

**Factors influencing provision of Special Educational
Needs support at the point of delivery within the Private,
Voluntary and independent group-based Early Years
Education and Childcare sector**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

by

Sian Benedict-Owen

Department of Education
Brunel University
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This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

Abstract

Local Authorities (LAs) policy and funding decisions have been heavily influenced by the stringent education and fiscal policy demands imposed upon them by Government. One sector particularly adversely affected during the period has been that of Education, especially within the area of Special Educational Needs (SEN) support and associated funding streams. This thesis considers those attributes which when combined shape SEN provision as delivered by the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) group-based Early Years Education and Childcare sector within England.

This research is divided into two discrete yet interrelated parts. The first considers the 'problem area' and explores issues that practitioners perceive to be barriers to proficient SEN provision within the PVI group-based Early Years Education and Childcare sector. The second analyses the development, implementation and on-going monitoring of an on-line intervention model that was developed by the researcher as a means to address, in part, some of the concerns identified in the first part of the research.

The research not only addresses matters directly related to SEN provision, such as the implications of targeted statute and practitioner competence, but also examines some of the wider operational concerns shared by PVI group-based providers.

An interpretivist approach is used within the research. Additionally, an action research model as outlined by Sager (2000) was adopted when designing, constructing and modifying the *Virtual Educational Support and SEN Inter-Linked System* (VESSILS) intervention. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using a mixed method design. A thematic analysis approach was the primary method of qualitative data analysis with BOS Online Survey and Facebook analytics used to generate and interpret quantitative data sources.

What becomes clear is that consequences of funding and ideological decisions made by Central Government and, in turn, by LAs with regards to not just SEN have had a direct impact on the extent to which, and quality of, any SEN provision available to children accessing PVI group-based early years provisions. Much feedback given by practitioners supports findings outlined in existing literature, yet, an unexpected and compelling outcome of this research is the extent to which PVI group-based provisions may have been being perceived and used by successive political administrations as venues for providing a low-cost way of meeting Central Governments' political manifesto pledges on early years education and childcare and how this might now prove the downfall of many PVI group-based provisions. This being further exacerbated through Government's consideration of ways in which early years education and care provision for children from the age of two could now be increasingly provided from within the LA maintained sector. An outcome of particular significance to the research is the suggestion that SEN support and delivery for and to children under statutory school age appears under threat at this current time regardless of the provision type attended.

Terms of reference

Disability

Within Chapter 2 of the 'Equality Act 2010' it states the legal definition of disability.

Disability is given as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on an individual's ability to do normal daily activities.

PVI - Group-based provision

Private nurseries: These providers are for-profit entities. Typically, they offer the free entitlement and provide a flexible mix of sessions. They tend to have children across all (pre- school) age groups, and include nurseries based on school sites.

Voluntary nurseries: This segment has a range of voluntary providers, including not-for-profits and social enterprises. These are typically open term-time only, although some also offer out- of-school and holiday care. Voluntary providers do not necessarily own their premises – they may operate out of church halls, community centres, school sites, etc.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479659/151124_Analytical_review_FINAL_VERSION.pdf)

SEN - Early Years Definition

'A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition in paragraph xiv. (a learning difficulty or disability) when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them'

(Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

Children within early years group-provision aged two or above are considered to have special educational needs if they require educational direction and intervention which is '*different from*' or '*additional to*' that received by their peers.

The Children and Families Act 2014

Part 3: Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
A briefing from the Council for Disabled Children

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/import/ChildrenAndFamiliesActBrief.pdf>

Glossary

CAF - Common Assessment Framework

EEE - Early Education Entitlement

ELE - Early Learning Entitlement

EFE - Extended Funding Entitlement

EHC Plan - Education, health and Care Plan

EYDCP - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage

Group-based providers - (identified from the Ofsted register): childcare providers registered with Ofsted and operating in non-domestic premises.

MISOC - Micro-Social Change

MNA - Maintained Nursery School

PVI - Private Voluntary and Independent group based early years childcare providers

SEN - Special Educational Needs

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability

SEND CoP - Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

SALT - Speech and Language Therapist

SENCo - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

SENDco - Special Education and Disability Co-ordinator

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Chapter 1 Introduction

'SEN exist upon a continuum of abilities and impairments'
(Hodkinson: 2018 np)

1.1 Research background

Many of the parents I worked with in my professional capacity as an Early Years Special Educational Needs (SEN) Advisory Teacher (Area SEN Coordinator) when told by the pediatrician of their child's autism diagnosis expressed a range of emotions including grief, fear and uncertainty. Some articulated their frustration about the lack of any local authority coordinated initiative designed to inform and support them in understanding what this diagnosis meant for their child, how they as parents could best support them and what support was available for them in borough.

In particular I was deeply moved by the experiences of a mother whose child had been recently diagnosed with both autism and significant global developmental delay. She kindly agreed that I could publish here the submission she wrote as a part of the request for 'consideration of statutory assessment'. The request was addressed to the Special Educational Needs Panel of her LA. Due to the high level of the demand placed on her by her son she wrote the submission at midnight when he had finally fallen asleep.

I include it here in full:

*I am concerned about ***** as he still does not recognise his name and has no speech. The only word he can say is 'bye' however he does not know what it means or understand how to use it in an appropriate context. It is a word he has*

learnt to say but it needs a lot of encouragement to get him to say it; we have to say 'bye' to him several times in an enthusiastic tone, wave and sometimes shake his hand before we get a response, sometimes he doesn't respond. He still does not call me mum or by any other name. He still doesn't wave, point or nod. He asks for food by pushing me into the kitchen, then pushes my hand towards the worktop where his empty milk bottles are kept. He is unable to tell what food he wants, I have to judge accordingly what to give him, if it is nearly dinner time then I give him his dinner, if he has had his meal I will give him a snack or some milk. He uses my hand and pushes it towards what he wants for example he will take my hand to his shoes if he wants me to take them off. A lot of the time it is guessing and if my guesses are wrong it causes him distress and triggers tantrums.

Eye contact is poor and there is no eye contact to strangers. He doesn't understand emotions; if someone laughs loudly, he gets frightened or if I am upset he will not understand. He still can't jump, skip or dance.

He has no understanding of even simple instructions; if I ask him to sit down or pick something up, he will not understand.

He doesn't like to be touched by strangers, he pushes them away. When he started playgroup, his support worker had to make several home visits in order to help him settle and build an attachment to her. He is now able to bond with her, let her touch him and will go to her for comfort and play with her. He requires 1 to 1 in the playgroup all the time becomes anxious if his support worker is out of sight. He seems to see through people, he doesn't acknowledge them. He does not show interest in other children and does not interact with his peers. If a child tries to play with him or touch him, he starts to make noises and gets upset, tries to move away from them or pushes them out of his way. He is anxious amongst people; he puts his hands over his eyes, and covers his ears to certain sounds and voices. It is extremely hard to get him examined by the doctor when he is sick, he cries and pushes the doctor away, shuts his eyes kicks and hits them to get away from them.

He needs to be looked after at home all the time too as he is unaware of danger. He has tantrums when we don't understand what he wants which result into him taking his head backwards with force without knowing what he was going to bang his head onto.

He also requires 1 to 1 physical help all the time, for example I have to forcefully hold him down to brush his teeth, he does not like water touching his head so bath times are again difficult and forceful.

On waking from his sleep he is disorientated and needs support for up to an hour, He keeps looking around the room and crying and won't let go of me holding me firmly. He gradually responds to coaxing. Full support is needed. Settling in to bed is another issue, he needs to be rocked to sleep or held in the arms and walked around the room humming to him. He requires firm strokes on back when putting him to sleep, this makes him feel secure. He gets up at least 6 times during the

night, he will put his head on my arm, sometimes he will go back to sleep straight away other times I will have to carry him around until he is settled again. Occasionally he has night terrors that can last up to 30-60 minutes.

He doesn't like change whether that is a change of environment or personal change that affects him, for example he doesn't want to wear new shoes or clothing, he keeps pulling and looking at them and crying until I take them off. I try to buy similar clothing and shoes of which he already has. There are certain textures that he cannot tolerate. He does not let me roll his sleeves up and his trousers have to be a certain (perfect) length or he will keep pulling at them and crying. He will not allow his support worker to put an apron on him when painting or playing with water.

I am still feeding him with a spoon and hand for things such as bread and chapatti where I would break off a piece and place it in his mouth. As he cannot use cutlery either I encourage him to use a spoon to eat his yogurt; he gives up easily after a few attempts. The only time he will use his hands to eat is when he eats crisps, but he needs a crisp in each hand one for holding and one for eating, will not eat out of the packet, will tip it over and eat off the floor, if I put the crisp in a plate, again he will tip it over and eat off the floor, therefore I give him one crisp at a time. He is a fussy eater and will not try new foods. He is still eating blended food and if I try giving it to him in its solid form (e.g. banana, apple, carrot, meat, pasta etc.) he either chokes it or spits it out. He will not eat from other family members it has to be me who feeds him. I am only able to give him a complete meal while he is engrossed in his television programs otherwise he resists his meal after a few spoons.

He will not sit down even to watch T.V, he seems to be floating around all the time. His concentration span is short and he flits from one thing to the next. He spins when he is excited or distressed until he gets dizzy and fall and then he gets up and does it again and again until he seriously hurts himself or until I hold him down and then try to divert his attention which can be very hard.

He is very clingy to me and feels the need to smell, touch, lick my arms and hold me firmly many times in an hour. He climbs on my back and shoulders whenever I sit down or bend down. He spends the whole day following me around the house apart from the time he is at playgroup. He is also fascinated with the washing machine and spends most of the time in the kitchen watching it when it is on. He attempts to turn it on himself when it is off and spins the drum when it is off.

Taking him outdoors is also a challenge. He starts walking in one direction and then doesn't stop, he doesn't want to cross over to the other side or turn into another road. To make him go where I need him to go I have to physically restrain him and then he starts to cry and kick, get out of my arms, go backwards to bang his head. At other times he refused to walk and just stand in one place and watches the traffic go past. He is unaware of danger and if not held suddenly walks out on to the road. His fascination with cars and their wheels causes him to want to go and explore and touch the car wheels, which can be moving cars on the road.

He has set routes which he likes to go on and if the route is even slightly altered he becomes anxious, upset and disorientated. E.g. each time we go to the park we have to walk on the same side of the pavement and cross at those same exact spots. The same applies on the journey back home. For this reason I use a pushchair he will not get out of it.

He has not had a haircut in over a year now as he will not allow anyone to touch his hair and he will not wear a hat in the winter as he doesn't like anything covering his head. I have also been unable to get his feet measured and use my judgement to when I think his shoes are getting too small and new pair is needed.

I think he will benefit from a statement of Special Educational Needs as I strongly believe it will give him a greater level of protection. It will give the school/s he goes to in the future a specific understanding of his needs and how to address them. It will also give them a better awareness of exactly what his needs are and what special help would benefit him. It will also demonstrate that he has additional care needs over and above other children of his age.

By giving him the opportunity to go to a Specialist Nursery he will be able gain access to adequate facilities in a more specialised learning environment with a very structured teaching approach, flexible curriculum and a higher adult: pupil ratio. This ratio will also benefit him in aspects of safety physically and mentally where he will be more closely watched. He will additionally have an advantage to specialist services that he is already involved with such as Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.

My concern led to the undertaking of some preliminary PhD research based around the concept of developing some type of a knowledge-base and information sharing hub for parents of young children who have been given a diagnosis of autism. I presented this research as a part of the proceedings of the 2014 London International Conference on Education. The following article was produced as a supplementary part of the proceedings: *'Steps towards the development of an on-line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children presenting with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)'* (Benedict-Owen: 2014) (Appendix A) . An extended version of the research findings was later published by *'The International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education'* (IJTIE) (Appendix B) in another article entitled *'The Development of an On-Line*

Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children Presenting with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Designed to Support Inclusive Education' (Benedict-Owen: 2015). Due to being unable to identify an appropriate research cohort I widened my research intent whilst remaining mindful that this would be an area of interest I would return to at a later date. As a concept the Virtual Education and SEN Support Interlinked System (VESSILS) intervention model discussed within this thesis has its roots in this earlier research.

The broader intent of this research at the point of the VESSILS intervention is to assist this group of children and their parents by supporting practitioners within the PVI group-based settings through the provision of an effective SEN intervention model at a time of national pecuniary challenge.

The research domain under consideration continues in recent years to be one of an ever changing landscape driven by political and economic pressures. Local authorities can be seen to be re-shaping the provision of the SEN support provided to the PVI group-based early years education and childcare sector. The nature and extent of this re-shaping is new territory for a number of LAs and consideration continues to be required as to the development of effective SEN advice and intervention modes which are affordable to PVI group-based early years educators at the point of delivery.

1.2 Research aims

The aims of the research are:

- To identify and consider key issues which influence the capacity of PVI group-based setting practitioners to support the SEN of children within their care.
- To develop an effective on-line early years SEN intervention model for use by practitioners within the early years phase of education.

This research contributes to the literature by providing a treatise of the PVI group-based sector experience of SEN provision as expressed by practitioners during a time of dynamic and systemic change.

1.3 Research questions

This thesis focuses on the following main question:

What are the influencing factors affecting the provision of Special Educational Needs support at the point of delivery within the Private, Voluntary and independent group-based Early Years Education and Childcare Sector?

Subsidiary questions considered are:

- What role have successive political ideologies played in the shaping of SEN provision within the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector of the Early Years Foundation Stage phase of education?
- How do PVI group-based provisions compensate for any deficiency in SEN support and training by other agencies?
- What scope is there for the design, development and implementation of an on-line intervention model to support SEN practice and professional development within the early years phase of education?

When initially writing up the research it was unclear to me where the section dealing with the design and implementation of the VESSILS model should sit, i.e. would it be best placed as separate from the initial research and findings? After some deliberation I decided that the VESSILS intervention should be seen as a part of the wider research as not only were the findings gathered from the wider research used to inform the action research approach adopted in the VESSILS design process and ongoing modification but both NING and Facebook VESSILS models were used as conduits from which to launch the on-line survey designed to gather data from the wider research domain. In effect the different research strands should be seen as interlinked research parts.

1.4 Research methodology

An interpretivist approach was adopted as the research lens was influenced by my own professional views and the experiences I shared with different PVI group-based practitioners over a nine year period. The seven cyclical step action research model as outlined by Sager (2000) was adopted when designing, constructing and modifying the *Virtual Educational Support and SEN Inter-Linked System* (VESSILS) intervention. Qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using a mixed method design. A thematic analysis approach was the primary method of qualitative data analysis. Bristol Online Survey and Facebook analytics were used in order to generate and interpret quantitative data sources.

1.5 Research rationale and motivation: a personal statement

For the past fifteen years I have been employed professionally within the area of special educational needs (SEN) in the capacity of specialist educator. During this period I have undertaken a number of different pedagogic roles: in a primary school for children with severe, profound/multiple difficulties and autism as a class teacher, Early Years coordinator and Physical Education coordinator, in a local authority as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher (Area SENCo) and as the Teacher-in-Charge of an assessment and intervention base for nursery aged children presenting with complex social communication difficulties/ autism.

Both the specialist primary school and a number of the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years group-based provisions with which I worked were situated in a region of West London recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government as the one hundred and fifty first most deprived borough in England (*Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2015*). Some of the provisions were further located within politically defined ward boundaries recognised as areas of particular deprivation, ranking among the twenty percent most deprived areas in England (Hounslow: 2017, p.8, JSNA Population Overview 2017).

During this period I have been fortunate enough to have shared many conversations with early years practitioners about a range of different issues affecting them professionally. Our conversations have touched on matters including business viability, the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, Local Authority (LA) Special

Educational Needs (SEN) support and training and the changing of SEN legislation as it related to them as providers of early years education .

Over the period of my advisory role within an outer borough LA the authority's educational provision to the PVI group-based provisions became significantly pared down both physically and fiscally with increased expectations placed on the PVI group-based provisions to support children with significant levels of SEN in a climate whereby levels of inclusion funding, access to LA training and advisory teacher visits became rationalised year on year. The PVI group-based providers, i.e. owners, managers, SENCOs and practitioners I worked alongside, found the levels of demand that the SEN requirements placed them under personally exhausting and at times professionally overwhelming. It is my intention that by providing practitioners with an SEN intervention which offers them immediate access to hyperlinks to specialist information, free training opportunities and teaching strategies some of the anxieties and pressures experienced by them in the work place will be alleviated leading to more positive outcomes for the children in their care and allowing them an elevated sense of their own professional self-efficacy.

In the following chapters the voices of a number of practitioners can be heard echoing the content of my shared conversations with practitioner colleagues.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

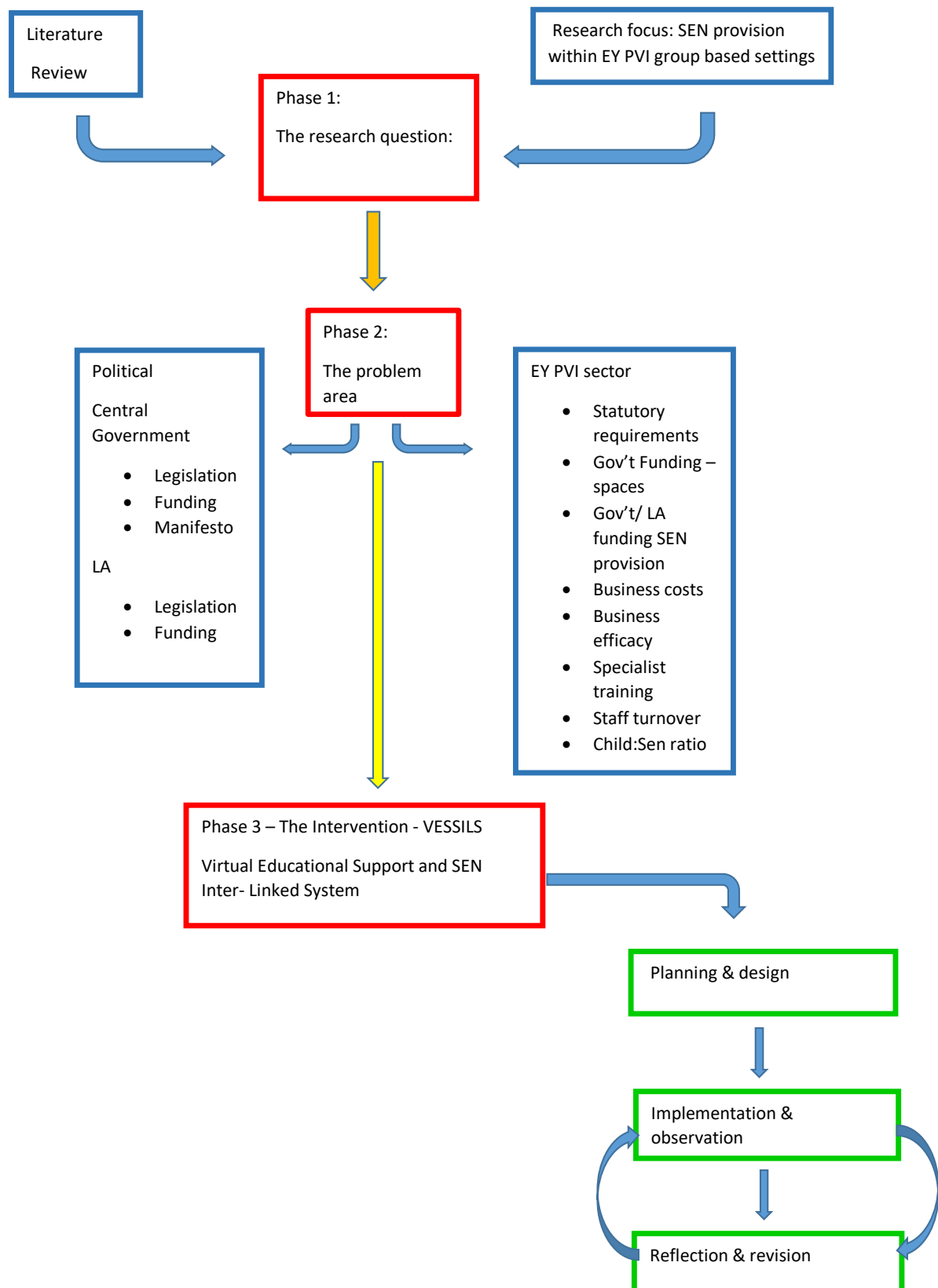
The current chapter is an introduction to the research. Chapter 2 provides a contextual overview of early years education situating the PVI group based early years education and childcare sector within this. Chapter 3 examines the position of PVI group-based early years education and childcare sector alongside the corresponding legislative and pecuniary journey of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Consideration is given to how both legislation and financial considerations have influenced the delivery of educational provision within the PVI group-based sector of the early years phase of education as a whole and in particular how they have affected the delivery of SEN provision. Chapter 4 discusses how Government policies have been seen to impact service provision within the PVI early years education and childcare sector paying particular attention to how this affects SEN provision within the PVI group based settings. Chapter 5 considers the design, development and implementation of an on-line intervention model intended to support SEN practice and professional development within the early years phase of education. Chapter 6 discusses the research paradigm and methodology including such matters as ontological and epistemological assumptions, methodological considerations, positionality and instrumentation and data collection. Chapter 7 is concerned with the review and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Chapter 8 is a discussion of the results of the research findings and focuses on the implications of these findings, the research contribution to knowledge, conclusions and limitations along with recommendations for future research.

Throughout the thesis a narrative device has frequently been adopted, mainly by means of social media references, in order to capture practitioner comments or conversation threads verbatim. The aim is to contextually record and represent practitioner accounts using their own words; these comments and conversations are an important information source providing as they do first hand witness testimony and opinion from within the research domain.

1.7 Main findings

In summary, the current climate within the early years phase of education can be seen as one of both economic and pedagogic challenge and downsizing. It is apparent that the Government continues to seek out the most cost effective methods for the provision of early years education and childcare in line with manifesto pledges and policy decisions. Whilst Government has previously appeared to settle on the PVI group-based early years and childcare sector to fill this need recent Government initiatives suggest that this particular playing field could be changing. Additionally, there has been an on-going pattern of the closure of PVI group-based provisions unable to maintain operational viability. For some providers this has been exacerbated through the need to financially supplement the SEN provision within their setting. Needless to say the closure of PVI group-based providers will inevitably threaten access to early years provision for a number of children presenting with SEN, particularly those not yet of reception class age if not statutory school age. In order to support PVI group-based provisions in effectively managing their SEN provision the VESSILS Virtual Community of Practice has been implemented via a popular online social networking platform.

1.8 The Conceptual Framework



Chapter 2 Research context: an overview of PVI early years group-based settings

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on LAs to ensure that within the geographic area for which they have administrative responsibility there are enough early years education spaces available for all of those children whose parents might wish to take up the offer of a government funded early years education placement. Ensuring compliance with this duty sits within the remit of a LA's Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The PVI group-based sector has become a major player in the field of early years educational provision and is the main LA educational provider for significant numbers of children under statutory school age. This is particularly the case amongst nursery aged children. The Micro-Social Change (MISOC) Childcare briefing (2014) reported that the proportion of three year olds taking up a part-time early years placement rose from 37% in 1999 to 88% in 2007. This increase in demand for places was met through the PVI group-based sector rather than through increased capacity within the LA maintained nursery sector. In 2016, 59% of early years provision for three year olds was accommodated by the PVI group-based sector as against 33% by LA maintained nursery class placements. Of particular relevance to this research is the consideration that for those children taking up the Government's offer of a nursery year placement through the Early Education Entitlement (EEE) funding, for those presenting with SEN there would a greater possibility that this would be through attending a PVI group-based setting.

A child's attendance at a PVI group-based setting using the Government's universal funding is generally through attending for fifteen hours per week over a thirty eight week period. This period is generally in line with a LA's school term dates.

However, within the PVI group-based sector the hours of attendance can be offered in a way which best fits with the patterns of sessional provision as decided by the provider, e.g. two weekly seven and a half hour sessions, three five hour sessions per week and so forth. Another approach used to allocate the funded hours over a year is through 'stretched' funding. For example, a child can attend a PVI group-based setting for ten hours per week over a fifty two week cycle with the outstanding fifty hours being fitted in as additional hours over the period.

In order to consider SEN provision within the PVI group-based early years sector, it is useful to take a step back and consider a wider context which positions the PVI group-based early years sector within both the Government's own educational framework and also within the broader political agenda. To do this requires consideration of a number of Government initiatives and statutory instruments where there are links to special educational needs provision within the PVI group-based sector of early years education and childcare. Additionally, any reciprocal responses made by local authorities to these initiatives in so far as they impact on SEN provision within the PVI group-based sector have been included. Decisions made independently at LA level related to SEN as they affect the PVI group-based settings are also discussed.

Also fundamental to the research domain are some other Central Government and Local Authority (LA) policy and fiscal decisions which are not overtly linked to SEN provision but which for various reasons impact on the nature of the SEN support delivered by PVI group-based setting practitioners. Social policy decisions such as those implemented to tackle child poverty, narrow the attainment gap and safeguard children have had a definite influence on the nature of educational provision within the PVI group-based sector of early years education and childcare. Research has demonstrated a strong correlation between defined areas of deprivation and a higher frequency of SEN within the population.

“... poverty is both a cause and an effect of SEND.”

(Shaw et al.,2016 np)

By implication it is PVI group-based settings within areas of social deprivation which will be expected to have children with higher representations of SEN present within the group. Therefore amongst those taking up the offer of Early Learning Entitlement (EEE) and Extended Funding Entitlement (EFE) spaces of early years education and childcare provision, both of which were designed as measures to support the Government’s wider social policies, there is a higher probability of the presence of SEN within the cohort.

Matters of funding were seen to be of particular importance to the research domain. The funding streams designated by Central Government for the purchase of education and childcare spaces within the PVI group-based sector in order to fulfil the Government’s own political programmes have been deemed by many within the PVI group-based sector as insufficient. Some within the PVI group-based sector

assert that the hourly rates allocated by Government for those children with SEN taking up on the Government's different education and childcare schemes are in effect further reduced since the additional costs incurred by the PVI group-based providers at the point of service delivery are neither factored in at source nor adequately compensated for through the Government/LA targeted SEN funding and support systems.

A useful illustration of the pressures faced by the PVI sector is an 'Open Letter' addressed to Theresa May - the Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party – by Rebecca Hudson Sheepwash, a former owner/manager of a PVI group-based setting. An extract is set out below. The letter was originally published on a politically motivated PVI group-based practitioners' Facebook Group called '*Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*'. The responses generated by a number of other PVI practitioners in agreement with Sheepwash's views have been included as Appendix C to this thesis alongside a full version of the letter itself. This 'open letter' to Theresa May and the subsequent replies provide a glimpse into a sector of early years education and childcare setting where practitioners are deeply dissatisfied with their relationship with the Government of the day.

“AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY I find myself continually annoyed at this 30 hours 'free' childcare situation. It is disgraceful on so many levels. Primarily it totally undermines our sector completely, it disregards our hard work and qualifications. Let's take myself as an example, I have spent over 25 years building up a nursery, that provides Ofsted Outstanding care, not an easy feat, many of you not in the sector probably have no idea how hard it is to achieve Outstanding, it is not just

meeting the welfare requirements and teaching young children, it is going over and above with everything from the environment in which the care is provided, to the quality of the teaching. Before I continue to complain, let me just remind you of some of the points Ofsted (your appointed inspectorate) made during our inspection (feel free to read it on their website ofsted registration number EY273510) ... Take a look at the photo attached from the report. This level of care and education is not provided without investing hard work, money and amazing staff continually. Another quote from 'Ofsted':- 'The manager provides extensive training opportunities for the staff team, recognising the importance of having highly qualified staff' so you acknowledge that I continue to invest time and money continually training my staff taking on board all the latest research and using that to inform my practice. With 'Ofsted' being your Government's inspecting body for our sector ... for all the education sector throughout our children's learning lives, you would think you would listen and take on board their findings, valuing the information - oh but actually there is research you have commissioned and ignored the findings, so maybe I'm over estimating your government's ability to use information to inform their practice ... a method we use often in our work ... it's effective ... go on try it... it's important to remember what Ofsted have told you about my nursery, when looking at the concerns I'm raising."

(Sheepwash:2017) (Appendix C)

The letter's content is borne out both by the literature and by the research findings. It is from within such PVI group-based settings alongside other early years providers that the Government's special educational needs and disability initiatives are delivered to children under statutory school age.

The last several decades have redefined the role of the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years education and childcare sector. A primary driver of this redefinition being the Government's effectively situating a significant amount of

the operational content and accountability of the PVI group-based sector settings within the parameters of the country's wider educational framework. It could be argued that this positioning of the PVI group-based providers, orchestrated over time by successive Governments, has allowed for the partial 'contracting out' by Government of the non-statutory early years phase of education. The utilisation of the PVI group-based sector by Government in this way has allowed the Government to implement manifesto pledges as to early years education, childcare, SEN and inclusion whilst at the same time responding strategically to outside economic and social pressures.

The impact on the PVI group-based settings of the Government's SEN initiatives operationally at the point of service delivery is regarded by some within the PVI group-based sector as considerable.

The post below by K. H., a frustrated practitioner, illustrates some of the difficulties faced by PVI group-based providers when supporting children within their cohort who present with higher levels of SEN. Indicative of the high levels of SEN supported by practitioners within this particular group-based setting is the author's expectation that these children will require an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to be in place to support them at the time of their transitioning into their next educational placement as EHCPs are only agreed by a local authority for those children presenting with the highest levels of SEN. She also cites three central components or professional attributes that she regards as essential to progress children with high

levels of SEN: confidence, knowledge and experience. These attributes are considered and discussed in further detail later.

'This sector really tears us in half in regards to our love and dedication to our children and our need for sustainability in order to continue providing hard working families with childcare and dedicated staff with jobs. Today we got confirmation of securing 2X more 1:1 funding for children who really need additional support and the way paved for their getting their EHCPs in place for school. We already have one child with 1:1 support in place.

My initial thought was what amazing work the team have done, securing this place, identifying the additional needs the children have and then to us for securing and providing this support. Not to blow our own trumpet, but these children are making progress because of our work. I know many settings without our confidence, knowledge and experience to secure this and in some cases, I can't blame them for not getting it. Then, I called the finance side of the business because I knew they would need to be warned of the £43 per child, per week loss we are going to make on these two children on top of the loss we are already making on the other child. To say that they are not best pleased on the estimated £4K loss we are going to have basically (to) take on these children for the next seven months would be an understatement.

The inclusion funding of £6.98, plus £4.03 of funding per hour (Leicestershire) does not cover 1:1 funding when you take into (account) the costs of staff holidays, potential sick cover, NI, break cover and because, God forbid, I believe in paying my team more than the NLW and pay the real living wage.

Where is our recognition for the bloody hard work we do co-ordinating services and supporting our most vulnerable families and children in society? Or they really not matter (care?) that we will all soon be forced to look the other way or worse, turn these children away due to poor funding rates? I really do despair.' K. H. (06.02.2019): Source: *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*

Alongside the Government's increased utilisation of early years PVI group-based settings during the same period substantial budgetary challenges forced local authorities to re-structure and at times redefine their own service provision in key areas such as social care, housing and education including educational provision as it relates to special educational needs and disability. In October 2018, May Bulman, Social Affairs Correspondent for the *Independent* newspaper wrote:

“Councils are facing the biggest cuts to government funding since 2010 despite unprecedented pressure and demand, which could risk “tipping many over the edge”, local authorities have warned. Figures show that the revenue support grant – the main source of government funding for local services – will be cut by 36 per cent next year, marking the largest annual deduction in almost a decade. It comes despite repeated warnings that continuing cuts to vital local authority provisions mean vulnerable people, such as the elderly, at-risk children and homeless people, are being left to ‘fend for themselves’.” (Bulman: 2018, np)

Andrew Gwynne, shadow minister for communities and local government, was quoted in the same article as saying:

“The Government can no longer ignore this crisis. Unless we see additional investment into local services and local government, councils will be in an impossible position and more will follow Northamptonshire into bankruptcy.” (Bulman: 2018, np)

Thus by various means including the enactment of statute, it can be contended that recent years have seen more of a devolution of the responsibility for SEN support and services within education, moving them away from Central Government and LAs with increased reliance on community partners and stakeholders such as the PVI group-based settings to undertake and maintain necessary SEN processes and functions previously undertaken by LA agents such as Early Years Advisory Teachers. In some cases as illustrated in the conversation string below, PVI group-based providers report that they have also been called on to finance much needed SEN support themselves from within the setting’s own funds:

JL: *'I think this is a real underground problem that parents and the public don't realise is happening. Private businesses should not be subsidising 1:1 funding for children with SEND. If they require 1:1 then I believe the local authority need to pay for it...'*

MW: *'We have been told the days of 1:1 are over by our LA.'*

JL: *'Correction the days of them funding 1:1 are over. Nurseries will still provide it because the child needs it. The issue is if the child is in a 1:3/4/8 ratio because there's no funding then the other children in that ratio are going to be really disadvantaged.'*

Conversation string between practitioners discussing one-to one funding for children with SEN (06.02.2019) Source: *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*

In the above conversation string, J. L. also remarks on the detrimental effect this has for other children within the group where adult:child ratios need to be skewed in order to manage and progress children with additional needs, describing these 'other' children as being disadvantaged by this. Within the research findings this view is common amongst practitioners when discussing the impacts of SEN provision on the wider Early Years cohort.

The incremental devolution of educational and financial responsibility for SEN to the PVI group-based settings can perhaps be viewed in part if not in whole as measures of economic necessity and expediency at both a Central Government and Local Authority level. This Central Government and local authority delegation of SEN duties and responsibilities to front-line early years PVI group-based providers is charted within the literature review which sets out some of those increasing pressures and responsibilities placed on providers as a result of the political decisions made at both central and local government level.

The impact on the early years PVI group-based settings of these responsibilities and duties, re-negotiated at a political level alongside a number of other concerns brought about as a result of various funding decisions made by Central and Local Government, such as the revised funding formula which is used to decide regional rates of funding for EEE spaces at PVI group-based settings and LA cuts in SEN service provision, are important influences which required addressing within the research.

The Government '*Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers, England, 2016*' reported findings that in 2016 there were estimated to be 25,500 PVI group-based early years providers with 96% of these offering the Government's fifteen hours of early education entitlement (Dept. for Education, 2017). This translates into 24,488 PVI group-based settings acting as educational providers on behalf of the Government's own early years educational programme with a combined staff of 270,600 practitioners as against a combined staffing level of 134,900 early years educators working within the LA maintained education sector where 9,300 school-based providers offered both nursery/reception provision and 400 were maintained nursery schools (Dept. for Education, 2016).

The table below shows that in England in 2016 between those PVI group-based settings offering full day spaces and the PVI group-based settings offering sessional spaces there was a combined total of 776, 400 children accessing early years provision from within the PVI group-based sector.

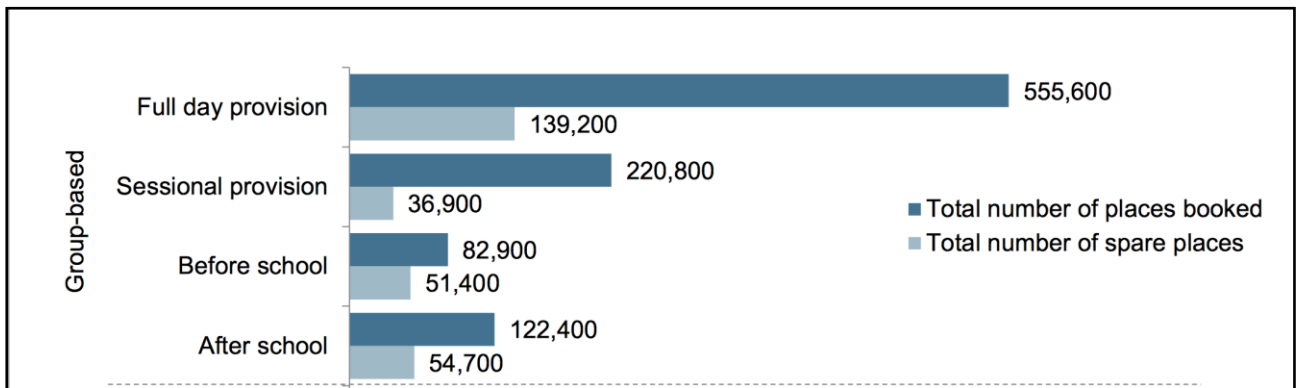


Fig. 2.1 Total number of booked EY places per day at PVI settings: England 2016. Source: Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2016

Of the overall number of early years educational placements, 53% of all registered places were taken up in schools (including maintained nursery schools) with 39% of registered places taken up in PVI group-based settings. Of the registered places provided via LA maintained school placements, there were 8,200 school-based providers who offered reception aged provision but no provision for those children of nursery age. A possible implication drawn from these figures being that for many of those children presenting with higher levels of SEN, their initial early years educational placement will be at a PVI group-based setting, with a number of these same children then moving directly into specialist educational provision from their reception class year.

In summary, the PVI early years education sector is a key provider of early years education, particularly so for those children of nursery age and under who present with SEN. The literature review and research findings both identify and examine a range of external variables which impact on SEN provision at the point of delivery

within the PVI group-based sector of early years educational provision. Particular influencers are those legislative requirements pertaining to SEN and a number of wider economic decisions made at a Central Government level and then managed and administered LAs which impact on early years education and SEN funding decisions. In more recent years much has been made by successive governments of the concept within education of inclusive practices in relation to the educational experiences of individuals presenting with SEN. Alongside the inclusive dialogue there is a recognition within education that effective early intervention can also significantly influence learning outcomes.

Chapter 3 - PVI group-based provision within the wider educational and political framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on a range of publications to offer a contextual view of PVI group-based provision within the wider educational and political framework. The content and manner in which statutory duties and fiscal decisions have been made, disseminated and passed from central government to local government and onwards to PVI group-based providers has also been charted along with any points of significance as to SEN provision as it affects the PVI group-based experience. The 'inclusive' concept as it affects the PVI early years providers in relation to SEN provision is also considered.

Children accessing non- statutory early years educational provision in a PVI group-based setting experience education at its most diverse. Children who will in due course be educated within a specialised educational establishment by means of an Education, Health and Care Plan will commonly not have any such formalised educational plan in place at the point of entering the early years phase of education. For those who do, access to a dedicated specialised educational provider may not be available to them until they are of reception age.

3.2 Schoolification:

Due to the 'contracting'-in of part of the PVI group-based early years and childcare sector, the Government undertook measures to ensure that the early years educational phase was

standardised across providers in both the LA maintained sector and the PVI group-based sector with the aim of ensuring that all children would receive a good Early Years learning experience.

“The Government has pursued a mixed-market approach to the delivery of early learning and childcare. A consequence of that policy has been particularly pronounced disparities in provider quality. The policy-makers have sought to reduce these disparities primarily through a) continuing the tradition of targeting school-based provision at disadvantaged children and b) applying the rigour of the school system across the mixed market through building professional capacity and regulation – sometimes termed ‘schoolification.’” (Morgan & Reed: 2016, p.4)

In order to ensure standardization the Government put in place a number of curricular and professional measures such as:

- The introduction of an integrated 0-5 play-based curriculum (2008);
- The introduction of compulsory progress checks at age 2 (2012);
- The introduction of a new Level 3 “Early Years Educator”, qualification
- An Ofsted common inspection framework, which ensured that registered providers received a judgement on the quality of teaching (2016).

(‘*Early Workforce Strategy*’: March 2017)

Alongside these, within the PVI early years education and childcare sector the legislative landscape pertaining to SEN has for providers and practitioners alike become increasingly complex and challenging. Government diktat as expressed

through SEN legislative expectations and responsibilities has been incrementally embedded into the fabric of early years education and childcare.

3.3 SEN and Pedagogy in the Early Years Phase of Education

Jane Friswell, Nasen Chief Executive in the introduction of *'Collaborative Learning for SEN: the role of the SENCO'* wrote:

'Good teaching does not happen by accident ... and we know that high quality teaching for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN) provides high quality teaching for all ... We know that the learning needs of our pupils and students across the 0 - 25 year age range of educational and training proven are increasing in complexity and the resulting impact on our teaching workforce is significant.' (Friswell, 2015, np)

Alongside an understanding of both typical and atypical child development good quality teaching is an essential component in ensuring the early identification of SEN and the subsequent implementation of appropriate educational steps such as those outlined in the National Strategies SEN waves of intervention Model *'Quality First Teaching'*. Practitioners within the PVI group-based sector are required to possess the knowledge and teaching skills needed in order to meet with their statutory duty to deliver an effective curriculum for all of the children in their care.

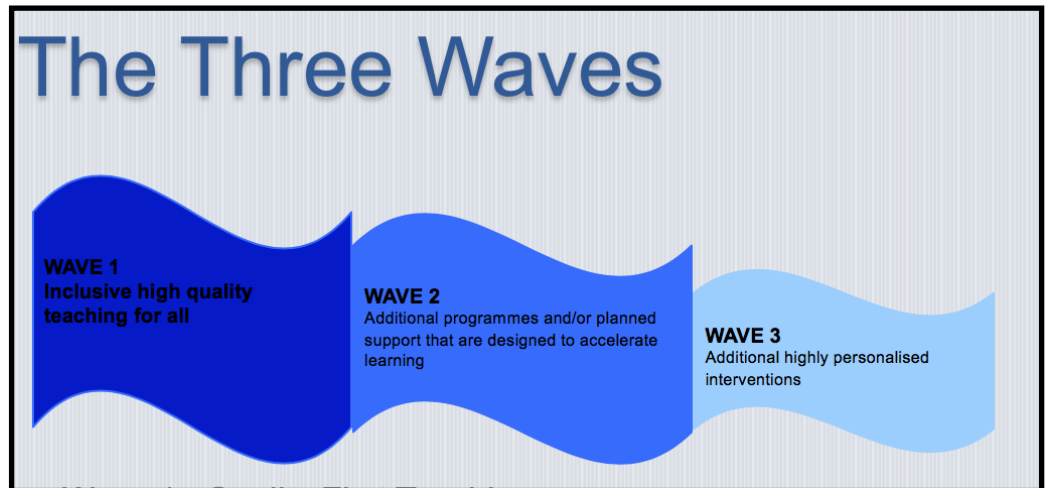


Fig: 3.1 Special Needs Waves of Intervention Model

www.westonturville.bucks.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=1189&type=pptx

1.24 of the SEND CoP (2015) states:

‘High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised ...some children ... need educational provision that is additional to or different from’ ... ‘Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.’

For the majority of the PVI practitioners with whom I worked in my capacity as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher with the responsibility of ensuring that the SEN requirements of the children within the LA’s group-based provisions were appropriately met, between the period 2008 to 2017 SEN specialist knowledge and experiences were gained primarily whilst in the workplace, generally on a need to know basis where one of their own key children presented with particular SEN requirements. This fact is supported within the findings of a study undertaken by Clough and Nutbrown (2004) which looked at early years practitioners professional development where twenty two practitioners from a total cohort of twenty four reported that their SEN understanding and knowledge was ‘derived on the job’ (2004:202)

3.4 SEN and Early Identification

All early years settings are required to monitor and support the children in their care to ensure that they develop and learn appropriately. Practitioners are expected to identify any developmental issues and work closely with parents in order to deal with any identified problems, source additional outside help where required and if necessary, support parents to refer their child for an Education Health and Care Plan assessment. Early years settings are also required to maintain a record, which is available to the child's parents, of those children within their care who present with SEN. Early years PVI settings in receipt of Government funding must also have a written policy outlining how they support children with SEN and disabilities (Appendix D - Inclusion policy including SEND and equality of opportunities: Surrey template).

In addition to the specific legislative frameworks governing SEN at the point of delivery there are a number of other related legislative influences which affect SEN support and provision within PVI group-based settings such as the Government's commitment to the principle of the inclusive education of disabled children and young people in line with articles 7 and 24 of The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

PVI group-based practitioners must also adhere to the specific curricular, assessment and safeguarding and welfare guidance relating to SEN in the Early Years Statutory Framework (DfE, 2017) as well as those pedagogic processes and

practices described in the *Special Educationalal Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015* (SEND CoP) (DfE, 2015).

A major influence on the extent and quality of SEN provision within the PVI early years education and childcare sector is that of the wider domestic fiscal framework of the United Kingdom as it affects England. In response to economic events such as the global financial crisis of 2007 - 2008 and the extreme financial recession of the early 1980s Central Government adopted a policy of substantially reducing public expenditure. This has resulted in a cut in funding to LAs by nearly 50% since 2010 - 2011 without any reduction in LA statutory obligations (Kara, 2019, np). In consequence there has been a marked reduction in support to educational and social care infrastructures at a local level.

The extent to which PVI group-based settings have access to external agency advice and support such as that provided by LA educational advisors and affordable SEN training are also important influencers on the availability and quality of any SEN support at the point of service delivery within the PVI group-based settings. Additionally, setting practitioners' perceptions of their own professional self-efficacy can be seen to influence the quality of any SEN measures implemented.

3.5 Political influences on SEN provision within the Early Years Phase of Education

3.5.1 SEN and Inclusion

'The terms 'SEN' and 'inclusion' have become inextricably linked through policy interpretation, professional development, personal experience and public voice.'
(Ellis, 2008, p7)

The philosophies and political agendas of those governing England during the scope of this research and the influence they exerted over education policy generally and early years education and special educational needs policies specifically, form a key part of the research literature. Of particular significance is how political ideology and legislation have directed the Special Educational Needs (SEN) support received by children accessing provision in the 'Early Years' phase of education and in particular those attending the PVI group-based education and childcare sector.

The term 'Special Educational Needs' was first introduced in the Warnock Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People (1978) (Warnock 1978:6.1 p94). It has since become a term of art within both political and educational vocabularies in England.

The findings of the Warnock report included the recommendation that the SEN of most children could be met within the mainstream body of the educational system through a series of increasingly differentiated provision. In the Education Act 1981 a number of the Warnock recommendations were adopted and a legal

definition was ascribed to the term 'SEN' and given legal status. The Act also stipulated how children with SEN should be assessed and outlined the process for producing Statements of SEN. The Act endorsed an integrative approach to education whereby children presenting with SEN would work alongside their peers where this was deemed appropriate in so far as their particular needs could be met without this being of detriment to their peers. (Hodkinson: 2015)

'In respect of children's rights to a full and broad education, history has shown that integration was to become something of a halfway house between the policies of segregation and those of inclusive education.'

(Hodkinson, 2015, np)

This integrated approach to education has been criticised by some academics and educators arguing that Local Authorities were given too much discretion as to the development of localised integrative educational practices. (Jones: 2004).

Additionally, interpretation by the various LAs as to what constituted reasonableness as given in the Act alongside LAs receiving no additional funding by Central Government in order to implement integrative educational provision resulted in a lack of equity of provision offered by the integrative educational models across the different authorities. (Farrell, 2004)

On 1st May 1997, 7th June 2001 and 5th May 2005 the general elections were won by 'New Labour' led by Tony Blair. Arguably, it was under the 'New Labour' Government that much proactive change and innovation with regard to inclusive SEN provision began. Armstrong (2005) in his work *Reinventing Inclusion: New*

Labour and the cultural politics of special education details how 'New Labour' on coming to power in 1997 made inclusive SEN practice a central focus of its educational agenda naming the Green Paper *Excellence for all children* (DfES, 1997a) as the political manifesto upon which 'New Labour's' inclusive educational policy was to be based.

"The best way to tackle educational disadvantage is to get in early. When educational failure becomes entrenched, pupils can move from demoralisation to disruptive behaviour and truancy. But early diagnosis and appropriate intervention improve the prospects of children with special educational needs, and reduce the need for expensive intervention later on. For some children, giving more effective attention to early signs of difficulties can prevent the development of SEN." (DfEE, 1997, pp 12-13)

The then Secretary of State for Education and Employment, the Rt Hon David Blunkett MP wrote:

"Good provision for SEN does not mean a sympathetic acceptance of low achievement. It means a tough-minded determination to show that children with SEN are capable of excellence. Where schools respond in this way, teachers sharpen their ability to set high standards for all pupils." (DfEE, 1997, np)

The *Excellence for all Children* (DfES, 1997) programme of action was described by 'New Labour' as a complete rethink of the systems and processes in education at the time of their coming into office. Explicitly stated in the Green Paper was the political expectation at Government level that children presenting with SEN should be seen to progress and achieve positive educational outcomes. This expectation was also embedded within the educational curriculum for children accessing the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) phase of learning. It was intended that by placing an

emphasis on early identification many children's special educational needs would be identified before children reached compulsory school age (DfEE, 1997, p14).

In 1997 *Excellence in Schools* (DfEE, 1997b) the New Labour Government's first White Paper was produced. The proposals it contained were intended to support the raising of educational standards for all children with special educational needs as an *'integral part of the wider programme for raising standards'* (DfEE, 1997b, np).

Importantly, the White Paper covered the years of a child's life before the start of their formal early education. This was achieved in part by the Government putting a number of mechanisms in place intended to support families where 'educational disadvantage' was present, particularly where young children were involved. The White Paper spoke of a *'comprehensive and integrated approach to pre-school education and childcare'* (DfEE, 1997a, np) and Local Authorities were required to set up early years forums with local private and voluntary childcare providers.

In 1998, the Government published the Green Paper *Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action*. The key principles of this Green Paper were:

- setting high expectations for children with special educational needs
- supporting parents
- increasing the numbers of SEN children included in mainstream schools wherever possible
- an emphasis on practical support, not procedures

- providing better opportunities for professional development for teachers and others
- promoting partnership for special educational needs issues locally, regionally and nationally.

(Association of Teachers and Lecturers: 1999, np)

Additionally, the 'New Labour' Government's *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001* came into force. The Act was intended as an adjunct to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, which itself was designed to prevent the unequal treatment of individuals in the provision of goods and services unless justification could be proven. *The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001* extended the remit of the earlier Act to include educational organisations, thereby making it 'illegal for providers of education and educational services to discriminate against disabled people' (Ellis et al., 2008).

Alongside the Act, *The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001* (SEN CoP 2001) (DfES, 2001) was produced. This was a revised version of the original *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs 1994* (DfE, 1994). The SEN CoP 2001 set out the special educational needs provisions in the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001*; it provided a framework for PVI group-based settings as to the SEN support measures and processes they were expected to adhere to.

In 2004 'New Labour's' vision for the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities was set out in *Removing Barriers to*

Achievement: The Government's Strategy for SEN (DfE, 2004). This publication addressed four key areas (DfES, 2004, Introduction):

- Early Intervention: children with difficulties and their parents should have access to suitable help and childcare.
- Removing Barriers to Learning: inclusive practice embedded in all schools and early years settings.
- Raising Expectations and Achievement: appropriate teaching skills and strategies to be developed and a focus be made on the progress children made.
- Delivering Improvements in Partnership.

In *Reinventing inclusion: New Labour and the cultural politics of special education*

Derrick Armstrong (2005) outlined how he saw inclusive education interpreted within the context of 'New Labour' politics:

“What is distinctive about New Labour policy on inclusive education is how the language of inclusion has been mobilised as a central normalising discourse of governance. State intervention is advanced in pursuit of technical 'solutions' to social exclusion as a moral rather than as a political problem.” (Armstrong, 2005, p.135)

The general election held in May 2010 led to a Conservative - Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, led by the then Conservative leader David Cameron which passed a number of Acts intended to improve SEN and disability legislation.

The *Equality Act 2010* replaced a number of previously separate anti-discrimination laws' including the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, with a single Act which both

simplified former anti-discrimination legislation and strengthened legislation designed to tackle discrimination and inequality. The Act is the current legislation in force to protect against any discrimination arising from an individual's disability. In the Act the definition of disability is "*a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect (on a person's) ability to do normal daily activities*". Conditions such as autism or global developmental delay meet this definition and consequently many children presenting with SEN are protected to some degree under this Act.

In March 2011, *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability* was published. The document set out the Government's plans to reform the systems for identifying, assessing and supporting children and young people who were disabled and/or presented with SEN. The plans included the early identification of needs through the extension of early education and childcare. The introduction to the paper stated:

'We want to give children the best chance to succeed by spotting any problems early, extending early education and childcare, and bringing together the services they need into a single assessment and a single plan covering education, health and care' (DfE, 2011, p.3)

On 13 March 2014 *The Children and Families Act 2014* became law. This Act was conceived as a means to completely reform services for vulnerable children and is now the primary legislation dealing with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The SEN requirements are set down in Part 3 of the Act '*Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities*'. Part 3 places statutory

duties on Local Authorities and other services with regard to disabled children and those with SEN. However not all the section parts apply to both of these groups. The strategic planning duties of the Act apply to all disabled children and young people and those with SEN whilst the individual duties laid down in the Act normally apply only to children with SEN, the Individual duties applying to disabled people more widely being incorporated in the *Equality Act 2010*.

Clause 20 of the *Children and Families Act 2014* defines a child as having a learning difficulty or disability where special educational provision is required. For the purpose of the Act a learning disability is defined as:

- when a child has significantly greater difficulty in learning as compared to age related peers

Or

- where a child has a disability that impedes or stops the child's ability to access and use facilities within a mainstream school environment which are accessible to their age-related peers.

The Key principles of the *Children and Families Act 2014* are:

- The views of parents, children and young people are important within decision-making about SEN
- There must be a focus on outcomes and improving progress.
- There should be a joint approach across all of the agencies supporting the child.

The specific requirements contained within the Act have been expanded in the statutory instrument the *Special Educational needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years* (DfE: 2015).

The individual statutory requirements for children presenting with SEN within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are given in chapter 5 of the *SEND CoP* (DfE, 2015) and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (DfE, 2017). For those children presenting with a disability these statutory requirements are laid down in the *Equality Act 2010*.

Familiarising themselves with and implementing the different SEN legislative requirements and reforms has involved PVI group-based settings in a significant amount of organisational and operational upheaval. Implementation of Part 3 of the *Children and Families Act 2014* requires LAs to provide training to PVI group-based setting practitioners as to the carrying out their SEN duties under the Act. In my capacity as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher involved in both providing such training for PVI group-based SENCOs, managers and group-based provision owners and also in guiding them through the new LA administrative systems and processes I saw at first hand the effects that implementing the SEN legislative requirements had on PVI group-based practitioners .

Examination of the SEN legislative path as it affects the early years PVI group-based sector, whilst necessary, is not sufficient in order to allow full consideration of the research questions. Government's social policy initiatives have also produced outcomes which affect matters of SEN provision within the sector.

3.6 SEN and social Policy in Early Years Education

‘Early years childcare and education touches on many aspects of social policy, from education to the labour market to the benefits system’ (Stewart & Waldfogel, 2017).

A not inconsiderable number of PVI group-based settings spaces are purchased by Government as a childcare resource used to support social policies targeted at reducing child poverty and encouraging social mobility. The Department for Education publication *30 hours free childcare, England, spring term 2019 (Experimental Statistics)* (DfE, 2019, p.3) estimated that in the spring term 325,000 children had taken up a 30 hours place. However, within the PVI group-based settings children’s educational experiences and childcare provision are inseparable.

Whereas the Government’s universal Early Education Entitlement (EEE) and Early Learning Entitlement (ELE) are focused on supporting child development, the extended hours initiative aims to reduce or remove the childcare cost for parents wishing to either join the workforce or to extend the number of hours currently worked.

‘Recent years have seen a shift in policy focus away from quality early education for child development and towards the affordability of childcare for working families.’ (Stewart & Waldfogel, 2017, p15)

A number of research findings (Shaw, Bernardes, Trethewey and Menzies, L, 2016, Morgan & and Reed 2016, p.10, Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010) indicate a clear

relationship between poverty and children presenting with higher levels of SEN.

Shaw, Bernardes, Trethewey and Menzies (2016) argue that '*SEN can be a result of poverty as well as a cause of poverty*'.

The location of a PVI group-based setting in relation to proximity to the child's home has been identified as a key influence on parents' decisions about where to send their child for early years education and care. However, parents of children presenting with more complex needs flagged up the importance of staff-child ratios and practitioner understanding of their child's specific needs as being crucial. (Griggs and Bussard, 2017)

Being a key service provider for a number of Government social policy initiatives such as those aimed to reduce child poverty clearly have undoubtedly placed additional demand for SEN provision within PVI group-based provisions such as that of having higher SEN caseloads than they would otherwise have as well as impacting on the daily working experiences of setting practitioners. The additional challenges faced by the PVI group-based settings practitioners in areas of social and economic deprivation include engaging with and leading on wider multi-professional partnership initiatives with LA agencies involved in social care issues which affect both parent and child populations. This means that in addition to supporting children within the PVI group-based setting itself, practitioners are required to attend meetings and liaise with outside agencies on behalf of children and the wider family group.

3.7 Early Education, social deprivation and SEN

Waldfogel and Washbrook (2010) reported that, based on the Millennium Cohort Study Analysis, in 2006 at the point of their starting school children from low-income families were behind their more financially/socially advantaged peers by nearly one year in vocabulary development and by smaller but still significant levels in other areas of their cognitive development. Morgan and Reed (2016) noted that:

‘Disadvantaged children ... remain 18 percentage points less likely to achieve a ‘good level of development’ at age 5 than their peers. On this measure the gap has hardly narrowed and on all measures it remains broad. Disadvantaged children also remain disproportionately represented in poorer quality settings and more likely not to take up any provision.’ (Morgan& and Reed, 2016, p.10)

Feinstein (2003) in his work *Inequality in the early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort* uncovered a significant correlation between social class and the achievement of children at the age of five. He found that children from higher socio-economic groups demonstrated higher levels of attainment at age five than those of children from lower socio-economic groups. Hansen and Joshi (2007) reported that results from the *Naming Vocabulary Subtest of the British Ability Scale* and the *School Readiness Composite (SRC)* of the Revised Bracken Basic Concept Scale showed that, by the age of five, children from the most advantaged socio-economics groups achieved better cognitive scores than their socio-economically disadvantaged peers.

‘Childhood disability is frequently a ‘trigger event’ for poverty because families face significant extra expenses related to their child’s disability and barriers moving into, or staying in work. And poverty can harm children’s lived experiences and outcomes’ (Buckland and Glass, 2014, np)

The research of Shaw et al. (2016b) on the relationship between SEN and poverty indicated that the relationship between the two is strong and identified two reasons why children who live in poverty are more prone to present with SEN:

- Intergenerational disability
- Co-occurring causal factors such as low levels of maternal education with mothers without educational qualifications being 2.3 times more likely to have children with SEN.

Research undertaken by Hastings et al. (2015) suggested that Local Authorities with the most significant levels of social deprivation within their population were also those disproportionately affected by public expenditure reductions since they were more reliant on central Government grants.

The following table illustrating the links between SEND and poverty clearly demonstrates the insidious two way relationship between these factors. In demographic areas where poverty and SEND co-exist and where greater demands are placed on LA resources by the population with regard to social and housing needs the PVI group-based sector are also expected by the LA to engage in the resolution process for the parents of children in their care.

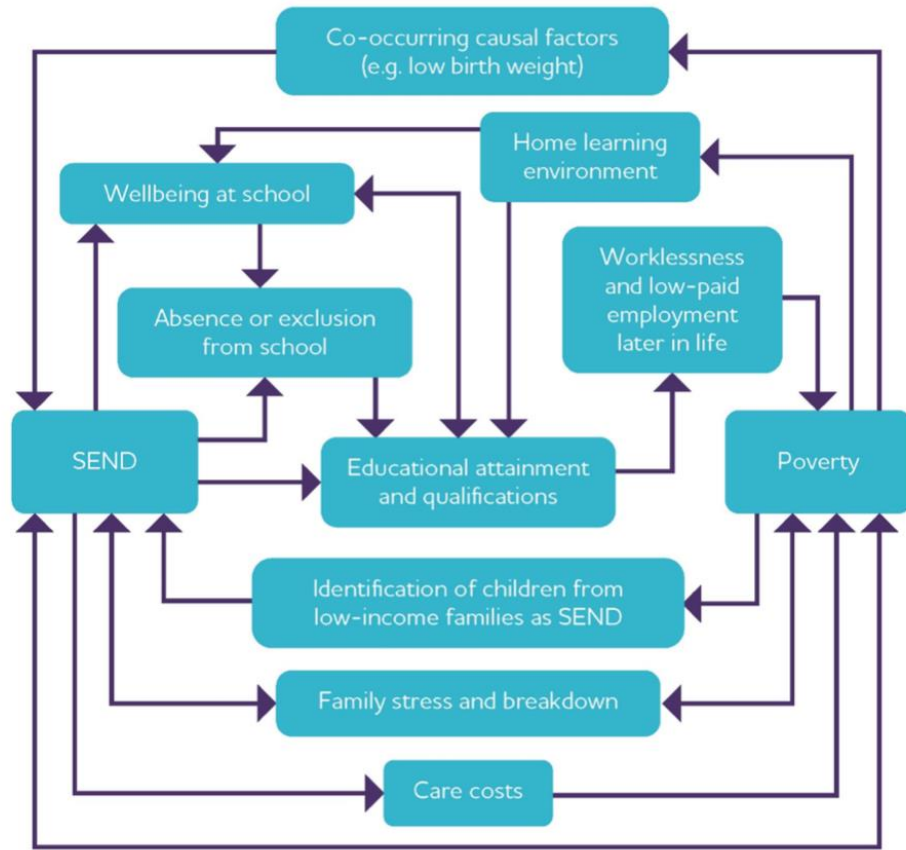


Fig: 3.2 The links between SEND & Poverty (Shaw et al.,2016)

3.8 Government initiatives to tackle child poverty

Government initiatives to deal with child poverty have had a significant impact on early years education.

'It is wholly wrong that children from lower income backgrounds can be behind their peers even before they've attended their first primary school lesson. We know that good quality early education can make a huge difference in levelling the playing field and improving a child's life chances.' Sam Gyimah - *Childcare and Education Minister (DfE, 2014, np)*

Up to fifteen hours per week of Government funded early years education and childcare is available for those children aged two years who are considered as being economically disadvantaged. Recent Government statistics reported that 72% of

eligible two year olds are now taking up the offer of this 15 hour entitlement. As well as those children who take up an early years funded placement due to parental eligibility, another eligibility category exists which includes children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or those issued an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). As this funding is directed towards children and families generally living in those areas officially denoted as economically challenged and children with identified disability, it stands to reason that the PVI group based settings operating within these demographics, will support larger numbers of children presenting with SEN than their counterparts in neighbouring areas.

'The evidence is clear that there are key family characteristics which make it harder for some poor children to do well at school. The six characteristics are a poor home environment, under-developed "character" skills (e.g. social skills, self-esteem, resilience), Special Educational Needs or disabilities or ill health, a parent being ill, having parents with low qualifications, and low family income' (HM Government, 2014, p14)

In June 2014 the government published a comprehensive Child Poverty Strategy which emphasised the importance of early years education and introduced the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for 3 and 4 year olds. The EYPP was designed to give children from the poorest families additional support in the early years in order that they become 'school ready' by reception age. Early Years providers are paid an additional top-up pupil premium of 53p per hour for those three and four year old children accessing a PVI setting through EEE funding subject to their parents meeting specified financial criteria.

As part of the *Childcare Act 2016* an entitlement to 30 hours of free childcare for working parents was mandated. This is part of a wider Government aim to encourage and support social mobility primarily through facilitating mothers' returning to the workforce.

'The Government firmly believes that work is the best route out of poverty. The extended entitlement (30 hours) has a part to play in improving social mobility through supporting and incentivising work.' (DfE, 2019, p.11)

Waldfoegel J. and Washbrook E.V. (2010) reported that based on Millennium Cohort Study Analysis children from low-income families were identified as behind their more financially/socially advantaged peers in 2006 by nearly one year in vocabulary development and by smaller but still important levels in other types of cognitive development at the point of starting school.

3.9 Statutory and other guidance

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, 2017) comprises a single regulatory framework, a set of Welfare Requirements and a set of Learning and Development Requirements. The framework is mandatory for all Ofsted registered childcare providers and schools. The framework came into force in September 2008. The most recent revision to the framework was published in March 2017. It is intended as an inclusive curriculum which outlines Government thinking as to best practice requirements for all providers and practitioners. It sets out the standards for learning and care for children aged from birth to five in England.

PVI group-based providers are required by statute to follow the principles and commitments in the EYFS statutory framework. The principles and commitments include involving parents in identifying needs, deciding outcomes, planning provision and seeking expertise at whatever point is needed in order to support a child's progress.

Section 3.67. of the framework addresses Early Years providers' responsibility to support children with SEN:

"Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained nursery schools and other providers who are funded by the Local Authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice. Maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs Coordinator and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO" (DfE, 2014, p.29)

To comply with the Government's requirements PVI early years group-based settings are required to possess a proficient level of professional knowledge and a competent SEN skills set both to allow for the meeting of SEN needs within their existing cohort and additionally as an 'anticipatory' measure in order to meet the needs of any potential future cohort (*Equality Act 2010*).

Adhering to these requirements has both fiscal and staffing consequences for the PVI group-based early years providers. Increasingly within the sector there has been disquiet in relation the delivery of SEN support within the PVI early years

education and childcare group-based sector where providers claim that they are increasingly bearing the additional costs incurred themselves.

The *SEND Code of Practice 2015* (DfE, 2015) sets out the legal duties and requirements arising from *The Children and Families Act 2014* regarding matters of SEN provision in education. All early years providers funded to offer the universal early years free entitlements by the Government must conform with the requirement to have regard to the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25* (DfE, 2015) and it is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that providers offering the funded early years entitlement conform with these requirements.

The Code of Practice emphasises the important role that good quality teaching plays in supporting children presenting with SEN and outlines the legal requirements and statutory duties as contained in Part 3 of the *Children and Families Act 2014* that Local Authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges must adhere to with regards individuals with special educational needs. It sets out a cyclic process of support based on intervention and assessment.

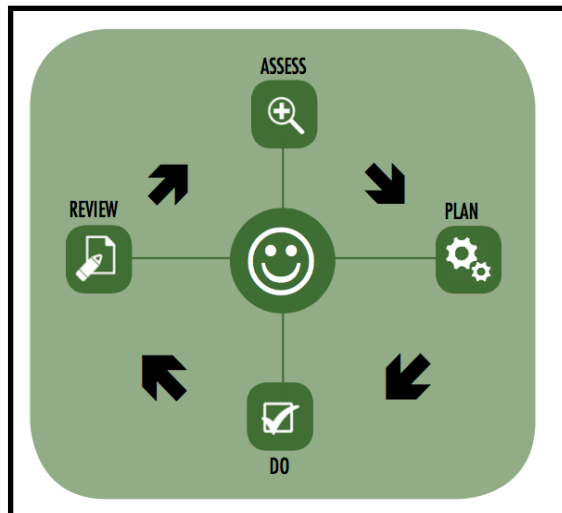


Fig. 3.3 The SEN Cycle of support (Nasen: 2014)

Other legal requirements as they relate to special educational needs in the Early Years phase of education are outlined in ‘*The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*’. 5.3 of the *SEND CoP 2015* states:

‘The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework for children aged 0 to 5 years. All early years providers must follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS and the learning and development requirements, unless an exemption from these has been granted.’ DfE, 2015a, p79)

The current SEND CoP has placed a greater responsibility than its predecessor on the PVI group-based settings’ identifying and implementing appropriate SEN specialist interventions and processes. An important change is the requirement that all PVI practitioners have a shared duty to support the SEN needs of all of the children attending a setting and not just their key children as was previously the case.

It can be argued that more recent years have seen a change in the landscape of early years education and childcare provision as delivered by the PVI group-based sector. There has been a significant increase in Governmental expectation for all educational providers within the non-statutory early years phase of education to support children with significant levels of SEN. Government social and childcare policies as well as those addressing early years education itself can be seen to have the levels of SEN support required as the point of delivery from within amongst other provider types the PVI group based early years and childcare sector.

The following chapter considers the implications of Government policy and decision making as they affect SEN provision from within the PVI group-based sector.

Chapter 4: The perceived Impact of Government policies

In terms of the Government's educational expectations the PVI group based early years education and childcare sector are required to adhere to the same statutory requirements as their counterparts within the LA maintained sector.

4.1 Legal requirements

The legal requirements as they relate to special educational needs in the Early Years phase of education are outlined in *The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, 2017). All early years providers must follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements and the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage unless an exemption from these has been granted.

4.2 Financial support

The Department of Education provides local authorities with six funding streams which together form the early years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DfE, 2018b). These are:

- the early years entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds
- the early years universal entitlement for three and four year olds
- the early years additional entitlement for three and four year old children of eligible working parents
- supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools (MNS)
- the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)
- the Disability Access Fund (DAF)

All three - four year olds in England are entitled to 570 hours of free (Government funded) education. This funding is referred to as the universal funded Early Education Entitlement (EEE).

As well as the universal entitlement to government funded early years education and childcare provision available to children between the age of three to five years old, there are other Early Years initiatives which attract government funding.

PVI group-based settings also accommodate children entitled to fifteen hours a week of free provision at point of delivery which is funded through a government initiative aimed to support the most disadvantaged two year olds. This funding, the Early Learning Entitlement (ELE) commonly known as the two year old entitlement, is primarily designed to reach children living within households positioned amongst the 40% most economically disadvantaged.

The general qualifying criteria for this funding being that parents are in receipt of welfare benefits or the child is looked after by the local authority. However, an additional qualifying criterion is that the child has additional needs. In such circumstances there is no need for a child to satisfy the other criteria. This entitlement to ELE funding for children with additional needs clearly has provision implications for providers. Claire Schofield, National Day Nurseries Association's Director of Membership Policy and Communications observed in an article for Nursery World:

'In our survey of nurseries who had been involved in trials of funded two-year-old places, 52 per cent said that they needed further support for children with additional needs.' (Morton, 2012, np)

In 2016 the Extended Funding Entitlement (EFE) was announced. This funding is designed to encourage mothers to return to work by providing an extended entitlement of 30 hours of free childcare for some working parents of three and four year-olds.

In terms of SEN, the offering of the thirty hours extended childcare entitlement could have significant operational consequences for PVI group-based settings. Those children qualifying for local authority support in the form of 'inclusion funding' during their hours of attendance through the Early Educational Entitlement would not necessarily receive inclusion funding to cover the additional fifteen hours which make up the thirty hour childcare entitlement.

During the period 2018 - 2019 Local authorities were required to pass 95% of the three and four year old funding from Government directly to early years providers. LAs were permitted to keep back 5% of the funding centrally to spend on central services or services in kind, including specialist SEND services from the SEN Inclusion Fund. (DfE, 2018b).

Local authorities offer a range of inclusion funding models. The LB Hounslow explicitly state that the SEN inclusion fund can only be claimed for a child for up to a

maximum of 570 hours per year, which keeps inclusion funding aligned to the EEE/ELE. In Hertfordshire PVI group-based providers are given a set amount. The funding is allocated for a maximum of two terms and is paid termly.

With reference to two year olds' provision situated within LA maintained schools, as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher I supported an LA group-based setting for children aged two which had been established in a local infant and nursery school. The school was situated in an area with a local demographic designated as disadvantaged in terms of local families' socio-economic status. The setting was managed by a member of the school's support staff and was under the governance of the school's head teacher. The entry age criterion for children was the beginning of the term following their second birthday. The setting catered solely for children in the year preceding their nursery year. As the setting was positioned within a LA maintained school, it did not meet with the LA's qualifying criteria for receipt of 'inclusion funding'. On several occasions the setting's manager expressed to me her increasing concerns regarding the operational difficulties the practitioners were experiencing due to the high levels of SEN support needed by some of the children and the subsequent increased pressure and feelings of stress this placed on practitioners. The children with SEN required disproportionate levels of 1:1 practitioner support in circumstances wherein there was not any recourse to additional targeted SEN funding. Practitioners found it extremely difficult to carry out their general duties and felt that they were unable to provide an equitable balance between supporting those children with SEN who also frequently presented with behavioural challenges and the other children in their care.

Alongside the various revenue support payments, in July 2018 the Department for Education (DfE, 2018) announced a *School Nurseries Capital Fund (SNCF)* of £30 million. The SNCF aims to help close the attainment gap for disadvantaged children through the provision of new ‘high-quality’ school-based nursery places for two, three and four year olds (DfE,2018, p.4) and to encourage social mobility through the provision of increased childcare available to mothers wishing to return to work. Bids for funding to be made in partnership with LAs were encouraged from a range of different agencies. These included: schools, academies, multi-academy trusts, educational institutions, charities and other interested organisations. The outcome of successful SNCF bid applications was to be announced by 28 February 2019.

At a time when a number of PVI group-based providers are under threat of closure due to budgetary constraints, increased competition within the marketplace for early years education and childcare provision could precipitate the closure of additional PVI group-based settings due to an inability on their part to fill spaces. Furthermore, if the number of early years spaces generated through the SNCF do not match those lost through PVI group-based setting and Maintained Nursery School (MNS) closures, the net effect would be an overall reduction in available pre-school early years spaces amongst a demographic where research suggests there is the Additionally, it is unclear as yet whether Central Government or LA funding will be made available to meet the SEN needs of children attending these proposed new school based early years provisions or whether SEN costs will need to be met within a school’s existing budget. probability of higher frequencies of SEN.

If so, in real terms, children who would benefit from higher adult / child ratios through attendance at a PVI group-based setting and who might also benefit from receipt of inclusion funding to finance additional levels of 1:1 adult engagement, might end up in classes with large early years cohorts, lower adult / child ratios and no additional funding to support higher level SEN.

4.3 Financial pressures in local authorities

Local authority support for early years education both in the maintained sector and through assistance to the PVI sector has been heavily affected by the government's fiscal policy.

The Government's fiscal response to the global recession of the 1980s, designed to achieve big reductions in public expenditure, began a pattern of significant year on year reductions in government funding streams to local authorities. Comments posted on the Camden Teachers Association (NUT) website by Andrew Baisley (2010) describe one local authority's experience of central government cuts at the time of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition:

'Camden Council has announced their cuts package for the borough. The Council estimate that central government has cut somewhere between £80 million and £100 million from grants to the Council. The government have also banned the Council from increasing Council Tax to protect services ... The plan is to reduce Children Schools and Families budget by £15 million over the next three years. The biggest cuts are to the special needs provision which is being reduced from the best service in the country to the legal minimum.' (Baisley, 2010, np)

Hastings et al. (2015) reported that Government support to local authority expenditure in England fell by 12% during the period 2009 to 2013. Gainsbury and Neville (2015) in an article appearing in the *Financial Times* described patterns of Government spending made available to Local Authorities as:

'A surge in spending under Labour between 2000 and 2010 has been followed by five years of sharp retrenchment, which by 2012 had already taken expenditure back to levels last seen in 2005.' (Gainsbury and Neville, 2015, np)

The Joseph Rowntree report *'The Cost of the Cuts: The Impact on Local Government and Poor Communities'* (Hastings, Bailey, Bramley, Heriot-Watt, Gannon and Watkins, 2015) reported that in real terms local authorities in England lost 27% of their spending power between 2010/11 and 2015/16. Two findings of particular concern within the report relevant to this research were that those local authorities with the most significant levels of deprived populations had not only received the highest levels of funding cuts but also that the short term need to cut costs was impacting on local authorities ability to introduce or maintain long term preventative strategies. The Report's summary suggests:

'The current proposals to maintain the scale and pace of the cuts do not appear to be sustainable. They risk putting local authorities in a situation where they will be unable to meet their statutory duties and unable to deliver critical services to their poorest and most vulnerable citizens.' (Hastings et al, 2015a, np)

Gainsbury and Neville (2015) 'in their article *Austerity's £18bn impact on local services* asserted that local authorities had in real terms received an £18 billion cut in

their finance from central government since 2010 with the expectation of a further £9.5billion being cut by the end of the decade.

A summary of the 2015 Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on Central Government cuts to local government in England and Scotland (Hastings et al., 2015) concluded that local authorities in England lost 27% of their spending power in real terms between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

In a Guardian article '*Special needs pupils being failed by system on verge of crisis*' (2018), the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) were reported as saying that sixty eight out of eighty five local authorities responding to a survey divulged an overspend on their high needs budget in 2016-17 which totalled £139.5m.

A press release issued by the London Borough of Hounslow on their webpage (Hounslow, 2017) reported leading councillors as describing cuts in Government funding as '*unprecedented*'. The press release asserted that central government funding had fallen by £22.8 million over the last two year period against a backdrop of continuously increasing demands on local council's services, particularly those relating to children.

A DfE report (2015, p.9) cited the most frequently reported factor mentioned as a barrier to the offering of the effective delivery of the free entitlement to children

requiring additional support was a lack of sufficient funding. Providers reported that they often bore the costs of any additional support themselves. The National Day Nurseries Association reported in November 2018 that PVI group-based providers were *'having to meet the cost of funded places from their own pockets due to low funding rates from government, as well as having to meet national living wage and business rate commitments'* (Lepper, 2018, np)

Central Government funding to LAs has continued to fall year on year. In October 2018 the Local Government Association (LGA) reported that main government grant funding for local services would be cut by a further £1.3 billion (36 percent) in 2019/20. (LGA, 2018)

The financial pressures on local authorities have led to widespread re-structuring and re-definition of service provision. In the past PVI group-based settings were able to access SEN specialist services from their LA through advisory teams offering specialist advice and on-site visits and through access to LA funded training frequently free or subsidised at the point of delivery. However due to the cuts to LA funding streams from Central Government these SEN services have often been reduced, rescinded or privatised. This has left PVI group-based settings finding it increasingly difficult to access and fund needed SEN support and training in a climate of rising and widening SEN needs. The LA budgetary cuts alongside the low hourly rates awarded to the group-based settings by Government have inevitably adversely affected the quality of teaching and learning for children who present with SEN attending the early years group-based settings.

A number of LAs have chosen to no longer see themselves as direct providers of SEN services, choosing instead to adopt a contracting in-based SEN model as is the case in both Worcestershire City Council (Babcock) and Sutton Council (Cognus). Other LAs have continued to provide in-house SEN services to the PVI group-based settings but often with a reduced menu of services.

In order to meet practitioners' SEN training-needs some Local Authorities now require experienced group-based SENCOs to work with and support other group-based settings as in the case of Northamptonshire, where they have established the Northamptonshire Inclusion Network Partnership. The partnership has charitable status and comprises a group of experienced EY SENCOs who offer mentoring to other group-based settings in specialist areas such as sign language, behaviour management, autism, emotional wellbeing and provision mapping.

The effect on PVI group-based settings of LA decisions on funding cuts in SEN provision as is evidenced in the following on-line conversation string posted on a subscription based early years practitioners social networking site in May 2016:

'Our local authority recently 'sold' the early years department to Babcock International - loads of people were made redundant and we knew there would be a significant impact. However, this week I contacted the Inclusion Team to request a visit from Sen advisor to visit (with parent's permission) to offer advice and support with a new child. I was appalled to hear that the SEN advisor will only visit if the child is already on Pre-School Forum - the only way to access that for this little boy is via SALT who have a minimum 18 week waiting list - I have referred him but I know it will be more than 18 weeks - this means it will be well into the Autumn Term before he sees SALT - that will

then take a while for him to be assessed etc. before his case is put before the panel for PreSchool Forum - I think we will be lucky to have a decision before January 2017. How can this be right? - I thought we were being pushed for Early Intervention to give children the very best start - we will obviously support as much as we can but we need some help - even just confirmation that what we are doing is right. Has anyone else experienced this - I strongly feel the local authority are failing in their responsibilities to the detriment of SEN children and I really want to take the matter further but don't know where to go?' (Ho: 2016) Source: Foundation Stage Forum

'We have been unable to get SEN visits for some years. The LEA has no SENCO and there is little training or support. It makes me furious ...as you say early intervention is key but the government appears to only believe this happens when the children get to school at 5 when most have accessed services since they were 2 (or younger) ... it doesn't make sense does it ???'(Fi: 2016) Source: Foundation Stage Forum

Dr Julian Grenier (2014) , Chair of *Early Education* (the national early years charity), wrote an article headed *Cuts in early years provision - Sway local opinion to protect services*, which gave voice to some of the concerns of Early Education campaign members during the period leading up to the local government elections of May 2014.

These included the following:

- *Our members are telling us that local authority advisory teams have been cut back significantly in many areas, reducing the support that they can offer early years settings and childminders. The number of local authority-provided courses and training opportunities reduces every year.*
- *We know that early years practitioners, including childminders, have always shown a remarkable commitment to training, often in the evening or at weekends. Without good-quality professional development opportunities, and without regular on-site support from local advisory teams, it will become ever harder to improve. Inspection by Ofsted cannot, on its own, improve early years practice; as a 2010 report from the University of Oxford and the Daycare Trust found, local authorities have a key role to play.*

- *This becomes even more critical with respect to the specialist support local authorities offer to early years practitioners and childminders working for the inclusion of young children with special needs and disabilities. Cutbacks here are yet another false economy: much greater costs will be incurred if children move on to statutory schooling without having received adequate early support.*
- *A 2010 report from the Department for Children, Schools and Families found that "support for early years settings to enable them to meet the needs of disabled children and those with special educational needs may be insufficient" and, even more worrying, that "funding for early years settings, particularly for support and advice, falls short of that available in schools".*
- *Early years settings in some areas are expected to include children with complex special needs, without the necessary resources or support. This is not true inclusion, and we cannot sustain this cut-price "Cinderella service".*

(Grenier, 2014, np)

SEN budget overspends within local authorities, together with changes introduced by Central Government which specify how LAs should manage the education funding blocks from Central Government, have meant that LAs have lost a degree of autonomy as to how these funding streams can be managed. This has for some LAs affected funding decisions in relation to SEN support to the PVI-group-based providers. (See: Appendix E – J. R. –LA support, Kent)

Claire Schofield, National Day Nurseries Association's Director of Membership Policy and Communications commented in an article for Nursery World:

'With spending cuts many nurseries are seeing support from local authorities for children with additional needs decreasing...' (Morton, 2012, np)

Chris Harrison (Independent SEN consultant, formerly head of SEN and inclusion for Nottinghamshire County Council) wrote the following about the impact on local authorities through the need to implement the imperatives of the SEN legislative reforms brought about by Part 3 of the *Children and Families Act 2014*:

'Though the reforms are 'the right thing to do', their implementation has proved a major challenge with uneven change across LAs. The reforms came at a time of austerity which has led to financial constraints, restructuring and the refocusing of LA attention away from schools' (Harrison,2016:37 np)

Importantly, Practitioners also believed that the level of support offered by the local authority informed their level of familiarisation and successful use of the Education, Health and Care system (Griggs and Bussard, 2017).

The sentiments in the above comments are echoed in both the literature review and the research findings where a number of the practitioners responding to the BOS on-line survey described their different experiences of LA SEN support to the PVI group-based settings.

4.31 SEN funding streams affected by financial pressures in LAs

With the ever increasing demands placed on educational funding streams and stricter government stipulations as to how and where funds should be used, LAs now have less autonomy in ways in which they can balance their books in order to finance their SEN funding streams.

Early Years Funding: Changes to Funding for Three and Four Year Olds

(DfE,2016) required local authorities to provide a Disability Access Fund (DAF) as an additional funding stream to early years providers for those three and four year olds who are in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA). However, should a child leave a PVI group-based setting which has received the DAF funding and move to another PVI group-based setting the new setting does not receive any DAF funding for the child for the remainder of that academic year though the setting is still required to make appropriate provision for the child. Such a stipulation as a part of the DAF funding agreement can leave PVI group-based providers severely financially disadvantaged as children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance generally require a high level of additional support.

Unlike schools, PVI early years education and childcare providers do not have a notional SEN budget and fulfil the needs of most children using their main budget. However, if due to high levels special educational needs which cannot be met from this core budget, and where the child does not have an Educational Health and Care Plan in place, PVI group-based providers can request a top-up of additional funding from their local authority. Previously, some local authorities used their high needs funding block (one of the three main education funding sources alongside early years funding and schools funding to finance this support).

It had become common practice across LAs to implement a discretionary early years inclusion funding stream from which to support children presenting with higher levels of SEN. This funding could generally be accessed by PVI group-based settings in

order to facilitate targeted SEN support and interventions for individual children or group-based settings. Since April 2017 all local authorities are required to provide an early years SEND inclusion fund. This fund is financed by LAs by drawing on either or both of their early years and high needs funding blocks.

LAs are now required to provide a SEN Inclusion Fund for three and four year olds but not for two year olds. This fund is intended to support children with lower levels of, or emerging SEN. No additional money was made available from central government to fund the initiative and it has been left for LAs to decide how much money they will set aside for the SEN Inclusion Fund and how the funding should to be allocated to the PVI group-based providers.

Some LAs have created SEN matrices which break down into different categories or bands the levels of SEN need. Each is then allocated a level of funding according to the severity of need within the category or band. A PVI group-based provision is then allocated funding based on the presenting needs of the individual child as measured against the matrix criteria.

4.3.2 Outside agencies

“Practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability, which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.”
(DfE, 2014, Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, para 1.6)

The PVI group-based settings multi-agency working partnerships with other 'outside agencies' such as speech and language therapy services, occupational therapy services, physiotherapy services, advisory teachers, paediatricians and health visitors have also been impacted by organisational restructuring and changed priorities due to financial restraints at both central government and local government level, with children waiting for longer periods before being seen by education and medical professionals for initial assessments, support, guidance and diagnosis.

Lucy Sanctuary (2016), a Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist working with children aged 2 to 16 years of age, wrote the following on her webpage with regard to the impact of NHS budget cuts to children's health services:

"Try as we might as practitioners, many services are no longer needs driven, strict care pathways dictate what a service can offer and those cannot be veered from. For parents to get their children onto the case load of most services (and I am not just referring to speech and language therapy caseloads) is a huge hurdle with no guarantee of getting any help. The papers are full of stories showing very clearly the impact of cuts to CAMHS. Where I live, families have told me that they have waited a year or more for speech and language therapy on the NHS and then they might get four sessions and they are discharged. Many trusts have no social communication pathway, so if your child has autism or social communication difficulties you have to work that one out yourself.

The following extracts taken from an SEN sub forum of the *Foundation Stage Forum*, a subscription based on-line space in 2016, were written by PVI group-based practitioners to express some of the challenges and frustrations practitioners at times encounter in relation to outside agency working and intervention.

- **Conversation string re. outside agencies - Health (2016):**

Fi: *'I am fuming! New child started today. He is exhibiting an array of symptoms which might suggest ASD. His parents have been worried and so took him to the doctors who announced within five minutes that as he made eye contact with her, he did not have ASD and was perfectly fine! When he went to his two year old check he refused to be weighed or measured (plus other issues) the health visitor said 'oh it's ok... he doesn't want to do it that's fine' signed him off as having no problems!*

This little chap does not speak discernable language, apart from some echolalia. Shouts to gain attention, not toilet trained, aggressive behaviour if stopped doing things, throws toys etc etc (this was within an afternoon). I am NOT qualified to make a diagnosis....but neither is the doctor. The health professionals have now put me in a very difficult position and I have already had to lay the foundations to explore this little one's issues further.

How can we get over to the professionals the consequences of of quick and ill judged 'diagnosis' ... how dare they fudge the issue so that we have to pick up the pieces further down the line.

Ma: *'Sounds exactly the same as my little chap. My little chap was not taken on by the LEA SEN teaching team as not bad enough??!! But he has had some speech and language (Speech and Language Therapy - SaLT -input). I completed an 'All about me' which along with the SaLT report, Health Visitor (HV) report the parents took along to the Dr. He didn't see our little chap but having read all our paperwork has done a paediatric referral. The HV said it was my form that really made the Dr see exactly what was happening with him. Parents were expecting a fight but there was none.*

Has your area not got this form? Could the parents seek a second opinion from another Dr?I find all this frustrating. We have no additional support for him as he has not got a diagnosis...'

Mo: *'We could have written this Ma. Allabout early intervention until you raise a concern and everyone that you expect to support you seem to find every excuse for the behaviour, I know we can't be labelling young children but at least take our concerns seriously and if we've made the wrong call so be it but that has to be better than not making the call at all and it being left too late.'*

Up: *'The GP needs to look at the NICE guidelines which clearly state: Do NOT rule out autism because of: good eye contact, smiling and showing affection to family members, reported pretend play or normal language milestones, difficulties appearing to resolve after a needs-based intervention (such as supported structured learning environment), a previous assessment that concluded there was no autism, if new information becomes available.'*

As these conversation strings demonstrate not only can PVI group-based settings be seen as impacted by LA reductions in SEN support, the reality for some group-based providers is that they are additionally adversely affected by the cuts or re-structuring of other outside agency services such as that provided by the National Health Service. Speech, language and communication difficulties and social communication difficulties/autism are recognised as areas of high frequency SEN in the early years, but long waiting lists for some children before they are seen by speech and language therapists and/or paediatricians, mean that settings are left waiting for supporting professional guidance and/or recommendations.

Some children are potentially adversely affected at the point of transition to their next school placement through the absence of a medical diagnosis which delays them access to appropriate levels/types of additional specialist educational provision which would otherwise be available to them.

In other circumstances, practitioners are left unconvinced by the medical outcomes from outside agency professionals where reported findings contradict their own professional knowledge of a child. Increasingly there is a need for practitioners to attend specialised training in order to implement health specialists recommendations, such as when supporting children needing access to alternative or augmentative communication modalities (AAC) such as The Picture Exchange

Communication System (PECS), Makaton and Intensive Interaction. These AAC modalities are frequently recommended by speech and language therapists as approaches with which to support children presenting with profound and multiple disabilities, severe learning disabilities and autism. This, in turn, injects further cost and delay.

4.4 Revised Government funding arrangements

The Government's 2016 response to its consultation on Early Years funding - *Early years funding: Changes to funding for three- and four-year olds'* (DfE, 2016) announced a new national funding formula and an increase in the average funding rate for the 2017 extension for free early education to £4.88 per hour which equates to up to £300 extra per year for each disadvantaged child who meets the eligibility criteria.

The revised formula contained adjustments linking actual funding rates to local circumstances in acknowledgement of the varying childcare costs across the country. This meant that whilst there was a nominal "national average rate", the actual rate paid to individual local authorities varied as determined by the formula. *The Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Survey* noted that "*there will be winners and losers*" and that "*the Government has committed to setting up dampening mechanisms to cushion losses of funding.*" (Rutter, 2016, np)

However, these new funding rates have not been well received within the PVI group-based sector:

Within the private PVI group-based sector there is much discontent amongst providers regarding the funding rates for the ELE and EEE currently allocated by Government to PVI group-based settings.

This is demonstrated in following conversation strings which were both posted in the Facebook group *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding* (CNLF) some seventeen months apart. The first was posted on the 10th September 2017:

JT: *'So IF in 2015 my hourly cost was £3.72 (and many of us would dispute these research findings), and my funding was £3.90, in theory I was happily returning 4% ?? But since this research the minimum/living wage has gone up by around 15%, and my funding is still £3.90, so I am making ...? And in April when the 'living' wage goes up again by around 4%, and my funding remains at £3.90, what is my profit margin...? For God's sake DfE, have any of you got a GCSE in maths?'*

SG: *'It's the same for small rural settings J, last year I did a 45 hour week and made £6,000 profit, it depends on your ratios, which depends upon the needs of the children, which varies annually.'*

The second string is a comment posted on the 17th February 2019 which again reflects a view held within the sector that Government funding levels to the sector are insufficient and do not cover those operational costs generated within the sector which are in part due to external Government imposed requirements:

LO: *'Has anyone seen the Government response to the petition about funding in line with the increase in (the) national living wage??? Biggest load of tosh! Yet again we are not being listened to.'*

The literature contains a range of evidence substantiating the assertion made by PVI group-based settings that they continue to receive insufficient funding from both

central and local government. This includes research findings from a Government commissioned report into LA SEN funding arrangements and practice which disclosed that some providers found funding the full free entitlement for children with SEN problematic as there was no recognition that the cost of meeting their SEN associated needs was greater than that required to meet the needs of their neuro-typical peers, providers only receiving the standard per-child funding rates for both groups. (DfE,2015, p13)

The following 'open letter' was sent by J.R. (2017) a PVI group-based practitioner to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in September 2017 on behalf of PVI group-based providers. It offers a concise account of the funding dilemma within the sector:

'Dear Chancellor, We are writing to you because we believe that the Government's childcare policies are desperately underfunded. As you are aware, the 30-hours of funded childcare for 3 and 4 year olds for working parents was introduced this September. As a sector we have been struggling for years with funding rates and warning that the funding supplied by local authorities, based on Department of Education Early Years Funding Formula, is insufficient. The Minister for Children and Families recently called providers who struggle to deliver the childcare on the funding provided by government 'outliers'. We are writing to you to prove that we are anything but. Across the sector, from childminders to nursery chains, providers are finding it extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to deliver the quality of childcare and early education we want to on the funding provided. There are huge amounts of research showing that high quality childcare and early years education is crucial to the long term outcomes for children, it provides a solid foundation which gives every child the opportunity to reach their potential in full. In short we're incredibly passionate about the early years and are not opposed to government funded childcare, what we are opposed to is providers, other fee paying parents, and in most cases those who

are receiving the 30 hours, having to subsidise these hours that the Government has promised will be free. The situation is reaching a crisis point, with providers closing their doors and many more finding it increasingly difficult to balance the books. Therefore we are asking you in the strongest possible terms to invest in our children's future and respect the work that we do, much of which can save money in the longer term by investing in early intervention, support and education for our youngest children, and increase the funding for childcare policies in your upcoming budget. This is not the whole solution to the under funding crisis but would give the sector some much needed stability.'

The Family and Childcare Trust's *Childcare Survey 2017* findings include the fact that 91% of local authorities were unable to affirm the continued viability of some of the PVI group-based settings within their region. The survey also raised concerns within the PVI group-based sector regarding the effect of the 'thirty hour' entitlement in relation to those children presenting with additional needs. The concerns raised included:

- setting closures could affect the availability of early years educational placements that are accessible to families,
- The perceived loss of quality learning experiences planned and delivered by knowledgeable practitioners could impact detrimentally on the attainment by children of the most positive learning outcomes
- the levels of additional funding made available by local authorities to support children with higher levels of need may not be sufficient in order to meet those needs at an appropriate levels.

In keeping with the above findings, Cameron et al. (2016, p19) also conjectured that the quality and availability of provision for the most vulnerable children was most at risk

4.5 PVI sector concerns

Over recent decades, government sponsored early learning and childcare experiences have been delivered through a mixed economy of providers coming from the voluntary, private, independent and LA maintained sectors. The Government funding is paid directly to the PVI group-based providers in order to secure sufficient early years education and childcare spaces to meet with the different Central Government early years and childcare requirements, particularly that of universal funding of early years education for children aged 3 years old and above.

The hourly rate paid by the Government to the PVI group-based settings has increasingly become a highly politicised matter within the PVI early years education and childcare sector. Representations made by practitioners to Parliament have included targeted correspondence to Members of Parliament, practitioner representatives meeting with politicians and the raising of the sector's public profile through the courting of wider media coverage.

A pivotal meeting place of those in the PVI group-based sector is which is used as a forum to share concerns, rally political support and motivate each other. The name of the group refers to an industry view that the Government expects the sector to provide high standards of early years education and childcare service provision whilst paying the PVI group-based settings unrealistically low hourly rates for doing so.

During their representations providers have widened their expression of dissent to include other concerns such as that of feeling demoralised, unappreciated and badly used by Government. This dissent can be seen as expressed with particular force in relation to the matter of the legislated provision of SEN support for children presenting with higher levels of SEN as such support generally needs higher staffing levels/ratios and a more diverse and specialised pedagogic toolbox which requires the additional and ongoing training of practitioners in an industry sector which experiences high levels of staff movement and is generally significantly more costly to provide.

The implementation of the additional fifteen hours of centrally funded childcare has also caused unease within the PVI group-based sector as it removes the capacity for providers to charge some parents for additional hours at a higher hourly rate in order to make up the financial shortfall due to providing the EEE at a loss. Nicky Morgan MP, Chair of a Treasury Committee report on 'childcare' (TSC, 2018) said about the government's formula when calculating the hourly funded rate for the additional hours of childcare that:

'The government's own figures on how much it provides per hour to fund 30-hours free childcare are often misleading and out-of-date. One estimate suggests that there would be a total sector-wide shortfall of over £157 million per year from 2017-18.' (Lawler, 2018, np)

The unpopularity of the 30 hours extended childcare entitlement within the PVI group-based sector was evidenced by the responses to the question *'In one word how do you feel about the 30 hours?'* posted on 5th February 2019 in the Facebook CNLF group by Jo Morris Golds. They included "Anxious"; "I don't mind the 30 hours at all it's the paltry hourly rate we get that's the issue"; "Shambles"; "Managing ... just"; "Exploited"; "Demoralised"; "Saddened"; "Usurped"; "Cheated"; "Painful"; "Frustrating"; "Impractical"; "Devaluing"; "Angered"; "Cross"; "Screwed".

The comments expressed a mix of practitioners' concerns. Some referred to the low hourly rate set by Government in order to fund the additional 15 hours of provision and the effect offering the extended funded entitlement (EFE) would have on the operational viability of their business. Others lay bare perceptions held within the PVI group-based sector of how they are treated as a profession by Central Government.

An article in *Nursery World* by Sara Bonetti (2019, np), Gaunt associate director for early years at the Education Policy Institute, argued that:

'While the Government has recognised the importance of early education in tackling disadvantage, certain policies appear to be impinging on efforts to improve social mobility, this includes the 30 hours childcare entitlement for

working parents, which we find works against disadvantaged families, and may be impacting on the quality of provision by creating a strain on child care providers.

The 30 Hours extended childcare initiative can be seen to have created a number of pressure points within the PVI group-based sector including the low financial remuneration by Government for funded spaces and an increase in the demand for SEN support within PVI group-based settings which is not met through LA funding, both of which have financial implications for PVI group-based providers.

4.6 The Early Years workforce

In addition to the rising pressures on the sector generally caused by rising expectations accompanied by increasing financial constraints a number of other factors have been seen to directly affect practitioners.

4.6.1 Qualifications

In the past the quality of the educational provision within the PVI group-based sector was considered to be of a lower standard than that delivered within the LA maintained sector (Sylva et al., 2010; Mathers & Joshi, 2007). In recent years practitioner qualification levels and the content and quality of teaching delivered within the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector have been subjects of actionable concern by Government. In 2011 the Minister for Children and Families invited Professor Cathy Nutbrown to lead a review of early education and childcare

qualifications. *The Nutbrown Review* (2012) focused on early education and childcare qualifications. Its terms of reference were:

'Purpose: To build a stronger foundation years experience for all children by creating a high qualified early learning workforce of skilled, knowledgeable professional practitioners who are child and family centred as well as confident and ready to work with families. The review will seek to do this by considering how best to strengthen qualifications and career pathways, for young people new to the early education and childcare sector and those already employed there. This supports the recommendations set in Dame Claire Tickell's review of the Early Years Foundation Stage which highlighted the importance of having qualifications that are of a high standard and meet the needs of all learners.'

Nutbrown's (2012) Interim report, the *Review of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications - Interim Report* expressed concern as to whether the content of childcare qualifications at that time adequately prepared practitioners to work with children presenting with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The final report, published in June 2012, proposed that the level 3 childcare qualification be strengthened to include more content on special educational needs and disability:

'No study of child development would be complete without a solid understanding of special educational needs and disability.' (Nutbrown, 2012, p19, para.2.1)

The findings of the Nutbrown Review confirmed government concerns that many practitioners entering the profession and gaining their professional qualifications prior to the publication of the Review (as well as some of those entering the profession for some time after its publication) did not receive an initial professional qualification

which appropriately equipped them with the necessary knowledge to adequately meet the educational needs of children presenting with a range of SEN:

‘Professional development opportunities for pre-school children was an issue which generated much comment and surprisingly few felt appropriately equipped for working with children with learning difficulties.’ (Clough and Nutbrown, 2004)

Nutbrown’s findings were further corroborated by Buckland and Glass (2014) in their Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children:

‘There is a significant shortfall of knowledge, skills, and confidence and worry in providing quality care and education to disabled children in the childcare and early years workforce. (Buckland & Glass, 2014, p9)

The legal descriptor of disability as given in the *Equality Act 2010*, Part 2 , pt1 (6) is where an individual has a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘*substantial*’ and ‘*long-term*’ *negative effect*’ on their ability to do normal daily activities. For example, individuals presenting on the autism spectrum are regarded as having a learning disability.

In 2008 when I first became an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher I quickly determined that many of the PVI group-based practitioners working in the geographic area I supported were uncertain and apprehensive as to how they should support those children attending the setting presenting with higher levels of SEN and disability. Within the LA in which I worked one of the central tasks of the Early Years

SEN Advisory Team at that time was the upskilling of practitioners within the sector. A programme of SEN training sessions was provided within the borough for PVI practitioners which was free at the point of delivery. The programme included a block of five training sessions with the content delivery focused on the role and responsibilities of the PVI group-based SENCo and other sessions addressing the Autistic Spectrum Disorder, social communication difficulties, behaviour management, speech and language difficulties, multi-sensory learning approaches and sensory processing difficulties. This gap in specialist knowledge around SEN support was recognised by Government as being problematic at national level across the wider education sector.

As a partial solution to this the Government commissioned a range of specialised training initiatives which were effected at national level under the umbrella of the National Strategies Initiative. The training modules were produced in partnership with specialist agencies such as the 'Autism Education Trust' (AET) and the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN). The *Inclusion Development Programme* (IDP) which was first mentioned in the Government document *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (2004) is an example of one such initiative designed to improve the outcomes for children with special educational needs by the up-skilling of educators. The programme consisted of on-line interactive learning modules containing hyperlinks alongside published materials and a CD-Rom containing an alternative format of the training materials which allowed modules to be accessed off-line. At the level of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum three packages were available: *Supporting Children on the Autistic Spectrum*,

Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Supporting Children with behavioural, emotional and Social Difficulties.

Whilst the Government has maintained a number of SEN initiatives at a national level such as those sponsored and accessed through agencies such as the National Association of Special Educational Needs (Nasen), a charity organisation, SEN training at LA level for practitioners within the PVI group-based sector has been substantially reduced and LAs which historically offered the training free to practitioners have attached a cost element or removed training altogether.

Following on from the 2011 Tickell review of the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2011) the qualification bar for practitioners within the early years was raised. In 2007 The Early Years Teacher Status qualification was introduced as was a requirement for practitioners to hold GCSE level qualifications in both English and mathematics. This latter requirement arising from the findings in Professor Cathy Nutbrown's 2014 review *Foundations for Quality* in which the importance for practitioners to have the necessary levels of competence in both numeracy and literacy in order to support the learning of the children within the early years phase was emphasised alongside the fact that, in addition, holding these qualifications would enable the practitioners to access further stages of professional study.

However significant difficulties in practitioner recruitment were experienced by early years PVI providers due to many potential applicants not meeting the GCSE

requirements and so with effect from April 2017 this requirement was replaced by one for practitioners to hold level 2 English and Mathematics qualifications and/or functional skills qualifications with those practitioners holding functional skills qualifications in English and Mathematics able to work as Level 3 educators.

The Social Mobility Commission Report (2017) asserted that the raising of the entry qualification criteria alongside the issue of low pay within the sector caused a recruitment crisis and that by 2014 the childcare workforce was reduced by 5% with nursery turnover rates of 18% per year. These figures again highlight the issues faced by group-based settings at risk of losing significant numbers of experienced/skilled practitioners in whom they had invested both the time and funding required to train and up-skill them in order to support the group-based setting's cohorts including SEN.

The findings of the Social Mobility Commission Report (2017) were supported by those of the *Early Years National Strategy 2017* where it was reported that employers within the PVI sector found it difficult to recruit because potential candidates did not have the GCSEs requirement. Within the report's evidence (DFE, 2017, p.11) it was also noted that since the GCSE requirement had been in place there had been about a 40% reduction in individuals starting a level 3 childcare apprenticeship.

Whilst some of the practitioners recruited as replacements for those leaving the PVI group based settings will themselves have previous or existing experience in supporting and progressing children who present with SEN, maintaining a group-based setting's collective knowledge-base and skills set in the face of high levels of staff turnover will almost inevitably place pressures on group-based settings endeavouring to meet with their actual and anticipatory SEN statutory obligations as required under the *Equality Act 2010*.

4.6.2 Perceived self-efficacy

Bandura (1994) defines perceived self-efficacy as:

'... people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave' (Bandura, 1994, np)

He contends that the extent to which individuals believe they can affect life events through their own aptitude has a considerable influence as to the attainment of positive/negative outcomes. He advocates that *'Positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, despondent mood diminishes it'*. (Bandura,1994, np)

Practitioners' sense of their own professional/personal self-efficacy within the context of delivering effective SEN support can be regarded as key. A lowered sense of their own sense of self-efficacy according to Bandura puts practitioners at risk of adversely influencing their levels of professional performance.

'I think that practitioners are very demoralised about most things at the moment due to lack of finances and unrealistic expectations.' (NING 1 BOS online Survey)

Additionally, as well as deliberating on the concept of perceived self-efficacy, Bandura (2000) also posited the notion of a perceived collective efficacy which he asserted resided in the minds of group members:

'People's shared beliefs in their collective efficacy influence the types of futures they seek to achieve through collective action, how well they use their resources, how much effort they put into their group endeavour, their staying power when collective efforts fail to produce quick results or meet forcible opposition, and their vulnerability to the discouragement that can beset people taking on tough social problems.' (Bandura, 2000, p.76)

It could be argued that examples of Bandura's collective efficacy model can be seen within a wider PVI group-based early years education and childcare sector context such as through the political agency of *Champagne Nurseries for Lemonade Funding* but to what extent collective efficacy exists within individual PVI group-based settings is, for the purpose of this research, unclear.

I suggest that a number of external variables affecting the PVI early years education and childcare sector have negatively influenced the morale and sense of perceived self-efficacy of those working within the PVI group-based early years education and childcare sector.

One such being the Nutbrown Review with its emphasis on the existing poor levels of qualifications held by practitioners within the sector. Another is the sense amongst a number of PVI practitioners of being less well regarded professionally by a range of outside agencies including the Government, than are early years educators working within the LA maintained sector. Variations of this view can be seen expressed as a common thread in posts appearing on different PVI group-based professionals social networking spaces, such as *Champagne Nurseries for Lemonade Fundin'* (CNLF) and the *Foundation Stage Forum* as well as in a number of professional articles.

Deborah Fielden (2017), an Early Years Consultant and trainer, wrote:

'The Department for Education seems to imply in its Early Years Workforce Strategy that the ultimate goal for the early years teacher is employment within a maintained nursery or reception class and that the award of QTS is not a priority. In doing this, I think it is demonstrating a fundamental lack of professional respect and support for all early years teachers and in particular for those working with babies, toddlers and young children in private, voluntary and independent pre-school settings.' (Fielding: 2017, p7)

The PVI group-based providers reacted angrily to a statement in Parliament by Damian Hind, MP for East Hampshire in the Commons Chamber on the 18th September 2018, in which he appears to emphasise the importance of school-based nurseries in providing early years education:

'One element of the early years foundation stage profile is the personal, social and emotional development of children, which is vital. There is a whole range of things we need to think about in this area. One of them is the announcement I made a

short while ago about ensuring there is adequate provision of high-quality school-based nurseries, particularly in deprived areas, but we also have to think about what happens at home and in other settings.'(Hansard, 2018, np)

The following extracts from the Facebook Group *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding* on 16th February 2019 illustrates the bitterness of the responses to what was perceived by a number of practitioners as criticism of the PVI sector by Government:

RB: *'From the day I took over twenty years ago and long before 2 year funding we kept our prices low to enable stay at home mums, single parents and families on low incomes to access pre school sessions. We are in rural Norfolk. We also give support to families in numerous ways. This will all be lost soon and the education system will take over!! It's a complete shambles, health visitors only available by phone, no Sure Start centres, new mums in our town weigh their babies in the library!!!! I could go on forever. They think we're failing our children and need to change!! The educators will educate but what about the care!!!! ...'*

DC: *'Yes I 've been feeling for a long time now that government are trying to push non school settings out by making things harder for us all to survive!'*

RB: *'Why can't they see our service is just as good and our ratios are much better – our local nursery school take 38 children from the day they turn 3!!! We feel as though we are fighting a losing battle and have really low numbers in September. It makes me so sad we put our heart and soul into our charity run setting and really don't want to close.'*

How can the school send out letters that give the impression the nursery is the only place to go. In the letter is ACTION REQUIRED in red print – it looks like a red bill!! Rant over.'

BW: *'As chair of a recently outstanding, not for profit nursery in one of the most deprived wards in the North East – this makes my blood boil. This inference that only the maintained sector can make a difference in deprived areas is a downright lie. It's a punch in the guts to other providers, including childminders, who do the same and BETTER work. Rant over...'*

LJ: *'Because it's not about the children...it's about the cost!'*

Furthermore, Government rhetoric refers interchangeably to the PVI group-based settings as offering 'early years education' and 'free childcare'. Some practitioners argue that the term 'free childcare' undermines the seriousness of the practitioner role within the early years phase of children's education. Sue Cowley (2017, p. 7) asks why instead of 'free childcare' do they not *'talk about funded early childhood education provided by hard working settings?'*

Early years providers, within the PVI sector such as J. R. below, have also posted comments on the social network platform Facebook about the way in which they feel perceived by outside agencies, in particular Local Authorities. J. R.'s Facebook post illustrates a manager/owner's view of LA attitude towards providers (J.R.:2017)

'This is the support we receive from our early years team in Kent, basically told off like school children and informed that they are employing more monitoring staff to tell us how we should run our business amazing how they find the money for these new roles but half our senif funding. When will the misery end!!'

4.6.3 Practitioner remuneration

The issue of poor remuneration for those working within the PVI group-based education and childcare sector will tend to compound the sense of low professional esteem that appears to be present within the profession. In the interim report of the *Review of Early Education and Childcare Qualifications* in March 2012 Professor Nutbrown (2012) wrote that:

‘Despite the strong evidence on the importance of early education in children’s development, work in early education and childcare is widely seen as low status, low paid, and low skilled.’ (Nutbrown, 2012, p8)

The Low Pay Commission identified the childcare sector as one of the top three areas finding difficulties in paying staff the National Living Wage. The 2013 DfE *Childcare Provider Survey* reported average hourly pay rates of £8.40 in full daycare settings. Its 2016 survey, which ran from March to July 2016, (DfE: 2016) reported an average hourly rate of £8.30. The *Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers, England, 2016* found that 34% of group-based provider staff aged twenty five years or over earned less than £7.50 an hour.

The practitioner extracts given below offer an insight into some of the issues affecting PVI group setting practitioners directly as a result of the pecuniary challenges by the sector:

‘... our staff haven’t had a real-term pay rise for four years, with three practitioners now on minimum wage (as this has risen to match their existing wages). Our manager is paid less than an unskilled labourer, while I, the

owner, worked a 45-hour week until 2015/16 for just £6,200 – this amounts to £3.43 per hour.’ (G, 2017)

‘We had a recent OFSTED inspection that we were thrilled with, however one of the recommendations was to do more training to build on their already sound practice. I pointed out to the inspector that most of my girls juggle three jobs in order to survive and boost their wages...’ (L, 2019)

PVI group-based providers have been seen to indicate that they have found it necessary to pay their staff low rates of pay due to the stringent amount paid by Government to secure ‘funded’ early years spaces. The following extracts posted on the Facebook Page *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*, give voice to some of the difficulties that settings are facing due to an inability to pay staff higher wages:

- Conversation string: Owners/Mangers commenting re. - Pay (August 2017)

MCT: *‘My team have been together eight years. I’m loosing three this year because I can’t give them the wage they deserve. This is making me very sad. Something has got to be done and fast. Private sector are being pushed out.*

LP: *‘I have been going through a similar thing over the last year and a bit. I can’t afford to pay them what they are actually worth...ridiculous as we could earn more as a dog walker or cleaner!’*

MCT: *‘I know – how is it right? And then on a weekend raid charity shops for interesting things and fund raise to pay the electric bill so to speak.*

DG: *‘I am so sorry to hear this. The bigger picture is that our businesses will suffer even more as we are unable to offer high quality care as our staff cannot work for goodwill alone.*

If providers continue to lose experienced staff then what happens for our children?

Secure attachments form the basis of child development and if we cannot get these right then how can we expect outcomes for children to be positive.

I am not criticising anyone here, merely discussing how we are being forced to make the best of this scandal and how it will have a negative impact on our most valuable little people.

Keep messaging, sharing the CNLF video, tweeting, writing letters, speaking to the media and pounding those drums.'

JC: *'it's awful – sorry to hear this. We have staff coming through with degrees and yet the gap between management and practitioners is narrowing currently it's difficult to then pay the graduates for what they deserve! The government need to recognize this big time!*

AS: *'Totally agree with you MCT, the Private sector is being pushed out.*

EC: *'Kills me monthly when I 'pay' my staff. They get nothing compared to what they are worth. It's barely passable as a wage, more a token of gratitude for their work. When I work out what I should be making and what I should be able to pay them it just utterly infuriates me and then when I calm down I'm utterly depressed by it all.'*

AW: *'I think eventually only school nurseries will survive.'*

CD: *'I think that's the ultimate plan.'*

AW: *'So sad and short sighted.'*

TS: *'Very true.'*

These comments also identify another re-occurring theme which is shared amongst some in the PVI group-based sector, i.e. that the Government is now trying to replace the PVI group-based sector with lower costed LA managed alternatives.

An article the publication Nursery World (2018) ‘ *Call for evidence into jobs shortages*’ reported a recruitment crisis in the early years sector citing 45% of PVI group-based settings as having current vacancies.

The low levels of pay can be regarded as a contributing factor to a high staff turnover within the sector with practitioners experienced in SEN support being lost to the PVI group-based settings. When broken down by age, The *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2013* (DfE, 2014), identified the highest representative age band for practitioners working in PVI group-based settings as being within the age category twenty five - thirty nine years old with a sharp decrease in categories for those aged forty years plus.

These figures suggest a number of experienced and skilled practitioners are lost to the profession well before the age of retirement. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced practitioners can result in PVI group-based settings having pedagogic gaps where none of the practitioners is able to deliver suitable learning opportunities for children presenting with more complex SEN requirements.

“I have recently found it very difficult to recruit a member of staff because I was looking particularly for someone with the calibre to provide childcare to a couple of children with additional needs – I needed someone to look after a child with developmental delay and major behavioural problems, and needed someone really experienced to do that.” (Cameron,et al., 2016, p.25)

This was a difficulty I encountered first-hand as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher. Practitioners would access specialist advice, guidance and training via the Local Authority and within a relatively short period leave the PVI group-based setting; this then resulted in a gap in the specialist knowledge and expertise held within the settings' skill-set. In turn this necessitated another practitioner repeating the same training. This became particularly problematic for the PVI group-based settings at the point at which the LA began charging practitioners to attend training.

Noteworthy in the context of this thesis are those research findings which suggest that the most important factors affecting the effectiveness of SEN provision at the point of delivery were practitioner competence, experience and training (Nutbrown, 2012).

Another staffing issue affecting group-based settings which holds potential consequences for good quality SEN support within the PVI group-based settings is that of the working patterns of practitioners within the sector. Patterns of part-time working are more common within the early years education and childcare sector than are present in the wider labour market. Whilst amongst the wider workforce 74% of all employed staff have been identified as working full-time amongst the early years workforce just 49% of early years staff work thirty five hours or more per week (DfE, 2015) . This part time pattern of working in the sector has a number of implications for the PVI group-based settings. The part-time working patterns of many practitioners creates a need for PVI group-based providers to accommodate a higher

number of practitioners requiring similar types of SEN training and upskilling in a sector that has widespread pecuniary difficulties.

4.7 Financial sustainability of PVI group-based provisions

For many providers in the PVI group-based sector education and childcare spaces are largely funded through the Government's early years funding schemes, namely the Early Learning Entitlement (ELE) for qualifying two year olds and the Early Education Entitlement (EEE) for three and four year olds. This reliance on government funding as a source of income generation has left a number of PVI group-based providers particularly vulnerable with regard to government decisions on rates paid for funding places.

Over the last several years many PVI group-based settings have closed due to becoming financially unsustainable. Many of them cited government underfunding of ELE and EEE places as a primary cause for this.

More than one thousand nurseries and childminders have closed in England since the Conservative government was elected in 2015. In a Guardian newspaper article, Tracy Brabin (2017, np) , the shadow minister for early years commented '*Ministers ask early-years providers to do more and more but refuse to give them the necessary funding.*'

The Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years reported that government underfunding left nurseries facing an average 18% annual shortfall in funds (Guardian, 2017). At the time of writing, the economic survival of many other providers continues to remain under threat.

'Providers have repeatedly warned how current funding levels are unsustainable and risk leaving many struggling to balance the books – but to date, every warning has been met with inaction from ministers who would prefer to dismiss them as outliers rather than consider the simple truth that the underfunding of their flagship childcare policy is forcing quality providers out of business. It's absolutely vital that the Government starts listening to providers and addressing the valid concerns they are raising if we are going to have any chance of tackling this worrying trend.'
Neil Leitch, chief executive of the Pre-school Learning Alliance' (Morton, 2018, np)

The following narrative posted on the Facebook group *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding* (CNLF) was written by the owner of a PVI group-based setting; the narrative reflects the views of many of the group-based providers as expressed to the researcher or evidenced through other publications.

"I just wanted a little rant! I just feel so extremely worried about my precious business, 12 long hard years building 2 small homely day nurseries and the 30 hours coming in is making me sick with worry that we will be able to survive. I don't want any of my parents to lose the hours they should be entitled to and yet the government see fit to not only decide on my funding rate but to tell me that I cannot charge anymore for this time. Of all the stresses and worries running a business causes in these times, this almost tips it over the edge. I basically feel that regardless of the funding rate given to us, if we are allowed to charge the shortfall it could still mean 30 hours (3 full days of care) for a small fraction of the usual cost. 100% of my parents agree they would much rather pay the additional than me opt out or lose my nursery....not one has disputed it, they all think the government are being ridiculous with this. There is no point offering free hours if a year down the line we have no nursery to offer anyone. Surely it's simple, it's my

business and I should be able to offer the sessions, funded or otherwise however I need to.....it's then parents' choice if they take it or not." (E. E., 2016)

The following table considers providers' profitability in 2011 and 2013.

	Day Nurseries		Sessional	
	30% most deprived areas		30% most deprived areas	
	2011	2013	2011	2013
Made a profit or surplus	24%	29%	19%	15%
Covering costs	39%	34%	48%	47%
Operating at a loss	19%	14%	18%	20%
Don't know	18%	20%	15%	16%

Fig: 4.1 PVI Provider profit +/- in the 30% deprivation areas during the periods 2011 and 2013 (DfE, 2013 modified)

In 2011 19%, nearly one in five, of day nurseries operating in the most deprived areas were doing so at a loss, with 18% unable to comment as to whether they had made a profit, broken even, or actually made a loss. Whilst in 2013 of this group the number of day nurseries reporting running at a loss dropped to 14%, the figure for those who didn't know whether they had made a profit, broken even or made a loss rose by 2%. Of the sessional group-based providers, the 2011 figures show 18% of providers making a loss with 15% unable to comment as to whether they had made

a profit, broken even or made a loss. For 2013, the percentage of settings making a loss rose to 20% or one in five with those unable to comment increasing to 16%.

It is noteworthy that in economic circumstances where financial sustainability has increasingly become of central concern within the sector, in 2013, 20% of full time group settings and 16% of sessional group settings did not have any knowledge pertaining to their business viability.

4.8 Reductions in Early Years provision

In an article for *Nursery World*, Morton (2018, np) reported that a growing number of PVI group-based providers up and down the country were closing or expecting to close because of financial difficulties exacerbated by the introduction of the 30 hours.

In 2016 there were 25,500 group-based providers offering a total of 1,200,000 early years places and representing 39% of the available market share (*Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2016*). In 2018 there were 23,600 PVI group-based providers offering 1,100,000 early years education and childcare places with a total market share of 37% (*Survey of Childcare and early Years Providers 2018*).

Between 2016 and 2018 the number of available group-based settings had therefore fallen by 1,900 with a consequent reduction of 100,000 spaces.

With every local authority having a statutory duty to provide sufficient early years educational places within their demographic area for all of those qualifying children. It could prove problematic for LAs in the future to comply with this statutory duty in

relation to early years educational provision should the number of providers continue to reduce.

A comparison of the *Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers: Main Summary, England*, figures for the years 2016, 2018 (DfE, 2017, DfE, 2018) shows a reduction in the number of PVI group-based settings operating from a figure of 25,550 in 2016 to 23,600 in 2018, a reduction of 1,900 PVI group-based settings.

The closure of PVI group-based settings within a demographic region will reduce the opportunity for the early identification of SEN and early implementation of supporting measures for children under statutory school age resident within the area. If the closure of PVI group-based settings continues as described here children presenting with SEN as young as two years old are at risk of losing out on the opportunity of an early years educational placement. This is of particular concern to this group of children as it is important that they can access appropriate educational experiences.

At the same time the number of maintained nursery school providers has also reduced from 17,900 in 2016 to 16,900 in 2018. According to an article by Ward (2018) the number of maintained nursery schools is expected to continue to fall with three in every ten now fearing imminent closure when the additional Government funding currently given to top up maintained nursery school budgets ceases in 2020. During the period the number of childminders also fell by five thousand -, seven hundred providers. This closure of a range of early years provision types means

that for those PVI group based providers still operating within an area the demands for SEN provision will increase.

4.9 Conclusions on the impact of Government policies

The early years sector has faced a 'perfect storm' in recent years. Successive governments have rightly called for higher standards in the foundation stage of education and in particular for more effective approaches to the teaching of children with SEN. This might have been expected to be followed by an increase in resources but at the same time fiscal pressures increased and the financial crisis marked the start of the period of "austerity" in government funding of services which bore particularly heavily on local authorities. Practitioner remuneration was constrained at the same time as, under the quest for higher quality, they were required to attain higher levels of qualification. Growth of the maintained sector was constrained; the PVI sector found it increasingly difficult to achieve financial sustainability.

The end of 'austerity' has now been announced and more resources may be made available, but there will be many high priority demands on them. The sector needs to explore means of increasing its productivity without undue reliance on government funding. One approach that has been widely adopted is the use of digital technology to improve communication and reduce costs. The Virtual Education and SEN Support Inter-linked System (VESSILS) designed as a part of this research has been specifically developed to align with the current working practices and requirements of

PVI group-based practitioners supporting children with SEN within the early years phase of education.

Chapter 5 The Virtual Education and SEN Support Inter-Linked System (VESSILS) model

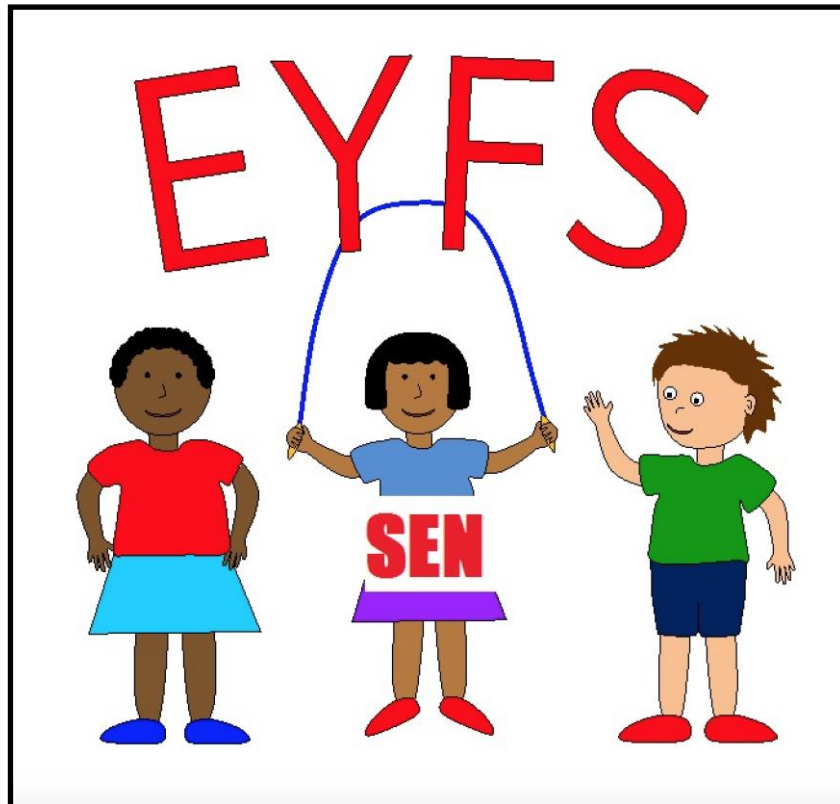


Fig. 5.1 VESSILS - logo

Research question:

Consideration of the design, development and implementation of an on-line intervention model intended to support SEN practice and professional development within the early years phase of education.

Within this chapter the wider situational environment for the VESSILS intervention is explored and the VESSILS design and purpose explained. As a part of the VESSILS design process it was necessary to be able to contextualise the intervention as operating within the parameters of a pertinent learning theory/environment.

Alongside this, the mode and ease of access to the VESSILS intervention by Early Years PVI group based practitioners needed to be considered as this would influence the effectiveness of VESSILS as a functioning entity. Data from the wider research was used to inform which attributes should be included in the initial intervention design.

An action research design approach was adopted in order to structure and lead the design process as the intervention model was a continuous work in process with modifications being made to the intervention once launched. The action research design adopted is considered in greater detail in the following chapter which addresses research design and methodology.

The following areas were identified within the research literature and findings as problematic affecting SEN support at the point of delivery in the PVI group-based settings:

- lowered sense of professional self-efficacy amongst practitioners,
- lowered sense of professional esteem amongst practitioners,
- prohibitive costs of training,
- difficulty in accessing specific training in a timely fashion,

- additional staffing costs incurred to maintain adult: child ratios during release time for practitioners to attend training,
- high levels of staff turnover leading to a loss of SEN expertise.

In order to be of value to practitioners the intervention model needed to be easy to access, easily navigated and offer such functionality as the capacity to share images/videos with others and importantly support hyperlinks to other sites. The model also needed to have the capacity for practitioners to be able to engage with each other, ask questions and share expertise.

In addition to consideration of the attributes of the intervention model itself, the following also needed to be considered:

- the attributes of learning in the digital age,
- Conceptual learning environments,
- Learning theory,
- Virtual learning approaches,
- Virtual learning communities.

5.1 Learning in the digital age

When considering the situating of the VESSILS intervention model, the characteristics of the model design and the model's purpose necessitated an on-line presence.

The World Wide Web comprised as it is of a global system of networked computers embedded with internet capability, allows individuals access to many millions of hypertext documents known as webpages. Their hypertext functionality allows for the creation of easy to navigate pathways between web pages and websites, i.e. collections of linked webpages. Importantly, the internet offers a malleable framework within which information acquisition and sharing can be managed in ways and at times convenient to both the knowledge initiator/provider and knowledge seeker. Hence, the internet and its constituent attributes proves an enabling and powerful medium facilitator.

Furthermore, the considerable increase in affordable mobile personal data devices such as smart phones, and lowered provider charges for internet usage, has allowed a greater number of individuals the opportunity to use personal data devices for communication, information searching and retrieval.

According to Office for National Statistics (ONS) data published in 2018 (ONS:2018) in 2018, 77% of adults used the internet "on the go" via either a mobile phone, smartphone, laptop, tablet or a handheld device. By age band this represented 97%

of adults aged 25 to 34 years (97%) and 39% of adults aged 65 years and over. Additionally 90% of all households in Great Britain, in 2018 had access to the internet (ONS:2018).

In line with these findings on internet usage, practitioners in the PVI group-based settings can be seen to have become increasingly more accustomed to using online technology. Many in the PVI group based sector now have their own webpages, EYFS assessment recording by practitioners is input onto dedicated ipad/tablet applications and online management systems are used to manage business operations. The increased mastery of online technologies within the PVI group-based settings is possibly due in part to the number of younger practitioners working within the sector.

The high levels of individuals now accessing information and services via the internet was considered a good indicator that an online model should prove an effective medium within which to situate an intervention.

5.2 Learning theory

During the design process it was important to be able to conceptually envisage how the intervention model would operate as part of a wider digital learning framework.

5.2.1 Connectivism - A Theory of Learning

Today's learners are able to structure and retrieve knowledge in new, flexible and immediate ways free from the restraints of stipulated times and/or geographic place.

Two key proponents of the digitalised learning theory of Connectivism are Stephen Downes leader of the Learning and Performance Support Systems program at the National Research Council and George Siemens an internationally known expert and theorist in the field of digital learning.

Siemens & Conole (2011) speak of:

"New technologies that influence how information is created and shared and how people connect and socialize hold promise for adoption in education. Much like the idea of a book necessitated the development of the library or the idea of structured curriculum and domains of knowledge produced classrooms, the idea of the Internet – distributed, social, networked – influences the structure of education, teaching, and learning" (Siemens & Conole: 2011 np)

Within the Connectivist paradigm communities exist as part of wider networks.

Within Connectivism such communities are referred to as nodes. A learner can be the member of different communities each one forming a "node" within the learner's 'Personal Learning Environment (PLE). Within the Connectivist model each learner is responsible for their own learning.

In Connectivism learning is seen as happening through the transfer of information by an individual to a node which then becomes a part of a personal network.

"Connectivist theorists believe that the acquisition of knowledge is no longer bounded by the presence of a content expert or academic institution, but rather occurs within groups, communities, and global networks. These communities and networks may be comprised of peers, subject matter experts, or even the community at large." (Remington, K.: 2015 np)

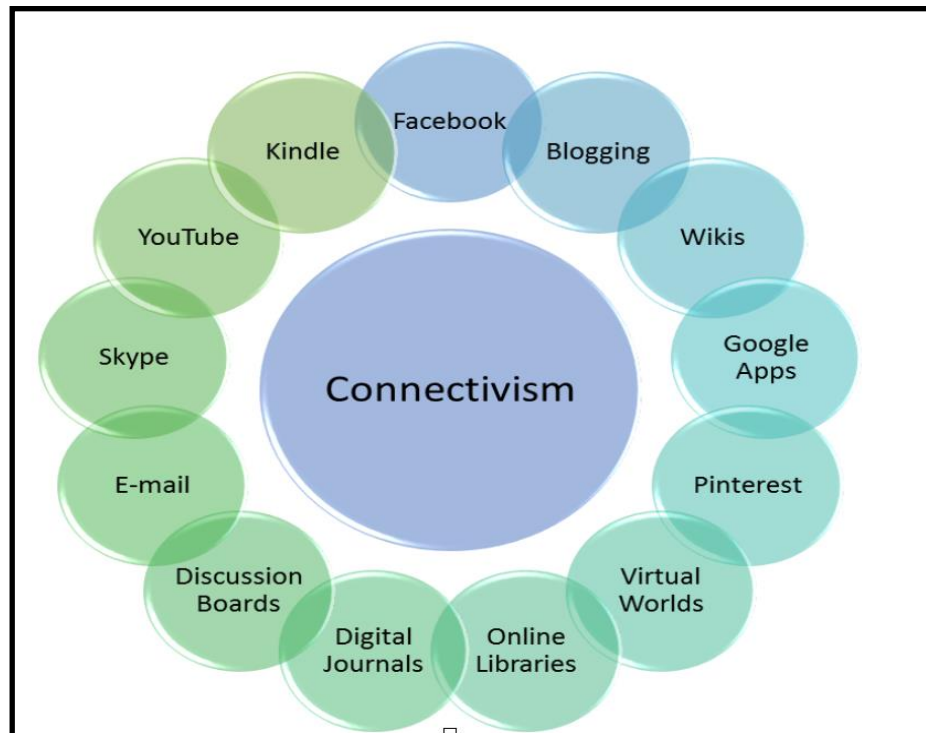


Fig. 5.2 Connectivism: Entities as nodes

The Connectivist framework was identified as a credible theoretical learning framework within which to situate the VESSILS model.

5.3 Personal Learning Environments (PLE)

A PLE consists of a number of different information sources identified by an individual as pertinent to their learning needs which combine together to create a bespoke learning environment. The sources are cerebrally linked creating a conceptually linked learning environment .

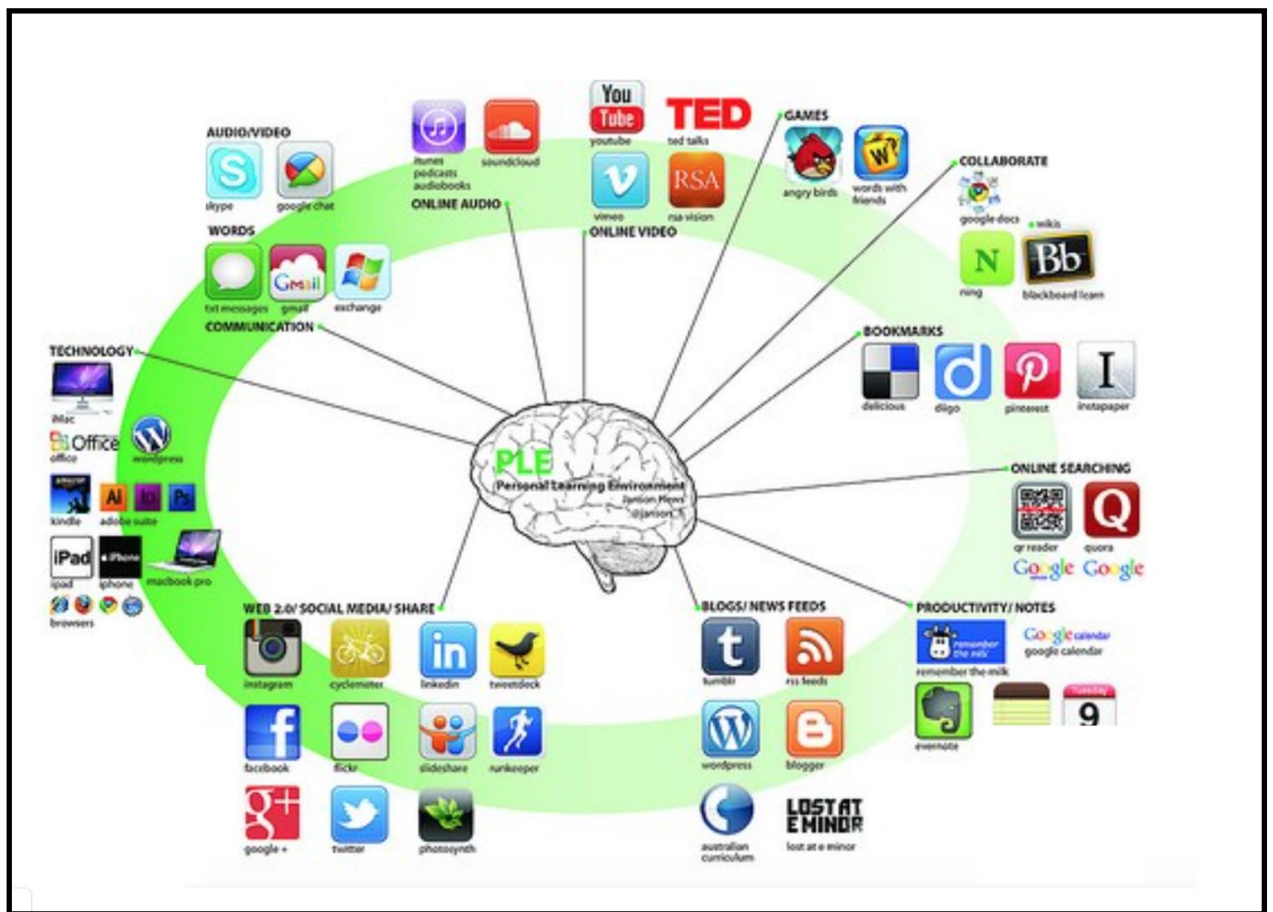


Fig. 5.3 Personal Learning Environment (PLE) modified from Hews (2012)

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/24823508@N04/6992313131>

'The most compelling argument for the PLE is to develop educational technology which can respond to the way people are using technology for learning and which allows them to themselves shape their own learning spaces, to form and join communities and to create, consume, remix, and share material.' (Preisinger-Klein: 2007)

It was intended that the VESSILS intervention would become situated within a practitioner's unique PLE thereby adding to any existing information sources.

5.4 Virtual Communities of Practice (VCoP)

"Learning needs and theories that describe learning principles and processes, should be reflective of underlying social environments". (Siemens :2004, np)

Lave and Wenger's (1991) "Communities Practice" social theory of learning with its emphasis on shared interests or like-mindedness within the 'community' sits well with the Connectivist model of complex social networked environments.

The VESSIL intervention design was based around the concept of a virtual space where information and social exchanges could be made between a community of early years practitioners all sharing a particular interest in the field of special educational needs. It was important that the intervention be embedded with social networking functionality.

In order to be effective the intervention called for a membership base who shared links of commonality in the central tenets of the model's purpose: SEN within the context of an early years educational setting. The framework for the VESSILS model was designed with the capacity to support a Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) . Importantly a VCoP model would allow practitioners access to a wide geographic spread of professional views.

The term 'Community of Practice' was originally devised by the anthropologist Jean Lave and the educational theorist and practitioner, Etienne Wenger (1991) in their work '*Situated Learning*' (Lave and Wenger: 1991)

'The term community of practice was coined to refer to the community that acts as a living curriculum ... learning in a community of practice is not limited to novices. The practice of a community is dynamic and involves learning on the part of everyone.'

(Wenger: 2015, p.4)

Lave and Wenger described a Community of Practice (CoP) as having three specific attributes:

5.4.1. The Domain

A CoP's identity is characterised by the strong sense of a shared focus of interest or purpose amongst its members. By becoming a member of a particular CoP implies a shared commitment to the particular area of interest on which the CoP is founded. Lave and Wenger refer to this area of interest as the 'domain'. As a part of the VESSILS design it was important to create a domain name which would resonate with its intended audience. Therefore the way in which the model was branded was seen as central to how the model would be perceived within the wider online environment. The domain name 'EYFS - SEN' was created as an instantly recognisable and self evident social media presence.

5.4.2 The Community

Within a CoP its members can engage in shared activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. Interactions between members create relationships between members of the group. Within the group exists a shared dynamic, members supporting and learning from each other. Within a CoP its members place store on their belonging as a part of the group and of their standing/status within it. A central characteristic of the community is the interaction and learning that takes place between members.

Members within a CoP engage with the community in different ways. Some members taking a proactive directional role within the group where others engage more on the periphery of the community.

Within the VESSILS CoP I took on the role of main contributor. As the community became more established some of its other members became familiar to me as frequent commentators on and sharers of the information uploaded to the community. Over time a few of the CoP members began to address me personally by name when commenting, requesting further feedback or flagging up problems with any link provided in a post.

5.4.3 The Practice

An important attribute shared by CoP group members is that they are practitioners rather than a group of individuals with a shared interest or hobby. As members they *'develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems in short a shared practice.'* (Wenger-Trayner :2015)

Lave and Wenger contended that in order to create and sustain a CoP requires commitment and regularity of interaction between its members.



Fig. 5.4 Lave & Wenger - Community of Practice (CoP)

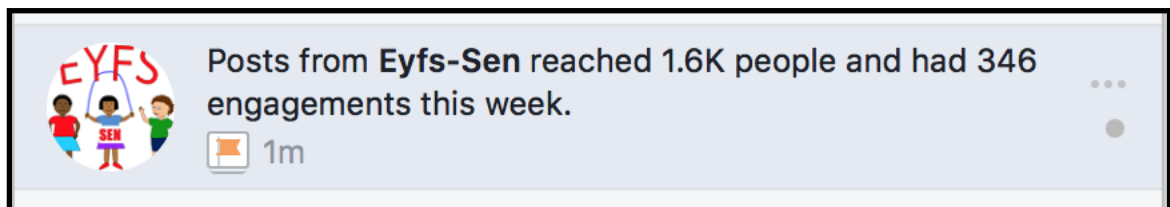


Fig. 5.5 Facebook Page interactions Week beginning 04.03.2019

The above Facebook notification shows the number of community members who received Eyfs- Sen Page posts in their Facebook feed and the number of engagements members made with the site's hyperlinks embedded in Page posts in a one week period.

Gannon-Leary & Fontainha (2007:1) suggest that for an online CoP to be successful a number of essential characteristics need to be present:

- usability of the technology,

- trust and acceptance of ICT as a means of communication,
- a sense of acceptance among members,
- a shared understanding,
- a common sense of purpose,
- use of netiquette,
- user-friendly language,
- longevity

In addition to the above Andrews and Schwartz (2002) proposed that the creation of a CoP community benefited when the membership included members who had an existing knowledge of each other as this aids the occurrence of consolidation and trust within the group. Chatti (2007) suggested that individuals fall naturally into a number of different types of community including communities of practice.

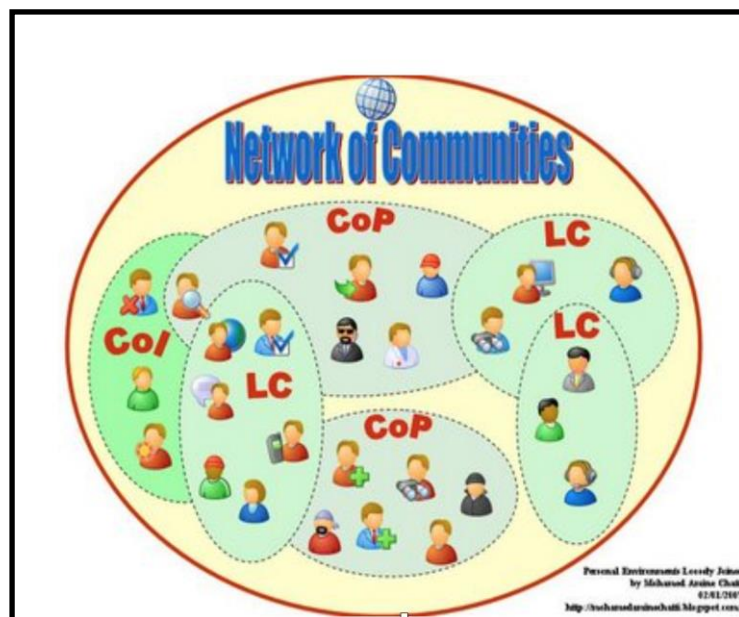


Fig. 5.6 'Personal Learning Environments Loosely Joined' (Chatti, M., 2007)

As shown in the illustration below within the VESSILS Facebook VCoP, community members who were also work colleagues could be seen to share posts and conversations such as those relating to teaching ideas linked to VESSILS posts. Additionally, VCoP members also shared VESSILS links with their own personal Facebook communities as the following conversation string demonstrates:

VA: CW, KS, KB I'm up for learning this for next term if you are.

KB: VA I'm up for the challenge 😊 😊

VA: KB I have the song on CD x

KS: I love things like this I'm up to learn anything new can't wait xx

DM: I cringed when I saw the Gruffalo's child was on TV and turned it off lol x

Furthermore, use of the WWW technology has allowed for a conceptual extension to Lave and Wenger's original 'Communities of Practice (CoP) model. The CoP as a learning theory has been re-contextualised to include virtual forms of community. This is a type of learning model which sits well within a Connectivist learning paradigm.

5.5 Virtual Communities

Technological developments have meant that there is no longer a need for a physically tangible environment in order for a CoP to exist. Members can now form and be a part of "Virtual Communities of Practice" (VCoP) (Dubé, Bourhis & Jacob: 2005).

A strength of virtual communities are that they allow for communities to associate online. Society increasingly regards technological software and devices as a part of the social communications 'fabric' of today's world. Delanty speaks of a virtual community '*mediated by a highly personalised technology*' :

'No discussion of community today can be complete without some consideration of the role technology plays in reshaping human relations'
(Delanty:2010 p134).

VCoPs as with other WWW enabled applications accommodate both synchronous and asynchronous interactions between individuals who themselves can be located at various and wide-ranging geographic locations. Additionally, access to virtual communities can be made at times convenient to the individual members.

Sun et al. (2011) situated virtual communities (VCs) into two defined groupings:

- relational virtual communities (RVC) based in the social exchanges between members,

- transactional virtual communities (TVC) where knowledge is purchased.

According to Sun's view the VESSILS CoP is a relational virtual community as it is founded on the social exchanges of its members . Like all VCoPs VESSILS can be viewed as both a repository of knowledge and also as a point of knowledge interchange.

A paper written by Kietzmann et al. (2013) considered how innovations in mobile technology were shaping the way in which mobile workers were able to share knowledge and collaborate on the go. They introduced the concept of the "Mobile Community of Practice" (MCOP). As described by Kietzman, membership of an MCOP means that members are able to communicate with each one another via mobile devices.

'Today, we witness a major shift to mobility as the main technological focus of Information Technology (IT) development, as a new network structure and as a facilitator of business activity' (Kietzmann et al. 2013 p282)

As mentioned in the literature review (ONS: 2017) 98% of adults within the age range sixteen - twenty four years of age and 39% of adults aged sixty five years plus in Great Britain had used a mobile or smartphone device in the previous year in order to access the internet in Great Britain. The demographic within PVI group-based workforce contains a significant number of younger practitioners and so during the design phase of the intervention it was decided that the intervention should be mobile/smartphone compatible With the Kietzmann (2013) study in mind it would be interesting to examine whether the VESSILS VCoP discussed here would fall into

the category of a Mobile Community of Practice (MCOP). In order to identify whether this is in fact the case, additional questions would need to be asked of the intervention cohort.

5.6 VESSILS: design and implementation

The interconnectivity of the VESSILS model design is intended to be a part (node) of an individual's personal learning environment.

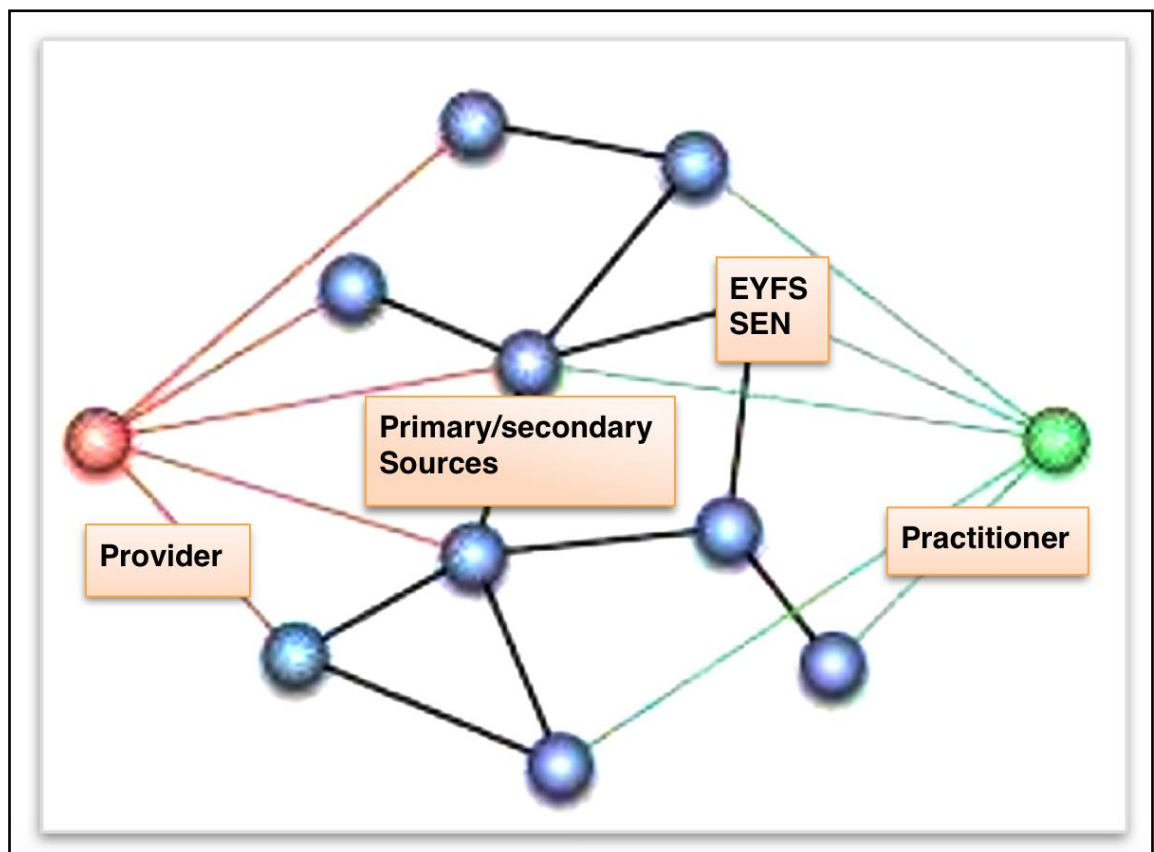


Fig. 5.7 VESSILS within the context of a Connectivist Personal Learning Environment

5.7 The VESSILS Cycle of Empowerment

It is intended that the VESSILS VCoP will provide practitioners with a resource hub/ platform from where they can source SEN resources and training which will further develop their SEN skills/ knowledge-base. VESSILS also allows practitioners to seek advice and feedback from other VESSILS VCoP members. As practitioners gain an increased sense of professional competence through utilising attributes of the VCoP it is envisaged that this will in turn impact positively upon their sense of perceived self-efficacy.

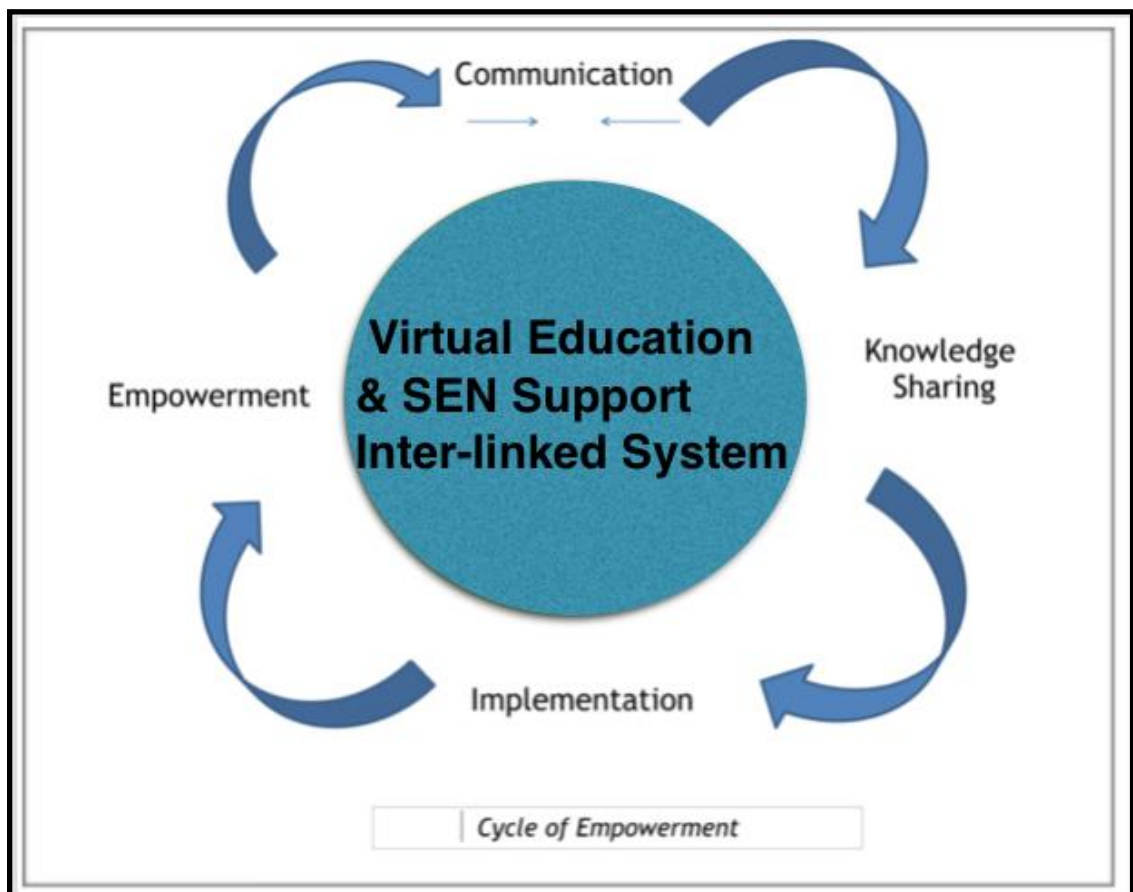


Fig. 5.8 The Cycle of Empowerment

5.8 VESSILS - Social Networking Platform:

The intervention was based around an on-line application design which would act as both a hub for SEN resources and guidance and could also support shared discourse amongst members. Due to the importance of the communication function to the intervention's purpose, a social networking platform was judged the best platform type on which to build the intervention model.

Initially two commercial social network platform providers were considered as possible platforms namely, Social Engine and Ning. Free trials of both platforms were undertaken. The Ning Platform was chosen as during the initial stages of the intervention model building process the Ning templates were easier to use.

In the initial design phase of the research process the Ning site was intended to be developed as the sole VESSILS site.

A Facebook Profile was set up as a part of the research process as this allowed for a Facebook Page to be created as a medium in which to embed a hyperlink to the Ning VESSILS site. Information which gave an explanation about the research intent was also added to the Page details.

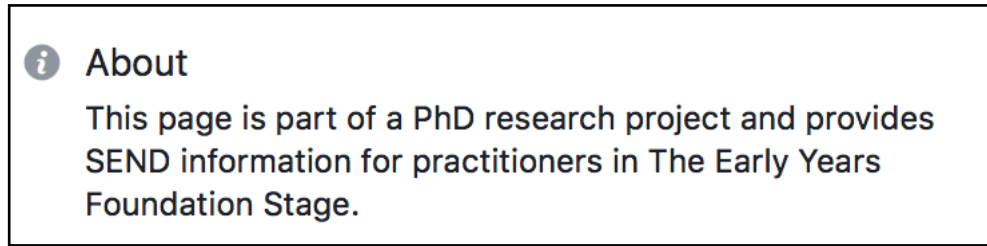


Fig. 5.9 'About' entry details as given on the Facebook Page Eyfs-Sen

In the initial VESSILS research design, the Facebook Page only contained a brief reference outlining the research aim as shown above. Some Facebook users visiting the page 'liked' it. 'Friends requests' were also sent to the research Facebook Profile also set up solely for the research purpose of setting up the Facebook Page. These actions suggested that within the Facebook membership there was a keenness amongst its membership to reach out and engage. This evident willingness to engage with other others led to the implementation of a Facebook version of the VESSILS VCoP with each 'post' mirrored across three different Facebook spaces, namely a Profile , Page and Group. The three Facebook spaces were intended to accommodate the preferred engagement styles of Facebook members. Furthermore, it allowed for the possibility to identify any differences in the behaviour of members which could be accounted for based on the type of Facebook space chosen.

There currently exists a number of Facebook Pages and Groups covering issues relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Whilst some of these include some

SEN related materials, in the main they contain more generalised content.

Facebook pages are often set up as business spaces with a central purpose being the promotion of products and services. This is illustrated below in a post on the Facebook Page of an Early Years Educational Consultant '*SEND in the Early Years*'

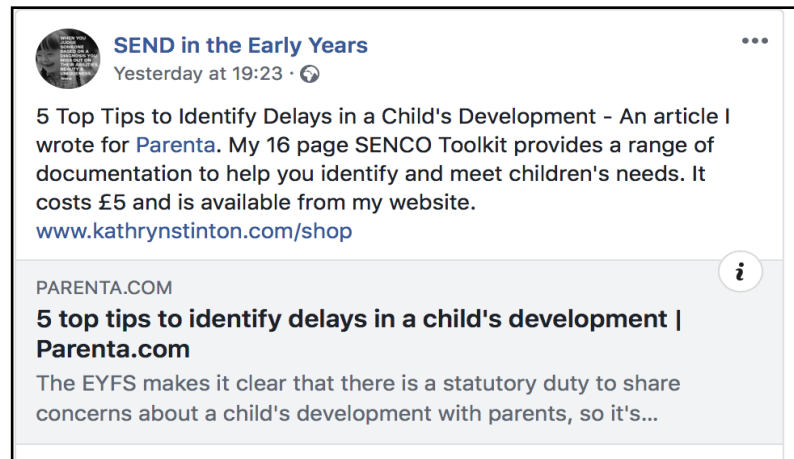


Fig. 5.10 Post advertising resources developed by the Facebook Page creator

5.9 NING:

The NING VESSILS model was established in January 2014.

NING offer a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform which allows customers to access the company's social networking architecture in order to produce a personalised social networking site. NING software is licensed and hosted on a subscription basis.

The NING social networking provider offers that capacity for a website to be integrated with other online social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and Google.

Summary of some key NING site functionality:

- personalised website using NING Templates
- Community profile: Public, private, members-only
- Individual sections can be set to public or private with an option to set different permission levels to different members
- iphone interface
- pull down menus/submenus
- hypertext links to resources/sites
- in-house email and messaging systems
- Broadcast all email function
- Subjects categorised and sub-categorised
- personalised pages
- closed group
- Administrator Function
- Material added on an ad hoc basis
- Site updates notified via Broadcast Email
- Additional resources distributed via Broadcast Email
- ability to share videos/photos

The NING platform allows for the building of personalised websites. There are a range of pre-designed website layouts to choose from which can be accessed through a function called ‘Design Studio’.

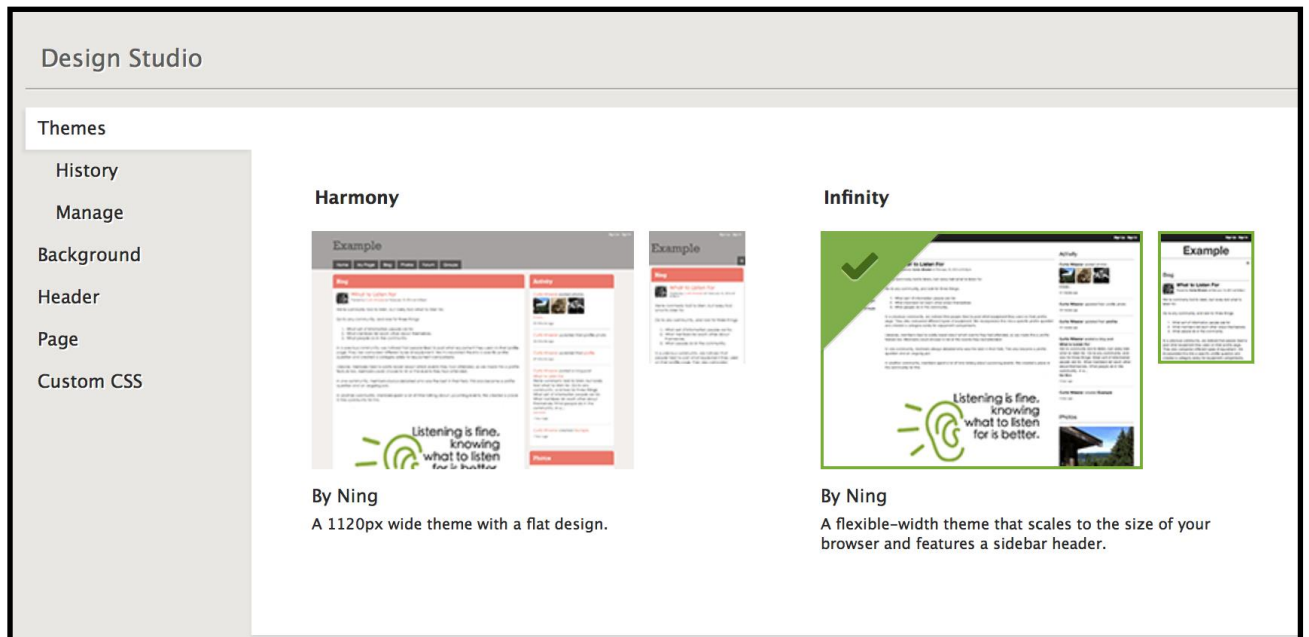


Fig. 5.11 Design Studio - options

The NING pre designed front end templates allowed for both different visual and also different access approaches to material on the site. This included whether the site menu would appear as a pull down menu or a page list down the left /right hand side of the screen. The tonal colours of the templates can also be changed and bespoke logos added.

5.9.1 Dashboard toolbar

The administrator of a Ning site is able to access and modify the different areas of the site by accessing the different areas via the Dashboard Toolbar:



Fig. 5.12 Dashboard Toolbar



- To manage site, pages and settings
- Design Studio
- Members and member settings
- Manage site content

Fig. 5.13 Toolbar Key

The toolbar allows for the direct access to the different design and administrative areas within the site for these to be adjusted.

5.9.2 Web pages

The website template allowed for the creation of different page types to accommodate different material types and styles, such as photographs and videos. For the purpose of VESSILS the most frequently used page type was 'articles'. This format allowed for the grouping and posting of sets of articles under bespoke headings

New Page

Page type Articles
 Events
 Blog
 Forum
 Photos
 Videos
 Social Channel
 Custom
 Link
 Chat

Status

Title

Navigation

Tab title

Open in a new window

General

URL EYFS-SEN.ning.com/

Who can contribute
 Administrators
 Featured Members
 Members

Approve articles before they appear
 Show Author Bio box

Who can view Everyone (Public)

Comments None

Categories Add New

Contributors must select a category

Excerpt Length 250

Layout & Content

Fig. 5.14 Page format options - NING

- forum - this format allowed for different discussion topics to be created which members could then feed into
- link - the link page was used in order to share hyperlinks to external internet webpages and websites

The site also included pages and links that would support PVI group based setting managers complete other administrative functions other than those specifically SEN related. This was done as a means of further encouraging their use of VESSILS.



Fig. 5.15 example of some of the pages and hyperlinks available on the NING VESSELS model

5.9.3 Dashboard

Site administrators can maintain an overview of members' engagement with the site through access to 'action' data provided by NING in a graph format displayed on the dashboard. This function allowed for an insight into the frequency of members engagement with the different areas of the VESSILS intervention, such as those requesting or sharing resource ideas.

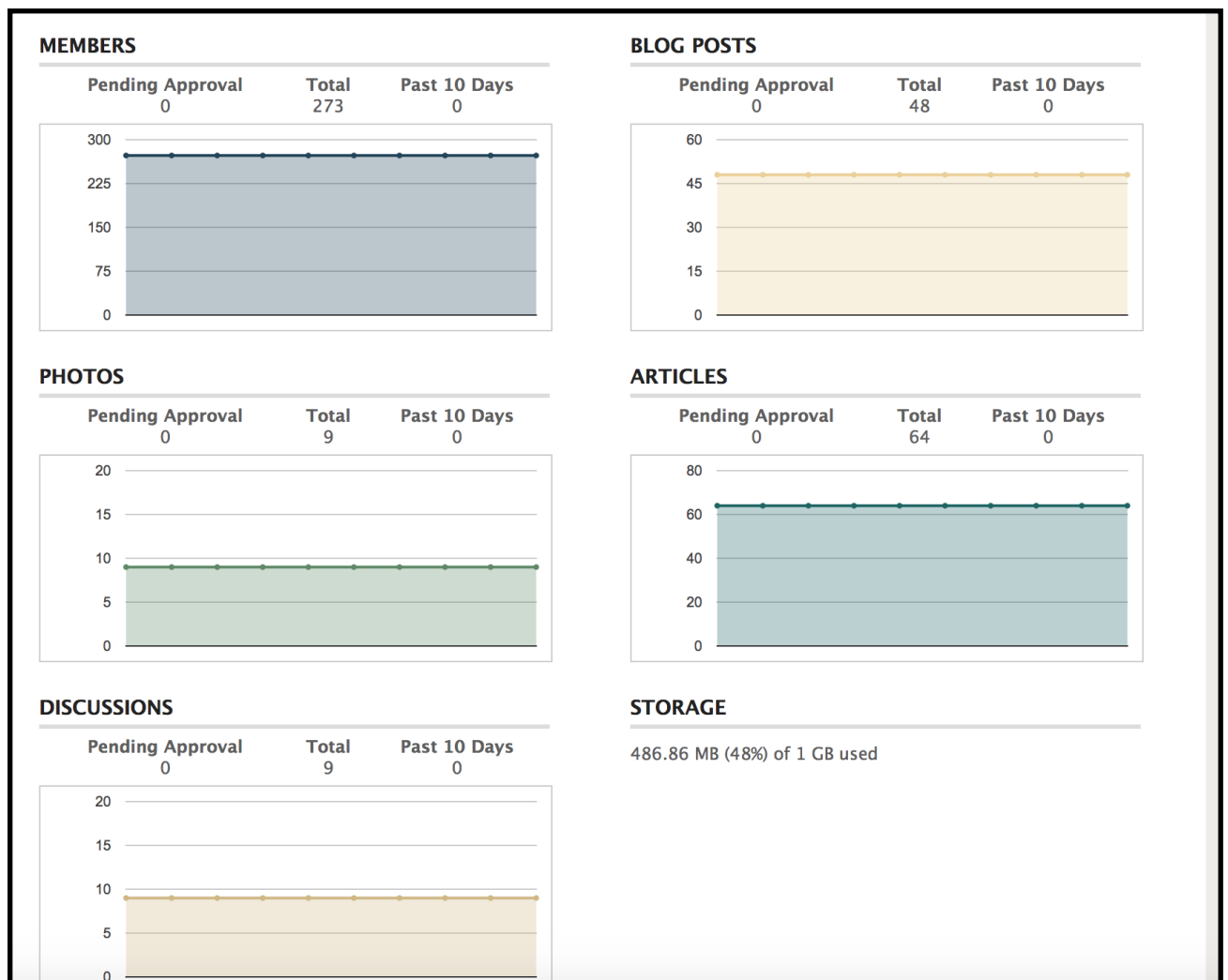


Fig.5.16 Dashboard - engagement data function

Page template options allow webpages to be designed for different types of member interactions, e.g. blogs, forums, articles. A site creator can specify how members can interact with page contents and limit any word count used by members. For the purpose of the VESSILS model, no limit was placed on the word count that members could input as any interaction with the intervention was to be encouraged.

5.9.4 Forum Page templates

Forum templates were used within the VESSILS model for creating interactive pages where members could open discussions. Each discussion on a page allowed for discreet conversation strings to be created.

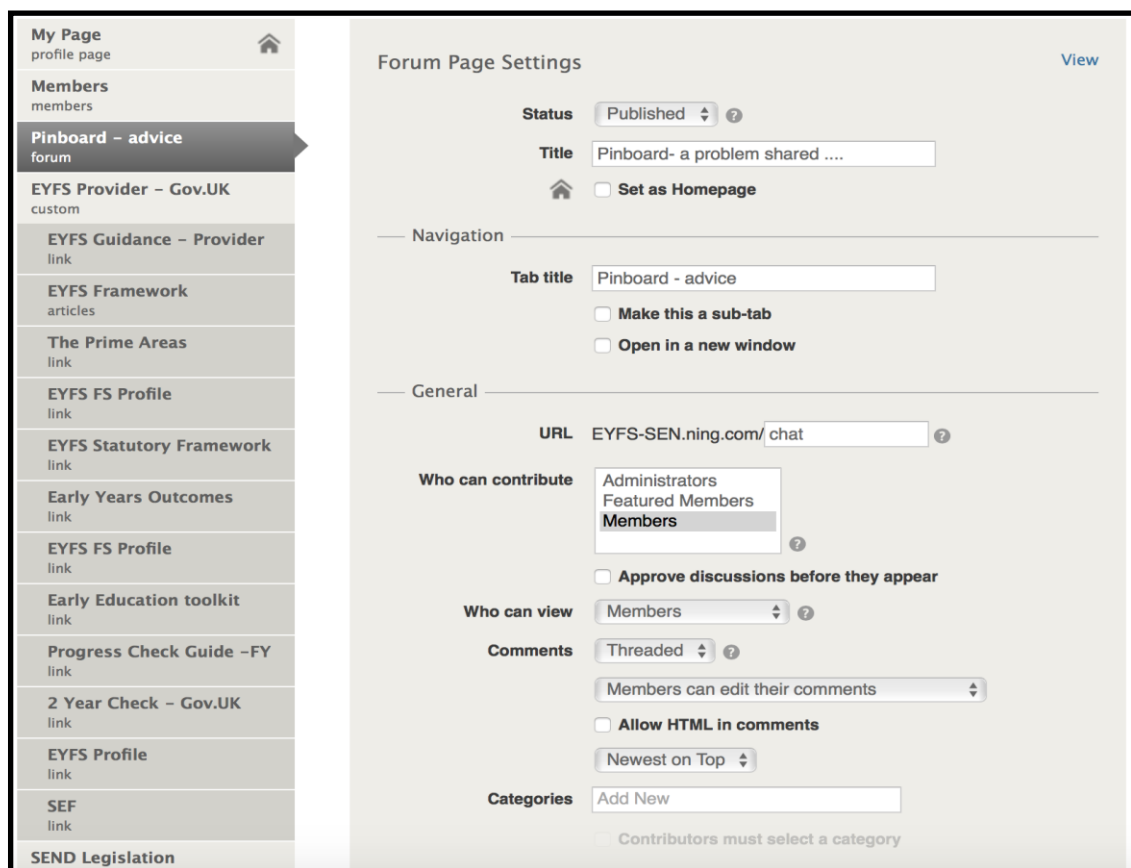


Fig. 5.17 Page settings for 'Pinboard' Forum Page

The Pinboard page was a space where members were encouraged to post questions and respond to posts uploaded by other members.

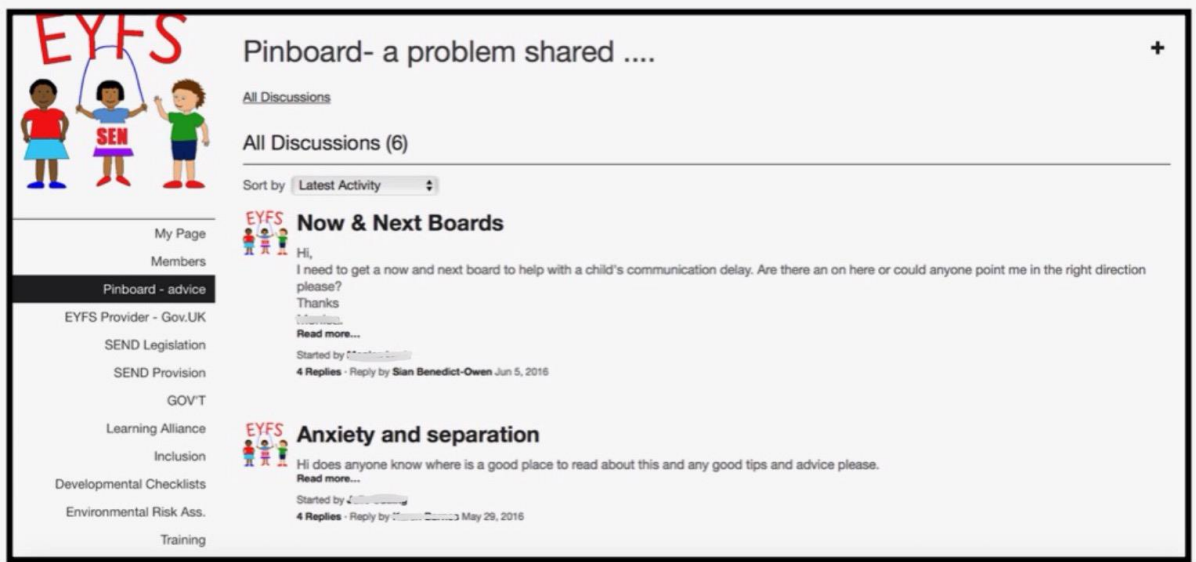


Fig. 5.18 'Pinboard' Page

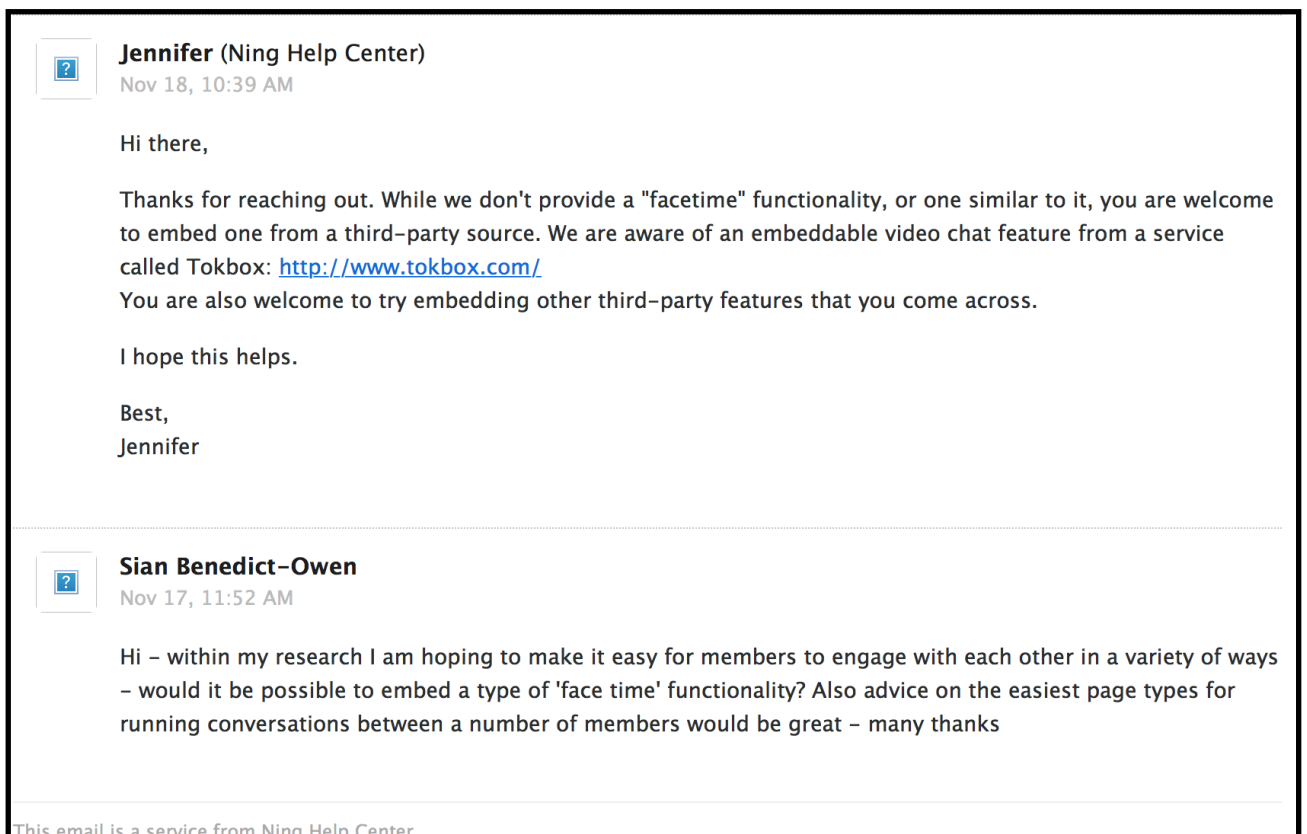


Fig. 5.19 Engagement with NING team re. design and functionality issues

A NING help centre was also available to advise during the VESSILS model building process.

5.9.5 Skysa

A Skysa toolbar was embedded into the Ning VCoP. The Skysa App Bar was a separate web application platform which allowed for a selection from over 50 different apps including Live Support Chat, Instant Messaging and Announcements to be added to the site.

The addition of the Skysa Tool Bar meant more communication modalities could be added to the VESSILS site, including a video conferencing option. A hyperlink connection to the Eyfs-Sen Facebook page was also included. Once the SKYSA Bar was setup, it was placed at the top of the VESSILS browser window.



Fig: 5.20 Additional applications available through the Skysa Bar

5.9.6 NING cohort

It was necessary to generate a startup cohort in order to initiate a VCoP. Meetings were arranged with five EYFS group-based managers/SENCOs in West Sussex and five managers/SENCOs from West London. At the meeting the research aims were explained and an information pamphlet given which offered a summarised overview of the research and directions on how to access the NING site.



Fig. 5.21 EYFS SEN - sign up page

Another method for recruiting members was by posting information about the research and the VESSILS intervention onto an already established EYFS practitioners website '*The Early Years Foundation Stage Forum*'.

Each member was welcomed personally on joining the VESSILS site and offered guidance as to the site layout and functionality.

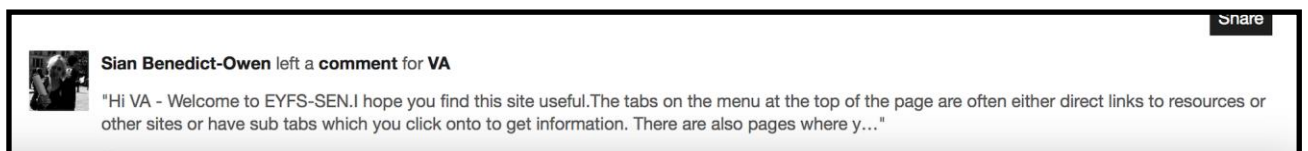


Fig. 5.22 Welcome message to a new member of the NING VESSILS site.

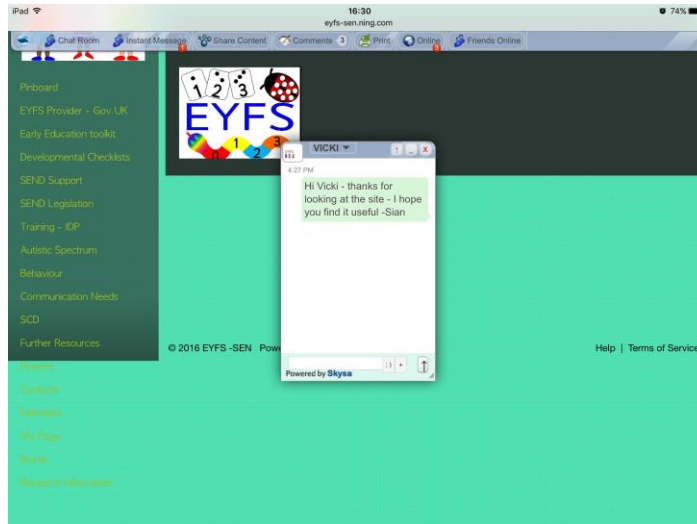


Fig. 5.23 Personalised welcome message to a new member

A users guide was produced to support members effectively negotiate the site. The guide could be accessed by clicking one of the tabs on the site menu.

Member interactions within the VESSILS site were monitored and generally responded to by me within two hours. In an effort to develop a sense of community and encourage interaction between members, links to different SEN related websites were frequently added to the site , members were sent site updates by email and professional dialogue was encouraged between members through the establishing of forum groups which addressed different issues pertinent to the membership including some topics which were being discussed more widely in the national news at that time, such as the closure of children’s centres.

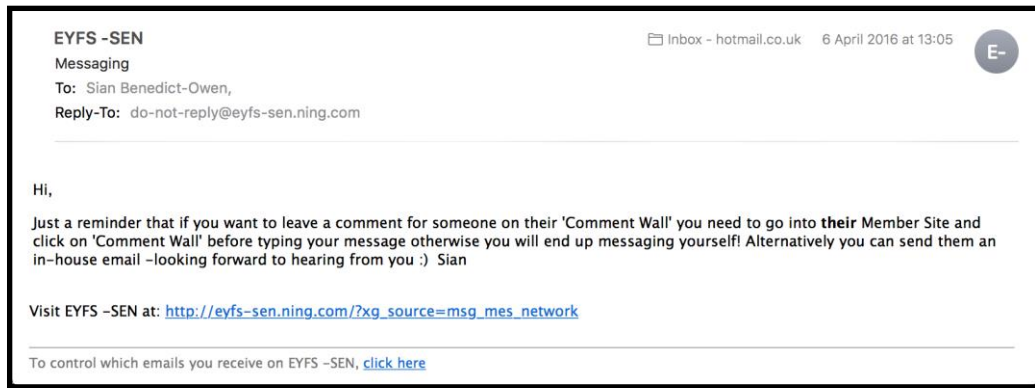


Fig. 5.24 reminder to members to encourage engagement and interaction

The message above is an example of a system-wide message sent to all members in order to remind them about some of the engagement functions available between members.

In the early stages of its installation hyperlinks to different established websites including: the National Autistic Society, Scope, Communication Matters, the Council for Disabled Children were added. Other hyperlinks led directly to specific resources including speech and language development assessment tools and the Inclusion Development Programme (IDP). These were all added as named tabs on a drop down menu. Topic specific pages were also added to the VESSILS site. This allowed for members to post their own comments and upload photographs and videos. Pages included a professional help space and a space where members could share photographs of different activity ideas. Subject updates, links to resources, requests for the sharing of good practice and practitioner views were also sent to members via the site's 'Broadcast All' email function. The 'Broadcast All' function, illustrated below, allowed the sending of email notifications to a member's external email address. As well as encouraging the engagement of members with

the site this was also an endeavour to maintain a sense of site presence with its members.

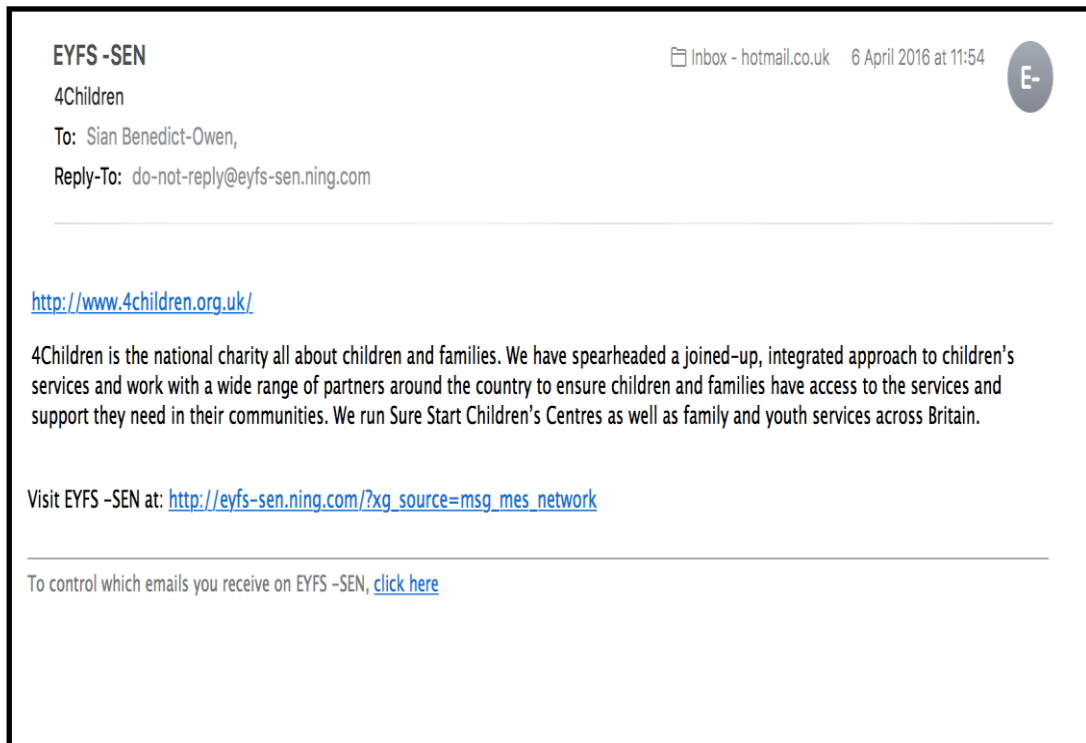


Fig. 5.25 Example of a 'Broadcast All' email

Some members own electronic devices such as iphones and laptops allowed the VESSILS icon to be added to the homepage or task bar thereby creating a short cut directly to the VESSILS site. This circumvented the need for members to access the site via its URL and site password each time they wished to access the site. The lengthy access process to gain access to the site by members in order to sign in was regarded as a weakness of the model as it could prove a deterrent to its use by practitioners

5.9.7 Membership

The Ning VCoP had a membership of two hundred and seventy three members.

The membership profile was made up of educators with a particular interest in SEN and most worked within the Early Years phase of education.

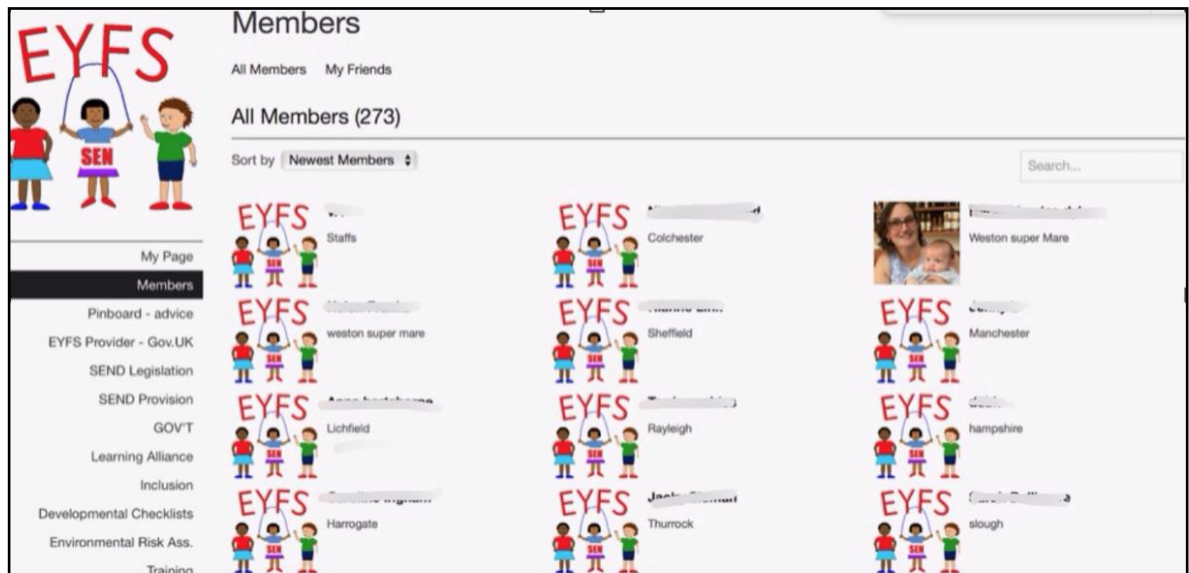


Fig. 5.26 Membership listings information

As administrator of the site I had access to the information held on all of its members. Each member had a profile space on the site which allowed them to communicate with other site members. Members could personalise the appearance of this should they wish to do so.



Fig. 5.27 Personalised member's area

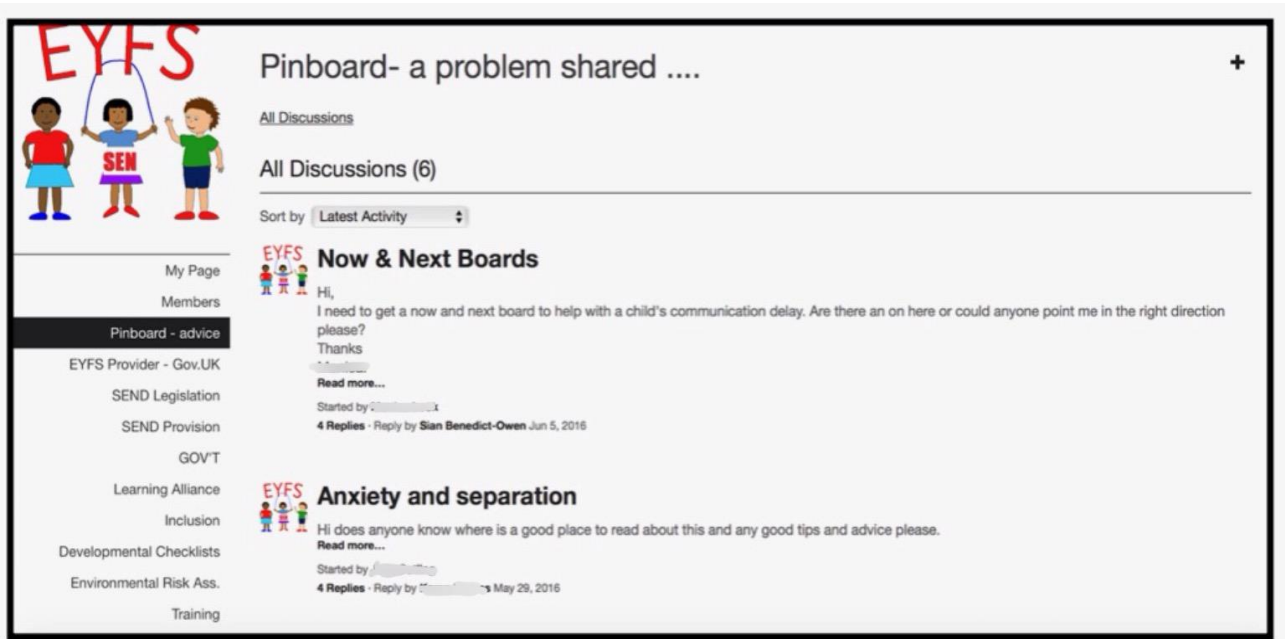


Fig. 5.28 Members Pinboard

Dedicated pages were set up to encourage different types of dialogue between members.

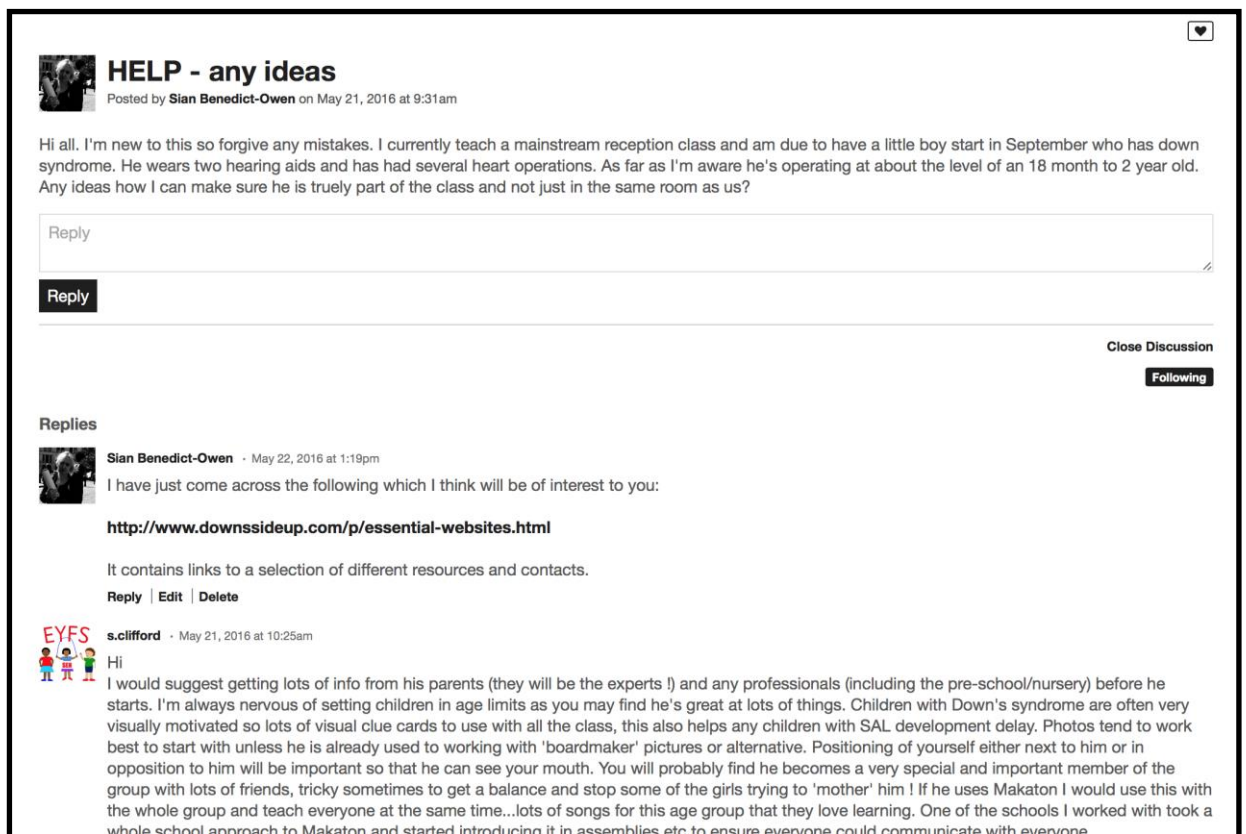


Fig. 5.29 members sharing advice

Members of the site posted their own requests for advice and responded to other practitioners' requests and comments.

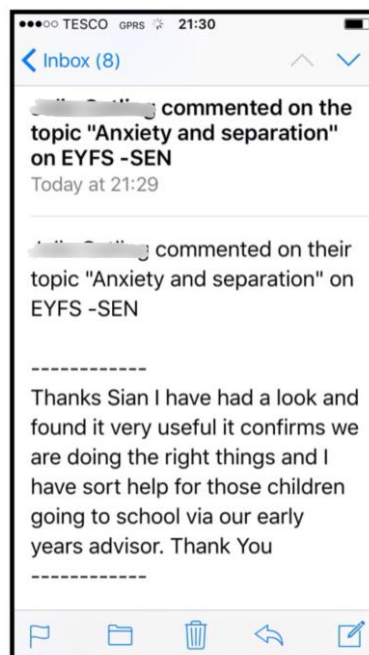


Fig. 5.30 Email notification from a VCoP member to the administrator.

When members commented on discussions their responses could also be accessed as an external email notification which allowed me to respond in a timely fashion to any actions or responses that were required.

Over the period of time that the VCoP was functional only a handful of members contributed to the site. The majority of the membership 'lurking', i.e. not having a demonstrable presence on the site.

'...virtual CoPs need to work hard to maintain energy and a high degree of participation. Individual members of a virtual community must engage with it in order that it may develop and grow and have meaning.' (Gannon-Leary: 2007, p4)

5.9.8 VESSILS - Virtual Community of Practice - Ning - examples of VCOP

interactions:

The NING community of Practice was formally launched as EYFS-SEN in October 2015. The site subscription was closed in July 2018.

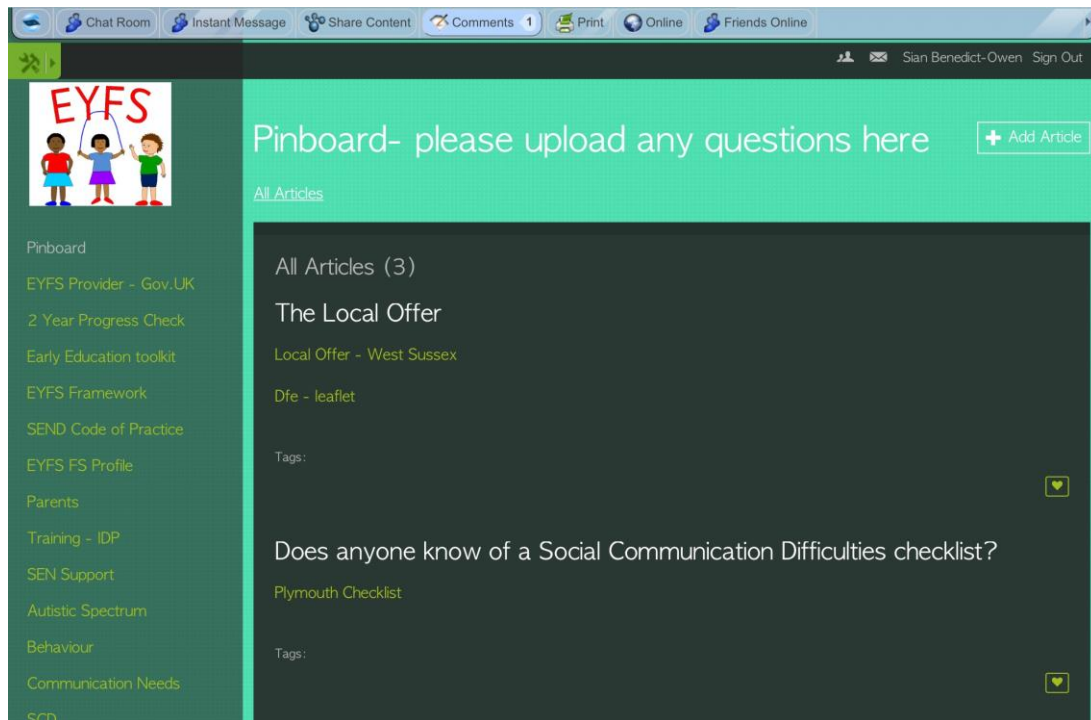


Fig. 5.31 practitioner request for a social communication difficulties assessment checklist

Documents requested by site members could be uploaded onto the page as an attachment. This would allow immediate access to the requesting professional and additionally add it to the bank of resources held by the site.


iPad 19:11 78%
 eyfs-sen.ning.com

Chat Room Instant Message Share Content Comments 4 Print Online

Leave a comment...


Comment

Comments

 **Sian Benedict-Owen** · February 21, 2016 at 7:07pm

Hi- Many thanks for this - your observations are so not a moan! I think that settings offer amazing levels of support for children with SEN and the extent of specialised in-house knowledge is impressive. But as has happened for your setting- a significant provider of training and support in the guise of LA support is becoming less available to many settings. I often wonder what will happen when due to staff turnover etc all of the SEN expertise that is currently available in house is slowly lost and needs to be replaced or updated. This is in part a reason for the development of this site. I hope that it will help fill some of the gaps by acting as a resource hub. No only that but over time there is potential for a community to develop here and share knowledge and ideas with each other as well as offer SEN advice and support.


[Edit](#) | [Delete](#)

 **s.clifford** · February 21, 2016 at 6:46pm

Hi Sian

In my setting we are ELKLAN trained /emotional wellbeing trained /pecs trained and use Makaton. We have been really lucky to have had training over the last 17 years of a high quality....however this is no longer available through our LEA as mentioned. We have a new referral method ...i'll tell you how that goes! But previously we have often sent to SALT and they have referred to the assessment centre. We have No other referral methods available to us...we rely on parents to take their children to hearing/speech or doctors . Once a diagnosis is in place we are able to collect evidence and put in for an EHCP assessment though this is often not taken further until the children are at school. We try to put in support groups for children who are finding things tricky but we cannot afford to employ extra staff as we get no additional funding. It would be great to offer more one to one support but it just isn't possible . Children make good progress with us but with additional money we could afford to put additional strategies in place. My SENCO does additional hours at home in order to complete all the paperwork...we pay her for this when it is needed. Sorry to have a moan...but you DID ask!!!

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#)

 **Sian Benedict-Owen** · February 21, 2016 at 5:44pm

Hi - many thanks for your feedback on this.

I would be really interested to learn more about how different settings are managing to support children with additional needs in the period of time before an EHCP plan is put in place:

Do settings have the responsibility of driving the Statutory Assessment Process forward and referring children?

Are practitioners finding that current levels of SEN support needed impacts on settings financially and/or in terms of practitioners' day to day roles?

Fig. 5.32 NING VCoP

In my capacity as a researcher I also took the opportunity to gather additional research findings through uploading questions to the site.

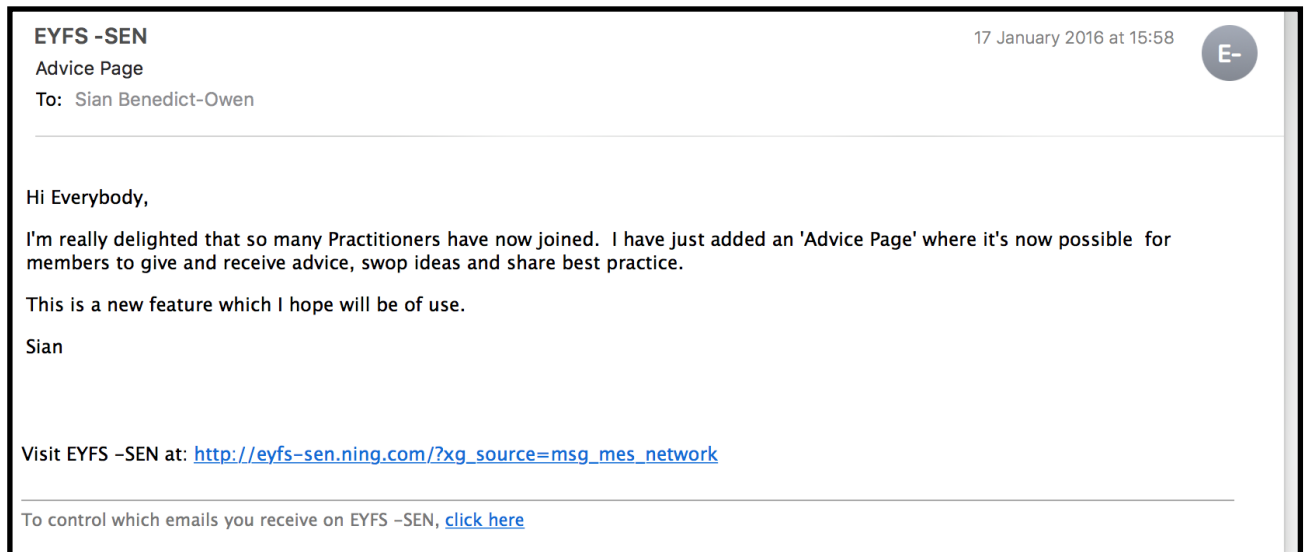


Fig. 5.33 'Broadcast all' email to members- notification of additions to the NING site

Membership updates were shared with the community through the 'broadcast all' email facility.

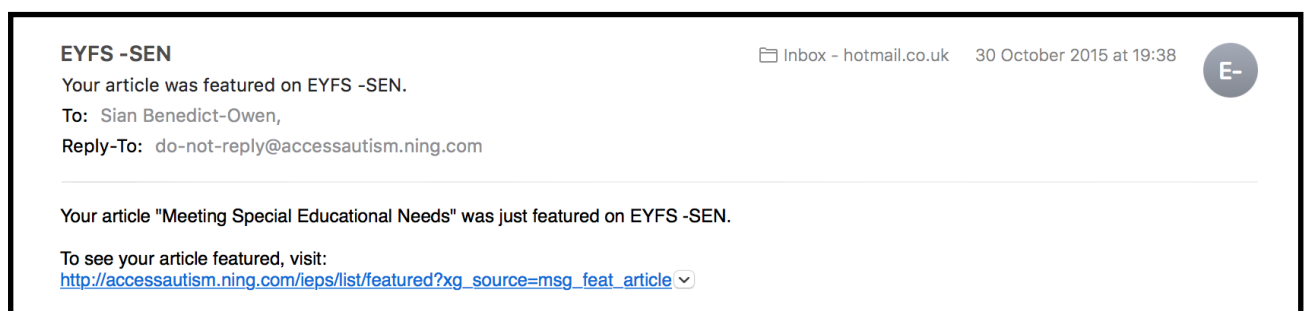


Fig. 5.34 email notification - article status

Members would receive immediate external email confirmation as to the nature of any posts that they uploaded to the VESSILS site.

5.10 Facebook:

Facebook is a social media and social networking service. Designed by Mark Zuckerberg, it was launched on 4th February 2004. The site can be accessed over both the internet and mobile networks. Facebook usage was reported to increase from 1 million active users in 2004 to two billion users connecting every month in 2017 with more than 1 billion people using 'Groups' and over 800 million 'likes' (Nowak, M). Between the period December 2017 and June 2018, Facebook's user base increased from 2.13 billion to 2.23 billion users.

(<https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>)

Facebook has a strong social networking design functionality which is created to initiate and encourage engagement between users. One of the ways this is achieved is through the monitoring of users movements over the various network

areas. Frequent notification updates given to users about recent interactions made by 'friends', Page followers and members of mutual Groups.

Fig. 5.35 Facebook Page notifications



'Notifications' provide real time updates about the interactions of other Facebook users with a members own Page space.

The social engine design, flexibility of use and range of features available to users identified Facebook as well suited to support a VESSILS VCoP. The site provided a strong pre-set framework within which VESSILS VCoP could be placed.

5.10.1 Design: Key Features - Facebook VESSILS

The three Facebook VESSILS locations were differentiated through the use of different cover photographs and different typefaces: Logo (Profile), Eyfs-Sen (Page), EYFS-SEN (Group).

5.10.2 User profile

Each registered member of Facebook has an account known as a user profile.

The profile consists of a fixed a template supporting a selection of field options such as name, occupation, schools attended and so on. Users can invite other users to be 'friends'. Once a request has been made, becoming a 'friend' is dependant on the recipient of the 'friend request' 'accepting. Amongst other things, Facebook allows friends to exchange private messages, share status updates, digital photos, videos and hyperlinks. They can also receive notifications when friends update their profiles or post online.



Fig. 5.36 Facebook Profile

Member Profiles can be personalised through the addition of individualised photographs and backdrops.

5.10.3 Personal timeline

The timeline consists of a chronological listing of all of the status updates, photos, interactions and events of the account holder.

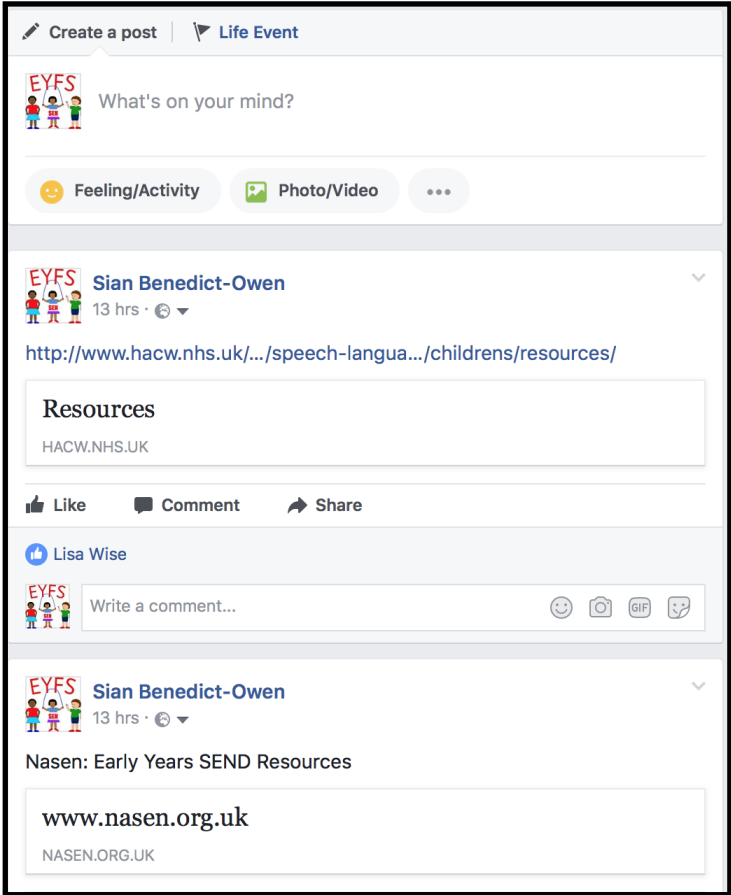


Fig. 5.37 Personal Timeline

5.10.4 Newsfeed

This feature shows programme generated selected updates submitted by 'friends', such as profile updates and upcoming events and page and group posts.

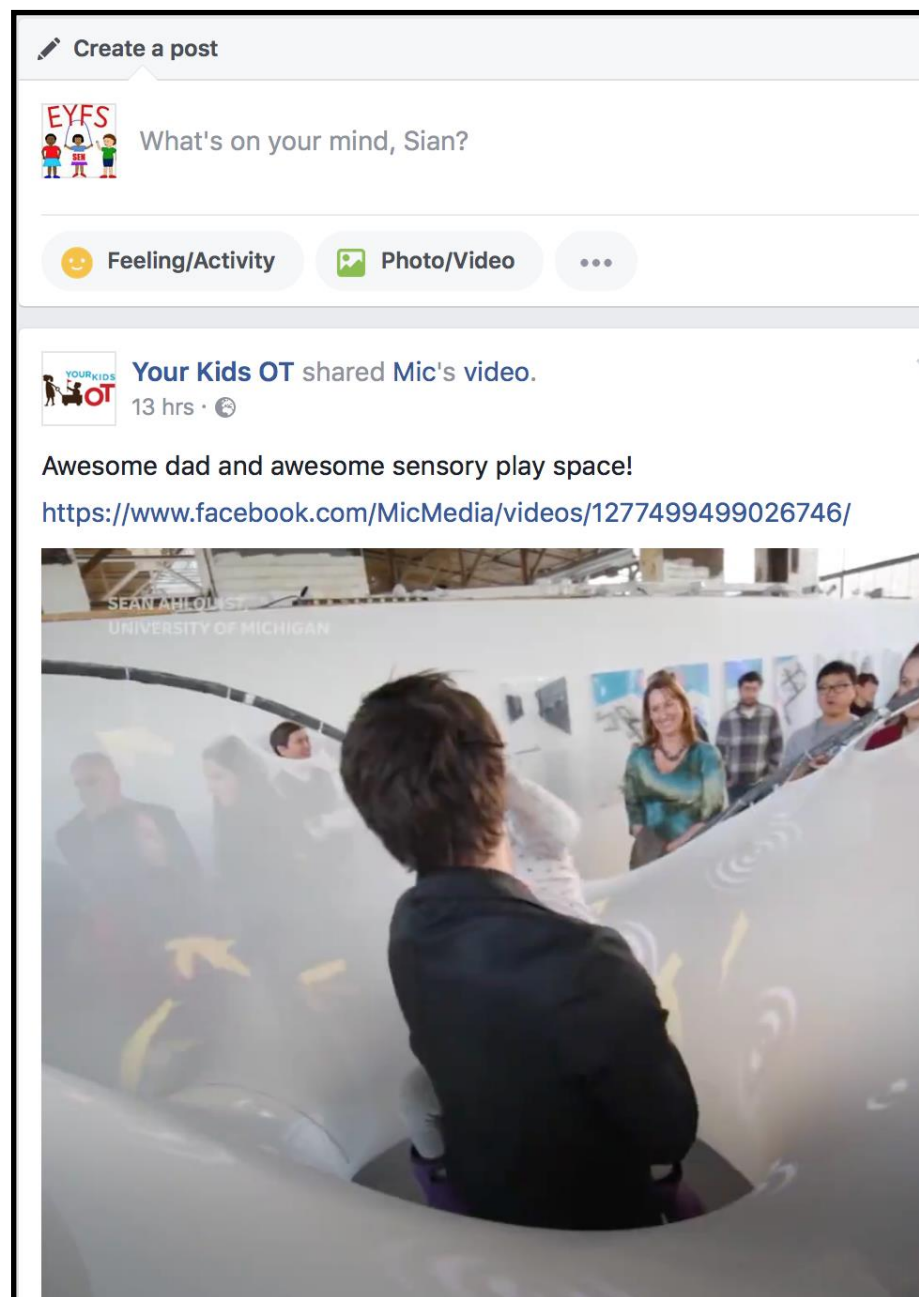


Fig. 5.38 Newsfeed

The newsfeed allowed for the receiving of posts being shared on-line by 'friends' and the posts of from liked/followed pages and groups to which the VESSILS account was affiliated.

5.10.5 Like button

This function allows users to interact with other users 'status updates', 'comments', photos and links shared by friends



Fig. 5.39 'Liked' icon

When a user 'liked' a particular post or the Eyfs-Sen page a notification would reported back. This meant that the popularity of particular posts was highlighted. If a particular post received several likes it could prove an indicator of the levels of frequency of specific SEN needs. Autism, behaviour and speech, language and communication related posts were some of those posts most commonly 'liked' or 'shared'.

5.10.6 Instant messaging

This function enables users to send messages to each other.

Instant messaging was not widely utilised by users of VESSILS.



Fig. 5.40 'Instant messaging' icon

5.10.7 Following

This function allows Facebook users to subscribe to the public postings made by a user without the necessity to ‘friend’ them or to ‘like’ a page.



Fig. 5.41 Following' icon

5.10.8 Privacy settings

Facebook users can select different levels of privacy setting from a pre-set menu of choices.

Privacy Settings and Tools			
Who can see my stuff?	Who can see your future posts?	Public	Edit
	Who can see your friends list?	Public	Edit
	Limit the audience for posts you've shared with friends of friends or Public?		Limit Past Posts
Who can contact me?	Who can send you friend requests?	Everyone	Edit
Who can look me up?	Who can look you up using the email address you provided?	Everyone	Edit
	Who can look you up using the phone number you provided?	Everyone	Edit
	Do you want search engines outside of Facebook to link to your Profile?	Yes	Edit

Fig. 5.42 Privacy settings function

The above figure shows areas of a user’s domain which for which they can set privacy levels. These range from ‘only me’ to ‘public’ or ‘everyone’.

The only part of the profile primarily mandatorily public is the user's name.

5.11 Overview of Facebook Profile functions - the VESSILS VCoP

5.11.1.Profile

A user profile name must relate to an individual rather than a group or business and so the profile was created using my personal details.

5.11.2. Privacy setting options

The purpose of the VESSILS model was to have a public online presence. The only details that were not designated Public were personal details such as my mobile telephone number.

5.11.3 Daily posts and feedback

Items of interest were posted regularly. In the initial stage of the intervention this was done at least once daily. Any feedback in the form of comments were responded to within the same day.

5.11.4 Personalised backdrop

The illustration used as a backdrop to the profile was carefully chosen to be in keeping with the theme of the intervention. The profile remained unchanged as it was considered part of the intervention's branding.

5.11.5 Automatic updating of members when new post added

This function allowed for a quick response turn around time which was important in order to support the growth of the community.

5.11.6 Ability to share videos/photos

This function was often utilised to share visual examples of good practice, such as how to use Makaton signing or implementing the TEACCH structured learning approach.

5.11.7 Post 'like' function

Facebook users can 'like' other users posts. The ability to do so depends upon users privacy settings and relationship.

5.12 Facebook user cohort

In order to generate a wider interest in the VESSILS VCoP, posts containing SEN information and hyperlinks were shared to other Early Years Facebook Groups .

These included the following:

- Early Years Professionals
- Eyfs On A Budget
- EYFS Packaway
- Early Years Practice
- Early years managers 2018
- Brighton and Hove EYFS Conversation
- Early Years Networking, Support, Training
- SENCo/SENDCo Support
- East Sussex EYFS Conversation
- West Sussex EYFS Conversation
- EYFS networking

- Early Years Packaway Managers

5.14 Facebook groups

Users can choose to join common interest groups which are created and organised by others.

In Facebook Groups, administrators have the option to pin a post to top of the newsfeed. Pinning ensures that the post remains at the top of a Group's space regardless of how many posts are added to the feed. This function is frequently used by Group administrators to inform members of any group rules.

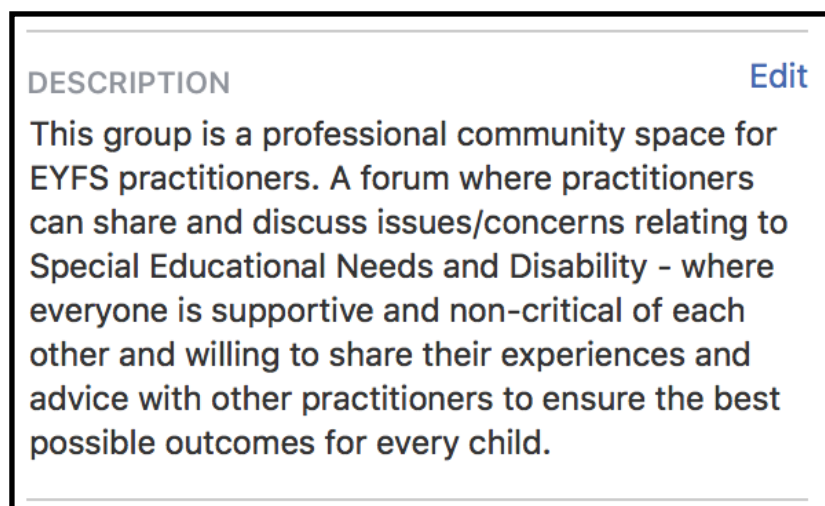


Fig. 5.43 EYFS SEN Group 'Description' including 'nettiquette'

The figure above outlines the purpose and 'nettiquette' for the VESSILS EYFS-SEN Group.



Fig. 5.44 Group cover photo

5.14.1 Summary of key Facebook group functionality in relation to VESSILS

- daily posts and feedback
- interaction allowed between users
- interactions allowed between Administrator and Users
- **closed Group option**

The EYFS-SEN Group was given a closed group status as this meant that the administrator agreement function could be utilised.

- **membership could be set requiring administrator agreement**

The purpose of this was that it allowed the opportunity for Facebook users to be screened before being allowed to join the group. Potential members would only be denied access to the group if it was apparent that their motive for joining was to promote their own services and products.

- **personalised backdrop**

Similar to the Profile backdrop this remained constant and was intended to form a part of the intervention's branding.

- ability to share videos/photos
- post 'like' function

Facebook Pages

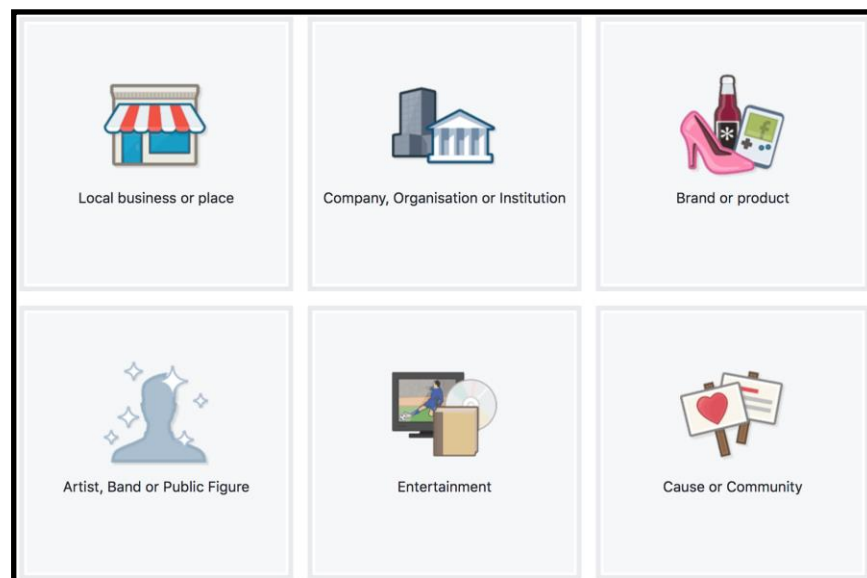


Fig. 5.45 Different types of Facebook Page templates

A Facebook page is a public profile. Users become a 'fan' of a Facebook page by 'liking' it. Users can also 'follow' a page'. As with the Facebook profile users who

'like' or 'follow' a page are given updates of new status posts. Status updates appear on the page itself and can also appear in the personal news feeds of its fans.

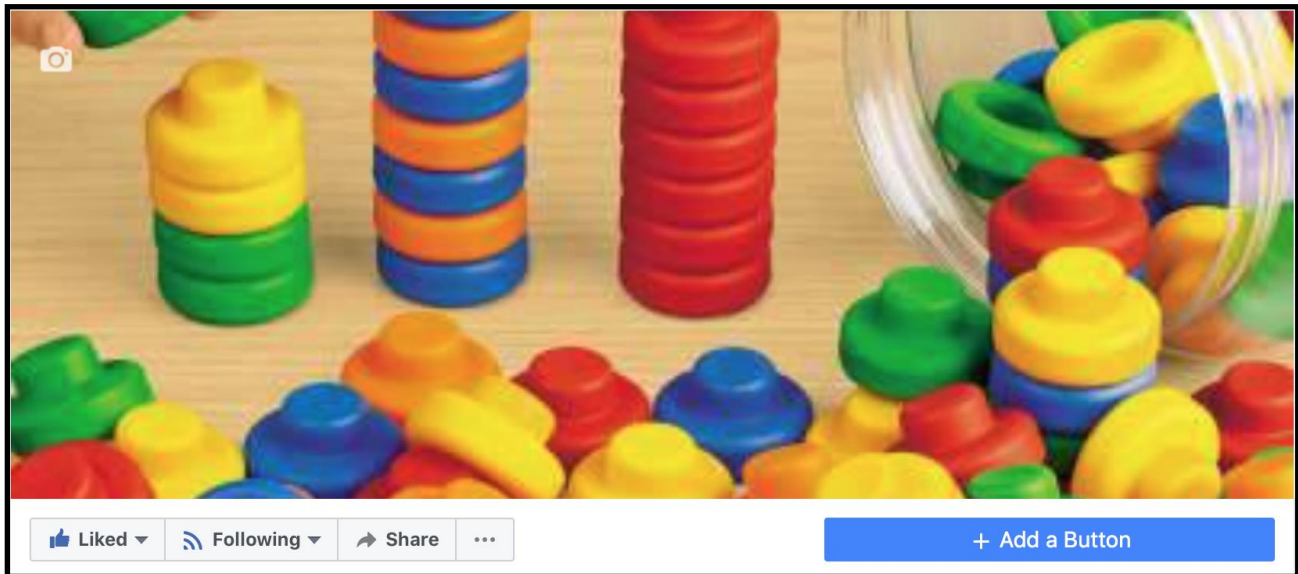


Fig. 5.46 Facebook Page cover photo

5.15 Key Facebook Page Functionality in relation to VESSILS

- public settings
- daily posts and feedback
- interaction allowed between users
- interactions allowed between Administrator and Users
- personalised backdrop
- automatic updating of members when new post added
- ability to share videos/photos
- 'like' function
- 'follow' Function

5.15 Facebook: A Virtual Community of Practice

(Facebook Page VCoP- Appendix F)

Cohort information: Facebook

The Cohort base was spread across three Facebook areas, namely:

- Facebook profile - 555 friends (May 2019)
- Facebook Page - 2,033 likes/2,056 following (May 2019)
- Facebook Group - 652 members (May 2019)

The total VESSILS membership spread across the group as of the 29th of May 20189 was 3,230, Facebook users. Of this total 67 were removed as there was an overlap of Facebook 'Friends' and Facebook likes leaving a figure of 3,173 Facebook users. Another 23 Facebook users 'follow' the EYFS-Sen Page increasing the total figure to 3, 196 members accessing the VESSILS intervention. This figure does take not take into account the overlap between EYFS SEN 'friends' who are also members of the 'group'.

The primary user profile was that of educators within the Early Years phase of education who had a particular interest or responsibility within the area of SEN.

5.16 VESSILS - Community of Practice - Facebook - examples VCOP

interactions:

The following posts offer an insight into the Facebook VESSILS Virtual Community of Practice which is situated across a Facebook Profile/Page/Group.

Frequently posts of interest were shared by educators across Facebook accounts. A number of post comments were comprised of educators sharing their views as to the post content in the context of lesson planning. This was frequently seen on those posts which contained activity ideas. Other posts can be seen to be providing suggested solutions to the concerns raised by others. The following conversation string held between me in my role as administrator of the VESSILS intervention and a member of Eyfs-Sen via messenger where the member is seeking advice with regards behaviour strategies:

NS: Hey Just started a new job and wondering if you have any ideas to help me engage two boys in focusing on the carpet on a bad day, currently they use a timer and if they sit for ten minutes they get a reward but this is starting not to work x

Eyfs-Sen: Hi N., how old are the boys? Is carpet time interesting? Was the reward worth the wait?

NS: They are 4. Both have behaviour problems due to family life and are being referred to CDC. Carpet time in reception is registration then what they are learning but it is always something new and interesting with props. Their reward is something they choose at the beginning and they both have their first and then timetable to help them but often will get up from the carpet and run away or climb on a table leading the other one to do the same and nothing makes them come back so far x

Eyfs-Sen: Hi, maybe as a rule 10 minutes is too long at the moment. Why not bring them into the end of the session rather than at the very beginning as this can lead to a feeling of achievement having sat through to the end. I am

guessing that you think behaviour is a wider issue than family life if referring to CDC? What is speech and language like? EAL?’

This next conversation string consists of a question posted by a member of the EYFS-SEN group seeking advice:


ZL: Good evening. I currently have a child who attends my preschool who is 55 months old but is currently at 8-20 months. I take from 2 in my preschool so my activities I present are older for them. Can you give me ideas for tasks and targets that can be set please?

SA: I'd liase with any outside agencies and see if the child has any targets they have set which you could implement into the setting? I had a child of similar age brackets on the EYFS and I spoke to Portage/Physio/SaLT and made a set of six small targets.

[Redacted] shared a link.

16 November at 20:16 · Add topics

Please sign & share! Because I love the school I work for, the children I teach and their wonderful families! I want what's best for them and what the council are proposing to do is ridiculous! As if the children and their families don't have it hard enough, the council have to try and make it harder making them travel a ridiculous distance to school and making transitions harder! We have worked hard to develop great links with the community to promote inclusion, independence, acceptance and understanding and now that is in danger of being taken away which saddens me deeply!



CHANGE.ORG

Can you spare a minute to help [Redacted]

i

Fig. 5.47 Member requesting peer support - EYFS - SEN



Fig. 5.48 Member seeking advice from other group members - Eyfs - Sen



Fig. 5.49 Member seeking advice from other group members - EYFS - SEN

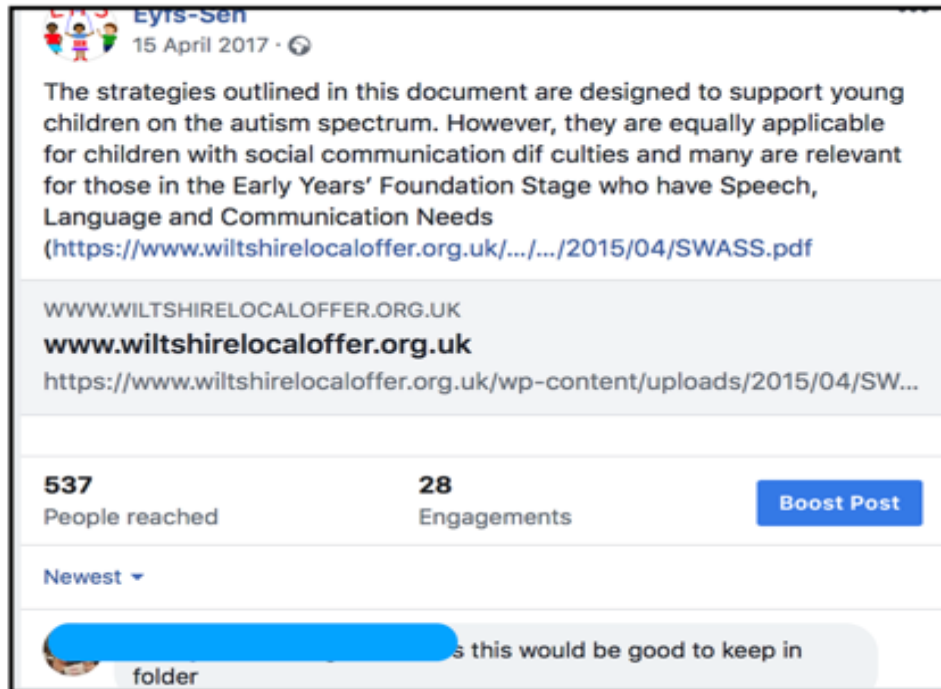


Fig. 5.50 Member sharing support strategies with known colleagues - Eyfs - Sen



Fig. 5.51 Member sharing a teaching idea with known colleagues - Eyfs - Sen

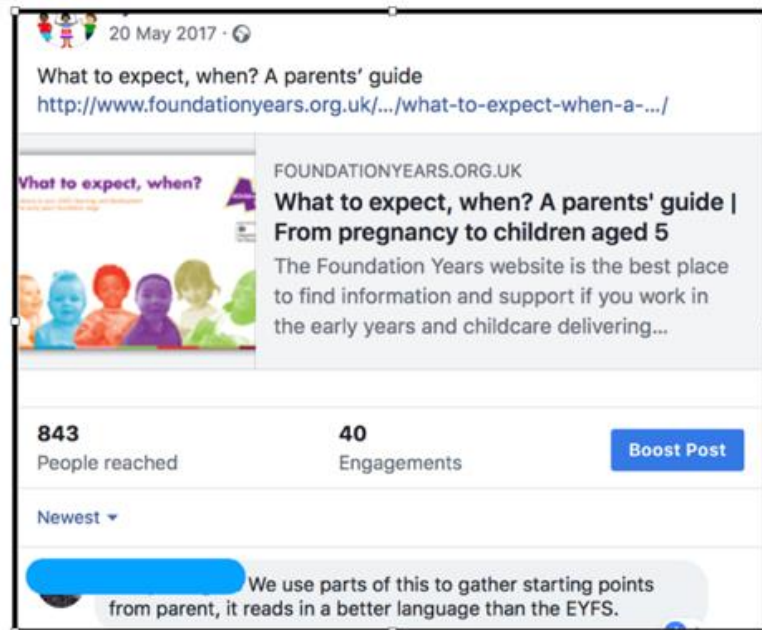


Fig. 5.52 Member sharing support strategies (assessment) with known colleague - EYFS - SEN



Fig.5.53 Member requesting research feedback - EYFS - SEN

 **Eyfs-Sen** Yesterday at 20:42 · 🌐

<https://youtu.be/m9efYYaAeco>



Singing Hands: Christmas Alphabet - Makaton Sign Language
Makaton signing: This is one of our favourite songs from the Singing Hands Christmas DVD "It's a Christmas Cra..."
YOUTUBE.COM

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)

👍 7



 **Louise...**
15 h Like Reply Message 👍 1



 Debbie Morris, Kelly Sales, Patricia Luraspata, Liam Baxter
we should learn this !
5 h Like Reply Message

Fig. 5.54 Member sharing a teaching suggestion with known colleague - Eyfs- Sen



Fig. 5.55 Conversation string discussion - Continued Professional Development (2017)

- **Conversation string between familiar colleagues:**

Early Years Pupil Premium Guidance for Providers | From pregnancy to children aged 5

The Foundation Years website is the best place to find information and support if you work in the early years and childcare delivering services for children and families. The broad range of information accessible on this site is developed by government, professionals and the voluntary and community...

FOUNDATIONYEARS.ORG.UK

453 people reached Boost post

Like Comment Share EYFS

Mich Whitehead Chronological

View 2 more comments

 Thanks we already claim it for ours who are eligible x
Like · Reply · Message · 20 November at 21:06

 Thought it was a form you could use sorry didn't read it properly 😊
Like · Reply · Message · 1 · 20 November at 21:07

EYFS 📷 😊

Press Enter to post.

Fig. 5.56 Conversation string with known colleagues- Pupil Premium

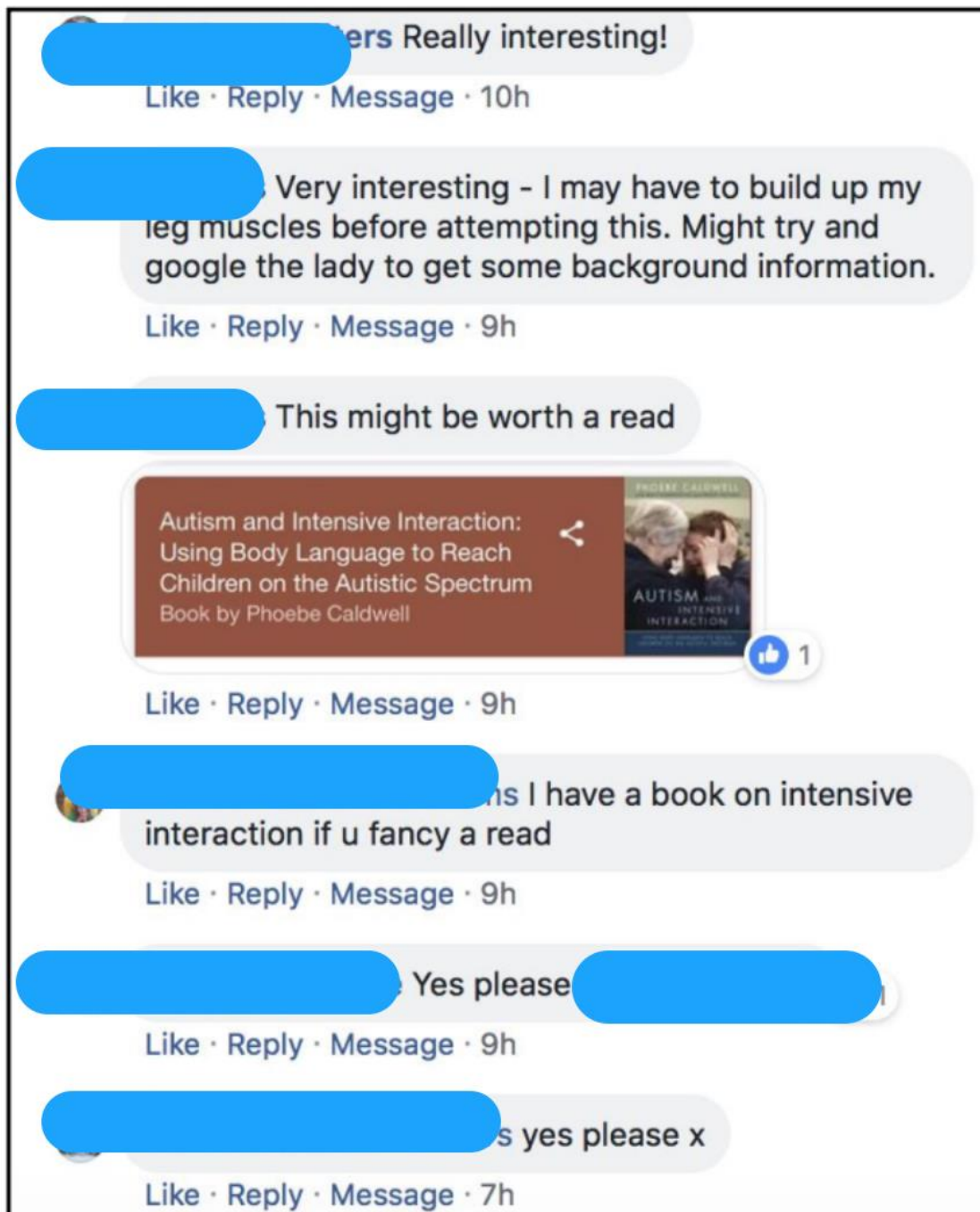


Fig. 5.57 Information and Resource Sharing initiated through Eyfs-Sen post

5.17 Cohort feedback - value

At the point at which I officially went into the writing up phase of my research I posted the following on the Eyfs-Sen Facebook Page:

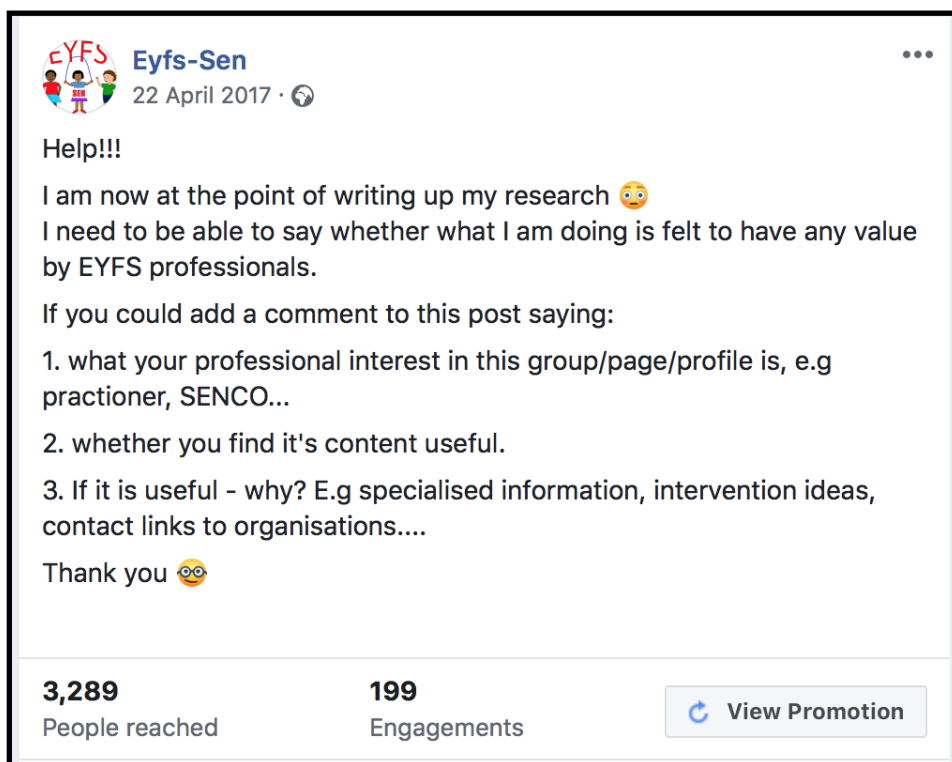


Fig. 5.58 Research request for VCoP users feedback (April 2017)

The post elicited the following responses:

CC: 'I am a manager and Incco within a pre-school and I have found the information really worthwhile. Providing advice and ideas to promote better outcomes for the children in my care. Thank you so much x

JC: *'I am a preschool SENCo and have found some of your articles particularly useful or interesting, such as the one on Dyspraxia.'*

L-ET: *'I am a student studying my Hons. I am hoping to use lots of this in my career, meanwhile I have been sharing activities and info with friends in childcare and education. The information on this page is accurate, up to date and relevant to practitioners...'*

AB: *'I am my nursery SENCo and also a mum to a cutie with special needs so I love reading your posts.'*

GW: *'I'm a childminder working with children with SEND so finding this page very helpful x'*

MS: *'I'm Senco for a preschool and also level 5 I find this page to have useful information and helpful tips keep it up xx'*

LH: *'I'm senco in a preschool. Finding your posts so useful. The links to different charities and organisations are great. I like the variety of special needs that you cover too. It is great to get all of that in one place. Thank you x'*

GB: *'I am a SENCo in a day nursery but newish to it and not very experienced and love this group'*

CO: *'I am a teaching assistant working in early years. I have used many ideas from this page and also shared with colleagues. It has really helped so thank you.'*

HT: *'I'm preschool senco I find this interesting with helpful info long may it continue.'*

EW: *'I work for a local authority, supporting children under 5 with SEND. I have shared many of your links with colleagues and family alike. It's a super resource and I hope it continues.'*

DS: *'I work at a preschool and am doing my level 2. I find it interesting and may find it useful in the future.'*

The construct and maintenance of the VESSILS intervention was seen to be very different in the two social engine frameworks which were adopted. The NING social networking framework is itself the commercial end product allowing individuals to create their own 'stand-alone' customised sites. Whilst NING allowed for a more bespoke shaping of the finished product, the Facebook platform allowed the intervention to grow organically sitting within Facebook's own predetermined functionality. This placement of the intervention was seen as a particular strength of utilising the Facebook social engine allowing as it did for the intervention to be embedded within a very powerful pre-existing site where social engagement between members is integral to its success and business purpose.

On reflection, the developed and established Facebook VESSILS model which has become a 'product' with a not inconsiderable membership could provide a good point of departure from which to launch a stand-alone site or alternatively develop a bolt on version of the intervention which could be linked to other early years educational sites.

The following chapter addresses the research paradigm and methodological approaches undertaken as a part of this research. The chapter contents outline the research lens and methodological tools adopted for both the wider research domain and also that of the VESSILS intervention.

Chapter 6 Research: Paradigm and methodology

Hitchcock & Hughes (1995,p.21) identified the research process as a series of steps, the outcome of each step dictating the nature and direction of the proceeding step:

- Ontological assumptions: (nature of reality and things)
- Epistemological assumptions: (ways of researching and enquiring into the nature of reality and the nature of things)
- Methodological considerations
- instrumentation and data collection

6.1 Research paradigm

As researcher it was important for me to be clear as to which research paradigm could be seen as most closely aligning with my research lens.

The research position taken was not one of an impartial onlooker, a required characteristic of traditional research but one in which I felt I had to a large extent in my former professional capacity as an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher, a shared frame of reference. For although I was involved with the PVI group based settings in my capacity as a LA representative, for those PVI group based settings I supported I felt myself to be an integral part of the settings' team, with '*an understanding of individuals' interpretations of the world around them (coming) from the inside not the outside.*' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2011, p.15)

To adopt a 'normative approach' to the research would be to view the behavior of those within the research domain as 'rule governed' and requiring investigation through the adoption of natural science methods of study (Douglas: 1973).

Standing opposite to the 'normative' approach, for the purpose of this research the subjective 'voices' from within the research domain with their causal links rooted firmly within the political, statutory, fiscal and educational factors identified and considered within the research domain are considered an important and insightful source of data.

Additionally, 'normative' paradigm approaches hold the actions of individuals as comprising embedded reactions to stimuli be they external or internal which have their basis in past experiences, as against those interpretivist approaches which allow for the recognition of '*intentional behaviour*' which is '*future-orientated*'. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2011, p.17 -18). The research domain under discussion can be seen to be one where participants demonstrate '*intentional behaviour*' in some cases the intent being, as a group, to change future outcomes. Furthermore, the adoption of a 'normative' lens would be seen to deny the recognition of the existence of creativity and the freedom to act by those individuals within the research domain thereby refuting their ability to respond independently and differently and through so doing add their own meanings and interpretations to the world around them.

Proponents against the interpretivist approach have also argued that the views held by those individuals within the research arena might prove to be solely outpourings based on premises emergent from a false sense of consciousness and in order to

prevent this the researcher's obligation is to look for and supply an objective perspective which ultimately may not reflect or include the views of the individuals within the research domain. (Rex: 1974). Other dissenters to naturalistic and interpretive approaches suggest that those adopting such paradigms are at risk of moving too far away from '*scientific procedures of verification*' (Mannon et al.:2011, p. 21) thereby risking higher levels of data inaccuracy (Argyle: 1978). Layder (1994) further suggesting that the use of interpretivist approaches can result in false barriers being erected separating participants from the world outside that being studied, effectively hermetically closing them away from the actuality of the real world. In response to Layder (1994) I would suggest that the current research is very much grounded within the confines of real world environmental factors and benchmarks. The conversations, happenings and reactions described here having their beginnings in Government rhetoric and policy.

Conversely, it was also important as a researcher to recognise how any pre-existing conceptions I might hold with regards the research domain might, if not appropriately challenged, influence not only the research process but possibly also the interpretation of the literature review and/or research data. Identifying the research paradigm was a difficult task and the attributes of different paradigms were continuously revisited during the research process. It did not become clearly evident as to where the research influence sat until some way through the research process .

'Paradigms are often hard to recognize, because they are implicit, assumed, and taken for granted. However, recognizing these paradigms is key to making sense of and reconciling differences in people's perceptions of the same social phenomenon.'
(Bhattacharjee:2012,p.7)

The research was conducted through an inductive interpretive lens, well situated within the attributes of the interpretive paradigm:

‘Observations must be interpreted through the eyes of the participants embedded in the social context.’ (Bhattacharjee: 2012, p.106)

6.1.1 Naturalistic inquiry

‘... the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated ...’
(Cohen, Manion & Morrison: 2011, p.15)

A primary research focus was to gain a contextual insight into the research problem area as it impacted on practitioners and PVI group-based settings. As a result, a significant amount of the data captured was contained within narratives of practitioners in the context of their professional working environment. The research itself was grounded within a socio-historic context. The research environment under consideration here is one with which I am very familiar, having worked closely in the professional capacity of an Early Years Advisory Teacher with a large number of PVI managers, SENCOs and practitioners a over a period of nearly a decade. This keen working knowledge and understanding of the research environment allowed for the articulation of questions tailored to be pertinent and appropriate in order to elicit the desired information. This pre-existing knowledge of the research domain supported a grounded contextual interpretation of the data. The research requirement to ensure that any interpretation remained objective was adhered to.

Furthermore, a pre-existing understanding of the research problem was advantageous when designing the VESSILS intervention model.

6.1.2 interpretivism

‘Interpretive research is a research paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology). (Bhattacharjee: 2012,p.103)

6.1.3 Interpretive analysis

When analysing the data the importance of maintaining the integrity of any narrative materials acquired during the course of the research process was recognised as of paramount importance. Narratives were interpreted contextually and endeavoured to accurately reflect the perspective of the originating source.

6.1.4 Use of expressive language

The narratives have widely remained in their purest form and been represented through pictorial data capture inserted thematically within the body of the main text. This device has ensured that the research ‘story’ can in part be seen as viewed through the lens of the practitioner/group-based setting and depicts the emotions and experiences of practitioners as expressed by them.

6.1.5 Temporal nature

I previously held a professional front line responsibility within an LA to ensure the on-going provision of good quality SEN support within a number of PVI group-based provisions during an extended period of economic and statutory change the recording of which forms a part of this research.

6.1.6 Hermeneutic circle

As a part of the research process there was an ongoing iterative comparison between practitioner narratives and the wider research in order to ensure the reconciliation of findings.

6.1.7 Mixed methods methodology

Whilst a significant amount of the new data gathered and analysed within this research sits within a qualitative model some significant data required a quantitative approach to data collection. The quantitative data was primarily sourced through the BOS online Surveys and was used in order to illustrate the range of seniority, experience and the diversity of provision types and the levels of SEN supported within the participating survey cohort.

6.1.8 Interpretive Data Collection

A number of different data collection methods were used. These included on-going observation of the different VESSILS model sites, semi-structured interviews and reference to documentation primarily in the format of 'posts' placed on a number of online social networking platforms. These allowed for further insight into the research area and also corroborated other forms of evidence and the findings of the literature review.

6.1.9 Interpretive research design

Interpretative research design recognises that '*researchers are inevitably embedded in the intersubjective social processes of the worlds they study.*' (Swartz-Shea and Yanow, D: 2012)

6.1.10 Positionality

'The positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what Researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes And their interpretations of outcomes.'

(Foote and Bartell, 2011, p. 46)

6.1.10.1 Positionality: researcher

Within their work *'Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures.'*, Merriam et al. (2001) considered the conceptual positionality of both the 'insider' and the 'outsider' and how it is possible for the positionality of the researcher to shift between these two positions.

'Positionality is thus determined by where one stands in relation to "the other"' (Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Lee, Ntseane, & Muhamad, 2001, p. 411).

They also discussed the notion of 'relativity' within the 'insider'/'outsider' concept. They argued that the researcher could legitimately be accepted as an 'insider', but the extent to which they were considered such was conditional and dependent upon the degree to which the researcher's own attributes matched those of the community being studied, e.g. compatibility/differences in relation to education, culture and so forth bearing influence on the degree of any positioning.

The notion of positionality is one holding resonance to my research where I am positioned as an 'outsider' in the capacities as the gatherer /interpreter of data as researcher and LA representative as Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher and additionally as an 'insider' as a specialist colleague and educator working within the PVI group-based sector.

As an Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher, I spent a period of some nine years supporting this particular early years sector's SEN delivery. I grew to know a number of the PVI group-based provision owners, managers, SENCOs and practitioners for variable and extended periods of time including some from when I very first started in the role of Early Years SEN Advisory Teacher. This familiarity provided a shared sense of commonality giving me a level of acceptance within the group which allowed for the sharing of multiple conversations with individual practitioners pertinent to this research. These conversations appeared both open and honest.

I viewed myself in turn both as an 'outsider' and as a periphery 'insider'. The latter due to the lengthy periods of time I spent in PVI group-based settings working both with and alongside PVI group-based practitioners.

'...the identities of both researcher and participants have the potential to impact the research process. Identities come into play via our perceptions, not only of others, but of the ways in which we expect others will perceive us. Our own biases shape the research process, serving as checkpoints along the way.' (Bourke, 2014, p.1)

My positioning within the PVI group-based settings as a periphery 'insider' whilst not conveying on me a sense of a close shared professional identity per se with the group, allowed me multiple opportunities to hear and see first-hand examples of those operational challenges in relation to SEN delivery across a number of PVI

group-based settings which had been both shared with me personally as a colleague and further corroborated by PVI group-based practitioners operating within the wider geographic spread under consideration within the research. This corroboration being in part through communicative channels such as those embedded within various social networking sites.

In my professional capacity as a local authority educational representative I had a different shared professional culture, position and responsibilities to fulfil which were contextually those of an 'outsider'. The requirements/demands of my professional role included implementing LA decisions some of which were unpopular amongst the PVI group-based sector. One such requirement to ensure PVI-group-based SEN provision within the settings was accountable at a local authority level did not sit well with those amongst the group-based owners/managers in the PVI group-based sector who felt that as independent businesses this externally imposed LA requirement was an infringement of their operational autonomy. As such my role was perceived by both myself and those working within the PVI group-based sector as that of an 'outsider'.

As a researcher it was important for me to acknowledge that as a result of an extent of 'insider' positionality I had developed a degree of empathy towards those PVI group-based practitioners with whom I had worked. It was imperative that this did not lead to any factual distortion and/or bias which would be detrimental to the objectivity, direction or findings of the research.

6.1.10.2 Positionality: VESSILS

Again, in relation to the digital communities with which I engaged, due to the differing nature of my engagement, my own positionality could itself be seen to change directly in correlation with the extent and nature of my role at that time.

When selecting and analysing data from the Facebook group Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding and when engaging with members of the on-line community Foundation Stage Forum, a site which I joined specifically with the intention of both generating a research cohort for the 'NING' VESSILS intervention and as a resource from which to collect qualitative data in the form of members' post/comments as a part of the research process, my intended positionality was that of an 'outsider' by endeavouring to be solely that of the objective researcher remaining mindful to consider all of the germane material and not just that which would fit with my own world view.

However, with regards the VESSILS intervention on both NING and Facebook platforms, as the initiator and driver of the intervention models with the responsibility of resource and community generation, I regarded myself as a critical 'insider' with a significant vested interest in the success or otherwise of the intervention.

Conversely, I was extremely aware of myself as researcher. This being a role in which I aspired to remain objective and avoid influencing the direction of any interactions between users of the VESSILS intervention as these interactions formed part of the qualitative data. In order to achieve this outcome I was careful not to add my own subjective opinion onto any of the comments posted. During the gathering

and analyzing of data I was very aware of the research 'lens' and in my capacity as researcher my role was once again mainly that of an 'outsider'.

6.2 Action research

The term "action research" was first used by Kurt Lewin in 1946 in order to describe a type of research approach for social research. There currently exist various different action research models. According to Cohen (2011, p.344) Action research is a *'powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level'* .

Susman and Evered describe the action research approach as one:

'which combined generation of theory with changing the social system through the researcher acting on or in the social system. The act itself is presented as the means of both changing the system and generating critical knowledge about it.'

(Susman, and Evered:1978 ,p.586)

An action research approach was adopted within that part of the research which addressed the design, building and implementation of the Virtual Educational Support and Sen Interlinked System (VESSILS). The reiterative Action Research cycle enabled the collection of a range of data to be gathered over an extended period of time. Furthermore, this reiterative capacity of the action research model also allowed for the revisiting and modifying of the VESSILS model. This was particularly evident at the point in the design and review process where the repeated review and evaluation of the VESSILS model's functioning led to the the model also being embedded within Facebook.



Fig. 6.1 The Action Research Model

(Bhattacharjee: 2012, p.108)

The action research steps as outlined by Sagar (2000) were chosen as the action research paradigm used in the design, implementation and review of the VESSILS model:

6.2.1 The seven cyclical steps:

6.2.1.1 Selecting a focus

Careful consideration of the data set analysis outcomes identified several areas of SEN provision within the PVI group-based early years sector that could benefit from access to an intervention offering a means of accessing support, guidance and training to practitioners within a reasonable/effective time frame.

6.2.1.2 Clarifying theories

The intervention model was embedded within two online social networking platforms. The intervention model sat well within the paradigm of virtual learning environments and the Connectivist learning theory.

6.2.1.3 Identifying research questions

The research question for this aspect of the research was drawn from both considering the literature review and practitioner feedback from on-line surveys.

6.2.1.4 Collecting data

Data was collected through various means. Four BOS Online Surveys were launched, on-line semi-structured interviews were undertaken, data was also taken in the form of posted materials from the NING and Facebook VESSILS sites as well as from other Facebook Pages and Groups .

6.2.1.5 Analysing data

This method was adopted to allow for a flexible and detailed and description of the data where data sets were sub categorised into topics. The Facebook analytics tool was also used to gather data on site usage in relationship to frequency of member engagement and frequency as to individual post dispersal and indicators of use.

6.2.1.6 Reporting results

Results were presented through diagrammatic representations and written observations.

6.2.1.7 Taking informed action

The use of the VESSILS intervention was closely monitored and member suggestions on some attributes of the model, such as the adding in of requested topic pages within the NING model were implemented.

Due to the stand alone nature of the NING model it experienced very limited interactions between its members and so the design of the VESSILS intervention model was modified and launched using Facebook as its social networking platform.

6.3 Research Cohort: Sampling strategy:

The initial research cohort consisted of two distinct groups:

- Initial participant cohort - NING
- Facebook VESSIL cohort

6.3.1 Initial participant cohort: NING

An initial cohort group was required who would be willing to engage with the NING VESSILS platform on an ongoing basis. Contact was made with a number of PVI group-based practitioners via the PVI group based settings email, contact details or by cold calling by phone or through an agreed appointment. Information about the research intention was given to practitioners at the initial point of contact.. Two pre-school managers within the West Sussex area agreed to engage with the research as did the managers/SENCOs of a chain of five group-based settings within the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Due to the lack of proactive engagement with the VESSIL platform by the initial cohort participants the design of the model was reconsidered and the initial cohort was extended in order to discover whether an extending of the cohort base, would result in there being more proactive behaviours seen with regards engagement with the VESSILS model. Other research participants were recruited through the publication of the research intent on the Eyfs-Sen Facebook page alongside a link to the VESSIL platform as well as on a number of pre-existing early years Facebook Groups . Additionally some other practitioners requested access to the VESSILS model having been made aware of the VESSILS platform by practitioner colleagues.

6.3.2 Facebook VESSILS cohort

In its initial stage the Facebook VESSILS model grew organically. Facebook had been intended to solely provide a research gateway for access by a potential research cohort to the NING VESSILS intervention.

However it was noticed that some individuals 'liked' the research Facebook page albeit that it only contained information about the research and a link to the NING site.

This unsolicited engagement raised an interesting research possibility. Namely, if another version of the VESSILS intervention could be developed and implemented so that it was situated within the Facebook social networking site and piggybacked Facebook's own social networking technology whether this be a good place to site a VESSILS intervention.

The intended demographic for this part of the research was again, early years practitioners based in PVI group-based settings. A homogeneous purposive approach was adopted. Initially no external limiting criteria was imposed as to the attributes of those in cohort group however due a number of 'computer generated' Facebook 'members' and others users who appeared to make contact with the site for reasons other than pedagogic interest, the researcher initiated a simple checking process by accessing the individual's User Profile to assess whether the application on the face of it was from someone with an interest in the specialist area of special educational needs in the early years of a child's development and educational experiences and not as a means to gain access the site in order to publicise their own products.

There was a reasonable expectation that the cohort would be made up primarily of Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners in the professional capacity of SENCo and/or Manager as it is generally practitioners in these professional roles who have the necessary professional experience and more specialist knowledge required to ensure that children presenting with SEN are identified and appropriately supported. It is practitioners in these professional roles to which other colleagues such as the Key Person/Inclusion Worker will turn to for specialist guidance and intervention advice.

In line with the British Psychological Society (2017) '*Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research*' the purpose of the research was published on the different social networking interfaces which were utilised for the purpose of research.

Hyperlinks from the interfaces to additional information about the research were made available

'It is important in IMR (Internet-mediated Research) , as in any research, that participants providing valid consent are given sufficient details about the study, and the nature of their participation, as well as possible associated risks.' (British Psychological Society (2017 .p. 10)

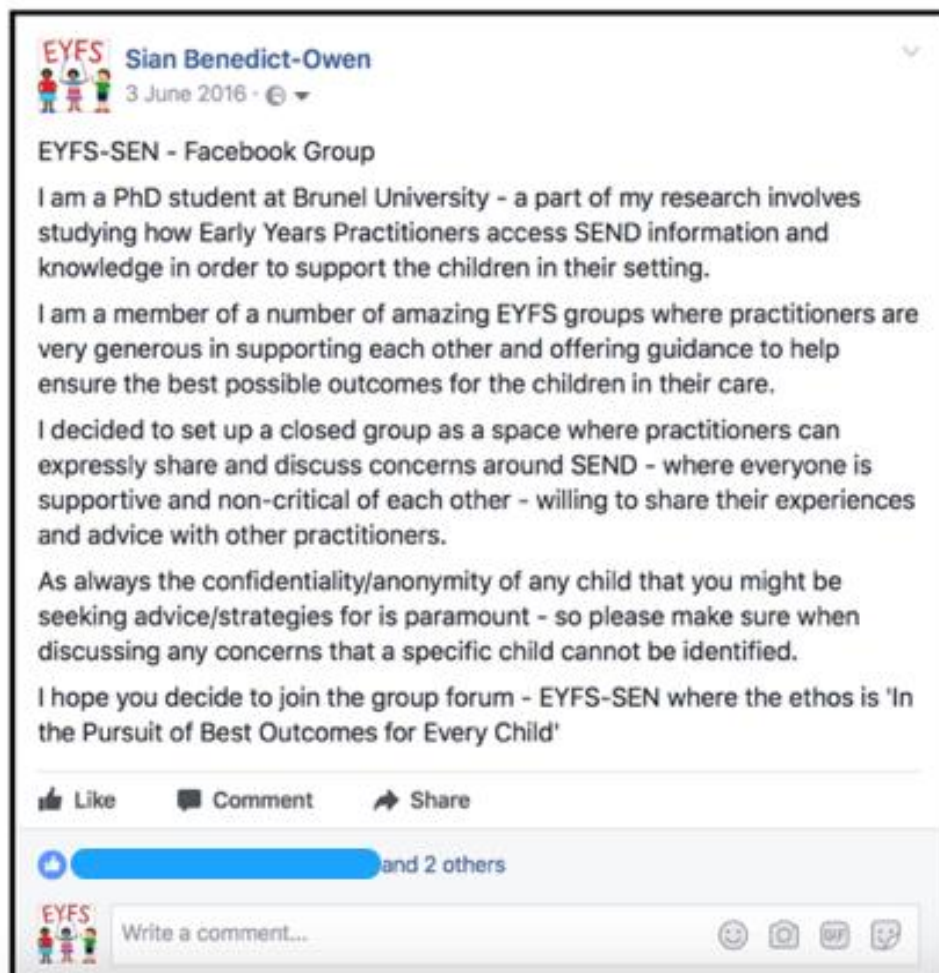


Fig. 6.2 Facebook Group publicity status post - Facebook Profile and Facebook Page



Fig. 6.3 Facebook Post inviting practitioners to engage with the NING VESSILS model

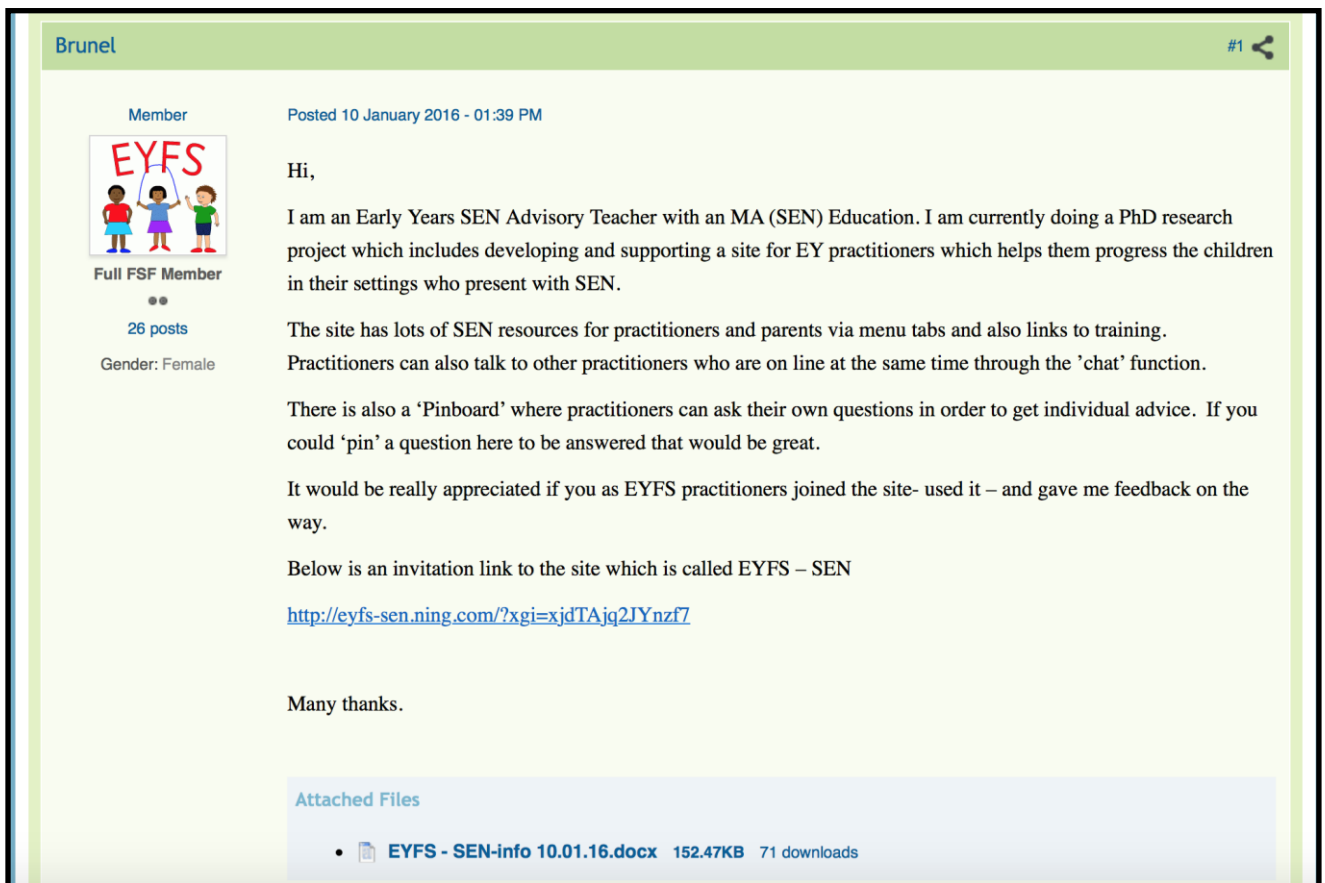
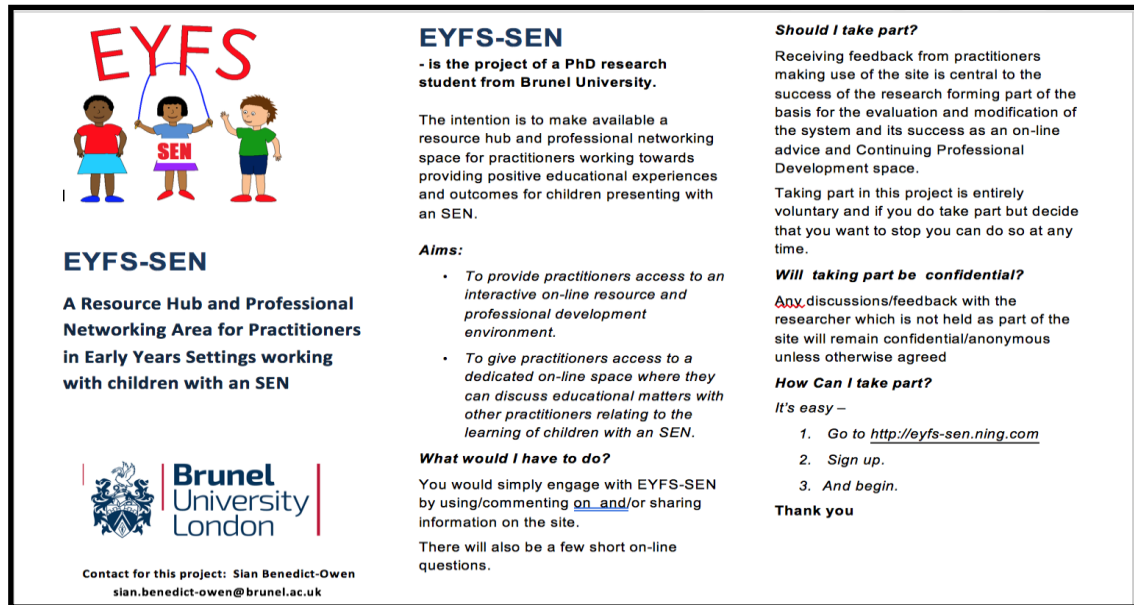



Fig. 6.4 Hyperlink from the Foundation Stage Forum to the Ning VESSILS site

An information leaflet was also produced:




EYFS



EYFS-SEN

A Resource Hub and Professional Networking Area for Practitioners in Early Years Settings working with children with an SEN

 **Brunel University London**

Contact for this project: Sian Benedict-Owen
sian.benedict-owen@brunel.ac.uk

EYFS-SEN
- is the project of a PhD research student from Brunel University.

The intention is to make available a resource hub and professional networking space for practitioners working towards providing positive educational experiences and outcomes for children presenting with an SEN.

Aims:

- To provide practitioners access to an interactive on-line resource and professional development environment.
- To give practitioners access to a dedicated on-line space where they can discuss educational matters with other practitioners relating to the learning of children with an SEN.

What would I have to do?
You would simply engage with EYFS-SEN by using/commenting on and or sharing information on the site.
There will also be a few short on-line questions.

Should I take part?
Receiving feedback from practitioners making use of the site is central to the success of the research forming part of the basis for the evaluation and modification of the system and its success as an on-line advice and Continuing Professional Development space.
Taking part in this project is entirely voluntary and if you do take part but decide that you want to stop you can do so at any time.

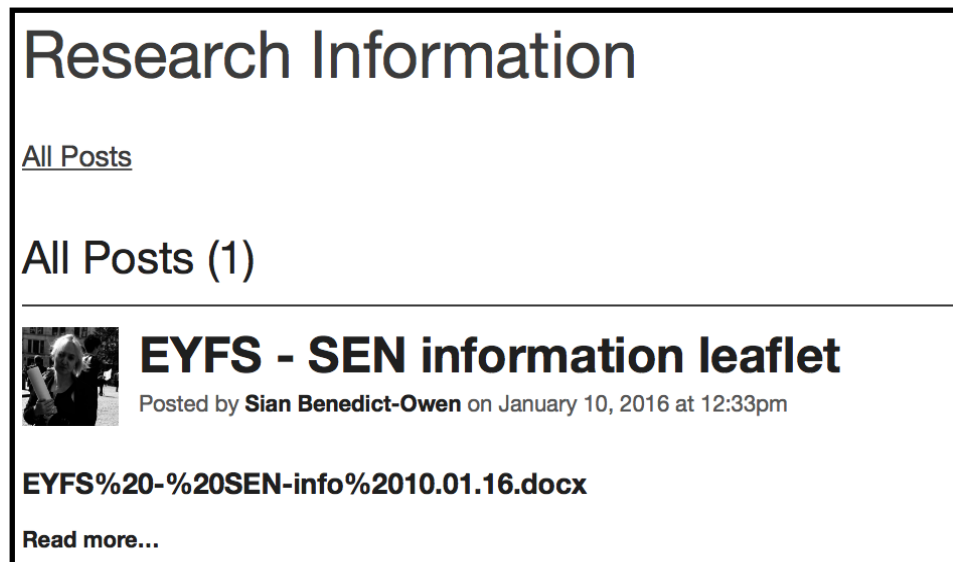
Will taking part be confidential?
Any discussions/feedback with the researcher which is not held as part of the site will remain confidential/anonymous unless otherwise agreed

How Can I take part?
It's easy –

- Go to <http://eyfs-sen.ning.com>
- Sign up.
- And begin.

Thank you


Fig. 6.5 Research information leaflet



Research Information

All Posts

All Posts (1)

 **EYFS - SEN information leaflet**
Posted by **Sian Benedict-Owen** on January 10, 2016 at 12:33pm

EYFS%20-%20SEN-info%2010.01.16.docx

Read more...

Fig. 6.6 Ning VESSIL - Research Information - Link to information leaflet

In order to extend the reach the VESSILS intervention a number of Early Years Facebook groups were joined and various SEN related posts and research information submitted, to the group administrators where necessary, which if

accepted and posted onto a site made members of the groups aware of the EYFS-Sen brand. It was hoped that should SEN be an area of professional interest, practitioners would then visit the EYFS-SEN Profile/Page/Group and request to 'friend', join, follow or like as preferred.

6.4 Methodological considerations

6.4.1 Data types

' A key feature of mixed methods research is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research'
(Johnson: 2004, p.14)

Both qualitative and the quantitative data collection methods were adopted as a means of gathering and representing the different types of data sets required to support the validity of the research question, substantiate its findings and justify the proposed intervention. Information was drawn inductively from the qualitative data.

Whilst a significant amount of research data was in a narrative (qualitative) form there was a need to adopt a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis. Quantitative data collection and analysis was an important component particularly of the of the BOS online Surveys, as the answers to questions pertaining to attributes such as those of practitioner seniority, SEN experience within the PVI group based sector and extent and range of SEN supported gave important knowledge as to the value of the data collected.

6.4.2 Instruments of measure

Qualitative and quantitative data was collected by using a range of methods:

- BOS online Survey tool - open ended questions (see appendix)
- Semi - structured interviews
- Informal meetings with practitioners
- Email conversations
- Comments posted by practitioners on different EYFS Facebook pages and groups
- The on-line subscription platform - The Foundation Stage Forum.
- VESSILS - Facebook/Ning - cohort feedback

6.5 Qualitative data acquisition and analysis

A large amount of the qualitative research data was comprised of materials collected from the Facebook social media and social networking platform, including those of the Facebook and the NING based VESSILS research intervention .

The data primarily took the form of text based comments and conversation strings encapsulated within a 'post' format. A majority of the 'posts' had been either directly posted to the researcher's VESSILS on-line presence or other Facebook Pages or Groups and the Foundation Stage Forum. The content generally consisted of posted comments and shared communications between cohort colleagues, other individuals accessing a site or the researcher.

'Narratives in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it.' (Hinchman and Hinchman 1997: xvi in Elliot:2005.p36)

A particular strength with this type of qualitative data acquisition was that it made possible the capture of the 'practitioner voice'. Typically communications shared on social networking spaces followed a narrative conversational pattern which could be captured through screenshots of the exchanges. This type of data representation allowed for the 'recording' of the data set in its exact and original contextual form. Data presented this way provided a unique type of data perspective as it encapsulated events, including at times an author's mood in 'real time' as experienced by the individuals and recorded using their own words and narrative style. Thus has been possible to present much of the data here using a type of narrative device which allows for the 'practitioner voice' to be embedded within the research. Contextually capturing the 'essence' of the cohort's own belief systems and experiences has been important to the research adding as it does another dimension to both the literature review and also the research findings. It is important that the research remains mindful that at the centre of the research itself are real people meshed together within a wider contextual framework. Some as practitioners directly affected by those issues identified within the literature review and the research findings, others being those children and their families who receive SEN provision and support within the PVI group-based settings by said practitioners.

6.5.1 Thematic coding and analysis

This is a qualitative approach first defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as:

"A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data."

(Braun and Clarke: 2006, p. 79)

They went on to add to this initial definition:

'TA is best thought of as an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches, which share some assumptions in common (typically that TA is a method, not a methodology)

(Braun and Clarke: 2006, p. 79)

Braun and Clarke identified three schools of thematic analysis:

- 1) *'coding reliability' underpinned by a positivist philosophy and involving the use of a more structured approach to coding*
- 2) *'approaches...located within a qualitative paradigm and emphasise on an organic approach to coding and theme development, with quality coding resulting from depth of engagement'*
- 3) *'codebook' approaches that combine the structured coding procedures of small TA q* with the underlying qualitative philosophy of Big Q* TA'. (Clarke and Braun: 2018, p. 108)*

*qualitative analysis

Big Q : qualitative research conducted within a qualitative paradigm;

small q': the use of qualitative tools and techniques within a positivist

paradigm (Kidder and Fine : 1987)

It was the second of these thematic schools that was adopted as the approach for qualitative data analysis. As themes emerged they were grouped together under thematic codes.

A thematic approach was used in order to identify implicit and explicit ideas within the narrative data. The approach allowed for the examination and the recording of patterns which were sorted into themes of shared meaning across the data items.

6.6 Quantitative data acquisition and analysis

6.6.1 Units of analysis – quantitative

The following approaches were used in order to allow quantitative data items to be captured

- System members
- categorisation of variables by type into groups as identified within question categories
- frequency of interactions by members with each other via 'post comments'

Units of engagement with VESSILS posts

The BOS Online Survey tool was used to create, disseminate and provide an analytical quantitative breakdown of data based on the tool's own analysis algorithms/parameters.

Similar on-line surveys were launched on both Ning and Facebook at two separate points in time.

6.6.2 The Facebook analytic tool

Facebook's own analytical tool provided a quantitative analysis of Facebook Page data breaking down Page data into a number of discreet data sets of different usage attributes, such as:

- Actions on Page
- Page views
- Page previews
- Page likes
- Post likes
- Post reach
- Recommendations
- Post engagements
- Page responsiveness
- Page followers
- Five most recent posts

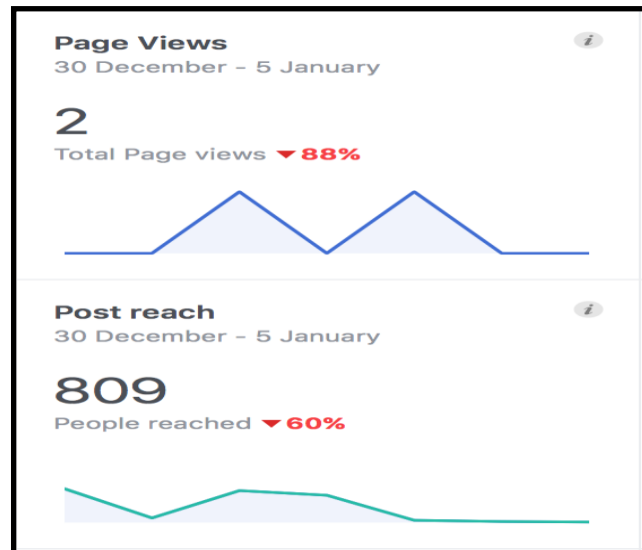


Fig. 6.7 Facebook Page analytics: User engagement

The Facebook analytics tool also produces data tables containing the following information:

- Posts published on the Facebook page
- published date
- post title/
- post type
- targeting

- reach
- engagement

The screenshot displays a table of Facebook post analytics. At the top, there are three legend items: an orange square for 'Reach: Organic/Paid', a blue square for 'Post clicks', and a pink square for 'Reactions, comments & shares'. The table has columns for 'Published', 'Post', 'Type', 'Targeting', 'Reach', 'Engagement', and 'Promote'. Each row represents a post with its date, time, URL, type, targeting, reach (with a bar chart), engagement (with bar charts for post clicks and reactions), and a 'Boost Post' button.

Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement	Promote
02/01/2019 09:33	http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk/resources-search			444	6 0	
01/01/2019 16:18	https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/gb/reports/policy/It%20			556	12 1	
30/12/2018 11:04	http://www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk/			494	2 0	
27/12/2018 21:25	The Ultimate Guide to Phonological Awareness			1.2K	53 15	
27/12/2018 21:18	These guidelines are designed to help improve schools' policies in			1K	31 5	

Fig. 6.8 Facebook analytics: Page content

Facebook’s own analytics function permits Facebook Page Administrators to gain insights into different variables connected with users and their connections with their content posts. The metrics included in the research are:

1. **Likes:** for the purpose of this research ‘page’ and ‘content’ likes were recorded.

Reach: This function provides data relating to how many individuals potentially saw the page content.

There are two types of reach:

- Organic - this shows how many individuals have seen the post content in their News Feed, ticker (real time column on the right hand side of the News Feed) or on the Page,

- Paid - on payment of a fee a specified post will be more widely circulated based on a set of selected variables , e.g. circulation may include members of 'Friends' contact lists.

For the purpose of this research 'organic' reach was utilised as one research measure was to consider the numbers of users who would 'find' the site. One 'paid' reach was published. The 'paid' post contained a request for research feedback purposes.

2. **Engagements:** this function measures individuals interactions with the Page and whether they have shared it with Facebook users. Engagements include: sharing, following and clicking through.

Engagement feedback is produced by the totalling of 'Likes', 'Comments' and 'Shares'.

The 'People engaged' calculation is based on every individual who visits the 'Page'

6.7 Online Surveys

6.7.1 Bristol Online Surveys

An initial online survey was designed in part to test the rigour of the findings within the literature review. The survey contained a range of questions touching on various aspects of SEN and SEN support experienced within PVI group-based settings.

Some questions were framed in terms of fixed category types and responses could

be recorded using simple quantitative data recording representations such as through the use of pie charts.

A screenshot of a survey question. It consists of a dark grey box on the left containing the number '2', followed by a white text box containing the question 'How long have you worked within Early Years education?'. To the right of the text box is a light grey rectangular area, likely representing a response input field.

Fig. 6.9 Survey question designed to elicit a closed response.

Other questions contained more than one part. The initial part eliciting a YES/NO response with a sub part requesting further details. The subsidiary question allowed respondents ta degree of subjectivity as they could self-select their responses these. This types of question allowed for practitioners to include/exclude a range of possible options.

A screenshot of a survey question with two parts. The first part is in a dark grey box with the number '12' and the question 'Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?'. The second part is in a light blue box with the number '12.a' and the text 'Please give further details:'. To the right of both text boxes is a light grey rectangular area, likely representing a response input field.

Fig. 6.10 closed question with open subsidiary question

Some of the survey questions which related to the different VESSILS intervention models were slightly modified to include questions specific to the VESSILS intervention linked to a specific social networking platform. The survey was run twice on both platforms in order to allow for a wider participant response to the research. Again some of the questions were modified. Some of the questions asked the first survey launch were removed as on reflection it was considered that they did not contribute data which was meaningful in the context of this research.

The BOS Online surveys were launched simultaneously on both Facebook and the Ning VESSIL site EYFS SEN during the period 4th April 2016 - 5th March 2017 with some modifications with regards some of the content.

The response profile was: Facebook - 61 responses/Ning - 57 responses

The Online Survey package contained an integrated analysis function to gather like quantitative data and present it in a visual format.

In Survey (1) and Survey (2) The questions were modified in order to personalise functionality questions to the different sites.

The second set of surveys was launched with the purpose of eliciting additional survey responses from the cohort group as this had increased in number over the period of the intervention.

In the second survey design, the following question included within the initial survey was removed:

'How does the Local Authority support parents/carers of children with SEN who attend your setting?'

This was due to changes made in the research direction reducing the required parameters of data types needed. Furthermore, the researcher formed the view that this type of question would be more appropriate to research examining matters of SEN provision as they related to the relationship between the Local Authority and the parents/carers of children.

Links to the BOS - Online Survey were made available in several ways:

Facebook: Status Posts were posted on the three EYFS-SEN sites and also onto the timelines of other Facebook Page sites which were EYFS based.

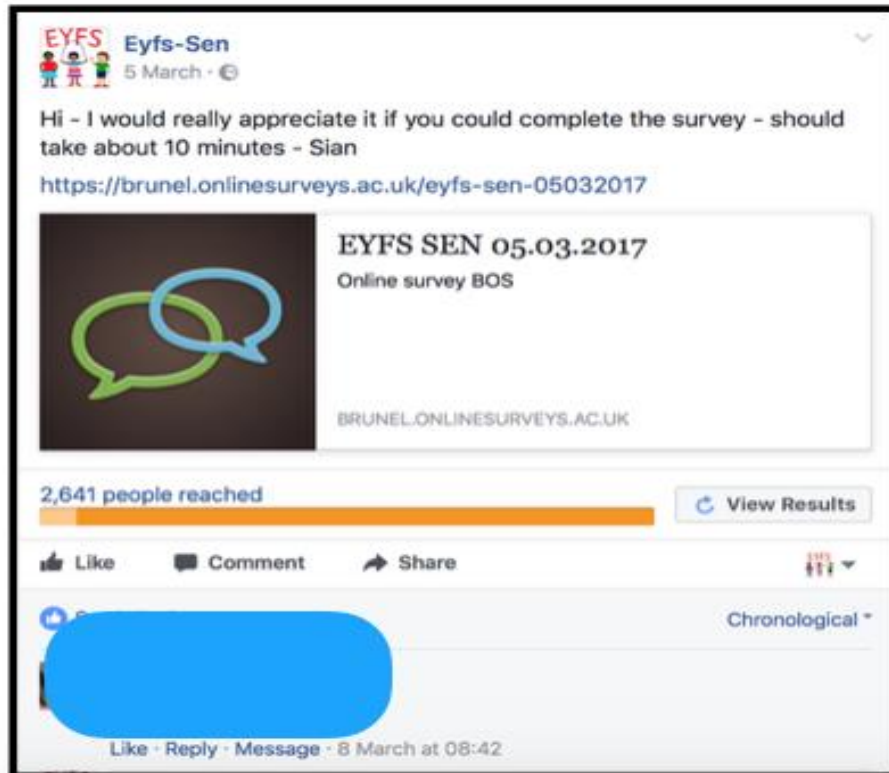


Fig. 6.11 Eyfs-Sen Page Status Update containing hyperlink to the BOS Online Survey

A 'Broadcast All' email was sent to members personal email address and a hyperlink tab was provided from the NING site directly to BOS Survey

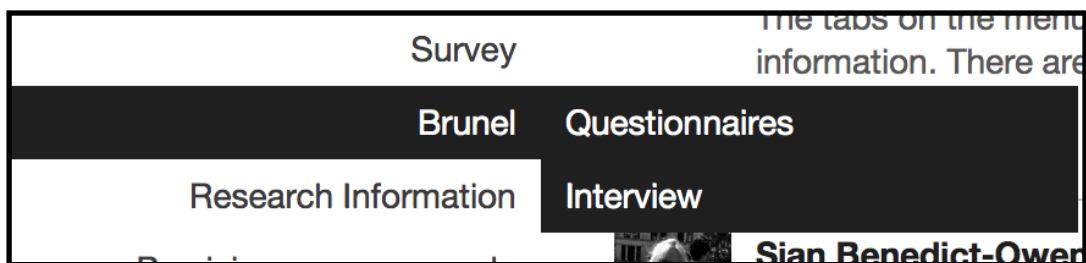




Fig. 6.12 Hyperlink tab from NING VESSILS site to BOS Survey

SURVEY - Your feedback matters

[All Posts](#) [Featured Posts](#)

All Posts (1)

 **Survey Link**
Posted by **Sian Benedict-Owen** on April 8, 2016 at 9:48am



LINK - CLICK SURVEY - Survey

Many thanks to those of you who have completed the survey - your responses have been fantastic.

The information you all provide helps shape my research. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Sian

Fig. 6.13 NING VESSIL: Research Survey Request sent via the 'Broadcast All' function

An additional short Survey was posted as a 'Status Update' on the VESSILS Facebook Profile and in the VESSILS ' Facebook Group'. It was also submitted as a 'paid' post onto the Facebook Page - Eyfs-Sen Page. By using Facebook's 'paid post' function the 'status update' was also distributed to Facebook 'friends' own lists of contact.

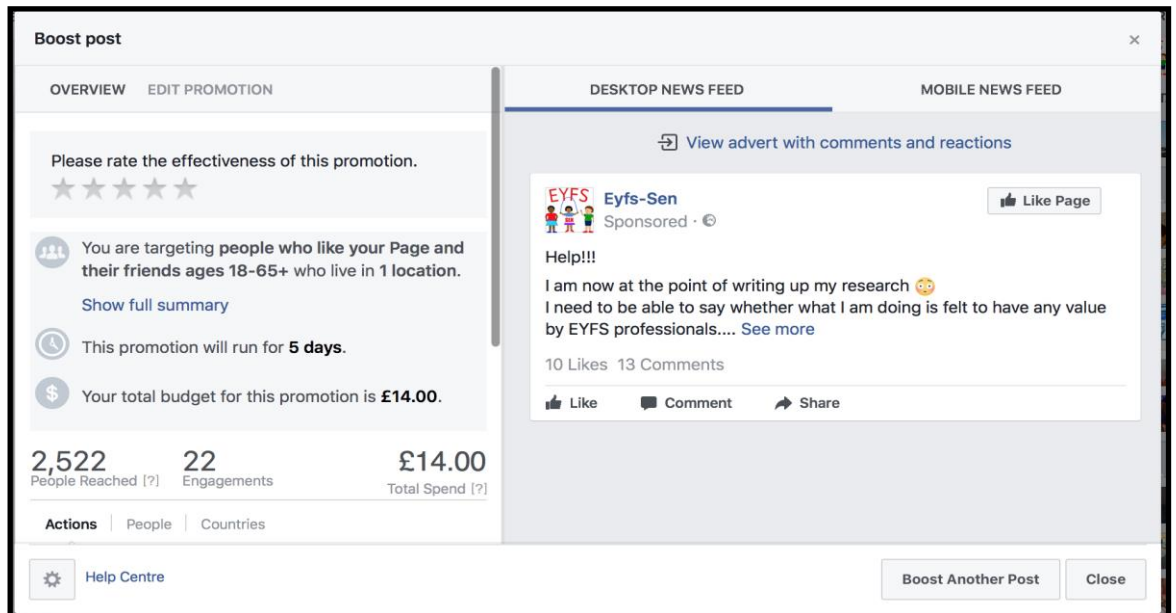


Fig. 6.14 EYFS - SEN Page: promoted post

6.8 Facebook Groups 'Joined' for research purposes

The purpose of joining a range of Facebook groups whose own content was targeted at professionals within the EYFS phase of education was that it allowed access to the professionals working within the research domain. In order to make them aware of the research profile/group/Facebook page, posts were 'shared' on the research domain with the intent that those professionals with a particular professional interest in SEN would visit the site and ideally join by either generating a 'friend request', 'liking/follow the Facebook page or ask to join the group. The intention was that in this way a purposive cohort could be created for the purposes of generating a Community of Practice and also allow access to professionals who when willing to engage in the research could offer experiences and views which were a valuable source of research data .

The researcher became a member of the following Facebook groups:

- Early Years Management

- EYFS Packaway
- East Sussex EYFS Conversation
- Early Years Packaway Managers
- Early Years Networking, Support, Training and Advice!
- Eyfs On A Budget
- Early Years Practice
- Early years managers 2016
- Childminder Resource Hut (Support, ideas and more)
- Childcare Providers & Managers
- Early Years Outdoors
- EYFS FOR EVERYONE
- Twinkl Early Years Teaching Group
- Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding
- Free CPD for early years practitioners
- Brighton and Hove EYFS Conversation
- West Sussex EYFS Conversation
- SMIRA - Selective Mutism Information and Research Association
- Early Years Training & Support (NEyTCO)
- SEN EYFS and Primary ideas, resources and support
- Early Years KS1 and SEN teachers - ideas, resources and displays
- Staff Well-being in Early Years
- Early Years Staffroom - Nursery/Reception/Year 1 Teachers
- Early Years Teachers UK (forum and share ideas, no advertising)

- EYFS networking
- Private Nursery Owners and Childcare Provisions

6.9 Research ethics

The Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014) outlines the four main principles underpinning the ethical conduct of research:

1. Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities;
2. Scientific integrity;
3. Social responsibility; and
4. Maximising benefits and minimising harm.

(BPS:2017 .p2)

In addition to this further ethical considerations were necessary as a significant amount of the research data was gathered from a number of different social networking interfaces.

An initial research proposal was granted approval by the Brunel University Research Committee and was undertaken in accordance with the Brunel University Ethical Framework, Brunel University Good Research Practice Policy, Brunel University Code of Research Ethics, and the Universities UK concordat on research integrity.

Data obtained through the analysis of material accessed via social media based systems is central to this research study. Using social media as a part of the data gathering process has allowed for the assembly of a large amount of relevant and

naturally occurring data. Within the context of social media based data the questions of ethical considerations are currently evolving and examples of best practice are currently still a dynamic area of research discussion.

'... it is problematic for researchers to justify their actions as ethical simply because the data are accessible... The process of evaluating the research ethics cannot be ignored simply because the data are seemingly public' (Boyd and Crawford 2012, p.672)

Within their work Townsend and Wallace (2016.p3) specifically address issues of social media ethics for researchers,

'social media data brings new contextual challenges which the more traditional approaches are not equipped to deal with. This calls for a new consideration of best practice in this domain.'

Within their work they identify the following as areas of ethical concern:

6.10 Private vs. public?

'When there is a level of ambiguity concerning whether data are 'in the public domain' or not, researchers should particularly consider the extent to which undisclosed observation may have potentially damaging effects for participants, before making decisions on whether to use such data and whether gaining valid consent is necessary.' (British Psychological Society (2017 p. 7)

Townsend et al (2016:p.5) suggest that the extent to which the researcher should feel ethically bound to seek informed consent is indicative as to whether data should be regarded public or private.

One Facebook group which produced valuable research data was *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding* .

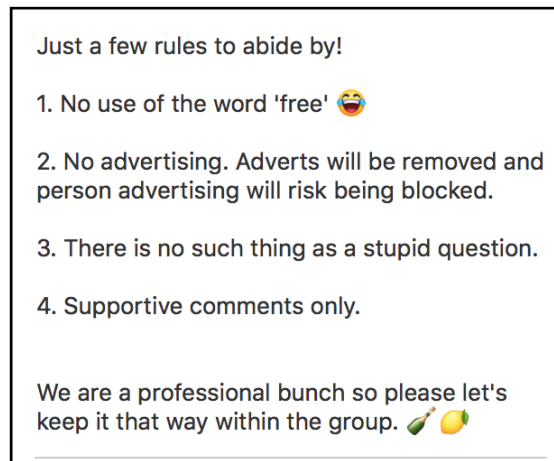


Fig. 6.15 Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade funding: group rules

6.11 Informed consent

Townsend et al. argue that informed consent is an essential ethical consideration for all research types. They suggest that whilst in many traditional types of research the question of informed consent is addressed in the form of consent forms the nature of social-based media research can render gaining consent problematic with data being accessed and analysed without consent being requested and that participants are often unaware that their personally generated data have been included within a research study. They argue that researchers are more ethically bound to seek informed consent in some scenarios than others, they give the example of using data accessed via social media which the user expects to be private.

In all three of the research domains it was made clear either through on-line posts or additional research information that any data generated could be used for research purposes.

As researcher I also clearly stated on my own Facebook spaces that these has been specifically created as a part of a PhD research project.

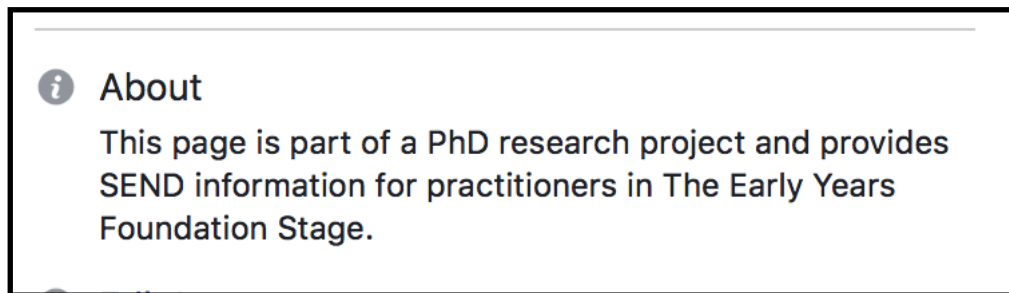


Fig. 6.16 Facebook Page decalaration

The VESSILS research sites were clearly advertised as being a part of a researcher's PhD study:

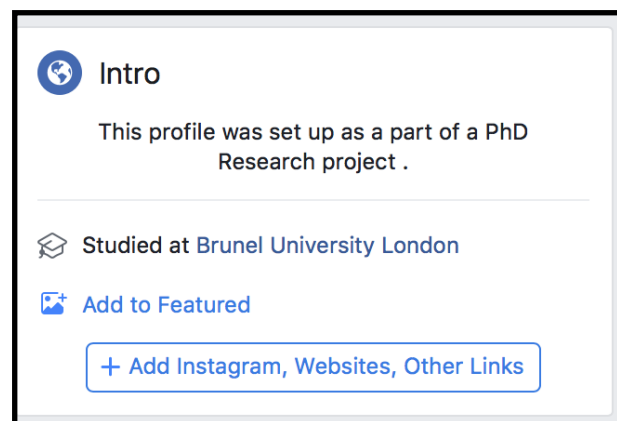


Fig. 6.17 Facebook user profile introduction.

DESCRIPTION	Edit
<p>This group is a professional community space for EYFS practitioners. A forum where practitioners can share and discuss issues/concerns relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability - where everyone is supportive and non-critical of each other and willing to share their experiences and advice with other practitioners to ensure the best possible outcomes for every child.</p>	

Fig. 6.18 EYFS-SEN Group description

The users of the NING social networking site and respondents to the BOS on-line surveys were also made explicitly aware that the site had been developed for research purposes.

At the point at which an initial participatory cohort was sought in order to populate the NING site, participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the research at any point without any obligation placed on them as to why they chose to withdraw. This information was provided by me as researcher during meetings with participants and was repeated within the printed literature that was given to the initial cohort members and made available via a hypertext link to members of both the NING and Facebook VESSILS sites.

6.12 Anonymity

'Questions of whether online postings are public or private are determined to some extent by the online setting itself, and whether there is a reasonable expectation of privacy on behalf of the social media user' (British Psychological Society 2017)

The data drawn from Facebook was located within either the research's own profile/page/group all of which were clearly identified as being set up for the purpose of this research or from the self-promoting public Facebook group '*Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*'. The group is highly politicised and members of the group can reasonably be expected to be aware that any post content may be made available elsewhere, followed up or shared through other mediums.

With regards any individuals posting on Facebook wishing to express their right to anonymity within the research findings, the following was posted on all three Facebook research sites in keeping with good ethical practice concerning the matter of valid consent..

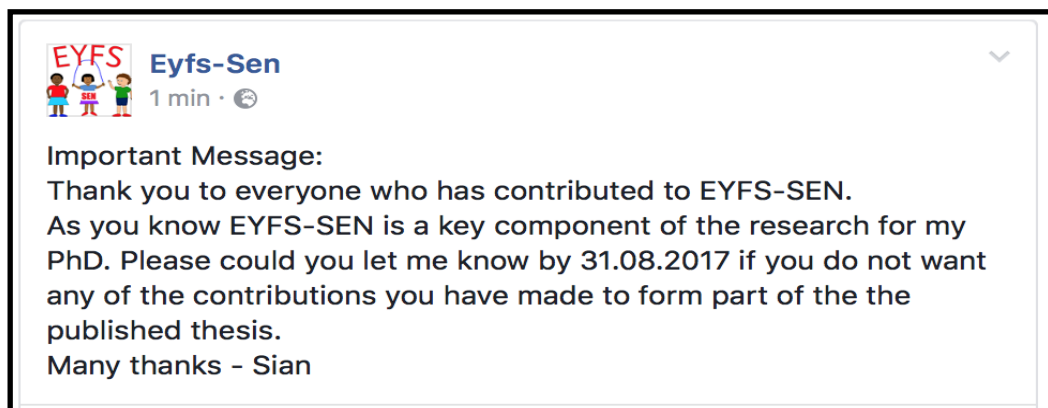


Fig. 6.19 Post to allow individuals to have their posts excluded from the published thesis

A similar notification was posted onto the Facebook model on 23.09.2018 in order to ensure that those accessing the site(s) at some later date were allowed the same opportunity:

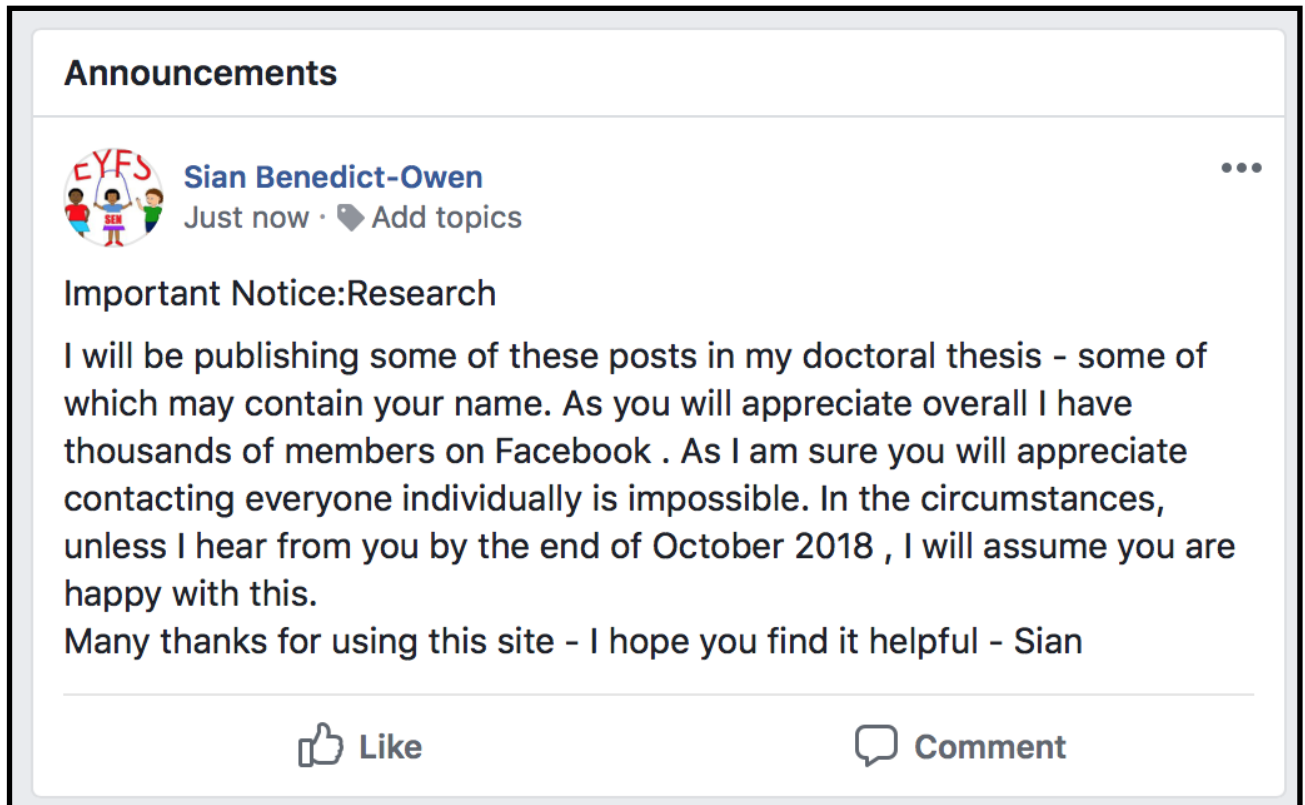


Fig. 6.20 Post notifying the intention to publish posts without codifying names



Fig. 6.21 Post requesting Facebook contributor anonymity

One Facebook contributor requested that any published contribution which was made by her remained anonymous.

Townsend et al. suggest that the anonymising of data gathered via social media can prove more problematic than that of data obtained through other means. They propose that it is particularly problematic anonymising individual data extracts when reproduced within published materials or as a part of a presentation. Within their work they refer to the '*protecting the identity of unwitting participants*' (2016:p.7) particularly so where data is sensitive in nature.

As a part of the research process efforts were made to inform contributors to the Facebook VESSILS intervention, via the posting of notifications to the different intervention areas, that posts might be published in full as a part of the research findings. However, it was not possible to confirm that all contributors would necessarily see or pay attention to these postings. Additionally, in recognition of the fact that some of the research data had been sourced from other Facebook groups and pages, all of the data sourced from Facebook and used within the research has either been transcribed and codified or identifying attributes such as names and personal images obscured. By doing this the anonymity of any '*unwitting participants*' should be assured.

The data which had been sourced through accessing a subscription-based on-line early years forum was codified in order that contributors could not be identified, albeit those engaged the conversation string were aware of my position as a researcher. Pictorially represented data taken from the NING research site which is published as

a part of this research, does not contain any personal data which could compromise contributors who accessed the site. Members of the NING site were promised that any engagement not published explicitly on the site would be anonymised within the research unless otherwise directly agreed. Data sourced through the application of BOS Survey questionnaires is again anonymous and any questionnaire content does not refer to issues of a sensitive personal nature.

6.13 Risk of harm

The Association of Internet Researchers (2012) suggest that the researcher's ethical responsibility to research participants is exponentially linked to levels of risk and/or vulnerability of participants. The researcher adhered to the ethical framework guidance as suggested by Townsend et al.

None of the data sought or obtained through the research process contained contributor content of a sensitive personal nature. Furthermore, there was no risk that any members engaging with the researcher would be placed in a position of risk or caused any harm.

6.14 Framework for ethical research with social media data

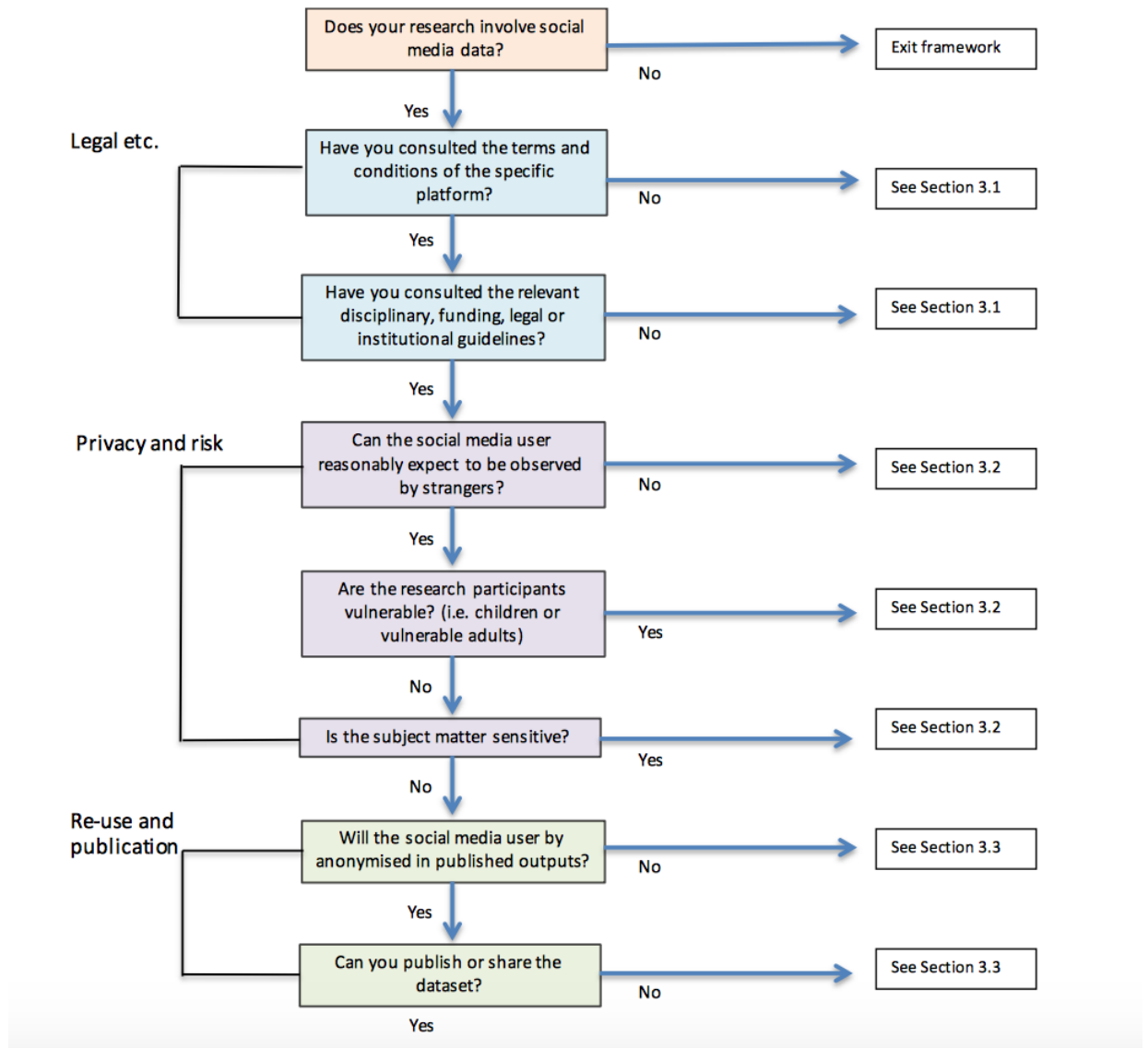


Fig 6.22 Social Media Ethics Framework - Townsend and Wallace (2016.p8)

When considering matters of ethical practice with regards social media use, Townsend and Wallace’s framework was consulted and adhered to.

Townsend and Wallace (2016) *Social Media Research: A Guide to Ethics* was used to determine whether the data acquired could be used and if so whether in its purest form, i.e. as direct representations of posts as they appeared in their original form. A

key question which needed addressing here was whether the social media data should be considered as private or public, as this would influence the nature of any data recorded within the writing up of the research.

'unless consent has been sought, observation of public behaviour needs to take place only in public situations where those observed 'would expect to be observe by strangers' (The Code of Human Research Ethics p.25)

Where it was the case that explicit consent had not been secured from individuals, as researcher I ensured that my own intentions and actions were overtly research based and individuals whose posts were noted and at times included within the research text in their entirety had placed the posts on forums where it would be reasonable to assume that the posts would be seen by strangers.

6.15 Copyright issues

The on-line sites from which data was reproduced within this work had different copyright framework parameters.

6.15.1 Facebook: Sharing your content and information - terms and conditions

'You own all of the content and information you post on Facebook, and you can control how it is shared through your privacy and application settings. In addition:

For content that is covered by intellectual property rights, like photos and videos (IP content), you specifically give us the following permission, subject to your privacy and application settings: you grant us a non-exclusive,

transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License). This IP License ends when you delete your IP content or your account unless your content has been shared with others, and they have not deleted it.'

(Facebook Terms and Conditions:2017)

In essence whilst the originator of a Facebook post owns the copyright, Facebook's terms and conditions are such that as a matter of fact, when an individual post is on Facebook, both Facebook and anyone to whom the post has been distributed has the right to use it so long as it is held on Facebook's servers.

6.15.2 Online subscription forum provider copyright permission:

The subscription based Foundation Stage Forum adopted a different approach to copyright. The forum providers are granted a royalty free, perpetual, non exclusive, unrestricted worldwide license as outlined below.

When you post a message, upload a file, or otherwise provide us with material for display on the Foundation Stage Forum, you are granting the FSF a royalty-free, perpetual, non-exclusive, unrestricted, worldwide license to use, copy, sub-license, adapt, transmit, publicly perform, publish or display all such material in any medium or venue or publication, printed or electronic, which medium may or may not exist at this time and without further compensation or attribution.

The foregoing grants shall include the right to exploit any proprietary rights in such communication, including but not limited to rights under copyright, trademark, service mark or patent laws under any relevant jurisdiction.

Copyright policy: Please contact us for permission if you wish to use material from any part of the FSF for replication or distribution elsewhere. Copyright of all content is otherwise reserved.

Fig. 6.23 Foundation Stage Forum terms and conditions – copyright

I contacted the service providers who host, maintain and monitor the subscription based online early years forum – *The Foundation Stage Forum* to request their permission to use posts that I had sourced from their site.

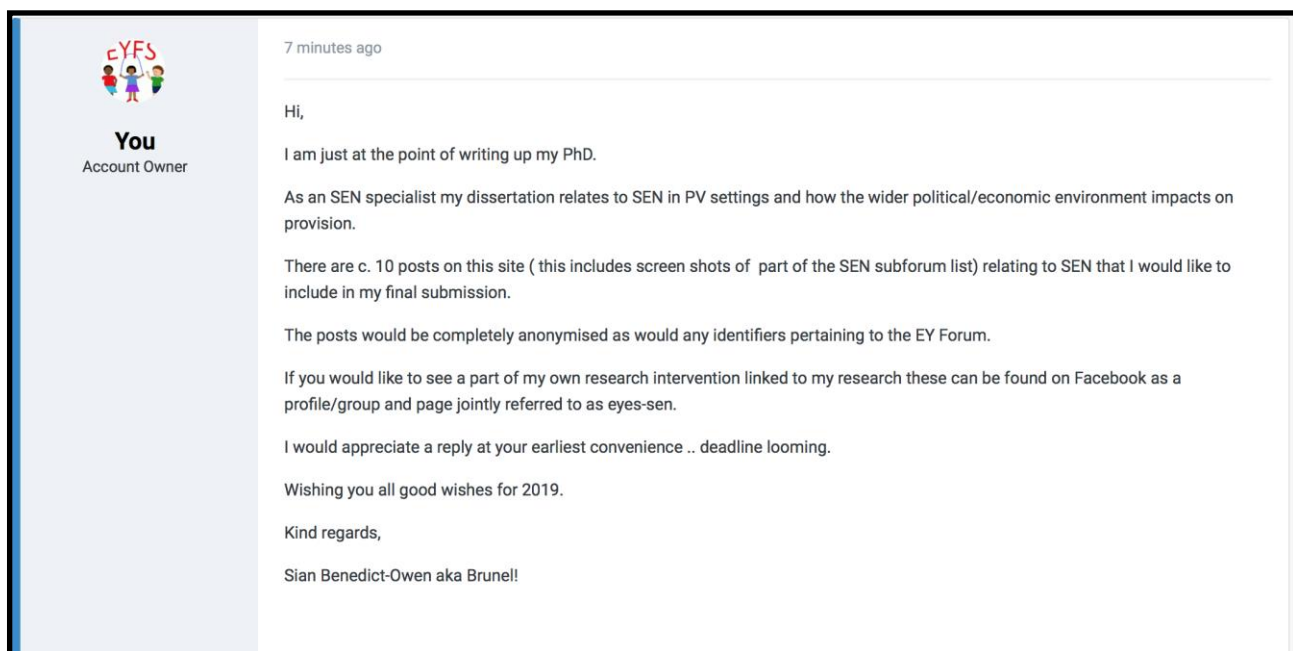


Fig. 6.24 researcher request to publish material acted from a subscription based online site

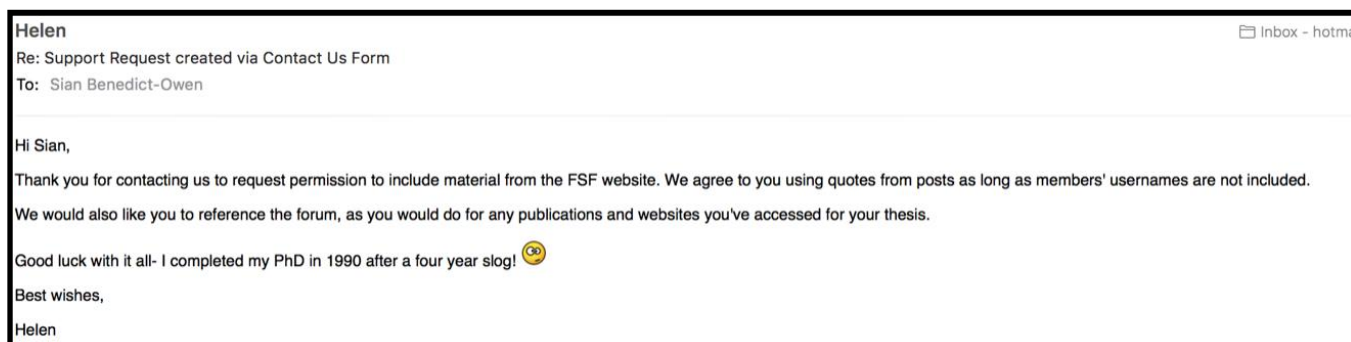


Fig. 6.25 email reply from an online provider agreeing to the use of site material

Permission to use any material was agreed with the proviso that forum members' names were not used and the forum should be appropriately referenced.

6.16 Triangulation

Case studies in the form of on-line semi-structured interviews were undertaken for three settings located in different local authority areas. The purpose of undertaking the case studies was to ascertain whether similar data and conclusions could be

drawn from these as from those elicited through the BOS Online Survey. The resulting data gathered from the semi-structured interviews was similar in type with that gathered through the agency of the BOS Online Surveys tool.

The frequency of practitioners' engagements with the SEN/Inclusion sub-forum space on the *Foundation Stage Forum*, a subscription based online EYFS space were compared alongside those of practitioners' interactions on the VESSILS model in order to discover whether the patterns of interactions on the sites were comparable and whether they shared a similar pattern of usage by practitioners in order to access specialised SEN advice and discussions.

The figures below illustrate examples of some sub-forum topic posts and member interaction levels for a number of SEN related subjects made by members of the subscription based *Foundation Stage Forum* on-line early years platform set up in 2003.

Inclusion & Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

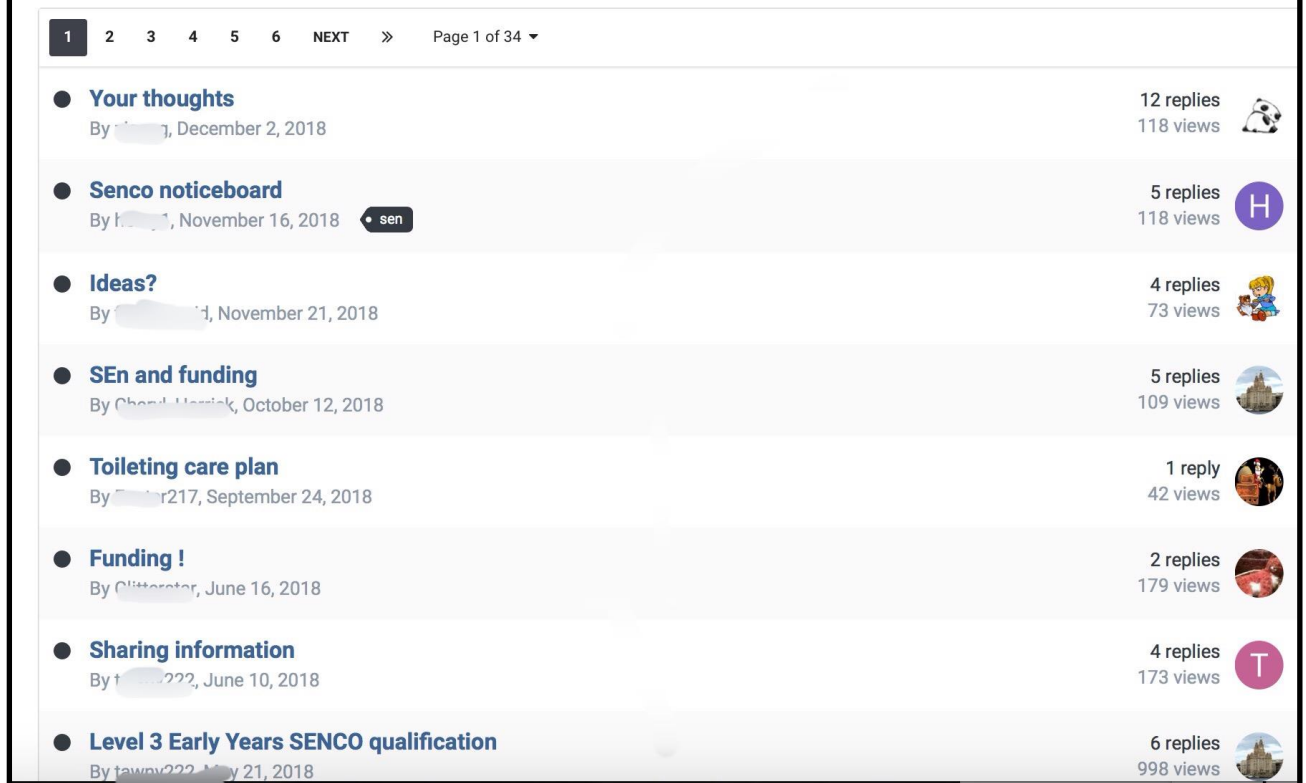


Fig. 6.26 Subscription based forum Sub-forum views/replies 21 May 2018 - 2 December 2018

On the *Foundation Stage Forum* 's sub-forum during the period 17th November 2017 - 2nd December 2018 there were fifteen topics generated by fourteen different forum members.

● Free CPD for Speech and language needs and good info to support you By catma, April 3, 2018 • sen • training	4 replies 424 views	
● Trying to support a child with sensory processing disorder By t...gule, January 30, 2018	16 replies 1,003 views	
● Help please By l..., February 9, 2018	0 replies 207 views	
● Short Term SEN Plan By s..., January 31, 2018	4 replies 347 views	
● Senco courses By h..., January 11, 2018	6 replies 483 views	
● Child with Visual Impairment By M..., November 21, 2017	3 replies 358 views	
● nursery Mental health By ..., November 17, 2017	5 replies 435 views	

Fig. 6.27 Subscription based forum Sub-forum views/replies 17 November 2017 - 3 April 2018

Post views ranged from forty two for a topic entitled ‘Toilet care plan’ to one thousand and three views for a topic titled ‘Trying to support a child with sensory processing disorder’. The figures of other sub-forum members who responded to the various topics ranged from no replies to a topic titled ‘Help please’

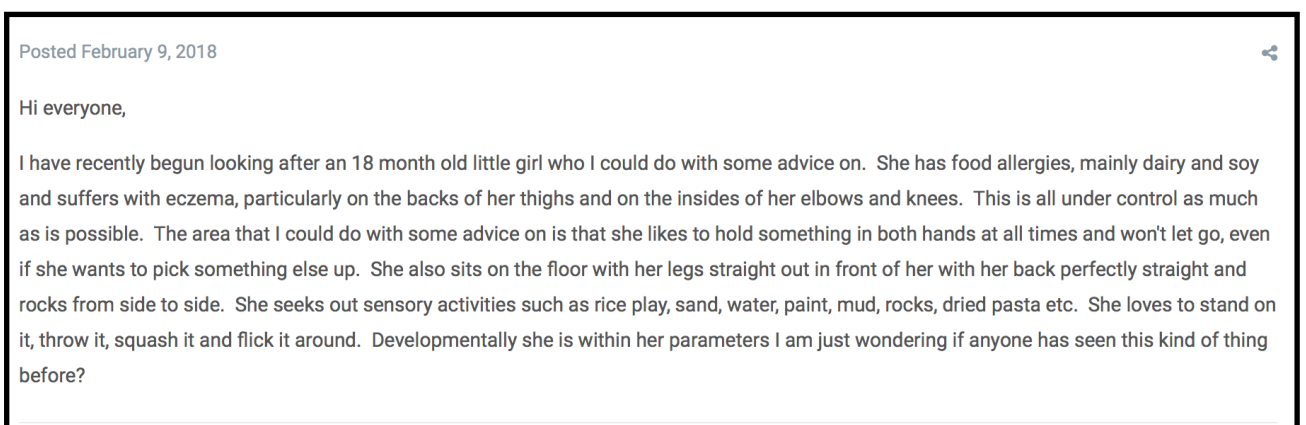


Fig. 6.28 Sub-forum post ‘Help please’ (Foundation Stage Forum)

to sixteen replies to the topic entitled ‘ Trying to support a child with sensory processing disorder’. The replies consisted of a mix of questions and responses,

shared experiences, in depth discussion and the recommendation by one sub-forum member of a specialist text.

The figures below illustrate examples of topic posts and member interaction frequency for a number of SEN related subjects made by members of the Eyfs-Sen Facebook Page:



Fig. 6.29 Eyfs-Sen Page insight data



Fig. 6.30 Eyfs-Sen Page insight data



Fig. 6.31 Eyfs-Sen Page insight data



Fig. 6.32 Eyfs-Sen Page insight data

A comparison between the *Foundation Stage Forum* and the Eyfs-Sen Facebook Page of frequency of member engagement evidenced a significantly higher numbers of posts being passively viewed/reached by members on both sites than posts that were responded to/engaged with by members. Reasons for this could include:

- lower levels of professional self-efficacy amongst members resulting in practitioners being reluctant to engage with colleagues in a pedagogic role,

- a greater number of those practitioners engaging with the groups doing so in a 'learning' capacity.

What was evident was that both platforms had low levels of proactive engagement.

In summary, by using a mixed method approach allowed for a richer research picture to be developed. Much of the quantitative data established the professional credibility of the cohort group whilst the interpretive/ narrative paradigms allowed for the 'voices' from within the research domain to add a further richness to the research picture.

For the purpose of the VESSILS intervention model adoption of an action research approach was considered best practice as it accommodated reflection and reiteration within the design and implementation process of the design.

The following chapter addressing the data gathering and analysis and provides an insight into SEN policies and practices as they affect the PVI group-based sector from the perspective of the practitioners working within the industry.

Chapter 7 Data gathering and analysis

7.1 Cohort profile (Purposive)

The cohort of practitioners who were asked to access and complete on-line BOS Surveys was selected on a purposive basis from educational professionals primarily within the early years phase of education. Those responding to the survey were mainly in senior management roles within PVI group-based settings as Manager, Manager/SENCo, Deputy Manager and Deputy Manager/SENCo (52%). Other respondent practitioners were divided between those who also undertook the SENCo role (26%) and those with other main responsibilities such as Key Worker 6% and SEN Teacher (2%). Data submitted by respondents not exactly fitting the targeted cohort criteria was put to one side where answers could skew the research findings.

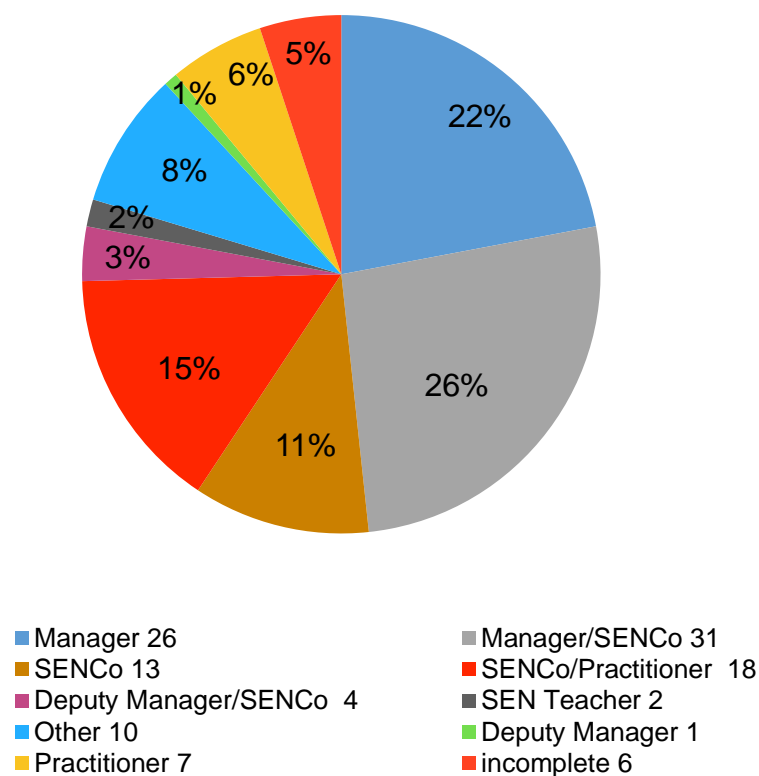


Fig. 7.1 Facebook/Ning combined: Professional Role

Additionally within the responding group were:

- Two Early Years Advisory Teachers,
- An Early Years Advisory Team Practitioner,
- Two Early Years Lead Teachers,
- A Head of Family Support SENCo,
- Two Special Needs Teachers,
- A Teacher in Charge (Nursery School),
- A Clinical Psychologist,
- A Childminder.

7.2 Experience and qualifications

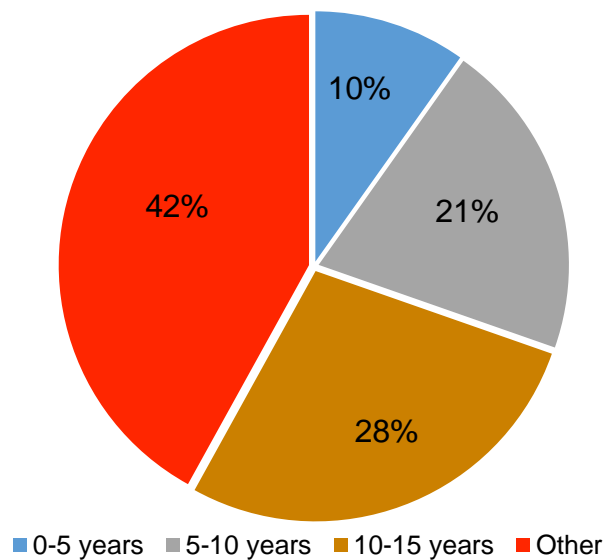


Fig. 7.2 Years working in Early Years Education: Facebook/Ning combined

The largest group represented within the survey had worked within the sector for more than fifteen years with 57% of the group holding a graduate level qualification.

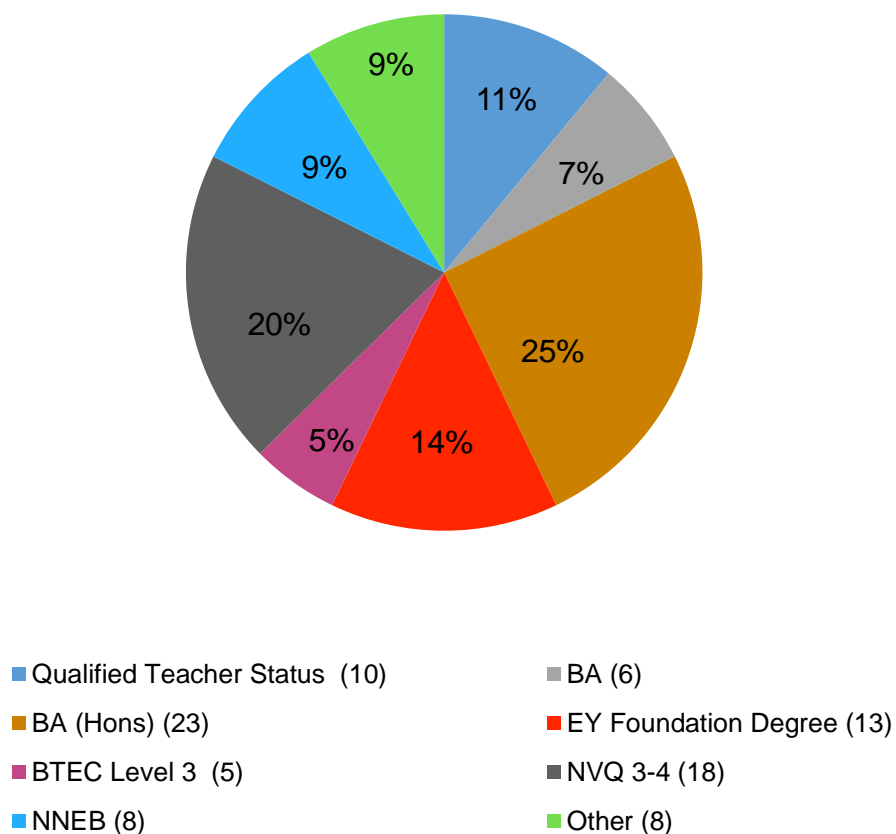


Fig. 7.3 Relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education held by participants - Facebook/NING

In summary, the respondent group comprised largely experienced EYFS practitioners with 70% having at least ten years' experience within the profession.

Respondents held a range of qualifications relevant to the early years childcare and education sector.

7.3 Setting type

The EYFS setting types most frequently represented in the cohort were those within the PVI group-based sector. These made up 78% of the total respondent cohort.

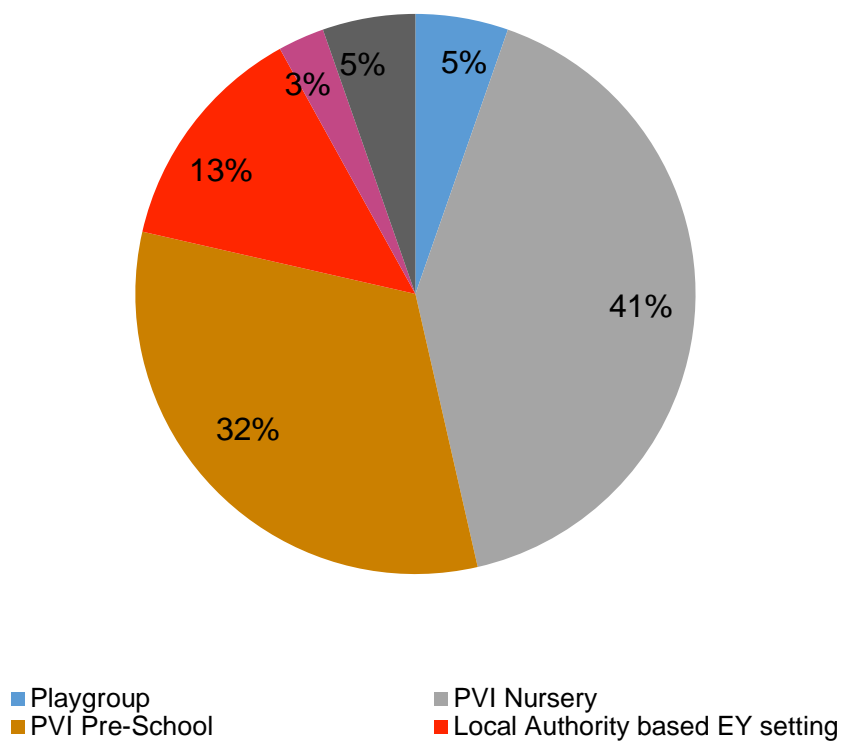


Fig. 7.4 Type of PVI setting - Facebook/Ning

The highest response frequency was from practitioners within the PVI group based sector. Many of these were at senior management level (53%) and had worked in the sector for at least fifteen years (68%). These two factors lend a good degree of

confidence to the substance of the responses given in answer to the survey questions.

Within the responding cohort the following types of provision were also represented:

- An autism resource base,
- Ten LA maintained Early Years nursery/reception provisions,
- A LA Early Years Special School,
- Three school based community pre-schools,
- An Independent School Nursery.

7.4 SEN Experience within the Cohort by Type

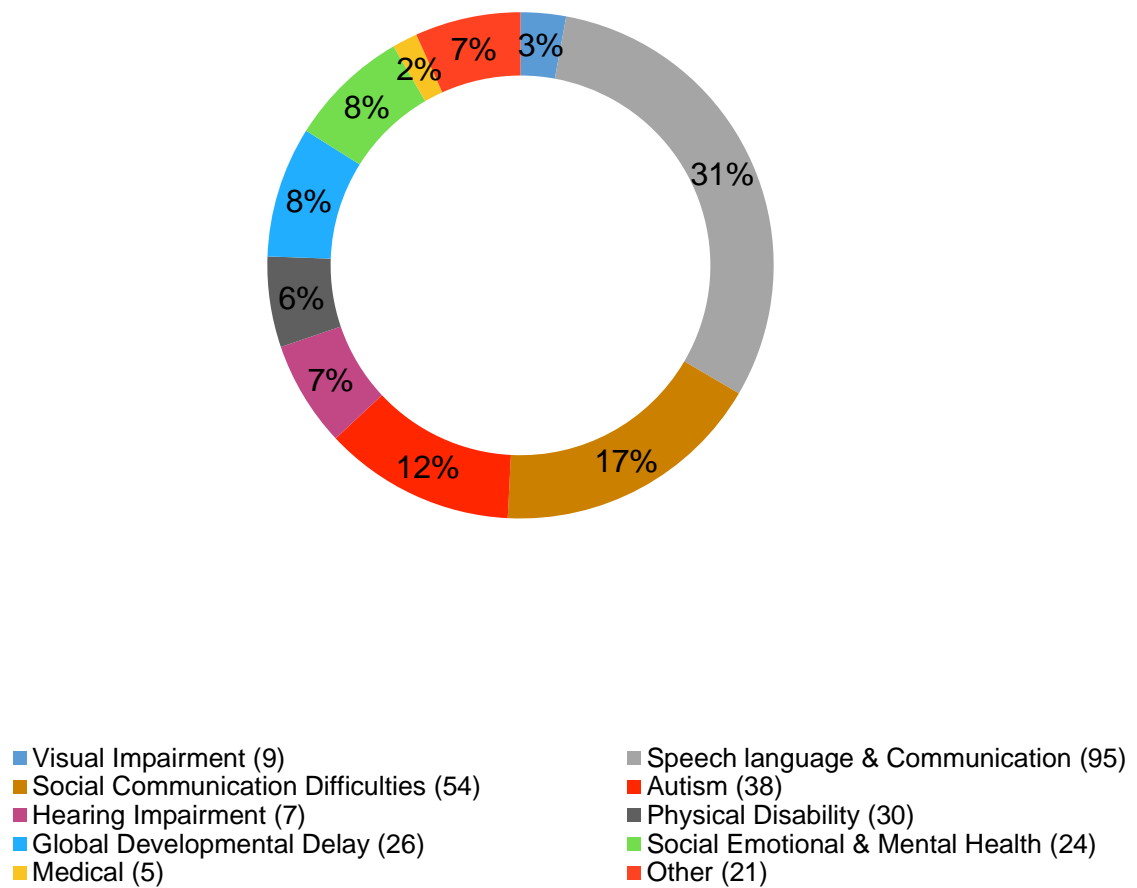


Fig. 7.5 SEN by Type

The respondents within the cohort had dealt with a wide variety of SEN provision

7.5 Local Authority SEN provision

7.5.1 Breakdown of Local Authority SEN support by type:

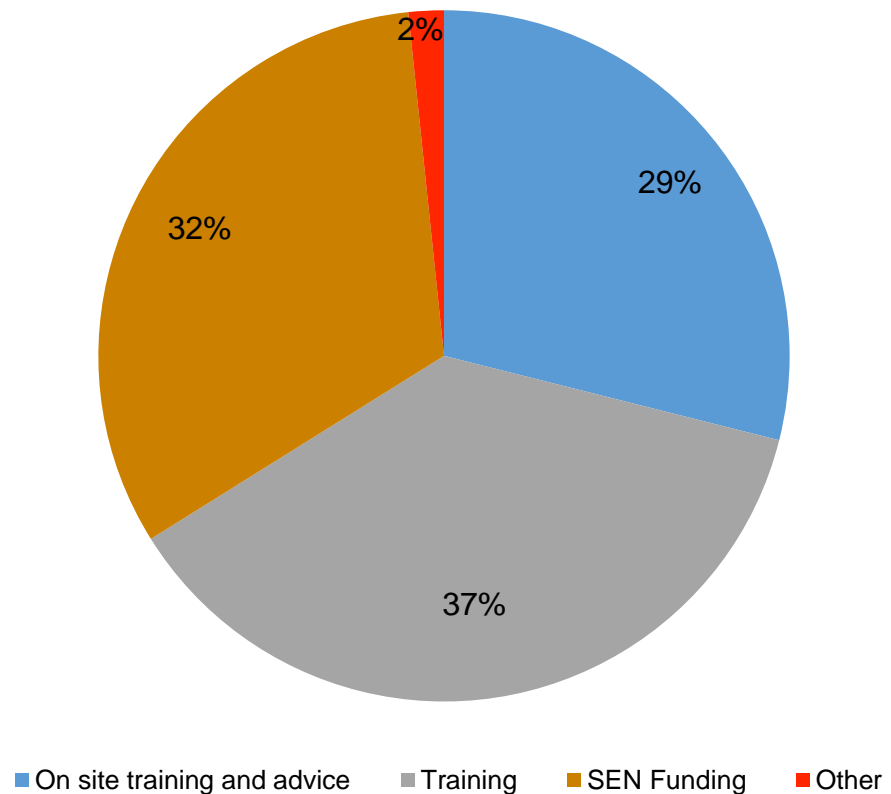


Fig. 7.6 Local Authority SEN provision by Type

The PVI group-based respondents reported differing types of LA SEN assistance dependent on region. The key types of support identified included a mix of some of the following types of support:

- Attendance at monthly SENCO surgeries
- SENCO network once a term
- Targeted setting support including observations of children
- Support via a website or from the end of a phone
- Separate funding support for children needing 1:1 support
- High needs funding

- eSupport
- Half termly TAC meetings
- Inclusion Meetings
- Mentoring Groups
- Area INCO/SENCO
- Training
- SEN forums and conferences
- Reports to support the writing of Individual Education Plans
- Inclusion teacher visits once a year when requested
- Assigned early years advisor and in some cases portage support
- Settings will have an area Inclusion officer
- Regular meetings, advice, strategies shown and supported, termly forums, training.
- Termly lift meetings, specialist teaching services come to see children every 2 terms at least.
- Allocating places in specialist provision through Admissions panels, offering Early Bird course
- Through the local offer
- Early Years Team
- Helpline
- SEN hub
- Vulnerable learners audit
- Termly network meetings

- LA SENO termly meetings
- SEN Network - termly

7.6 Thematic development

Responses to the BOS Online Surveys and data gathered from online social media platforms were codified in accordance with the principle of thematic development:

‘...themes are active creations of the researcher (rather than just passively ‘emerging’ fully formed from the data) that unite data that at first sight might appear disparate, and often capture implicit meaning beneath the data surface.’

(Clarke and Braun: 2018, p. 108)

7.6.1 Survey questions

7.6.1.1 Ning: Survey (1) questions (Appendix G)

Launch date : 04.04.2016	response rate: 26
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Page 1: The Setting

1. What is your current professional title?

Manager

SENCo

Manager/SENCo

Practitioner

Practitioner/SENCo

Other

* If Other please give further details:

2. How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

Other

3. Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g. NVQ Level 3?

4. Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

5. How many children can the setting have on roll?

6. How many children are on the SEND Register?

7. What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

8. Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

*Please give further details:

9. Does providing SEND support to individual children within your setting have an impact on provision to the wider group of children and if so how?

Page 2: SEND Provision

10. How does the setting support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

11. How do practitioners support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

12. How does the Local Authority support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

13. What Local Authority is the setting in?

14. Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

On site advice and support (SEND)

Training (SEND)

Funding (SEND)

Other

* If Other please give further details:

15. Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

Other

* Please give further details:

16. How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?

* How has this affected your SEND provision?

17. In what way could your setting be further supported to ensure best outcomes for children within your setting who present with SEND?

18. What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting. e.g. SEND Code of Practice 2014, and how these impact on practitioners and their practice?

Page 3: EYFS SEN

19. If you access the EYFS-SEN network - in what ways are you finding it useful?

20. Are there any other functions or areas of information that you would like to be added to the site:

21. If you do not currently access EYFS SEN how could it be made more relevant to your needs?

22. What additional types of provision would you like to be able to access to support SEND provision in the setting?

7.6.1.2 Ning: Survey (2) (Appendix H)

Launch date : 05.03.2017	response rate: 31
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Page 1: The Setting

1. What is your current professional title?

Manager

SENCo

Manager/SENCo

Practitioner

Practitioner/SENCo

Other

*If Other please give further details:

2. How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

Other

3. Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g. NVQ Level 3?

4. Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

5. How many children can the setting have on roll?

6. How many children are on the SEND Register?

7. What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

8. Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

* Please give further details:

Page 2: Local Authority SEND Provision

9. What Local Authority is the setting in?

10. How does the Local Authority support setting practitioners/SENCOs to progress children with SEND who attend the setting?

11. Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

On site advice and support (SEND)

Training (SEND)

Funding (SEND)

Other

* If Other please give further details:

12. Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

Other

*Please give further details:

13. How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?

* How has this affected your SEND provision?

14. What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting and how these affect practitioners and their practice?

Page 3: EYFS SEN

15. Which on-line sites do you use to support your understanding of SEND ? e.g.

Facebook, Facebook Pages (which ones?) National Autistic Society.

16. Do you find this SEND site useful and why?

17. How could it be made more relevant to your SEND needs?

7.6.1.3 Facebook: Survey (1) (Appendix I)

Launch date : 05.06.2016	response rate: 36
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Page 1: The Setting

1. What is your current professional title?

Manager

SENCo

Manager/SENCo

Practitioner

Practitioner/SENCo

Other

* If Other please give further details:

2. How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

Other

3. Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g. NVQ Level 3?

4. Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

5. How many children can the setting have on roll?

6. How many children are on the SEND Register?

7. What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

8. Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

* Please give further details:

9. Does providing SEND support to individual children within your setting have an impact on provision to the wider group of children and if so how?

Page 2: Local Authority SEND Provision

10. How does the Local Authority support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

11. What Local Authority is the setting in?

12. Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

On site advice and support (SEND)

Training (SEND)

Funding (SEND)

Other

* If Other please give further details:

13. Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

Other

* Please give further details:

14. How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?

*How has this affected your SEND provision?

15. In what way could your setting be further supported to ensure best outcomes for children within your setting who present with SEND?

16. What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting. e.g. SEND Code of Practice 2014, and how these impact on practitioners and their practice?

Page 3: EYFS SEN

17. EYFS SEN has been created primarily to support practitioners in Early Years settings access SEND information/resources/training - are you finding it useful as a source of SEND provision?

18. Is it different in emphasis from other on-line sources that you use to find SEND information/resources/advice?

Yes

No

19. If it is different - in what way is it different?

20. If you do not currently access EYFS SEN how could it be made more relevant to your needs?

21. What other on-line groups do you use to access SEND information/advice/resources/training to support better outcomes for the children in the setting?

7.6.1.4 Facebook: Survey (2) (Appendix J)

Launch date: 04.03.2017	response rate: 25
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Page 1: The Setting

1. What is your current professional title?

Manager

SENCo

Manager/SENCo

Practitioner

Practitioner/SENCo

Other

* If Other please give further details:

2. How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

Other

3. Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g. NVQ Level 3?

4. Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

5. How many children can the setting have on roll?

6. How many children are on the SEND Register?

7. What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

8. Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

*Please give further details:

Page 2: Local Authority SEND Provision

9. What Local Authority is the setting in?

10. How does the Local Authority support setting practitioners/SENCOs to progress children with SEND who attend the setting?

11. Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

On site advice and support (SEND)

Training (SEND)

Funding (SEND)

Other

* If Other please give further details:

12. Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?

Yes

No

Other

*Please give further details:

13. How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?

* How has this affected your SEND provision?

14. What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting and how these affect practitioners and their practice?

15. Which on-line sites do you use to support your understanding of SEND ? e.g.

Facebook, Facebook Pages (which ones?) National Autistic Society.

16. Do you find the Facebook Page/Profile EYFS-SEN useful and why?

17. How could it be made more relevant to your SEND needs?

7.7 Centrally emerging themes

The content of the data was analysed and codified according to thematic content.

The following key thematic streams were established:

- Statutory requirements
- Funding streams
- EFE 30 hours funding
- Local authority support
- SEN: effects on the wider cohort

7.7.1 Thematic categorisation of data

Once the key thematic streams had been identified the data was grouped together as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Theme	Statutory requirements: perceived disadvantages
Facebook (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Practitioners still expect there to be an emphasis on SENCo, not themselves.</i> • <i>Many settings don't apply them unfortunately.</i> • <i>I do not think the legislation has changed how we work with the children it is the lack of practical support that is the challenge.</i> • <i>Good personally, but has proved challenging for some staff in developing deeper understanding of changes, processes and new formats.</i> • <i>I fully support the expectations set out in the code but obviously such expectations place a huge drain on staff moral because regardless of the never ending paperwork and chasing up we have to do without the support of the LA it is very frustrating.</i> • <i>Makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEN children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This is putting /makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEN children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This is putting a massive strain on staff</i> • <i>a massive strain on staff</i> • <i>Not easily achieved</i> • <i>lack of funds is an issue but through dedicated staff and good relations with parents we make the best opportunity we can as a setting</i> • <i>In practice the workload has increased and there is a need for time to be funded for liaison with other professionals, completing paperwork and supporting families. It needs to be remembered that many pre</i>

	<p><i>schools are working in pack away settings with SENCOs earning not much more than the minimum wage.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Too much pressure being put on early years.</i>
Facebook (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No impact that I am aware of although adds pressure to practitioners especially with no support</i> • <i>Ensuring SEN children are supported and this is the same for all children its just we spend more time with interventions for these children.</i> • <i>It's hard to deliver when parents won't accept</i> • <i>I feel the children are better supported from a younger age now but the paperwork is so consuming along with the concern about getting it right and not letting the children or families down, sometimes it feels like to much pressure to meet the deadlines for everyone</i> • <i>It's very difficult to support these children when they are in a 1-8 ratio or 1-4 for 2 year olds. Practitioners are doing their best but sometimes we wish we could do more.</i> • <i>I agree and feel that on the whole it has the best interests of the child and family at the heart of the policy. However, additional funding needs to be made available if early years settings are going to be able to implement them.</i> • <i>They are cutting money but still expecting the same practice</i> • <i>More and more SEN children. Less support for children parents and setting but setting expected to do more and more</i> • <i>Seems we are expected to do what health visitors and other professionals are will little to no support</i>

<p>NING (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The new COP is quite extensive and we need to be compliant in all areas. This has been a lot of work and investigation.</i> • <i>Too long to explain!</i> • <i>I think that practitioners are very demoralised about most things at the moment due to lack of finances and unrealistic expectations.</i> • <i>very time consuming but I agree with all of it</i> • <i>more funding is needed</i> • <i>It's great but it's on the ground support we need within the setting rather than keeping having to make phone calls after phone calls</i>
<p>NING (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's getting harder to access 1-1 funding. More and more paperwork needed is time spent away from the children</i> • <i>Too much emphasis on the rights of the parents to choose a setting when sometimes the child may flourish in a more specialised setting</i> • <i>Inclusion can be very difficult to maintain, we have seen an increase on children requiring support in their development and at times the multi-agency working breaks down , also expectations change so it is hard to keep practitioners up to date</i> • <i>I feel too much is expected of preschool practitioners and more funding is needed</i> • <i>Still lots of confusion over what has changed, leading to over reliance on time bands for information gathering. This leads to further delays in getting help and support</i> • <i>Much more pressure on professionals</i> • <i>Having lots of SEN children impacts on the other children and staffing</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Setting expected to make referrals - more paper work</i> • <i>Feel that if legal obligations are made then relevant authorities need to support settings!</i> • <i>I try to give all children the support they need and make time to ensure they get full support. It is hard but if you get on with it without moaning you can be proud when children make progress and move to school.</i> • <i>Early intervention is a wonderful soundbite but without the financial support to back it up it is not possible to provide continuous high quality support especially as it is not just a case of supporting a child it is always a case of supporting parents too. Practitioner feel demoralised and undervalued.</i> • <i>Feel too much expectation.</i> • <i>I think there needs to be a fast track to accessing funding to support children with special needs especially in early years when they present for the first time. It is hard to support the minority and the majority well at the same time without it.</i>
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Table 1: Statutory requirements: perceived disadvantages

Other themes present within the research findings, included the following:

- the heavy paperwork load involved within the SEN processes,
- the extreme pressures/strain felt by practitioners to complete paperwork in a timely fashion and support children appropriately,
- the need of the key person to provide additional SEN support to some children meaning that other children did not receive equitable amounts of practitioner time,
- a lack of sufficient external Government/LA commitment and SEN funding in order to support PVI group-based providers in meeting statutory obligations,
- low practitioner morale,
- difficulties with interagency working,
- rates of funding for Government sponsored early years education and childcare spaces.

7.7.1.1 Statutory requirements

Most of the responses on statutory requirements emphasised the additional burdens placed on staff or the inadequacy of funding.

Facebook 1

- *Practitioners still expect there to be an emphasis on SENCo, not themselves.*
- *Many settings don't apply them unfortunately.*
- *I do not think the legislation has changed how we work with the children it is the lack of practical support that is the challenge.*
- *Good personally, but has proved challenging for some staff in developing deeper understanding of changes, processes and new formats.*

- *I fully support the expectations set out in the code but obviously such expectations place a huge drain on staff moral because regardless of the never ending paperwork and chasing up we have to do without the support of the LA it is very frustrating.*
- *Makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEN children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This is putting /makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEN children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This is putting a massive strain on staff*
- *a massive strain on staff*
- *Not easily achieved*
- *lack of funds is an issue but through dedicated staff and good relations with parents we make the best opportunity we can as a setting*
- *In practice the workload has increased and there is a need for time to be funded for liaison with other professionals, completing paperwork and supporting families. It needs to be remembered that many pre schools are working in pack away settings with SENCO s earning not much more than the minimum wage.*
- *Too much pressure being put on early years.*

Facebook 2

- *No impact that I am aware of although adds pressure to practitioners especially with no support*
- *Ensuring SEN children are supported and this is the same for all children its just we spend more time with interventions for these children.*
- *It's hard to deliver when parents won't accept*
- *I feel the children are better supported from a younger age now but the paperwork is so consuming along with the concern about getting it right and not*

letting the children or families down, sometimes it feels like too much pressure to meet the deadlines for everyone

- *It's very difficult to support these children when they are in a 1-8 ratio or 1-4 for 2 year olds. Practitioners are doing their best but sometimes we wish we could do more.*
- *I agree and feel that on the whole it has the best interests of the child and family at the heart of the policy. However, additional funding needs to be made available if early years settings are going to be able to implement them.*
- *They are cutting money but still expecting the same practice*
- *More and more SEN children. Less support for children parents and setting but setting expected to do more and more*
- *Seems we are expected to do what health visitors and other professionals are will little to no support*

NING 1

- *The new COP is quite extensive and we need to be compliant in all areas. This has been a lot of work and investigation.*
- *Too long to explain!*
- *I think that practitioners are very demoralised about most things at the moment due to lack of finances and unrealistic expectations.*
- *very time consuming but I agree with all of it*
- *more funding is needed*
- *It's great but it's on the ground support we need within the setting rather than keeping having to make phone calls after phone calls*

NING 2

- *It's getting harder to access 1-1 funding. More and more paperwork needed is time spent away from the children*
- *Too much emphasis on the rights of the parents to choose a setting when sometimes the child may flourish in a more specialised setting*
- *Inclusion can be very difficult to maintain, we have seen an increase on children requiring support in their development and at times the multi-agency working breaks down , also expectations change so it is hard to keep practitioners up to date*
- *I feel too much is expected of preschool practitioners and more funding is needed*
- *Still lots of confusion over what has changed, leading to over reliance on time bands for information gathering. This leads to further delays in getting help and support*
- *Much more pressure on professionals*
- *Having lots of SEN children impacts on the other children and staffing*
- *Setting expected to make referrals - more paper work*
- *Feel that if legal obligations are made then relevant authorities need to support settings!*
- *I try to give all children the support they need and make time to ensure they get full support. It is hard but if you get on with it without moaning you can be proud when children make progress and move to school.*
- *Early intervention is a wonderful soundbite but without the financial support to back it up it is not possible to provide continuous high quality support especially as it is not just a case of supporting a child it is always a case of supporting parents too. Practitioner feel demoralised and undervalued.*
- *Feel too much expectation.*

- *I think there needs to be a fast track to accessing funding to support children with special needs especially in early years when they present for the first time. It is hard to support the minority and the majority well at the same time without it.*

Increased and changing statutory requirements can be seen to have placed different and additional statutory expectations and requirements on to PVI group-based providers. These alongside the impact of reduced LA support for SEN and associated staffing and financial difficulties can be seen as central themes within the research findings.

Some practitioners spoke of the challenges faced as they familiarised themselves with administrative processes brought about by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the 'never ending paper work'. Powerfully descriptive terms were sometimes used which capture the effect on the practitioners themselves of delivering SEN support at the current time. Examples of this include: 'a huge drain on staff morale'; 'worried'; 'very frustrating'; 'challenge'; 'can't cope'; 'a massive strain'; 'too much pressure'; 'very difficult'; 'adds pressure'; 'concern about getting it right and not letting the children or families down'; 'very demoralised'; 'too much is expected'; 'too much expectation'.

Unexpected responses in relation to the implementation of statute included the following:

- a number of PVI group-based settings either did not implement the statute at all or only in part,

- parents had too much influence in choosing a child's next placement in cases where a specialist placement would be advantageous.

Few respondents expressed the view that SEN expectations as set out in statute were not problematic in some way although some respondents did comment that they had no or little concerns with regard to the provision of SEN support within their PVI group-based setting. This was generally an unsupported personal view, for example:

- I do not have a problem with this.
- I am generally happy with it
- Its ok so far
- I feel it works better as it's more child focused
- Doesn't make any difference at present as we have few children with SEN.

Others cited good teamwork, the availability of several SENCOs, embedded inclusive practice and clarity of expectation as positive outcomes.

Below are examples of verbatim narratives given in response to the BOS Online Surveys, and both The Early Years Foundation Stage Forum and Facebook conversation strings. They address different external factors which affect PVI group-based settings when meeting statutory requirements associated with SEN.

The social media conversation strings below also demonstrate that group-based settings are not only impacted by limited or reduced LA funding for SEN educational support , but that some PVI group-based providers have been additionally adversely affected by cuts or re-structuring in services provided by the National Health Service. With speech, language and communication difficulties and social communication difficulties/autism recognised as areas of high frequency SEN, long waiting lists for some children before they are seen by speech and language therapists and/or paediatricians, means that PVI group-based settings are left waiting for supporting professional guidance and/or recommendations. In some cases, early years practitioners have been left unconvinced by the medical outcomes of outside agency professionals where reported findings are contradictory to their own professional experiences of a child.

7.7.1.2 Funding streams

Further research data was gathered from the Early Years Foundation Stage Forum and Facebook social networking platforms. This dealt with issues not addressed within the BOS Online Surveys.

Data sourced from the Public Facebook Group Champagne Nurseries - Lemonade Funding (CNLF) offered an insight into group-based provider experience of funding child places. The first example describes an incident of some parents' unsympathetic attitude towards the predicament the setting is in:

“Just wow. Some parents of ours have gone to the council to find out exactly how much we get per hour as they were not happy with our explanation about how we don’t get enough to cover costs. The council give them the amount £3.27 and told them regardless they are still entitled to their 15hrs. So these parents have informed us that they don’t care that we are losing money on it, they want their 15hrs free. First time ever!” (Oz: 2016)

The second example is two conversation strings between practitioners expressing their exasperation and disillusionment with regard to Government funding for the sector.

Conversation 1:

“I try so hard to remain positive, but it’s hard! No funding increase since 2009, but found out yesterday my rent is to be increased again! How do LA and Government expect us to be sustainable? Really does get me down!!!” (L.P. - Horsham- 18.08.2016)

“Very frustrating and disheartening; when all we want to do is provide quality care and provision to our little ones. Give us a break! Xx (K. E.: 18.08.2016)

“Feel the same I have had enough so am applying for jobs, I cannot do this anymore. We r so undervalued yet expected to do more and more work as other outside agency help is cut. Min wage going up and our 2yr funding money actually went down by 12p an hour this year!!!! With our 3s remaining the same for 4 years. With increase in min wage I just can’t make ends meet with what I take home, and most of the time it’s well below min wage. I took over our setting in 2009 and love the kids but it’s getting harder to stay positive when I feel so undervalued ” (A.D.: 18.08.2016)

Conversation 2

"Unfortunately the government feel that children in the UK are only worth around £3.68 per hour, less in some counties. Until the early years and the professionals that work there are recognised by the government, and nurseries are funded appropriately there is no way for providers to pay more. The early years is in crisis and nurseries refuse to be blamed for this crisis that is caused by government under-funding." (D. L.P., 2016)

"It is disgusting how we are treated. I am a family business if it was just me I would put closed on my door tomorrow after 28 years in the business." (H.C.)

"if you were to own a quality business and the government prevented you from charging your private fees to maintain your quality business, would you a) accept the cap on your price and wait for your business to go under b) find a way to charge your true fees c) withdraw from government funding scheme and accept that you will probably lose your customers and ultimately your business." (L.S.)

These comments are in keeping with practitioner comments within the literature review such as those expressed by Sheepwash (2017), J.R (2017).and Hutton (2019).

7.7.1.3 EFE: 30 hours funding

The following narrative posted on the Facebook group 'Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding' by the owner of a PVI group-based setting reflects the views of many of the group-based providers as discussed with the researcher or evidenced through other publications and are supported by both the findings of Lawler (2018),

and recent practitioner comments posted on social media and captured within the literature review .

"I just wanted a little rant! I just feel so extremely worried about my precious business, 12 long hard years building 2 small homely day nurseries and the 30 hours coming in is making me sick with worry that we will be able to survive. I don't want any of my parents to lose the hours they should be entitled to and yet the government see fit to not only decide on my funding rate but to tell me that I cannot charge any more for this time. Of all the stresses and worries running a business causes in these times, this almost tips it over the edge. I basically feel that regardless of the funding rate given to us, if we are allowed to charge the shortfall it could still mean 30 hours (3 full days of care) for a small fraction of the usual cost. 100% of my parents agree they would much to rather pay the additional than me opt out or lose my nursery....not one has disputed it, they all think the government are being ridiculous with this. There is no point offering free hours if a year down the line we have no nursery to offer anyone. Surely it's simple, it's my business and I should be able to offer the sessions, funded or otherwise however I need to.....it's then parents' choice if they take it or not." (E. E., 2016)

7.7.1.4 Local Authority support

A number of the respondents appeared keen to stress that the quality of any LA provision received was good but generally with a caveat around access and availability:

- *'Early years SEN advisors very supportive. Some professionals very supportive but access to professionals can take a long time. All professionals very stretched'. (Facebook 1)*
- *'Virtually no outreach support or advice.' (Facebook1)*

- *It seems more and more difficult to access specialist teachers and to successfully obtain EHCPs'. (Facebook1)*
- *'Children have to get to a critical development stage before help supplied.'* (NING2)

Some of the responses were fragmentary and/or consisted of a brief comment relating to a single aspect of change such as 'much less contact time' (Facebook1), or 'Yes less' (Facebook1) whilst other responses provided a broad-brush answer, e.g. 'Training.' (Ning2), 'Yes' (Facebook2) or 'Improved it.' (NING1).

When drawing conclusions from the data it was important to be mindful that the answers given by respondents might be impacted by local demographic considerations. Some group-based settings might be largely if not totally unaffected by issues relating to high need SEN provision because of their location, e.g more affluent rural/suburban locations might have lower levels of SEN within their cohorts than those in built up urban areas or those designated as areas of social deprivation. It was not possible to identify precise locations since the research question parameters only applied to local authority areas.

A majority of the group-based providers spoke of increasingly challenging experiences of LA SEN support accessed from reduced or privatised LA SEN services within the last five years arising from restructuring of SEN services.

Comments included:

- *'It can feel like there is no support at times and that I am always chasing them up for updates, reports and appointments etc'. (Facebook1)*

- *'Lots of delaying techniques! There is very limited specialist provision outside of mainstream and our IEP visits are set for the year in Sept, we receive 3 days worth' (Facebook1)*
- *'Poorly ... just like to sign forms we fill in and take the credit .' (Facebook2)*
- *'Training is difficult to access for various reasons, funding is practically non-existent and on-site advice and support is available but again, difficult to access at times' (NING1)*
- *A lot less funding available.
Not so much training available. Early years advisers have less time as a wider caseload. Not enough appropriate places for SEN children at primary school.
(Facebook1)*
- *'The funding for SEN is much more difficult to obtain and every setting is very confused on if they are able to claim this and there is a mountain of paperwork to fill in. We have a child within our setting that has severe communication difficulties and we have worked so hard to achieve her goals with help from speech and language setting support and now we have had a Educational Psychologists in we feel that we should have got financial support for this.'
(NING1)*
- *'Support has been in decline over the last few years and it seems that we are identifying more children who need additional support especially with speech and language. Also funding does not cover additional time needed to complete the lengthy process of completing EHCP requests. ' (Facebook2)*
- *'Gone from huge support with lots of expert advice to two early years specialists this year!' (NING1)*
- *'No where as much as they used to support us. Basic help but have to ask. Too many forms to fill in to get support.' (Facebook2)*

These findings reflect the literature in which it was identified that LAs were increasing having to redefine services to the PVI group-based settings.

Only five respondents said there had been no changes to the LA support received, with a further thirteen practitioners appearing generally satisfied with current levels of LA SEN support. Comments included:

- *'Good support system which then impacts positively most of the time on children/families/staff/setting.'* (NING2)
- *'Better helped but it keeps changing? At present it's getting better.'* (NING2)
- *'Yes it has become more child/family friendly and encourages a whole family approach with outside agencies working together with us to provide the best support they can.'* (Facebook1)

As discussed within the literature some respondents reported that the LA SEN function had been contracted out by the LA:

- *'Change took over at Easter this year and all settings in the area now completely alienated win no support unless you pay premium prices but service is so stretched I'm not sure it would be worth the investment.'* (Facebook 1)
- *'Paid service now, no setting improvement partnership anymore, SEN advice from LA is not forthcoming.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Main LA support has to be bought in.'* (Facebook1)

Within the cohort group who answered more fully, most frequently cited were the adverse effects on SEN provision due to reduced access to SEN advisory teams/professionals caused by rationalisation by LAs and the effect of LA changes to the levels of SEN funding available to PVI group-based settings to support individual children.

- *'Support is there but hard to access at times mainly due to funding cuts.'* (NING1)
- *"Little support available at present. No funding. No training. No advisors available for visits who have SEN knowledge'. (NING1)*
- *'Depends how behind the child is. Have to be half their chronological age in development before la will get involved.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Virtually no outreach support or advice. '* (Facebook1)
- *I feel it has taken a massive step backwards and we will be seeing lots of children slipping through the net in future.'* (Facebook2)
- *'... Lack of money has meant a huge decline in services.'* (NING1)
- *'... Truthfully there is not very much help.'* (NING1)

Practitioners reported that cuts to inclusion funding have been implemented by LAs in different ways, such as reductions to the hourly rate of inclusion funding, reducing the number of allocated hours of inclusion funding per child, and raising the qualifying thresholds of SEN required in order to qualify for funding.

The majority of practitioners who commented on LA inclusion funding systems cited finding them difficult to negotiate with in some cases insufficient levels of funding being made available:

- *'... I have heard of many practitioners not as qualified being unable to get past the paperwork side and therefore struggling to get adequate support. It is a lot harder now to obtain extra hours for a child.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Children with severe and complex needs funding for additional adult support has been reduced to £7.90 per hour'* (Facebook1)
- *'Funding you have to fight for* (Facebook1)
- *'We do not get any extra funding for any child within our setting which I feel is wrong.'* (NING1)
- *'Any funding is just about impossible to obtain, so much so, that a parent has offered to pay staff for extra one to one speech and communication support for her son.'* (Facebook1)

Issues around accessibility of SEN training opportunities for practitioners through either a reduction of types/frequency of the training on offer or the removal of free or subsidised SEN training opportunities were also raised as a concern:

- *'Training for all courses has become more expensive and lots of courses are really hard to get onto'. (Facebook1)*
- *'Less training available, all courses are now funded by the setting approx £20 per half day course per person.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Free training completely withdrawn.'* (NING1)
- *Only key personnel can be trained up rather than all setting practitioners.'* (NING2)
- *'... and training is not sufficient .'* (Facebook1)
- *'Limited SEN training available.'* (NING1)

- *'There seems to be less training available, many courses being cancelled or not a variety of different approaches and ideas.'* (NING1)
- *'...courses/training can be very bland and basic and staff have been left feeling that they could do with extra advice...'* (NING1)
- *'Training is limited and very expensive.'* (Facebook2)

Findings on inter-agency working were again consistent with the literature review.

Where outside agencies were mentioned this was often done in a positive light:

- *'Outside agencies like physio and speech n language have been brilliant in their support. Portage dept also been helpful.'* (Facebook1)

However in some regions interagency provision was identified as problematic. Some of the concerns raised were in relation to effective partnership working:

- *'I feel there are still gaps in regards to health sharing information with us-they still talk about data protection which I disagree with when it comes to the health and wellbeing of a child.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Health visitors do not communicate. Portage does not communicate.'* (Facebook1)

Other concerns addressed difficulties of accessing outside specialist agencies.

These are consistent with comments in the literature review made by Lucy Sanctuary (2014) a Paediatric Speech and Language Therapist on her own professional website.

- *'For S&L there is a 17 wk wait for the children to be observed/assessed. Approximately 5 wk wait for integrated services to get involved.'* (Facebook1)
- *'Support is often inconsistent from Health (ever changing or high turnover of staff- OT,PT and SLT)'* (Facebook1)
- *Not so easy to get hold of outside agencies - long waiting lists*
- *'Speech and language referrals seem to take longer to go through'* (NING2)

In some cases it was felt that outside agencies had been remiss:

- *'Health visitors haven't been picking up or following up clear concerns at the two year checks and are relying on the settings to do the work which includes those tricky conversations with parents and time consuming referrals.'* (NING1)
- *'... We are getting children with clear SEN that haven't been addressed following their two year check with the health visitor. (NING1)'*

Again, the concerns cited are in keeping with the literature review with sentiments reflecting those recorded in the literature review where practitioners posting on the Early Years Foundation Stage SEN sub forum shared anecdotal examples of their disappointment in the professional advice and attitudes of medical professionals.

7.7.1.5 SEN support - effects on the wider early years cohort

The following examples collected from BOS online surveys reflect practitioners' views on the effects high levels of SEN demands on practitioners have on PVI group-based quality provision to the wider group of children.

7.7.1.5.1 Perceived disadvantages

Facebook 1

i) Additional support

- *Yes. Member of staff is taken out of ratio for a few hours.*
- *Yes. Can be disruptive to group as often the child needs 1:1 support.*
- *Additional 1-1, extra body to ratio*
- *At the moment we do not have any SEN children, but in the past it has been difficult to provide support to the children, as it is usually one to one and it is not always possible to free up a member of staff for just one child, especially when inclusion funding is not approved, we then have to take on the financial burden.*
- *Reduces ratios*
- *1 child is currently taking up a lot of unfunded 1:1 time, plus severe behaviour issues are impacting on the group.*
- *Two of our children have one to one meaning we have to employ more staff which is increasingly difficult to do. We employ all strategies advised for s&l etc across all children anyway so everyone benefits. We use Makaton signing.*

ii) Inclusion Funding

- *yes - although we have additional funding for 3 children one 15 hours 2 for 5 hours the funding isn't enough to pay for some-one to totally work 1-1 with these children - the setting as a whole is currently paying an additional member of staff out of their own means to ensure the impact it as detrimental which allows our other children to enjoy story/singing time more comfortably as 2 of our autistic children are working at a 8-20 month level being 3-4 years old requiring heuristic play activity's at all times - although our other children are very accepting and often try to encourage them to engage with them or offer*

them toys they know they will enjoy. for SALT we have all become amazing at signing :)

- Yes, massive financial implications, many children don't meet the threshold for additional funding so puts a strain on finances and key person work load. Children need to attend in setting for a certain amount of sessions before can be assessed so even if needs are very severe they can't get funding. If allocated funding the nursery has to advertise, interview and appoint and this takes too long*
- It would do if funding hadn't already been set up before child started setting .*

iii) Impact on the wider cohort

- I'd be lying if I said it didn't. Whatever we do has an impact on the other children within the setting we try to minimise that impact. With a child with high functioning autism it impacts if we're having quiet time with the children or discussing topics as they will be noisy distracting so we have to minimise this in the best way we can ensure they are still included but don't impact within the setting*
- Children needing a higher level of staffing who are receiving higher needs funding but not for their entire hours impact on time staff are able to provide other children. On the positive supporting those children to be included helps other children to develop understanding of other people's needs.*
- Yes sometimes the group can be a challenging one. Supporting all the varying needs of 2-4 yr olds alongside SEN, child protection plans, children with EAL too...*
- Yes! Both this year and last year, the children with autism have been particularly disruptive for want of a better word impacting on the learning of other children. We are still working with the younger child (mainly 1 to 1 at the minute away from larger group of children until ready to integrate). The older child can now usually engage in wider group activities at carpet time, story time, activity time etc. Without our input, this would not be possible.*

- *Can reduce overall quality of provision if too many children with variable SEN being supported. At present my setting has 36% SEN children, this has overstretched resources, quality of mainstream provision (due to most experienced staff supporting children with SEN) and been very busy (especially applying for EHCP, paperwork etc).*

NING (1)

i) Additional support:

- *We would like to provide more small group and individual work to reduce gaps but this means we must remove staff from the other children in order to do so.*

ii) Funding

- *Yes. We get no additional funding for children with SEN therefore this has to be resourced from our normal budgets. Any additional equipment/resources or staff must be taken from the general funding.*
- *I feel that supporting SEN without financial help does impact on the other children, usually the impacts is that less time is spent with them, however saying this a lot of preparation for SEN children I do at home in my own time so it impacts on my time.*

iii) Impact on the wider cohort

- *Due to sight problem it is necessary to keep blinds on window closed which impacts on others who then find it difficult to see, also impacts on staff as we cannot see who is at the door.*

- *Yes some of it positive in that the wider group of children understand that not all children are the same but some of it is negative - less time, adult resources etc.*
- *Due to staffing restrictions and money, children can be overlooked as the need to focus on them can at times be great.*
- *Yes if a keyworker is assigned to work individually with one child then the remaining children in the key worker group have agency staff to work with them. No consistency. If the designated worker is away then the named permanent member of staff works with the child now leaving 2 groups of children with agency workers.*
- *Sometimes I feel that the needs of the larger group are not taken in to consideration when everyone is trying to accommodate the child with additional needs.*
- *It can take longer to complete a planned activity due to the extra time a SEN pupil may need and they can quickly demand the full attention of the practitioner leaving the remainder of the group losing focus.*
- *Not currently but in past it has caused some disruption until funding was available for support workers.*

7.7.1.5.2 Perceived advantages

Other respondents commented positively as to how inclusive learning approaches benefited all children, including the wider group. However, practitioners when indicating these benefits did not contextualise these in relation to any types of SEN support currently provided to individual children and whether these affected the nature of provision to the wider group despite such inclusive strategies being in place.

Facebook (1)

- *Huge impact; ensures wider capacity of support for all children. Enables more inclusivity I believe in practice*
- *I would say yes because we implement the strategies throughout the setting.*
- *No all children are understanding and very accepting making it easier for 1 -1 support*
- *What benefits children with additional or sen will benefit all children*
- *Yes I feel they become accepting of other children's needs early on and include children more.*
- *Children get involved with activities designed for certain SEN children, so the other children hear correct letter sounds or get involved in a small group situation*
- *Yes. All children benefit from and respond to strategies such as visual cues, signing, S&L strategies.*
- *Yes, children join in and then help each other*
- *Yes they have a chance to be involved in speech and language activities language steps. Jolly phonics. Sensory activities enhances their knowledge and experience*
- *Definitely. We have Signalong trained practitioners and visuals which benefit all children in our care. Having children with Sen and finding strategies for them help all the children.*
- *If amount of children being supported is limited then this has a positive impact on the setting, increasing the feeling of an inclusive community. At the end of the day it is an amazing accomplishment to support children with SEN and is an honour that their parents chose our nursery.*
- *Yes - where there is top up funding to support 1-to-1 the additional adult in the setting is beneficial as they can also support small groups etc. Children who are being referred can access some support prior to gaining additional funding support.*

NING (1)

- *In group work, other child will benefit from the strategies used.*
- *Yes some of it positive in that the wider group of children understand that not all children are the same but some of it is negative - less time, adult resources etc.*
- *No, we are a fully inclusive provision. Children on the SEN register have 1:1 support and we strive to ensure that children participate in class alongside their peers at all times. Class work and additional provision is differentiated to support all children's needs including those children who I support who are not on the SEN register but are more than two years behind their peers.*
- *No, as we work over ratio and receive extra funding to cover 1-1 support for 15 hours a week*
- *Not entirely certain. It definitely helps the individual child.*
- *Not at present*
- *Interventions using support staff will include other children a lot of the time. Good practice for all children*
- *No as our nursery ensure that children with SEN are provided with support from a non-timetabled SEN support who can carry out intervention without disruption of other group*
- *On the plus side all children learn how to use Makaton.
Not at present*
- *No to some contents as I mainly work with three children in a small group so I can monitor them and their key carer then works with them via their IP which we do with the parent. Other children also want the same time with me which I feel has an impact on them too.*
- *It has made us look at our routine as a whole, providing picture routines to support all children, activities such as knock knock boxes, attention Hillingdon and other familiar activities/resources have provided all children with the opportunity to improve their concentration, listening and attention skills and speech and*

language skills, especially those concentration, listening and attention skills and speech and language skills, especially those of EAL.

7.7.1.5.3 Ambiguous responses:

- *None*
- *Yes*

7.8 Other issues

The amount and complexity of paperwork was cited as a particular challenge. The types of paperwork referred to included requests for Advisory Teacher intervention, applications for inclusion funding, the writing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and paperwork associated with Education, Health and Care Plans and reviews.

- *'Setting expected to do more without professional involvement. Paperwork increased therefore time increased.'* (Facebook1)
- *'A lot of time filling in forms.'* (NING1)
- *'Find needing to spend more time filling in forms and explaining why we feel the child should be seen.'* (Facebook2)

Another emergent theme was a shared belief amongst group-based providers that children presenting with SEN were not always supported as well as the practitioners felt should be the case:

- *'The children in question don't always receive the extra support they require.'* (Facebook1)

In other cases PVI group-based practitioners felt that due to the added demands SEN support placed on the setting, the capacity of the group-based setting to support numbers of children with SEN was reducing:

- *'We cannot accommodate as many SEN children as we used to.'* (Facebook2)
- *'We aim to be as inclusive as possible but when you know inclusion funding is limited and support too, it does leave you questioning how you can best support the child and if your setting is the best environment for them to be in...'* (NING2)
- *'Having to decide on how many children we can take on due to the demand of paperwork and time that is required by us now.'* (NING2)
- *'We have to be careful to balance the needs of the whole class to ensure that we are able to meet all of their needs when considering the numerous children with SEN.'* (NING1)

A few of the respondents answered to the effect that the lack of external professional advice had a positive effect within their group-based setting:

- *It has empowered us to make decisions for the SEN children, and gives us a chance to research for ourselves instead of someone always giving us the answers.'* (Facebook2)
- *'Setting more pro-active.'* (NING2)
- *'We are more self-sufficient and reliant to develop our own SEN provision'* (Facebook1)

The findings within the research data align closely with that identified as a part of the wider literature review. SEN provision within the PVI group based settings is delivered against a backdrop of practitioner angst. The effects of pecuniary

challenge can be seen to run threadlike through many areas of the PVI group based service provision from the affecting of practitioners' sense of their own professional self- efficacy through low pay and perceived Governmental attitude, reduced external agency support and training opportunities, stretched staffing demands with children with SEN either impacting on practitioner: child ratios or the 1:1 funding levels of individual children.

7.9 Comparison: Facebook and NING - VCoPs

The NING community was demonstrably the less interactive of the VESSILS sites.

This was possibly in part at least due to the following:

- lack of an embedded access to a pre-existing potential cohort group,
- members did not have an existing knowledge of each other,
- member reluctance to overtly engage with the site,
- the requirement for practitioners to access a stand-alone site.

The NING VESSILS VCoP was a small standalone social network site which lacked the influence of an intrinsic and dynamic social engine such as that underpinning Facebook. The Facebook social networking construct has a powerful search engine central to its system design whereby there is constant interaction between Facebook and its users providing updates and reminders on a 'real time' basis in relation to each users unique connections and pathways on the site. Facebook offers a

functionality allowing users to move into different areas of the site through clicking on icons and hypertexts within their own 'Personalised Environment'.

Alongside the implementation of an easier way for members to access the NING site, should a more energetic process be adopted to capture the membership's continued interest by means of frequent 'Broadcast all' emails, links to other sites of interest and the encouraging of shared discussion points? Encouraging frequent membership interactions and increased patterns of use by members might help it to become embedded with members as a familiar online SEN application.

Whilst the Ning group was not as overtly interactive as a community, member feedback indicates that it was regarded as having value as a SEN intervention.

However it lacked the frequency of interaction and commitment to the group that Lave and Wenger contend were important in order in order to create and sustain a CoP. Conversely, Facebook as an established Social Networking entity was very proactive in creating and sustaining the engagement and interaction of its member group.

The VESSILS 'community' attributes were compared in accordance with Gannon-Leary's (2007) successful characteristics of an online community:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Facebook	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ning	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N

Fig. 7.7 Attribute Compatibility

- Key:
- 1. usability of the technology,
- 2. trust and acceptance of ICT as a means of communication,
- 3. a sense of acceptance among members,
- 4. a shared understanding,
- 5. a common sense of purpose,
- 6. use of netiquette,
- 7. user-friendly language,
- 8. longevity
- 9. prior acquaintance of members

The purposive Facebook community was shown to be well disposed to using the VESSILS SEN intervention as the following usage data demonstrates:

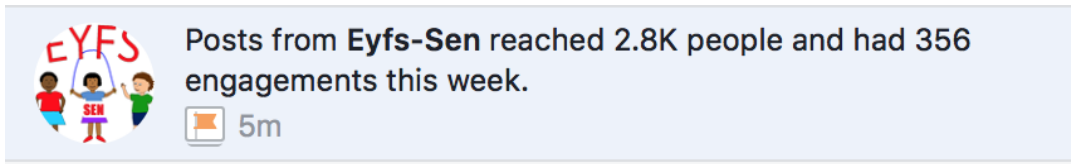


Fig. 7.8 Metrics update - Eyfs-Sen - 23.09.2018

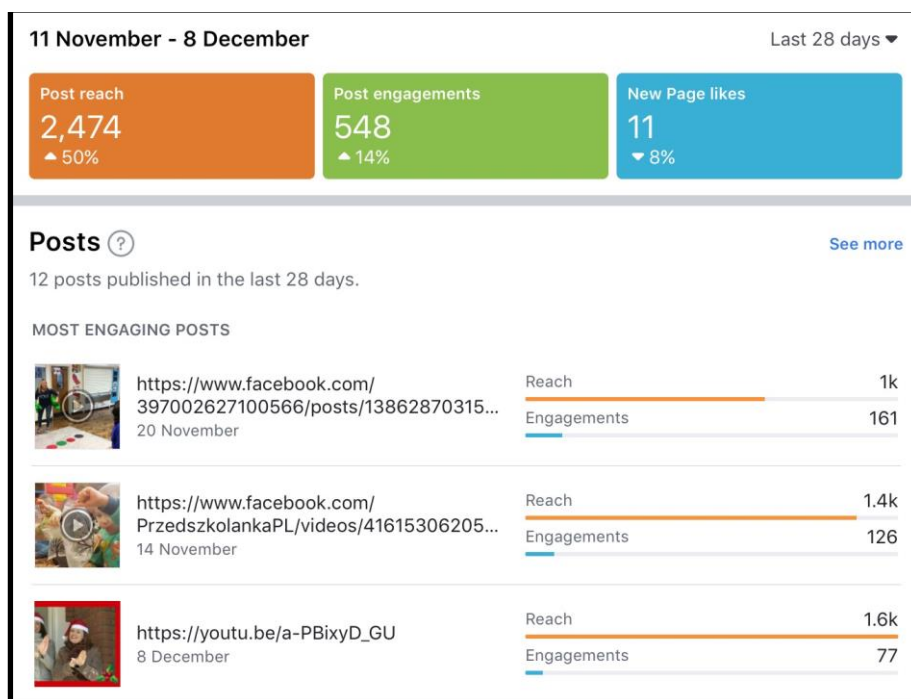


Fig. 7.9 Metrics update – Eyfs Sen 11.11.2018 — 08.12.2018 - Post reach/ post engagements

The Facebook analytics tool reports on the frequency and type of interactions and demonstrations of interest generated on the Facebook Page. The metric feedback

for the period 11th November 2018 – 8th December 2018 showed that the three most 'engaging' posts generated 364 engagements between them.

The findings of the Community of Practice experience within the research supports Andrews and Schwarz assertion that for a community to be effective they should have an existing familiarity with other members of the community.

7.10 Summary

The data generated through the research process encapsulates the effects of the Central and Local Government policies and initiatives considered within the literature review and how these have impacted on the PVI group-based sector's SEN provision at the point of delivery. In so doing they provide a purposeful data cluster from which the research question could be answered.

The following chapter discusses and consolidates the key research findings and considers some possible avenues for continued research.

Chapter 8 Discussion and Findings

Part one of this thesis has been the exploration of Central Government policy, charting how Government policy has trickled downwards operationally to Local Government level and then again downwards to the PVI group-based provisions who stand at the point of delivery. Importantly it considers how implementing Government policy impacts on those in the front line by capturing the intensely personal experiences of the PVI group-based practitioners who actually deliver these policy requirements.

Part two in consideration to the data findings explores the design, development and implementation of an intervention as a contribution to supporting SEN provision within the PVI group-based sector during a period of political uncertainty and retrenchment.

Due to demographic/regional differences between the various PVI group-based setting locations, there will undoubtedly be some PVI group-based practitioners who do not share a number of the views and experiences expressed within this thesis but there will be many who will.

8.1 SEN and political ideology

It would appear from the literature that with the emergence of 'New Labour' as political victors in 1997 there was a renewal of commitment to inclusive educational principles and SEN policy (Armstrong:2005) with their Green Paper *Excellence for All Children* (DfEE:1997) acting as a flagship and precursor to their inclusive

educational manifesto which included the expectation that children presenting with SEN should progress and achieve positive educational outcomes alongside their peers.

The incorporation early on in the thesis of the open letter written to the Prime Minister of the day clearly illustrates the position of SEN support within the PVI group-based Early Years Childcare Sector as one immensely politicised with the PVI group-based sector engaged with Central and Local Government in a dispute which for many PVI group-based providers and practitioners has amounted to a struggle for professional and business survival:

'...The early years is in crisis and nurseries refuse to be blamed for this crisis that is caused by government under-funding.' (D. L.P., 2016)

'It is disgusting how we are treated. I am a family business if it was just me I would put closed on my door tomorrow after 28 years in the business.' (H.C., 2016)

'if you were to own a quality business and the government prevented you from charging your private fees to maintain your quality business, would you a) accept the cap on your price and wait for your business to go under b) find a way to charge your true fees c) withdraw from government funding scheme and accept that you will probably lose your customers and ultimately your business.' (L.S. 2016)

These comments reflect those within the literature as expressed by Sheepwash (2017), J.R (2017).and KH (2019) where they comment on the operational challenges currently facing the PVI group-based providers.

When considering the inclusiveness of Government policy, the following comments require noting by the Government should they wish to continue with an inclusive programme of education.

'Inclusion can be difficult to maintain...' (NING 2)

This comment made by a PVI group-based practitioner is supported by the point made earlier in the review of literature by Grenier's (2014, np) in her article where she wrote:

'Early years settings in some areas are expected to include children with complex special needs, without the necessary resources or support. This is not true inclusion, and we cannot sustain this cut-price Cinderella Service.'

Findings within the literature and the additional data gathered through practitioners' views showed that it is not uncommon for families of children presenting with SEN to be living with other additional challenges such as social deprivation (Shaw et al.:2016, Morgan and Reed:2016, Waldfogel and Washbrook:2010), identifying a clear relationship between poverty and children presenting with higher levels of SEN and domestic disharmony and dysfunction. Some areas of the Government's social welfare initiatives such as that of the Early Intervention strategy implemented in order to *' help so many families under stress to fulfil their mission of giving children a secure and loving space in which to grow up'* (Allen, 2011, p. viii) require

PVI group-based practitioners to make referrals on behalf of a child's wider family to different outside agencies including Social Care and Housing. Managers and SENCOs working in the PVI group-based settings that I supported spent large amounts of time, sometimes whole working days, engaged with other agencies, intervening on behalf of parents, and attending multi-professional meetings in support of children and their families:

- *In practice the workload has increased and there is a need for time to be funded for liaison with other professionals, completing paperwork and supporting families. It needs to be remembered that many pre schools are working in pack away settings with SENCO s earning not much more than the minimum wage. (Facebook1)*
- *Seems we are expected to do what Health Visitors and other professional are with little to no support. (Facebook 2)*
- *... at times the multi-agency working breaks down. (NING 2)*

8.2 Fiscal considerations

8.2.1 Central and Local Authority funding streams

The 2008 financial crisis and subsequent fiscal austerity has seen the gradual retrenching and diluting of many LA services SEN-related education initiatives.

LAs are increasingly having to redefine service provision to the PVI group-based provision (Baisley:2010, Hastings et al.:2015, Gainsbury and Neville:2015).

Some in the PVI group-based sector are finding it more and more difficult to remain operationally viable in the current economic climate. A consequence of this will undoubtedly be the continued loss of early years PVI group-based provisions rated good and outstanding by Ofsted, and particularly so in some demographic areas serving some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Assertions made by PVI group-based practitioners as to the underfunding of SEN within the sector have been widely corroborated with Matt Dunkley, Director of Children's Services in Kent commenting specifically on the fiscal ramifications of implementing the statutory responsibilities set out in *The Children and Families Act 2014*:

'... the 2014 legislation set out an expectation of what they (children and young people with SEN) are entitled to, but we have a system that is not currently funded sufficiently to meet their demands ... it's a crisis that threatens to undermine the general funding of schools, but also potentially to bankrupt local authorities who might have to bail out overspend from their own resources. We've got a perfect storm which is contriving to threaten the viability of the system.' (Dunkley, 2018, np)

Additionally, The National Education Union's own findings identified the existing LA SEN funding crisis as partly attributable to the extra duty by *The Children and Families Act 2014* requirement placed on them to support children and young people with an EHCP up to the age of 25. Their conclusions in accordance with Dunkley (2014), with both agreeing that measures to support the 2014 SEN legislation had not been adequately funded by Central Government (Richardson, 2019, np).

It is undoubtedly the case that the delivery of SEN support at the frontline of service provision by the PVI group-based sector has been impacted not just by shortfalls in SEN funding at both national and local level but by the underfunding by Government of other funding streams to the PVI group-based providers in their capacity as a Government resource for supporting of welfare reforms.

8.2.2 Government funding for PVI group-based provisions

The insufficient hourly rates paid by Government to the PVI group-based sector in order to finance Government educational and welfare initiatives, such as those of

- ELE – Government funding (Welfare) for 2 year old children experiencing social deprivation/SEND/Looked after by a LA.
- ELE – Government Funding for the universal educational entitlement of all 3 – 4 year olds to access early years education,
- EFE – Government Funding (Welfare) to allow qualifying working parents an extra 15 hours per week top up of early education and childcare for their 3 and 4 year old child on top of the universal entitlement

These alongside reduced rates of LA inclusion funding have been seen to profoundly impact on the delivery of SEN provision within the PVI group-based sectors.

The consequence of insufficient Government funding for some within the PVI group-based sector has led to the closure of PVI group-based provisions:

Responses included:

- *A lot less funding available.*
- *'They are cutting money but still expecting the same practice'. (Facebook 2)*
- *Yes, massive financial implications, many children don't meet the threshold for additional funding so puts a strain on finances and key person workload. Children need to attend in setting for a certain amount of sessions before can be assessed so even if needs are very severe they can't get funding. (Facebook1)*

8.2.3 Local Authority SEN funding to PVI group-based provisions

The Government has required LAs to put in place a range of SEN funding streams which can be accessed by the PVI group-based providers. However, in many instances PVI group-based providers are uncertain or unaware of when they can claim these. Also, it has been claimed by those in the sector that frequently the amounts offered are insufficient for the purpose of issue.

- *'The funding for SEN is much more difficult to obtain and every setting is very confused on if they are able to claim this and there is a mountain of paperwork to fill in. We have a child within our setting that has severe communication difficulties and we have worked so hard to achieve her goals with help from speech and language setting support and now we have had Educational Psychologists in we feel that we should have got financial support for this.'* (NING1)
- *... also funding does not cover additional time needed to complete the lengthy process of completing EHCP requests. ' (Facebook2)*
- *Any funding is just about impossible to obtain ... (Facebook 1)*
- *Children with severe and complex needs funding for additional support has been reduce to £7.90 per hour. (Facebook 1)*

- *We do not get any extra funding which I think is wrong. (Facebook 1)*

8.3 Legislation

It has also been that the meeting of the statutory requirements in part 3 of *The Children and Families Act 2014* has placed increased statutory expectation and financial pressure on the PVI group-based sector:

The majority of PVI group-based practitioner responses emphasised the additional SEN workloads:

- *.... It feels like too much pressure to meet the deadlines. (Facebook 1)*
- *Many settings don't apply them unfortunately.*
- *... a huge drain on staff morale because regardless of the never-ending paperwork and chasing up we have to do without the support of the LA is very frustrating.*
- *This is putting /makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEN children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This is putting a massive strain on staff*
- *Not easily achieved understanding of changes, processes and new formats.*
- *I fully support the expectations set out in the code but obviously such expectations place a huge drain on staff morale because regardless of the never-ending paperwork and chasing up we have to do without the support of the LA it is very frustrating.*

8.4 SEN legislative and fiscal effects on the wider cohort

In 2005 Baroness Warnock expressed reservations about the appropriateness of total inclusivity as policy in relation to special educational provision:

"Governments must come to recognise that, even if inclusion is an ideal for society in general, it may not always be an ideal for schools, ... I think it has gone too far. It was a sort of bright idea of the 1970s but by now it has become a kind of mantra and it really isn't working." (Lightfoot, 2005, np)

Despite this reconsideration of her educational stance by Baroness Warnock since the publication of *The Warnock Report* (1978), legislation such as that contained in the *Children and Families Act 2014* has dictated that the Early Years PVI group-based sector continues to be required by statute to support children presenting with higher levels of SEN needs with this frequently impacting negatively on the nature of that educational provision received by the wider cohort:

- *At the moment we do not have any SEN children, but in the past it has been difficult to provide support to the children, as it is usually one to one and it is not always possible to free up a member of staff for just one child, especially when inclusion funding is not approved, we then have to take on the financial burden.* (Facebook1)
- *1 child is currently taking up a lot of unfunded 1:1 time, plus severe behaviour issues are impacting on the group.* (Facebook1)
- *I'd be lying if I said it didn't. Whatever we do has an impact on the other children within the setting we try to minimise that impact. With a child with high functioning autism it impacts if we're having quiet time with the children or discussing topics as they will be noisy distracting so we have to minimise this in the best way we can ensure they are still included but don't impact within the setting.* (Facebook1)
- *Yes sometimes the group can be a challenging one. Supporting all the varying needs of 2-4 yr olds alongside SEN, child protection plans, children with EAL too...* (Facebook1)
- *Can reduce overall quality of provision if too many children with variable SEN being supported. At present my setting has 36% SEN children, this has overstretched resources, quality of mainstream provision (due to most experienced staff supporting children with SEN) and been very busy (especially applying for EHCP, paperwork etc).* (Facebook1)

- *lack of funds is an issue but through dedicated staff and good relations with*
- *Too much pressure being put on early years.*

(Facebook1 responses)

8. 5 Local Authority specialist SEN support

Government funding streams to LAs over the past twenty or so years have been seen to be reduced year on year. As Hastings et al. (2015) pointed out Government expenditure to LAs in England fell by 12% during the period 2009 – 2013 and the findings of the Rowntree Report (Hastings et al., 2015) citing a spending loss for LAs in England in real terms of 27% between the years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

As a part of LA services restructuring and the retrenchment of funding to the different LA service areas, SEN provision to the PVI group-based sector has experienced dramatic cutbacks for some in the PVI group-based sector. Grenier (2014, np) wrote of early years practitioners concerns that LA advisory teams had *'been cut back significantly in many areas, reducing the support they can offer early years settings ...'* Some LAs such as those of Sutton and Worcestershire going so far as to contract out parts of their SEN functions.

- *Children have to get to a critical development stage before help supplied. (NING2)*
- *It can feel like there is no support at times and that I am always chasing them up for updates, reports and appointments etc. (Facebook1)*
- *'Lots of delaying techniques! There is very limited specialist provision outside of mainstream and our IEP visits are set for the year in Sept, we receive 3 days worth' (Facebook1)*
- *'Poorly ... just like to sign forms we fill in and take the credit .' (Facebook2)*

- ... *it is the lack of practical support that is the challenge.* (Facebook 1)
- *Funding is practically non-existent and on-site advice and support is available but again, difficult to access at times'* (NING1)
- *'Support has been in decline over the last few years and it seems that we are identifying more children who need additional support especially with speech and language.* (Facebook 2)
- *'Gone from huge support with lots of expert advice to two early years specialists this year!'* (NING1)
- *'Nowhere as much as they used to support us. Basic help but have to ask. Too many forms to fill in to get support.'* (Facebook2)

8.5.1 Training

Due to LAs rationalising of their SEN provision to the PVI group-based sector PVI group-based practitioners have found difficulty accessing appropriate specialist training albeit for a number of reasons including the timeliness of externally run courses, availability of spaces and travelling distance involved alongside associated costs. As Grenier (2014, np) commented *'without good-quality professional development opportunities ... it will become ever harder to improve'*

Many respondents of the BOS Online Surveys commented that they experienced various difficulties accessing SEN training:

- *'Training is difficult to access for various reasons, Not so much training available.'*
- *Training for all courses has become more expensive and lots of courses are really hard to get onto.*
- *Free training completely withdrawn.*

The findings of the data can also be seen to be in keeping with the *Nutbrown Review* (Nutbrown, 2012) which highlighted government concerns that many practitioners, particularly those entering the profession prior to the publication of the Review did not receive an initial professional qualification appropriately providing them with the necessary knowledge to meet the educational needs of children presenting with a range of SEN:

- *... I have heard of many practitioners not as qualified being unable to get past the paperwork.*

Nutbrown's findings are further supported by Buckland and Glass's (2014) own findings from their Parliamentary Inquiry into childcare for disabled children. They identified:

'a significant shortfall of knowledge, skills, and confidence and worry in providing quality care and education to disabled children in the childcare and early years workforce. (Buckland & Glass, 2014, p9)

Not having the required skill set in order to appropriately support children with SEN alongside matters such as the low levels of financial remuneration within the sector can be seen to have affected PVI group-based providers sense of professional self-efficacy. Bandura (1994) asserted that if an individual felt confident in the competence and effectiveness of their own actions it would result in positive outcomes with the reverse also being true:

'I think that practitioners are very demoralised about most things at the moment due to the lack of finances and unrealistic expectations'

(NING 1)

'... expectations change so it is hard to keep practitioners up to date,'
(NING2“)

8.6 Summary

Through the study of the literature and the research findings, and by reflecting on my own professional experiences and the many shared conversations I have held with PVI group-based setting owners and SENCOs over the years, it seems clear that many PVI group-based provisions are struggling to adequately meet with operational costs as well as the needs of all of the children in their care particularly when they those of children with higher levels of SEN.

PVI group-based practitioners have found it difficult to determine where to draw an equitable line between their commitment to inclusive principles and practices as required by statute and the educational and emotional needs of all of the children attending the PVI group-base setting. Managers, SENCOs and PVI practitioners have expressed frustration and feelings of concern, believing that they are unable to offer any of the children within the group-based setting a good early years educational experience because of the range, quantity and types of SEN that they must strive to support within a single cohort of children.

Ironically, it can be argued that a legislative framework which was implemented in order to ensure best practice and positive outcomes for individuals with special educational needs might prove to be too expensive to maintain and in part prove responsible for a reduction in demographically accessible early years education for those children most in need of SEN support. SEN provision within the sector can be

seen to have been placed under additional pressure due to other Government legislation and policy such as that of the EFE which not only removed an area of potential income generation by PVI group-based providers in order to supplement the low levels of Government hourly funding rates and initiatives such as the ELE which also brought with them the need for additional SEN provision within the PVI group-based sector.

The literature and research findings suggest that LA reductions in SEN support services and an apparent Government expectation that practitioners can absorb rising administrative workloads created through the obligatory adherence to SEN statutory requirements place considerable strain on individual practitioners as well as the PVI group-based provisions themselves. This stress is exacerbated by insufficient levels of funding paid by Government for early years education and childcare spaces in the PVI group-based sector.

The literature and research findings also show that practitioners within the PVI group-based sector feel demoralised, perceiving that they are undervalued by Government as a profession, being referred to interchangeably by Government as either providers of early years education or 'childcare providers' (a descriptive terminology which changes depending on which term best fits the Government's different manifesto pledges).

Timely access to external agency involvement was also identified by some practitioners as problematic, with National Health Service waiting lists delaying the

prompt involvement of medical professionals such as speech and language therapists and paediatricians.

The PVI group-based provisions as a sector support a considerable number of children presenting with a range of SEN in disadvantaged areas at a time where LA maintained nursery schools are seen to be closing (Paull et al.: 2018) However in areas of social deprivation where there is likely to be a higher level of SEN within the community, the research findings suggest that it is more difficult for PVI group-based provisions to raise sufficient funding to maintain the setting's financial viability through the provision of additional service or parental take up of further hours costed at a higher hourly rate than that paid through Government funding for ELE, EEE and EFE funding.

What became clear within the review of literature and the research findings is that a number of Government initiatives such as those aimed to reduce child poverty and social deprivation which involve early years education and childcare as a part of their solution have led to an increase in the numbers of children presenting with SEN who access the PVI group-based provisions by default

Fiscal pressures have had a major impact within the research domain: they have affected business sustainability, practitioners' perceived self-efficacy, and the types and extent of SEN support available to children accessing the PVI group-based provisions. Additionally, the effect on this particular group of PVI group-based providers by the implementation of the Government's School Nurseries Capital Fund initiative is yet to be seen.

Some of the providers delivering a significant number of the inclusive opportunities for children under statutory school age appear to be under imminent threat of closure. Moreover, SEN support itself has been considerably reduced at LA level.

The squeeze on government support during the period of austerity has been accompanied by substantial ongoing overspends in local authorities' budgets created by rising SEN costs across the education sector. National Education Union analysis identified that there are currently large funding shortfalls for SEN education with nearly 93% of local councils not keeping up with '*rapidly increasing demand*' and nearly two-thirds of England's local councils spending less now in real terms than they were three years ago to support pupils with complex needs (Richardson:2019, np).

A key concern identified from the research is that unless the Government begins to listen and respond sympathetically to what the practitioner voices coming from the PVI group-based provisions are telling them this will inevitably become an educational sector in crisis.

The growing disquiet and discontent amongst practitioners in the PVI early years educational and childcare sector associated with the impacts on service provision by Central and Local Government fiscal decisions alongside a raft of statutory expectations including those relating to SEN has caused the sector to become politicised creating within the sector a negotiating strength that they previously lacked. A point worthy of consideration is whether the timing of the Government's

recent decision to look to LA school-based solutions for the provision of early years education and childcare has any bearing on the evident grouping-together of the PVI group-based sector into a cohesive and united front with a common funding agenda.

At the centre of this growing professional unity is the Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) *Champagne Nurseries on Lemonade Funding*.

The success of this VCoP based on social networking principles is indicative that large numbers of practitioners within the sector are willing and able to engage with virtual communities of practice.

An unexpected finding as a part of this research when analysing the data on a regional basis was the existence of a 'postcode lottery' as to SEN provision across authorities with there being no overall equity of SEN provision across the board despite the legislator requirements. One research respondent suggesting that many of the PVI group-based provisions are not adhering to these statutory duties:

'Many settings don't apply them unfortunately.' (Facebook1)

8.7 Conclusion

The current SEN system within the Early Years has fallen into a shambolic state nationally and the current SEN processes will ultimately collapse unless restorative action is undertaken proving the initiative to have been a chaotic failure.

It is absolutely imperative to have a policy for the protection of some of the most vulnerable children within society, but such policy has to be prioritised as a matter of urgency.

8.8 VESSILS intervention

VESSILS is a heutagogical tool which provides both a gateway to specialist links also allows practitioners access to a Virtual Community of Practice in which they have the opportunities to share professional knowledge and support.

The VESSILS intervention model supports practitioners in their efforts to deliver effective SEN support to the children in their care through providing hyperlinks to specialist organisations, resources and opportunities for practitioners to access free professional development opportunities.

'People are partly the products of their environments, but by selecting, creating, and transforming their environmental circumstances they are producers of environments as well' (Bandura:2000, p.75)

By increasing practitioner confidence and competence within the area of SEN support perceptions of self-efficacy should be enhanced as illustrated through 'the *cycle of empowerment*' model which sits within the VESSIL design.

The interactive dialogue within the VESSILS 'community' is rooted in the sharing of resources and links pertinent to the domain of SEN in early years education.

Examples of 'collaborative' conversations in pedagogic discussions were identified within the findings.

In so far as the effectiveness of the VESSILS VCoP can be considered as of May 2019 the Facebook based VESSILS VCoP had a total membership exceeding 3,000 members and available data has shown that the intervention is valued amongst the early years educator community. There have been a number of encouraging comments made by early years educators about the VESSILS intervention model, these include:

- *“You helped! Had a cheeky look at new resources through your page. Thank you!”*
- *“Will you keep it [VESSILS] going when you’ve finished?”*

Additionally, Facebook’s own analytic tool has charted that the intervention is being used by the membership group.

8.9 Contribution to scholarship

This work offers a unique compilation and analysis of PVI group-based practitioners’ professional and personal perspectives. It pulls together and documents the legislative journey of SEN through the very personal narratives of PVI group-based practitioners, many of these through the medium of social media. The experiences of a sector of early years professionals who have been caught within the walls of a collapsing SEN process have been captured.

8.10 Next Steps

Representatives from an Outer London borough have expressed an interest in discussing the VESSILS intervention model in connection with extending the

borough's Local Offer. The Local Offer comprises the services and provision available to children, young people and families 'locally' within a borough who are living with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Furthermore, it is intended that the research journey will be made to turn full circle with the continued modification of the VESSILS intervention model in order to develop a standalone bespoke version of the model which will act as a Virtual and SEN Support InterLinked System for parents of children presenting with SEN and Disability aged from birth to five years.

Model functionality could include:

- a 'library' of catalogued links leading to SEN and Disability pertinent sites and resources
- a training suite consisting of links to on-line training modules and facilitators
- an advice forum offering specialised SEN advice in real time
- a parents' forum
- a professional forum

The central tenets of the module could also be adapted to provide an on-line resource for different SEN specialist areas and key stages both in mainstream and specialist educational provision. Specific areas of SEN such as Global Developmental Delay, Autism, or ADHD could be embedded with targeted support from within dedicated areas within a VESSILS node.

8.11 Further research areas of consideration

8.11.1 Research consideration (1)

Pedagogic enquiry into the development of an Early Years online teaching model to support effective inclusive teaching for children with SEN within a mainstream educational setting.

8.11.2 Research consideration (2)

The Development of an Early Years online intervention model to support the understanding of parents whose child has received a diagnosis of complex social communication difficulties or autism and provide early intervention support.

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Appendices:

Appendix A:

Steps towards the development of an on-line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children presenting with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Steps towards the development of an on-line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children presenting with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Sian Benedict-Owen
Brunel University
United Kingdom

Abstract

Educating a child with an ASD dictates that where possible daily opportunities are created in order to teach and generalise skills across different environments. The extension of school-initiated interventions into the home is proven to lead to more positive outcomes for the child.

However the effects of stress experienced by parents of a child with an ASD can impact enormously on their capacity to engage with their child's education. Research has indicated that high levels of parenting stress can counteract the effectiveness of teaching intervention.

A parent training and social networking system was implemented at a school for children and young people presenting with moderate and severe learning difficulties where a high proportion of students have a diagnosis of Autism.

The aim of the system was to provide a parent training platform and community focus based on social networking principles for parents engaged with the project.

1. Introduction

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are a group of neuro developmental disorders which impact on aspects of an individual's neuro development and functioning competence. They affect areas of a person's processing in relation to social interaction, social communication and flexibility of thought. These are expressed in the International Statistical Classification of Health Related Problems 10th revision as:

'A group of disorders characterized by qualitative abnormalities in reciprocal social interactions and in patterns of communication, and by a restricted, stereotyped, repetitive repertoire of interests and activities. These qualitative abnormalities are a pervasive feature of the individual's functioning in all situations.'

This trio of commonalities when present within the regions of social interaction and communication and rigid, ritualistic behaviours is referred to as the 'triad of impairments' (Wing, L. & Gould, J.: 1979).

Autism is currently estimated to affect one in every one hundred children in the United Kingdom (Office of National Statistics: 2005) with four times as many boys diagnosed than girls (Office of National Statistics: 2005).

The way in which an ASD affects the individual varies considerably from one person to another. Consequently parenting a child who presents on the spectrum is not the same for every parent. Experiences and needs will at times be different as well as sometimes in common. Dr Stephen Shore [25], Professor at Adelphi University, whose research focus is matching best practice to the needs of people with autism, states *'If you have met one person with autism - you have met one person with autism.'*

Parental experiences can include a range of emotional and physical challenges including feelings of parenting inadequacy, social isolation, family breakdown and mental illness (Karst and Van Hecke: 2012). There can also be an expectation on parents, self-imposed or otherwise, for them to engage intensely with their child's programme of educational interventions, such as in Applied Behaviour Analysis where intervention can involve several hours of focused one on one engagement with their child each day.

Furthermore, when discussing parental engagement with educational interventions for children with an ASD, it is important to remember that the educational interventions alluded to can also include those of the wider 'life curriculum', for example life skills such as dressing, toileting and feeding. These types of interventions can be necessary for a child presenting with an ASD when they are of an age considerably more advanced than that of their neuro typical peers when they achieved these same skills.

Alongside ASD, an individual can have the existence of a co-morbidity with another condition such as Fragile X, Downs Syndrome and/or learning difficulties. A circumstance which can add an additional challenge to parents and impact on their coping mechanism and sense of emotional well-being.

2. Considering the effect of ASDs on parental efficacy

Whilst it is recognised that some parents may become imbued with a sense of energy at the prospect of supporting a child diagnosed with an ASD (NAC: 2012), having a child who presents with any kind of disability can prove stressful for family members, particularly parents.

Research has suggested that amongst parents of children with a disability the stress levels shown by parents of a child with an ASD are substantially higher than in the other groups of parents (Osborne et al.:2008) and that this stress could affect the child's success within an early intervention programme (Robbins et al.: 1991, Carlson-Green et al.:1995).

Divorce rates are reported to be higher amongst this group of parents (Hartley et al., 2010). Ambitious about Autism a national charity in the United Kingdom for children and young people with autism estimates the divorce rates of parents of children with autism as 60% higher than the average for other groups. One UK study found that one in three families of children diagnosed with ASD were headed by single parents (Bromley, Hare, Davison and Emerson: 2004). Behaviour is also cited as a centrally problematic concern.

Other parental concerns adding to the pressures experienced by parents include:

- worry about their child's ability to function independent of others
- ASD impacts on financial stability due to treatment costs and planning for a child's future when parents are no longer available to support them
- ASD impacts on employment status for parents when they have to miss significant amounts of time from work in order to attend appointments
- ASD impacts on a family's quality of life – families are more likely to eat at home, not engage so much in community activities and spend more time on daily activities
- They might also receive little support from other extended family members
- worry about what quality of life their child will have as an adult and how they will cope when parents die
- Health of their child
- Often transportation issues
- lack of access to child minding
- language barrier
- difficult work schedules
- parental uncertainty as to what their role in the process is

- an absence of confidence when working in partnership with the different professionals involved in supporting their child.

The figure of carers of children with autism in full time work have been reported at 11% with 70% of carers saying that the lack of appropriate care facilities stops them working. (Broach, S., et al.:2003)

3. Importance of parental engagement with educational interventions

There have been a wealth of studies undertaken where the outcome has highlighted the effectiveness of early teaching intervention for children with an ASD and the associated potential for more positive long term outcomes (Lovaas: 1987, Reed et al.:2007, Sallows and Graupner:2005).

Karst, J.S et al. (2012) Jordan and Powell (1995) emphasised the importance of parental involvement in the learning and teaching programmes of children with ASDs describing it as 'imperative in order to foster consistency between all environments for the children.

Parents possess important information about their child which can contribute greatly to the reciprocity of the learning and teaching process (Gov't. Publications. Dublin:2006).

Rao and Beidel (2009) put forward the view that as well as treating the child presenting with an ASD, parents may also need to learn effective strategies for coping with their own distress.

4. Research plan

This research was planned as the first phase in a study seeking to design a system which could be implemented on-line and used by parents as an educational knowledgebase and social interaction system. Anticipated outcomes included identifying whether and to what extent a targeted virtual educational and community network system could present as a meaningful tool for parent training, information sharing and as an emotional well-being conduit for parents of a child with an ASD.

Put simply the intention of this study was to develop and test a system's design which was proposed as a possible educational and social networking intervention for parents of children presenting with ASD. Its design based on the proposition that better overall outcomes will be achieved by children with ASDs when their parents are informed, empowered, engaged and supported.

A further aim at this point of the research was that implementation of, and engagement with, the prototype would provide a basis for additional information gathering from parents and educators to

identify additional system requirements which could be added into the system model. Implementing and administering the modified model would then underpin the foundations of phase two of an extended project.

5. Methodology

The project was piloted in a geographically defined area. All of the children whose parents took part in the study attend the same local authority special school in an outer London borough. The school offers specialist provision for children and young people with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The school also has its own autism provision.

Initial contact was made by the researcher with the head teacher of the school outlining the research intention and a meeting date was arranged.

At the meeting a discussion was conducted between the head teacher, the school's Co-ordinator for the management of the Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) programme running in school and the researcher.

It was established between the head teacher and the SCERTS co-ordinator that the co-ordinator had capacity to input to the 'VESSIL' system on a daily basis with up to five parents.

6. Instruments of measure

A '*parental/ carer anxiety assessment sheet*' was developed by the author. This was designed for the purpose of identifying levels of parental anxiety about a range of issues such as their child's social development, ability to communicate, self-injurious behaviours and diet before the intervention was in place. This assessment was completed by parents at the beginning of the study. The '*parental/carer anxiety assessment sheet*' could then be completed again at a later date and the data compared in order to identify if there had been a reduction in levels of parental anxiety during the period that parents accessed the intervention.

Semi-structured interviews were also employed as a method of identifying parent's perceptions as to their relationship with their child's teacher and degree which they, as parents, engaged with school.

7. Study population

The sample was selected using a purposive method and was comprised of parents of children presenting with an autistic spectrum disorder.

The SCERTS Co-ordinator identified five children that she was currently working with. Details about the research and an invitation to participate was sent home to parents in the form of a pamphlet.

All of the parents approached agreed to take part in the research. Three actively did so.

An initial forum meeting was held at the school with those parents who expressed an interest in taking part. At the meeting expectations of user etiquette were established. Parents would 'touchbase' on-line at least three times a week, even if just to say 'hello'. This proviso was to encourage parents to become familiar with accessing and using the intervention through frequency of use.

8. Consent

A letter in the case of school-side and pamphlet in the case of parents, was sent prior to any initial engagement in keeping with good ethical practice. The overall aims of the project in general terms was explained and recipients were asked whether they would be agreeable to participate.

9. System considerations and Functionality

A set of systems considerations was produced. These considerations included the identification of an existing social networking site for the on-line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System to help shape the design. The reasons for sitting inside an existing site at this pilot stage included deliberations such as the cost of developing and maintaining the pilot site, the ease of accessibility to the site by parents and how easily security levels could be implemented.

One attribute of operational functionality was to have a facilitator from the school's own teaching staff as well as the researcher. This offered a twofold benefit. Parents would have the familiarity of a facilitator they already knew and also one who could respond more immediately to requests directed 'school-side'.

It was essential that the 'VESSIL' system would be able to provide secure levels of protection of any information shared.

The system requirements identified were felt most closely to match Google+ capabilities. Thus Google+ was selected as the host network for the pilot.

Each member of the pilot sample needed to either have a pre-existing Google+ account or to set one up for the purpose of the study.

Once a Google+ account is in place, permanent links can be created with other account holders by linking email addresses. In Google+ terms this process is regarded as the creation of a 'circle'. For the purpose of the pilot, 'circle' permutations could consist of a variation of different variables such as the two facilitators, the researcher and the SCERTS

Co-ordinator, the researcher-the SCERTS Co-ordinator-parent/s, parents together.

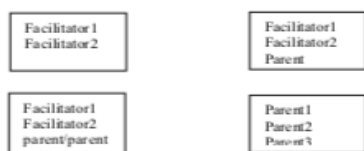


Figure 1. Examples of possible group permutations

A mirror image of each 'circle' needed to be created by all members of a discreet group. Initial 'circles' were set up and every 'circle' was codified using a unique name. In the initial stage, each parent could access a 'circle' consisting of themselves, the researcher and the school side facilitator. If a post was addressed to a particular named 'circle', the contents of the post would only be received by those who were designated members of that discreet 'circle' by the initiator of the post. Posts sent to a 'circle' gave members of that 'circle' the opportunity to share comments across that group. Where posts were sent by a facilitator from a 'circle' which included the email addresses of all members of the wider pilot group the comments could be seen, added to and shared by everyone.



Figure 2. Google circles

Whilst information sharing by account holders of Google+ at a public level is possible, the use of the Google+ 'circles' capability ensured that information sharing could be controlled and shared on a pre-determined level. All individual members could choose who would be a member of a particular 'circle' and control the flow of any information they themselves shared.

Project issues were also influenced by the findings of Losh et al. (2008), namely that sub-threshold characteristics of autism are often seen in the parents of children presenting with an ASD, i.e. they are part of the broader autism phenotype (BAP) so that they

too could present with their own difficulties around indicators of ASD.

A possible parental BAP connection raised its own design concerns as parents presenting with the broader autism phenotype might themselves gain greater benefit from an end user interface which was markedly logical in its operational structure and supported by very clear and uncluttered visual graphics. For the 'VESSIL' system to be perceived by parents as a helpful tool it was important that the system was easy to access and navigate.

Certain strictures of use and etiquette protocols also needed to be identified and agreed to ensure that the system was used for its design purpose and any misuse such as being used as a tool to voice dissatisfaction by parents about teaching staff or the school facilities could be avoided.

Table 1. Strictures of use and etiquette protocols

Facilitators	Parents/carers
That the community should be a place which offered a supportive and confidential environment	The group was a place where they could discuss and share their concerns about their child in confidence with professional teachers
Comments made within the group should be confined to issues relating to the specific child and their education	Comments made within the group should be those concerning their own child and their education and not addressing wider school issues, i.e. This was not a forum for recording dissatisfaction about school related issues
Facilitators should avoid offering advice which contradicted or conflicted with that of the child's class teacher	That with parents' permission 'facilitators' might at times consult with members of the schools teaching team
Group members should act with integrity towards each other and respect each other's privacy	That group members would act with integrity towards the other members of the group and respect their privacy
Comments made within the group should not address issues relating to wider school concerns	

Exchanges could be expected during week days during term time in recognition that the school side facilitator was signed to a contract of employment and should not be expected to commit to engage in the study outside of contracted work hours.

10. The on-line Virtual Education Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) system – TouchBase121

The system was staged to parents as a packaged product with a unique product name 'Touchbase121' and its own logo. This was done in order to give the system an element of prestige aimed to heighten parents confidence. Rather than perceiving the system as being a 'work in progress' it should be viewed as an already capable product.



Figure 3. TouchBase121 - logo

This was important as in order for parents to feel supported by the system they needed to have the confidence that it would be effective.

It was hoped that the system would be seen to grow organically with new 'circles' being created amongst and that relationships between members of 'circles' would develop and perhaps deepen.

The 'VESSIL' system was designed with the aim to ameliorate parental stress and anxiety through the provision of parent training and social links between groups: educators and parents and parents with each other.



Figure 4. Proposed system dynamic - cycle of empowerment

Communication flows were designed to allow for multi way interactions. By the different types of knowledge sharing which could be achieved through the medium of the system, e.g. parent training (one of the centrally proposed functions of the communication flow) it was anticipated that parents should feel more confident at implementing those intervention strategies put in place by educators for the purpose of supporting their child's education. This confidence in turn could lead to increased perceptions of parental efficacy and well-being leading to increased feelings of parental empowerment. Ideally parental stress levels should then be favourably impacted on which in turn could allow for parents to feel more able to engage with their child's educational interventions. And so the cycle should continue.

11. The study

An initial meeting was held at the school. Three parents and the SCERTS co-ordinator attended. Feedback from the group included the fact that parents were also looking forward to the social aspect of the project as well as to any educational benefits that might be gained. At the meeting parents were asked to complete the 'parental/ carer anxiety assessment sheet'. Parents were shown how to sign up to Google+ and create a 'circle'. Both the researcher and the school side 'facilitator' posted onto the system each morning. Posts varied from those with ASD specific educational information to pictures accompanied by texts containing statements aimed at encouraging feelings of self-empowerment and wellbeing.

The community used the network for a variety of different reasons, some relating to questions of behaviour 'I have to take J. to a wedding next Friday and I am a bit concerned that he might freak out', and communication strategies, 'How do you know what's wrong with your child... everyone says to take him to the doctor but I don't know what to tell him'. Other enquiries were specifically aimed at other parents such as asking what they would be doing over the holiday periods with their child, what were their experience of accessing respite services: 'Question: Do parents here get respite for your children? If so, how did you go about getting it?' (Parent 3). Photographs and web links were shared between parents about their children and their experiences:

'This short clip gives me insight into (name)'s world. I watch him closely when we go out for our walks and I think this is how things are for him...' (Parent 1)

The pilot was managed over a half term school period of six weeks by the researcher. For the purposes of researching the prototype system, the researcher felt that by that time, the aims of the pilot system for research purposes had been met. The second forum

meeting was planned as a final feedback session. Both the parents and the school side 'facilitator' expressed that they were loath to close down the system at this point and requested that it continue as an extension of the current communication systems in place between home and school.

For the next period of a term the researcher acted as an observer of the functioning system.

12. Findings

It was clear from feedback given by parents both in written form and through forum discussions that with regards seeking educational advice, parents were very happy with the current arrangements. As their children attended a school which itself delivered specialised educational provision they professed themselves satisfied with the available levels of educational support. They believed teachers at the school had both the right levels of specialist expertise in order to support the needs of their child and also the ability and willingness to meet the parents own information needs regarding any educational interventions so allowing them, as parents, to proficiently support their own child's educational interventions at home. The feature of the study outcomes that appeared of particular value to this set of parents was the social opportunities that the system offered parents, allowing them to engage with each other in a way that had not previously been possible. Within a period of weeks of the system being in place members of the system began communicating with each other during weekend and later the holiday periods.

'...do you think that other parents would benefit from using this?it's nice to chat and share thoughts with each other and I thought some other parents might like/need this too?' (Parent 3)

Parents summarised their experiences of using Touchbase121, experiences included:

'I have found 'TouchBase' a fantastic tool for making contact with school and other parents. I have found the information I have got here very useful. Even tho I am a prolific user of the home school book, I think 'TouchBase' fills the gap that the book alone does not...' (Parent 1)

'TouchBase 121 has given me more confidence in dealing with (name). I now have much needed understanding that other people experience the same issues as (name). It's the perfect platform to go and ask questions for any issues or concerns that I have. With this, I don't feel so alone! I would really like to thank you for inviting me to take part in this.' (Parent 2)

'...TouchBase has helped voice immediate concerns and know someone will answer as soon as they can. I love that it has been kept and that we are now able to interact with other parents as well as professionals.' (Parent 3)

The positive tone of these excerpts and the comments made clearly demonstrate that there is a place for this type of parental intervention.

13. Conclusion

In England there are reported to be 71% of children with autism being educated in mainstream schools (Department for Education: 2012) with 54% of teachers in England feeling that they have inadequate training to meet their needs (NFER: 2011). With these statistics in mind a modified system based on the principles of the 'VESSIL' system could prove a useful provider of both parent training and as a social network agent within a mainstream educational environment.

The modified 'VESSIL' system is to be pioneered in an outer London borough locality and operated on a 'cluster' principle. The system will be independent of any one school but will act as a central point, supporting the parents of children with an ASD who attend one of a group of mainstream primary schools within a denoted area.

The aim is that parental access to the 'VESSIL' system in a mainstream school environment will lead a parent to feel that in relation to their child, and their own educational and social requirements as a parent, they are adequately supported and that this in turn will increase a parent's sense of parental efficacy, emotional well-being and reduce any feelings of anxiety and stress. Furthermore an increased sense of well-being should impact positively on parental capacity and willingness to engage more fully with their child's educational interventions thereby leading to more positive long term outcomes for the child.

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Appendix B

The Development of an On-Line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children Presenting with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Development of an On-Line Virtual Educational Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System for Parents of Children Presenting with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Designed to Support Inclusive Education

Sian Benedict-Owen
Brunel University
United Kingdom

Abstract

Educating a child with an ASD dictates that where possible daily opportunities are created in order to teach and generalise skills across different environments. The extension of school-initiated interventions into the home is proven to lead to more positive outcomes for the child. However the effects of stress experienced by parents of a child with an ASD can impact enormously on their capacity to engage with their child's education. Research has indicated that high levels of parenting stress can counteract the effectiveness of teaching interventions. For the purpose of this study designed to test the prototype of a parent training and social networking system, the system was implemented at a school for children and young people presenting with moderate and severe learning difficulties where a significant proportion of students have a diagnosis of Autism. The aim of the system was to provide for parents engaged with the project a parent training platform and community focus constructed on social networking principles.

1. Introduction

Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are a group of neuro developmental disorders which impact on aspects of an individual's neuro development and functioning competence. They affect areas of a person's processing in relation to social interaction, social communication and flexibility of thought. These are expressed in the International Statistical Classification of Health Related Problems 10th revision as:

'A group of disorders characterized by qualitative abnormalities in reciprocal social interactions and in patterns of communication, and by a restricted, stereotyped, repetitive repertoire of interests and activities. These qualitative abnormalities are a pervasive feature of the individual's functioning in all situations.'

This trio of commonalities when present within the regions of social interaction and communication

and rigid, ritualistic behaviours is referred to as the 'triad of impairments' [27]. Autism is currently estimated to affect one in every one hundred children in the United Kingdom with four times as many boys diagnosed than girls [16].

The way in which an ASD affects the individual varies considerably from one person to another. Consequently parenting a child who presents on the spectrum is not the same for every parent. Experiences and needs will at times be different as well as sometimes in common. Dr Stephen Shore [25], Professor at Adelphi University, whose research focus is matching best practice to the needs of people with autism, states 'If you have met one person with autism - you have met one person with autism.'

Parental experiences can include a range of emotional and physical challenges including feelings of parenting inadequacy, social isolation, family breakdown and mental illness [9]. There can also be an expectation on parents, self-imposed or otherwise, for them to engage intensely with their child's programme of educational interventions, such as in Applied Behaviour Analysis where intervention can involve several hours of focused one on one engagement with their child each day.

Furthermore, when discussing parental engagement with educational interventions for children with an ASD, it is important to remember that the educational interventions alluded to can also include those of the wider 'life curriculum', for example life skills such as dressing, toileting and feeding. These types of interventions can be necessary for a child presenting with an ASD when they are of an age considerably more advanced than that of their neuro typical peers when they achieved these same skills.

Alongside ASD, an individual can have the existence of a co-morbidity with another condition such as Fragile X, Downs Syndrome and/or learning difficulties. A circumstance which can add an additional challenge to parents and impact on their coping mechanism and sense of emotional well-being.

2. Considering the Effect of ASDs on Parental Efficacy

Whilst it is recognised that some parents may become imbued with a sense of energy at the prospect of supporting a child diagnosed with an ASD, having a child who presents with any kind of disability can prove stressful for family members, particularly parents [13].

Research has suggested that amongst parents of children with a disability the stress levels shown by parents of a child with an ASD are substantially higher than in the other groups of parents and that this stress could affect the child's success within an early intervention programme [3] [17] [20]. Divorce rates are reported to be higher amongst this group of parents [7]. Ambitious about Autism a national charity in the United Kingdom for children and young people with autism estimates the divorce rates of parents of children with autism as 60% higher than the average for other groups. One UK study found that one in three families of children diagnosed with ASD were headed by single parents [2]. Behaviour is also cited as a centrally problematic concern.

Other parental concerns adding to the pressures experienced by parents include:

- worry about their child's ability to function independent of others

- ASD impacts on financial stability due to treatment costs and planning for a child's future when parents are no longer available to support them
- ASD impacts on employment status for parents when they have to miss significant amounts of time from work in order to attend appointments
- ASD impacts on a family's quality of life – families are more likely to eat at home, not engage so much in community activities and spend more time on daily activities
- They might also receive little support from other extended family members
- worry about what quality of life their child will have as an adult and how they will cope when parents die
- health of their child
- often transportation issues
- lack of access to child minding
- language barrier
- difficult work schedules
- parental uncertainty as to what their role in the process is
- an absence of confidence when working in partnership with the different professionals involved in supporting their child.

The figure of carers of children with autism in full time work have been reported at 11% with 70% of

carers saying that the lack of appropriate care facilities stops them working [1].

3. Importance of Parental Engagement with Educational Interventions

There have been a wealth of studies undertaken where the outcome has highlighted the effectiveness of implementing early teaching interventions for children with an ASD and the associated potential for more positive long term outcomes [12] [19] [21].

Karst, J.S et al. Jordan and Powell emphasised the importance of parental involvement in the learning and teaching programmes of children with ASDs describing it as 'imperative' in order to foster consistency between all environments for the children [8] [9]. Parents possess important information about their child which can contribute greatly to the reciprocity of the learning and teaching process [6]. Best practice suggests that parental involvement is needed both for more rapid advances and to ensure consistency of approach [15].

Whilst interventional approaches adopted can be seen to vary, those interventions identified by the National Research Council as comprehensive, all possess some degree of parental involvement within their model [15]. The most common parent participation model being that of parent as educator - where parents are taught intervention techniques which enable them to continue interventions in the absence of professional input. As educators, parents are in a strong position to address issues concerned with generalising of their children's learning over a range of natural settings and situations including those within the home and the wider community. In addition Rao and Beidel put forward the view that as well as treating the child presenting with an ASD, parents may also need to learn effective strategies for coping with their own distress [18].

4. School - Roles, Responsibilities and Inclusive Education

Schools and educational authorities in the United Kingdom are obliged by law to develop cultures, policies and practices which work towards achieving an inclusive educational environment. Wilkinson and Twist within their work on UK Policy and Practice in relation to the education of children and young people with autism emphasise the legal expectation of schools to adopt attitudes and processes that make sure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum [24] [26].

Additionally, Wilkinson and Twist concluded within their work concerning educational provision and autism that [24]:

'despite best endeavours, it appears that efforts towards achieving mainstream educational inclusion

of pupils identified with ASD still have some way to go. In practice, higher school exclusion rates and greater gaps in attainment for ASD pupils compared to their typically developing peers demonstrate a need for improvements in educational provision for these pupils'

The above findings suggest that currently there exists a discernable gap within schools' inclusive provision for this cohort of children. As discussed elsewhere, the effective education of young people presenting with an ASD requires an informed, consistent and 24 hour curriculum approach. Possibly the lack of access to such a consistent and focused curriculum by this cohort of children, could in part, be responsible for the issues outlined above. The provision of an intervention by schools which facilitated parents to become empowered, confident and informed educators of their child, as part of the school's inclusive approach could prove part of the answer to those concerns raised by Wilkinson and Twist [26].

5. Research Plan

This research was planned as the first phase in a study seeking to design a system which could be implemented on-line and used by parents as an educational knowledgebase and social interaction system. Anticipated outcomes included identifying whether and to what extent a targeted virtual educational and community network system could present as a meaningful tool for parent training, information sharing and as an emotional well-being conduit for parents of a child with an ASD.

Put simply the intention of this study was to develop and test a system's design which was proposed as a possible educational and social networking intervention for parents of children presenting with ASD. Its design based on the proposition that better overall outcomes will be achieved by children with ASDs when their parents are informed, empowered, engaged and supported. A further aim at this point of the research was that implementation of, and engagement with, the prototype would provide a basis for additional information gathering from parents and educators to identify additional system requirements which could be added into the system model. Implementing and administering the modified model would then underpin the foundations of phase two of an extended project.

6. Learning Theory

In 2005 Siemens amongst others questioned the appropriateness of current learning theories within a changing technological landscape [5]. He argued that the rapid growth and complexity of information available on the internet, the ability for individuals to

interact on global networks, and the ability to combine different information flows suggested a need for a new learning theory. A new learning paradigm was needed in order to capture the new patterns of learning dynamics. Siemens suggested that the starting point for learning transpires when knowledge is triggered through the process of a learner linking with and submitting information into a learning community.

In the connectivist model, a learning community is termed a 'node'. Each 'node' is always part of a larger network. 'Nodes' are the result of connection points existing on a network. Each network consists of two or more 'nodes' which are connected for the purpose of sharing resources. Learners connect to a network to share and find new knowledge. The connectivist approach recognises that by increasing subject competence and the discovery by the learner of additional facts within a subject area, current knowledge held may change. A learner's existing knowledge will be extended and or modified on the basis of newly gained knowledge and subject competence. This new knowledge is then shared within the network. This modified knowledge may then itself be altered and shared as a result of further new knowledge received via the network. The skills regarded as imperative to learning within the connectivist stance are the ability to find current information and the ability to filter secondary and irrelevant information. Siemens argued 'the capacity to know is more critical than what is actually known' [24]. This connectivist approach presents a clear and germane paradigm upon which the aspirations of the learning dynamic framed within this research are based.

7. Methodology

The project was piloted in a geographically defined area. All of the children whose parents took part in the study attend the same local authority special school in an outer London borough. The school offers specialist provision for children and young people with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The school also has its own autism provision.

Initial contact was made by the researcher with the head teacher of the school outlining the research intention and a meeting date was arranged. At the meeting a discussion was conducted between the head teacher, the school's Co-ordinator for the management of the Social Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support (SCERTS) programme running in school and the researcher. It was established between the head teacher and the SCERTS co-ordinator that the co-ordinator had capacity to input to the 'VESSIL' system on a daily basis with up to five parents.

8. Instruments of Measure

A 'parental/ carer anxiety assessment sheet' was developed by the author. This was designed for the purpose of identifying levels of parental anxiety about a range of issues such as their child's social development, ability to communicate, self-injurious behaviours and diet before the intervention was in place. This assessment was completed by parents at the beginning of the study. The 'parental/carer anxiety assessment sheet' could then be completed again at a later date and the data compared in order to identify if there had been a reduction in levels of parental anxiety during the period that parents accessed the intervention.

Semi-structured interviews were also employed as a method of identifying parent's perceptions as to their parental concerns regarding their child and their education, their relationship with their child's teacher and the degree which they, as parents, engaged with school.

9. Study Population

The sample was selected using a purposive method and was comprised of parents of children presenting with an autistic spectrum disorder. The SCERTS Coordinator identified five children that she was currently working with. Details about the research and an invitation to participate was sent home to parents in the form of a pamphlet.

All of the parents approached agreed to take part in the research. Three actively did so. An initial forum meeting was held at the school with those parents who expressed an interest in taking part. At the meeting expectations of user etiquette were established. Parents would 'touch-base' on-line at least three times a week, even if just to say 'hello'. This proviso was to encourage parents to become familiar with accessing and using the intervention through frequency of use.

10. Consent

A letter in the case of school-side and pamphlet in the case of parents, was sent prior to any initial engagement in keeping with good ethical practice. The overall aims of the project in general terms was explained and recipients were asked whether they would be agreeable to participate.

11. System Considerations and Functionality

A set of systems considerations was produced. Considerations included the identification of an existing social networking site which would allow for the prototype of the on-line Virtual Educational

Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System to be created using the host network's own functionality. The reasons for sitting the 'VESSIL' system within an existing social networking site at this pilot stage included deliberations such as the cost of developing and maintaining a pilot site, the ease of accessibility to the site by parents and how easily security levels could be implemented. Another attribute of operational functionality at this initial stage was to have a facilitator from the school's own teaching staff as well as the researcher. This offered a twofold benefit. Parents would have the familiarity of a facilitator they already knew and also one who could respond more immediately to requests directed 'school-side'.

It was essential that the 'VESSIL' system would be able to provide secure levels of protection of any information shared.

The system requirements identified were felt most closely to match Google+ capabilities. Thus Google+ was selected as the host network for the pilot. Each member of the pilot sample needed to either have a pre-existing Google+ account or to set one up for the purpose of the study.

Once a Google+ account is in place, permanent links can be created with other account holders by linking email addresses. In Google+ terms this process is regarded as the creation of a 'circle'. For the purpose of the pilot, 'circle' permutations could consist of a variation of different variables such as the two facilitators, the researcher and the SCERTS Coordinator, the researcher-the SCERTS Coordinator/parent/s, parents together.

Facilitator 1 Facilitator 2	Facilitator 1 Facilitator 2 Parent
Facilitator 1 Facilitator 2 Parent/Parent	Parent 1 Parent 2 Parent 3

Figure 1. Examples of Possible Group Permutations

A mirror image of each 'circle' needed to be created by all members of a discreet group. Initial 'circles' were set up by participants under the guidance of the researcher. Every 'circle' was codified using a unique name. In the initial stage, each parent could access a 'circle' consisting of themselves, the researcher and the school side facilitator. The system design allowed for other 'circles' to be created based on different member permutations. If a post was addressed to a particular named 'circle', the contents of the post would only be received by those who were designated members of that discreet 'circle' by the initiator of the post sent. The flexibility of the 'circle' design allowed that 'circle' permutations could be modified on a post by post basis if this was required. Posts sent to a

'circle' gave members of that 'circle' the opportunity to share comments discreetly across the group. Posts sent within a 'circle' allowed all members of the 'circle' to also see any additional comments made within the 'circle' which were linked to the post and also an opportunity to share further comments, photos etc. within the group.



Figure 2. Google Circles

Whilst information sharing by account holders of Google+ at a public level is possible, the use of the Google+ 'circles' capability ensured that information sharing could be controlled and shared on a predetermined level. All individual members could choose who would be a member of a particular 'circle' and control the flow of any information they themselves shared.

Project issues were also influenced by the findings of Losh et al., namely that sub-threshold characteristics of autism are often seen in the parents of children presenting with an ASD, i.e. they are part of the broader autism phenotype (BAP) so that they too could present with their own difficulties around indicators of ASD [11].

A possible parental BAP connection raised its own design concerns as parents presenting with the broader autism phenotype might themselves gain greater benefit from an end user interface which was markedly logical in its operational structure and supported by very clear and uncluttered visual graphics. For the 'VESSIL' system to be perceived by parents as a helpful tool it was important that the system was easy to access and navigate.

Certain strictures of use and etiquette protocols also needed to be identified and agreed to ensure that the system was used for its design purpose and any misuse such as being used as a tool to voice dissatisfaction by parents about teaching staff or the school facilities could be avoided.

Table 1. Structures of Use and Etiquette Protocols

Facilitators	Parents/carers
That the community should be a place which	The group was a place where they could discuss

offered a supportive and confidential environment	and share their concerns about their child in confidence with professional teachers
Comments made within the group should be confined to issues relating to the specific child and their education	Comments made within the group should be those concerning their own child and their education and not addressing wider school issues , i.e. This was not a forum for recording dissatisfaction about school related issues
Facilitators should avoid offering advice which contradicted or conflicted with that of the child's class teacher	That with parents' permission 'facilitators' might at times consult with members of the schools teaching team
Group members should act with integrity towards each other and respect each other's privacy	That group members would act with integrity towards the other members of the group and respect their privacy
Comments made within the group should not address issues relating to wider school concerns	

Exchanges could be expected during week days during term time in recognition that the school side facilitator was signed to a contract of employment and should not be expected to commit to engage in the study outside of contracted work hours.

12. The On-Line Virtual Education Support and Social Interface Link (VESSIL) System – TouchBase121

The system was staged to parents as a packaged product with a unique product name 'Touchbase121' and its own logo. This was done in order to give the system an element of prestige aimed to heighten parents confidence. Rather than perceiving the system as being a 'work in progress' it should be viewed as an already capable product.



Figure 3. TouchBase121 – Logo

This was important as in order for parents to feel supported by the system they needed to have the confidence that it would be effective. It was hoped that the system would be seen to grow organically with new 'circles' being created and that relationships between members of 'circles' would develop and perhaps deepen.

The 'VESSIL' system was designed with the purpose of information provision and the amelioration of parental stress and anxiety through the provision of both parent training and social links between groups: educators and parents and parents with each other.



Figure 4. Proposed System Dynamic – Cycle of Empowerment

Communication flows were designed to allow for multi way interactions. By the different types of knowledge sharing which could be achieved through the medium of the system, e.g. parent training (one of the centrally proposed functions of the communication flow) it was anticipated that parents should feel more confident at implementing those intervention strategies put in place by educators for the purpose of supporting their child's education. This confidence in turn could lead to increased perceptions of parental efficacy and well-being leading to increased feelings of parental empowerment. Ideally parental stress levels should then be favourably impacted on which in turn could allow for parents to feel more able to engage with their child's educational interventions. And so the cycle should continue.

13. The Study

An initial meeting was held at the school. Three parents and the SCERTS co-ordinator attended. Feedback from the group included that parents were looking forward as much to the social aspect of the project as well as of any educational benefits that might be gained. At the meeting parents were asked to complete the parent/carer anxiety assessment sheet'. Parents were shown how to sign up to Google+ and create a 'circle'. Both the researcher and the school side 'facilitator' posted onto the system each morning. Posts varied from those with

ASD specific educational information to pictures accompanied by texts containing statements aimed at encouraging feelings of self-empowerment. The community used the network for a variety of different reasons, some relating to questions of behaviour "I have to take J. to a wedding next Friday and I am a bit concerned that he might freak out", and communication strategies, 'How do you know what's wrong with your child... everyone says to take him to the doctor but I don't know what to tell him'. Other enquiries were specifically aimed at other parents such as asking what they would be doing over the holiday periods with their child, what were their experience of accessing respite services: 'Question: Do parents here get respite for your children? If so, how did you go about getting it?' (Parent 3).

Photographs and web links were shared between parents about their children and their experiences: 'This short clip gives me insight into (name)'s world.

I watch him closely when we go out for our walks and I think this is how things are for him...' (Parent 1)

The pilot was managed over a half term school period of six weeks by the researcher. For the purposes of researching the prototype system, the researcher felt that by that time, the aims of the pilot system for research purposes had been met. The second forum meeting was planned as a final feedback session. Both the parents and the school side 'facilitator' expressed that they were reluctant to close down the system at this point and requested that it continue as an extension of the current communication systems in place between home and school.

For the next period of a term the researcher acted as an observer of the functioning system.

14. Findings

It was clear from feedback given by parents both in written form and through forum discussions that with regards seeking educational advice, parents were very happy with the current arrangements. As their children attended a school which itself delivered specialised educational provision they professed themselves satisfied with the available levels of educational support. They believed teachers at the school had both the right levels of specialist expertise in order to support the needs of their child and also the ability and willingness to meet the parents own information needs regarding any educational interventions so allowing them, as parents, to proficiently support their own child's educational interventions at home. The feature of the study outcomes that appeared of particular value to this set of parents was the social opportunities that the system offered parents, allowing them to engage with each other in a way that had not previously been

possible. Within a period of weeks of the system being in place members of the system began communicating with each other during weekend and later the holiday periods.

'...do you think that other parents would benefit from using this?it's nice to chat and share thoughts with each other and I thought some other parents might like/need this too?' (Parent 3) Parents summarised their experiences of using Touchbase121, experiences included:

'I have found 'TouchBase' a fantastic tool for making contact with school and other parents. I have found the information I have got here very useful. Even tho I am a prolific user of the home school book, I think 'TouchBase' fills the gap that the book alone does not...' (Parent 1) 'TouchBase 121 has given me more confidence in dealing with (name). I now have much needed understanding that other people experience the same issues as (name). It's the perfect platform to go and ask questions for any issues or concerns that I have. With this, I don't feel so alone! I would really like to thank you for inviting me to take part in this'. (Parent 2) '...TouchBase has helped voice immediate concerns and know someone will answer as soon as they can. I love that it has been kept and that we are now able to interact with other parents as well as professionals.' (Parent 3)

The positive tone of these excerpts and the comments made clearly demonstrate that there is a place for this type of parental intervention.

13. Conclusion

In England there are reported to be 71% of children with autism being educated in mainstream schools with 54% of teachers in England feeling that they have inadequate training to meet their needs [4] [14].

The above statistics combined with other findings cited in this article suggest that a modified parent training/social network system within a mainstream educational environment based on the principles of the current 'VESSIL' system could prove a useful intervention model for schools to adopt. A key objective being that parental access to the 'VESSIL' system in a mainstream school environment will lead a parent to feel that in relation to their child, and their own educational and social requirements as a parent, they are adequately supported and that this in turn will increase a parent's sense of parental efficacy, emotional well-being and reduce any feelings of anxiety and stress. Furthermore an increased sense of well-being should impact positively on parental capacity and willingness to engage more fully with their child's educational interventions thereby leading to more positive long term outcomes for the child.

By educating and empowering parents, effective educational partnerships could be developed across

home/school environments which in turn could lead to more effective educational support mechanisms being put into place for children and young people presenting with ASD thereby perhaps lessening those causal incidents which ultimately lead to poor attainment and/or exclusion.

The modified 'VESSIL' system is intended to be pioneered in an outer London borough locality and operated on a 'cluster' principle whereby a group of neighbouring schools are linked into the same system. The system will be independent of any one school but will act as a central point, supporting the parents of children with an ASD who attend one of a group of mainstream primary schools within a denoted area.

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Appendix C

An Open Letter to the Prime Minister

Champagne Nurseries - Lemonade Funding

Watch the video below ...

Video by Doodle Ads



Joined ▾

✓ Notifications

➦ Share

⋮



Rebecca Huson Sheepwash

12 August at 13:12

AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR PRIME MINISTER THERESA MAY I find myself continually annoyed at this 30 hours 'free' childcare situation. It is disgraceful on so many levels. Primarily it totally undermines our sector completely, it disregards our hard work and qualifications. Let's take myself as an example, I have spent over 25 years building up a nursery, that provides Ofsted Outstanding care, not an easy feat, many of you not in the sector probably have no idea how hard it is to achieve Outstanding, it is not just meeting the welfare requirements and teaching young children, it is going over and above with everything from the environment in which the care is provided, to the quality of the teaching. Before I continue to complain, let me just remind you of some of the points Ofsted (your appointed inspectorate) made during our inspection (feel free to read it on their website ofsted registration number EY273510) ... Take a look at the photo attached from the report. This level of care and education is not provided without investing hard work, money and amazing staff continually. Another quote from 'Ofsted' :- 'The manager provides extensive training opportunities for the staff team, recognising the importance of having highly qualified staff' so you acknowledge that I continue to invest time and money continually training my staff taking on board all the latest research and using that to inform my practice. With 'Ofsted' being your Governments inspecting

body for our sector ... for all the education sector throughout our children's learning lives, you would think you would listen and take on board their findings, valuing the information (oh but actually there is research you have commissioned and ignored the findings, so maybe I'm over estimating your governments ability to use information to inform their practice ... a method we use often in our work ... it's

effective ... go on try it 😊😊) it's important to remember what Ofsted have told you about my nursery, when looking at the concerns I'm raising. I have spent years ensuring that every single child and their family that walks through my nursery door, is treated with respect and equality, that has meant sometimes, in the past having to provide extra care, changing the environment, sometimes extensively. I have built up a reputation for never turning a child away and always meeting their additional needs. This is not easy to do, and at times costly, but it's what I do, each child has a right to the same care and education regardless of any barriers they may have to their learning. I have ensured that I have learnt as much as I possibly can in my specialism, that is the 'Early Years', I have learnt on a deep and intensive level how children develop and learn so I can meet any challenge a child may present head on. I have a BA honours degree in Early Years Education and I have achieved Early Years Professional Status (now known as Early Years Teacher Status - that's another argument for another day) as well as many other childcare qualifications prior to that. I continually develop my learning. I can't even list how many courses I have attended over the last 25 years from Autism & ADHD training to different ways of teaching, including Montessori and High Scope. Behaviour management to Story telling. Working with Travellers and refugee children to Makaton sign language.

Management and leadership skills to forest school training and the outside learning environment - the list really is endless and each time I come away having learnt something new that I can apply to my practice. I have attended conferences and lectures from some of the worlds leading child experts, I have sat in awe at the wonder of our children's minds and been amazed at their ability to learn and take in the world around them like sponges. I have sat in some of the most heartbreaking child protection conferences worrying endlessly about the little faces I see before me and his or her future. I have dealt with children who have had life threatening illnesses and life changing injuries through accidents. I have dealt with children who are going through bereavement, from a lost parent to a lost pet. I have hugged

many upset children, cleaned many grazed knees and seen sooooo many headlice cases !!! As well as ensuring the children in my care are cared for and educated to an outstanding standard, I have worn many other hats, I am caretaker, I have mended blocked toilets, painted the nursery inside and out, built fences and ensured all equipment is safe and useable. I am administrator, from form filling, to payroll, from Government funding paperwork nightmares, to referrals to every agency you can imagine. I am a financial whizz, crunching the numbers to make it all work, applying for grants and funding whenever I can, to help along the way (don't even get me started on how long those applications take and how complicated they are) I am a social worker, to all my families, the problems I have had brought to my door and I have helped solve over the years are just too numerous to mention, but range from housing problems, child's health problems, marriage guidance (a little ironic I know from those who know me well) and debt problems. I am a cafe and a listening ear, my office door is always open, the kettle is always on and I listen, always, no matter what the subject is, because to that parent/ carer/ child at that time it is important to them and in turn may affect their child (or in the case of the child their day) and so that makes it my business. I am an event planner, trips, fetes, coffee mornings, parent evenings, sponsored events. I am a trainer, I ensure all my staff keep up to date with all essential training, as well as encouraging them to continue with their personal development, watching as they learn and apply their learning in practice. I have the very best staff, whose commitment to early years never waivers. I teach safeguarding to many sectors, through being a safeguard trainer for the local authority.... I do this for free. I am part of an Early Years collaboration, local nurseries all working together for the benefit of the children in our care and community. We meet in our own time and without pay. Without pay is a familiar phrase in this sector, many practitioners and definitely a great deal of managers and owners go over and beyond their paid hours to ensure the smooth running of each nursery (I know it is the same for childminders but I can only speak for nurseries in my experience) I am an independent business and as such I have worked out my business model to be able to provide all the above plus all the rest I haven't mentioned (we would be here all day) and my figure for the last 3 years has been £5.00 per hour. This £5.00 per hour included everything. I am a not for profit nursery so every penny is ploughed back into the running of the nursery. Now, when the Government introduced the funded 15 hours many years ago and paid at the rate lower than the nurseries were charging, it wasn't a

problem, it was advertised as funded and the nurseries could charge top ups everyone was happy. The parents were happy because they were getting an amount out of their fees paid, the nurseries were happy because they didn't have a shortfall and the care and education could stay at the same high level. But then some Government spin doctor decided it would be election winning if they offered parents 'free' childcare and so the nightmare began. The Government, and their side kicks the local authorities, began to put restrictions on how the funded (now advertised as free although in reality not) could be used (although the different LA's interpret the framework as they please and there is no one rule nationwide and transparent - fighting ensues amongst the natives) The tops ups were the first thing to go and so now nurseries were faced with how to deal with the shortfall. Don't forget literally all nurseries were involved with the scheme already as it had been running as funded prior. Nurseries were trapped between a rock and a hard place, they had no choice but to try and make it work, look for ways to make up the shortfall, without imposing it on the parents or lowering the standard of care. It was and still is hard and in some cases impossible to do. So imagine the sectors horror when the Government decided to double that offer and along with it, an impossible list of restrictions. 30 hours 'free' childcare offered to parents my charge as previously mentioned is £5.00 per hour, the Government are giving me £3.91 per hour, not only are they paying £1.09 below my rate, they have fixed that amount until 2020 and then they have told me you cannot charge a top up rate to cover the difference. However the minimum wage and national living wage rates continue to rise, national insurance rises, as do buildings / content/ public liability insurances, utility bills rises and all the other general running costs of a nursery rise, year in year out, do you see the problem? We are not greedy I have graduate members of staff working for the minimum wage, yes I know you wouldn't do it Prime minister, but none the less it's true and my staff do. But wait it gets worse, we have been attending local authority meetings where they have been giving us advice on how to make ends meet, some of which are frankly insulting, not just to us as a sector, but to us as personal individuals. They have suggested we make takeaway breakfasts for hardworking parents to take as they drop their children into nursery and then we charge for them. They have suggested we take in parents ironing and charge. They have suggested we now charge for items already covered in our business model charge, so charge for nappies, wipes, walk out trips, sunscreen, break sundries such as toast, fruit, etc. It has even been suggested we charge for art/ craft resources.

(oh did I forget to mention all these charges you suggest have to be voluntary from the parents) One local authority suggested that the staff work for a whole term without pay to help bridge the finance gap !! Really ?? Now I have lots of friends in many different sectors of employment and I have some really generous friends who do more than their fair share within their work place, but I can bet my house that there is not one single person I know, who would work for 6-12 weeks for absolutely nothing just so they can bridge the gap in the Governments underfunded scheme !!! Bet you could bet your house on the same ? Come on LA's get a grip for gods sake. There have been some weird and some absolutely ridiculous and terribly insulting suggestions which goes to show that you all know it's underfunded or these suggestions wouldn't be made in the first place, you are acknowledging your lack of funding placed into the scheme by your government and the LA's suggestions. So this begs the question, why is this even happening - the resolute fact remains that, despite what your government is putting out about the successful pilots (that's a whole new argument ... you gave inflated funding that has now been reduced after the pilot - and allowed charges you are now not allowing - scandalous) that the whole scheme is seriously underfunded to allow nurseries to offer totally 'free' childcare. The correct information is not reaching the parents and the nurseries are being painted as the bad ones in this whole fiasco. I personally don't think it's rocket science change from free to funded, allow a top up to the nurseries own fee structure and 'boom' happy parents, happy nurseries, happy childminders, no lack of places, no level of care or education standards will be dropped. BUT hey why listen to me, after all, I'm only a nursery owner experienced in the childcare business sector for over 25 years, I'm only a graduate in Early Years education, I'm only the person you entrust your child's care and education to (whether you are the queen, a labourer or an mp) I'm only one of the main influences in your child's Early Years. I'm only the nursery that in 'your' (the Governments - remember that paragraph) own words is 'providing outstanding care, where children make excellent progress, where staff meet their every need and where excellent resources are provided'. Please madam Prime Minister, help me understand how I can continue to do that with the 30 hours 'free' Childcare? - Sorry what's that? No you can't help? Thought so, and for that reason madam, as the dragons famously say, I am out ... after 25 years, I have given up my outstanding nursery, I have taken off all my hats and I have left the rat race. So remember that Outstanding report I mentioned, best you read it quick, because as soon as I'm de registered it will

disappear, another nursery lost! However, I'm no quitter, I will not stop campaigning for this ridiculous scheme to stop or be better managed. The Champagne nurseries for Lemonade funding campaign
(<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=0Zm-mYA6XpQ>) *have taken on the nurseries and childminders plight and are doing a superb job at fighting and raising awareness of this injustice. I will also continue the fight in my own little way, but I will NOT in the meantime compromise my standard of care and education, that every child who walks through my nursery door deserves and by YOU Teresa May paying me £3.91 per hour does just that ... nope won't do it, can't make me, toys thrown well and truly out of my pram!! The overwhelming sadness in this whole fiasco Mrs May, is that I am not alone, mine is not a unique story, this is the story of thousands of childminders, nursery managers, deputies and practitioners country wide. This problem will not go away, we are a sector in crisis and the children of this country, a rich western world country are going to suffer because of your ill thought out 'free' childcare policy. If you can't even invest and properly fund the countries most important, precious commodity.... our children, then what hope is there for a better future? Proud to be British?sad to say as I finish this letter, not at this moment in time I'm not!*

Yours, a seriously disgruntled EX nursery owner !

First Steps Childcare Club

Fairwash Primary School, St. Georges Place, Hythe, Kent, CT21 6NE



Inspection date 15 October 2015
Previous inspection date 19 January 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding	1
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Outstanding	1
Outcomes for children		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is outstanding

- The manager and staff have an excellent understanding of how to safeguard and protect children. They ensure children's safety is secure at all times, and teach children how to identify and manage hazards for themselves extremely well.
- Children use a wealth of resources and activities that help them to be motivated active learners and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery.
- Leaders are inspirational. The manager and staff team work extremely well together in their drive for continuous improvement. Their highly effective self-evaluation procedures identify development areas accurately and help them to provide excellent care and education for all children.
- The staff plan a tremendous range of experiences for children. They make very good use of the outdoor environments. Children have excellent opportunities to exercise and learn about the world and local community they live in. The quality of teaching is outstanding.
- The well-qualified and experienced staff use accurate observations and assessments of children's progress effectively to plan and provide challenging activities. As a result, all children make significant progress in their learning.
- Parents are fully involved in their children's learning; there are exceptional relationships between the nursery and families. Parents and staff constantly share information to support children's learning at home.

Fig. 'First Steps' - Ofsted

<https://>

www.facebook.com/groups/ChampagneNurseries/permalink/1980552272190962/
accessed 14th August 20117

Replies:

[redacted] Brilliantly written, thank you. I'm so sorry you are being forced to make such an awful decision. What a massive loss for our children! 😞👉



J [redacted] Outstanding letter and absolutely heartbreaking for the sector that so many can no longer carry on. Would be great to have you as our Early Years Minister!
Like

2 · 12 August at 13:34



[redacted] Wow fantastic letter, but I feel very sad and sorry that you are another outstanding setting that has now closed. When will the government begin to listen. They wouldn't get away with doing this to large businesses (Tescos, M&S etc). The whole debacle is sadly stripping young children of the early years care & education they need.



1 · 12 August at 13:40



D [redacted] Brilliant brilliant letter but sadly she won't read it, it's far far far too longer. But I bet you feel a while lot better for getting it all down on paper 😊 :-) I have been operating for over 26 years and jumped through many of the same hoops that you ...See

3 · 12 August at 13:50



[redacted] Outstanding letter and makes me tear up!!! I have said no to 30 only doing 16 - send this to every MP and all news outlets - such a heartfelt sum up!!

[redacted] Send it to NDNA/PSLA/Pacey/Nursery World and every education minister government/shadow minister.

12 August at 13:59



... Was about to suggest the same thing xxx



Rebecca Huson Sheepwash Have sent to all as yet no acknowledgement from anywhere



... Fantastic letter, just sums it all up!

12 August at 14:00



... Brilliant letter. It is such a shame we are losing so many fantastic outstanding people.

12 August at 14:12



Well said. Sadly, IF you get a reply at all it will be the boiler plate parrot fashion from the ministry. We all know it so well. I am/was a Conservative voter. Not any more!

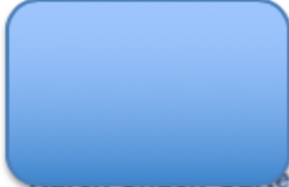
12 August at 14:13



My heart is breaking reading this as, though a childminder, it echoes my journey of the last 30+ years with training and uni and EYTS. I'm lucky my LA is paying my going rate so my parents will benefit, at least this year, from lower bills and outstanding care for their children. However 2020 is a long way off and things may change. It is a

poorer world with the demise of your nursery 🗑️👤

12 August at 14:14



...er Well said. Why is it we can all see what is happening but the LAs will not even accept that anything is wrong. My own nursery is barely clinging on and yours will not be the last to close. It is so sad and frustrating.

12 August at 14:23



Rebecca Huson Sheepwash Thank you xxx



Wonder if princess Kate is interested in our plight???

12 August at 14:27



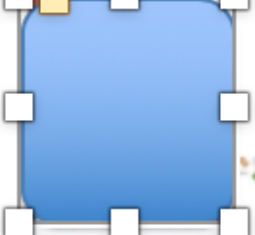
Well said , heartfelt words. Good luck to you ,the children will be miss your passion.

12 August at 14:31



What a fabulous letter, straight from the heart. Let's hope that somebody cares enough to read it and act.

12 August at 14:47



I was hoping to get to the end of your post and not read the words "I am out". Another outstanding nursery lost indeed and what a total utter mess this sector has been unfairly placed in. We will continue to fight this! On behalf of all those

parents and children you gave your time to, thank you.
#parentsupportingchampagnenurseries

12 August at 14:46



How eloquently you write and how sad it is that you will probably receive

a standard reply from some dogsbody at no 10 🙄👎.

12 August at 15:13

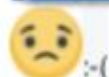


No option to share x

12 August at 15:21



So sad Rebecca Huson Sheepish will Lullabies be taking over then.



Rebecca Huson Sheepwash Lullabies is nothing to do with First Steps and we have no affiliation with them whatsoever, either now or in the past. . Little Cubs Palmarsh have bought the building. X



Well said... x

12 August at 15:28



So sad and so eloquently written - all the points id also say for me after only 10 years!

12 August at 15:31



Wow brilliant letter says exactly what needs to be said 😞 ;{

12 August at 15:44



Bloody brilliant!


12 August at 15:55



Wow so true well said well written and so heart destroying. Wishing you all the best for whatever you do next the sad thing here once again is that the sector lost another passionate Early Years Genius. 😞👉

12 August at 16:11



 A very sad state of affairs... to hear another nursery is closing due to the financial pressures of the 30 hours!! Your passion for the early years shines through, in this well written letter.

You are so right in what you say, just so very sad it has come to this especially for your children, families, staff and local community.

12 August at 16:24



well said

12 August at 16:25



12 August at 16:25



Do you know since Thursday i have received 32 email posts from redwoods the nursery agents - marketing 32 nurseries across the country for sale! In the past i have generally received one or two a week. What is this also telling us?

12 August at 16:59



Ps. So well said Rebecca. I have shared your open letter on several outlets.

Xxxx

12 August at 17:00



shared to all the groups I'm in. Great

work.

12 August at 17:21



Well you've listed everything so well done but very sad you won't be continuing

12 August at 17:29

12 August at 17:42



Respect x



WOW 90 shares can we get this to 190?

Let's do this people.

12 August at 18:38



Well said xx

12 August at 18:57



Heartbreaking but true



12 August at 19:04



Very well said

12 August at 19:48



Our Council pay £4.00 per hour to providers and expect them to survive, yet the same council charge a minimum fee of £3.00 to park your car! It's absolutely shocking!

12 August at 20:48



So sad, yet so true

12 August at 20:54



such a well written letter. I was really hoping not to read the words "I am out" but once again they are there and another outstanding nursery closes. I really hope Mrs May reads this, but sadly it will probably be one of her minions and you'll just...[See more](#)

12 August at 21:21



Jackie Warren Such a shame! Where will this fiasco end?! Xx

12 August at 21:37



Wow. I have no words. Well said.

12 August at 22:22



I dont know whether to whoop, cry, shout huzzah or sob. Thank you for writing this. B*stard government.

12 August at 22:30



Oh my goodness! I am crying for you and myself and every nursery owner. Every word so very true. You have clearly put your heart and soul into your 25 years. I understand so very well. I hope and wish for you a new and refreshing happiness. Put yourself...[See more](#)

12 August at 23:00



Very emotive and true. Vocalised our issues so eloquently. Best of luck

Like

12 August at 23:04



I'm a childminders and agree with such a well written pieces, sorry your leaving the childcare sector after 25 year's x

Like

12 August at 23:06



So sorry to hear and feeling your pain ... It's the start of many nurseries and minders to close I'm sure and the lost ones will be these beautiful children ... Government please listen before you have a major crisis on your hands for the future of these children and hard working people that enrich the future Take care and well done for such a powerful letter ... x x

12 August at 23:37



So true and reflects totally what's happening in our sector. Very sad to hear you are leaving xx 😞🥺

Yesterday at 00:02



Omg, incredible letter. !!! So true on every aspect and let's hope it's heard.
Like

Yesterday at 00:16



Your letter is being shared in Ireland too as it reflects exactly on how providers here feel and on what is happening here too as our childcare providers are facing exactly the same problem here too with many beginning to make exit plans due to this Go...[See more](#)

Yesterday at 00:19



 ADMIN:- WE NEED YOU TO HELP 

Please please please share this far and wide.

Yesterday at 00:31



Wow You amazing passionate lady... for what you have done for 25 years and for what you have written. I felt every word (every true and correct) word... x

Yesterday at 00:37



 200 shares 

Come on people.....let's get this further can we make 500?



I feel let down and sad as us childminders in our local area have almost been pushed out at our local sure start centre .We provide valuable shared learning interest for us and the children . I have personally been attending for 6 years where all the...[See more](#)

Yesterday at 00:44



The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Maybe each person offering funding should (with Rebecca Huson Sheepwash permission) use and pertain to their own circumstances and send to each head of LA.

Yesterday at 02:45



you've certainly wrote this letter from your heart. I'm gutted that your area will lose such a passionate inspirational person in our sector. I wish I had a magic wand to wave over us all to stop this catastrophe from happening. I hope your letter gets heard by Mrs May herself. X

Yesterday at 04:20



as Wow very powerful !

Yesterday at 07:13



A very emotive and eloquently written letter! Hope Theresa May gets to see it. Feeling sad that you have been put in this position where you have to walk away from a job you loved as much as I love mine (I'm a nursery nurse) 😞😭

Yesterday at 08:34



in Excellent

Yesterday at 12:01



Well said and I agree with every single word you say , we are totally undervalued and always have been ! X

Yesterday at 12:34



Rebecca Huson Sheepwash



Oh my goodness me, I never thought my letter would have this reaction and so many shares ... just maybe someone who can be influential may take on board some of my thoughts ... let's hope so xxx

Yesterday at 12:36 - Edited



Very well said. So sad. I hope the government wake up to this crisis and act soon. The children are those who are going to suffer and the parents they are supposed to be getting back to work! There wont be enough childcare spaces and the parents will be at home!


Yesterday at 12:50



I applaud you - so well written xx

21 hrs



 tt   can't add any words to that xx think you said how we all feel



21 hrs



Beautifully written. Sorry to hear your done but wishing you huge success in your new ventures, gotta be honest I feel the same and good for you it's all just too much!

18 hrs



This has made me cry. Your words are from the heart of all of us x I too am sorry you are no longer able to continue thank you for your fight - sadly more will follow but unfortunately there will be no delight in saying 'told you' to the powers that be x

18 hrs



you must read this x

[Redacted] Well written, but so sad... 🗣️ 😞
Let's hope they start to listen soon 😞 🙏

10 hrs

[Redacted] thinking would this be good to post on our Facebook page for parents?

7 hrs

[Redacted] So sad x

7 hrs

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChampagneNurseries/permalink/1980552272190962/>
accessed 14th August 20117

Appendix D

Surrey Inclusion Policy Template



**Inclusion policy including
SEND and equality of
opportunities**
Early Years and Childcare Service



Inclusion policy including SEND and equality of opportunities

Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service have written this document to help you write an inclusion policy for your setting. This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to www.surreycc.gov.uk/eycpractitioners or ask your improvement advisor or childminding advisor to email you a copy.

Whenever we say parents in this document we mean parents and carers, and whenever we say child we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND)).

"All providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained nursery schools and other providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the SEN Code of Practice." [EYFS 2014 3.67] This policy must include information about how you value and acknowledge children's individuality and how you provide for the individual needs of **all** children, promoting and valuing diversity and differences. It is important that children learn to feel good about themselves and value and respect others.

Do you have regard for the Equality Act 2010 and the requirements for making reasonable adjustments to your premises to make sure they are accessible to all?

Do you provide quality and consistency in your setting so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind? **Q4**, EYFS P5

Do you share progress and possible concerns with parents from the start? **Q1**

Do you talk with parents/carers about their child's routines, likes and dislikes as well as any other professionals involved with the child to form a detailed picture?

Do you differentiate activities and your environment so that all children can take part? How do you incorporate inclusion in the daily planning in your setting? **Q3**

Do you make sure there are suitable resources if needed [including staff]? **Q11**

How do you support bilingual families and ensure inclusion for all groups? Do you always give information verbally as well as in written form and do you translate materials?

Do you meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements as outlined by Surrey and the EYFS, in place to keep children safe and promote their welfare? [EYFS P16, section 3]

Consider:

- making suitable arrangements for outings **Q8**
- encouraging children's confidence and independence and support for a child's overall well being **Q5**
- looking at ways in which other children's awareness might be raised, for example, positive images of disability, gender and additional languages in books and toys **Links to Q2,4 and13**
- How do you work with and involve parents to appropriately support their children and encourage them to contribute to their child's learning at home? Who oversees the child's learning and development? **Q13 and 2**
- How do you take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop their home language in play and learning and support their language at home, valuing linguistic diversity? **Q2,3, and 4**
- How do you ensure your policies and information are communicated and understood by parents?

Inclusion policy including SEND and equality of opportunities

- How do you make sure that all staff are aware of each individual child's needs and stage of development and use this to inform and plan for that child's learning and development? **Q4** and EYFS 1.6
- How do you allow for consistency and continuity of care and let children build relationships? E.g. Keyperson **Q5**
- How do you deploy staff and/or adapt adult to child ratios to meet the needs of all children? **Q11**
- How do you provide information in clear, concise language, whether in spoken or written form and in as many languages as possible? **Q3 and 4**
- How do you make sure there is equal access (admission) to your setting, irrespective of SEND? **Q9 and 10**
- How do you make sure staff are kept up-to-date with training, information, current legislation and understand about safeguarding, child protection procedures and other information in policies? **Q6 and 7** EYFS 3,6, 3.20
- How do staff and volunteers deal sensitively with toileting, changing, feeding, and administering medicines and occasions where facilities are used off-premises to ensure the privacy of children, including trips out? These are statutory requirements in the EYFS section 3 **Q5,7 and 8**
- How do you accommodate and celebrate individual children's needs and customs? E.g. food
- How do you maintain confidentiality at all times? Do you have confidentiality procedures or a policy in place? P29 3.70
- How do you use the 2 yr check to take possible action to support children with additional needs? P13
- Do you have arrangements for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of your inclusive practice? How do you support transitions to other settings? Do you have appropriate paperwork to support this? **Q10 and 12**
- Do you have information about how inappropriate attitudes and practices, including among members of staff, will be challenged? Do you have disciplinary procedures in place? **Q7 See recruitment and retention guidance**

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy

This section of your policy will need to be specific to SEND and in addition to the equality of opportunity section.

Following the introduction of the new Children and Families Act and the introduction of the SEND Code of Practice (2014), local authorities will be required to publish and keep under review information from services that they expect to be available for children and young people with SEND aged 0-25. The intention of this local offer is to improve choice and transparency for families. From the Local Offer parents and carers will know what services they can reasonably expect from their local area. It will also be an important resource for professionals in understanding the range of services and provision within the local area. This information will be web based and there is an expectation that all providers will need to answer the 14 questions [as referenced to in this document and included as an appendix at the end of this document]. You may want to add more

This is a reference document that you should adapt for your own setting.
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Inclusion policy including SEND and equality of opportunities

information about the offer your setting can make and some questions may overlap into your equality of opportunity section of your policy. This local offer should be reviewed annually.

Named special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)

You are expected to identify a named SENCO who must adhere to the SEND Code of Practice (CoP), [EYFS 3.67] You can download this document from the Department for Education website, go to www.education.gov.uk and search for SEND code of practice.

For providers registering for free early education (2, 3 & 4-year olds), the Surrey Local Code of Practice states „prospective providers need to make sure they have a named special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) who works in the setting (Homebased childcare advisors will act as SENCO for childminders).

The SENCO should have an overview of the children in the setting who have identified needs and make sure that these needs are being met. Along with the child's key person, accurate records should be kept and partnerships developed with the family and other professionals. The graduated approach, as outlined in the CoP must be followed in consultation with parents. If you are in a large setting or have a large number of children with additional needs you should appoint a deputy SENCO. This person should also be named in your policy.

It is considered „good practice" for each setting to have a behaviour lead and a behaviour management policy. Each child **must** have a Keyperson. **Training is available for this.**

It is recommended that playwork settings and crèches have a named person, the Special Needs Coordinator (SNCO). If you are based in a school, you should make sure that there are links between the school's SENCO and your SNCO. See Playwork Equality of Opportunity guidance, including SEN, Inclusion Self Assessment guidance and CAP (Children's Access to Play)

Consider the following in your policy:

- How do you use of the 2 yr check and Early Help Assessment to identify and record a child's SEND needs? **Q1**
- Does your child have a Keyworker or EHCP Coordinator [for those children with Education, Health and Care Plans EHCP]?
- How do you make sure that there is specialist equipment if needed? settings can apply for inclusion grants through the EYCS to support this **See FINE [funding individual needs equipment grant via Inclusion Grant] and Inclusion Support Grant can be applied for via your EYCS advisor**
- Do you have members of staff with extra responsibilities, skills or qualifications? E.g. Makaton or Early Language. Do you have a behaviour lead, equal opportunities coordinator, SENCO and a deputy SENCO? **Q 6 & 7 and 14**
- If a child has identified needs, does their key person oversee all the support the child receives and discuss concerns and targets/support strategies with parents? How often will this happen? **Q1 and 4**
- How do you work with other agencies to appropriately support children with special educational needs? Who could you work with? **Q6**

This is a reference document that you should adapt for your own setting.

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Inclusion policy including SEND and equality of opportunities

- If you employ additional staff, do they have a different job description? What are the basic differences in roles? How do you allocate budget to support children with SEND? Do you sometimes receive extra funding (FEET, inclusion grant or discretionary funding to support additional needs? **Q11**
- How do you make sure you do not discriminate against a child with a disability or refuse a child entry to your setting because of any disability? **Q9**
- How do you monitor, and observe children to identify areas of concern?
- How do staff and key persons maintain records on children with SEND or children they have concerns about? How do you gather information from outside professionals? **Q6**
- How do you consult with children with SEND on how you can meet their needs? **Q4**
- What are the roles and responsibilities of staff in your setting (and outside the setting) in relation to SEND? How do you make sure parents are aware of these staffing arrangements? Does the child have a Key Worker, Plan Coordinator or assistant allocated to them? **Q14 and 6**
 - Do you provide information to parents about who they can contact if they have concerns about their child? E.g. SENCO or referrals to other agencies **Q14**

How do staff and parents know what support is available for;

- Accessing your premises
- Using Early Help Assessment and referrals to Children's ~~Centres~~ and training for staff
- Providing adaptations ~~eg~~ room layout, adjusting the height of tables or equipment
- Supporting bilingual children and use of home languages
- Adjusting provision to support language ~~eg~~ visual timetables, and prompts to ensure all children have opportunities to access the curriculum **Q 3,4 & 5,6 and 7**
- Accessing toilets and other facilities
- Accessing outdoor play and equipment
- Accessing specialist equipment (if needed)

All of the above link to Q2, 6, 7 and 9

Employment

Please refer to Recruitment Guidance Policy

Training

Please refer to training directory for training opportunities on SEND and Inclusion

Useful resources and websites

- Special educational needs and disability; a guide for parents and carers (2014) www.education.gov.uk
- Special educational needs and disabilities in early years
- Centre of Accessible Environments www.cae.org.uk
- Information and publications about the Equality Act 2012 www.gov.uk
- www.education.gov.uk
- Mencap www.mencap.org.uk
- Additional funding for SEND
- Children's Centres
- SEND changes 2014.
- Family voice www.familyvoicesurrey.org

The legal frameworks for this policy are:

- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004 and 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998 and amendments 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005
- Education Act 2011
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014)
- Race Equality Act 2000
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014

The following 14 questions are referenced throughout this document and settings should publish and review this information annually to inform parents and carers of the "local offer" provided by their setting.

From the parent carer's point of view:

1. How does the setting / school / college know if children/young people need extra help and what should I do if I think my child/young person may have special educational needs?

How do you identify children/young people with special educational needs? How will I be able to raise any concerns I may have? If the setting / school / college is specialist which types of special educational need do you cater for?

2. How will early years setting / school / college staff support my child/young person?

Who will oversee and plan the education programme and who will be working with my child/young person and how often? What will be their roles? Who will explain this to me? How are the setting / school / college governors or trustees involved and what are their responsibilities? How does the setting / school / college know how effective its arrangements its provision for children and young people with special educational needs are?

3. How will the curriculum be matched to my child's/young person's needs?

What are the setting's / school's / college's approaches to differentiation? How will that help my child/young person?

4. How will both you and I know how my child/young person is doing and how will you help me to support my child's/young person's learning?

In addition to the normal reporting arrangements what opportunities will there be for me to discuss his or her progress with the staff? How does the setting / school / college know how well my child/young person is doing? How will I know what progress my child/young person should be making? What opportunities will there be for regular contact about things that have happened at early years setting / school / college eg a home school-book? How will you explain to me how his or her learning is planned and how I can help support this outside of the setting / school / college? How and when will I be involved in planning my child's/young person's education? Do you offer any parent training or learning events?

5. What support will there be for my child's/young person's overall well-being?

What is the pastoral, medical and social support available in the setting / school / college for children with SEND? How does the setting / school / college manage the administration of medicines and providing personal care? What support is there for behaviour, avoiding exclusions and increasing attendance? How will my child/young person being able to contribute his or her views? How will the setting / school / college support my child / young person to do this?

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting / school / college?

Are there specialist staff working at the setting / school / college and what are their qualifications? What other services does the setting / school / college access including health, therapy and social care services.

7. What training are the staff supporting children and young people with SEND had or are having?

This should include recent and future planned training and disability awareness.

8. How will my child/young person be included in activities outside the classroom including school trips?

Will he or she be able to access all of the activities of the setting / school / college and how will you assist him or her to do so? How do you involve parent carers in planning activities and trips?

This is a reference document that you should adapt for your own setting.

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9. How accessible is the setting / school / college environment?

Is the building fully wheelchair accessible? Have there been improvements in the auditory and visual environment? Are there disabled changing and toilet facilities? How does the setting /school / college communicate with parent carers whose first language is not English? How will equipment and facilities to support children and young people with special educational needs be secured?

10. How will the setting /school / college prepare and support my child/young person to join the setting /school / college, transfer to a new setting / school / college or the next stage of education and life?

What preparation will there be for both the setting / school / college and my child/young person before he or she joins the setting / school / college. How will he or she be prepared to move onto the next stage? What information will be provided to his or her new setting / school / college? How will you support a new setting / school / college to prepare for my child/young person?

11. How are the setting's / school's / college's resources allocated and matched to children's/young people's special educational needs?

How is the setting's / school's / college's special educational needs budget allocated?

12. How is the decision made about what type and how much support my child/young person will receive?

Describe the decision making process. Who will make the decision and on what basis? Who else will be involved? How will I be involved? How does the setting / school / college judge whether the support has had an impact?

13. How are parents involved in the setting / school / college? How can I be involved?

Describe the setting's / school's / college's approach to involving parents in decision making and day to day school life including for their own child or young person.

14. Who can I contact for further information?

Who would be my first point of contact if I want to discuss something about my child/young person? Who else has a role in my child's/young person education? Who can I talk to if I am worried? Who should I contact if I am considering whether child/young person should join the setting / school / college? Who is the SEN Coordinator and how can I contact them? What other support services are there who might help me and provide me with information and advice? Where can I find the local authority's Local Offer?

Appendix E

Post by J.R and Practitioners' responses



6 October at 12:15

This is the support we receive from our early years team in Kent , basically told off like school children and informed they are employing more monitoring staff to tell us how we should run our business amazing how they find the money for these new roles but half our senif funding . When weill the misery end !

Dear Provider

We know that the recent changes to the support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has proved challenging. Even those with excellent track records have had to revisit how they include children with the reduced 'top up' funding.

It has been brought to our attention, through parental complaints, that some providers are or may be breaching disability discrimination legislation, the SEND Code of Practice and the Kent Provider Agreement (and by implication Early Years and Childcare Statutory Guidance) by treating children with SEND less favourably than their peers, by reducing hours or charging additional fees. This is clearly unacceptable and we are unable to condone these actions.

In order to address the concerns that have arisen since the introduction of the new SEN Inclusion Fund we have the following in place.

The newly appointed SENIF Monitoring Officers will take up their posts shortly and will be making visits to help you explore the totality of the funds available and how you can use this to improve outcomes for children.

The SENIF Practitioners have also been appointed for most districts and will be part of the agreed support towards the end of term two.

In addition to this the Workforce Development Conference in November includes a workshop exploring how to use additional funding. We are planning local workshops to support you to complete more detailed and effective personalised plans and how to ensure you share with parents how you meet the needs of children with SEND in your setting which is a requirement as part of the Local Offer.

Yours sincerely

Alex Gamby

Head of Early Years and Childcare

Julie Ely

Head of SEN Assessment & Placement

[redacted] I find that quite disturbing when it's your business u run it as u choose within the ofsted requirements, they should only be there as advisor we don't need to apply what there say if it doesn't suit, and in pass experience they always want u to do more than necessary which scares a lot of people away


Like · Reply · 6 October at 12:19 · Edited

[redacted] I agree that the wording is quite direct and feels like a telling off! However if providers are turning away disabled children due to lack of funding that is a serious issue, is indeed discrimination and needs to be addressed. That being said the funding has been severely reduced and in some cases has been removed all together m.as childminders we usually work alone and being able to support a special needs child does indeed need extra funding! That also needs addressing.

Like · Reply · 6 October at 12:25

[redacted] All children have the right to a place whatever their need, I don't think anyone would argue with that . But it annoys me when local authorities dictate to us how we should provide this when cuts in funding are being made constantly. The criteria for top up funding becomes more difficult to prove and we have to complete endless forms with evidence of need . I find some of it patronising to us , being constantly told how we are not doing things the correct way ! We are not specialists, we try our best with little or no support. We all offer inclusion but sometimes this doesn't work for some children, whose needs are so great that we really struggle and this effects staff and other children. Yet again we are not listened to or asked our opinions. Just told . 😞


Like · Reply · 3 · 6 October at 12:35

 our example was a child with very complex needs attended our setting and received one to one funding from KCC as they recognised he needed this support to attend the setting for there own safety and also the safety of the other children. We received £7.50 per hour to cover a member of staff for the funded hours they attended . The senif funding comes in , child still has the same needs we are allocated £3.41 per hour and told by KCC that we should top up his one to one funding by using the childs 3 year old funding not sure what we are suppose to use to pay for the cost of his place ??

Like · Reply · 🧡 3 · 6 October at 12:53

 Shocking !

Like · Reply · 6 October at 13:00

 This is exactly what we have had (Kent too). Child requires 1:1 - covered last term, this terms funding cover 14 hours (he attends 30). That's if we never have to pay for any equipment/training/meetings etc !! I know a nursery in Kent who turned away a child who requires 1:1 and I am so sad it's come to that but how can we stay afloat otherwise. We are now making up 16 hours of 1:1 from our own pockets to meet the first little boys needs - making a loss on his place of over £150 a week. This could not be sustained for anymore than one child in our setting so we too may have to turn away SEN enquiries if we simply cannot meet their needs!! (Health and safety, risk assessment etc!) this email made my blood boil when we got it! Xx


Like · Reply · 🙄🧡 3 · 6 October at 15:27

[Redacted] Bloody cheek of them!! 😡

Like · Reply · 6 October at 13:01

[Redacted] Just tell them sorry your not welcome your self
employed not employed by them

Like · Reply · 6 October at 13:21

 Lisa Howick Sorry I dont understand your comment? Who's not welcome?

Like · Reply · 6 October at 15:59



Write a reply...



[Redacted] If a nursery or minder can not offer the place due to lack of support the child that is not discrimination that is business! KCC need to re think this letter and also the stupid lack of funding

Like · Reply · 1 · 6 October at 15:18

[Redacted] I think this is one that needs to go back to your County Councillor. Cost (exactly and completely) what the cost of the child's place is and advise Kent Cc that this is what you will be charging. Point out that if they are not prepared to pay this then they will be in breach of their legal duties and Disability legislation.


Like · Reply · 6 · 6 October at 15:48

[Redacted] What you could do is get parents to complain to council that they are not providing enough funding for the child and that they don't understand why the providers need to charge fee paying parents more to make up the lack of funding. And send a copy to goodwill saying peep peep

Like · Reply · 2 · 6 October at 16:11

[Redacted] It's terrible. These children deserve the support they need to be included and to learn. As early years providers we strive to help them and give them the same opportunities but this is being hindered by the lack of funding and then being thrown back at us for not being able to take them on the funding given! It is a vicious circle and these children need and deserve so much more!

Like · Reply · 6 October at 16:14 · Edited

 It absolutely beggars belief. If they hadn't have cut the funding then they wouldn't need to employ someone to oversee its implementation. Dear Lord give me strength!!!

Like · Reply ·  3 · 6 October at 16:45

  I am saddened by this email from KCC.

I work hard to provide an outstanding setting for my children, we had a child with funded one to one care last year. The LA paid the minimum wage but this did not cover payroll, pensions, uniform, time etc. These items all had to come out of the nursery pockets.

This child has now left us to go to mainstream school, something which without our support and intervention would have happened. We spent many hours with her new reception teacher and SENCO transitioning her across. These hours were good practice and right for that child, with no pay for us!


What I do not understand is the figures now given? I am unable to legally employ someone for that figure. I do not understand the employment of others when budgets are so low and we therefore cannot afford to support children sufficiently on the front line.

The fact is that practitioners want to support children, they want to improve outcomes for ALL children however if they do it out of pure love and no money to cover costs they will not be able to provide for ANY children, let alone the most vulnerable.


This makes me so sad. I know Kent providers want to make a difference, but at the cost of their livelihoods....then no.



Like · Reply ·   6 · 6 October at 17:34



Inclusion is important but without the correct funding for 1:1 support the other children in the room dont receive the care and education they deserve. When staff are having to deal with a child who hits, bites and throws chairs around who is looking after the needs of the other children. Its not up to us to pay for inclusion its up to the state and the parents. Its sad to have to take this stance but when you also work with deprived children there needs have to be considered too.

Like · Reply ·  2 · Yesterday at 07:10 · Edited

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChampagneNurseries/> accessed 8th October 2017

Appendix F

Eyfs-Sen: Virtual Community of Practice

Facebook interface for the page **Eyfs-Sen** (@eyfssend).

Page Header: Eyfs-Sen | Search | Stan Home Create | Settings

Navigation: Page | Inbox | Notifications | Insights | Publishing T... | Ad Centre | More

Profile: Eyfs-Sen (@eyfssend)

Home Menu: Home | About | Reviews | Photos | Events | Videos | Posts | Community | **Promote** | Manage promotions

Main Content:

- 2,055 people follow this
- About:** Typically replies within a few hours. Send message. http://eyfs-sen.nin... Community. Suggest Edits.
- Page Transparency:** Facebook is showing information to help understand the purpose of a Page.
- Write a post... (Photo/Video, Get messages, Feeling/Activ..., etc.)
- Create (Live, Event, Offer, Job)
- Get more Page likes:** Help people find and like your Page.
- Get more link clicks:** Send people from Facebook to a website.
- Get started with Automated Ads:** Get personalised ads that adjust over time to help you get better results.

Photos:

- Image of a smiling dog.
- Thumbnail: **First** magnetic numbers (2+4=6)
- Thumbnail: **Then** ball bounce
- See all

Upcoming Events:

- No upcoming events
- Make it easy for people to find your next event. Create it on Facebook.
- Create event

Right Sidebar:

- YOUR PAGES:** Eyfs-Sen
- CONTACTS:** Allie Bartlett, Alison Halpin, Kacie Ellis, Sarah Brown, Natalie King-Gleave, Clare Scott, Chelsie Brooks, Gem Jade, Jodie Essel
- GROUP CONVERSATIONS:** Create new group
- MORE CONTACTS (102)**

Posts

 **Eyfs-Sen**
23 September 2018 ·   

Important Notice:Research



I will be publishing some of these posts in my doctoral thesis - some of which may contain your name. As you will appreciate overall I have thousands of members n Facebook so contacting everyone individually is impossible. In the circumstances, unless I hear from you by the end of October 2018 , I will assume you are happy with this.
Many thanks for using this site - I hope you find it helpful - Sian

699 People reached **7** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

 Lisa Humphray, Helen Thomas and 3 others




 Like  Comment  Share 

 Write a comment...


 **Add a Donate button** 


Add a donate button to your post to raise money for a charity, and we'll take care of the donation processing with no fees. To raise money for a personal cause instead, [create a personal fundraiser](#).

[Select Charity](#)

 **Eyfs-Sen**
21 hrs ·  

SEN Support Strategies for Communication & Language - What can we put in place?

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/.../sen-support-strategies-de...>


CHESHIREEAST.GOV.UK
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk 



362 People reached **27** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

1 comment 3 shares

 Like  Comment  Share 



Most relevant ▾

 Write a comment...


 **Sarah Jones Sophie Clare Watson**
Like · Reply · Message · 14h 




[See all](#)

Posts

 **Add a Donate button** 


Add a donate button to your post to raise money for a charity, and we'll take care of the donation processing with no fees. To raise money for a personal cause instead, [create a personal fundraiser](#).

[Select Charity](#)


 **Eyfs-Sen**
22 hrs ·  

Cheshire East Toolkit for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/.../ce-toolkit-for-send-final...>

CHESHIREEAST.GOV.UK
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk 

365 People reached **18** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

 Lisa Barnes 1 share



Eyfs-Sen
22 hrs · 🌐

...

Cheshire East Toolkit for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/.../ce-toolkit-for-send-final...>



CHESHIREEAST.GOV.UK
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

365
People reached

18
Engagements

Boost Post

👤 Lisa Barnes

1 share



Write a comment...



Add a Donate button

✕

Add a donate button to your post to raise money for a charity, and we'll take care of the donation processing with no fees. To raise money for a personal cause instead, create a personal fundraiser.

Select Charity



Eyfs-Sen
23 hrs · 🌐

...

Early years toolkit
Useful resources to help develop your early years setting.
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/.../good-p.../early-years-toolkit>



OXFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK
Early years toolkit | Oxfordshire County Council

Get more likes, comments and shares

✕

This post is performing better than 95% of other posts on your Page. Boost it to get more great results.

703
People reached

56
Engagements

Boost Post

👤 Stacey Sawicki, Lisa Barnes and 1 other

1 comment 5 shares



Most relevant ▾



Write a comment...



Hjh Ash Stacey Sawicki 1

Like · Reply · Message · 22h



Eyfs-Sen
26 May at 19:56 · 🌐

...

Communication and Language
<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/.../communication-and-languag...>



CHESHIREEAST.GOV.UK
www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

561
People reached

37
Engagements

Boost Post

👤 Keren Gilby-Steadman

2 shares



Write a comment...



Eyfs-Sen
 18 May at 10:47 · 🌐
<https://www.facebook.com/TheDadLab/videos/4489575491911457?s=1000112063895415&sfns=rno>



314,297 Views

TheDadLab
 13 May at 13:00 · 🌐
 Get outside and try these incredible projects with your children @TheDadLab @fatherhood @mumsbookclub

Watch this video with your friends Start Watch Party

671 People reached 10 Engagements Boost Unavailable

Like Comment Share 🗨️

Eyfs-Sen
 18 May at 10:42 · 🌐
<https://www.facebook.com/195827063992420/post/4880006385676481?is=1000112063895415&sfns=rno>



505,500 Views

TheDadLab
 23 March · 🌐
 We can't stop doing amazing science experiments with Alex and Max. This time we made an Underwater Volcano in a jar. When I submerged a bottle of warm orange...

See more

396 People reached 14 Engagements Boost Unavailable

Like Comment Share 🗨️



Eyfs-Sen
18 May at 10:37

<https://www.gov.uk/.../pub.../early-years-inspection-handbook-ef>



GOV.UK
Early years inspection handbook (EIF)
Detailed guidance on inspecting registered early years and childcare

1,073

People reached

66

Engagements

Scroll Post

Anna Williams, Nafis Akhtar and 2 others

1 comment · 4 shares



Most relevant



Write a comment...



Sonia Andrews, Shazia Ahmed, Jane Benn, Claire Poynter, Ruth Wilson, Susan Bryant, Kate Ogurwa, Lisa Weston, Sherri Latham

Like · Reply · Message · View



Eyfs-Sen
18 May at 10:32

<https://www.facebook.com/1499500236765480/posts/21285059405325707?w=500&sfns=rno>



21,430 Views

LEARN as you PLAY

14 May at 12:54

Like Page

Number Sense Play Dough Roll! AGES 3+
This game is an easy way to work on number sense. Since the kids are rolling balls of playdough they are also working th...
See more

937
People reached

56
Engagements

Boost Unavailable

Michelle Barefoot, Jo Brockman and 3 others · 8 comments · 1 share

Like
Comment
Share
More

Most relevant

Write a comment...

Christine Walton Emma, Susan Jo

Like · Reply · Message · W

↳ 1 reply

Jo Aeschlimann Melanie Copage Anita Hubbard Woki Hodoy This looks good

Like · Reply · Message · W

↳ 3 replies

[View 1 more comment](#)

Eyfs-Sen

13 May at 19:16 ·

...

Early Years SEN toolkit - Sensory and physical needs
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/.../early-years-sen-toolkit/se...>

OXFORDSHIRE.GOV.UK

Early Years SEN toolkit - Sensory and physical needs | Oxfordshire County Council

Strategies and resources that are useful for children with hearing, visual...

395
People reached

17
Engagements

Boost Post

Ellen Higson

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Comment
Share
More

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen

4 May at 20:52 ·

...

Treasure Basket - This explorative play supports children in developing their own sensory exploration of natural items and can advance the child's developing understanding of cause and effect

<https://www.littleacornstomightyoaks.co.uk/.../heuristic-play...>

NON-TOXIC PRODUCTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

J.LITTLEACORNSTOMIGHTYOAKS.CO.UK

Heuristic Play Part 1 - The Treasure Basket

Welcome to Little Acorns to Mighty Oaks.

440
People reached

15
Engagements

Boost Post

Keran Gilby-Steadman

1 share

Like
Comment
Share
More

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 4 May at 20:45 - 

Heuristic Play and Treasure baskets: Heuristic play was a term coined by a child psychologist Elinor Goldschmeid in the early 1980's. Heuristic play describes the activity of babies and children as they play with and explore the properties of 'objects'. These 'objects' are things from the real world
<https://m.oxfordshire.gov.uk/.../childrenun.../HeuristicPlay.pdf>

m.oxfordshire.gov.uk

737 People reached 28 Engagements **Boost Post**

Lisa Humphray, Carrie Jayne Currell and 1 other 4 shares

Like Comment Share 

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 3 May at 21:26 - 

FYI
 Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education
<https://www.gov.uk/.../education-inspection-framework-2019-in-...>



gov.uk

Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education

1,119 People reached 57 Engagements **Boost Post**

Lavinia Melissa, Claire Derrington and 2 others 2 shares

Like Comment Share 

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 30 April at 19:02 - 

The resources file was produced by working parties of principals, teachers, lecturers and other educationalists who shared their considerable skills and experience and identified useful and effective strategies, shaping these into a common framework for use by all teachers and support staff. It is hoped that the resources and skill set to which these resources contribute can be deployed to support children not only with SEN but with a range of barriers to learning.
<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/.../resources-file-children-sp-...>

EDUCATION-NI.GOV.UK

Resource file for children with special educational needs | Department of Education

The resources file was produced by working parties of principals, teachers, lecturers and other educationalists who shared their...

443 People reached 20 Engagements **Boost Post**

Louise Tomlinson 1 share

Like Comment Share 

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 30 April at 18:53 - 

Curriculum Resources for SLD
 These curriculum resources are developed for learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD). They aim to provide teachers with support in the planning, teaching and assessment process within the classroom. All these units are aligned with the Northern Ireland
http://ceea.org.uk/.../sen_inclu.../severe_learning_difficulties

CCEA.ORG.UK

Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) | CCEA

Learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD) have very significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. Their cognitive and/or attainment levels are normally at or below the 0.01 percentile. This has a major...

306 People reached 4 Engagements **Boost Post**

Like Comment Share 

Eyfs-Sen
30 April at 18:53 · 🌐

Curriculum Resources for SLD

These curriculum resources are developed for learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD). They aim to provide teachers with support in the planning, teaching and assessment process within the classroom. All these units are aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum
http://ceea.org.uk/.../sen_inclu.../severe_learning_difficulties

CCEA.ORG.UK

Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) | CCEA

Learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD) have very significant intellectual or cognitive impairments. Their cognitive and/or attainment levels are normally at or below the 0.01 percentile. This has a major...

306 People reached 4 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

Eyfs-Sen
30 April at 18:50 · 🌐

Curriculum Resources for PMLD

These curriculum resources have been developed for learners aged 3-19 with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). They aim to provide teachers with support to enhance the learning experiences of this unique group of learners and deliver all aspects of the curriculum at a level appropriate to individual needs. All these units are aligned with the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
http://ceea.org.uk/.../profound_multiple_learning_difficulties

CCEA.ORG.UK

Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) | CCEA

Learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) have complex learning needs. In addition to their severe learning difficulties, they may have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities,...

316 People reached 13 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

Eyfs-Sen
27 April · 🌐

SEN and disability in the early years: A toolkit
 Section 10: Transitions for disabled children and children with SEN

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/.../Section-10-Transitions...>

FOUNDATIONYEARS.ORG.UK
www.foundationyears.org.uk

384 People reached 15 Engagements [Boost Post](#)


👤 Lisa Humphray

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

📝 Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen
21 April · 🌐

<https://youtu.be/cPR2H4Zd8bf>

 YOUTUBE.COM
A Js For Autism.(Tim.Webb,1992).avi
 A must watch!

391 People reached 3 Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👤 Keren Gilby-Steadman 1 share

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🗨️

📝 Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen
21 April · 🌐

Early Years Down Syndrome resources
<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/early-years-down-syndrom.../>

ESSEXLOCALOFFER.ORG.UK

Early Years Down Syndrome resources - Essex Local Offer

The Specialist Teaching and Preschool Service advises parents and early years' practitioners on the learning and development of young children...

Eyfs-Sen 21 April · 🌐

Early Years Down Syndrome resources
<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/early-years-down-syndrom.../>

Early Years Down Syndrome resources - Essex Local Offer
 The Specialist Teaching and Preschool Service advises parents and early years' practitioners on the learning and development of young children...

403 People reached 4 Engagements [Book 1 Post 1](#)

1 share

Like Comment Share 🗲

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 21 April · 🌐

SENsational resources
 The following resources have been developed by the team to encourage the practice of communication-supported activities.
<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/sensational-resources/>

SENsational resources - Essex Local Offer
 The following resources have been developed by the team to encourage the practice of communication-supported activities. Sign-supported...

470 People reached 19 Engagements [Book 1 Post 1](#)

Keren O'Byrne-Steedman

Like Comment Share 🗲

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 21 April · 🌐

Ideas to Develop Effective Parent Partnership
<http://dnn.essex.gov.uk/.../ideas%20to%20develop%20Effective%.../>

dnn.essex.gov.uk

396 People reached 13 Engagements [Book 1 Post 1](#)


1 share

Like Comment Share 🗲

Write a comment...

Eyfs-Sen 21 April · 🌐

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/.../good-beginnings-essex.../>



Good Beginnings - Essex Early Years Autism Programme - Essex Local Offer

404 People reached 10 Engagements [Book 1 Post 1](#)

1 share

Like Comment Share 🗲

Write a comment...



ESSEXLOCALOFFER.ORG.UK

Good Beginnings - Essex Early Years Autism Programme - Essex Local Offer

93

People reached

11

Engagements

Scroll Post

Stephanie Glover

1 comment · 1 share



Most relevant



Write a comment...



Emma Walton Vikki Law

Like · Reply · Message · Share



Eyfs-Sen

21 April · Public

...

Case Studies (Good Beginnings)

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/case-studies-good-beginnings/>

ESSEXLOCALOFFER.ORG.UK

Case Studies (Good Beginnings) - Essex Local Offer

Dylan (aged 4) Highlights of work with Dylan, his family and his nursery...

429

People reached

6

Engagements

Scroll Post

2 shares



Write a comment...



Eyfs-Sen

21 April · Public

...

Structuring the environment (Good Beginnings)

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/structuring-environment-.../>



ESSEXLOCALOFFER.ORG.UK

Structuring the environment (Good Beginnings) - Essex Local Offer

717

People reached

20

Engagements

Scroll Post

Emma Walton

1 share



Write a comment...

Appendix G

BOS NING 1 Completed Surveys

EYFS SEN

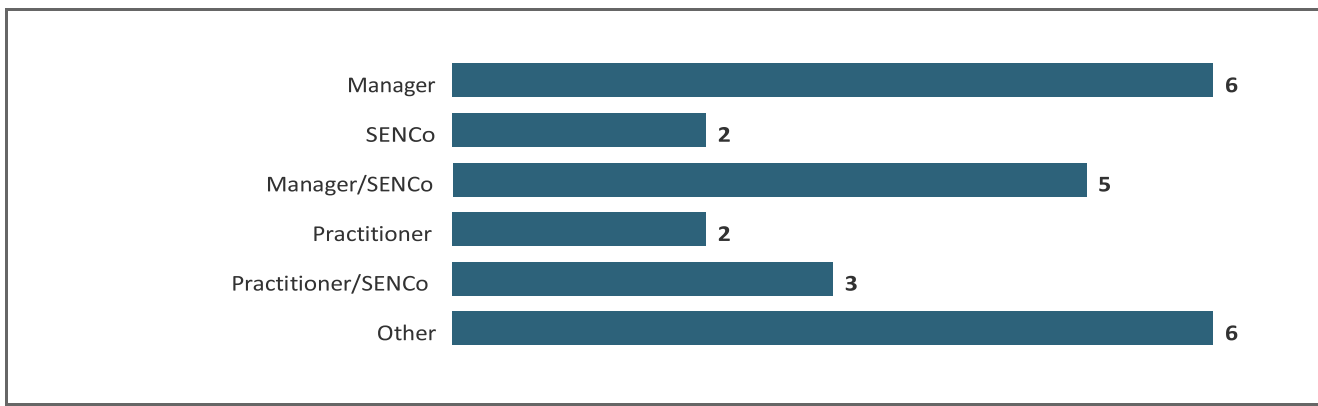
Showing 26 of 26

Showing all responses

Showing all questions

Response rate: 26%

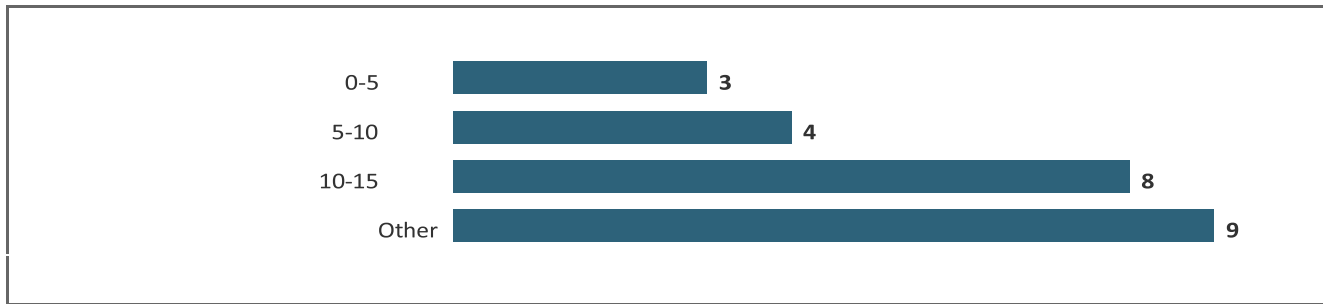
1 What is your current professional



1.a If Other please give further details:

Showing all 6 responses	
deputy manager/INCO	191775-191768-13177595
Deputy Manager	191775-191768-13308189
Special needs teacher	191775-191768-13323685
clinical psychologist	191775-191768-13911306
EYP	191775-191768-14106063
Special Needs Teacher	191775-191768-14592096

2 How long have you worked within Early Years



3 Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and NVQ Level 3?

Showing		all		23		responses	
N/a							191775-191768-13152
NNEB BA EACS Hons							191775-191768-13153
NVQ4 DPP Portage training Makaton training SENCO training THOMAS training							191775-191768-13153
NVQ Level 4 Children's Care, Learning and Development							191775-191768-13154
Btec Nat Cert level 3							191775-191768-13164
diploma level 3							191775-191768-13177
NVQ 3							191775-191768-13180
NNEB NVQ level 4 Paediatric first aid CPLO training All relevant SENCO training Regular one day courses that local council provide.							191775-191768-13298
Level 4 in Montessori education (0-6), QTS primary							191775-191768-13300
Nvq L4 childcare and education							191775-191768-13301
EYPS BA Early Years Cache Level 3 Diploma in NurseryNursing							191775-191768-13308
NNEB							191775-191768-13324
NNEB							191775-191768-13330
Bed primary education (early years) with QTS							191775-191768-13368
BAECS hons							191775-191768-13878
Eyps							191775-191768-13882
BTEC National Studies Diploma Diploma In Childhood							191775-191768-13903

A1 NVQ Assessor	
Clinical psychology doctorate Family therapy masters Psychology degree	191775-191768-13911
EYP	191775-191768-14106
EYTS BA(Hons) Education (Early Years)	191775-191768-14591
None - I have a B.Ed (Hons)	191775-191768-14592
NVQ L4 CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION	191775-191768-14592
NVQ LEVEL 3	191775-191768-14600

4 Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup,

Showing all 24 responses	
Nursery	191775-191768-13152881
Nurserywith wraparound	191775-191768-13153742
preschool	191775-191768-13153971
Lower School	191775-191768-13154221
Nursery	191775-191768-13164380
pre-school	191775-191768-13177595
pre-school	191775-191768-13180898
Day Nursery	191775-191768-13298854
Autism resource base attached to primaryschool	191775-191768-13300654
nursery	191775-191768-13301754
Day Nursery	191775-191768-13308189
School	191775-191768-13323685
Playgroup	191775-191768-13324796
Reception class	191775-191768-13330679
Authority maintained nursery school	191775-191768-13368182

Education preschool attached to infant school	191775-191768-13878406
Independent school nursery	191775-191768-13882292
EY's SEN Advisory Team	191775-191768-13903045
CAMHS	191775-191768-13911306
pre-school	191775-191768-14106063
Preschool	191775-191768-14591449
Special School Early Years Class	191775-191768-14592096
NURSERY	191775-191768-14592129
Playgroup	191775-191768-14600338

5 How many children can the setting have on

Showing all 24 responses	
20	191775-191768-13152881
65	191775-191768-13153742
30	191775-191768-13153971
400	191775-191768-13154221
38	191775-191768-13164380
20 per day	191775-191768-13177595
30 per day session 60 per	191775-191768-13180898
42	191775-191768-13298854
11	191775-191768-13300654
180 approx	191775-191768-13301754
180	191775-191768-13308189
currentl 80 accrod the whole school	191775-191768-13323685
20 per session	191775-191768-13324796
60	191775-191768-13330679
80	191775-191768-13368182
52	191775-191768-13878406
44	191775-191768-13882292

N/A	191775-191768-13903045
NA	191775-191768-13911306
80	191775-191768-14106063
30	191775-191768-14591449
9	191775-191768-14592096
185	191775-191768-14592129
30	191775-191768-14600338

6 How many children are on the SEND

Showing all 24 responses	
3	191775-191768-13152881
4	191775-191768-13153742
4	191775-191768-13153971
30	191775-191768-13154221
3	191775-191768-13164380
5	191775-191768-13177595
4 (plus SAL issues)	191775-191768-13180898
5	191775-191768-13298854
All	191775-191768-13300654
3	191775-191768-13301754
unsure	191775-191768-13308189
All	191775-191768-13323685
Two	191775-191768-13324796
8	191775-191768-13330679
18	191775-191768-13368182
10	191775-191768-13878406
3	191775-191768-13882292
N/A	191775-191768-13903045
NA	191775-191768-13911306
6	191775-191768-14106063

1	191775-191768-14591449
9	191775-191768-14592096
3	191775-191768-14592129
2	191775-191768-14600338

7 What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

Showing all 24 responses	
VI, S&L, ASD	191775-191768-13152
SLC SCD	191775-191768-13153
social communication	
Speech, language and communication needs/disorders, ADHD, Aspergers and children on the Autistic Spectrum, Behavioural needs, elective mutism, 22Q11.	191775-191768-13154221
S< Global delays Medical	191775-191768-13164380
Severe speech and language and communication needs	191775-191768-13177595
Autism Social communication difficulties Selective mutism/reluctant speakers Speech and language issues including stammering	191775-191768-13180898
Speech & lang. Social communication. Hearing imparied. Physical disability.	191775-191768-13298854
Autism (and associated SLCN), ADHD, anxiety, epilepsy	191775-191768-13300654
Speech and language Behaviour	191775-191768-13301754

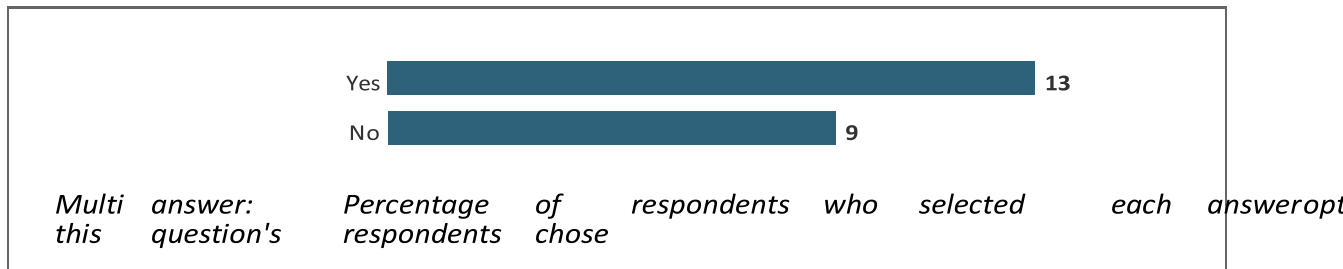
Speech and Language Social Communication Difficulties Autism Physical Development	191775-191768-13308189
CP, VI, HI, SLCN, SCD etc	191775-191768-13323685
All of the above	191775-191768-13324796
Speech and Language Social communication difficulties Cognitive processing	191775-191768-13330679
PI, VI, HI, global delay, SPEech and language, Down's syndrome, behaviour and emotional .	191775-191768-13368182
Speech and Language, social communication difficulties, physical disability, auditory deprivation	191775-191768-13878406
Speech, language and communication needs Social communication difficulties	191775-191768-13882292
N/A	191775-191768-13903045
I am not employed to work in a particular setting, but around a quarter of the children I see have significant social communication difficulties.	191775-191768-13911306
speech and language long term medical conditions physical disabilities	191775-191768-14106063
Speech, Language & Communication Physical needs	191775-191768-14591449
ASD / MSI PD / VI / SLD / SCD /	191775-191768-14592096

speech & language [191775-191768-13153971](#) speech & language

191775-191768-13153971 SPEECH & LANGUAGE DELAY 191775-191768-

SPEECH & LANGUAGE DELAY	191775-191768-14592
Speech, Language and Communication needs	191775-191768-14600

8 Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate children in the setting who present



8.a Please give further

Showing all 21 responses	
Lack of funding	191775-191768-13152
access to courses and opps to attend sessions with child and parents.	191775-191768-13153
training in the area is very limited and therefore difficult to access and can be very expensive which for a small group like mine is difficult	191775-191768-13153
Staff on the SEN Team are encouraged to access training that will enable them to best support the needs of children they work with. For example Autism Training. I have trained once a month with CHUMS over a two year period and gained a Level 1 Wellbeing Practitioner Award. Training accessed consisted of, for example, Basic Counselling Skills, Loss and Grief, Domestic Violence, Anxiety, Self Harm etc. As part of the Language Provision Team our SALT provides training in order to enable us to support children with Language Statements.	191775-191768-13154
S< came into nursery to give group training on signing, relevant words for the nursery routine	191775-191768-13164
Specialist came into nursery to give group training on a particular medical need	

We attend all INCO forums and we have support from outside agencies (Speech and language setting support, SALT, Educational Psychologists). We are also a part of the training subscription which enables us to attend any courses that are on the training. (talking clearly, talk, talk, talk, Early language development programme etc). We cascade information from courses that we attend in staff meetings.	191775-191768-13177
Although we are well experienced and qualified the LEA do not currently have any training available. We therefore internally train staff.	191775-191768-13180
Staff attend training days. Also have outside professionals visiting setting to give specific, individual training to support certain children.	191775-191768-13298
Run by the council for statemented children, access to related CPR	191775-191768-13300654
	191775-191768-13300
They work alongside and with me supporting their key child.	191775-191768-13301
We are a very specialist school and have a very good in house training system and we work alongside NHS staff to meet chn needs.	191775-191768-13323
Struggle to find appropriate courses with space	191775-191768-13324
Staff sent on training or trainers brought in to setting	191775-191768-13878
There are insufficient Makaton courses available locally and training is expensive.	191775-191768-13882
N/A	191775-191768-13903
Not sure - I doubt it	191775-191768-13911
training not available but other professionals involved offer support where needed. Management and senior staff v experienced and management are persistent in seeking support!	191775-191768-14106
Elkan training SENCo Training	191775-191768-14591

We have an extensive Programme. accessed and of INSET Days	Induction external course we	Training can be made good use	191775-191768-14592
YES BUT ONLY VIA REALLY MYSELFAS THE SEND CO-ORDINATOR OR IF THEY SEARCH INFORMATION THEIR SELF.			191775-191768-14592
work/ratio lots of variety provided.	restraints training/courses provided.	can be a cancelled problem. and not enough	191775-191768-14600

9 Does providing SEND support to individual children within your setting have an impact on provision to the wider group of children and if so how?

Showing all 23 responses			
In group work, strategies	other child will	benefit from the	191775-191768-13152
Due to sight keep who on door.	problem blinds then as we find	it is difficult to see who	191775-191768-13153
Yes some of children is negative etc.	it are the -	positivein understand that the same but less time, adult	191775-191768-13153
No, we strive to class and all support are	we are the SEN ensure their additional children's who are more than	a fully inclusive register have 1:1 that children peers at all times. Class provision is differentiated to those children who are not on the SEN register but two years behind their	191775-191768-13154

No,
as
we
work
over
ratio

and
 receive
 extra
 funding
 to
 cover
 1-1
 support

191775-191768-13164380

for 15 hours a week.	
I feel that supporting SEND without financial help does impact on the other children, usually the impacts is that less time is spent with them, however saying this a lot of preparation for SEND children I do at home in my own time so it impacts on my time.	191775-191768-13177
Yes. We get no additional funding for children with SEND therefore this has to be resourced from our normal budgets. Any additional equipment/resources or staff must be taken from the general funding. We would like to provide more small group and individual work to reduce gaps but this means we must remove staff from the other children in order to do so	191775-191768-13180
Not entirely certain. It definitely helps the individual child.	191775-191768-13298
Would like to further disseminate good practice to class teacher in attached mainstream school	191775-191768-13300
Not at present	191775-191768-13301
No because all children are SEND in the school	191775-191768-13323
Due to staffing restrictions and money, children can be overlooked as the need to focus on them can at times be great	191775-191768-13324
Interventions using support staff will include other children a lot of the time. Good practise for all children	191775-191768-13330
No as our nursery ensure that children with send are provided with support from a non timetabled send support who can carry out intervention without disruption of other groups .	191775-191768-13368

Yes	if a keyworker is assigned to work individually with one child then the remaining children in the key worker group have agency staff to work with them. No consistency. If the designated worker is away then the named permanent member of staff works with the child now leaving 2 groups of children with agency workers.	191775-191768-13878
On	the plus side all children learn how to use makaton.	
Sometimes	I feel that the needs of the larger group are not taken in to consideration when everyone is trying to accommodate the child with additional needs.	
It	can take longer to complete a planned activity due to the extra time a send pupil may need and they can quickly demand the full attention of the practitioner leaving the reamainder of the group losing focus.	191775-191768-13882
N/A		191775-191768-13903
NA		191775-191768-13911
not	currently but in past it has caused some disruption until funding was available for support workers	191775-191768-14106
Not	at present	191775-191768-14591
All	our children have SEND	191775-191768-14592
NO	TO SOME CONTENTENCE AS I MAINLYWORK WITH THEE CHILDREN IN A No, as we work over ratio and receive extra funding to cover 1-1 support	191775-191768-14592

191775-191768-13164380

SMALL GROUP SO I CAN MONITOR THEM AND THEIR KEY CARER THEN	
SMALL GROUP SO I CAN MONITOR THEM AND THEIR KEY CARER THEN WORKS WITH THEM VIA THEIR IP WHICH WE DO WITH THE PARENT. OTHER CHILDREN ALSO WANT THE SAME TIME WITH ME WHICH I FEEL HAS SO IMPACT ON THEM TO.	
It has made us look at our routine as a whole, providing picture routines to support all children, activities such as knock knock boxes, attention Hillingdon and other familiar activities/resources have provided all children with the opportunity to improve their concentration, listening and attention skills and speech and language skills, especially those of EAL.	191775-191768-14600

10 How does the setting support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

Showing all 23 responses	
Open door policy.	191775-191768-13152
Meetings, discussions, support available on site.	191775-191768-13153
time for face to face chats - this is most important targeted plans discussed help parents to implement plans/strategies at home home visits if asked answering questions attending meetings/appointment with paediatricians etc if required writing reports	191775-191768-13153
Weekly drop in meetings with the setting SENDCo. Updates of progress or sharing of information through telephone conversations, posting children's IEPs, meeting with parents for update meetings and including other professionals as required, arranging times for the Family Support Workers to meet with parents, arranging for other professionals/specialists to observe children and then meet with parents and key practitioners to advise in strategies to support children.	191775-191768-13154
By offering information, time to talk and advice at the level they need	191775-191768-13164

By accessing support and resources needed	
We support parents by being there at the beginning/end of the morning for them to discuss any concerns they have as well as their reviews. We are also at the end of a telephone or email whenever they need us. This term we will spend a vast amount of time with parents during transition to school, and going to the school with parents when needed.	191775-191768-13177
individual meetings regular catch-ups talking through paperwork Signposting Introduction to specialists/private therapists. Supported transitions Support on visits to assessments if required Training of parents in behaviour management Arrange specialist equipment at pre-school if needed, Flexibility in times/arrangements to suitanything that helps!!! anything that helps!!!	191775-191768-13180
Parents fully involved in all decisions and discussions about their child. Documents and reports shared with parents. Advice and support given when needed.	191775-191768-13298
IEP and statement reviews, phone calls and chats at pick up time, sharing info on courses, signposting relevant resources e.g behaviour support, SENDIAS organising social events for parents,	191775-191768-13300
Regular meetings IP's in place Plus their regular termly reports	191775-191768-13301
Pointing them in the right direction for support, supporting them in getting support	191775-191768-13308
We have a home school diary which goes home daily. We regularly meet with parents/carers.	191775-191768-13323

Regular meetings, the right open door policy, pointing them in direction for further help	191775-191768-13324
Keep parents up to date Explain paperwork Offer courses eg ADHD	191775-191768-13330
Wheelchair access, nurture groups, welcoming approach .	191775-191768-13368
Offers to attend meetings, offers suitable setting times, shares ideas etc so good practice. Know who to direct them to for extra support.	191775-191768-13878
Practitioner and senco support Signposting	191775-191768-13882
N/A	191775-191768-13903
NA	191775-191768-13911
regular meetings and updates	191775-191768-14591
All children have IEP's shared with parents All children have a Home / school diary with daily entries on progress etc Meetings with individual parents can be and are arranged as and when there is a need Telephone conversations are often had email is used once termly meetings to review progress Target setting meetings TAC Meetings as needed	191775-191768-14592
WE MEET TERMLY UNLESS NEEDED OTHER WISE. WE ALSO TRY AND SUPPLY ANY SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR THEM AND ALSO WILL ARRANGE ANY HELP VIA EARLY YEARS SUPPORT ADVISER	191775-191768-14592
regular meetings, providing different development tools such as the Early support journal or portage packs, home link books, attending meetings with the parents, showing parents around specialised schools in the area. Attention Hillingdon, Inviting our inclusion coordinator in for regular meetings.	191775-191768-14600

11 How do practitioners support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

Showing all 22 responses	
Regular communication.	191775-191768-13152
Close communication through variety of means-verbally, written book etc Sharing good practice	191775-191768-13153
as above	191775-191768-13153
Ensuring parents are aware that their child accesses strategies to support children with needs, for example visual timetables, checklists and social stories. Intervention sessions 1:1 or small groups, for example SEAL and SALT. Preparing and providing intervention techniques and strategies that can be used at home ensuring consistency in approach to, for example challenging behaviour or SALT. Home/school books.	191775-191768-13154
See above	191775-191768-13164
We have constant conversations with parents about any concerns they have. We have reviews and we attend all meetings.	191775-191768-13177
As above	191775-191768-13180
same as question 10.	191775-191768-13298
As above	191775-191768-13300
They are fully involved in the whole process,	191775-191768-13301
regular meetings, feedback, sharing information	191775-191768-13308
As above.	191775-191768-13323
Give information Support through process Compassionate and caring	191775-191768-13330
Regular contact, review meetings , arranging additional support through fun ability, lighthouse projects for those with more complex needs , support completing forms and referrals .	191775-191768-13368
Key worker assigned to child, time to listen and discuss worries. Provide a relationship so parents/carers feel able to leave their child.	191775-191768-13878

Sharing experiences Working in partnership Writing reports Planning and observation review cycle	191775-191768-13882
N/A	191775-191768-13903
NA	191775-191768-13911
daily chats	191775-191768-14591
See above	191775-191768-14592
AS ABOVE AND VIA HAND OVER TIME TO HELP CATCH IN IF ANYTHING CHANGES.	191775-191768-14592
as above setting IEP's with the parents and home target forms. Regular parents meetings, attention Hillingdon, regular training.	191775-191768-14600

12 How does the Local Authority support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?

Showing all 22 responses	
EHCP.	191775-191768-13152
Speech and language attending setting, physio attending settings etc	191775-191768-13153
some children are eligible for EYPP which is not much but helps a little, extra funding can sometimes be accessed depending on the diagnosis. Truthfully, there is not very much help	191775-191768-13153
Funding so that 1:1 support can be accessed. Outside professionals visit to make assessments and advise, family support workers engage with the school and work with families at home, children in school.	191775-191768-13154
In our case they have provided the extra funding needed to support 1-1	191775-191768-13164
We have speech and language setting support which is a great help. We do not get any extra funding for any child within our setting which I feel is wrong	191775-191768-13177

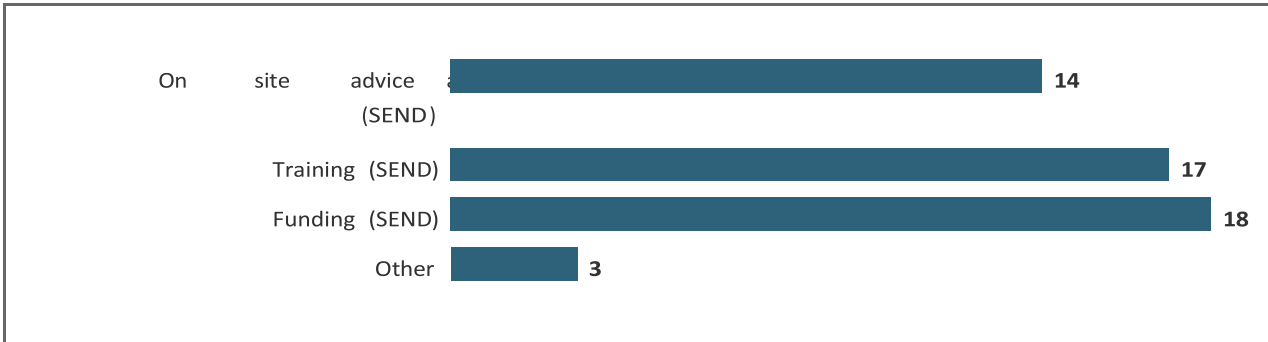
depending on needs... Sensory consortium early bird programme Saturday club They are allocated a support worker but they tend to only co-ordinate paperwork	191775-191768-13180
Funding such as FEE & FEET. Setting can apply for additional funding to provide extra support to child, which reassures parents that child is getting appropriate level of care. Advisors will attend meetings and advise parents to additional support outside of the setting.	191775-191768-13298
Allocating places in the Base through Admissions panels, offering Early Bird course	191775-191768-13300
Via telephone support and a visit from an early years advisory teacher	191775-191768-13301
N/A	191775-191768-13323
Support is there but hard to access at times mainly due to funding cuts	191775-191768-13324
Reports from ed physic School nurse support	191775-191768-13330
Through the local offer .	191775-191768-13368
Provides funding for additional staff/equipment	191775-191768-13878406
Provides funding for additional staff/equipment	191775-191768-13878
Occasional specialist visit to the setting to see child Blocks of speech and language support Love mited funding towards ina support	191775-191768-13882
N/A	191775-191768-13903
Early Years Team	191775-191768-13911

helpline	if	required								191775-191768-14591
Statements	or	now	EHC	Plans	are	in	place	for		191775-191768-14592
all	children									191775-191768-14592
VERY	LITTLE-YOU	GE	TTOLD	LOOK	AT	THE	GOV	WEBSITE		191775-191768-14592
FIRST-WHICH	IS	NOT	EASY	TO	FOLLOW.					191775-191768-14600
training	where	possible.								191775-191768-14600
Great	support	from	our	advisory	teachers	and	the			
Inclusion	team,	Toy	Library.							

13 What Local Authority is the setting

Showing	all	23	responses
Reading.			191775-191768-13152881
Solihull			191775-191768-13153742
Hampshire			191775-191768-13153971
Bedfordshire			191775-191768-13154221
Norfolk			191775-191768-13164380
west Sussex			191775-191768-13177595
RBWM			191775-191768-13180898
Surrey			191775-191768-13298854
Oxfordshire			191775-191768-13300654
West Sussex			191775-191768-13301754
Reading			191775-191768-13308189
East Sussex			191775-191768-13323685
Westberks			191775-191768-13324796
Wirral			191775-191768-13330679
Derby city			191775-191768-13368182
Solihull			191775-191768-13878406
Escc			191775-191768-13882292
N/A			191775-191768-13903045
I work in Hounslow			191775-191768-13911306
Lincolnshire			191775-191768-14591449
Essex			191775-191768-14592096
WEST SUSSEX			191775-191768-14592129
Hillingdon			191775-191768-14600338

14 Does your Local Authority provide any of the

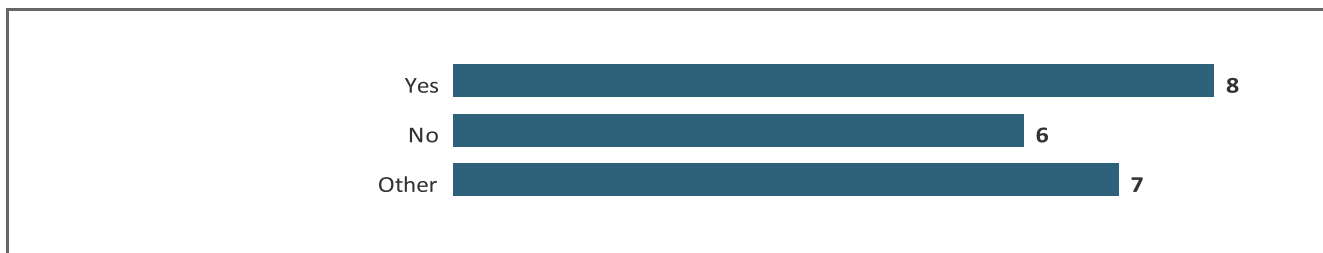


Multianswer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

14.a If Other please give further

Showing all 8 responses	
None of the above is particularly forthcoming - training is difficult to access for various reasons, funding is practically non-existent and onsite advice and support is available but again, difficult to access at times.	191775-191768-13153
Speech and language setting support and Targeted setting	191775-191768-13177
little support available at present. No funding. No training. No advisors available for visits who have SEND knowledge	191775-191768-13180
Telephone support	191775-191768-13301
Limited send training available	191775-191768-13882
Not sure	191775-191768-13911
but all less than previously available	191775-191768-14106
SUPPORT VIA A WEBSITE OR THE FROM THE END OF A PHONE USUALLY.	191775-191768-14592

15 Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside children in your setting who present with



15.a Please give further

Showing all 20 responses	
Sometimes, if we push the communication with agencies.	191775-191768-13152
School is always on top of ensuring the best possible support is available for child.	191775-191768-13153
I do not feel particularly well supported by the LA. Portage and SLT are very stretched in our area and referrals take a long time.	191775-191768-13153
Statements for children with SEN take as long as a year to complete, until then there is no funding for additional support for a child so that	191775-191768-13154
they can have a 1:1 key person. For children that have suffered severe emotional trauma and loss and need counselling the waiting list is more than 6 months long and the evidence that you have to provide before a service will accept a child is huge. Jigsaw will only work with a child if they are at the point of exclusion... This is too little too late for a 4/5 year old!	
Social Services do not seem to have the time or inclination to work closely with vulnerable families.	
We have setting support but we have no other financial support, the EYAT should be able to tell the LA when a setting needs	191775-191768-13177

financial support and not all this paperwork with claim forms.	
sensoryconsortium is effective SALT ..over loaded! OT ...rarely available Camhs 1 year waiting list Autism supportgroups not targeted to needs of the group	191775-191768-13180
Advisors and other professionals good at giving support, however it is often hard to get appointments and funding levels (in terms of the hours we need) are often much lower than we require.	191775-191768-13298
Yes at the moment but budget cuts may change level of supportgiven and focus for supporttends to be centred around Primaryage rather than early years although there are some children in Base who are in Early Years	191775-191768-13300
Information given via website Personal 1:1 phone conversations	191775-191768-13301
We are a self maintained charity school	191775-191768-13323
When they can be a reached a d are available	191775-191768-13324
Cut backs have meant that what was previously a well resources send team is now a depleted one where the authority no longer facilitate send networks in order to keep sencos and practitioners up to date with changes in funding and supportat both a local and national level .	191775-191768-13368
At times it feels difficult to access send supportand that too much is expected of settingsand practitioners.	191775-191768-13882
N/A	191775-191768-13903
NA	191775-191768-13911
current children do do not require a high level of supportwithin the setting	191775-191768-14106

Sensoryteam	visit	to	observeand	give	advise			191775-191768-14591	
Work	with	the	Early	Years	Team	of	Pre-School	and	191775-191768-14592
	Specialist		teachers	and	FSKW's				
HAVEN'T		NEEDED		TO	MUCH	SUPPORT		RECENTLY.	191775-191768-14592
I	feel	we	are	supported	well	but	training	can	191775-191768-14600
	be	limited							
until	then	there	is	no	funding	for	additional	support	for
	child	so	that						a

16 How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?

Showing all 23 responses	
Move from statements to EHCP.	191775-191768-13152
Less funding.	191775-191768-13153
It has definitely got worse - we used to have regular termly visits from our area senco but these have stopped. We get the feeling that all resources are going to groups with low grades from Ofsted so groups like us with a good or outstanding rating are left to manage.	191775-191768-13153
There seems to be more and more cutbacks that are having a huge impact on practitioners, parents and children's health and wellbeing. Particularly in the health sector, i.e., SALTs, School Nurses, Social Services and Health Visitors, Midwives...all overworked and underpaid!!!	191775-191768-13154
Yes	191775-191768-13164
The funding for SEND is much more difficult to obtain and every setting is very confused on if they are able to claim this and there is a mountain of paperwork to fill in. We have a child within our setting that has severe communication difficulties and we have worked so hard to achieve her goals with help from speech and language setting support and now we have had a Educational Psychologists in we feel tht we should have got financial support for this.	191775-191768-13177
yes . Lack of money has meant a huge decline in services	191775-191768-13180
Not certain.	191775-191768-13298
Not sure, only been there this year	191775-191768-13300
Yes taken away first team	191775-191768-13301
N/A	191775-191768-13323

Yes		191775-191768-13324
Gone from two huge early support with lots of expert advice to	specialists this year!	191775-191768-13330
Hugely, support is children	sparse, rushed and , parents or practitioners	191775-191768-13368
Fundng has been cut		191775-191768-13878
Appears to be less support and funding available. More has been out on the setting and practitioners. Health visitors haven't been picking up or following up clear concerns at the two year checks and are relying on the settings to do the work which includes those tricky conversations with parents and time consuming referrals.		191775-191768-13882
N/A		191775-191768-13903
Got much smaller.		191775-191768-13911
reduced who in now terms do of not visit	staff - fewer area sencos	191775-191768-14106
	reduced in terms of staff - fewer area sencos who now do not visit	191775-191768-14106063
Training Funding	for 1-1 care	191775-191768-14591
Probably time Passports	getting less pre-school team for all childfen	191775-191768-14592
	supportive e.g. there was a would write Communication us	

-	they	no-longer	do		
ITS	GOT	LESS	AND	LESS.	191775-191768-14592
There	seems	to	be	less training available, many courses being cancelled or not a variety of different approaches and ideas.	191775-191768-14600

16.a How has this affected your SEND

Showing all 20 responses					
A	lot	of	time	filling in forms.	191775-191768-13152
Not	at	all	as	School has stepped in.	191775-191768-13153
I	have	an	extremely	experienced and dedicated team and our SEND provision is good but we feel a bit out on a limb most of the time.	191775-191768-13153
More	and	more	children	display highly emotional and challenging behavioural needs. Waiting lists for additional support and interventions by other professionals are far too long and consequently, the impact on parents and practitioners well being is at a low resulting in more and more staff leaving a profession they love and opting for an easier and less frustrating work role in Tesco or Homebase!	191775-191768-13154
Job	roles/titles	have	changed,	but I still feel supported	191775-191768-13164
This	has	affected	our	provision by staff taking work home and not getting paid for it, as we do not want this to affect our time with the children	191775-191768-13177
More	children	presenting	with	SEND, however we now have to deal with this with little support.	191775-191768-13180
See	above				191775-191768-13300
Not	at	present			191775-191768-13301

N/A		191775-191768-13323
Having only been in my current position for four months, can't answer		191775-191768-13324
It has meant that children come to us with increasingly complex needs and we strive to meet those needs with little support from the authority . Our nursery have taken children who apparently are too complex for even the local special school !		191775-191768-13368
hasn't as school has footed the bill		191775-191768-13878
We have to be careful to balance the needs of the whole class to ensure that we are able to meet all of their needs when considering the application of numerous children with send. We are getting children with clear send that haven't been addressed		191775-191768-13882
following their two year check with the health visitor.		
Structural changes in LA services. Fewer resources across the piece (eg social care, third sector, NHS) mean increased pressure on remaining services. Low staff morale / a sense of hanging on in there and doing your best in spite of the challenging circumstances.		191775-191768-13911
as experienced it hasn't caused an issue		191775-191768-14106
improved it		191775-191768-14591
More work for us to do as we complete them in liaison with parents / professionals		191775-191768-14592
YES WE FEEL THEIR IS LESS SUPPORT COMING OUT TO THE NURSERY TO CARY OUT OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDRENS NEEDS.		191775-191768-14592
this has affected my setting in the past as courses/training can be very bland and staff have left feeling that they could do with extra advice, and training to be a hands on approach.		191775-191768-14600

We are getting children with clear send that haven't been addressed

17 In what way could your setting be further supported to ensure best outcomes for children within your setting who present with SEND?

Showing all 20 responses	
unsure	191775-191768-13153
More financial help and more accessible training maybe	191775-191768-13153
Local Authorities and the Government need to facilitate better health care and earlier intervention for vulnerable families. Children's centres were a good idea but the government chooses to make cutbacks and close many of them down unless they can prove their worth by jumping through numerous hurdles. Still, having come from Childrens Centre management background... You cannot engage with families who don't want to engage no matter how many times you drop leaflets through their door, engage with their midwife or health visitor.	191775-191768-13154
Not having to go through the paperwork each term for the extra funding when all the professionals involved know there is no change to circumstances.	191775-191768-13164

More financial support as this is more difficult to obtain		191775-191768-13177
regular inclusion settings who good practice Funding additional	support groups to get together resources and lines/specialists	191775-191768-13180
More funding. children because the local authority afford, bit the best for the ridiculous	It is often difficult to give the require of provide cannot want require a	191775-191768-13298
amount of 'might' is So, more	paperwork will be broken down into less paperwork! to show how the funding they insist on that it	
Funding (currently of health needs offer the year)	for access to therapists/ support for mental health the end	191775-191768-13300
Having a child	faster visit to the setting to assess a	191775-191768-13301
Pre school and support	teacher counsellors more available for advice	191775-191768-13324
Financing ensure out disseminate meet care	improved in the local authority to come to our	191775-191768-13368
Ensuring is	parents are best for their child made fully aware of what setting them	191775-191768-13878
Higher funding eye available.	to offer the send support e.g a higher not	191775-191768-13882

N/A	191775-191768-13903
NA	191775-191768-13911
faster response from external agencies	191775-191768-14106
more funding for training	191775-191768-14591
Not sure.....	191775-191768-14592
ONCE YOU'VE MADE A CALL AND FELT THERE ARE GROUNDS FOR A CHILD TO BE SEEN THEN SHOULD HAPPEN WITHIN 2 WEEKS?	191775-191768-14592
more training provided in a wider range.	191775-191768-14600
the best for the child. Also, the local authority require a ridiculous	

18 What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting. e.g. SEND Code of Practice 2014, and how these impact on practitioners and their practice?

Showing all 16 responses									
The new COP is quite extensive and we need to be compliant in all areas. This has been a lot of work and investigation.									191775-191768-13152
Too long to explain!									191775-191768-13153
I think that practitioners are very demoralised about most things at the moment due to lack of finances and unrealistic expectations.									191775-191768-13153
The expectations for providing evidence that shows a child has SEN are too high and are enough to put people off attempting when they know that the answer will more than likely be 'No!' Children with lower level SEN are more than likely never going to get the support they need and will consequently spend their lives struggling to keep up. What impact will that have on their future health and well being we must ask ourselves? How will these children fit into society in the future?									191775-191768-13154
Practitioners struggle to provide for SEN children, most give up their own									
Practitioners struggle to provide for SEN children, most give up their own									
time to ensure provision is at least adequate, most practitioners lose sleep worrying about children in their care, worrying about how they can provide for them and their parents. That is why we are in this profession because we care. However, most of us, at the expense of our own well being and our own families well being...and most of us are on a very low wage because schools cannot afford to pay us at a better rate even if they wanted too. The SEN practitioners on my team, as an example, are paid at a TA Level 2 rate, however there are trained, qualified teachers									

<p>on the team, practitioners trained to levels 3/4 and 5. Our school openly says that it employs SEN practitioners who are very experienced and knowledgeable in their field but cannot afford to pay them for their skills.</p> <p>I guess we made the choice to accept a job that pays so little...</p> <p>Nonetheless, it is very frustrating to know that we are employed on the same pay as unqualified/trained Lunchtime Assistants!!</p>	
<p>I am generally happy with it</p>	<p>191775-191768-13164</p>
<p>very time consuming but I agree with all of it</p>	<p>191775-191768-13177</p>
<p>We fulfil the criteria according to information . However we have to fund any additional work from the NEF funding received for all children. Work of SENCO is done offsite and in paid overtime</p>	<p>191775-191768-13180</p>
<p>Not sure</p>	<p>191775-191768-13300</p>
<p>Its ok so far</p>	<p>191775-191768-13301</p>
<p>If schools are to be able to support children with additional needs then resourcing should be increased not reduced as we are seeing year in year out . Sold services do not mean quality ... They mean an opportunity to exploit educational providers who are given no alternative due to the lack of support from local authority send teams .</p>	<p>191775-191768-13368</p>
<p>Far too much pressure on settings to take children with complex needs when the setting may not be the best place for the child. By having more children with SEN in the settings puts more pressures on staff trying to ensure all children are being treated and being given the opportunities they deserve. eg some toys/equipment cannot be out as it is not safe for child with sen meaning that other children cannot experience some activities. The amount of paperwork/meetings etc put pressure on other staff having to cover.</p>	<p>191775-191768-13878</p>

N/A	191775-191768-13903
Hasn't really filtered through to me in CAMHS yet - likely to be greater emphasis on mental health?	191775-191768-13911
more funding is needed	191775-191768-14591
.... not sure....	191775-191768-14592
ITS GREAT BUT ITS ON THE GROUND SUPPORT WE NEED WITHIN THE SETTING RATHER THEN KEEPING HAVING TO MAKE PHONE CALLS AFTER PHONE CALLS.	191775-191768-14592

19 If you access the EYFS-SEN network - in what ways are you

Showing all 23 responses	
only just joined.	191775-191768-13152
Good to keep up to date around the country	191775-191768-13153
I havent really made good use of the network yet	191775-191768-13153
There are some very interesting articles on SEN and interesting theoretical approaches to children's needs. I am sharing such articles with work colleagues.	191775-191768-13154
I use the pull down menu to access information from other LA' and organisations	191775-191768-13164
I find this really informative and it is a good time to share ideas, I attend all INCO forums	191775-191768-13177
information is always useful! formats from other counties can be helpful. Signposting to training etc	191775-191768-13180
Have only recently accessed it. Was expecting more members and more 'ideas', e.g. things/activities people have done with children with additional needs that have worked well. Maybe it is there and i haven't found it yet.	191775-191768-13298
Have only just joined, not had much time to explore	191775-191768-13300

All the useful information in one place, easy to assess, quick help and responds to were to find something.	191775-191768-13301
to access information to support children with different needs	191775-191768-13308
Interesting articles/ ideas	191775-191768-13323
Advice and support, ideas	191775-191768-13324
Up to date information advice and guidance	191775-191768-13330
I have only just started using it .	191775-191768-13368
not much at moment as do not get time to look at leisure	191775-191768-13878
A really useful resource to look up information e.g. Code of Practice, children with SCD. I loved the good ideas area with the simple threading activity using a colander and pipe cleaners one photograph explained it perfectly	191775-191768-13903
It looks like a good place to go for well curated content/resources	191775-191768-13911
quick to find resources/info rather than endless searching	191775-191768-14106
information	191775-191768-14591
Getting advice / ideas from other colleagues / feeling supported - we are all in this together - Early Years can be isolating in a school	191775-191768-14592
GREAT STUFF I TRY AND GO TO EVERYONE, I HAVE TO GO TO THE ONE OUT OF MY AREA-INCURRING MORE TRAVEL TIME THEN NEEDED BUT I GOT AS THE EARLY YEARS ADVISER RUNS IT AND I TRUST HER SUPPORT AND SHE KNOWSTHE CHILDREN AND SETTING IF NEED ANY ADVISE.	191775-191768-14592
Lots of interesting tools to access quickly and all within one site rather than having to search.	191775-191768-14600
Are there any other functions or areas of information that you would like to be added to the site:	
Showing all 16 responses	
no	191775-191768-13153

not sure	191775-191768-13153
So far so good.	191775-191768-13154
Not at the moment	191775-191768-13164
Slightly confusing layout at present....find I lose track easily!. Perhaps a 'positive patch' where people could share things that have worked or things children have achieved.....we all like a happy ending!	191775-191768-13180
More info on other additional needs, e.g. hearing impaired, sensory processing, physical disabilities. Especially those that are less 'common' and info is hard to come by.	191775-191768-13298
See above, maybe visual support resources?	191775-191768-13300
Maybe more straight forward ways ok assessing funding	191775-191768-13301
A section which details how conversions can be done quickly And efficiently . Are other authorities completing conversions or are sencos expected to carry out this time consuming administrative role ?	191775-191768-13368
n/a	191775-191768-13878
Any more photos of good practical ideas for simple Early Years activities would be a useful resource	191775-191768-13903
As a destination for someone who pretty well knows what they want it looks very good. Perhaps it could be more magazine-ish in order to attract browsers into engaging in forums?	191775-191768-13911
no	191775-191768-14591
....not sure	191775-191768-14592
WEST SUSSEX TRAINING SCHEME IS EXPENSIVE TO JOIN BUT NOT ALWAYS THE RIGHT COURSES FOR OUR APPROACH I WOULD LIKE BETTER TRAINING AT A BETTER COST EFFECTIVE WAY AND LESS OF THIS TRAIN ON LINE!	191775-191768-14592
not at the moment.	191775-191768-14600
If you do not currently access EYFS SEN how could it be made more relevant to your needs?	

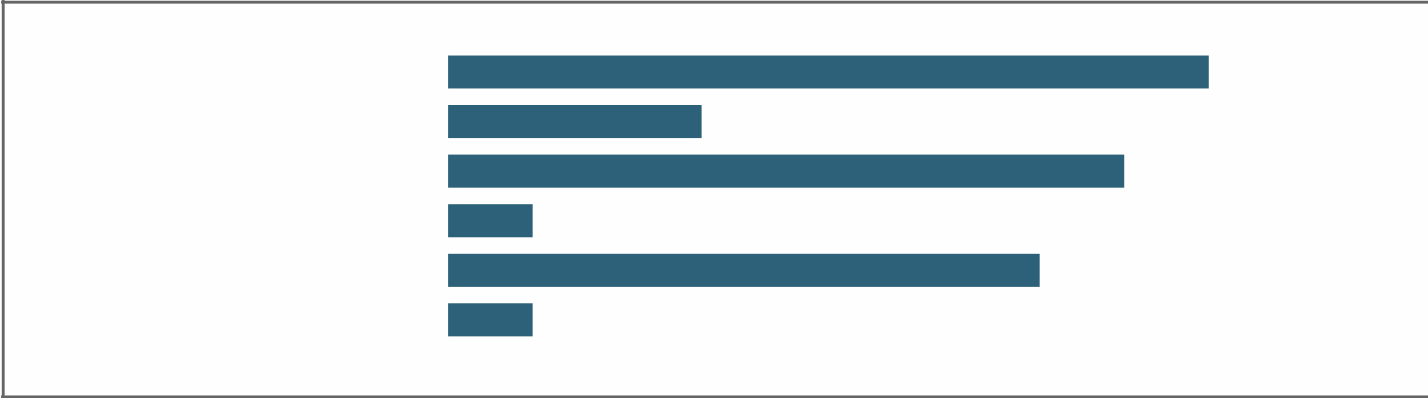
Showing all 8 responses							
n/a							191775-191768-13153
not	sure						191775-191768-13153
Even	though I	work	with	children	up	to	8
	years old	I	can	easily	make	use of	ideas
	approaches	discussed	in	articles	on	this	site
	and differentiate	to	provide	for	older	children	
	with SEN						191775-191768-13154
See	above,	maybe	publicise	it	better	as	I've
	in early	years	for	5 years	and	only	just
	discovered	the	website				
							191775-191768-13300
Its	just	getting	time	to	access	it	
							191775-191768-13878
It	isn't	quite	in	my	professional	domain -	so
	my	needs	probably	don't	fit	here	
							191775-191768-13911
....							191775-191768-14592
n/a							191775-191768-14600
What	additional	types	of	provision	would	you	like
be	able	to	access	to	support	SEND	provision
							in the
							setting?

Showing	all	14	responses		
Educational	psychologists			191775-191768-13152	
none				191775-191768-13153	
maybe speak to	an	SLT,	ED	Psych on line for	191775-191768-13153
advice??					
Proven Practical,	hands on	activity suggestions	for children		191775-191768-13154
with social and	emotional	needs etc.	Like an		
ideas base/forum..					
good quality, higher	level	training appropriate	to	early years	191775-191768-13180
settings.					
More training on	sensory needs,	Waldon,	balancing	child-led	191775-191768-13300
learning with	needing to	move away	from rigid/repetitive		
behaviours	(more than just	repetition	due to		
schemas),	PECs, more	parent support	resources, more		
support on	toilet training,				
All staff have	access to	a	one stop	place for	191775-191768-13301
answers	and	questions			
Advisors with	knowledge	who can	make a	real	191775-191768-13368
difference	to	supporting children	at	mainstream	
level .	This means	increasing	funding .	Sen	
children need	the best	practitioners	yet all		
Too often are	supported	by those	who do not		
have the	knowledge	and expertise	to fulfill		
Their role to	the best	of their	potential		
.					
The realisation	that	with	all the	support in	191775-191768-13878
that some	children	are not	better	in a	
specialised	setting			non	
N/A					191775-191768-13903
'youtube club'	-	something	like a	journal	191775-191768-13911
club where	members	watch youtube	videos (could be		
only 2 mins	long)	and then	discuss, with		
emerging	debates and	links to	resources	and	
related topics.					
online training					191775-191768-14591

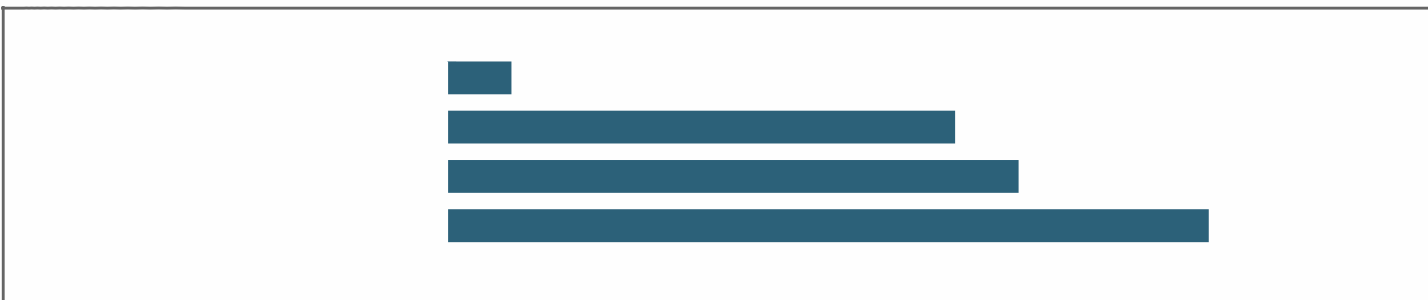
....	191775-191768-14592
TIME LINES FOR DIIFERENT SITUATIONS FORTNIGHTLY TESTS ON LEGISLATION	191775-191768-14592

Appendix H

BOS NING 2 completed surveys



Header 1	
Header 2	



EYFS SEN ning 05.03.2017

Showing 31 of 31 responses

Showing **all** responses

Showing **all** questions

Response rate: 31%

What is your current professional title?

Manager		9 (31%)
SENCo	3 (10.3%)	
Manager/SENCo		8 (27.6%)
Practitioner	1 (3.4%)	
Practitioner/SENCo		7 (24.1%)
Other	1 (3.4%)	

1.a If Other please give further details:

Showing all 5 responses

Manager and Senco

[257754-257746-20946433](#)

Deputy manager senco	257754-257746-20947887
Childminder	257754-257746-20995675
Head of Family Support/ Senco	257754-257746-21300669
teacher in charge/senco	257754-257746-21555239

How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years	1 (3.3%)	
5-10 years		8 (26.7%)
10-15 years		9 (30%)
Other		12 (40%)

Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g.

NVQ Level 3?

Showing all 30 responses

BA HONS in early Years.

257754-257746-20945548

BA Honors in Early Years and Education

257754 257746 20945598

Bec Nat cert

257754-257746-20946433

Nvq 3

257754-257746-20947287

BAECS 1st class

257754-257746-20947781

NNEB

Foundation degree early childhood studies, studying BA hons at moment

257754-257746-20947887

NNER

257754-257746-20948002

ADCE

Management L3

Nvq4

257754-257746-20949999

ba honours

257754-257746-20952304

nvq 3

257754-257746-20952191

qualified teacher/ Montessori Directress

257754-257746-20953288

EYITT

257754-257746-20955822

Foundation degree in childhood studies and currently studying for a BA

257754-257746-20956885

Hons degree

NVQ Level3	257754-257746-20974367
Advanced Study of Early Years & Education Studies BA (Hons)	
BA -Hons in Early Years (2:1)	257754-257746-20995675
NNEB (LEVEL 3)	
Foundation degree	257754-257746-21006615
Early years teacher status, FDA early years in education, Cache Level 3,	257754-257746-21013197
BA Early years	257754-257746-21055810
NVQ level 3	257754-257746-21235186
Foundation degree Level 5	
Ba hons qts	257754-257746-21236528
Early years professional status	
Certificate in the Early Years	257754-257746-21237401
foundation degree early childhood studies	257754-257746-21237683
BA in early childhood	257754-257746-21242201
BEd primary Education with QTS	257754-257746-21242453
Foundation degree	257754-257746-21244227

Foundation degree	257754-257746-21244227
BA Hons Childcare and Education, EYPS	257754-257746-21249362
NVQ L4, Senco L6, SG L3, 1st Aid, H&S L3	257754-257746-21253574
NVQ L4 CHILDCARE & EDUCATION	257754 257746 21300669

<input type="checkbox"/> NNEB. QTS	257754-257746-21555239
Certificate in Early Years level 4	257754-257746-22330511

Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

Showing all 30 responses	
Private Nursery	257754-257746-20945548
Pre School	257754-257746-20945598
Nursery	257754-257746-20946433
Preschool	257754-257746-20947287
Pre-school	257754-257746-20947781
Private day nursery	257754-257746-20947887
Playgroup / Pre school	257754-257746-20948002
Preschool	257754-257746-20949999
school nursery	257754-257746-20952304
pre-school/out of school club	257754-257746-20952191
Montessori	257754-257746-20953288
Primary school	257754-257746-20955822
Preschool	257754-257746-20956885
Private Day Nursery	257754-257746-20974367
Childminder	257754-257746-20995675
Pre-school	257754-257746-21006615
pre-school	257754-257746-21013197

Preschool	257754-257746-21055810
day nursery	257754-257746-21235186
day nursery	257754-257746-21236528
Pre-School	257754-257746-21237401
two, three year olds nursery	257754-257746-21237683
Pre-school	257754-257746-21242201
Nursery school - authority maintained	257754-257746-21242453
Playgroup	257754-257746-21244227
Pre-school	257754-257746-21249362
Pre school	257754-257746-21253574
NURSERY	257754-257746-21300669
Nursery School	257754-257746-21555239
Pre school	257754-257746-22330511

How many children can the setting have on roll?	
Showing all 29 responses	
50	257754-257746-20945548
72	257754-257746-20945598
26	257754-257746-20946433
	257754-257746-20947287
60	257754-257746-20947781
88 per session	257754-257746-20947887
27	257754-257746-20948002
35	257754-257746-20949999
	257754-257746-20952304
60/ 16 per sessin for OOSC	257754-257746-20952191
70	257754-257746-20953288
?	257754-257746-20955822
90	257754-257746-20956885
58	257754-257746-20974367
6 eaely years at any one time	257754-257746-20995675

32 per session

257754-257746-21006615

28	257754-257746-21013197
260	257754-257746-21055810
800	257754-257746-21235186
136	257754-257746-21236528
45	257754-257746-21237401
32	257754-257746-21237683
90	257754-257746-21242201
80	257754-257746-21242453
40	257754-257746-21244227
30 per day - average overall register about 50	257754-257746-21249362
30 each session- currently 37 on roll	257754-257746-21253574
80 PER DAY	257754-257746-21300669
100	257754-257746-21555239

How many children are on the SEND Register?

Showing all 28 responses	
	257754-257746-20945548
3	257754-257746-20945598
	257754-257746-20946433
	257754-257746-20947287
	257754-257746-20947781
2 eyparm	257754-257746-20947887
	257754-257746-20948002
	257754-257746-20949999
	257754-257746-20952304
	257754-257746-20952191
	257754-257746-20953288
	257754-257746-20955822
	257754-257746-20956885
	257754-257746-20974367
	257754-257746-20995675

257754-257746-21006615

257754-257746-21013197

3

257754-257746-21055810

257754-257746-21237401

257754-257746-21237683

257754-257746-21242201

14

257754-257746-21242453

257754-257746-21244227

11%

257754-257746-21249362

257754-257746-21253574

257754-257746-21300669

10

257754-257746-21555239

257754-257746-22330511

What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g Speech, Language and Communication

Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

Showing all 30 responses	
Eye Sight impairment Speech and Language	257754-257746-20945548
2 being assessed for Autism. 1 speech and language. We have many children with EAL	257754-257746-20945598
S@L Medical	257754-257746-20946433
Speech and language Physical Social and emotional	257754-257746-20947287
Speech,Language and Communication Needs Social Communication Difficulties	257754-257746-20947781
Global Development Delay Visual Impairment	
SAL, autism, global delay, social communication difficulties	257754-257746-20947887
fragile x with language and communication, social, sensory, OT, feeding,	257754-257746-20948002
Slit, ASD	257754-257746-20949999
Speach and language, social communication,behavioural	257754-257746-20952304
Salt	Strokes
ASD/social communication	
Dyslexia	

Speech language	257754-257746-20953288
Social communication difficulties	
ASD; S&L; SCD; Behavioural needs;	257754-257746-20955822
Nystagmus, Down syndrome and Global Developmental Delays	257754-257746-20956885
Speech and Language	257754-257746-20974367
Social Interaction	
Social & Communication Difficulties	
Brain Injury	
N/A	257754-257746-20995675
1 x social communication- autism	257754-257746-21006615
3 x speech and language delay	
Speech and language, Social communication (behaviour)	257754-257746-21013197
Speech and Language	257754-257746-21055810
Speech delay	257754-257746-21235186
Speech and language, downs syndrome, global delay (life limiting condition), social and communication difficulties	257754-257746-21236528

condition), social and communication difficulties	
Speech and language	257754-257746-21237401
Social communication	
Autism	
speech and language, global development delay, behaviour, possible autism	257754-257746-21237683
Speech and language	257754-257746-21242201
Speech and language, ASD , physical Impairment BSED.	257754-257746-21242453
Global delay	257754-257746-21244227
Speech and language	
Understanding	
Hearing and visual impairment	

Speech, Language and Communication

257754-257746-21249362

Social Communication including selective mutism

SALT

257754-257746-21253574

S & L X6

257754-257746-21300669

X1 LACKING PHYSICAL STRENGTH IN THE HANDS AND LEGS

S&L, Physical needs, Emotional Needs, Autism

257754-257746-21555239

SAL

257754-257746-22330511

SCD

Autism

Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the

children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes	22 (73.3%)
No	8 (26.7%)

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

8.a Please give further details:

Showing all 18 responses

Time and costs mean we cannot access all the training we would like [257754-257746-20946433](#)

Courses available and staff can access and cascade information [257754-257746-20947781](#)

No specific training , support limited , goalposts change for each child.
Strategies put in place and setting required to 'manage' the child which
isn't always what's best for the child. LA not flexible in approach to
alternative strategies and therapies. [257754-257746-20947887](#)

not enough in house training given ie makaton to all staff , behaviour training that I did attend was not enough support and ideas for sen children. Sen support has decreased now and more paperwork has to be filled out now to ask for support and help. SEn reviews, letters, documents, updating SEN plans need more regular time and no extra money is put in the budget for this time.	257754-257746-20948002
I have attended the 11,2,3 Autism training but that is expensive and then to put other staff on too we have no budget for now.	
Lack of available and suitable training and cost	257754-257746-20949999
LEA no longer provides training by qualified persons Inclusion training is limited	257754-257746-20952191
No training for experienced practitioners wanting further info No funding for SEND to access training further afield No senco in borough or persons to advise	
Lots of local authority courses, online training available and in house training.	257754-257746-20956885
This could be so much better though	257754-257746-20974367
Mostly but not always local or convenient times	257754-257746-21006615
SENCO training, specialist training on Speech language and communication needs, autism awareness	257754-257746-21013197
Have had to have specific training for peg feeds.	257754-257746-21236528

Epilepsy training



Cluster meetings

Local authority
training courses

Workshops

257754-257746-21237401

We are set within a Children and family centre where we can speak directly to speech and language therapists, early years advisors and health visitors

257754-257746-21242201

We have access to a private speech therapist.

257754-257746-21244227

We have had a lot of support from the visual impairment team and hearing support.

Costs of training mean that not all staff can be trained - training is therefore limited to key personnel to support SEND

257754-257746-21249362

Via myself, an the west Sussex councils website

257754-257746-21300669

Our IDS team provide a lot of support for us.

257754-257746-21555239

Training on line and within local authority.

257754-257746-22330511

What Local Authority is the setting in?

Showing all 30 responses	
Chester	257754-257746-20945548
Wandsworth	257754-257746-20945598
Norfolk	257754-257746-20946433
Wiltshire	257754-257746-20947287
Birmingham	257754-257746-20947781
West Sussex	257754-257746-20947887
Buckinghamshire	257754-257746-20948002
Hampshire	257754-257746-20949999
hertsmere	257754-257746-20952304
rbwm	257754-257746-20952191
Hertfordshire	257754-257746-20953288
Devon	257754-257746-20955822
Southampton	257754-257746-20956885
Manchester	257754-257746-20974367
ARUN, WEST SUSSEX	257754-257746-20995675
West Sussex	257754-257746-21006615
Brighton and Hove	257754-257746-21013197

Turkey	257754-257746-21055810
west sussex	257754-257746-21235186
south lincs	257754-257746-21236528
CWAC	257754-257746-21237401
staffordshire	257754-257746-21237683
Crawley, West Sussex	257754-257746-21242201
Derby city	257754-257746-21242453
Leicestershire	257754-257746-21244227
Bournemouth	257754-257746-21249362
HARROW	257754-257746-21253574
West sussex	257754-257746-21300669
warwickshire	257754-257746-21555239
CWAC	257754-257746-22330511

How does the Local Authority support setting practitioners/SENCOs to progress children with SEND who attend the setting?

Showing all 29 responses	
Sen hub	257754-257746-20945548
We have SLT visits and advisors	257754-257746-20945598
I'm generally happy with the support I receive	257754-257746-20946433
Inclusion officer Lead worker both support	257754-257746-20947287
Funding for additional support staff	257754-257746-20947781
Running courses	
Vulnerable learners audit highlights the children then advice settings to make referrals, some children who go to EYPARM then setting receives termly visits from LA and regular TAF meetings in preparation for transitions to school	257754-257746-20947887
termly visits.	257754-257746-20948002
training	
Area income portage slt Thomas outreach	257754-257746-20949999
specialist advisory service, speech and language	257754-257746-20952304
occasional meetings led by EY team	257754-257746-20952191
observations/ieps	257754-257746-20953288
Early years senco supports settings plus early years special needs	funding

We have excellent links with Rodney House Outreach Service and the
Statutory Assessment Team

257754-257746-20974367

N/A... not had recent experience so don't feel I can offer an opinion.

257754-257746-20995675

Training and Early years advisors

257754-257746-21006615

We have an area senco

257754-257746-21013197

No support

257754-257746-21055810

Early years advisor

257754-257746-21235186

Speech and language therapist

we have a dedicated consultant that comes and sees us regularly, helps
us complete forms, observes children in setting. Inclusion funding up to
15 hours a week

257754-257746-21236528

We have a very good relationship with Early Years Specialist Support.

257754-257746-21237401

we have a local area senco

257754-257746-21237683

Regular network meetings, vulnerable learners audit.





257754-257746-21242201

Support is provided through the steps team with assigned VI, HI, PI and
ASd practitioners .

257754-257746-21242453

ASd practitioners .	
Help line on Wednesday afternoon. Termly network meetings.	257754-257746-21244227
LA SENDO termly meetings	257754-257746-21249362
SEN Network - termly	
training,	257754-257746-21253574

Early years setting support 257754-257746-21300669

IDS support, funding		257754-257746-21555239
Come out on visits to observe		257754-257746-22330511
		
		

Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

On site advice and support	17 (60.7%)
(SEND)	
Training (SEND)	25 (89.3%)
Funding (SEND)	16 (57.1%)
Other	1 (3.6%)

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all

this question's respondents chose that option)

11.a If Other please give further details:

Showing all 5 responses

we are give a small budget for lsa support for children needed one to one support.

257754-257746-20948002

none available to the level required.

257754-257746-20952191

Usually every term but sometimes this is miles away

257754-257746-20974367

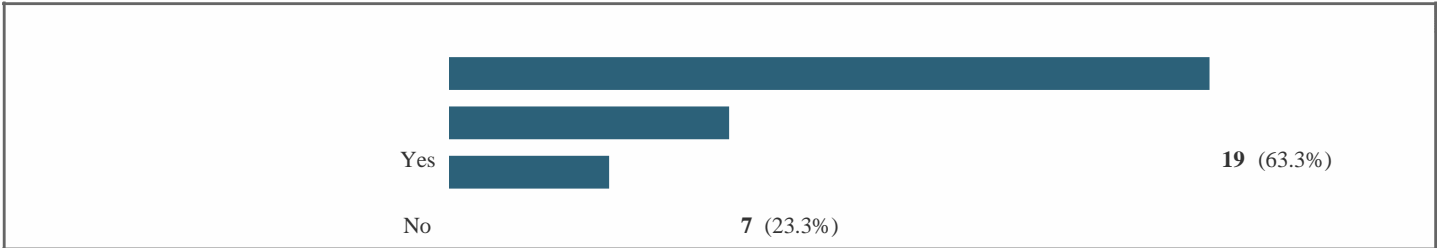
I really don't know as above.

257754-257746-20995675

Nothing

257754-257746-21055810

Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?



Other 4 (13.3%)

12.a Please give further details:

Showing all 11 responses	
Seems to be the support comes once the reach a certainty n stage in the process , however now the vulnerable learner audits require regular visits to settings we are able to seek advice if required at these times ... support limited due to times and budgets and manpower to support settings e.g SAL	257754-257746-20947887
we have SEN networking termly meetings for support plus can call for support	257754-257746-20948002
Difficult to get support quickly	257754-257746-20949999
Not always. at the moment there is no visual impairment teacher for support with the child with nystagmus	257754-257746-20956885
As above	257754-257746-20995675

Mostly but setting expected to seek out or make referrals [257754-257746-21006615](#)

we have a lot of support, welcomed to other groups that our children may attend	257754-257746-21236528
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The service the local authority provides has dwindled greatly in recent years, educational, psychologist and ASD support is now a sold service .EHCP deadlines are not being met ,support is not sufficient from the SEND team , too many staff have left the service leaving people in positions without necessary experience and knowledge to carry out their roles .

257754-257746-21242453

I have had support from Area Senco, visual and hearing support teams to complete send support plans and in day to day support.

257754-257746-21244227

Waiting lists for outside agencies are very long which delays access to assessments and support

257754-257746-21249362

Our IDS support teacher is amazing!

257754-257746-21555239

How has Local Authority provison changed over the past five years?

Showing all 25 responses

Not sure

257754-257746-20945548

Ongoing changes

257754-257746-20946433

Ongoing changes	257754-257746-20946433	
Although support is still available it has considerably reduced	257754-257746-20947287	
Yes, less funding and support	257754-257746-20947781	
There have been lots of changes and support withdrawn, despite their best efforts teams are not able to support settings to the level they once did and the pressure is on the setting	257754-257746-20947887	
less visits from professionals to the setting now due to staff cut backs.	257754-257746-20948002	
more information is now been put onto the bucks learning trust fir us		
now.		
more paperwork need to be done by ourselves and holding and chairing		
reviews by ourselves.		
Not so easy to get hold of outside agencies - long waiting lists lack of	257754-257746-20949999	
funded training		
funding cuts	257754-257746-20952304	
decreased help/support/funding and advice	257754-257746-20952191	
No	257754-257746-20953288	
Less money available for support	257754-257746-20955822	
No	257754-257746-20956885	
Really don't know	257754-257746-20995675	
Much the same	257754-257746-21006615	
Cut backs are making an impact on the area SENCO support. Any		
funding is just about impossible to obtain, so much so, that a parent		When off-site SEN
has offered to pay staff for extra one to one speech and communication		specialists visit, it is
support for her son.		for 20 minute sessions
		each

week.	257754-257746-21013197
less money for inclusion funding	257754-257746-21236528
Speech and language referrals seem to take longer to go through	257754-257746-21237401
I feel it has got better for me but I know that isn't the case for all	257754-257746-21242201
Enormously ... funding but backs has meant that the service is near non existent , unless a child has a diagnosis they do not receive any support from the authority , trying to secure an EHCP is extremely difficult .. a child I submitted an EHCP for last MAy does not yet even have a proposed plan !	257754-257746-21242453
No regular area Senco visits. Bigger network meetings. Less funding.	257754-257746-21244227
Free training completely withdrawn	257754-257746-21249362
No longer do visits, no longer have an Area SEnco	257754-257746-21253574
Networks via the childrens centres are pushing through our worries etc	257754-257746-21300669
Larger amout of integration, less availability of specialist provision	257754-257746-21555239
Local offer has been introduced	257754-257746-22330511

13.a How has this affected your SEND provision?

Showing all 21 responses	
No change	257754-257746-20946433
More pressure on role of senco	257754-257746-20947287
Children not being given the extra support	257754-257746-20947781
We aim to be as inclusive as possible but when you know inclusion funding is limited and support too, it does leave you questioning how you can best support the child and if your setting is the best environment for them to be in, also it puts added pressure on the staff if a child requires one to one but resources and funds don't allow this having to decide on how many children we can take on due to the demand of paperwork and time that is required by us now.	257754-257746-20947887
We are very lucky to have a highly qualified and experienced team who support each other	257754-257746-20948002
longer waiting times	257754-257746-20949999
Fortunately several of the practitioners have years of experience to pass on to team members. Speed of service is so slow that children have often moved on before we get specialist help. SENCO has to undertake work in own time in order to support send	257754-257746-20952304
Less able to support individual children with inclusion	257754-257746-20952191
As above	257754-257746-20955822
Setting more pro-active	257754-257746-20995675
We kind of do the best we can based on the training we have received. We have ICAN accreditation and employ well trained, experienced staff.	We are also a small setting therefore

children do make progress.	257754-257746-21013197
fewer children able to access inclusion funding	257754-257746-21236528
Just means longer to wait until you can put strategies into place	257754-257746-21237401
we have had to be extremely creative with support services,we now run our own aenxi betqork meetings alongside a special school in order that sencoa in the authority have some form of support . We have looked to national courses run through naseeb in order to keep our knowledge up to date .	257754-257746-21242453
It hasn't yet!	257754-257746-21244227
Only key personnel can be trained up rather than all setting practitioners	257754-257746-21249362
have to wait much longer for help and advice as now go straight to EY Ed-Psych	257754-257746-21253574
Better helped but it keeps changing? at present its getting better.	257754-257746-21300669
Children with a wider variety and a higher level of need	257754-257746-21555239
More resources available	257754-257746-22330511



What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting and how these affect practitioners and their practice?

Showing all 18 responses	
It's getting harder to access 1-1 funding.	257754-257746-20946433
More and more paperwork needed is time spent away from the children	
Too much emphasis on the rights of the parents to choose a setting when sometimes the child may flourish in a more specialised setting	257754-257746-20947781
Inclusion can be very difficult to maintain, we have seen an increase on children requiring support in their development and at times the multi agency working breaks down , also expectations change so it is hard to keep practitioners up to date	257754-257746-20947887
I feel too much is expected of preschool practitioners and more funding is needed	257754-257746-20949999
still lots of confusion over what has changed, leading to over reliance on time bands for information gathering. This leads to further delays in getting help and support	257754-257746-20952191
Much more pressure on professionals	257754-257746-20955822
Having lots of SEND children impacts on the other children and staffing	257754-257746-20956885
No comment	257754-257746-20995675
Setting expected to make referrals - more paper work	257754-257746-21006615
I do not have a problem with this.	257754-257746-21013197
we are fortunate to have a number of SENCo's in the setting who can work together to meet the expectations.	257754-257746-21236528
I agree that early intervention is certainly the best way to start the support for a child with SEND. In our setting we work as a team and	support with consistency

I feel that is legal

257754-257746-21242453

Obligations are made then relevant authorities need to support settings

!

I try to give all children the support they need and make time to ensure they get full support. It is hard but if you get on with it without moaning you can be proud when children make progress and move to school.

257754-257746-21244227

Early intervention is a wonderful soundbite but without the financial support to back it up it is not possible to provide continuous high quality support especially as it is not just a case of supporting a child it is always a case of supporting parents too. Practitioner feel demoralised and undervalued.

257754-257746-21249362

Feel too much expectation.

257754-257746-21253574

I think there needs to be a fast track to accessing funding to support children with special needs especially in early years when they present for the first time. It is hard to support the minority and the majority well at the same time without it.

257754-257746-21555239

A lot of paperwork required for referrals.

257754-257746-22330511

Which on-line sites do you use to support your understanding of SEND ? e.g. Facebook, Facebook

Pages (which ones?) National Autistic Society.

Showing all 25 responses

Facebook, NAS

257754-257746-20945548

Any individual ones relevant to a child we have at the time eg epilepsy

257754-257746-20946433

EYFS Forum

Facebook

257754-257746-20947287

Facebook - lots of pages!!

257754-257746-20947887

Local groups

Foundation stage forum

West Sussex website

Bucks cc website, Autistic society, Fragile x society, deaf society,

257754-257746-20948002

face book groups,

Facebook

257754-257746-20949999

National autistic society

I Can

Early Years Forum

facebook all early years groups

257754-257746-20952304

aspergers experts

EYForum.

257754-257746-20952191

EYFS sen

Google !

Facebook, NAS, google

257754-257746-20956885

Member of National Autistic Society	257754-257746-20974367
Facebook	
Facebook pages,	257754-257746-20995675
Pacey	
And any others needed to access once signposted to them	
West Sussex Including all Children	257754-257746-21006615
EYFS SEN. NAS, The communication Trust	257754-257746-21013197
Facebook	257754-257746-21055810
National Autism	
Facebook	257754-257746-21235186
Makaton facebook page	257754-257746-21236528
SEN website	257754-257746-21237401
National Autistic Society	
Foundation Years	
Early Years Foundation Stage Forum	
Google everything	
often google and the dfe documents and online sources, facebook	257754-257746-21237683

Facebook pages, West Sussex website	257754-257746-21242201
Facebook, nasen, Down's syndrome association communication trust, national autistic society , makaton webpages etc .	257754-257746-21242453
Facebook. Early years managers and packaway managers. EYES SEN	257754-257746-21244227
A wide variety of site including those specific to individual types of SEND Early support resources continue to be of great value	257754-257746-21249362

West Sussex county council

257754-257746-21300669



SEN in the Early Years, EYFS:SEN, NASEN, Local Authority early years

257754-257746-21555239

NAS

257754-257746-22330511

Foundation stage forum

Early Years FS forum

EYES SEN

Do you find this SEND site useful and why?

Showing all 26 responses	
Yes	257754-257746-20945548
Yes very informative	257754-257746-20945598
Yes, the drop down menu offers sections, information and resources I have found useful	257754-257746-20946433
Great for networking	257754-257746-20947287
Haven't been using it long	257754-257746-20947887
yes for updates and information	257754-257746-20948002
Good information on variety of SEND	257754-257746-20949999
yes	257754-257746-20952304
really useful for giving info to parents Know I can ask questions if needed	257754-257746-20952191
Yes. always posting links for useful articles and helpful resources	257754-257746-20956885
Yes, it's brilliant	257754-257746-20974367
N/A.. I've not had experience of this send site	257754-257746-20995675
All referral guidelines are here	257754-257746-21006615
YEs	257754-257746-21013197
Yes. Lots of useful info	257754-257746-21055810

Yes

257754-257746-21235186

yes, resources are useful	257754-257746-21236528
Yes. It is interesting and good to be updated on areas of SEND	257754-257746-21237401
yes	257754-257746-21237683
Yes	257754-257746-21242201
Yes, flags up current information that otherwise would need to be hunted down individually with time implications . I find this website extremely helpful.	257754-257746-21242453
Yes. I get up to date information and support.	257754-257746-21244227
information	257754-257746-21253574
yes can always get help when needed and quickly.	257754-257746-21300669
Yes, identifies information, resources and support all in one place which might be missed otherwise.	257754-257746-21555239
Yes it is easy to follow and understand	257754-257746-22330511

How could it be made more relevant to your SEND needs?

Showing all 13 responses	
Not sure as yet	257754-257746-20947887
not sure right now	257754-257746-20948002
Not sure	257754-257746-20949999
List of training providers? courses available	257754 257746 20952191
It can't as it's a great resource tool already	257754-257746-20956885
As above	257754-257746-20995675
Not all downloads are able to be typed into making email referrals all	257754-257746-21006615
most impossible	
Training	257754-257746-21235186

not sure

257754-257746-21236528

Perhaps present information under each of the send criteria headings,
 e.g. Sub headings that can be clicked in which take you to relevant
 information / support for that particular area ... a tab / heading for
 government updates etc

257754-257746-21242453

n/a at present.

257754-257746-21300669

Not sure

257754-257746-21555239

Needs seem to be met

257754-257746-22330511

22 / 22

Appendix I

BOS Facebook 1 completed surveys

EYFS SEN - Facebook

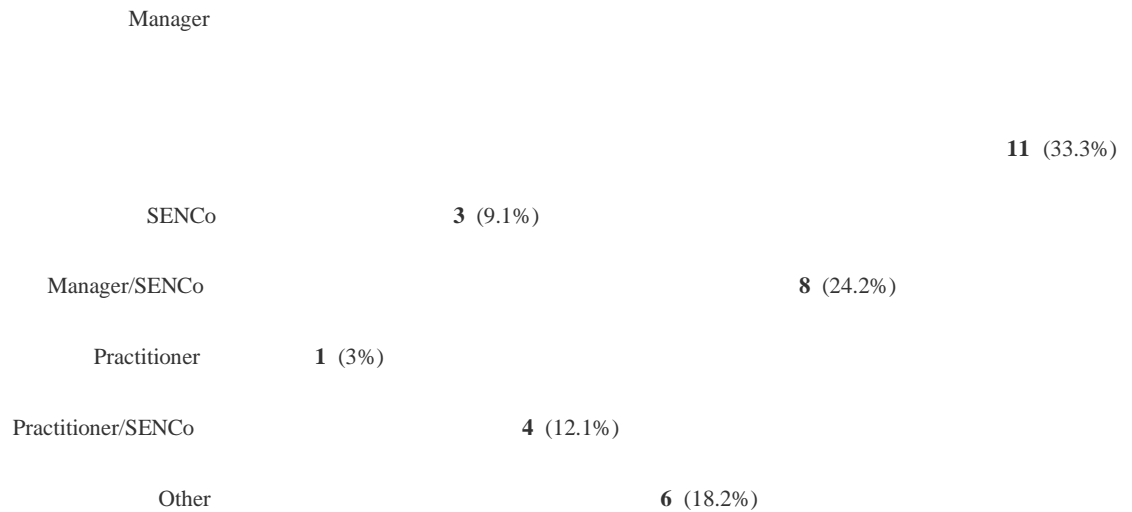
Showing 36 of 36 responses

Showing **all** responses

Showing **all** questions

Response rate: 36%

What is your current professional title?



1.a If Other please give further details:

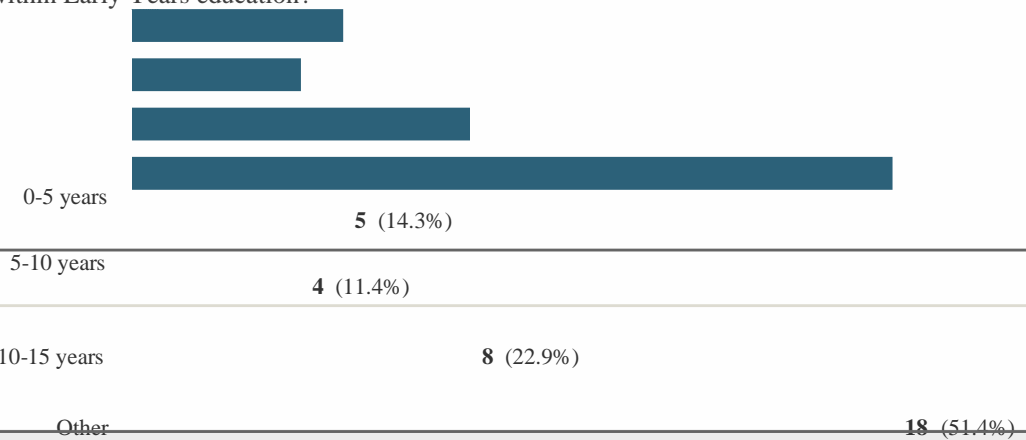
Showing all 12 responses

Senco

203219-203212-14591916

Deputy manager/senco	203219-203212-14593599
Advisor / Consultant	203219-203212-14596929
owner	203219-203212-14597106
Early years adviser for 3 nurseries (chain)	203219-203212-14597183
nursery nurse	203219-203212-14615790
Manager and senco	203219-203212-14854396
Deputy manager/senco	203219-203212-15039083
Room Leader	203219-203212-15230484
Deputy manager/senco	203219-203212-15237932
Early Years Lead/Reception Teacher	203219-203212-15244843
Early Years lead (Nur/Rec)	203219-203212-15245083

How long have you worked within Early Years education?



Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g.

NVQ Level 3?

Showing all 35 responses

Level 5 Early Years	203219-203212-14590565
Education studies ba hons	203219-203212-14590566
NVQ3	203219-203212-14591103
Hnc early education and childcare	203219-203212-14591177
Very Ed. further ed lecturing	203219-203212-14591237
BA Hons in Early Years	
EYPS	
NPQICL	
MA in Integrated Provision for Children and Families in the Early Years	
BTEC National Diploma in Early Years 0-8	203219-203212-14591916

Level 3	203219-203212-14592629
Early years teacher	203219-203212-14593599
EYP	203219-203212-14596929
BA HONS learning and development	
ba hons early childhood studies NVQ level 3	203219-203212-14597106
Btec L3 nursery nursing	203219-203212-14597183
HND L4 early childhood studies	
City & guilds L3 working with parents	
Degree	203219-203212-14610570
Nneb	203219-203212-14615790
BTEC lv 3 in early yrs	203219-203212-14745843
PGCE Primary education, specialising in early years National Qualification in SEN coordination	203219-203212-14828330
Early years foundation degree	203219-203212-14854396
Foundation degree	203219-203212-14856656

Nvq level 3. EYT status.	203219-203212-15039083
EYPS, BA HONS, NNEB	203219-203212-15080346
nvq3 management level 4 cert ed	203219-203212-15229558
NNEB BaHons in Early Childhood	203219-203212-15229502
B.A honours early years professional practice. N.N.E.B.	203219-203212-15229552
NVQ Level 4 CCLD	203219-203212-15229551
NNEB	203219-203212-15230008
Nvq3 Foundation Degree Ba Early Childhood Studies	203219-203212-15230247
NVQ L2 and L3	203219-203212-15230484
Fda early years	203219-203212-15230682

Level 3 diploma in childcare

203219-203212-15230872

BA Hons in early years	203219-203212-15231205
EYPS	
Level 4 just passed first year of foundation degree :)	203219-203212-15233217
Foundation degree in early years	203219-203212-15237932
Level 4 in early years	
DPP	

PGCE (3-7)	203219-203212-15244843
BA (Hons) Early Primary Education with QTS	203219-203212-15245083
BA Hons Early Years Leadership	203219-203212-15246219
Nvq3, 4 and 5	203219-203212-15302799

Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

Showing all 35 responses

Nursery full time	203219-203212-14590565
Childminder	203219-203212-14590566
Pre School	203219-203212-14591103
Private nursery	203219-203212-14591177
Nursery provision - multi settings	203219-203212-14591237
Pre-School	203219-203212-14591916

Day nursery	203219-203212-14592629
Daycare	203219-203212-14593599
All Early Years	203219-203212-14596929
pre-school	203219-203212-14597106
Nursery/preschool (2-5)	203219-203212-14597183
Pre school	203219-203212-14610570
nursery setting within a primary school	203219-203212-14615790
Day nursery but based in pre-school	203219-203212-14745843
Nursery and infant	203219-203212-14828330
Pre-school	203219-203212-14854396
Nursery	203219-203212-14856656
School based community pre school.	203219-203212-15039083
Preschool	203219-203212-15080346
nursery	203219-203212-15229558
Day Nursery	203219-203212-15229502
Pre-school attached to a combined school	203219-203212-15229552
Day nursery	203219-203212-15229551



nursery

203219-203212-15230008

preschool	203219-203212-15230247
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Pre-School	203219-203212-15230484
day nursery	203219-203212-15230682
Nursery	203219-203212-15230872
Preschool	203219-203212-15231205
Committee run charity preschool and after school club	203219-203212-15233217
Daycare	203219-203212-15237932
Maintained school	203219-203212-15244843
Nurs/Rec unit	203219-203212-15245083
Day nursery	203219-203212-15246219
Pre school	203219-203212-15302799

How many children can the setting have on roll?

Showing all 34 responses

38	203219-203212-14590565
11 total, 6 age 0-8	203219-203212-14590566
48	203219-203212-14591103
	203219-203212-14591177
3 months	203219-203212-14591237
100	203219-203212-14591916
	203219-203212-14592629
60	203219-203212-14593599
Na	203219-203212-14596929
74 per session currently 33	203219-203212-14597106
3 nurseries (30, 82 & 66)	203219-203212-14597183
64	203219-203212-14610570
40	203219-203212-14615790
240	203219-203212-14745843
360	203219-203212-14828330
33	203219-203212-14854396
200	203219-203212-14856656
	203219-203212-15039083
53	203219-203212-15080346

	203219-203212-15229558
30	203219-203212-15229502
35	203219-203212-15229551
42	203219-203212-15230008
100	203219-203212-15230247
17	203219-203212-15230484
130	203219-203212-15230682
We have 92	203219-203212-15230872
Hours dependent presently 65	203219-203212-15231205
48 preschool 60 After school club	203219-203212-15233217
60	203219-203212-15237932
12 2 year olds, 52 nursery, 45 reception	203219-203212-15244843
Nurs 64 place, Rec 30.	203219-203212-15245083
140+	203219-203212-15246219



Showing all 55 responses	
	203219-203212-14590565
	203219-203212-14590566
	203219-203212-14591103
10	203219-203212-14591177
	203219-203212-14591237
	203219-203212-14591916
	203219-203212-14592629
	203219-203212-14593599
	203219-203212-14596929
	203219-203212-14597106
	203219-203212-14597183
	203219-203212-14610570
	203219-203212-14615790
	203219-203212-14745843

Approx 30

203219-203212-14828330

1 at present

203219-203212-14854396

7

203219-203212-14856656

25 (approx)

203219-203212-15039083

203219-203212-15080346

203219-203212-15229558

6

203219-203212-15229502

203219-203212-15229552

203219-203212-15229551

203219-203212-15230008

203219-203212-15230247

203219-203212-15230484

203219-203212-15230682

203219-203212-15230872

	203219-203212-15231205
	203219-203212-15233217
	203219-203212-15237932
	203219-203212-15244843



Nurs - 2, 3 with SLCN Rec - 2 with SEN needs, 4 with SLCN

203219-203212-15245083

	203219-203212-15246219
6	203219-203212-15302799
What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?	
Showing all 33 responses	
Social communication delay & SALT	203219-203212-14590565
Autism	203219-203212-14590566
Speech language & communication, ,social awareness.	203219-203212-14591103
Asc	203219-203212-14591177
Social communication difficulties	
Speech and language	
Global development delay	
All	203219-203212-14591237
SALT, Behaviour, Social & Communication	203219-203212-14591216

Global delay, ptls, social and interaction, speech and language	203219-203212-14593599
SALT	203219-203212-14597106
Autism	
General Global Deley	
Speach & language	203219-203212-14597183
Social communication	
Developmental delay	
Cerebral palsy	203219-203212-14610570
Asd	
PDA and social anxiety	
Social communication difficulties	203219-203212-14615790
Speech and language	
Salt	203219-203212-14745843
Ot	
Portage	
Sensory	
Eal	
All! asd, semh, vi, slcn, pni no hi at the moment	203219-203212-14828330

Speech, language and communication	203219-203212-14854396
Physical and neurology delay	203219-203212-14856656
Speech and language	
Autism	
All of the above! ASD, GDD, behavioural issues.	203219-203212-15039083
Phy	203219-203212-15080346
C&I	203219-203212-15229558
physical difficulties.	
EAL, Speech and language, Social/Emotional needs	203219-203212-15229502
Speech and language, Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Interaction difficulties	203219-203212-15229552
resulting in challenging behaviour.	
	203219-203212-15229551
Speech and language. Autism	203219-203212-15230008
Speech and language	203219-203212-15230247
Physical development	
Social development	
Behaviour	
SL, CN, SCD	203219-203212-15230484
Speech language. Social communication	203219-203212-15230682
Speech and language	203219-203212-15230872
Autism	
Social	

Speech & language	203219-203212-15231205
Social communication difficulties	
ADHD	
Nurturing groups for emotional needs	203219-203212-15233217
Speech and language intervention this includes 2 children deferred entry to school.	
Medical needs	
Behaviour - GRT families	
Speech and language	203219-203212-15237932
Social	
Global development delay	
Autism	
Physical delay	
Physical Needs (FM1)	203219-203212-15244843
Speech and Language	
ASD	
Social Communication	
Global developmental delay	
Behavioural support	
In Nurs, we have one child we are currently going down the route of autism diagnosis and 1 child with speech and language needs (selective	203219-203212-15245083

autism diagnosis and 1 child with speech and language needs (selective mutism at the moment at times). 3 further children are receiving support from a speech and language therapist. In rec, 1 child has global delay working at about the level of a 3 year old now, another child diagnosed autistic then 4 involved with SL therapist.

SLT, ASD, HI, MSI, VI, SEMH, PD, CL,CI

203219-203212-15246219

Speech and language

203219-203212-15302799

ASD X 2 diagnosed

2 X waiting assessment

1 X chromosome deletion syndrome



Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes		22 (64.7%)	
No		13 (38.2%)	
Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)			
8.a	Please give further details:		
Showing all 30 responses			
Training subscribing through country & pla educare online & nursery			world subscription

As I am a sole trader, I put myself forward for as many courses and training opportunities as I can

203219-203212-14590566

There is very little training available and can't afford to send staff on it.

203219-203212-14591103

Lead Senco (myself) finds training that meets requirements and attends then feeds back to other staff

203219-203212-14591177

We have 3 trained SENCO at the moment, there is insufficient SEND training available & that which is available is only 1& half day course ! definitely not enough.

203219-203212-14591916

No la training provided for anything other than basic senco training- no info about specifics but it's always a recommendation when applying to them for any funding for the setting

203219-203212-14593599

the training is expensive and hard to enroll on although for Autsim we have found a free online training

203219-203212-14597106

3 London boroughs, training available but not always easy to accessing timely fashion as a child may join without knowing there are additional needs and by the time the training can be accessed the child is nearly ready to leave.

203219-203212-14597183

Not enough financial support	203219-203212-14610570
Child has 1/1 support	203219-203212-14615790
We have our EYST who advises us on new training or practices which are changing	203219-203212-14745843
Also we attend SENCO forums once a term	
Through in house training, cluster groups and specific training	203219-203212-14828330
All staff receive in house training from the manager and key worker who is working alongside S&L therapist.	203219-203212-14854396
Courses are very expensive	203219-203212-14856656
I attend all Sen training and feed back to the team. Other staff members are trained in specific areas such as ELKLAN and Can Do music.	203219-203212-15039083
Step into training-Oxfordshire training,	203219-203212-15080346
our local authority is very good at providing training.	203219-203212-15229558
SENCO cascades to staff and staff are regularly updated through updates and sent on relevant training where appropriate. Follow SEND policy	203219-203212-15229502
Good access to local training for supporting speech and language and local authority also linked with Autism Education trust.	203219-203212-15229552
Local professionals also provide advice on individual basis.	
Setting has a SENCO who attends regular forums for updates and training.	whom.
Details of local authority SENCO is available and discussed during meetings and training. Staff are aware of how and when to refer and to	

All training is now coming with ridiculous costs. Accessing some but not enough

203219-203212-15230247

Short courses

203219-203212-15230484

Makaton. Senior training. Portage support

203219-203212-15230682

Senco attends local authority training & disseminates

203219-203212-15231205

Inclusion team who used to visit setting now all made redundant. We only get support for GR3 and 4 and this is limited contact. Our local authority have tended childrens service to Babcock and we can now not afford the prices of training and conferences. Any support I get is through seeking out myself.

203219-203212-15233217

Local council only has limited courses which experienced practitioners have accessed before so have to look for online courses etc

203219-203212-15237932

LA specialists come in to work with children and staff, but courses are not readily available, or the cost of course + cost of supply cover preclude attendance at many.

203219-203212-15244843

We have 2 staff with QTS and one with EYPS bringing a wealth of knowledge. We rotate on training courses to keep up to date with relevant practice. Our named SENDCo attends training as directed by EY

203219-203212-15245083

relevant practice. Our named SENDCo attends training as directed by EY lead. All staff have had in house training delivered by LA on autism, aspergers and ADHD.	
Mostly provided by Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, In-house and Local Authority	203219-203212-15246219



Would always like more information on training courses. Feel west sussx do not provide enough training in this area [203219-203212-15302799](#)

Showing all 32 responses	
Yes. Member of staff is taken out of ratio for a few hours.	203219-203212-14590565
In the sense of restricting certain activities. A lot of pre planning is involved, especially with regard to outings	203219-203212-14590566
Yes. Can be disruptive to group as often the child needs 1:1 support.	203219-203212-14591103
No all children are understanding and very accepting making it easier for 1 -1 support	203219-203212-14591177
Huge impact; ensures wider capacity of support for all children. Enables more inclusivity I believe in practice	203219-203212-14591237
I would say yes because we implement the strategies throughout the setting.	203219-203212-14591916
None	203219-203212-14593599

yes - although we have additional funding for 3 children one 15 hours 2 for 5 hours the funding isnt enough to pay for some-one to totally work 1-1 with these children - the setting as a whole is currently paying an additional member of staff out of their own means to ensure the impact it as detrimental which allows our other children to enjoy story/singing time more comfortably as 2 of our autistic children are working at a 8-20 month level being 3-4 years old requiring heuristic play activity's at all times - although our other children are very accepting and often try to encourage them to engage with them or offer them toys they know they will enjoy. for SALT we have all become amazing at signing :)

203219-203212-14597106

Yes, massive financial implications, many children don't meet the threshold for additinal funding so puts a strain on finances and key person work load. Children need tonne in setting fir a certain amount of sessions before can be assessed so even if needs are very server they can't get funding. If allocated funding the nursery has to advertise, interview and appoint and this takes too long

203219-203212-14597183

No lack of staff understanding

203219-203212-14610570

It would do if funding hadn't already been set up before child started setting ..

203219-203212-14615790


Id be lying if i said it didnt

203219-203212-14745843

What ever we do has an impact on the other children within the setting

<p>What ever we do has an impact on the other children within the setting we try to minimise that impact</p> <p>With a child with high functioning autism it impacts if were having quiet time with the children or discussing topics as they will be noisy</p> <p>distracting so we have to minimize this in the besy way we can ensurr they are still included but dont impact within thr setting</p>	
<p>What benefits children with additional or sen will benefit all children</p>	203219-203212-14828330
<p>Yes I feel they become accepting of other children's needs early on and include children more.</p>	203219-203212-14854396
<p>Children get involved with activities designed for certain send children, so the other children hear correct letter sounds or get involved in a small group situation</p>	203219-203212-14856656
<p>yes. All children benefit from and respond to strategies such as visual cues, signing, S&L strategies.</p>	203219-203212-15039083
<p>Additional 1-1, extra body to ratio</p>	203219-203212-15080346
<p>Much of the behaviour strategies are embedded for all children and group of EAL children are supported in targeted group and individual time</p>	203219-203212-15229502
<p>Children needing a higher level of staffing who are receiving higher needs funding but not for their entire hours impact on time staff are able to provide other children .</p>	203219-203212-15229552
<p>On the positive supporting those children to be included helps other children to develop understanding of other people's needs.</p>	
<p>At the moment we do not have any SEND children, but in the past it has been difficult to provide support to the children, as it is usually one to one and it is not always possible to free up a member of staff for just one child, especially when inclusion funding is not approved, we then</p>	have to take on the financial burden.
<p>12 / 28</p>	

	203219-203212-15229551
Reduces ratios	203219-203212-15230008
1 child is currently taking up alot of un funded 1:1 time, plus severe behavior issues are impacting on the group.	203219-203212-15230247
Yes, children joins in and then helps each other	203219-203212-15230484
Yes they have a chance to be involved in speech and language activities language steps. Jolly phonics. Sensory activities enhances their knowledge and experience	203219-203212-15230682
Yes ... All children like to take turns in language groups and smaller group work	203219-203212-15230872
Yes sometimes the group can be a challenging one. Supporting all the varying needs of 2-4 yr olds alongside SEND, child protection plans, children with EAL too...	203219-203212-15231205
Definatly. We have Signalong trained practitioners and visuals which benefit all children in our care. Having children with Sen and finding strategies for them help all the children.	203219-203212-15233217
Yes	203219-203212-15237932
Yes - where there is top up funding to support 1-to-1 the additional adult	203219-203212-15244843

<p>Yes - where there is top up funding to support 1-to-1 the additional adult in the setting is beneficial as they can also support small groups etc.</p>	<p>203219-203212-15244843</p>
<p>Children who are being referred can access some support prior to gaining additional funding support.</p> <p>Yes! Both this year and last year, the children with autism have been particularly disruptive for want of a better word impacting on the</p>	<p>203219-203212-15245083</p>
<p>learning of other children. We are still working with the younger child (mainly 1 to 1 at the minute away from larger group of children until ready to integrate). The older child can now usually engage in wider group activities at carpet time, story time, activity time etc. Without our input, this would not be possible.</p>	
<p>Can reduce overall quality of provision if too many children with variable SEND being supported. At present my setting has 36% SEND children, this has overstretched resources, quality of mainstream provision (due to most experienced staff supporting children with SEND) and been very</p>	<p>203219-203212-15246219</p>
<p>busy (especially applying for EHCP, paperwork etc).</p>	
<p> If amount of children being supported is limited then this has a positive</p>	
<p>impact on the setting, increasing the feeling of an inclusive community.</p>	
<p>At the end of the day it is an amazing accomplishment to support children with SEND and is an honour that their parents chose our nursery.</p>	
<p>Two of our children have one to one meaning we have to employ more staff which is increasingly difficult to do. We employ all strategies advised for s&l etc across all children anyway so everyone benefits. We use makaton signing</p>	<p>203219-203212-15302799</p>
<p>How does the Local Authority support parents/carers of children with SEND who attend the setting?</p>	
<p>Showing all 33 responses</p>	

Paperwork	203219-203212-14590565
SENSAP, SENDIASS, SENIT are all involved with the child and share information	203219-203212-14590566
Not very well.	203219-203212-14591103
Some of the parents at the moment feel that they aren't getting enough support and it is them that's need to chase up appointment etc	203219-203212-14591177
Intervention/facilitation support, effective communication of information and meeting regularly.	203219-203212-14591237
There is not a lot of support for our parents:(we as a setting put in all the footwork & seeking out & funding support from outside agencies. There is no extra funding available.	203219-203212-14591916
Basic senco training Additional funding for children who meet certain critia	203219-203212-14593599
we have access to eyesenits who support us/parents with ILP's and 5 hours additional funding if they feel it it really necessary - although last year we had the 5 hours funding turned down for a child - who with our continued nagging was confirmed with autism the week before half term	203219-203212-14597106

continued nagging was confirmed with autism the week before half term	
the child starts school september – the eyesenit was quite apologetic	
over this	
Not much support once they are in settings apart from sometimes 1:1	203219-203212-14597183
funding but often not	
Provide early help once 2 terms have been attended and all strategies	203219-203212-14610570
exhausted	
1/1 support	203219-203212-14615790
Tac meetings	
They have a EYST attached to the family under their caseload	203219-203212-14745843
They can put messures into place such as salt/ot/sensory or get a	
nursery place withing a special needs setting where appropriate	
Support is signposted from the local offer, support ia variable, they	203219-203212-14828330
infrequently attend annual reviews	
In my experience previous children and families have received lots of	203219-203212-14854396
support from practitioners, Early support and S&L therapists once one	
the list. Consultants are not involved at all.	
Local offer lists where parents can get help.	203219-203212-14856656
And have a parents help line.	
Not very well until recently. They now speak directly to parents regarding	203219-203212-15039083
visit outcones and attend multi agency meetings. They are always	
contactable by phone and are happy to speak to parents. However this	
is only for children accessing support (ie 50+%delay). Lower delay levels	
are discussed with LA but they don't have contact eme that he family.	
Ecs plans, targets, obs, access to funding	203219-203212-15080346
visits	meetings

support	203219-203212-15229558
Yes	203219-203212-15229502
Provision of early bird course, information through their website on local offer, SENDIAS service.	203219-203212-15229552
They did support us...but it seems that we are having to do more of it ourselves now.	203219-203212-15229551
Good support for speech and language and visual impairment	203219-203212-15230008
Visits once a term to setting Financial funding, but never the amount you ask for.	203219-203212-15230247
They have tac meetings	203219-203212-15230484
Extra support. Early help hub portage. Local inco	203219-203212-15230682
Have meetings with them in a regular basis sharing information and letting them know how we support them at nursery and how they can support at home	203219-203212-15230872
Will give support & advice. Chair Team around the child meetings, allocate inclusion support funding.	203219-203212-15231205

allocate inclusion support funding	
Currently doesn't! We have to pay for support from our local service unless GR3/4 and contact is very limited as they are so stretched over very large areas due to funding cuts.	203219-203212-15233217
Preschool liaison	203219-203212-15237932
Refer through LA hub, who give case to right area - Speech and language, ed psych, ASD etc.	203219-203212-15244843
Not enough. Sometimes we feel we are not supported enough by LA either in terms of intervention delivered to children and the impact	203219-203212-15245083

Although they provide training, we find it hard to get them to come in

and assess children (using specialist services). As an example, we pay

privately for speech therapy.	
Specialist Teaching and Learning Service	203219-203212-15246219
I have little information about this but from feedback from parents I would day not enough	203219-203212-15302799
What Local Authority is the setting in?	
Showing all 33 responses	
Hart & Rushmoor	203219-203212-14590565
Leeds	203219-203212-14590566
Prefer not to say	203219-203212-14591103
Cheshire	203219 203212 14591177




Hillingdon	203219-203212-14591237
Tameside	203219-203212-14591916
Barnsley	203219-203212-14593599
Oxfordshire	203219-203212-14597106
3 nurseries (Newham, Redbridge, havering)	203219-203212-14597183
Bolton	203219-203212-14610570
wolverhampton	203219-203212-14615790
Medway	203219-203212-14745843
Essex	203219-203212-14828330
Cambridgeshire	203219-203212-14854396
Leicestershire county council	203219-203212-14856656
Wigan.	203219-203212-15039083
OCC	203219-203212-15080346
barnsley	203219-203212-15229558

Lincs	203219-203212-15229502
Buckinghamshire	203219-203212-15229552
Redbridge	203219-203212-15229551
Warwickshire	203219-203212-15230008
Staffordshire	203219-203212-15230247
Southwark	203219-203212-15230484
Hampshire	203219-203212-15230682
Test valley	203219-203212-15230872

Wiltshire 203219-203212-15231205



Worcestershire 203219-203212-15233217

Suffolk	
Northumberland	 203219-203212-15244845
Northumberland	 203219-203212-15245083
Kent	203219-203212-15246219

Adur/West Sussex 203219-203212-15302799



Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

		23 (69.7%)
Training (SEND)		29 (87.9%)
Funding (SEND)		27 (81.8%)
Other	1 (3%)	

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

12.a If Other please give further details:

Showing all 5 responses	
We have a SENCO surgery which we can attend when booked a month in advance, plus SENCO network once a term.	203219-203212-14591916
Newham is a pilot for 30 hours funding and is focussing their pilot on SEND children, don't know what the support will be yet	203219-203212-14597183

In theory, yes provides onsite advice/support but not enough/regularly enough. [203219-203212-15245083](#)

~~Children must meet a certain criteria to receive any type of support~~ through a graduated approach. [203219-203212-15246219](#)

Funding you have to fight for and training is not sufficient [203219-203212-15302799](#)

Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?	
Yes	12 (36.4%)
No	12 (36.4%)
Other	9 (27.3%)

13.a Please give further details: **Showing all 23 responses**

Partially.

Health visitors do not communicate.

Portage does not communicate.

Salt do communicate & TOPS.

203219-203212-14590565

Quite well. Especially with regards to autism. Stars Leeds are very approachable and come out to the setting

203219-203212-14590566

It can feel like it there is no support at times and that I am always chasing them up for updates, reports and appointments etc

203219-203212-14591177

For S&L there is a 17 wk wait for the children to be observed/assessed. Approximately 5 wk wait for intergrated services to get involved.

203219-203212-14591916

Yes from other professionals such as speech physics etc

203219-203212-14593599

eyesenits/SALT/OT all attend meetings for children and this year we are currently hosting 2 EHCP meetings

203219-203212-14597106

Support with IOP if ask

203219-203212-14597183

Half termly TAC meetings but little other support or advice

203219-203212-14615790

I feel i am well supported

203219-203212-14745843

I love my role as senco and enjoy meeting the families and seeing support being put in place to help them	
Without the support of the local authority i wouldnt be able to have such an impact on the lives of children with send	
Lots of delaying techniques! There is very limited specialist provision outside of mainstream and our ep visits are set for the year in Sept, we receive 3 days worth	203219-203212-14828330
Once a multitude of paperwork has been completed and evidenced then previous support has been brilliant. I have heard of many practitioners not as qualified being unable to get past the paperwork side and therefore struggling to get adequate support. It is a lot harder now to obtain extra hours for a child.	203219-203212-14854396
Depends how behind the child is. Have to be half their chronological age in development before I a will get involved. Outside agencies like physio and speech n language have been brilliant in their support. Portage dept also been helpful.	203219-203212-14856656
Good inclusion team who are supportive.	
Acres to other services is good (ie key worker service). I feel there are still gaps in regards to health sharing information with us-they still talk about data protection which I disagree with when it comes to the health and well being of a child.	203219-203212-15039083
Fairly well supported. Early years SEND advisors very supportive. Some professionals very supportive but access to professionals can take a long time . All professionals very stretched.	203219-203212-15229552
Not always fully supported...sometimes it takes too much following up.	203219-203212-15229551
Local SEN team are very stretched so cant visit as often as they'd like. SALT team have regular contact.	203219-203212-15230247

Visit often. Reports to support its iep's

203219-203212-15230682

We are given lots of advice. However our setting is recommended by early years advisers to parents so we have a high proportion of SEND children to support & the funding only covers part of the 1:1 required for the 15 hours.

203219-203212-15231205

As above all funding cut.

203219-203212-15233217

High case-load means support is not always timely. Funding is not accessed quickly enough.

203219-203212-15244843

Timescales and work loads cause a massive problem and yes all LAs will be under pressure to meet the needs and demands of schools but my previous LA was far more efficient when dealing with SEN cases.

203219-203212-15245083

Support is often inconsistent from Health (ever changing or high turnover of staff- OT,PT and SLT)

203219-203212-15246219

Main LA support has to be bought in

I do not feel we are given enough support from anyone. I feel there is no respect for the job that preschool practitioners do. When we want help we have to jump through too many hoops and fill in too many pages of paperwork before anyone will even listen.

203219-203212-15302799

How has Local Authority provision changed over the past five years?	
Showing all 30 responses	
N/a	203219-203212-14590565
It hasn't affected me until this past year so I'm not sure	203219-203212-14590566
Virtually no outreach support or advice.	203219-203212-14591103
More funding been made available however no always able to access	203219-203212-14591177
Systematic changes in light of changes through COP and transition to EHCP, but still supportive	203219-203212-14591237
Less training available, all courses are now funded by the setting approx £20 per half day course per person.	203219-203212-14591916
Not significantly less than when I first started as a senco 3 years ago.	203219-203212-14593599
yes we use to be able to access free SEND training and had more visits/support from eyesenits - although I have to say the 2 eyesenits who support our children are amazing having working with them both for over 10 years and the lead does take every referral I make seriously (although i feel this could be due to the fact i worked in an opportunity playgroup for 5 years)	203219-203212-14597106
Redbridge service has declined in last 2 years because of financial constraints, nurseries only been open 2 years. Newham offer good support, havering support is reduced	203219-203212-14597183
Early help has been implemented	203219-203212-14610570
children in nursery used to be under the early years team but this is very	

diluted now so very limited contact .. It used to be on a weekly basis now it's once a half term if we're lucky	203219-203212-14615790
Provision is constantly changing New practices have come about and the paperwork we have to complete to ensure outside agencies get involved sooner has changed so its easier for staff aswell as parents	203219-203212-14745843
It seems more and more difficult to access specialist teachers and to successfully obtain EHCPs	203219-203212-14828330
As above, harder to apply for extra help and funding.	203219-203212-14854396
Less money to support settings.	203219-203212-14856656
Their systems have changed and improved but nothing major.	203219-203212-15039083
Yes, less professional to support, promoting the settings g to provide the support	203219-203212-15080346
Yes it has become more child/family friendly and encourages a whole family approach with outside agencies working together with us to provide the best support they can.	203219-203212-15229502
Access to higher needs funding for early years introduced. Waiting times for all professionals increased.	203219-203212-15229552

for all professionals increased.	
Much less funding.	203219-203212-15229551
Much less contact time	203219-203212-15230247
Yes less	203219-203212-15230682
Training for all courses has become more expensive and lots of courses are really hard to get on to	203219-203212-15230872
A lot less funding available. Not so much training available. Early years advisers have less time as a wider caseload.	203219-203212-15231205
Not enough appropriate places for SEND children at primary school.	
Change took over at Easter this year and all settings in the area now completely alienated win no support unless you pay premium prices but service is so stretched I'm not sure it would be worth the investment.	203219-203212-15233217
We used to have regularly visits from the local area senco. This has now changed and we have no visits for advice in general and to be kept upto date with changes. If we require advice we have to ring for advice which	203219-203212-15237932

is only relevant to the individual child.

Restructure due to budget cuts.	203219-203212-15244843
Haven't worked in this authority for 5 years so couldn't comment.	203219-203212-15245083
Paid service now, no setting improvement partnership anymore, SEN advice from LA is not forthcoming.	203219-203212-15246219
Children with severe and complex needs funding for additional adult support has been reduced to £7.90 per hour	
I feel it has got worse - everyone has had to tighten their belts meaning we get less help and support but as settings are expected to take children with additional needs in order to be inclusive.	

14.a How has this affected your SEND provision?

Showing all 29 responses

N/a

203219-203212-14590565

We struggle to put appropriate support in place or refer to cdc for instance as well as support for parents.

203219-203212-14591103

The children in question don't always receive the extra support they require.

203219-203212-14591177

Not noticeable, we have continued to gain funding which helps immensely.

203219-203212-14591237

With no capital funding it makes purchasing equipment very draining on our budget. Plus extra staff needed.

203219-203212-14591916

Struggle as requirements in our la are changing constantly and there are less and less people to contact now to discuss concerns

203219-203212-14593599

I dont feel it has as we are very sensitive to SEND and ensure we provide

203219-203212-14597106

I dont feel it has as we are very sensitive to SEND and ensure we provide	203219-203212-14597106
1-1 ILPs as soon as we believe there may be a delay	
No but it means that we are struggling as we are having to find support	203219-203212-14597183
from elsewhere	
Access to funding is easier	203219-203212-14610570
you just manage the situation the best you can ... and experience helps	203219-203212-14615790
as a newly qualified ta/teacher it must be hard	
Being able to get the support quicker and help sooner has a huge	203219-203212-14745843
impact	
Without it the children under our care would be left without the support	
Increased time completing paper work and gathering evidence.	203219-203212-14828330
Not personally yet, it has affected the support a child transitioned to	203219-203212-14854396
school with though.	
Children have to get to a critical development stage before help	203219-203212-14856656
supplied	
Made it better.	203219-203212-15039083
	203219-203212-15080346
good support system which then impacts positively most of the time on	203219-203212-15229502
children/families/staff/setting.	
Setting expected to do more without professional involvement.	203219-203212-15229552
Paperwork increased therefore time increased.	
Very difficult to get the support...give up hope sometimes...but then will	outcomes of the child.
face the financial burden ourselves because we worry about the	

	203219-203212-15229551
Not as much on site support	203219-203212-15230247
Not much as a setting we are good at supporting all children as a setting have years of knowledge and plans	203219-203212-15230682
See above	203219-203212-15230872
It makes it very challenging at times. As Manager I often have to fight our corner with our own bookkeeper with regard to supporting children 1:1. Added to that bookkeeper wanting to use ofsted ratios & due to the needs of the children higher ratios are a must!	203219-203212-15231205
It hasn't. I have just sourced advice elsewhere and employed a speech and language assistant to support our children. I have also secured free ECAT training.	203219-203212-15233217
I feel we are less supported and it is only personal interest between myself and manager to find out information to support children and keep upto date with legislations and changes	203219-203212-15237932
lack of timeliness of support and funding	203219-203212-15244843
N/A	203219-203212-15245083
We are more self sufficient and reliant to develop our own SEND	203219-203212-15246219

We are more self sufficient and reliant to develop our own SEND provision	203219-203212-15246219
We would never say no to a child unless they had requirements that we couldn't meet. It has put a financial burden on the setting when we have	203219-203212-15302799

to provide one to one ut only get basic funding support. We are expected to do so much more paperwork.

In what way could your setting be further supported to ensure best outcomes for children within your setting who present with SEND?	
Showing all 29 responses	
Reggular training. Liaison with other professionals more. Better funding rate. Earlier dates to see children.	203219-203212-14590565
It would be better if the LA made regular training courses mandatory and readily available. I always push for them anyway	203219-203212-14590566
More support. More money for staffing. Less rules about how support can be granted.	203219-203212-14591103
More visits from other professionals to the setting to see the children. Having our option taken seriously .	203219-203212-14591177
More funding!!, training perhaps with regard to new approaches in supporting children.	203219-203212-14591237
More funding in place for training, staffing & resources.	203219-203212-14591916
Increased training opportunities	decisions
Increased la budget	
More info about who is eligible for which finding so can make informed	

more money to enable us to continue to provide the high quality ratios
we are currently giving

203219-203212-14597106

Lower threshold for 1:1 support

203219-203212-14597183

Not having to wait to have a child assessed if needs are obvious and
services, more isle children were assessed before starting and came with
funding

Time to plan for a child who has SEND to ensure things in place early on

Earlier recognition and support from other professionals sh salt hv

203219-203212-14610570

additional training to meet needs of individual pupils

203219-203212-14615790

We normally get recommendations from SALT portage OT etc without
seeing them

203219-203212-14745843

Being able have them come in and see the child and support us in
settings would be beneficial not just to the outside agencies but to all
staff as well

We have some outside agencies come in but not all can

Quicker agreement to fund early intervention

203219-203212-14828330

My setting are fully qualified members of staff with a vast amount of

203219-203212-14854396

previous training and personal experience so not much else would help us. I do feel settings that are not as qualified struggle to get passed all of the red tape and paperwork. An area SENCO in my belief, should complete this and make observations on the child in question as they are more equipped to notice unusual behaviours and patterns. I believe this would help children with early intervention that they so desperately need.	
More advice on a drop in session from outside professionals.	203219-203212-14856656
More outside support for those children with lower level delay.	203219-203212-15039083
EAL support, specialit teaching in experience e.g. spectrum, s&i,	203219-203212-15080346
in an ideal world coordination of all diaries with all outside agencies for meetings etc and better EAL provision and support	203219-203212-15229502
Better access to professionals.	203219-203212-15229552
More funding and quicker support in place.	203219-203212-15229551
More regular visits, better contact with other professionals	203219-203212-15230247
Ep come in early for the ehcps for children support transition to school	203219-203212-15230682
More available resources which can be lent out	203219-203212-15230872
Better funding to fit the hours & support that each child requires maybe along the lines of EYPP funding?	203219-203212-15231205

They could answer the phones when we call! Set up a forum for all

203219-203212-15233217

settings to engage with signposting us to new ideas and important changes.

More advice and general support from local authority

Maybe forums specific for Sen/sencos

More online free training

quicker action. faster turnaround on panel decisions.

203219-203212-15244843

Higher funding support to retain high quality staff that are experienced.

203219-203212-15246219

More training and support on specific strategies to support particular SEND needs for example 'see and learn', 'PECS' and 'clever hands'.

For people to show respect for us as a profession and to not be condescending when dealing with us. For more training to be available and for people to actually listen rather than just going through a tick list of questions because sometimes you know a child needs help but just can't put your finger on what's wrong as on paper there are not really issues!

203219-203212-15302799

What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting. e.g. SEND Code of Practice 2014, and how these impact on practitioners and their practice?

Showing all 23 responses

Practitioners still expect there to be an emphasis on SENco, not themselves.

203219-203212-14590565

Many settings don't apply them unfortunately.	203219-203212-14590566
I do not think the legislation has changed jow we work with the children it is the lack of practical support that is the challenge.	203219-203212-14591103
Agree with the changes , feel that expectations should be high and the setting works well within them	203219-203212-14591177
Good personally, but has proved challenging for some staff in developing deeper understanding of changes, processes and new formats.	203219-203212-14591237
I fully support the expectations set out in the code but obviously such expectations place a huge drain on staff moral because regardless of the never ending paper work and chasing up we have to do without the support of the LA it is very frustrating.	203219-203212-14591916
Think they have made significant changes but all for the better	203219-203212-14593599
i feel the expectations are high, but working within early years we want the best outcomes for our children and provide the highest standard of care/education/support we can and i believe for most of our practitioners this has improved their knowledge practice and understanding of SEND	203219-203212-14597106
Makes managers worried that even though they can't cope with any more SEND children the legal expectation is that they have to take them. This isnoutingna massive strain on staff	203219-203212-14597183
Not easily achieved	203219-203212-14610570
I'm not directly 1/1 so not that familiar with this	203219-203212-14615790
I believe every child no matter their difference, deserves the right to a fun and enjoyable learning experience.	203219-203212-14854396

So far not found a problem with it	203219-203212-14856656
I am happy with changes made and clear in what s expect d of me.	203219-203212-15039083
Doesn't make any difference at pres r nt as we have few children with send.	203219-203212-15080346
lack of funds is an issue but through dedicated staff and good relations with parents we make the best opportunity we can as a setting	203219-203212-15229502
In practice the workload has increased and there is a need for time to be funded for liaison with other professionals, completing paperwork and supporting families. It needs to be remembered that many pre schools are working in pack away settings with SENCO s earning not much more than the minimum wage.	203219-203212-15229552
Too much pressure being put on early years.	203219-203212-15229551
Positive and helpful for staff	203219-203212-15230682
None specifically. We are a very inclusive setting & do our utmost the support every child who join us.	203219-203212-15231205
Clear and concise, I am happy with how we adhere to these.	203219-203212-15233217
it has changed our practice slightly, by adapting and tweaking how we	203219-203212-15237932

document information.

Fine

203219-203212-15244843

EYFS SEN has been created primarily to support practitioners in Early Years settings access SEND information/resources/training - are you finding it useful as a source of SEND provision?	
Showing all 30 responses	
No	203219-203212-14590565
Definitely. Everything is in one place	203219-203212-14590566
Have not used it.	203219-203212-14591103
Yes. Have printed off some information from it to add to the send folder I keep.	203219-203212-14591177
Yes	203219-203212-14591237
Yes.	203219-203212-14591916
Yes	203219-203212-14593599
I have not really used it at present	203219-203212-14597106
Don't know anything about it	203219-203212-14597183
Not really	203219-203212-14610570
I'm not directly involved in this	203219-203212-14615790
I am now ive figured how to use the site	It was a little tricky at first but the wealth of

information and support is	203219-203212-14745843
amazing	
Only joined recently	203219-203212-14828330
Yes	203219-203212-14854396
Not really	203219-203212-14856656
I don't use it.	203219-203212-15039083
	203219-203212-15080346
yes	203219-203212-15229558
Yes	203219-203212-15229502
Yes.	203219-203212-15229552
Have not used yey	203219-203212-15229551
Excellent page	203219-203212-15230008
Sometimes	203219-203212-15230247
Mmmx not sure	203219-203212-15230682
Our Senco is using it so I can't comment as much as she would be able	203219-203212-15231205

to?	
This page has been useful	203219-203212-15237932
Good signposting facility using social media	203219-203212-15244843
Just found it recently - will be keeping an eye on it to see how it can support us.	203219-203212-15245083



some interesting articles have been shared 203219-203212-15246219

Only just started to access to unable to comment	203219-203212-15302799
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18 Is it different in emphasis from other on-line sources that you use to find SEND

information/resources/advice?	
Yes	10 (41.7%)
No	14 (58.3%)
If it is different – in what way is it different?	
Showing all 13 responses	
As above	203219-203212-14590566
Information broken down easier to find and inviting making it easier to	

ask questions.

	203219-203212-14591177
Don't know not seen it	203219-203212-14597183
Theres alot more supprt and i formatioon and eveyone i have encountered have been both proffessional and informative	203219-203212-14745843
I believe ir has the potential to be but need longer to see benefits	203219-203212-14828330
	203219-203212-15080346
The training is clearer	203219-203212-15229502
More accessible	203219-203212-15229552
Not used	203219-203212-15229551
This is a more friendly feeling source of information	203219-203212-15237932
rather than specific advice on a narrow band of conditions it gives wider information, developments and news across a range of different areas.	203219-203212-15244843
As a new user, can't comment too much but I like that it is on social media platform.	203219-203212-15245083
Not very comprehensive, interesting views though	203219-203212-15246219

If you do not currently access EYFS SEN how could it be made more relevant to your needs?

Showing all 5 responses

N/A

203219-203212-14591916

i need to have more time to access this before i can comment

203219-203212-14597106

203219-203212-15080346

Not sure

203219-203212-15229551

Unsure

203219-203212-15231205

What other on-line groups do you use to access SEND information/advice/resources/training to support better outcomes for the children in the setting?

Showing all 17 responses	
Autism friendly uk support group on Facebook, Leeds abc support group.	203219-203212-14590566
Early years managers site	203219-203212-14591177
Various; SALT in particular such as communication matters, talking point, I Can	203219-203212-14591237
Gov.co.uk, Foundation Years, Individual sites eg, BSL/Makaton, Ofsted.	203219-203212-14591916
Specific pages for conditions like ptls foundation	203219-203212-14593599
Sen forums with parents and professionals instant support and ideas shared	203219-203212-14610570
The main forum for the local authority	203219-203212-14745843
Facebook groups	
Meeting other practitioners and senco	
Whole range of Facebook groups, pinterest	203219-203212-14828330
None really, I speak with other practitioners and professionals involved with the child.	203219-203212-14854396

Hope this helps, good luck

Local support group senco

203219-203212-15080346

Outreach, Autism groups, Dyslexia groups

203219-203212-15229502

Local authority website early years section.

203219-203212-15229552

Redbridge online services

203219-203212-15229551

I Can

203219-203212-15231205

Our local authority site.

Info from our local district specialist centre.

Twinkl support groups on Facebook.

203219-203212-15245083

Some SEN blogs, main websites for particular SEND eg. NAS, contact a family.

203219-203212-15246219

My SENCO does most of this so cannot answer

203219-203212-15302799

28 / 28

Appendix J

BOS Facebook 2 completed surveys



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[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]



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EYFS SEN 05.03.2017

Showing 25 of 25 responses

Showing **all** responses

Showing **all** questions

Response rate: 25%

What is your current professional title?

Manager	2 (9.1%)	
SENCo		5 (22.7%)
Manager/SENCo		6 (27.3%)
Practitioner	1 (4.5%)	
Practitioner/SENCo		5 (22.7%)
Other	3 (13.6%)	

1.a If Other please give further details:

Showing all 4 responses

Area manager/SENCO

257752-257744-20946178

nurse assistant	257752-257744-20950385
Room manager	257752-257744-21017920
Deputy manager & senco	257752-257744-21025847

How long have you worked within Early Years education?

0-5 years	2 (8.7%)	
5-10 years		7 (30.4%)
10-15 years		6 (26.1%)
Other		8 (34.8%)

Please give details of any relevant qualifications in Early Years Care and Education that you have, e.g.

NVQ Level 3?

Showing all 22 responses

NVQ level 3	257752-257744-20946309
Cache diploma level 3	257752-257744-20946178
Nvq 4	257752-257744-20947177
NVQ 4..Management and child development	257752-257744-20947177
Level 3 Nvq	257752-257744-20947885
Level 3 in special educational needs coordinator	257752-257744-20947885
Studying early years degree	
NVQ 2 and 3	257752-257744-20948173
Foundation degree	257752-257744-20948173
BA Hons top up degree	
Nvq level 3	257752-257744-20948450
Certificate of higher education level 4	257752-257744-20948450
Level 2 in understanding autism	
NVQ Level 3	257752-257744-20949043
I don't know	257752-257744-20950385
Foundation degree in childhood studies	257752-257744-20953275
Management level 3	257752-257744-20954601
Level 3	257752-257744-20955554

NNEB	257752-257744-20955505
National diploma level 3 children's care learning and development.	257752-257744-21017920
Language champion.	
Elklan level 3 0-3 years.	
NNEB	257752-257744-21020410
DPP And	257752-257744-21025847
Foundation degree in early years	
Early years teacher status	257752-257744-21058227
NVQ 3	257752-257744-21134495
Early years foundation degree	257752-257744-21172599
Ba level 6	257752-257744-21235313
foundation degree in early years.	257752-257744-21234982
Childcare & education level 4.	257752-257744-21568424
Nvq 3 in playwork	
FDA in early years play work and education.	257752-257744-21576981

Please detail the type of provision that you work in, e.g. Playgroup, Pre-school?

Showing all 23 responses	
Sessional, preschool ages 2-4 term time only	257752-257744-20946309
Private nursery	257752-257744-20946178
Playgroup..full days	257752-257744-20947177
Pre school	257752-257744-20947885
Nursery	257752-257744-20948173
Day nursery	257752-257744-20948450
Private Nursery	257752-257744-20949043
Reception class	257752-257744-20951270
playgroup,nursery	257752-257744-20950385
pre-school	257752-257744-20953275
day nursery	257752-257744-20954601
Preschool	257752-257744-20955554

Nursery & pre-school 257752-257744-20955505

Private day nursery 257752-257744-21017920

Private Day Nursery 257752-257744-21020410

Day care 257752-257744-21025847

Preschool	257752-257744-21058227
Day Nursery	257752-257744-21134495
Pre school	257752-257744-21172599
Nursery	257752-257744-21235313
Pre-school	257752-257744-21234982
Full daycare nursery	257752-257744-21568424
Private nursery	257752-257744-21576981

How many children can the setting have on roll?

Showing all 21 responses	
100	257752-257744-20946309
9 setting - 400-500 children in total	257752-257744-20946178
Take 30 up to 30 a session	257752-257744-20947177
30	257752-257744-20947885
47	257752-257744-20949043
14	257752-257744-20951270
15-20	257752-257744-20950385
50	257752-257744-20953275
84	257752-257744-20954601
60	257752-257744-20955554
57 per session	257752-257744-20955505

66 a day 257752-257744-21017920



50 per session 257752-257744-21020410

65 257752-257744-21025847

112 257752-257744-21058227

121 257752-257744-21134495

56 257752-257744-21172599

70

257752-257744-21235313

30 a day

257752-257744-21234982

40

257752-257744-21568424

52 a day

257752-257744-21576981

How many children are on the SEND Register?

Showing all 22 responses	
	257752-257744-20946309
Aprox 20 across all	257752-257744-20946178
	257752-257744-20947177
3	257752-257744-20947885
	257752-257744-20948450
	257752-257744-20949043
14	257752-257744-20951270
	257752-257744-20950385
8	257752-257744-20953275
	257752-257744-20954601
	257752-257744-20955554
	257752-257744-20955505

8

257752-257744-21017920



257752-257744-21020410

	257752-257744-21025847
14	257752-257744-21058227
35	257752-257744-21134495

257752-257744-21172599

257752-257744-21235313

257752-257744-21234982

257752-257744-21568424

257752-257744-21576981

What types of SEND is the setting currently supporting, e.g Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Social Communication Difficulties?

Showing all 23 responses

3 x children with autism

257752-257744-20946309

2 x children with hurler syndrome who both have impaired hearing

1 x child with behavioural problems

12 x children receiving support for speech and language difficulties

ASD

257752-257744-20946178

Speech and language

immobile - physical

Social communication

Social communication	
Social interaction	
Cognitive and learning	
Speech & lang	257752 257744 20947177
Social communication	
Physical	
Attachment	
Asd	257752-257744-20947885
Speech and language delay	
Sensory	
EAL	257752-257744-20948173
Speech and Language	
Speech and language delays, social communication delays	257752-257744-20948450
2 children diagnosed ASD	
Speech and language	257752-257744-20949043
Social communication difficulties	
Mld, sld, slcn, asd	257752-257744-20951270
Speech, Language and Communication Needs and with A.D.H.D	257752-257744-20950385
Speech and language, social communication, sensory processing difficulties.	257752-257744-20953275
Speech and language	257752-257744-20954601
SALT	257752-257744-20955554
PHYSICAL NEEDS	
AUTISM	
Communication and interaction	Social and emotional mental health

Cognition & learning	257752-257744-20955505
Physical	
Sensory	
Speech and language	257752-257744-21017920
Senis	
Physio	
Portage	
Autism	257752-257744-21020410
Speech, language and communication difficulties	
Social communication difficulties	
Physical difficulties	
Speech and language	257752-257744-21025847
Physical development	
Global development delay/asd	
Social communication and	257752-257744-21058227
Speech and language difficulties	
Speech and Language	257752-257744-21134495
Social Communication delay/disorder	
Autisum	
Behavioural difficulties	



Behavioural difficulties	
Social communication	
Speech and language	257752-257744-21172599
Attention and listening	
S&L	257752-257744-21235313
sCD	

ASD, Multi complex needs, speech, language and communication needs.

257752-257744-21234982



Social difficulties, behavioural needs, Feeding needs.

Global development delay		257752-257744-21568424
Behaviour, autism, speech and language		257752-257744-21576981

8

Are practitioners in the setting able to access sufficient and appropriate training to support the children in the setting who present with SEND?

Yes		19 (82.6%)
No	4 (17.4%)	

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

8.a Please give further details:

Showing all 19 responses	
Courses	257752-257744-20946309
Speech therapists Teacher for the deaf	
Portage	
Some training is difficult to find and at times come as a cost. Staff who have these children as key children usually are chosen with experience are are supported to develop these children	257752-257744-20946178
Had regular send visit each month to help us carrying out iep, help us with children needing to see professionals etc but this gone now	257752-257744-20947177
Our local authority is good at providing i house training. (Area sencos, specialist teacher services)	257752-257744-20947885
Receive support from SALT when children are seen by them senco attending autism training through local authority	257752-257744-20948450
People are enrolled on any course they wish to do within the setting	257752-257744-20949043
I am nurse assistant and child intendant	257752-257744-20950385
All staff attend supervision meetings every 6 weeks, when there is something that a practitioner struggles with I would find ways to 'teach' the skills.	257752-257744-20953275
All staff completed full and relevant send training	257752-257744-20955554
Middas offer courses as well as cpd online and Sen forum meetings offer support and guidance	257752-257744-20955505

All staff are kept up to date with training and regularly tested

[257752-257744-21017920](#)

Unfortunately not much training locally, to go further afield makes it difficult covering staff for a full day.	257752-257744-21020410
Online learning	257752-257744-21025847
Local authority training	
Online courses provided by educare	257752-257744-21058227
Staff can access training to do support the needs of children	257752-257744-21134495
In house training is provided and training offered through the local borough.	257752-257744-21172599
Long waiting lists for LA training	257752-257744-21235313
Only phone support from Area inco	
Majority of the team had full SENCo training and 2 yearly refreshers, attend SENCo forums monthly and conferences 2 termly provided by local authority	257752-257744-21234982
Not enough time.	257752-257744-21568424
No funds	

What Local Authority is the setting in?

Showing all 22 responses

Northamptonshire 257752-257744-20946309

South glos and Bristol 257752-257744-20946178

Wychavon 257752-257744-20947177

Essex 257752-257744-20947885

Sefton 257752-257744-20948450

Birmingham 257752-257744-20949043

Bolton 257752-257744-20951270

towards child protection 257752-257744-20950385

Basingstoke 257752-257744-20953275

Walsall 257752-257744-20954601

Bucks 257752-257744-20955554

Kcc 257752-257744-20955505

Sefton 257752-257744-21017920

Lancashire 257752-257744-21020410

Suffolk 257752-257744-21025847

Dorset 257752-257744-21058227

Hampshire	257752-257744-21134495
Hounslow	257752-257744-21172599
Hampshire	257752-257744-21235313
Kent county council	257752-257744-21234982
Nottinghamshire	257752-257744-21568424
Barnet	257752-257744-21576981

How does the Local Authority support setting practitioners/SENCOs to progress children with SEND who attend the setting?

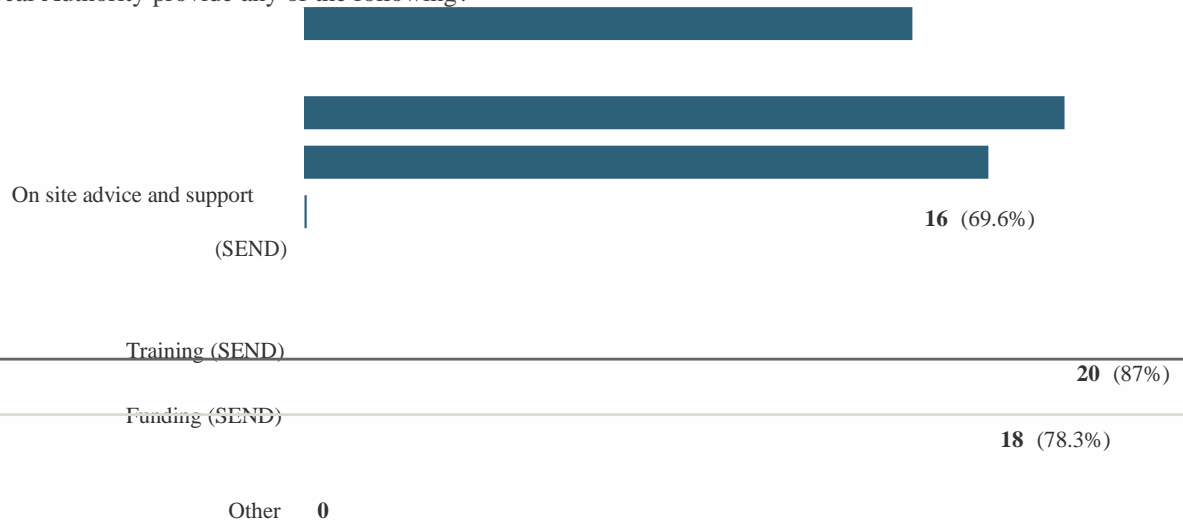
Showing all 20 responses

Inclusion meetings	257752-257744-20946309
Mentoring groups	
Portage	
High needs funding	
Training courses	

South glos - training is good and affordable They are on phone or email and do hold surgeries for us to attend, will come out if referred to	257752-257744-20946178
Bristol-training is limited and very expensive They do visit setting regular and children get more funding opportunities Audit not sure how often they will do this	257752-257744-20947177
Inclusion grants Sen premiums Area sencos Specialist teachers termly visits, email and phone contact when needed All offering support and advice on where to go next	257752-257744-20947885
Once referred a child receives a visit every half term from an inclusion consultant, if needed also an educational psychologist Istanbul.	257752-257744-20948450
Social service to integration, communication,	257752-257744-20950385
We have an area INCo that we can contact anytime needed, who visit the setting adhoc when support is required. LA offer termly SENCo support group meetings. Also free training sometimes.	257752-257744-20953275
With training	257752-257744-20954601
No where as much as they used to support us. Basic help but have to ask. To many firms to fill in to get support	257752-257744-20955554
They offer lift meetings to access specialist teachers and advice from other professionals such as early help & educational psychologists. We have Sen forum meetings and conferences. We can access additional funding through SCARF funding. We have equality and inclusion officers that can support settings.	257752-257744-20955505
Giving targets	Seeing the children

Speaking to practitioners and parents	257752-257744-21017920
Giving ideas	
Helping staff	
Supporting all involved	
Inclusion teacher visits once a year and when we request them.	257752-257744-21020410
On my request to have them visit	257752-257744-21025847
Assigned early years advisor and in some cases portage support	257752-257744-21058227
Settings will have an area Inclusion officer	257752-257744-21134495
Regular meetings, advice, strategies shown and supported, termly forums, training.	257752-257744-21172599
Poorly ... just like to sign forms we fill in and take the credit	257752-257744-21235313
Termly lift meetings, specialist teaching services come to see children every 2 terms at least.	257752-257744-21234982
Termly senco network meetings	257752-257744-21568424
Area senco and training courses	257752-257744-21576981

Does your Local Authority provide any of the following?

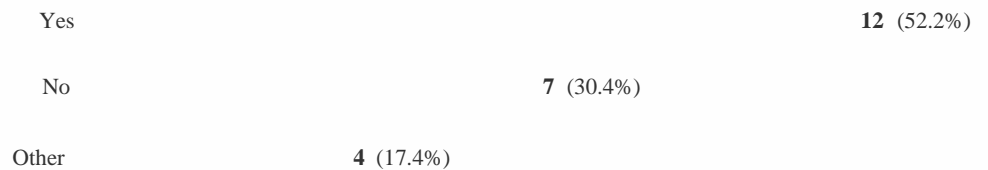


Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)

11.a If Other please give further details:

No responses

Are you well supported by the Local Authority and other outside agencies in meeting the needs of children in your setting who present with SEND?



12.a Please give further details:

Showing all 9 responses	
The support s few years ago was mischief better than what it is now and primarily due to cut backs	257752-257744-20946178
Dont come out enough to provisions	257752-257744-20954601
Other agencies often dismiss concerns and the children end up being re referred by school	257752-257744-20955554
Wouldn't say well supported, we get support and advice but each visit limited to a hour. No help completing paperwork.	257752-257744-21020410
Sometimes, although sometimes it is hard to get other professionals into the setting.	257752-257744-21025847

- Support has been in decline over the last few years and it seems that we are identifying more children who need additional support especially with speech and language. Also funding does not cover additional time needed to complete the lengthy process of completing EHCP requests.

257752-257744-21058227
- I can phone the area inclusion officer or can request for her to see me

257752-257744-21134495
- It's not consistent, varies depending on the professional and their views

257752-257744-21234982
- No specialist support

257752-257744-21568424

How has Local Authority provison changed over the past five years?

Showing all 12 responses	
I feel that it has taken massive steps backwards and we will be seeing lots of children slipping through the net in the future	257752-257744-20946178
Yes	257752-257744-20947885
We have less area INco support, bit I feel this is better as there was a time when too many people were giving us too many messages and there was never time to work on anything.	257752-257744-20953275
Support and money just not there	257752-257744-20955554
Basically more and more paperwork is needed to access all the agencies open to us. When we initially refer and then again at every review	257752-257744-20955505
Yes.	257752-257744-21020410
We used to have regularly visits from the then area senco who would provide ongoing support to myself the setting and advice on general Sen and for specific children. This has now stopped and a referral has to be made for the individual child to get support. This is then only a one off and additional referrals for advice etc have to be made each time	257752-257744-21025847
Cuts in funding means less physical support and increases in training costs for settings as no longer provided by LA for free. Although do have opportunity to attend SENCO network meetings which enables me to share ideas experiences with other practitioners	257752-257744-21058227
Less people to offer the support and waiting list	257752-257744-21134495
No	257752-257744-21235313
More paper, less face to face time	257752-257744-21234982

13.a How has this affected your SEND provision?

Showing all 12 responses	
Sometimes the support and where to go next, is not there. This then impacts the child and nursery.	257752-257744-20946178
We cannot accommodate as many SEN children as we used to	
Children not getting help before school	257752-257744-20947177
It has got better as we have more support and information	257752-257744-20947885
It has empowered us to make decisions for the SEND children, and gives is a chance to research for ourselves instead of someone always giving us the answers.	257752-257744-20953275
Applications take forever to fill in.	257752-257744-20955554
Child goes without support due to waiting times	
More time and then money is needed to be able to provide all the necessary paperwork	257752-257744-20955505

Yes.

[257752-257744-21020410](#)



I feel that I haven't always got the support to bounce ideas off from other specialists and not a confident within my role which then effects the provision we provide to support the Sen provision.

[257752-257744-21025847](#)

We have to spend more time researching how best to support children, find resources. Especially SALT as it takes so long to get support

[257752-257744-21058227](#)

It can mean waiting for professionals to be involved and supportvthe child

[257752-257744-21134495](#)

Find needing to spent more time filling in forms and explaining why we feel the child should be seen.

Yes made it easier

257752-257744-21576981

What are your views on the current legal expectations for SEND within the setting and how these affect practitioners and their practice?

Showing all 12 responses	
It is an accepted part of our settings inclusion policy and we have very experienced staff and an open door policy to children with SEND	257752-257744-20946309
No impact that I am aware of although adds pressure to practitioners especially with no support	257752-257744-20946178
Ensuring SEND children are supported and this is the same for all children its just we spend more time with interventions for these children.	257752-257744-20953275
It's hard to deliver when parents won't accept	257752-257744-20955554
I feel the children are better supported from a younger age now but the paperwork is so consuming along with the concern about getting it right and not letting the children or families down, sometimes it feels like to much pressure to meet the deadlines for everyone	257752-257744-20955505
Its very difficult to support these children when they are in a 1-8 ratio or 1-4 for 2 year olds. Practitioners are doing their best but sometimes we wish we could do more.	257752-257744-21020410

These are imbedded within our daily practices and our practice adapts

257752-257744-21025847

to the individual needs of all children not just those with Sen.

I agree and feel that on the whole it has the best interests of the child and family at the heart of the policy. However, additional funding needs to be made available if early years settings are going to be able to implement them .

257752-257744-21058227

They are cutting money but still expecting the same practice

257752-257744-21134495

More and more Send children . Less support for children parents and setting but setting expected to do more and more

Seems we are expected to do what health visitors and other professionals are will little to no support

257752-257744-21234982

I feel it works better as it's more child focused

257752-257744-21576981

Which on-line sites do you use to support your understanding of SEND ? e.g. Facebook, Facebook Pages (which ones?) National Autistic Society.

Showing all 18 responses	
Eyfs- SEN support- face book ASDA sites and checklists	257752-257744-20946178
Pre school learning alliance - training	
Facebook pages	257752-257744-20947177
Send cluster	
Facebook pages	257752-257744-20947885
Autism Anglia	
Local offer pages	
Local authority web page	
Facebook eyfs send	257752-257744-20948450
Autism friendly uk	
Google	257752-257744-20949043
Facebook	257752-257744-20950385
Facebook groups and pages sorry I can't remember all the names, Local authority website,	257752-257744-20953275
Various	257752-257744-20955554
Kelsi, middas training, support groups online, consultants, speech and language therapists, NHS, Facebook,	257752-257744-20955505

As many as we can! Mostly Facebook pages- any that we find.

257752-257744-21020410

Face book- senco forum, ehcp support

Relevant sights according to the current children attending

Local council

Government websites

	257752-257744-21025847
National autistic society and ICAN.	257752-257744-21058227
Face book pages And researching diffrent charitoes such as i can talk	257752-257744-21134495
Facebook and instagram.	257752-257744-21172599
Face book	257752-257744-21235313
EYFS-SEN Facebook page and will Google as needed	257752-257744-21234982
Facebook	257752-257744-21568424
None	257752-257744-21576981

Do you find the Facebook Page/Profile EYFS-SEN useful and why?

Showing all 17 responses	
It has lots of useful information and ideas	257752-257744-20946309
Yes- really good links that we have used and found useful	257752-257744-20946178
Keeps us up to date with legislation	
Yes it helps share practice and give lots of ideas we wouldn't if nessecarly had by only seeking advice from the same people all the time	257752-257744-20947885
Yes has very useful info to read and share	257752-257744-20948450
Not got this page	257752-257744-20949043
Yes defiantly, I like hearing how others went about supporting children. I love magpieing ideas and trying them out for ourselves sometimes tweeking them to suit the children. This saves me so much research time.	257752-257744-20953275
N/A	257752-257744-20955554
Yes they keep us informed of updated & changes to practises and laws and so on	257752-257744-20955505
Yes	257752-257744-21017920

Yes, ideas of activities. Reading other peoples ideas.

257752-257744-21020410

It reflects current interests and government changes. I can relate to information and others views as it is real life people in real life situations that can be going through the same situations I may be going throug, it is a supportive site

257752-257744-21025847

Yes good way of comparing views and support nationally

257752-257744-21058227

Yes because you may have new ideas and strategies to try

257752-257744-21134495

Yes- information shared, new ideas, strategies to use,
recommendations.

257752-257744-21172599

Yes

Support , ideas, info bank

257752-257744-21235313

Yes user friendly great links, lots of opportunities to chat with others.

257752-257744-21234982

No

257752-257744-21576981

How could it be made more relevant to your SEND needs?

Showing all 7 responses	
I feel at has already been very useful	257752-257744-20946178
Keep doing what you're already doing, it's informative and helpful	257752-257744-20955505
It couldn't as we never know what needs we are going to have. Just nice to be able to dip in and out.	257752-257744-21020410
It is a good site, continue doing a great job	257752-257744-21025847
Also posting resources that are helpful	257752-257744-21134495
I feel it is relevant.	257752-257744-21172599
More question and answer type help Video clips	257752-257744-21235313

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