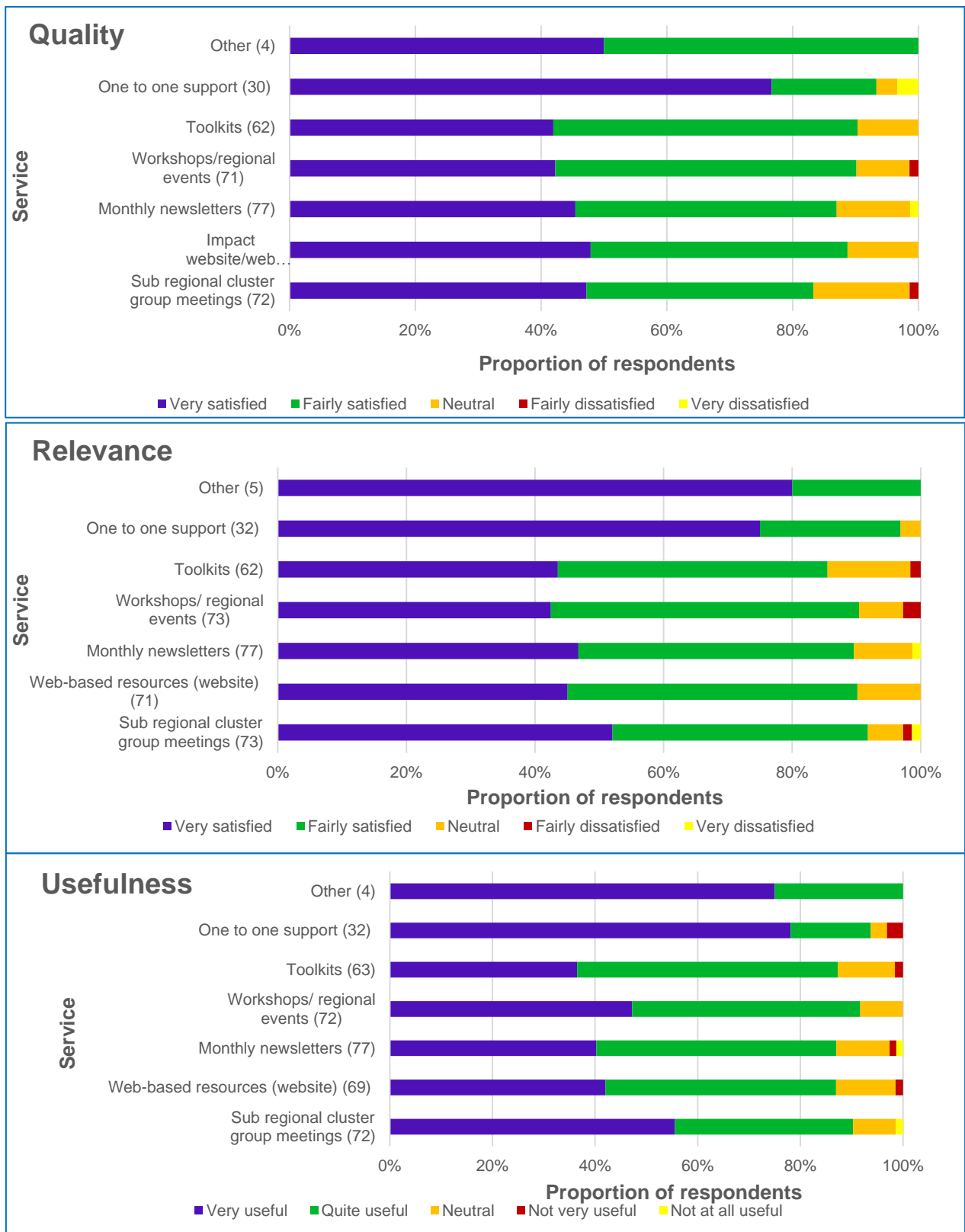


Source: Survey of Short Breaks leads (N =94)

Satisfaction with the services received was high in relation to their *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness*, with over 82% of all respondents reporting that they were either fairly or very satisfied with all the services they had accessed (or had found them quite or very useful) across all three indicators. Of particular note were the:

- Satisfaction levels reported in relation to the provision of one to one support, where at least 94% provided positive feedback against the three satisfaction indicators
- High levels of *usefulness* reported in relation to all services accessed, where at least 88% reported each service as having been either quite or very useful
- Very low levels of dissatisfaction across all the indicators and services.

Figure 18 Satisfaction with the relevance, quality and usefulness of the support offered in the last 12 months



Source: Survey of Short Breaks leads (N in brackets)

These findings suggest that Impact had correctly and appropriately identified the needs of their target audience and had subsequently delivered an effective suite of services to

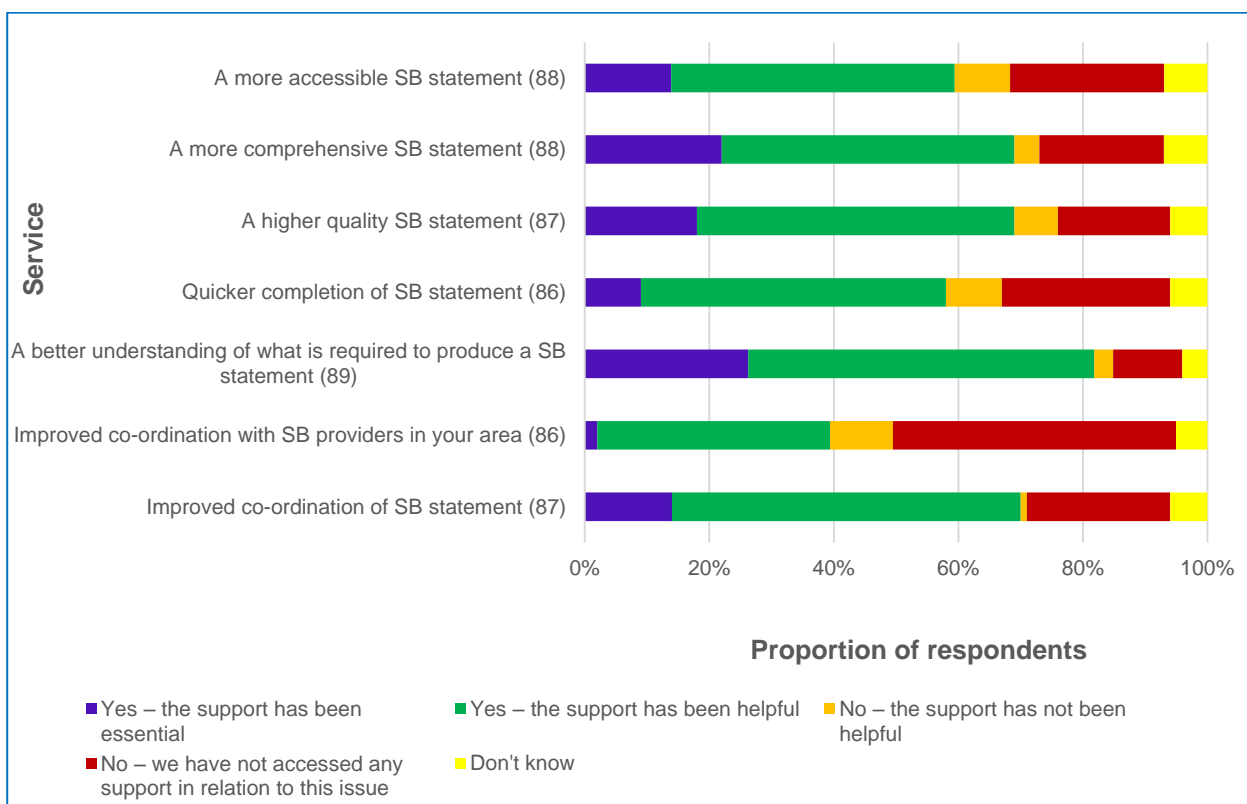
meet the required need. Evidence gathered from the qualitative follow-up interviews reinforced this positive message, and indicated that the Impact team had been both responsive and considered in the support they had offered.

Perceived impact of support

Those that had accessed services provided by the Impact support contract generally reported that this had led them to produce a better short breaks statement, with between 58-81% of respondents stating the support had been either essential or helpful in relation to each of the short break statement related outcomes (see Figure 19). At the top end of this range was the belief by most (81%) that the support had created a better understanding of what was required to produce a short breaks statement, and at the lower end (58%) was the belief that the support had led to quicker completion of the statement.

The only exception to this largely positive progress was around improved communication with local short break providers, which the majority of respondents felt had not been influenced. Feedback from the Impact team showed that this had not been one of the primary focuses of their work and that they therefore agreed with the survey data.

Figure 19 Impact of the support offered through the Short Breaks contract



Source: Survey of Short Breaks leads (N in brackets)

Summary

Take-up of Short Break services was very high, with 99% of respondents having accessed at least one of the services offered. This was further evidenced by the finding that over three-quarters (78%) of respondents had accessed four or more of the six services formally offered through the Impact support contract.

Satisfaction with the services received was high in relation to their *relevance*, *quality* and *usefulness*, with over 82% of all respondents reporting that they were satisfied with all the services they had accessed across all three indicators. Similarly, a large number of respondents reported that the support had been helpful in supporting the development and delivery of their statutory short breaks statement.

These findings suggest that Impact had correctly and appropriately identified the needs of their target audience and had subsequently delivered an effective suite of services to meet the required need.

7. The BOND contract

Through the scoping phase, it was decided that the most appropriate way to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the BOND contract would be through a mixture of in-depth telephone/ face to face interviews with key stakeholders in one of the five 'increasing capacity' pilot areas. This chapter presents a summary of the feedback in relation to the *BOND* contract, supplemented where appropriate with additional evidence provided by the consortium of progress across the other pilot sites¹⁸.

This is structured as follows:

- A summary of the contract objectives as set by the DfE and the activities delivered by the consortium led by Youngminds
- Analysis of evidence on take-up of and satisfaction with the support offered
- Perceived impact of the support that has been delivered.

Contract Objectives

The objectives of the BOND contract were as follows:

1. Disseminate good practice from Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) where the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has been commissioned by schools to provide direct support and encourage local authorities to capitalise on investment in this area.
2. Identify the barriers and opportunities faced by the voluntary and community sector in delivering mental health support to children and young people.
3. Identify how the organisation/consortium can overcome barriers and increase capacity of the VCS to deliver early intervention mental health support to children and young people.
4. Agree and implement a series of innovative evidence-based approaches that will assist in building the capacity of the voluntary and communities sector.
5. Facilitate and set up open communications between government departments and voluntary and community sector organisations (VCSOs) delivering, early intervention mental health services for children and young people.

Contract delivery

Over the course of the contract, BOND has aimed to improve the ability of VCSOs to respond to the needs of commissioners - schools, local authorities, and the NHS - and deliver more effective mental health services for children and young people. This included: working with VCSOs to improve their readiness to bid successfully for public

¹⁸ The information was collected over the course of March 2013 and is therefore relevant as of that point in time.

sector contracts; and working to improve the awareness of commissioners of the importance of mental health services for children and young people, and the value that the VCS can add if commissioned to deliver these.

BOND had worked with five pilot areas by the end of March 2013, which were selected on the basis of a competitive application process. Support for commissioners and the VCS in these areas was delivered through a number of activities including three one day workshops, and intensive one-to-one support for selected VCSOs. While support has been tailored to the needs of participating areas, common themes included:

- A discussion of changes in the commissioning landscape and the implications of this for VCSOs
- Brokerage activities aimed at showcasing the value of mental health services for children and young people, and that which VCSOs could deliver
- A discussion of the commissioning process, and how VCSOs could most effectively package and promote their offer.

The consortium also developed and delivered the ACE-V tool. This tool provided an accessible online directory of VCSOs and detailed information setting out evidence of their experience and competence in delivering Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The aim of the tool was to provide a consistent platform through which commissioners could not only ascertain which VCSOs in their local area might be equipped to meet an established need, but also if they could be trusted to deliver a commission effectively.

At the time of the evaluation, development of the ACE-V tool was still ongoing. As a result, *it was decided to focus the evaluation on the support provided to the pilot areas (which closely aligns with contract Objective 4)* as this was most likely to demonstrate if impact had been achieved. It is also worth noting that this strand was the most resource intensive.

Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support

The decision to focus support in five areas was predicated on the assumption that intensive activity was required if the support was to deliver sustainable impact. Teeside was selected to trial the support package as BOND already had links there, and it was felt that the area was at a stage where the support could be effective.

The other four areas were selected on the basis of a competitive application process. Bids were selected based on a number of criteria including the need demonstrate that their area served a population of over 150,000 children and young people. This meant that most local authorities had to put in a joint-application, which created a number of opportunities but also challenges. For example, in some areas the application provided an opportunity to improve inter-authority relations, and VCSOs gained an insight into the working practices of a number of neighbouring areas. However it also meant that BOND

had to target multiple commissioners with differing: relationships with their local VCSOs; commissioning processes; and attitudes to mental health services for children and young people.

Despite some of the challenges illustrated above, demand for the support was strong. Twenty-eight expressions of interest were received for the round two pilots. Four were successful. These were Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley, South West London, Cambridgeshire and Staffordshire. One of these started in late 2012, and it was decided that this would be the most appropriate focus for the evaluation. Feedback gathered from stakeholders in the selected area was enhanced through consideration of internal evaluation materials commissioned by BOND covering their work in the other pilot areas.

Take-up of support

Overall take-up of the support by VCSOs was felt to have been strong, particularly where an active Council of Voluntary Services (CVS) organisation was already in place. Interviewees considered that the role of this organisation had been a vital source of contact information, and a positive influence in encouraging local VCSOs to reflect on how they could improve on their existing record in securing public sector contracts. In areas with less developed networks, there was concern about the capacity of the contract to benefit an area's smaller providers. Indeed it was suggested that in such areas, engaging with VCSOs should form the focus of initial activity.

A number of interviewees commented that take up would have been more comprehensive and therefore the pilot would have been more successful if local authorities had been engaged more effectively. Two issues appear to have contributed to this perception:

- The need to demonstrate that each area serviced a population of over 150,000 children and young people - while in some locations the pilot provided an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, in others, where relationships were less well developed, engagement was felt to have suffered
- The pilot was launched at a time of substantial reform in the NHS – this resulted in significant change to local authority and health commissioner related staffing, which in turn had created uncertainty about who to contact, and lack of capacity to participate in pilot related activities. This included the devolution of responsibility for commissioning CAHMS to local Clinical Commissioning Groups, which again was felt to have led to insufficient engagement from the relevant commissioning staff.

While a number of areas indicated that they had been comforted by recent comments from their commissioners, few indicated that they had managed to engage directly with them. However, given many of these organisations had not yet agreed their strategic priorities, it was unclear if any engagement would have been meaningful at this stage.

Turning now to look at school related take up, although there was evidence that some schools had engaged in pilot-related activity, there remained concern that more could have been done to raise their awareness of the potential support on offer. That is, a large number of school leaders were felt to have demonstrated little interest in exploring the opportunities associated with their new commissioning responsibilities. In some areas this appeared to have manifested itself into a willingness to continue to support existing local authority pathways, implying engagement from local authority commissioners may have been sufficient. However, in others, where the local authority was not in a position to support these arrangements, there was concern that existing commissioning pathways were in danger of disintegrating, which presented an issue that could have been addressed through support from BOND.

Satisfaction with the support

By and large interviewees were very satisfied with the support provided by the BOND consortium. Feedback provided on the individual elements of the support is detailed below:

Scoping support/planning workshops

Given the scope of the pilot, the planning workshops were seen as essential in bringing together all of the major stakeholders and agreeing priority areas of support. It was felt that this process was made all the more important by the very different relationships that existed between commissioners and providers in each area.

Local launch event/Thematic workshops

The majority of interviewees felt that these events provided a very useful networking opportunity to bring a variety of commissioners and providers together from different areas. On the whole, interviewees felt that the topics discussed were appropriate, and that the content delivered by the consortium had been of a high quality. A number of interviewees indicated that the workshop on demonstrating effective outcomes had been particularly relevant to them.

Interviewees suggested a number of ways that the consortium could have improved their offer. This included a couple of interviewees noting that there was often too much time between sessions, and that the pace of delivery could have been quicker. It was suggested that if the workshops could be condensed from a full to a half day, they might prove more attractive to more organisations, as relatively senior members of staff had been unable to set aside the time to attend the current full day ones.

One to one support for VCSOs

One of the organisations consulted had received one-to-one support. Feedback on this form of support was very positive, particularly the quality of support offered around organisations developing an appropriate outcomes framework. This support was felt to have led to major improvements in the organisation's capacity to successfully tender for work from public sector clients.

Tools and resources

There was broad consensus amongst interviewees that the tools and resources were most helpful to those organisations that were beginning to think about how they could be more successful in bidding for public sector contracts. One to one support was deemed more appropriate to meeting the needs of organisations further on in their journey.

Perceived impact of support

Despite the difficult climate in which the pilot had been delivered – with the substantially altered roll of local authorities within the commissioning process - there was evidence to suggest that the support offered by BOND had had a positive impact. That is, participating local authority areas consulted had used the support to extend and enhance their existing activity and therefore had made progress to build the capacity of VCSOs to win work from the public sector.

Building the commission-readiness of VCSOs

One of the major challenges facing the consortium has been the need to interact with local authorities at very different stages in their journey in relation to engaging the VCS in CAHMS commissioning. While this remained the case, there is evidence to suggest that the support offered through the pilot had led to progress in each locality. For example, in one area, a local health commissioner committed to set aside an additional £125,000 for new investment in VCSOs. In addition, most of the commissioners consulted noted an increased willingness amongst VCSOs to work in a collaborative way with their peers as a result of their engagement with BOND. While it was noted that no formal consortia have yet been developed, it was recognised that until VCSOs gain a clearer understanding of the new commissioning landscape, this was unlikely to be a rewarding endeavour.

Strengthening relationships between commissioners and providers

A number of interviewees felt that the pilot had provided a useful space in which stakeholders had had an opportunity to talk through the significance of recent changes to the commissioning landscape (including a reduction in the role of local authorities as commissioners) and identify where opportunities did exist, to sustain – or even expand - their work with the VCS. Indeed a number of providers noted that attendance of the workshops had led to the identification of a new opportunity around counselling services for 0-10 year olds. In another area, the local authority decided to make an additional £50,000 available to their schools to support joint-commissioning activity.

Improving shared understanding of local commissioning priorities

Across both commissioners and provider organisations there was concern that changes in the policy landscape had the potential to destabilise existing commissioning pathways. While it was noted that there had been some positive messages from some local health commissioners around the continued role of the VCS in delivering CAHMS services, there was concern that in some areas school leaders had failed to respond to their new role as commissioning bodies. Until this engagement had taken place, the opportunities

for VCSOs to engage with this market remained limited. As such, in one area BOND had developed a leadership and development programme for head teachers and early years leads, in partnership with the National College for School Leadership. In another area, the consortium had delivered a VCS market event for head teachers.

The BOND contract had therefore resulted in positive and differing impacts across the areas consulted, indicating that the approach used to provide support had worked well. However, given the approach was resource intensive to deliver, only a handful of areas had benefitted from the support to date. The challenge moving forwards will therefore be to understand how to effectively engage, resource and work with a larger number of areas to take forward this agenda.

Summary

The small scale contract had been effective in building a sense of shared purpose between commissioners and providers, despite the challenging time at which it had been delivered which had coincided with substantial changes to the commissioning landscape. The support had been most effective in those areas with a history of commissioning CAMHS from VCSOs, however, interviewees also felt that even in those areas where these relationships had not been as strong, the pilot had helped to cultivate stronger links.

The changes in the commissioning landscape had led to significant uncertainty, and while there was frustration that partners had not been able to engage more school leaders/health commissioners, significant effort had been spent in trying to do so.

Those that received support over the course of the pilot were very satisfied with its quality, usefulness and relevance. The thematic workshops in particular were identified as a good networking opportunity and were felt to have been very useful in helping VCSOs navigate their way through the new commissioning landscape. A number of interviewees indicated that the workshop on demonstrating effective outcomes had been particularly relevant to them. That said there was some concern that there was a need to better tailor support to the varied needs of different localities.

Overall, despite the challenging climate, the pilot was felt to have had a positive impact on the capacity of VCSOs in the three local authority areas to successfully bid for public sector contracts. However, until there was increased certainty over the commissioning landscape, there was concern that the benefits of this work were unlikely to be fully realised.

8. Awareness of the SEN reforms and potential areas for future support

The Heads of SEN were asked to provide their views on their local area’s awareness of the SEND Green paper reforms, their readiness to meet the reforms, and the areas they felt less confident about and therefore may benefit from the provision of additional support. This information was gathered through the Head of SEN survey, the results of which are presented in this chapter¹⁹.

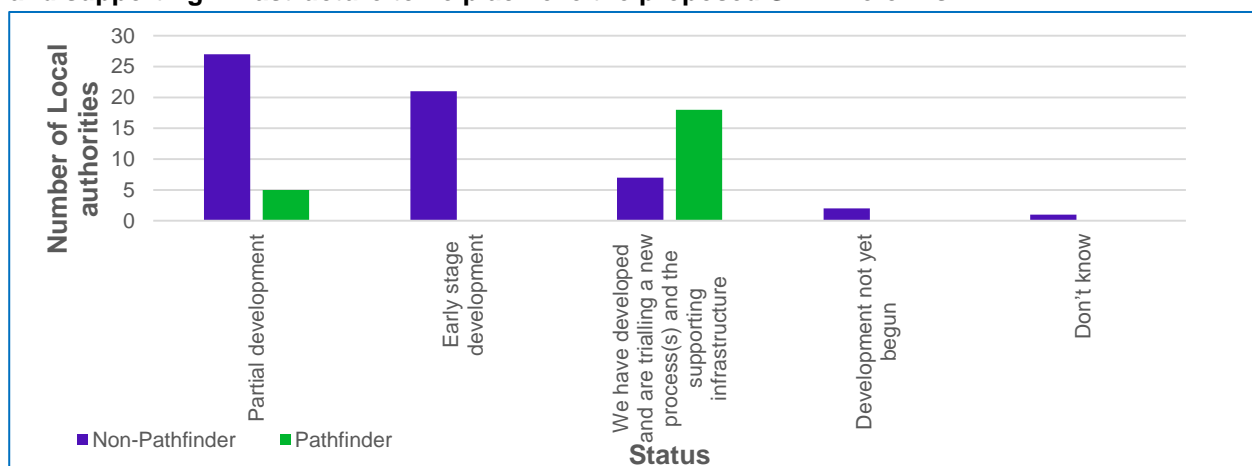
Where possible, the analysis is divided to illustrate any difference between the responses provided by pathfinder and non-pathfinder areas²⁰. Similarly, where relevant, the findings are supplemented by findings from the parent carer, parent partnership, short breaks and preparing for adulthood surveys.

Awareness of the SEN reforms

Awareness of the proposed SEND reforms was high across the board. This included 84% of the responding Heads of SEN reporting being very aware, and between 78-98% of parent carer forums, parent partnership services, short breaks leads and transition leads reporting they were either fairly or very aware of the reforms.

Figure 20 shows that the vast majority of Heads of SEN felt that their local area was actively considering measures aimed at improving the readiness of their area (97%)²¹. This included a majority (71%) that felt they were either at a stage of partial development or had already developed and were trialling a new process and supporting infrastructure.

Figure 20 The extent to which local authorities were considering the development of new processes and supporting infrastructure to help achieve the proposed SEND reforms



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=81)

¹⁹ The Head of SEN survey was undertaken in February 2013 and therefore results presented in this chapter reflect the views of respondents as of that point in time.

²⁰ The sample was made up from 23 Pathfinder areas and 58 Non-Pathfinder areas.

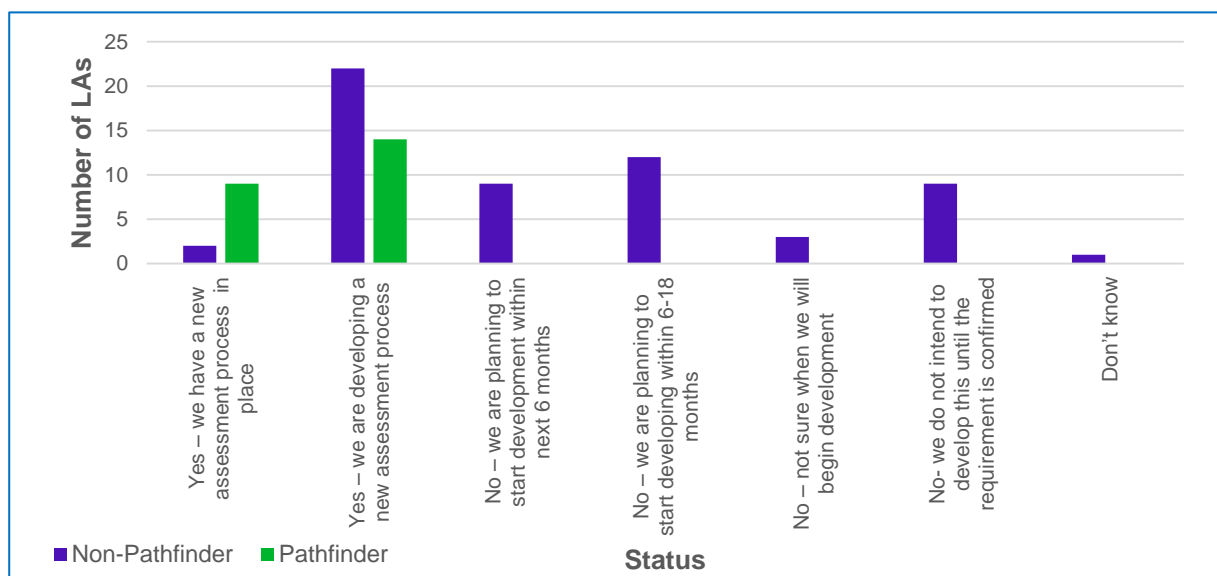
²¹ Figure refers to all Heads of SEN who indicated that they had developed & trialled new processes and supporting infrastructure, were at partial development, or were in the early stages of development.

The data also showed that the pathfinder areas were more advanced than the non-pathfinder areas, with all reporting having reached at least the partial development stage. Nonetheless, the progress made by the non-pathfinder areas should be seen as encouraging, with 7 and 27 (out of a total of 58) reporting having reached either the stage of already trialling a developed process or partial development respectively.

Development of a new integrated or single assessment process

As might be expected, the Heads of SEN from pathfinder areas reported having made more progress in relation to the development of a new integrated or single assessment process relative to those from non-pathfinder areas. That is, just over two-fifths (41%) of the Heads of SEN from the 58 non-pathfinder areas and all those from the pathfinder areas (n=23) indicated that their area was in the process of developing or had a new assessment process place (see Figure 21). Of the remaining non-pathfinder areas, just over a third (36%) of their Heads of SEN suggested that their area was likely to begin developing a new process over the next 18 months²². Although this illustrates good progress, there remained a small set a of thirteen non-pathfinder areas who did not have firm plans in place at the time of undertaking the survey (i.e. February 2013).

Figure 21 The extent to which local authorities were considering the development of a new integrated or single assessment process



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N = 58 Non-Pathfinder areas and 23 Pathfinder areas)

Those areas that had begun the development of their new assessment processes indicated they had had near universal involvement from SEN and Social Care (Children’s Teams) teams (see Figure 22). High levels of engagement from specialist health and schools were also noted. However, less than half of respondents indicated that the VCS, colleges and children and young people had been involved.

²²This figure is constructed from those respondents who indicated that they will be looking to develop a new assessment process over the next 6 or 6-18 months.

Figure 22 Stakeholders involved in developing proposals for the integrated and/or single assessment process

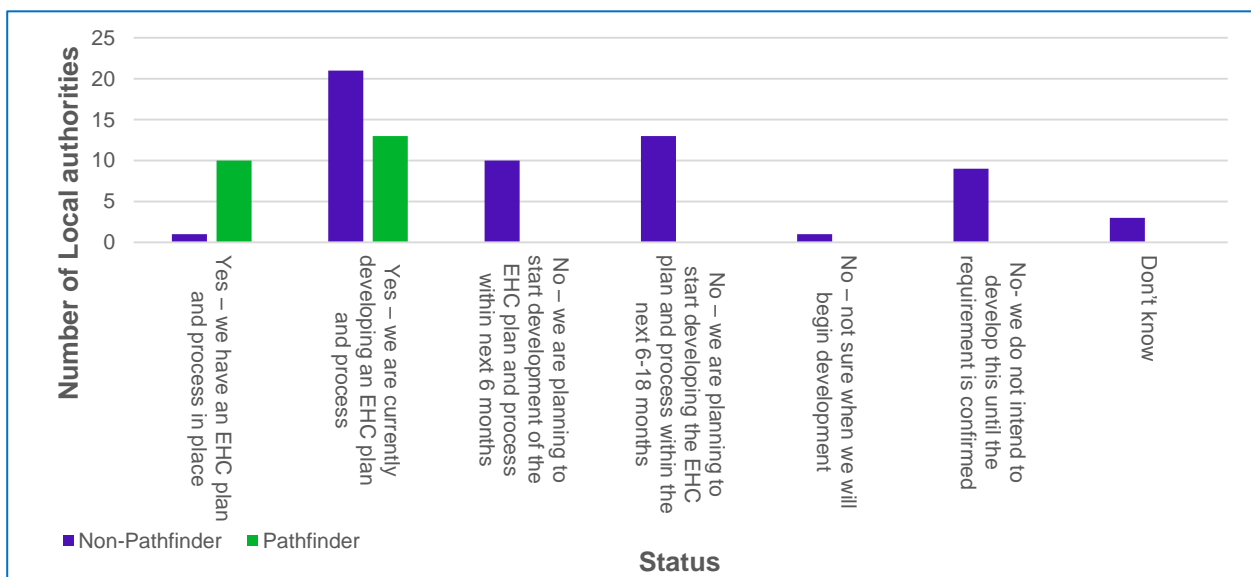


Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=47)

Development of a single education, health and care plan and process

Figure 23 illustrates that progress appeared broadly comparable to the extent to which local areas had considered the development of a new assessment process (see Figure 21). That is, just under two fifths of the Heads of SEN from the non-pathfinder areas (38%) and all those from pathfinder areas were either in the process of developing an EHC plan, or had one in place. And again, there was a small group of 13 non pathfinder areas that indicated they were either unsure or had no firm plans.

Figure 23 The extent to which local authorities were considering the development of a single education, health and care plan and planning process?

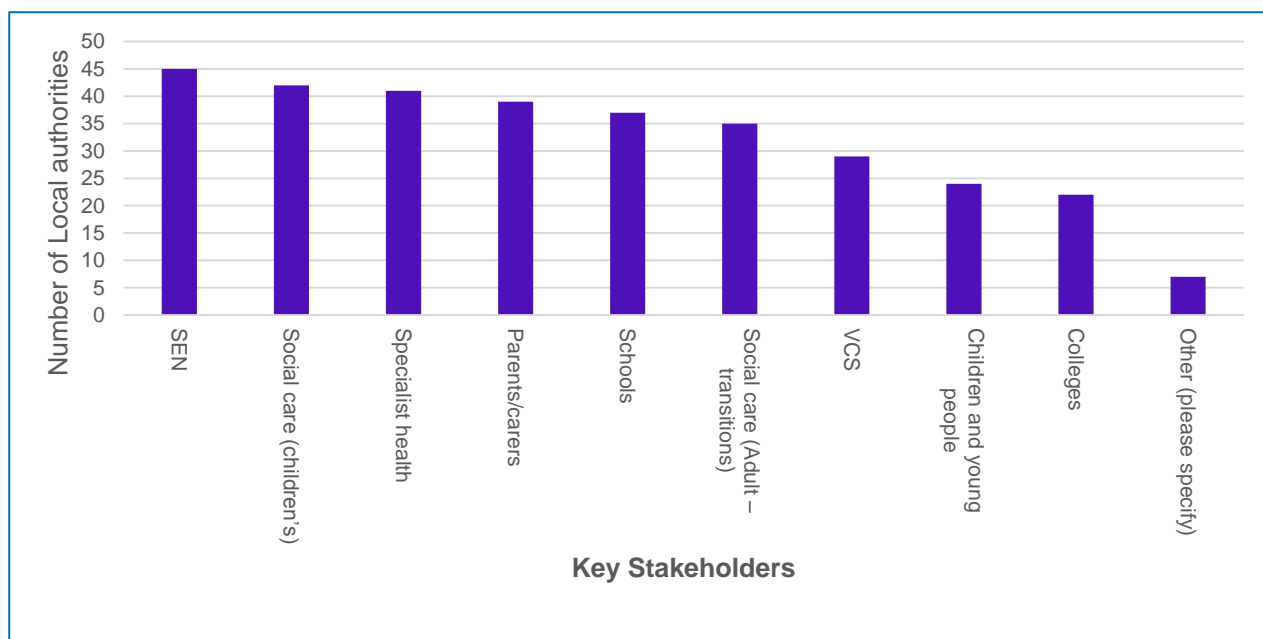


Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= 58 Non-Pathfinder areas and 23 Pathfinder areas)

Figure 24 illustrates that engagement across the majority of stakeholder types in relation to the development of proposals for the EHC plan and planning process appeared good.

This reflected a largely similar picture to those that had been engaged in the development of new assessment processes.

Figure 24 Stakeholders involved in developing proposals for the integrated education, health and care plan and planning process



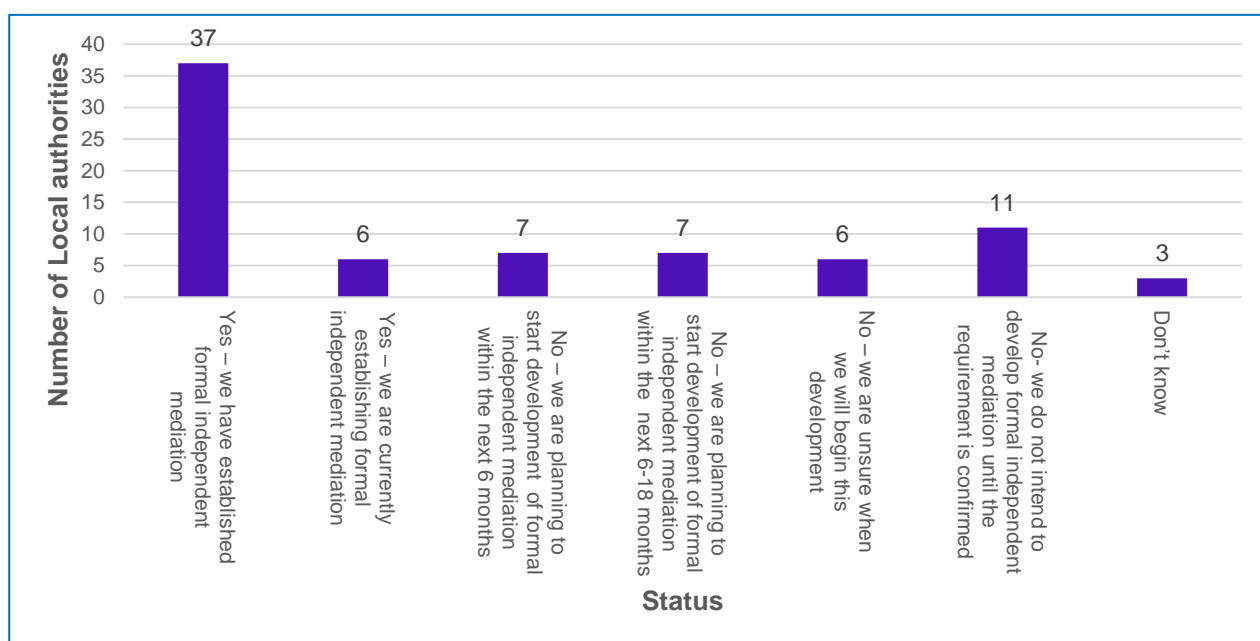
Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=45)

In addition, just less than three quarters of respondents (73%) indicated that they either had governance arrangements in place for their new processes, or were currently in the process of developing these arrangements.

Development of a formal mediation process

Figure 25 shows that just under half (48%) indicated that systems for formal mediation were already established and that the majority of the remainder (26% of the total) had either begun or were planning to start the development of a formal mediation process within the next 18 months. However, a further 20 Heads of SEN indicated that they were unable to confirm exactly when they would begin this development.

Figure 25 Extent to which local authorities have considered the introduction of formal mediation for parents and young people as a pre-cursor to a tribunal



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=77)

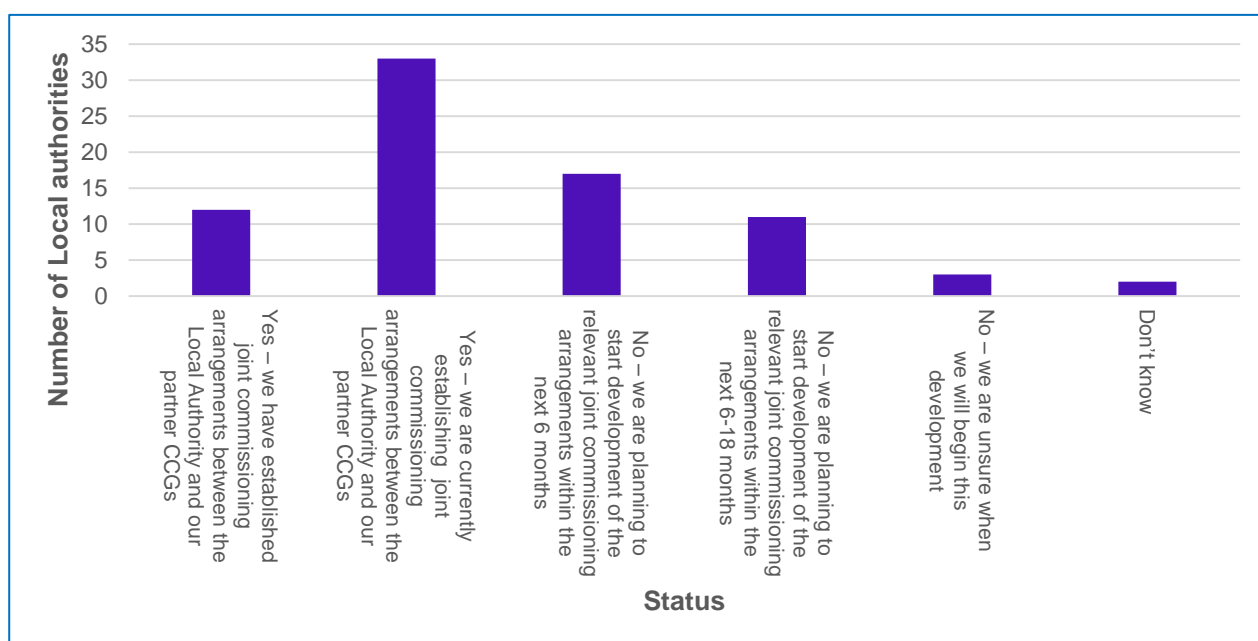
Development of joint commissioning arrangements

Nearly all (94%) of the responding Heads of SEN stated that they were either developing or had intentions to develop joint commissioning arrangements with their partner CCGs, illustrating the importance placed on the development of such arrangements. This included, just over half of the Heads of SEN (58%) stating that in their area the development of joint commissioning arrangements with partner CCGs were already in place, or that the area was in the process of agreeing them. The majority of the remaining responses (36% of the total) indicated that their area planned to develop joint commissioning arrangements over the next 18 months²³.

Interestingly, although strong progress had been made in this area, several Heads of SEN indicated that they would like additional support to either begin or further their developments. This mirrors the findings from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, which illustrated that many areas were struggling to understand how to effectively engage their partner CCGs.

²³ Ibid

Figure 26 The extent to which local authorities are considering the development of joint commissioning arrangements with partner Clinical Commissioning Groups



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N=78)

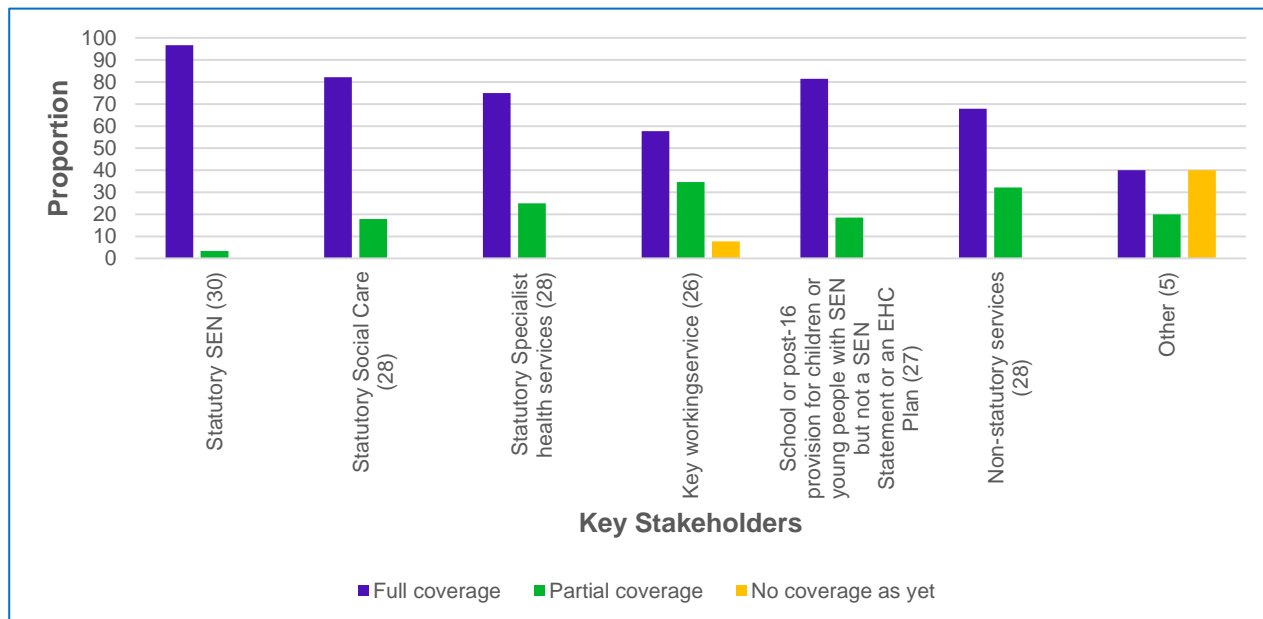
Development of the Local Offer

The development of the ‘Local Offer’ remained at an early stage, with 38% of respondents indicating that they had published an interim offer or would do so within the next 6 months and just over half of respondents (53%) indicating that they planned to publish within the next 6-18 months. Division of progress between the pathfinder and non-pathfinder areas illustrated the former had made more progress.

At least three quarters of the respondents that indicated that their area had published, or hoped to publish their ‘Local Offer’ within the next 6 months indicated that the ‘Local Offer’ would fully cover statutory SEN, Social Care and Specialist Health services (see Figure 27). However, reported coverage of non-statutory and key working services were more varied and included intentions to fully and partially cover these areas, as well as a small minority that had no plans to do so. This is likely to reflect the timing of the survey, which was undertaken prior to the publication of the indicative SEN code of practice²⁴, which provided more guidance on the areas that should be covered by the local offer.

²⁴ DfE (2013) Indicative Draft: the 0-25 Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

Figure 27 Where a ‘Local Offer’ has been published or will be published in the next 6 months, an indication of which services will be included



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= in brackets)

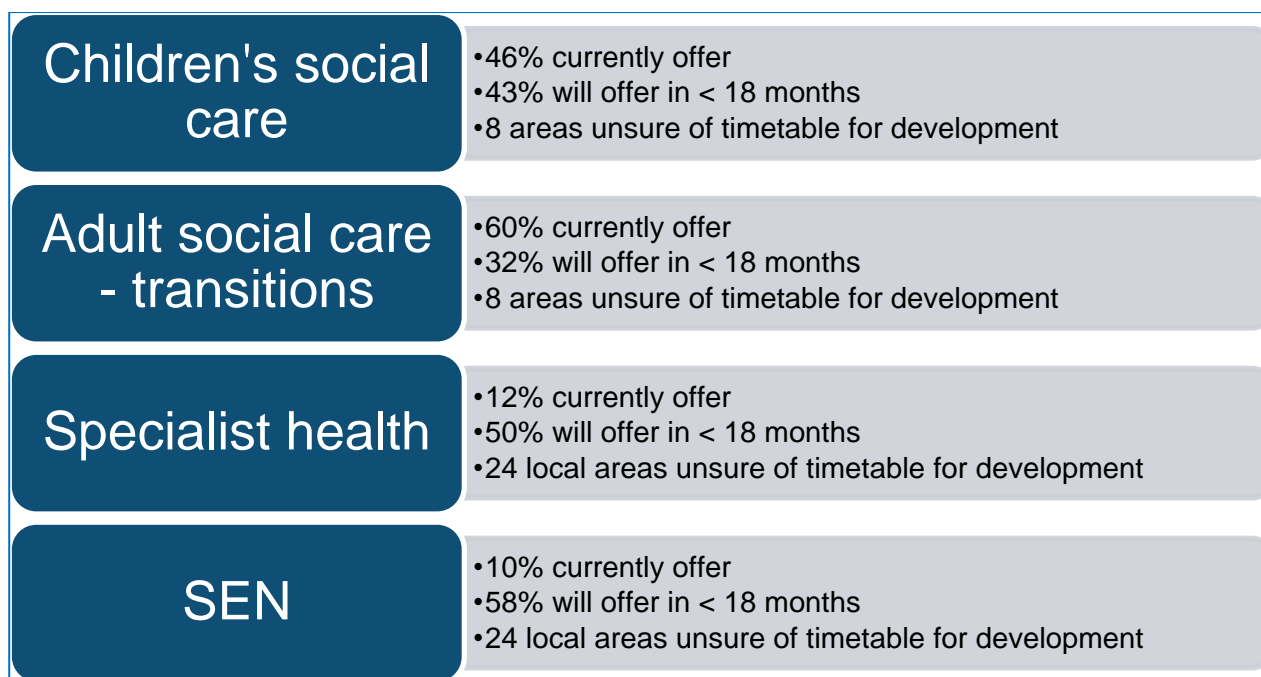
Development of Personal Budgets

Figure 28 shows that the personal budget offer appeared to be more developed in social care than in specialist health and SEN, which is unsurprising given the social care origins of personal budgets²⁵. Although the numbers of local areas that were currently offering either specialist health and SEN personal budgets were very low, this number was set to increase over the next 18 months, with 50% and 58% of areas respectively, indicating intentions to develop these. This finding mirrors the evidence gathered from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, which showed that progress in this area had been slower than expected, primarily because areas had focused their initial efforts on developing new assessment and planning processes.

Moving forwards, it will be important for areas not only to develop their personal budgets offers, but to consider how these will align and join up across the services. This will help to ensure that families who are eligible to access all forms of a personal budget can easily navigate this part of the process.

²⁵ The concept of a personal budget was originally drawn from adult social care, which first introduced direct payments and then personal budgets.

Figure 28 Services likely to be included within Personal Budgets



Source: Heads of SEN Analysis (N= 74 authorities with personal budgets for CYP for Children's social care, 76 authorities with personal budgets for CYP for Adult social care, 76 authorities with personal budgets for CYP for Specialist health and, 77 authorities with personal budgets for CYP for SEN)

Workforce development

Figure 29 shows the provisions that had been made in relation to workforce development activities. At the time of the survey, just over two fifths (44%) of respondents indicated that workforce development activities were already underway, or were planned as part of their areas on-going workforce development activities. A similar proportion were planning to start the development of these activities over the next 18 months²⁶.

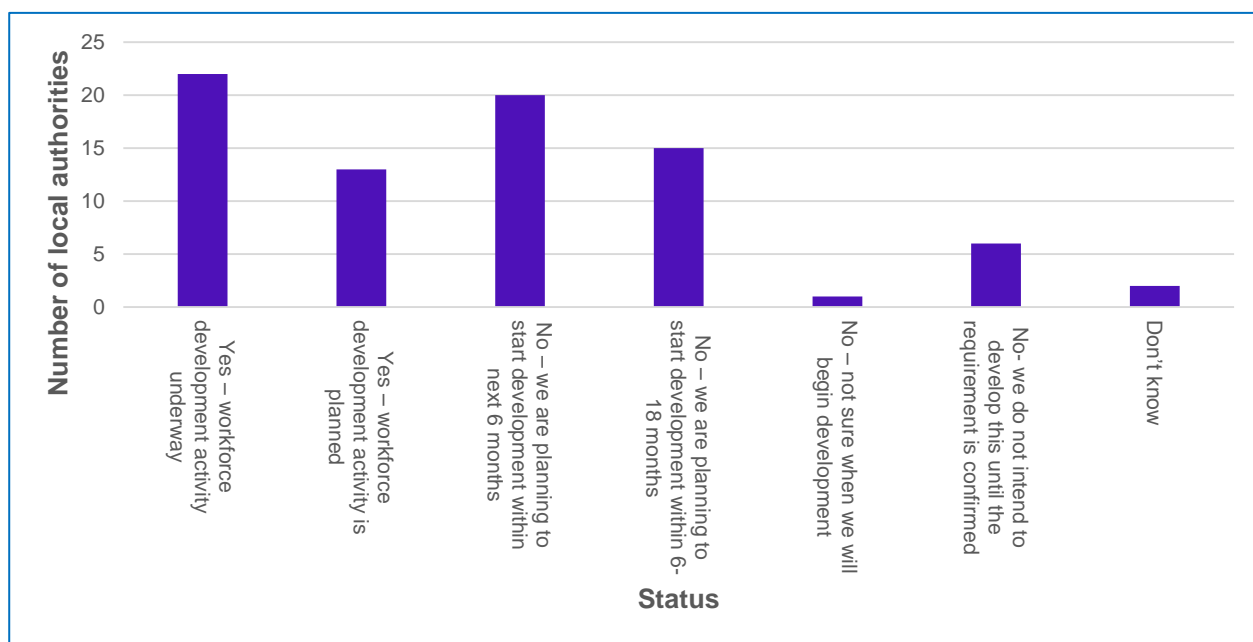
Where areas had a workforce development strategy in place, respondents were asked to describe the activities that had/were likely to occur. The responses could be grouped into a number of common areas including: provision for key worker training both within the local authority and with external providers (e.g. schools); awareness-raising amongst schools and specialist health professionals (particularly SENCOs); and training to support person-centred planning.

These areas were also identified as priorities for workforce development in areas that were at the stage of planning what they intended to do. Additional priorities included how to further develop local multi-agency working and the new assessment and EHCP approach.

Evidence from the qualitative follow-up interviews illustrated that workforce development was perceived to be one of the largest potential challenges to meeting the SEND reforms and therefore an area where additional support would be welcome.

²⁶This figure is constructed from those respondents who indicated that they will be looking to develop a new assessment process over the next 6 or 6-18 months.

Figure 29 Extent to which local authorities are planning to support workforce development activity in order to prepare for the proposed Green Paper reforms



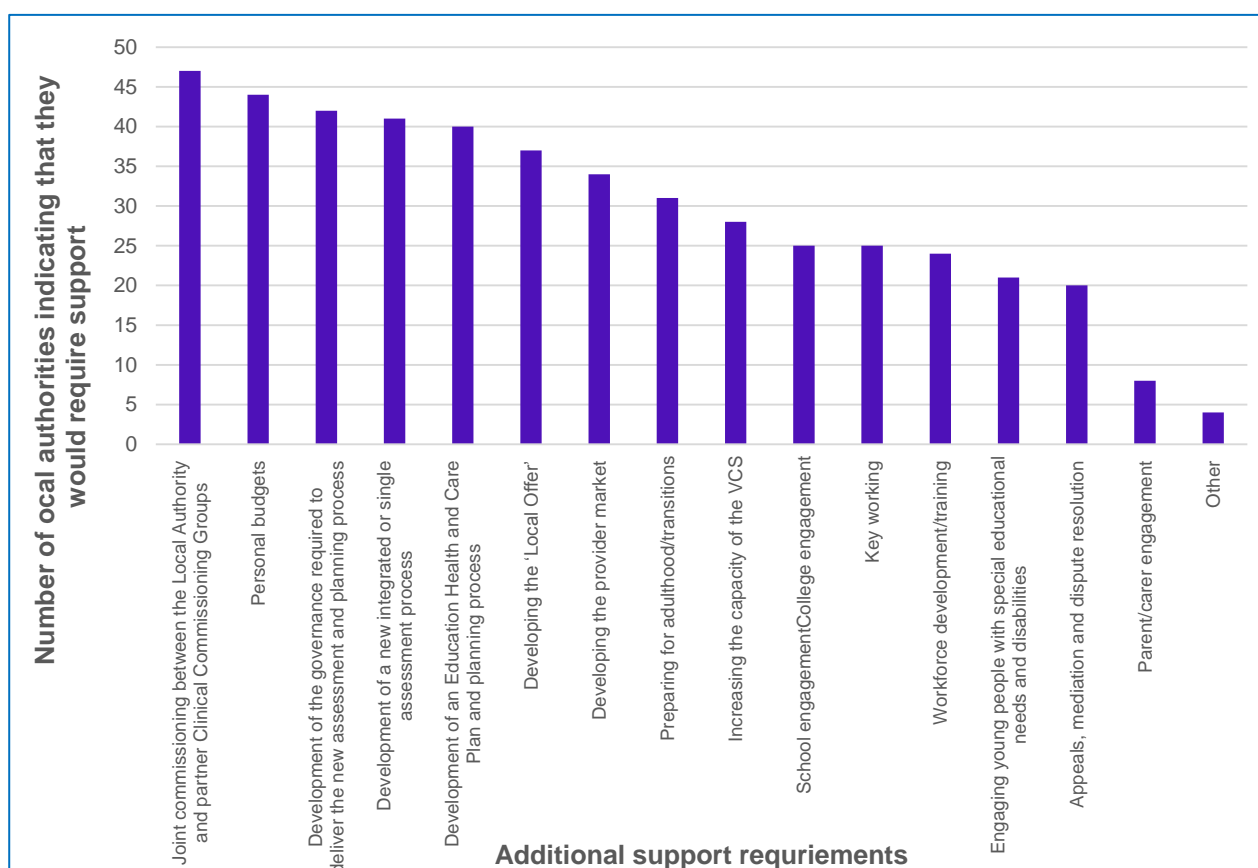
Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= 79)

Suggested areas of support to help prepare for SEND reforms

Heads of SEN

The Heads of SEN suggested several areas where they felt additional support may help them to better meet the requirements of the SEND reforms. The most common areas selected were additional support on developing: joint-commissioning arrangements with partner CCGs (49%); personal budgets (46%); governance structures to deliver the new assessment and planning process(es) (42%); and development of a new integrated assessment (41%) and planning process (40%) (see Figure 30). This mirrors the findings from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, which identified that pathfinder areas had made less progress in relation to joint commissioning, personal budgets and the development of appropriate governance structures.

Figure 30 Areas in which local authorities would like additional support in order to prepare for the Green Paper reforms



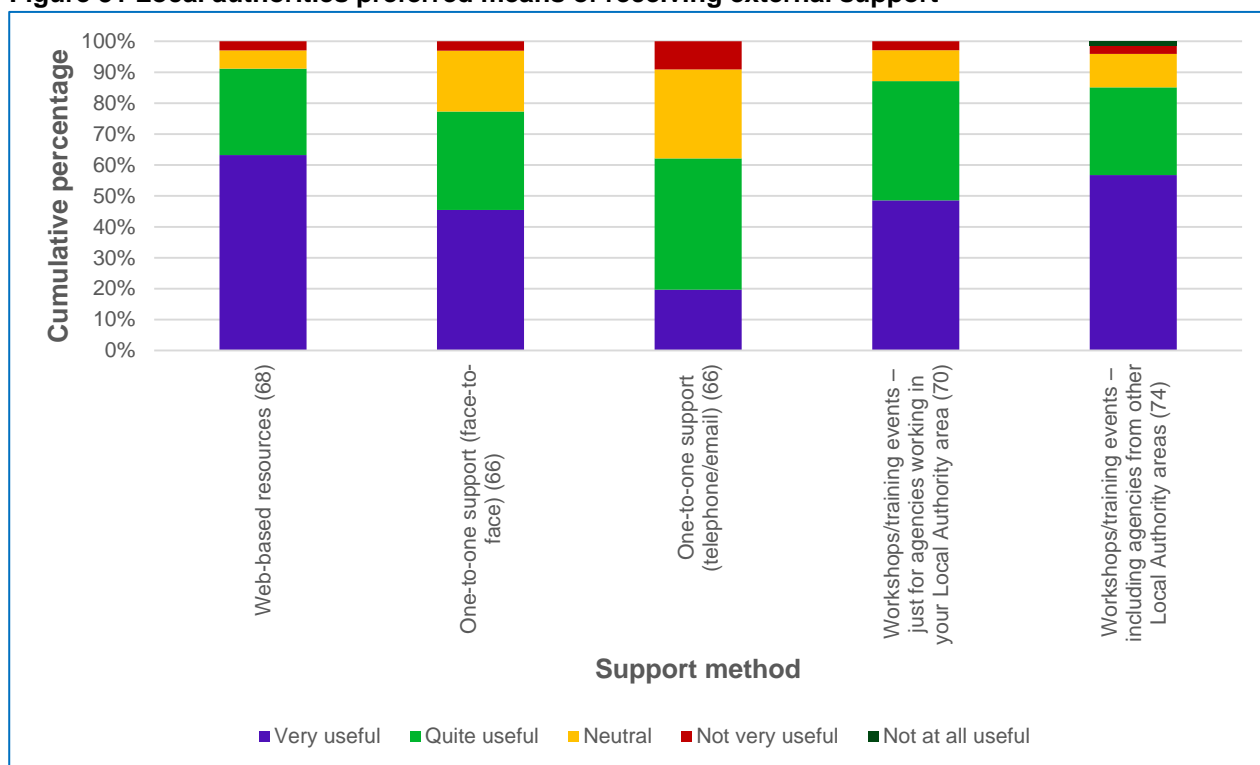
Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= 95)

Figure 31 illustrates that respondents generally favoured a mixture of delivery methods, with web-based resources and workshops proving the most popular. They also indicated that they would like:

- Access to good practice examples on how to meet the demands of the SEND reforms from pathfinder areas
- Targeted guidance on the likely impact of the SEND reforms on education providers (particularly schools).

Respondents were also asked if they would be willing to pay for this type of support. Of the 70 Heads of SEN who provided a response, just over half (56%) indicated that they would be willing to pay a nominal amount and just over a third (37%) indicated that they would not be willing to pay anything towards the cost of the support. Of those that said that they were willing to pay a nominal amount, it is important to note that a large number added that this would be difficult given the budgetary strain that they are already under.

Figure 31 Local authorities preferred means of receiving external support



Source: Heads of SEN Survey (N= in brackets)

Supplementary feedback

Feedback gathered from the parent carer forums, parent partnership services, short break leads and transition leads in relation to potential, future areas of support to enable an effective response to the SEND reforms is illustrated in Table 4. This shows that between a third and two-fifths of respondents from the various audiences reported that they may benefit from additional support.

Although each group of respondents reported slightly differing potential future support needs, which reflected the perceived uncertainties in their varied service areas, all four felt they would benefit from further clarification on the implications of the SEND reforms. Evidence from the qualitative follow-up interviews reinforced this view, as it illustrated that on-going and targeted SEND reform-related communications for each group would be helpful.

Table 4 Feedback on the most commonly suggested forms of additional support

Type of Support	Parent carer forums	Parent partnership services	Short Breaks leads	Transition leads
% of respondents stating may benefit from additional support	42%	42%	32%	39%
Clarification on implications of SEND reforms	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information on pathfinder activities and progress	✓			✓
Gain better understand and engagement of/with health	✓	✓		
Gain better understanding and engagement of/with social care		✓		
Gain better understanding and engagement of/with schools/colleges	✓			
Identifying funding sources to support local activity	✓	✓		
Understanding personal budgets			✓	✓
Development of local provider market			✓	✓

Source: Targeted surveys

Summary

Awareness of the SEND reforms was high across the Heads of SEN, parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short breaks and transition leads in February 2013²⁷, with between 78-98% of each type of respondent reporting they were either fairly or very aware of the reforms. Similarly, the majority of the Heads of SEN reported that they had either begun or were actively considering measures aimed at improving the readiness of their area to meet the reforms.

Most of the progress reported by the Heads of SEN had been achieved in relation to the development of a new integrated or single assessment process and similarly the subsequent education, health and care planning process. Conversely, the least progress

²⁷ All surveys were undertaken in February 2013 and therefore the responses provided are relevant as of that point in time.

was reported in relation to the development of the local offer, personal budgets and workforce development, which mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the first 18 months of the pathfinder programme.

Pathfinder areas were more advanced in their developments relative to non-pathfinder areas. Nonetheless, progress reported by the non-pathfinder areas was generally encouraging, with only a small number of areas reporting not having any firm plans in place to progress the various elements required to deliver the reforms.

The Heads of SEN suggested several areas where it was felt they may benefit from additional support to better meet the requirements of the SEND reforms. This most commonly included support to further develop:

- Joint commissioning arrangements between the local authority and partner CCGs
- Personal budgets
- Governance structures to deliver the new assessment and planning process
- Workforce development
- Development of a new integrated assessment and planning process.

This mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, with the exception of the final bullet, which was suggested by non-pathfinder areas in the main.

Supplementary feedback gathered from the other surveys also identified potential areas of support, which differed in accordance with the needs of the relevant group. However, all four groups – the parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short break and transition leads – felt they would benefit from further clarification on the implication of the SEND reforms, signalling a potential need for continuing communication in this area.

Local areas will be asked to provide an update on their perceived readiness to meet the SEND reforms in both October/November 2013 and April/May 2014, as part of the extended evaluation of the SEND pathfinder programme. This will enable the tracking of readiness over time, where it is expected that subsequent surveys will show improvements as areas increase their efforts to prepare for the reforms.

9. Summary and recommendations

The final chapter draws together the evidence from the study to reflect on how the four core evaluation questions set by the DfE. It also considers how future support aimed at improving the readiness of areas to meet the SEND reforms could most effectively be delivered.

Evaluation objectives

Identify local areas' use of, and satisfaction with, the activities of the Delivery Partners

The Heads of SEN reported high levels of awareness across all the support contracts, with the exception of the BOND contract, as their activities had focussed on delivering in-depth support to a small number of local authorities.

Take up of the support offered as part of all six contracts was high across the relevant target audiences. Furthermore, those that had accessed the support offers generally reported high levels of satisfaction in relation to the relevance, quality and usefulness of the activities that had been delivered.

Negligible levels of dissatisfaction were reported in relation to the delivery of each of the support contracts. Where dissatisfaction was reported, this more commonly comprised of a small number of areas stating they had been dissatisfied with the logistics associated with workshops/events. This included unhappiness in relation to: the location and therefore travel required to attend events/workshops; a lack of tailoring of event/workshop agendas to meet the needs of diverse areas; and a lack of notice on the timing of the workshops/events.

Assess the function and effectiveness of the Delivery Partners (i.e. perceived effectiveness of support)

The support offered by all of the six Delivery Partners was perceived to have had some form of impact on their target audiences. This varied by Delivery Partner but could be divided into two types of impact: the first related to an improvement in general awareness of the relevant agenda and as a result had acted as a catalyst to further the thinking of areas; and the second related to more tangible results, such as improvements in the quality and capacity of a service. Although both types of impact were felt to have been valuable, future support should probably lean more towards achievement of the latter more tangible results as areas need to move from considering how to develop the new agendas to delivering these.

Ascertain awareness of, and readiness, for the SEN reform across local authorities

Awareness of the SEND reforms was high across the board i.e. the Heads of SEN, parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short breaks and transition leads. The high levels of awareness translated into most areas (as reported by the Heads of SEN) reporting that they had either begun or were actively considering measures aimed at improving the readiness of their area to meet the reforms.

Most of the progress reported by the Heads of SEN had been achieved in relation to the development of a new integrated or single assessment process and similarly the subsequent education, health and care planning process. Conversely, the least progress was reported in relation to the development of the local offer, personal budgets and workforce development, which mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the first 18 months of the pathfinder programme.

Pathfinder areas were more advanced in their developments relative to non-pathfinder areas. Nonetheless, progress reported by the non-pathfinder areas was generally encouraging, with only a small number of areas reporting not having any firm plans in place to progress the various elements required to deliver the reforms.

Identify the types of support that local areas require in order to implement the SEN reforms set out in the Children and Families Bill

The Heads of SEN suggested several areas where it was felt they may benefit from additional support to better meet the requirements of the SEND reforms. This most commonly included support to further develop:

- Joint commissioning arrangements between the local authority and partner CCGs
- Personal budgets
- Governance structures to deliver the new assessment and planning process
- Workforce development
- Development of a new integrated assessment and planning process.

This again mirrored the findings from the evaluation of the pathfinder programme, with the exception of the final bullet, which was suggested by non-pathfinder areas in the main.

Supplementary feedback gathered from the other surveys also identified potential areas of support, which differed in accordance with the needs of the relevant group. However, all four groups – the parent carer forums, parent partnership services, and the short break and transition leads – felt they would benefit from further clarification on the implication of the SEND reforms, signalling a potential need for continuing communication in this area.

Reflections on the potential provision of future support

Central coordination of the support on offer

Although the six support contracts were perceived to have been useful and delivered much of what they had set out to achieve, there appeared to be limited central coordination across the activities of the individual Delivery Partners. This included an absence of a single point of access for local areas to build their understanding of the range of support that was on offer from across the Delivery Partners and an absence of a formal interface for the Delivery Partners to provide better aligned support across the contracts. This therefore represented a potential missed opportunity to deliver better marketed, and more joined-up provision across the Delivery Partners.

Feedback from each of the Delivery Partners suggested that where informal and ad hoc joint working had occurred, this had been beneficial. All partners therefore agreed that central coordination would be useful and expressed a general willingness and desire to rationalise and coordinate their approaches in the event that funding of the relevant activities was continued.

Areas of potential future support

Evidence from the evaluation indicated that although areas were beginning to develop the required elements to deliver the SEND reforms, many were still trying to understand the implications of the reforms and what it would mean for the relevant service areas (or indeed waiting to be precisely told how they should deliver the reforms). This implies that there remained considerable levels of uncertainty around the reforms, which could in part be addressed by the provision of the following general support:

- Wider communication that helped to make sense of the SEND reforms and associated legislation, which are tailored to meet the needs of different audiences e.g. parent carer forums, parent partnership services etc.
- Continued dissemination of learning from the pathfinder areas to inform local developments and delivery of the SEND reforms
- Development and dissemination of more practical tools and resources (based on evidence of what works) again to inform local developments and delivery.

Turning now to the individual areas of potential future support that could be of most benefit, evidence drawn from this evaluation and the evaluation of the pathfinder programme illustrated a demand for support in relation to:

- Strategic leadership and workforce development
- Personal budgets and resource allocation
- Joint commissioning
- The local offer and market development

- Outcome focused planning
- Effective engagement of families and young people in the new EHCP process.

Although this is a wide ranging list of potential support areas, it is important to note that the areas are not mutually exclusive and should therefore not be considered in isolation. They should instead be viewed as potential themes, which seek to build on each other.

Commissioning of potential future support

In light of the above findings, we would recommend that any future support is commissioned as part of an integrated package of services/activities that draws together the relevant expertise and experience. The integrated package should include strategic oversight across the relevant activities (i.e. central coordination) and be underpinned by a common set of principles (e.g. to work across the 0-25 years age range, engender multi-agency working etc.) to ensure all partners are working in a collaborative and efficient manner, and can share lessons across the themes.

This recommendation has in part been addressed by the commissioning of the strategic partner for SEND – the Council for Disabled Children – whose role includes the central coordination of the Delivery Partners.

Any future commission should also factor in complementary support that has been commissioned by the Department for Education. This includes the pathfinder champions and the recently commissioned 2013-15 VCS contracts.

Annex A: Methodology

Original methodology

The original proposed methodology for this evaluation was a single online survey which was to be distributed to the Heads of SEN in every local authority across England, with the purpose of:

- 1 Identifying local areas' use of, and satisfaction with, the activities of the Delivery Partners
- 2 Assessing the function and effectiveness of the Delivery Partners (i.e. perceived effectiveness of support)
- 3 Identifying the types of support that local areas require in order to implement the SEN reforms set out in Children and Families Bill
- 4 Ascertaining awareness of, and readiness for, SEN reform across local authorities.

It was anticipated that each Head of SEN would circulate the questionnaire to relevant colleagues and that a single collective response would be provided. This was to be supplemented by a series of face-to-face follow-up qualitative interviews with local authorities that had responded to the survey, in order to explore issues in more depth.

Evaluation challenges

The evaluation commenced with a scoping stage in October/November 2012 in order to 'test' the viability of the proposed survey methodology. The scoping stage comprised a review of background documentation pertaining to each of the contracts (e.g. the formal contract and monitoring/performance data), as well as face-to-face interviews with the relevant DfE contract managers and the Delivery Partner organisations themselves. Through this activity we explored in more detail the type and nature of support that was being delivered, and identified the target audience for each of the Delivery Partner contracts. At the same time we also sought to identify a comprehensive list of all Heads of SEN across all local authorities in England, to whom the questionnaire could be sent.

Our early scoping activity highlighted a number of potential challenges for the proposed survey methodology linked to the fact that the Delivery Partners were not a homogenous group. Between them the Delivery Partners were delivering a wide variety of activities including the production of practical tools or resources to support preparation for SEN reform, training or bespoke support, and awareness raising and capacity building activity. Furthermore, they were also delivering a mix of targeted in-depth support to a small number of local authorities (including Pathfinders), as well as general support to all Local authorities. The contracts themselves also varied in size from several hundred thousand pounds, to several million pounds. This posed several challenges for the proposed methodology:

- The BOND consortium contract was focused on in-depth activity and support in a small number of local authority areas, and therefore a quantitative survey approach was not suitable in this context
- It was unlikely that Heads of SEN would necessarily be aware of all the activity of the Delivery Partners as the intended audiences was sometimes wider than their service or the local authority itself (e.g. Support for Parent Carer Forums, or Early Support and Key Working and the PfA contracts which were intended to reach wider audience of local authority staff as well as those working in health and other agencies)
- Given the point above - even if Heads of SEN were fully aware of which contracts has been accessed - a comprehensive questionnaire response might require them to circulate the document to large number of different colleagues in order to provide a full response on each of the Delivery Partner contracts. This was deemed logistically complex and time-consuming, and therefore posed a risk as it may put individuals off providing a response.

Early investigation into options for collating contact information for the Heads of SEN across all local authorities in England revealed that there was no centralised or comprehensive list of information. Therefore, the evaluation team needed to assemble this list.

Revised methodology

In light of the challenges identified above it became clear that an alternative methodology was needed in order to systematically capture feedback on the different Delivery Partners, with a focus on views from the main target audience for each of the contracts. For four of the Delivery Partner contracts (support for Parent Carer Forums, support for Parent Partnership Service, Short Breaks and PfA) the delivery organisation was able to provide details of a single point of contact in every local authority area, i.e. an individual/organisation they had been working with or that was working in the relevant field. Thus we had a potential audience in each case for a targeted survey focused specifically on each of those Delivery Partner contracts.

For the Early Support and Key Working contract there was no single consolidated list of contacts for every local authority area. This reflected that nature of activity within this contract (delivery of key working training, alongside the development of tools and resources, as well as strategic engagement activity) and the intended audience which was much broader than local authorities. It was agreed, however, that in the absence of a specific list of contacts for this contracts, that Heads of SEN would be best placed to provide feedback.

In the instance of the BOND contract, it was agreed that qualitative case study fieldwork in a small number of local authority areas would be the most appropriate means of gathering feedback on the activities of that Delivery Partner contract.

In Table 5 we outline the five online surveys that were distributed and their focus.

Table 5 Description of the five online surveys

Target audience	Coverage	Response rate ²⁸
Heads of SEN Survey		
Heads of SEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awareness and take-up of Delivery Partner contracts ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support delivered through the Early Support and Key Working contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	63% (95 Heads of SEN)
Parent Partnership		
Heads of Parent Partnership Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with, support delivered through Parent Partnership contact ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	73% (111 Parent Partnership Services)
Parent Carer Forums		
Chairs of Parent Carer Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the Parent Carer Forum contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	73% (111 Parent Carer Forums)

²⁸ Base = 152 local authorities

Target audience	Coverage	Response rate ²⁸
Preparing for Adulthood		
PfA leads in local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the PfA contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	51% (78 PfA leads)
Short Breaks		
Short Breaks Leads in local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take-up of, and satisfaction with support delivered through the Short Breaks contract ▪ Awareness of SEN reforms, and readiness for reform ▪ On-going support needs in preparing for reform 	62% (94 Short Breaks leads)

Source: SQW

Approach to survey design and distribution

In order to maximise the response rates to the surveys we sought to ensure that the questionnaire length would not be too onerous for those completing it. With this in mind, the Heads of SEN survey was designed to include a mix of open and closed questions which would take up to 40 minutes to complete. The remaining four (targeted surveys) also comprised a mix of open and closed questions, but were shorter and it was anticipated they could be completed within 15-20 minutes.

As outlined above, the distribution lists for the PfA, Parent Partnership, Parent Carer Forum and Short Breaks survey were provided by the Delivery Partners themselves (email contacts). For the Heads of SEN survey we constructed a list of relevant individuals through web searches and direct telephone contact with local authorities. In many instances there was not a specific Head of SEN role within a local authority, either because of restructuring or because the role was split between more than one post. In these cases we explained the nature of the survey and requested advice on the most appropriate person to complete the questionnaire. Wherever possible we sought to speak directly with the Head of SEN (between December 2012 and early January 2013) to introduce the survey and encourage them to respond.

All surveys were distributed by email in mid-January 2013, with a link to the online questionnaire and a letter to introduce the survey. Participants were also able to request a hard copy of the questionnaire if they did not wish or were unable to complete it online.

All respondents were given approximately three weeks to complete the survey. In the week before the advertised end date we sent reminder emails out to non-completers to try and boost the response rate. A further email was sent out to non-respondents just after the advertised end date informing them that we would keep the survey open for a further week in order to allow them to respond. In the case of Heads of SEN this was also accompanied by follow-up calls wherever possible to encourage them to complete the survey.

Qualitative fieldwork (survey follow-up)

The five surveys were closed at the end of February 2013. An initial analysis of findings was undertaken in order to inform our sampling for the follow-up qualitative fieldwork. The qualitative follow-up interviews were intended to provide greater insight into the responses provided in the surveys, e.g. reasons for high/low satisfaction with the activities of the Delivery Partners and to better understand future support needs in responding to SEN reform. Sampling was therefore undertaken to ensure that a mixture of both satisfied and dissatisfied respondents could be followed-up.

We had originally intended to undertake the follow-up work via a series of face to face group-based interviews, with the relevant Heads of SEN and their respective colleagues who could provide representation for the responses provided on the distinct Delivery Partners. However, having moved from a single Head of SEN survey to a set of targeted surveys, this element of the research was reconfigured to ensure qualitative follow-up was undertaken for all five surveys. This was undertaken via a series of telephone consultations.

A total of 29 follow-up interviews were completed, each of which lasted between 20-40 minutes. These took place between March and April 2013. For reasons of confidentiality we do not state which areas were consulted. Indeed, in practice some interviewees were able to provide information on more than one Delivery Partner contract. It should be noted, however, that interviews with Heads of SEN also confirmed that in some cases they could provide very little feedback on the activity of the Delivery Partners as they had not always had direct contact with the relevant representatives.

The breakdown of follow-up interviews by survey was as follows:

- Heads of SEN (and Early Support and Key Working) – 10 follow-up interviews
- PfA – 8 follow-up interviews
- Short Breaks – 5 follow-up interviews
- Parent Carer Forums – 3 follow-up interviews
- Parent Partnership Services – 3 follow-up interviews.

Qualitative fieldwork – BOND contract

Following the scoping phase it was decided that the most appropriate way of obtaining feedback on the delivery of the BOND contract would be through a mixture of in-depth telephone/ face to face interviews with key stakeholders in one of the five ‘increasing capacity’ pilot areas. Following consultation with Youngminds (the consortium lead), it was agreed that due to the timing of the study, Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley would provide the most appropriate case study site (although it was acknowledged that there were significant differences between the different experiences of each separate area). A list of key stakeholders was subsequently drawn up by Youngminds. This list was used to inform our call for interviewees.

Initial emails were sent out to prospective interviewees in early March 2013 inviting them to participate in the study. Depending on availability, a mixture of face to face and telephone interviews were conducted over the course of March and April 2013.

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted over the course of the study. To ensure consistency between the interviews a topic guide was developed covering three principle research questions:

- Identifying local areas’ use of, and satisfaction with, the activities of the Delivery Partner
- Assessing the function and effectiveness of the Delivery Partner (i.e. perceived effectiveness of support)
- Ascertaining awareness of, and readiness for, SEN reform across local authorities.

Interviews lasted approximately an hour to an hour and a half. Notes were taken during the consultations and following the fieldwork written summaries of the interview responses were provided by each interviewer. These responses were transferred into a thematic matrix with themes based on the principle research questions. Information was directly transferred from the case study notes into the matrix to ensure all original notes were retained for analysis purposes and were not subject to interpretation. Thematic analysis of the set of responses was then undertaken using the principle research questions to draw out similarities and differences that had been experienced by different stakeholders.

Analysis and reporting

Quantitative analysis was undertaken for each of the five targeted surveys. This was undertaken using both Key Survey software and Microsoft Excel and involved developing basic frequency tables for each of the closed questions across all the questionnaires. Where relevant, findings were also disaggregated to illustrate any differences in response between pathfinder and non-pathfinder areas.

Responses to the open questions were combined with the responses from the qualitative follow-up work, all of which were inputted into a thematic matrix with themes based on

the principle survey/research questions. Information was directly transferred from the both the survey responses and the interview notes into the matrix to ensure all original notes were retained for analysis purposes and were not subject to interpretation. Thematic analysis of the set of responses was then undertaken using the principle research questions to draw out similarities and differences that had been experienced by different stakeholders.

Feedback to Delivery Partners

In April 2013, on completion of our analysis of the quantitative survey data and qualitative fieldwork we presented our initial findings and conclusions on each of the Delivery Partner contracts to the relevant delivery organisation(s). The purpose of this was to 'test' our findings and ensure we placed these in the appropriate context for each of the contracts.



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