

Family Voice Norfolk Consultation on Returning to School or College

Consultation

Parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) were consulted via an online survey from 10 to 14 September 2020 about returning to school or college.

Background

Family Voice Norfolk (FVN) is a collective of parent carers from nearly 1,060 families across Norfolk and represents nearly 1,400 children and young people with SEND. FVN has been the strategic voice of parent carers working in partnership with Norfolk County Council (NCC) and the Norfolk and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) since 2006. It is funded through a direct DfE grant (administered through Contact), by NCC and by the CCG.

Parent carers were invited to complete a questionnaire online and had the opportunity to include comments on their experiences about returning to school. The survey ran for five days, in order that a report could be sent to the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) in time for a meeting with Vicky Ford, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families. FVN received 57 responses, representing 58 children and young people (CYP) with SEND.

Key messages

Children and young people with SEND have individual needs and requirements. Some are happy to be back at school and enjoy the routine that school or college offers them. Others, who relished being at home during lockdown, are anxious and stressed about returning to a school environment that often did not meet their needs before Covid-19.

Attendance and transition back to school

Parent carers who completed the survey reported that nearly 60% of their children and young people had returned to school on a full-time basis. Many special schools have offered a part-time transition over the first few weeks of September.

Parents' rating of their and their children's experience was influenced by many factors, including their child's individual needs, their experience of lockdown and what had been happening at school (or not at school in the case of some children) in the first three months of the year.

Half of all parent carers who responded to the survey felt that the transition back to school was good or excellent. This appeared to apply mainly to schools that provided detailed transition plans. Others were reported as giving parent carers very little written information or opportunity for preparation and were not rated highly as a result.

"A five-minute visit to meet new teacher and new 1:1 is not sufficient after such a long time away."

"The information provided by our son's special school has been confusing and unclear. Our mainstream son's school did a better job in that we could answer all our son's questions because his timetable everything was set out well in advance and shared. For our autistic son we had no idea what it was going to look like."

Transport

Transport continued to be an issue with some parent carers at the beginning of September as information about arrangements came too late for families to plan and prepare. This also meant that

taxi companies often did not have time for a meet-and-greet, and children and young people were not confident about arrangements for their first day back to school. Transport issues are a source of huge anxiety for families.

“Found out at 10.30 the night before about who would take my daughter.”

“The taxi service and staff are perfect, but the communication from NCC Transport was non-existent.”

Short Breaks

Relaxation around how parent carers of children under 18 could use their Short Breaks budget during lockdown has meant that over 60% of parent carers who responded said that their experience of Short Breaks was good or excellent, despite not being able to access usual services. Although some services are resuming now, many parent carers are still not able to access Short Breaks or alternatives.

“Well, I can’t really fault Short Breaks but I have been unable to use it fully.”

Speech and language therapy (SALT)

85% of parent carers whose children or young people had SALT services in March said that their experiences of accessing SALT have been poor. Very few children or young people have had any access to SALT services since March 2020 and communication about the service has also been lacking. Some services may resume by October 2020 but many face-to-face therapies may not commence until January 2021.

“Nothing has taken place or been offered during lockdown. However, we did do a few games and activities. Which didn’t go down too well. We now await school restarting sessions.”

Occupational therapy (OT)

OT has been offered to some children and young people during lockdown via Zoom but 58% of parent carers found the service to be poor, unsatisfactory or non-existent. Many parent carers are still waiting for assessments or referrals for their children or young people, which have not been progressed since March 2020 or even earlier.

“Still waiting for them to do an assessment at the school. Only 2 years late!”

“Too little, too much expectation that the parent can do it.”

“My son had OT via school zoom sessions and she was amazing!”

Physiotherapy

Many parent carers (57%) were unable to access physiotherapy for their child or young person.

“Mobility has decreased dramatically in lockdown.”

Mental health

70% of parent carers who responded said that Covid-19 and having six months of not being in school or college had had an impact on their child or young person’s mental health. For some this meant missing friends and social isolation but for others the Crisis team have been involved. Some children and young people were happier while at home.

Only 17% of parent carers have been able to access mental health services for their child or young person.

“No help from school or any services. Daughter regressed an awful lot during lockdown. No one seemed concerned, not even her paediatrician.”

“Crisis point entry into Crisis Team and now receiving help. Shouldn't have to reach crisis to get this though.”

Other health-related services

Some parent carers found that often telephone conversations were more convenient than having an appointment face-to-face. 60% of respondents said their experiences of other health-related services were either good or excellent.

Behaviour and thoughts about returning to school

With only a week back at school, the most noticeable changes in behaviour are increased levels of tiredness in some children and a greater calmness in others. However, several parent carers mentioned that their young person's behaviour at home had deteriorated with the added stress of returning to school.

Parental feelings were polarised for some and mixed for others. For all the parents happy that their child or young person had returned to school there were as many parents who were anxious. Many felt that it is not safe for their child or young person to be returning to school, especially if they or their child are medically vulnerable to Covid-19. Inconsistencies in rules around Covid-19, such as mask wearing, caused anxiety for some children, young people and adults.

“Ranges between excited and scared, we have had extreme hyper ness and real sadness and fright. The news saying where children are safe but they can pass it on to parents and other adults is not very useful, neither is the way the rules are so woolly.”

“I am very keen for him to be in school. I have concerns re Covid19 but feel any risks are worth it as keeping him out of education for any longer would be worse.”

“I'm glad he's at a small specialist school. I'd have been worried sick about his safety and emotional well-being if he had gone to a mainstream school.”

And there was a reminder that for parent carers of children with disabilities there is an additional depth to the worry of how the children can be cared for if the parent becomes ill or worse.

“Very anxious about the changes at school, risk of them catching and passing on to us and one of us dying.”

Support for siblings

Six months of no school has had an effect on siblings of children and young people with SEND. Often parent carers were unaware that service existed that offered support for young carers.

“I wasn't aware that there was any help out there for my daughter. She has really struggled with my son over lockdown.”

Final comments

Parent carers were asked what has worked well in their first week and what has not worked well. Many parents said that continuity and good communication have made the first week back at school easier.

“Good communication from his teacher.”

“Having the same teacher again.”

Lack of support and concerns around Covid-19 were reasons that the first week had not worked well for parent carers and their children.

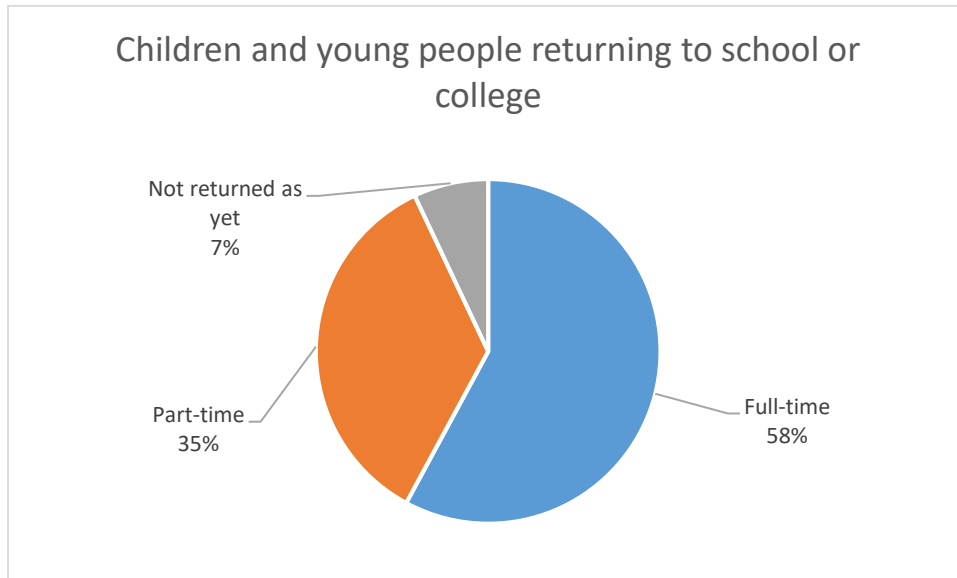
“I am shocked that home learning isn't an option, since this was working very well.”

“No matter what steps the school takes my children (and my husband and me) are at greater risk now we have been forced (due to school fines) to send my children to school.”

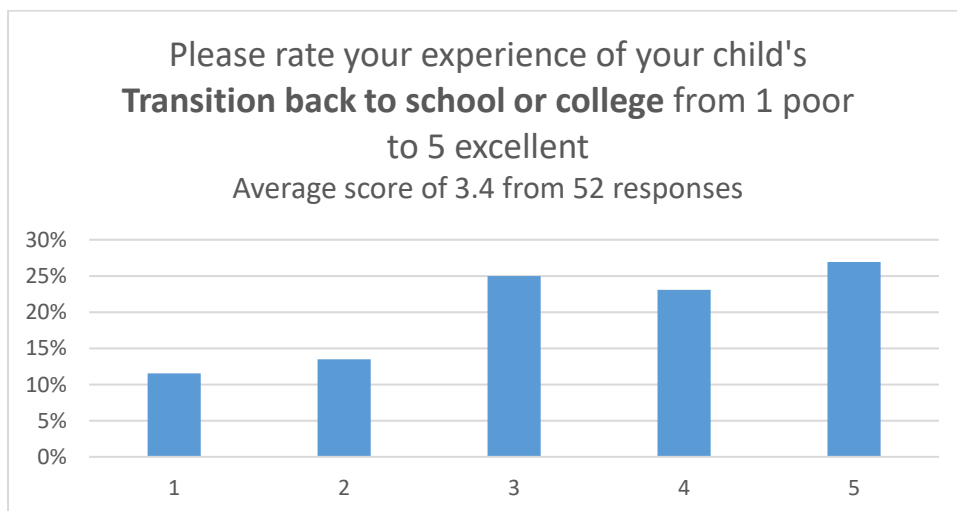
“Despite having an EHCP, nothing was in place to support her transition and still things have not been put in place.”

Main findings

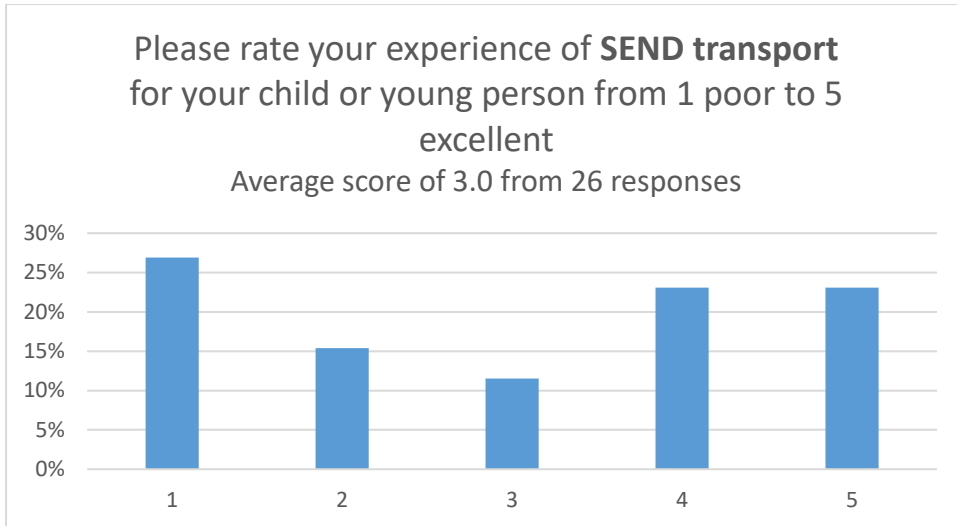
Has your child or young person returned to school or college?



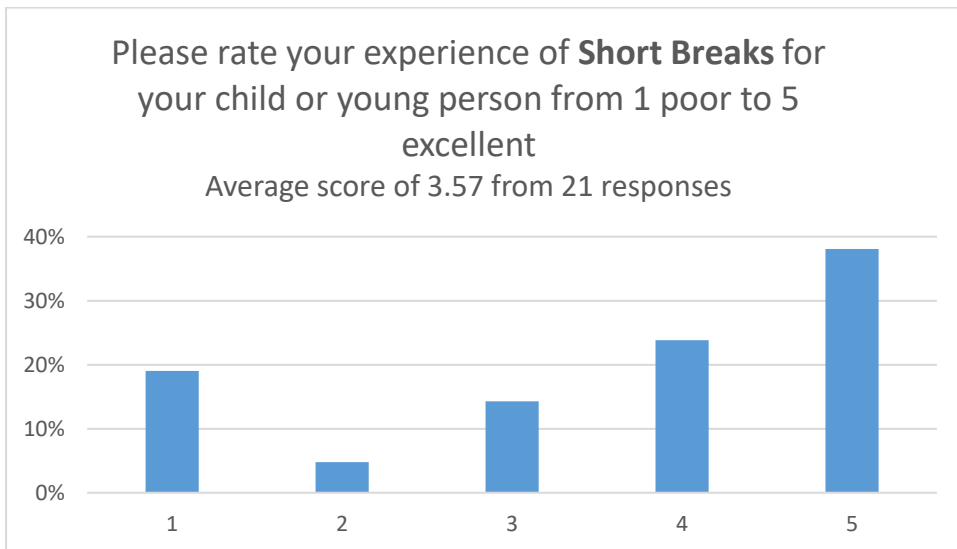
Please refer to Appendix A on pages 10 to 12 for comments about attendance, exclusions, part-time timetables or home-schooling.



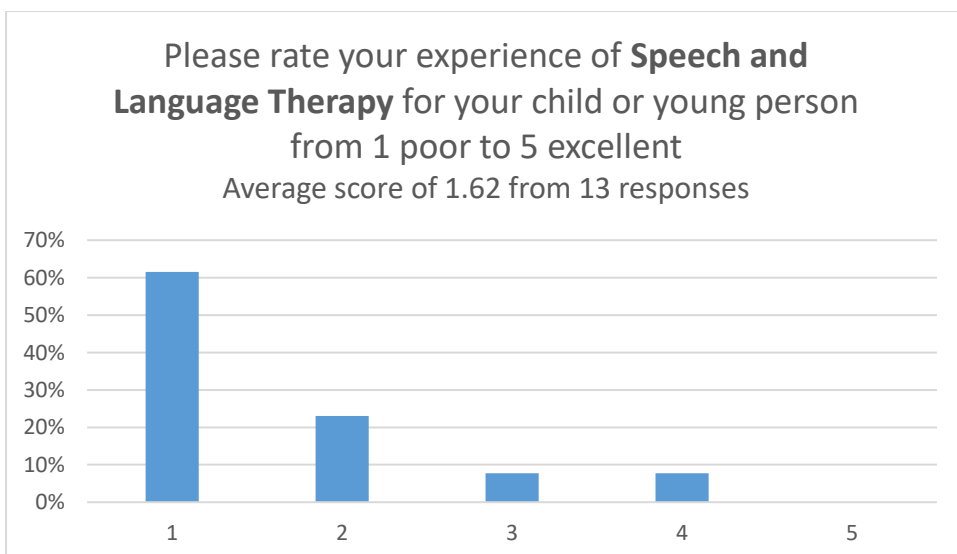
Comments of experience of child's transition back to school or college – refer to appendix B on pages 12 to 15



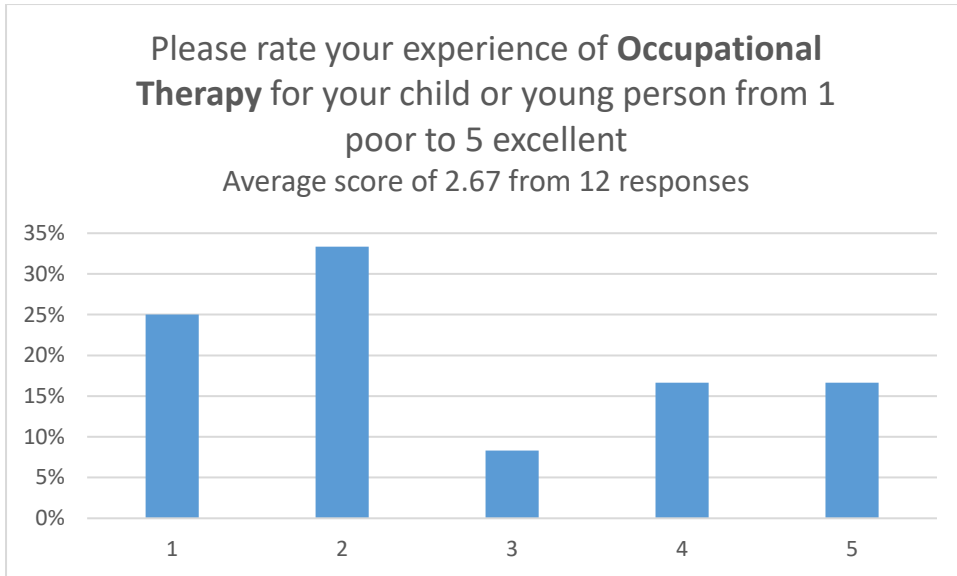
Comments of experience on SEND transport – refer to appendix C on pages 15 to 126



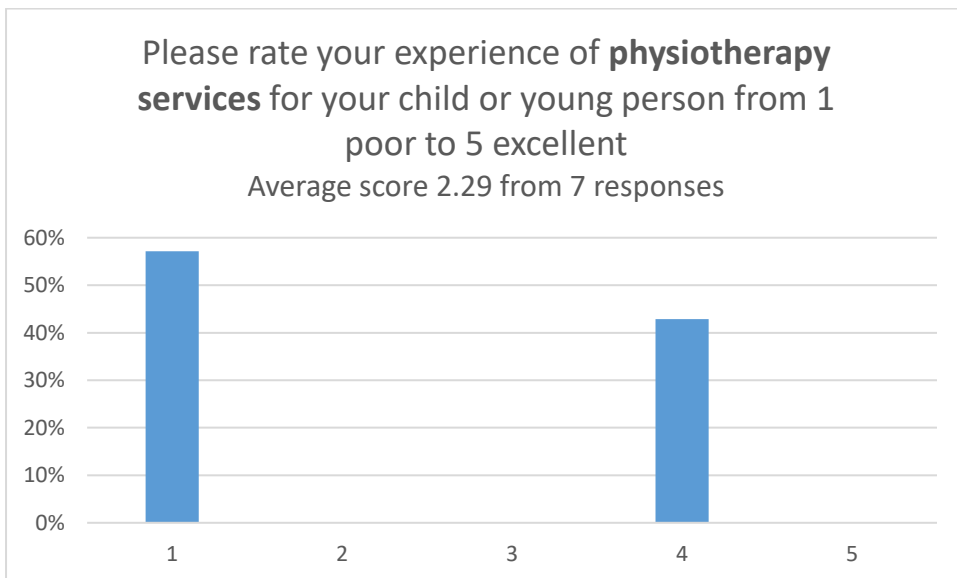
Comments of experience on Short Breaks – refer to appendix D on pages 16 to 17



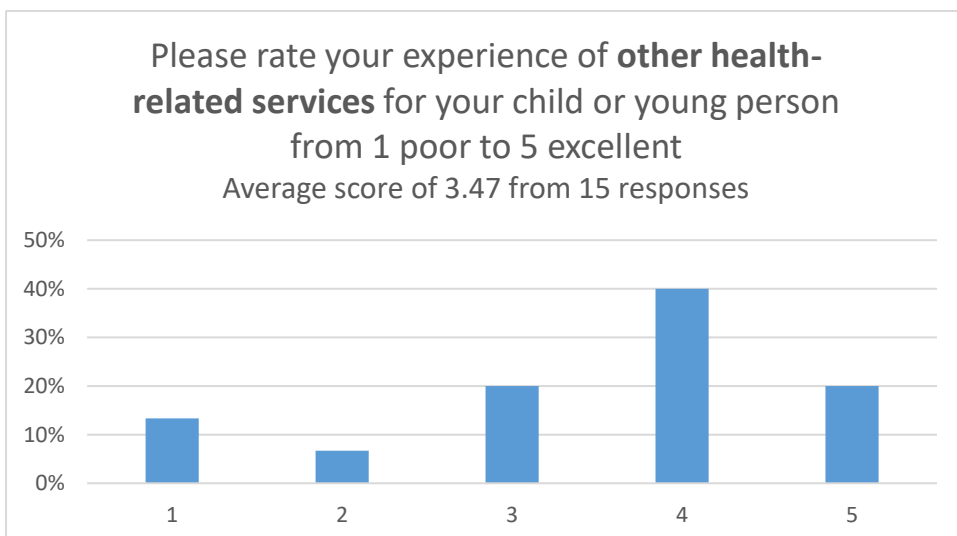
Comments of experience on speech and language therapy – refer to appendix E on pages 17 to 18



Comments of experience on occupational therapy – refer to appendix F on pages 18

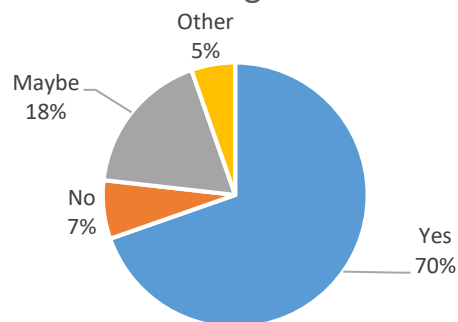


Comments of experience on physiotherapy – refer to appendix G on page 18 to 19

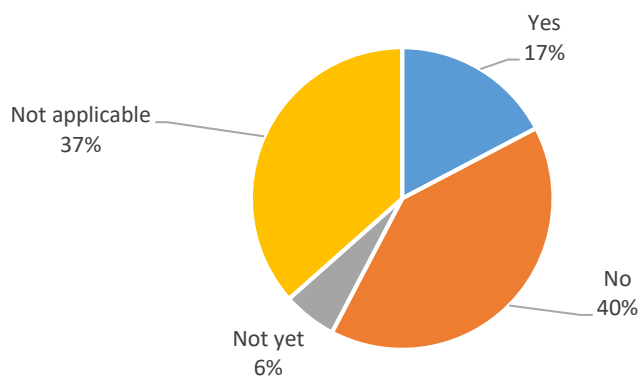


Comments of experience on other health-related services – refer to appendix H on page 19.

Has there been any impact on your child or young person's mental health due to Covid-19 and the six months of not being in school or college?

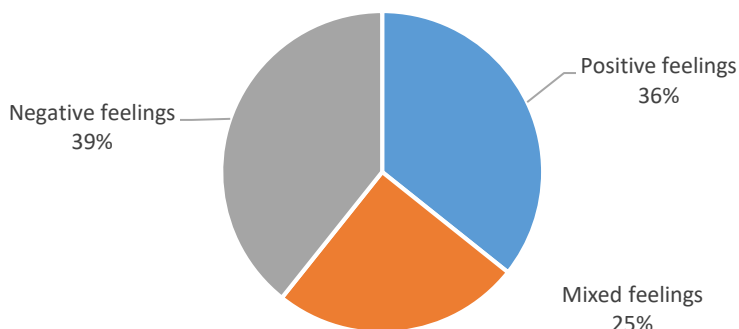


Have you been able to access any services to help your child or young person's mental health?



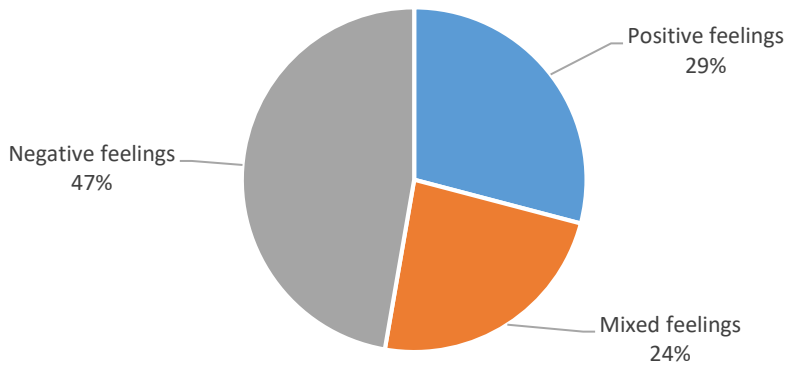
Please refer to appendix I on pages 19 to 20 for comments on mental health and access to services.

How does your child or young person feel about going back to school or college?



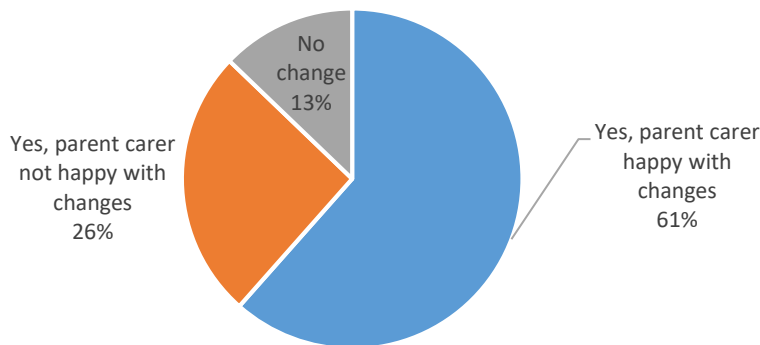
Please refer to appendix J on pages 21 to 22 for comments on how children and young people are feeling about going back to school or college.

How do you feel about your child or young person going back to school or college?



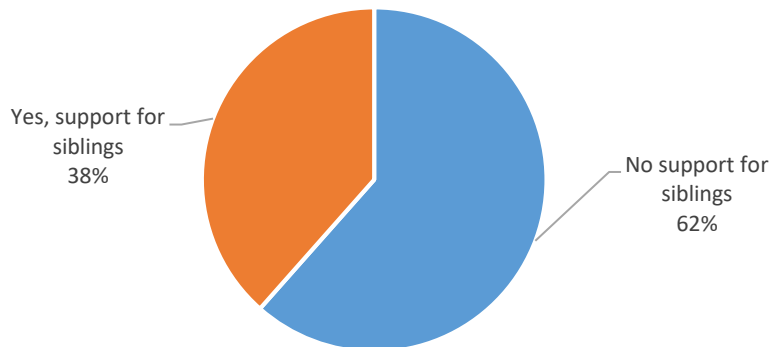
Please refer to appendix K on pages 22 to 24 for comments on how parent carers are feeling about their child or young person going back to school or college.

Has there been any changes in your child or young person's behaviour since they returned to school?



Please refer to appendix L on pages 24 to 25 for comments about behaviour since returning to school.

Do siblings of your child or young person with SEND receive any support for being young carers?



Many parent carers did not realise that there was support available for siblings who are young carers. Please refer to appendix M on page 25 for further comments.

Please refer to appendix N on pages 25 to 26 for comments on what has been working well during the first week back to school.

Please refer to appendix O on pages 26 to 27 for comments on what has NOT been working well during the first week back to school.

57 parent carers responded to the survey and their responses represented 58 children and young people with SEND.

	Mainstream	SRB	Special School	Home school	Other	Total
0 to 4 years old	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
5 to 11 years old	27%	0%	24%	0%	2%	53%
12 to 16 years old	12%	2%	19%	0%	0%	33%
17 to 21 years old	0%	2%	3%	0%	2%	7%
22 to 25 years old	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
TOTAL	46%	4%	46%	0%	4%	100%

Please comment about attendance, exclusions, part-time timetables or home schooling. We would like to hear the good, the bad and the ugly.

Comments where CYP have returned full time and respondents rated it 1 (poor)

- Work was provided by the school, and completed by my children. Worked very well, and my children were safe.
- 13-year old has been back 2 days so far, 11-year old 4 days and 4 year old will be part time until Nov.
- I'm concerned about if the school will do any work with my child to help them catch up on all the time missed due to Covid. My child's school insists that all students wear masks in school for the whole day including all taught lessons, apart from breaks, and I feel this is appalling for health and welfare, and communication, and they are struggling. We do not attend school in an area of high incidence of Covid, and I feel its draconian in the extreme. There seems to be no national pattern for coping with restrictions, and every place has different rules.

Comments where CYP have returned full time and respondents rated it 2 (unsatisfactory)

- My child with ASD has been temporarily excluded 4 times earlier this year for violence. Home schooling went well which to me proves he needs to be in a very small group, not a class of 30+
- He has just started on a full-time course at a mainstream college (first time in mainstream since year 4). He has only attended one day so far and apparently at least one of the 3 scheduled days a week will be on Zoom. Too soon to say much. He was incredibly nervous before attending the first day and I know will find it difficult to engage in learning if done online. Not sure what to expect, but anticipating a very stressful time at least in the short to medium term. Not sure how they can meet his EHCP requirements in this setting.

Comments where CYP have returned full time and respondents rated it 3 (satisfactory)

- Home schooling was fine but you need a computer and will power. We are not all teachers....it is also isolating and not good for socialised society
- My son has been going to school full-time during lockdown as I work in the NHS. He has never had an exclusion or bad attendance at school
- My son attends part time on a flexi-school arrangement. This was requested by myself 2 years ago and I've been allowed to continue it.
- No transition offered at all, taxis messed up, staffing not in place
- Nothing as such so far apart from lots of changes to pick up and drop off, lunch, break times. School still tweaking

Comments where CYP have returned full time and respondents rated it 4 (good)

- Full attendance, differentiated timetable
- Struggling with first day transitioning back into school due to past trauma in junior school.
- They had stayed open for me as a keyworker.
- Part time for 2 weeks and then full time onwards year 2 and year 6

Comments where CYP have returned full time and respondents rated it 5 (excellent)

- He has liked the new setting as it is more structured which suits his autistic nature
- Returned to school but shorter day for all 9am to 2pm. No concerns with this as we understand why.
- Home schooling was really hard for us, as a family with a child who is adopted and has special needs. Sadly, only at the point of crumbling, did our school let us know we had been eligible for a space all along. Why didn't they let us know this from the beginning of lockdown?? We desperately needed our routine back again and, had we known about the school space, wouldn't have experienced the stress and anxiety that we did at home.
- Can't fault the Nursery School, they phoned me weekly during lockdown and put lots of things onto Tapestry and the website. It wasn't easy and my child missed going but made the best we could of the situation.

Comments where CYP have returned part time and respondents rated it 1 (poor)

- 2 days per week for the first two weeks then to be reviewed. Can't see it changing any time soon. I'm disgusted. Sent a link for ClassDojo for home learning, you have to pay to access most of the resources and there is no real set learning. What an absolute mess.

Comments where CYP have returned part time and respondents rated it 2 (unsatisfactory)

- We would have liked our son to go back full-time but the school isn't doing Fridays in September and has permanently reduced every school day by 30 minutes.
- We have had a really difficult time with school work over the COVID lockdown. Our son was permanently excluded from his school in January so was already out of school before lockdown. He was receiving home tutoring for only 2hrs per day 3 times a week as we were told there were no places in the short stay school. We had just started looking at autism SRBs and special schools for him but are consistently told that there are no places. Once lockdown started the home tutoring was via video link but (3 tutors later) our son was not engaging and would run off and hide. Then we were finally told there was a place for our son at our local short stay school but as year 2 was not a year which was, at that time, returning to school he could not attend. This meant that all home tutor support was instantly stopped and we were supplied with school work which we were expected to have him complete. This meant tantrums and meltdowns every day for us. During this time we were told after each panel meeting that our son had been turned down for SRB placements. We were told that there were places at a SRB but we would have to go and see it before we could make an application, the same goes for special schools. Of course we were unable to do this because parents are not allowed on site during lockdown and still currently aren't.

Comments where CYP have returned part time and respondents rated it 3 (satisfactory)

- My son started reception class on Monday and was only doing 3 hours this week to get used to it he had a lovely 3 hours Monday got a phone call on Tuesday after 2 hours to go and collect him he had been sick everywhere. He then developed a cough so we are waiting for results of Covid 19 test hopefully try again on Monday
- Started transition to new school this week. He has been out of school for 18 months whilst the LA found a place that could meet need.
- Struggled with home schooling managed a little online for maths and English. Struggled without structure of timetable so we did our own which enabled different things to learn like cooking, baking, Joe Wicks, gardening life skills etc.

Comments where CYP have returned part time and respondents rated it 4 (good)

- My child has returned to school on a part time basis doing 3 days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This was a decision that the head teacher allowed me to make and has been fully supportive. They have given me the option to do this for up to 6 weeks - so we're being lead by how he responds to going back.
- He's going Mon, Tue and alternate Weds
- Reduced timetable

Comments where CYP have returned part time and respondents rated it 5 (excellent)

- I am happy that it is part time attendance for the first four weeks, at least.
- My son has started at a Special School on a phased entry for September going two days the first week, 3 the second, 2 the third week and then three the fourth week. Our son was in Mainstream up until Year 6. On the whole, his attendance was very good. He had the odd day off for illness and the odd half-day for medical appointments. During lockdown we attempted home learning where it was an eye opener as to just how far behind he was in his year. He only managed about 10 minutes a day. He went back to school in June during which time he had one meltdown but ended up staying in school. He has just started at [a special school] and I have been very impressed at the level of communication we have had from them regarding transition. It helped to ease not only our worries but our son's too.
- As the children missed their transition days due to Covid, they are having them now
- Temp 4 day week for 3 Weeks then full time as all in school

- Son invited to attend two days for two weeks. Then full time thereafter. It's been a good return for him. Having been off since March. We have been home the whole of lockdown. We focused on life skills and very little academia.
We were concerned with restarting school. However, all went extremely well. [The special school] are superb! And the gentle return ideal for all concerned. Long may this happy boy continue to thrive.
- Nothing to say, happy with phased return.

Comments where CYP has not yet returned to school or college

- My son was on a build up timetable at school before lockdown due to anxiety and transport problems. Now he is refusing to go in at all as he said he can't social distance in a taxi with other children and none of them are in his bubble. I am carrying on with home-schooling for now and waiting to hear if transport can help with this. The school is too far away for me to take him myself so that is not an option.
- Our school was very helpful during lockdown with regular telephone calls and zoom sessions, free art activity packs, online music sessions and badges to work towards.
- Returning to university out of county 26/9
- My son was due to return to his special school in Norwich (we live in west Norfolk) on a part time basis on Monday (just gone), which we had all agreed on. However due to the taxi firm, who is contracted to transport him, not following the instructions in their contract he has been unable to attend all this week.
On Sunday they sent me a text to tell me there would be a new driver; then sent a grainy picture of the driver which was his Facebook profile through WhatsApp! The contract clearly states that there must be a meet and greet of any new staff that comes to pick my son up; it also stipulates that the taxi company has to inform the transport department of any changes. They chose to ignore our questions and have still yet, nearly a week later to respond.

Appendix B

Please comment on your experience of your child's transition back to school or college.

Comments where transition was rated 1 (poor)

- Sending children to school at this time should be parental choice. My children have been successfully educated at home without being put at risk. I am a stay at home mum, so I don't need to send my children back to school to help the economy. I should be given the choice whether to send my kids to school or whether to continue home learning with tasks issued by the school. No matter what steps the school takes my children (and my husband and me) are at greater risk now we have been forced (due to school fines) to send my children to school.
- Non existent really, just messages on social media.
- No support
- There has been no real prep or information given by school about what the school day would look like or how lessons would be taught, until they got there, so we couldn't talk about it at home first, or prepare. The requirement to wear masks all day including in class, was really short notice, and I didn't have lots of masks for my 2 children so they have had to wear the same one over and over as it's all we have. One of my children has moved up to high school and been very anxious, and no work has been done beforehand by school to help them prepare, and they are unable to socialise as they would normally due to restrictions, which makes everything even harder for them. No extra work is being done by school to help them meet new friends. Also all children have been at home for months and are suddenly expected to return to school as if it's all normal and they are not really prepared or ready to hit it full on.
- Although my daughter attended for 5 weeks before the summer holidays, the returning transition has been non-existent. I am so fed up with the schools lack of communication and assuming everyone will be ok.

- Should be back full time.

Comments where transition was rated 2 (unsatisfactory)

- A five-minute visit to meet new teacher and new 1:1 is not sufficient after such a long time away.
- Very anxious and unsure about whether he can manage.
- Due to my daughters struggles with going to school this week has been a real challenge and really distressing for her
- Left on first day with no SEN support no guidance, separated from the only child she knew in the school. High anxiety.
- We have had no correspondence/feedback from college since he started back
- The information provided by our son's special school has been confusing and unclear. Our mainstream son's school did a better job in that we could answer all our son's questions because his timetable everything was set out well in advance and shared. For our autistic son we had no idea what it was going to look like.
- The short stay schools have put our son on yet another reintegration plan, which means that he will be on 2hrs per day. There will review meetings fortnightly so gauge his progress and hopefully increase his hours. This will be dependent on him meeting certain goals, such as improved behaviour, completing his initial assessment (he had a meltdown and refused to do most of it) and engaging with his teacher and doing his work. We have also been told that if our son won't or can't social distance at school he may have to be sent home. So again as I have for most of his school life, I am on call again, waiting to go and collect him from school at any time.

Comments where transition was rated 3 (satisfactory)

- Has gone very quiet. It's ok but not much work being done - drawing and playing outside. We are not told of work structures as yet and it's day 3. The school is closing at 12 noon on every Friday???
- It was only day 2 and he was given work without it being explained to him as it is stated in his EHCP that it should be.
- It was the change of taxi company that made it more difficult than normal, he was anxious about the first day back as they would be more children back in the school
- Luckily the post lockdown schooling system really suits my son - no assembly, no mixing at playtime, sitting in rows etc.
- Luckily my son was not too anxious about his return to school, it could have been much worse and school made little attempt to alleviate that
- Up and down so far but more to do with usual school issues such as poor communication and practice rather than Covid issues. Disappointed there has not been more emphasis on settling back in. Spelling and maths tests already on day 2.
- He has so much anxiety about it all, school had plans in place as was only in 3 days last week but I don't know if this is continuing as we go on
- As a new pupil to a specialist school, I would have expected there to be a member of staff available to greet and support him on his first morning. Two members of staff briefly came out to the car but were too busy with other pupils to stay with us. After 40 mins (by which point my son had got out the car in order to give me a proper whack to show just how difficult it all was!) we were lucky that the school's acting deputy came to assist. At this point, we found out he wasn't even supposed to be in the classroom we were trying to get him in to. Not a great start!
- Part time return is not ideal given special needs and need for routine
- Part time attendance challenging due to fixation on routines
- The lack of communication with us about his transport caused unneeded stress.
- Communication from teachers is poor, last minute timetables with not much time for preparation. Transport was late at communicating too. Generally over promise and under deliver when they communicate from school.

Comments where transition was rated 4 (good)

- Haven't received full timetable of support, trying to establish 1 to 1 has been provided as agreed
- This was my son's transition to secondary education. Due to delays we did not find out he would be going to a specialist setting until 10 August. Even with COVID, the delays were not necessary.
- The school have contacted us prior to our son starting back and a support teacher is meeting him at the gate for his first morning. I feel it would be good if he could have more support in the mornings initially at least for the first few days but there doesn't seem to be the staff capacity to allow for this to happen. Also will be meeting with the head of year to hopefully receive further support for him.
- The school have made all the relevant changes required
- It has gone very well. But as normal with autism, he is keeping calm all day and then we have some changes in behaviour at home
- My son has been happy to go back to school and has coped surprisingly well with all of the new changes. So far!
- School have prepared well and produced a good temporary timetable
- So far, it's going well.

Comments where transition was rated 5 (excellent)

- The school have been brilliant and very supportive
- He loved being back at school
- Great information very, very safe and all done positively
- Amazing
- It helped that we had been back at school before the summer holidays started. This definitely helped with a smoother transition into the next year
- Lots of communication, letters, Facebook posts and able to email Head Teacher with any questions or queries. Happy with what the school has done to make it safer and everything seems to be working well.
- My daughters teacher listened to my concerns about how my daughter was feeling about returning to the learning environment and accommodated by making a phone call the day before outlining the plan for the next day, where she was sitting, which gate she would be entering through etc. so as to lower her anxiety of being thrown into the unknown. She is ASD and I was very pleased with the consideration and time that went into that phone call.
- Our son has started in a new school. In an absolute first, he has come from school each day and said he has had a good day. He has willingly told me what he has done. On the first day, his teacher called after he'd got home to say that he'd settled well.
- We had a long phone call the day before with the TA who will work with my child. The TA helped allay all our concerns and fears of returning to school. The TA was actually shielding throughout Lockdown, and they feel safe being back at school. Lots of emails as well, detailed plan of what school will look like, who my child will be! Loads of communication a very positive experience!
- The College are very clued up with Covid. But their Rugroom is shut - disastrous
- Amazing. Well planned. Expertly coordinated.
Sadly, the Wednesday community activities had to be cancelled due to Boris's change of law/recommendation, which all were really looking forward to attending. As some pupils and staff are shielding (till the end of sept)
However, my son's return has been perfect for him. Can't ask for better!?!
- Daily communication from school now child back in setting. Conversation with school prior to return so could update on everything. Transport arranged with meet and greet. All going well in general so far.

Comments where CYP has not yet returned

- Been given social story explaining what is going to happen.

Appendix C

Please comment on your experience of SEND transport for your child or young person.

Comments where SEND Transport was rated 1 (poor)

- We have to drive. Then we have to gather to drop off and collect children. Not exactly Covid safe!
- Found out at 10.30 the night before about who would take my daughter.
- Absolute disgrace. Told 5 days before school started that Norse would not take him, even though he had the same bus and staff for the past 4 years! They blamed an accident that the bus driver had in Feb 2020 when the tail lift of the bus fell down on the driver's food with my child on the tail lift. Faulty tail lift and nothing to do with child! NCC were only told about the accident a week before school started in September and had to organise a taxi at very short notice. The whole experience has caused a lot of stress for the family and child; he normally loves school, but we have had tears, screaming and upset tummy all week due to this change in his routine at very short notice.
- Transport knew we were having problems before lockdown and they said they couldn't help with this. I'm very worried about this now as he has already missed so much school.
- Although my child hadn't returned to school my transport escort has told me that our bus would have three children in wheelchairs, one small child in a car seat and one mobile young person plus an escort This means social distancing is impossible. I do not drive so school transport is the only option but does not appear to follow social distancing rules! Very unsafe!

Comments where SEND Transport was rated 2 (unsatisfactory)

- The change of taxi company again
- Transport made the assumption that taxis were not required based on my claiming expenses for 4 days in July. No contact made to check even though I let them know my change of address.
Very late realisation of mistake due to poor organisation of whole system so no taxi on the first day at all. And his original taxi place has been given to another child so now a much longer journey than before.
- Did not find out who were providing the transport until Friday and did not find out when he would be picked up until they were knocking on the door on Monday.
- Lack of communication
-

Comments where SEND Transport was rated 3 (satisfactory)

- The taxi service and staff are perfect, but the communication from NCC Transport was non-existent.
- No masks, multiple drivers who don't know or understand his needs. Contract changed without any consultation of school or parents
- Only got told the time of pick-up Friday for Monday and up to 1 hour 20 mins drive for 5 year old. Luckily, she's dropped home first on route so return journey 30-40 mins.

Comments where SEND Transport was rated 4 (good)

- Only at 9.15pm did we have a visit from the taxi service to tell us what time he would be picked up the next day!!

- The actual taxi driver and assistant are excellent but given 4 for lateness in communicating arrangements, which is not the staff but the firm or education transport department.
- He is on a bus with one child who is also in his class bubble
- No one from NCC contacted us, we had a text from them prior to COVID 19 PA , to let us know they would be picking our child up, who else was on the bus, the new time, as classes are split into half, so less pupils on the bus! They even took a photo of themselves wearing masks so the children would know what to expect, very good communication from the passenger assistant!
- Had visit from driver, not at school until 14th.

Comments where SEND Transport was rated 5 (excellent)

- Only concern is the wearing of a mask in the taxi is causing our son sensory issues, hopefully these won't escalate.
- Taxi called beforehand and everything is good.
- Our taxi provider has done everything they said they would do. They called when they said they would, turned up for the meet and greet on time. They are friendly and quickly put our son at ease.
- Advised of transport provider couple of weeks before return to school, had successful meet and greet happy journeys so far.

Appendix D

Please comment on your experience of Short Breaks for your child or young person.

Comments where Short Breaks provision was rated 1 (poor)

- We are eligible for respite and wanted to use a family member (part of our bubble) to help with this during lockdown, as we thought it was too unsafe to have different people coming into our home. We were refused this and were told only Adults could do this. We ended up with no respite.
- No services available
- There is not enough on offer for 6 year olds, some places are heavily subscribed and have waiting lists.

Comments where Short Breaks provision was rated 2 (unsatisfactory)

- I paused homebased care during lockdown but now I'm only receiving one six-hour session per week due to staffing problems. I should get 3x 6 hr sessions per week and one night per month. I'm exhausted.

Comments where Short Breaks provision was rated 3 (satisfactory)

- We are still receiving Short Breaks but the duration and number have reduced.
- Nothing was open when in full lockdown, and we weren't allowed within two meters of someone who didn't live in same house, so PAs were inaccessible really. Our child has accessed two day sessions with one PA. Girl Guides will not resume in the near future, and it's not good mixing with different households, so when PA input will safely resume is sadly something I don't know. As I feel it's been detrimental for all parties.
- Well I can't really fault Short Breaks but I have been unable to use it fully. We only got awarded Short Breaks in January for the first time. We used some of the money for booking a private pool, which our son loved (he struggles to go to a public pool with all the people and noise). Unfortunately, we have been unable to get anymore bookings now that lifting of lockdown as seen the pool reopen, it is booked solidly for months. We discovered that over lockdown we could use the Short Breaks funding to buy equipment and toys for our son but everything we have tried to buy that he wants have been out of stock everywhere. Such as, trampoline, paddling pool, bike etc.

Comments where Short Breaks provision was rated 4 (good)

- Flexible and understanding attitude. Well done. Lost signed paperwork with personal details.
- School Short Breaks have been fantastic - cannot access Hamlet due to only allowed to go to one provider, hence half of budget not spent and this will be lost at end of year when short breaks renewal comes up. Have asked for more than the £500 allowed to spend, but negative answer. Annoyed that we can't use this money for the benefit of child
- £500 during lockdown was great, but now services are still not up and running. I can't take him to his normal 1:1 swimming lessons, no PA required as cubs not started and cinema not showing much.
- Some ongoing flexibility about how to spend the money would be useful given many restrictions are still in place.
- Was not able to access the remainder of budget.
-

Comments where Short Breaks provision was rated 5 (excellent)

- This was our first time applying. The time spent explaining it was wonderful.
- We have access to a prepaid financial card, which we normally use for activities to keep active. During Covid, we could use it for equipment which enabled my son to buy a new bicycle and to learn to cycle with more confidence and with all of the family which he would not have done prior to Covid.
- Fabulous provision of SB, using 2 x PAs. This summer able to spend £500 out of budget for something to help child during Covid. Brilliant that Short Breaks service allowed this flexibility.
- Short Breaks has helped her have some normality over summer and allowed her to keep going to the care farm
- Great service.
- I was allowed to use my budget, which ends in October to buy equipment. I don't feel safe going to extracurricular activities or days out, so I don't think I'll be able to make use of it this academic year unless I can buy equipment again

Appendix E

Please comment on your experience of SALT for your child or young person.

Comments where SALT provision was rated 1 (poor)

- Appalling. My daughter attends a special school and has PECS once a fortnight for 1 hour. SALT have made one assessment in the 3 years she's been there.
- Therapists are not yet able to come out, had a phone call but nothing else
- Our son finally got an EHCP after years of trying and being turned down. In the EHCP it set out that he would be receiving speech therapy and the school were to facilitate this. We thought he would finally be getting the speech therapy he needs (reports from paediatricians and Ed psych state that he needs this). Unfortunately, this had not been arranged before he was permanently excluded. I brought this up with my son's EHCP coordinator and she promised to look into this. Then lockdown started and no therapy was offered. I found private behavioural and speech therapies in Suffolk and I asked the local authority if they would pay for this. It appeared that they were about to agree, following lockdown but the COVID outbreak had such a devastating effect on business that they have now ceased running.
- Not had any despite pushing
- No actual therapy offered locally via NHS for children with autism.
- He should be getting/having SALT prior to lockdown but he wasn't! I have asked for it now he is back to college
- Not been

- Nothing has taken place / been offered during lockdown. However, we did do a few games /activities. Which didn't go down too well. We now await school restarting sessions. Alongside East Coast restarting.

Comments where SALT provision was rated 2 (unsatisfactory)

- Too little
- Not really had much communication at all
- Not often enough 3 times a year isn't enough
-

Comments where SALT provision was rated 3 (satisfactory)

- He hasn't had any for years

Comments where SALT provision was rated 4 (good)

- They kept in touch by email and sent ideas for activities to help.

Appendix F

Please comment on your experience of OT for your child or young person.

Comments where OT provision was rated 1 (poor)

- Still waiting for them to do an assessment at the school. Only 2 years late! We have paid privately in the past for OT.
- None provided by any route
- We've had none since before Christmas!
-

Comments where OT provision was rated 2 (unsatisfactory)

- My son only had a one off OT session followed by an assessment in school. On his EHCP it states that he should receive this and that we should ask for another appointment after six months but lockdown happened, so this was not possible.
- Was a zoom session for 40 mins. For specific area not for all as put in request.
- Too little, too much expectation that the parent can do it.
- NHS OT was poor, no understanding of ASD

Comments where OT provision was rated 4 (good)

- I understand it is returning to school but as yet don't know if they are able to visit children at home
- They kept in touch by email and sent activities we could do at home. Activities were very helpful.

Comments where OT provision was rated 5 (excellent)

- My son had OT via school zoom sessions and she was amazing!
- The OTs have been fabulous, very patient and understanding of our family life and requirements

Other comments relating to OT

- We are awaiting a referral. Initial assessment a year ago. So definitely due!

Appendix G

Please comment on your experience of physiotherapy services for your child or young person.

Comments where physiotherapy provision was rated 1 (poor)

- Non-existent. Again, supposed to be working with my daughter at school.

- None provided since before lock down, one call to see if we were OK in 6 months!
- Discharged no help
- Had a phone call at the beginning of lockdown from a physio, who did see my child at school and at the hospital prior to March, to say that there would be no face-to-face appointments for four months, but that they would ring in April. They gave a date and time, we haven't heard from them since, mobility has decreased dramatically in lockdown, we had to choose our battles and doing yoga and boring physio exercises went out of the window.

Comments where physiotherapy provision was rated 4 (good)

- Had a home visit to adjust a standing frame. Physios are back in school

Appendix H

Please comment on your experience of any other health-related services for your child or young person.

Comments where other health-related services were rated 1 (poor)

- We went to the GP as our son was receiving no medical support or therapy at all. We asked if there was anything else we could possibly try to help our son with his condition, particularly with his behaviour as he'd just been permanently excluded from school. We explained that we were desperate. The GP just said "Well I don't know what you expect us to do about it!". In her opinion, "this is only going to get worse as he gets older and you really need to think about what you should do for the future". She basically suggested that we consider having him put in some kind of residential care. We've not been back since.

Comments where other health-related services were rated 3 (satisfactory)

- Dentists aren't allowed to do anything but look in the mouth.

Comments where other health-related services were rated 4 (good)

- Had to attend hospital for appointments recently, it was well-managed and felt safe.
- My son has ADHD, interactions with his paediatrician have been good
- We had video consultations with his consultant paediatrician

Comments where other health-related services were rated 5 (excellent)

- Telephone appointments were much more convenient
- We had a couple of phone calls from our nurse in the Specialist community nursing team, who has been on the front line through all of this, and I knew they would be there for us if needed, and they went into school today to show new TAs how to undertake a medical procedure on my child.
- Telephone appointments were convenient and face-to-face were available when necessary
- Phone consultation Re epilepsy review. We will meet in October. Hopefully, face-to-face.

Appendix I

Please comment about any help that you have received for your child or young person's mental health.

Comments where there has been access to mental health services

- Spoken to GP and the school who were very helpful
- Has support from children's services
- Crisis point entry into Crisis Team and now receiving help. Shouldn't have to reach crisis to get this though.

- We have been very grateful for excellent CAMHS support
- Had telephone consult with psychiatrist, very strong accent and difficult to understand. Result was to carry on with what doing.
- I have been put onto the dieticians at the hospital for my son's eating problems
- Early years help and going to school before end of summer term.
- It took well over a year before he saw anybody. By this point, his mental health had deteriorated to a point where the group sessions offered were obviously not suitable. We were then passed to CAMHS. We have had some sessions and some telephone support. No contact since Easter.

Comments where there has not been access to mental health services

- He is on a waiting list; we had a call to see if he still needed to be on that list.
- None - social isolation has been extremely hard and tiring on all the family
- I haven't tried, as the thought of battling for a service like I had to for my eldest child, when not in a pandemic filled me with the upmost dread. I have passed on the issues to the school, and my child attended four sessions at school at the of the summer term, which did help somewhat. I was told when I spoke to the TA that their main focus at school, at the moment, is the children's happiness and mental well-being, which made me feel happier.
- None, not serious just socially missed other children
- Pointless, tried to access years ago and complete waste of time.
- They're affected by the pandemic but supported at home
- Yes but because they prefer being at home!
- Due to son living away during uni term time he is under a different health authority. Due to Covid he's been home longer than usual. Had there been a problem I genuinely wouldn't know where to go for help anymore 😊
- No help from school or any services. Daughter regressed an awful lot during lockdown. No one seemed concerned, not even her paediatrician.
- We were waiting to hear from a therapist before lockdown but have heard nothing. We already have issues with accessing any mental health services as our son is autistic, he is considered too emotionally immature to have talking therapy he doesn't have a learning disability (even though his autism causes issues with his learning ability!) so have been turned down by CAHMS. Basically, he slips through the net yet again!
- Prior to March his paediatrician and GP had made a few referrals to CAMHS, school also supported it but CAMHS turned us down.
- There has been no support offered, I would not know how to find it, no-one answers phones anyway under the premise of "due to Covid our service is suspended" type thing, and we are all left hung out to dry as it were. School have been useless and not supported my child at all or kept an eye on them or offered any support at all.
- Just before lockdown, my son had his first session of therapy to help him deal with eating issues. After lockdown, they offered him telephone or online therapy, which he refused and continues to refuse although he admits he desperately needs it. He is insisting on waiting until he can again meet in person.
- They missed their friends.
- Contact from Break throughout lockdown, which my son visited for attachment therapy and sensory support. We will be restarting in the next couple of weeks (hopefully). We had one Zoom session, which was ok for 15 mins. Then he lost interest. Needs to be face-to-face.
- Being sent back to school when they can work out it is not safe for them or their family

How does your child or young person feel about going back to school or college?

Positive feelings about going back to school or college

- Eager
- Excited
- Happy
- Happy
- Happy
- Happy
- Happy😊
- He couldn't wait!
- He was looking forward to going back-
- He was looking forward to it.
- Is nonverbal but I would say happy.
- Keen to go back to be with peers.
- Luckily, our son was quite keen to go to school. On a "good day" he loves it. He keeps saying that he wants to stay longer than the 2 hrs. At the weekend, he said, "Oh is it Sunday? I wish it was Monday because that means school!"
- Pleased and happy to be back with her friends again
- She has enjoyed the 2 days!
- Very excited
- Very happy but currently only in 2 days a week. Back to full time at end of September.
- Very happy.
- Very, very excited
- Wanted to go back

Mixed feelings about going back to school or college

- A bit nervous but wanted his routine back
- bit anxious for first few days but now positive
- Excited & nervous
- Excited. Nervous. Anxious. Happy
- I'm sure he would like to return but does not attend in winter months anyway due to severe respiratory risk
- Nervous with all the changes, but happy.
- Now he is back to school he seems to be ok, but huge impact on mental health thinking about going back.
- On the outside, he is excited but he is covering his anxiety. It will come out eventually though, and then he will inevitably be sent home for it.
- Our son was nervous and excited
- Pleased but apprehensive. Some measures are odd as every school is built from 1900 to today...
- Ranges between excited and scared, we have had extreme hyper ness and real sadness and fright. The news saying where children are safe but they can pass it on to parents and other adults is not very useful, neither is the way the rules are so woolly.
- She was very anxious but at same time very over excited to be able to have her routine back in place and some normality back into her life
- Very happy, though anxious
- Was excited but after first couple of days is scared and anxious

Negative feelings about going back to school or college

- Anxious
- Anxious & scared
- anxious and worried

- Anxious preferred being at home.
- Anxious, unhappy, scared worried
- Anxious, worried about the work they have missed and how to catch up, fed up with having to wear a mask in class, bored by the lack of communal activities, and so many things cancelled.
- Anxious. At 7 and 10 years old they can both work out it isn't safe for them to return, and they are angry that they are being put at risk, and that they are putting their parents at risk
- Didn't want to go
- Extremely anxious
- Incredibly anxious and unsure.
- Nervous
- Neither want to go. They have enjoyed being at home.
- Nervous and anxious not happy about being kept in one block for all lessons.
- Not happy about it
- Not happy! He doesn't want to do any work!!
- Really not looking forward to returning to university
- Unhappy
- Very anxious
- Very scared
- Very stressed!
- Very worried
- Very hard to tell. He got up, dressed and in the car on time for four days in a row. We had our most success this morning. Only 20 minutes to get out the car and 30 minutes in the classroom.

Appendix K

How do you feel about your child or young person going back to school or college?

Positive feelings about going back to school or college

- Children needed to go back. As parents, when the world is shut down, we are not enough for our children. I am glad my child is going back part time, as a special schools classroom sizes are smaller.
- Felt schools should not have shut in the first place.
- Fine as long as they stick to the rules. Also, make sure other students do to.
- Fine, they need to learn.
- Good.
- Happy
- Have been looking forward to it.
- Hopeful
- Ok as the school has things in place for Covid 19 and he has been going in all through lockdown and has been well informed and the school is adhering to the rules they have to
- Pleased that she can have a little bit of normality.
- Relieved
- Relieved
- Very happy
- Very happy she loves it. She goes off and doesn't even look back. Nursery staff have been posting on Tapestry, so I know she is happy and settled when I leave her. I feel anxious about Covid still but know the Nursery has worked to make it safe.
- Very happy!
- Very happy!

Mixed feelings about going back to school or college

- Anxious, happy
- Excited but also worried about Covid
- Glad to have the routine and structure as this helps. Educationally relieved as worried about falling behind. Worried as it is always a long day with early taxi starts.
- He needs to be there, but still extremely anxious. He needs to be in a small group but he's not.
- Hoping he will be able to cope, wondering what comes next if he can't.
- I am very keen for him to be in school. I have concerns re Covid19 but feel any risks are worth it as keeping him out of education for any longer would be worse.
- I'm glad he's at a small specialist school. I'd have been worried sick about his safety and emotional well-being if he had gone to a mainstream school.
- Initially excited but now anxious and on meds from GP to the mental effect on me
- Its ok, but not happy with transport issues. No one is wearing masks, social distancing is poor and attitudes of "It'll never happen to us in Norfolk" .ummmm
- Just would like him to feel settled and happy to go in, we are not there yet.
- Lovely to see my child enjoying school but very apprehensive about risks to him and to me Winter approaches. We are both ex-shielding/health vulnerable people.
- Positive but concerned if progress will be made
- we know they have to go but anxious about their health and wellbeing

Negative feelings about going back to school or college

- We on the other hand were scared stiff!
- Anxious
- Anxious
- Anxious
- Anxious - I don't trust the school to take proper distancing measures and protect the children.
- Anxious for them
- Apprehensive
- Apprehensive, mainly because of it being a new school to him and we've not been able to see round. Some concerns about transmission of COVID but at least it's a very small school with very few children in his class.
- Concern over Covid procedures
- Concerned about all the uncertainty and changes in school and my children's anxiety
- Honestly, I was terrified. Not about the virus, just about how she would cope having a new teacher and the new environment and rules.
- I still don't feel children should be back at school. I don't think it is safe
- I was anxious especially as he was going by taxi for the first time.
- I wish he wasn't going
- I'm worried that his mental health will suffer again going back.
- I'm worried that they will not get the help they need to catch up, or the support they need with their learning generally.. they were falling behind before Covid, and everything got dropped as far as support being put into place for them, due to shutdown of everything .
- In easy and worried about the support she is getting
- Nervous
- Shocked
- Transport concerns me greatly, the school experience is severely limited with no rebound therapy, no sensory rooms in use, so I think the only thing he misses is social contact and interaction
- Unhappy
- Very anxious about the changes at school, risk of them catching and passing on to us and one of us dying.
- Worried and scared

- Worried as he is in a mainstream school so I am extremely worried that they aren't going to be able to meet his needs.
- Worried Re CV19 happy with all that's in place. Happy he is in such good hands
- Worried, upset for him

Appendix L

Has there been any changes in your child or young person's behaviour since they returned to school? If so, please comment below.

- Binge eating due to stress, anger due to stress, not sleeping, and not eating normal meals.
- bit more feral
- Has just started hitting me. Is more tired.
- He's very tired
- High anxiety and tears in the mornings, won't sleep alone
- Meltdowns when home but this was expected as big change
- More challenging at home
- More tired enjoying see and playing with other children
- More worries
- Of course. She's much more argumentative but I'm sure that's cause she's not found her feet yet in the new set of rules and regulations at school. Naturally she's very tired too.
- Spends all weekend worrying about Monday from coming home on Friday
- The days that my child is off he is quite difficult. I think this is a let down from being in the school environment
- They are upset, worried, despondent
- Tired as expected
- Tired. He tried so hard to be "good" that he slept most of Wednesday! He has since returned to his usual lovely self.
- Tiredness! And they have only been in for one day so far.
- Understandably finding it difficult to settle to play when at home. A little more agitated. He has been physically aggressive towards me for the first time in months.
- Very tired, angry, anxious
- withdrawn and tired, not eating well
- Worse behaviour.
- Yes he's really enjoyed lockdown as he hates having to interact with society
- Yes low mood
- Yes, both showing fear, anger and confusion. Asking why are they being sent to school when people working at the council don't have to go to work until next year. Asking if they will make their parents ill. Scared that they could give older parents and relatives Covid, scared that people might die because they have been sent back to school
- Yes, she is much more unsettled and has been having more outburst
- Calmer at home, more independent and talking about her day a lot. Generally happier but we did enjoy the time together but getting back to routine is good.
- Calmer.
- Definitely more calm and sleeping better.
- Generally happy to return to routine.
- He has become a little calmer at home, and now behaviours are increasing again now he's back.
- More relaxed
- More settled and content but worried about part time as differing days during the week and ASD makes this difficult for him to manage
- Much happier and thriving with a schedule.

- Our son is happy to be going out to school.
- yes, more relaxed and tired at the end of the day
- No, changes
- No, only what we expected
- Not returned yet
- Same number of meltdowns etc
- Just in the leadup to going back. Has only been back one day. Next week will go 3 days and after that one on zoom and 2 at school? Not sure.

Appendix M

Does your child or young person with SEND have siblings? If so, have they received any support for being young carers?

- No help
- No support
- Not during Covid
- No support
- No support
- No support
- No support
- Not sought support although registered with YC. Siblings have not found it necessary.
- No support
- I wasn't aware that there was any help out there for her. She has really struggled with my son over lockdown etc.
- I didn't know it was available
- They get no support for being a young carer.
- She doesn't get support I need to find out how to access that.
- No, he hasn't received any support at all
- Yes, young carers did an assessment on my children last summer, promised lots, nothing happened. Not even a courtesy call.
- From sunbeams play
- Only when I made a fuss
- One of them has.
- Our son has an older Sister. She has been offered support as she does help us with him. She is reluctant to join any Young Carer groups
- They have in the past. Sibling is a young adult at uni now.
- Yes - Connect & co
- Yes, younger sister. In young carers group. Able to join Zoom meetings but difficult to manage with her brother about - the point of her going is to have some time without him!

Appendix N

Please let us know of anything that has worked well for you and your child's first week back at school or college.

- Being back at a familiar setting.
- Communication with staff
- Feedback from teachers.
- Good communication from his teacher letting us know how he settled on his first few days. Transport staff brilliant.
- good organisation, communication

- Having a countdown calendar from school. As well as letters of introduction. Having a photo of his new classroom. Having the same teacher and TA. Knowing some of the pupils in his class and returning with peers for transition. Keeping home low key.
- Having the same teacher again
- I managed to tidy the house, but I would rather have my children at home. It is quite clear that my children are safer at home than being in a bubble at school with 60+ other children. Children mix with siblings from other bubbles, and other schools. Children each have bubbles at home. My children have already worked out that the bubble systems aren't going to protect them.
- It has also been my first week back at work and our daughter's first week back at school so being organised and having early night's all round has helped.
- Keeping in the same class room with the same teacher that he has had for the last 2 years has helped him feel a little less anxious
- MacDonald's and choc fudge cake!
- My child has been pleased to see their old teachers again at last (the ones they like!) and feel things are a bit more normal.
- No phone calls or emails yet. Good support from incontinence nurse.
- Nurse sent new driver to meet our child the week before he started back
- Part time has worked really well for my son
- Part time has helped to ease the transition and also reduce the time spent in small space with several people
- Structure to our day of sorts. Seeing her pals and teachers, but comms from latter is low
- The amazing communication from school and their support so far
- The other child who was supposed to be on the school bus, didn't as family still not sure about going back, which is better for our child, less people in A confined space
- The welcoming staff and smiles have made it easy for my child to settle back in. Being informed before we came back helped us feel prepared for the changes and new routines at drop off and collection. They even posted us a video showing us what to expect which made me feel happier.
- Too soon to know
- Understanding specialist provision he has started is amazing
- We have drip fed the idea to him for a long time. There has been quite a lot of bribery/rewards in the form of Match Attax cards and extra screen time/TV

Appendix O

Please let us know of anything else that has NOT worked well for you and your child's first week back at school or college.

- Being forced to send my children into an environment where they are more likely to bring Covid home. This is incredibly stressful for all of us. I am shocked that home learning isn't an option, since this was working very well, and my children going back to work is not going to help the economy.
- Despite having an EHCP nothing was in place to support her transition and still things have not been put in place
- Early taxi pick up times got earlier making his school day long. It's very tiring.
- EHCP being read and actions being put in place.
- Lack of communication
- New 1:1s and because of restrictions, I can now barely communicate with them. I am very fearful that not being listened to will have major repercussions.
- No support for my child
- Not being able to assist her to her classroom and the teachers not being able to help guide her through the school like they used to

- Nothing so far... it has all gone amazingly well.
- Nothing. Yet. Other than Wednesday - community activities having to be cancelled!
- Our son wants to be at school for longer hours.
- Part time only
- Staff being too quick to push parents out. I understand with Covid everyone is taking precautions, however some staff are just rude.
- Teachers not know what class to use for lessons
- The school appears to be very badly understaffed