

SEND Workforce Development Survey 2023: Summary of Results

What is the purpose of the SEND workforce development survey?

The purpose of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) workforce development survey is to gain feedback from practitioners and professionals who work with children, young people and families with SEND around their training needs. Understanding the training needs of practitioners and professionals will allow Swindon Borough Council to ensure that the appropriate training is on offer to the SEND workforce, supporting them to continue to meet the needs well of the children and young people they work with.

The SEND workforce development survey 2023 ran from Monday, 5 June 2023 to Friday, 28 July 2023 (8 weeks). The survey was released at this time to ensure that the survey closed before the Annual SEND Survey was launched in the autumn. Results of the SEND workforce development survey 2023 were compared to the previous biennial survey in 2021 and it is planned to repeat the survey every other year to continue to provide information about current training needs to support the improvement of services for children, young people and families.

Who responded to the 2023 survey?

This year, 159 responses were received, compared with 187 responses to the 2021 survey. Whilst the number of responses was still low in comparison to the size of the SEND workforce, responses were received from most areas of the SEND workforce, so the results can be seen as representative.

Q2 What is your main area of work?

Area of work	Number of respondents 2023	%age of respondents 2023	Number of respondents 2021
Education	66	41.51%	101
Early Years	4	2.52%	22
Children's Services	48	30.19%	22
Health	21	13.21%	17
Social Care	3	1.89%	10
Early Help	11	6.92%	8
Youth Offending	3	1.89%	3
Parenting Hub	0	0%	1
SEN Transport	0	0%	1
Commissioned Charity	0	0%	1
Logistics	0	0%	1
Employment/training	3	1.89%	1

Survey responses from individuals broke down into the following stages of education:

Early Years SEND Provision	24%
Primary SEND Provision	29%
Secondary SEND Provision	27%
Post 16 SEND Provision	20%

What has happened to the information collected in the 2023 survey?

The views of practitioners and professionals working with children, young people, and families in Swindon are taken very seriously. Following a detailed analysis of the responses received from the 2023 workforce development survey the SEND Service has:

- Noted the main themes and trends in relation to training needs
- Compared these identified training needs with training plans currently in place for the workforce and identified any new training requirements
- Updated the plan put in place in 2021

This year, a few questions were updated, and the option for 'other' was removed throughout the survey. However, the data still allows trends in workforce development and training needs to be seen.

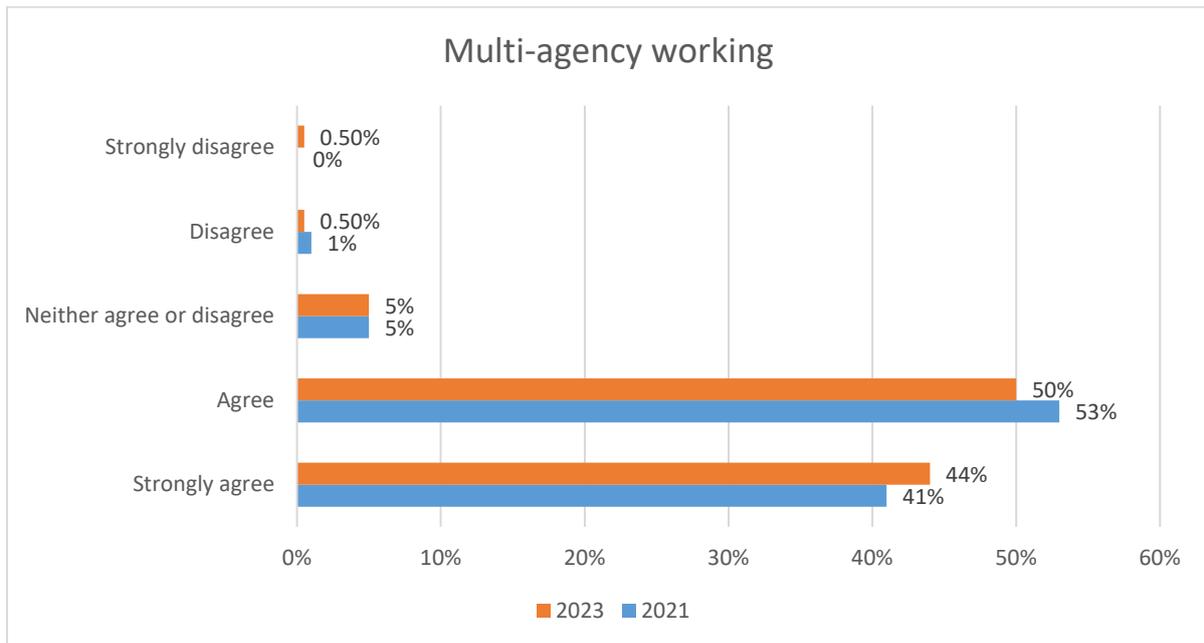
This report provides a written summary of the information collected from the SEND workforce development survey 2023. This report will be shared with SEND, Inclusion & Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-28 Priority Leads, and uploaded to the Local Offer once approval is received.

What positives can be celebrated?

This year, the majority of respondents to the survey said that they are confident (90% and greater) in the following:

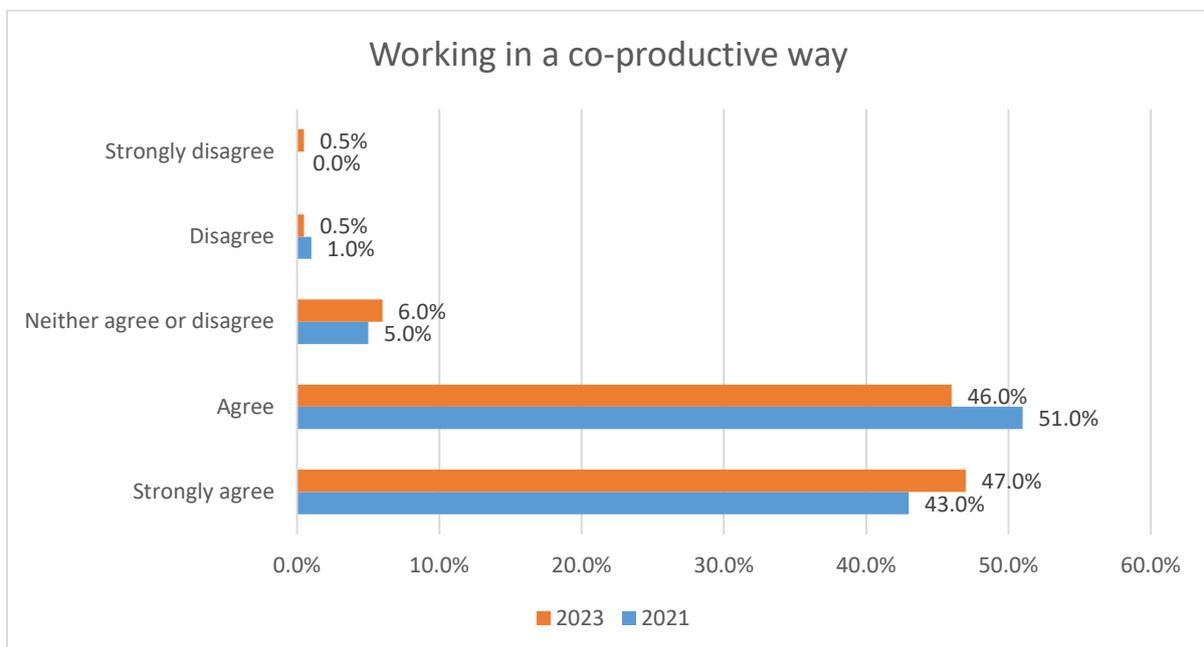
- multi-agency working in meeting the needs of CYP in Swindon (Q7+Q23)
- working in a co-productive way with CYP and parents/carers to ensure their voices are heard in meeting their needs (Q8+Q9)
- making positive relationships with and gaining the trust of CYP, parents/carers and other practitioners/professionals (Q24+Q25)
- being part of a 'team around the child' to support CYP (Q30)
- using person-centred approaches and effective listening skills when working with CYP and parents/carers (Q47+Q48)
- encouraging open discussion, provide and encourage constructive feedback at all stages of learning/training (Q57)

Q7+Q23 Multi-agency working



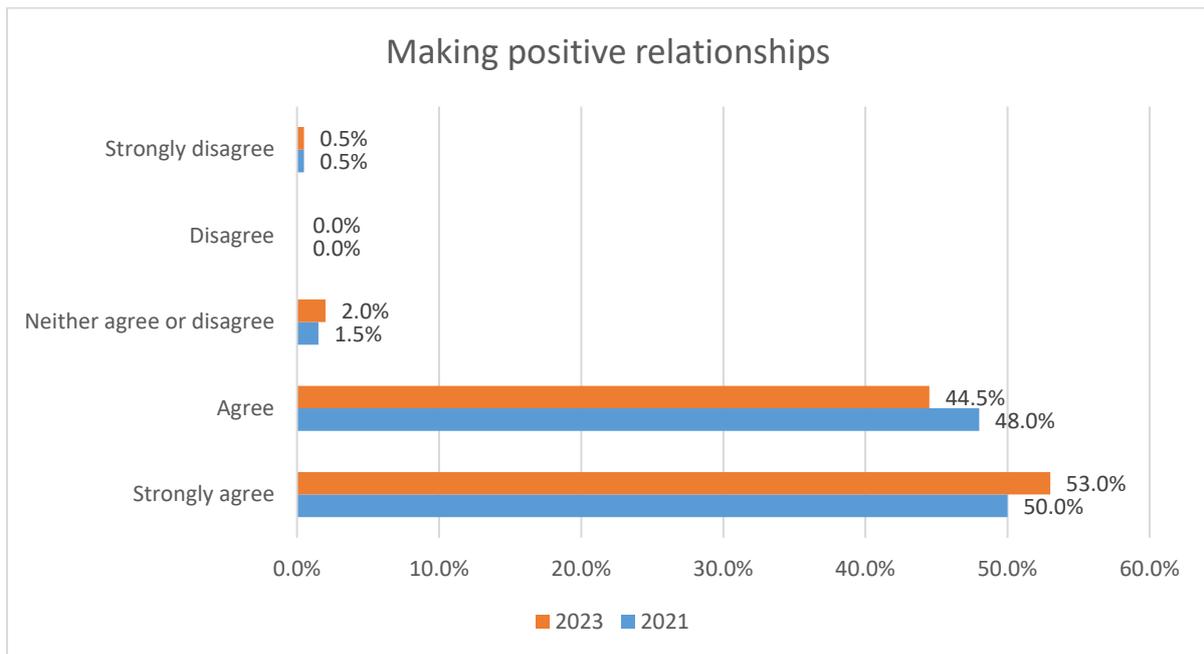
Overall, 94% strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to show what multi-agency working means and contribute to working in a multi-agency way in meetings with children, young people and parents/carers. This is similar to the 2021 survey results.

Q8+Q9 Working in a co-productive way



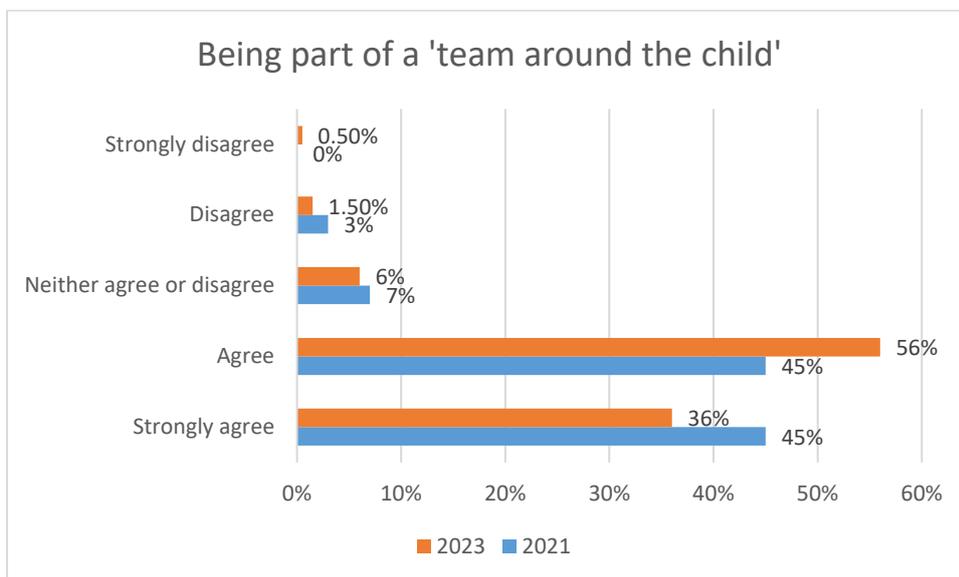
Overall, 93% strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to work in a co-productive way with children, young people and parents/carers to ensure their voices are heard in meeting their needs. This is a reduction of 1% since the last survey in 2021.

Q24+Q25 Making positive relationships



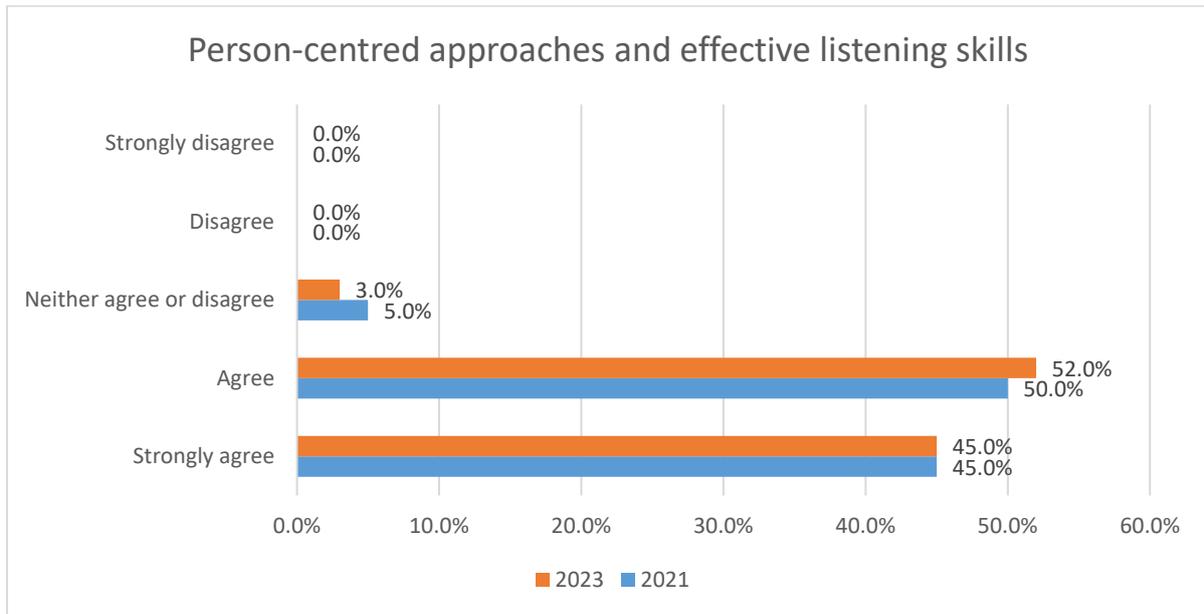
Overall 97.5% strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to make positive relationships and gain the trust of young people, parents/carers, and practitioners/professionals. This is similar to the 2021 survey results.

Q30 Being part of a 'team around the child' to support CYP



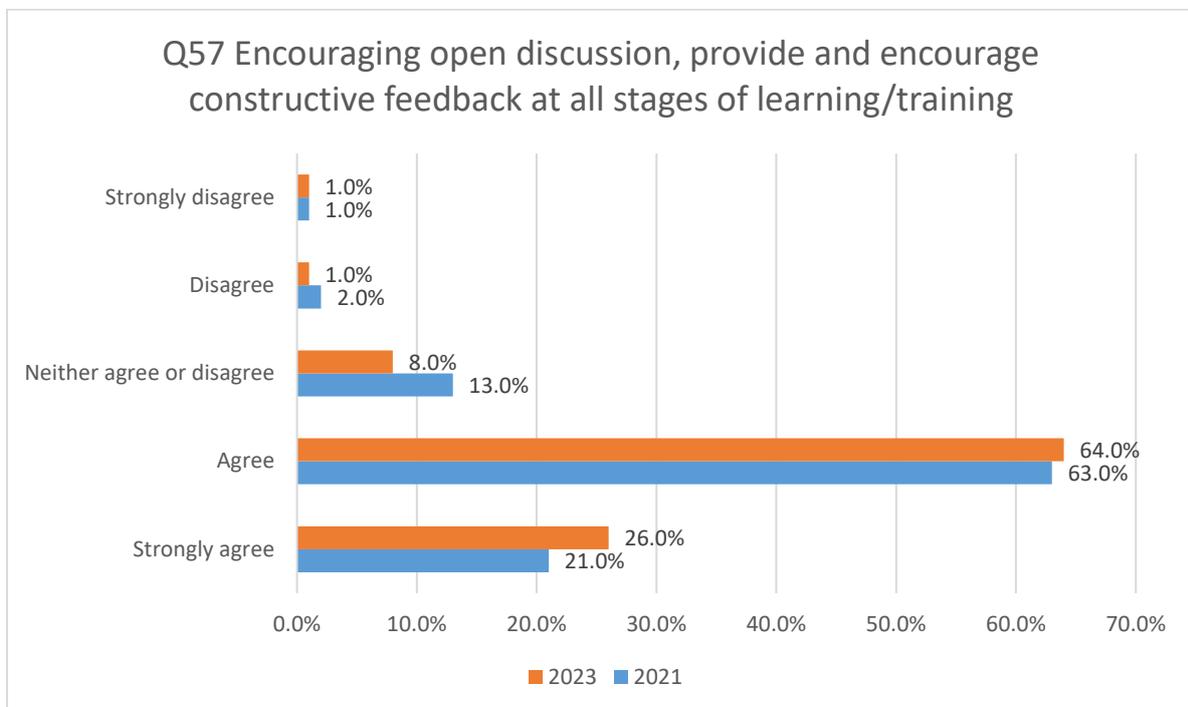
Overall 92% strongly agreed or agreed that they felt confident in being part of a 'team around the child' to support children and young people. This is a 2% increase compared with the 2021 survey results.

Q47+Q48 Person-centred approaches and effective listening skills



Overall, 97% strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to use person-centred approaches and effective listening skills with children, young people and parents/carers. This is a slight increase on the previous survey results in 2021.

Q57 Encouraging open discussion, provide and encourage constructive feedback at all stages of learning/training



Overall, 90% strongly agreed or agreed that they are able to encourage open discussion, provide and encourage constructive feedback at all stages of learning/training. This is an increase of 6% on the previous survey results.

Swindon Local Offer

Question	Strongly agree or agree	Neither agree or disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree
Q13 I feel confident in explaining what the Local Offer is to young people and parents/carers	79.25% ↑ (70% in 2021)	13.21% ↓ (20% in 2021)	7.52% ↓ (10% in 2021)
Q14 I feel confident in explaining what the Local Offer is to other professionals	78.48% ↑ (67% in 2021, 70% in 2019)	14.56% ↓ (22% in 2021, 21% in 2019)	6.97% ↓ (11% in 2021, 8% in 2019)
Q15 I can use the Local Offer when engaging with families	71.07% ↑ (61% in 2021)	21.38% ↓ (28% in 2021)	7.55% ↓ (11% in 2021)
Q16 I feel part of contributing to the Local Offer	45.91% ↑ (45% in 2021, 43% in 2019)	37.11% ↑ (35% in 2021, 46% in 2019)	16.99% ↓ (19% in 2021, 10% in 2019)
Q17 I am able to signpost young people and parents/carers to Health Services in the Local Offer as appropriate	70.44% ↑ (59% in 2021)	18.87% ↓ (24% in 2021)	10.69% ↓ (17% in 2021)

*Note - some data was not available, as the question was not asked in 2019 survey.

The above figures show that over the 5 questions asked about the [Local Offer](#) in the 2023 survey, all have seen an increase in strongly agree/agree to the questions when compared to 2021 survey responses. However, the percentage of respondents that strongly agreed/agreed that they felt part of contributing to the Local Offer remained stubbornly low at 45.91%. This shows that whilst the Local Offer may be more well known than previously, there is still more work to be done in engaging with practitioners and professionals so that understand their role in the Local Offer. The Local Offer is included in SEND Training Module 2, which is available to staff in education, health and care (both internal to SBC and externally) and could support practitioners/ professionals with this development need.

What was less positive?

This year, positive responses in the following areas reduced as follows:

Question	2023 responses Strongly agree or agree	2021 responses Strongly agree or agree
Confidence in explaining the graduated approach (Q11 2023, Q10 2021)	69.06% ↓	77.57%
Confidence in being Lead Professional on an Early Help plan (Q29 2023, Q42 2021)	40.88% ↓	50.80%
Explaining the legal framework around EHCPs (Q34 2023, Q20 2021)	55.35% ↓	69.19%
Confidence in EHC plans with CYP with SEND (Q35 2023, Q21 2021)	54.71% ↓	73.77%
Identifying effective evidence-based evaluations of interventions (Q41 2023, Q27 2021)	67.09% ↓	73.91%

Confidence in describing what should be included in an annual review (Q44 2023, Q31 2021)	51.26% ↓	64.32%
Explaining levels of SEN Funding and their role in ensuring it is used well and appropriately (Q42+43 2023, Q28+29 2021)	38.11% ↓ (average)	50.97% (average)
Knowing how to access the complex case panel (Q28 2023, Q40 2021)	14.55% ↓	26.49%
Confidence in capturing the CYP voice on their plans, even with CYP who use non-verbal communication (Q38 2023, Q24 2021)	69.18% ↓	73.51%
Confidence in describing what should be included in PfA Y9 reviews (Q45 2023, Q32 2021)	19.75% ↓	25.14%
Confidence in describing what PfA from the earliest years means (Q46 2023, Q33 2021)	26.12% ↓	27.17%
Have read the SEND & Inclusion Strategy (was 2020-23 version at time of survey going live) (Q60 2023 and 2021)	36.48% ↓	42.25%
Ability to facilitate learning in a multi-agency context (Q55 2023 and 2021)	51.27% ↓	52.75%
Providing training methods that are experiential and interactive (Q58 2023 and 2021)	40.50% ↓	54.64%

Which results were low, but improving?

This year, the following areas still had low positive responses, but the overall trend is improving:

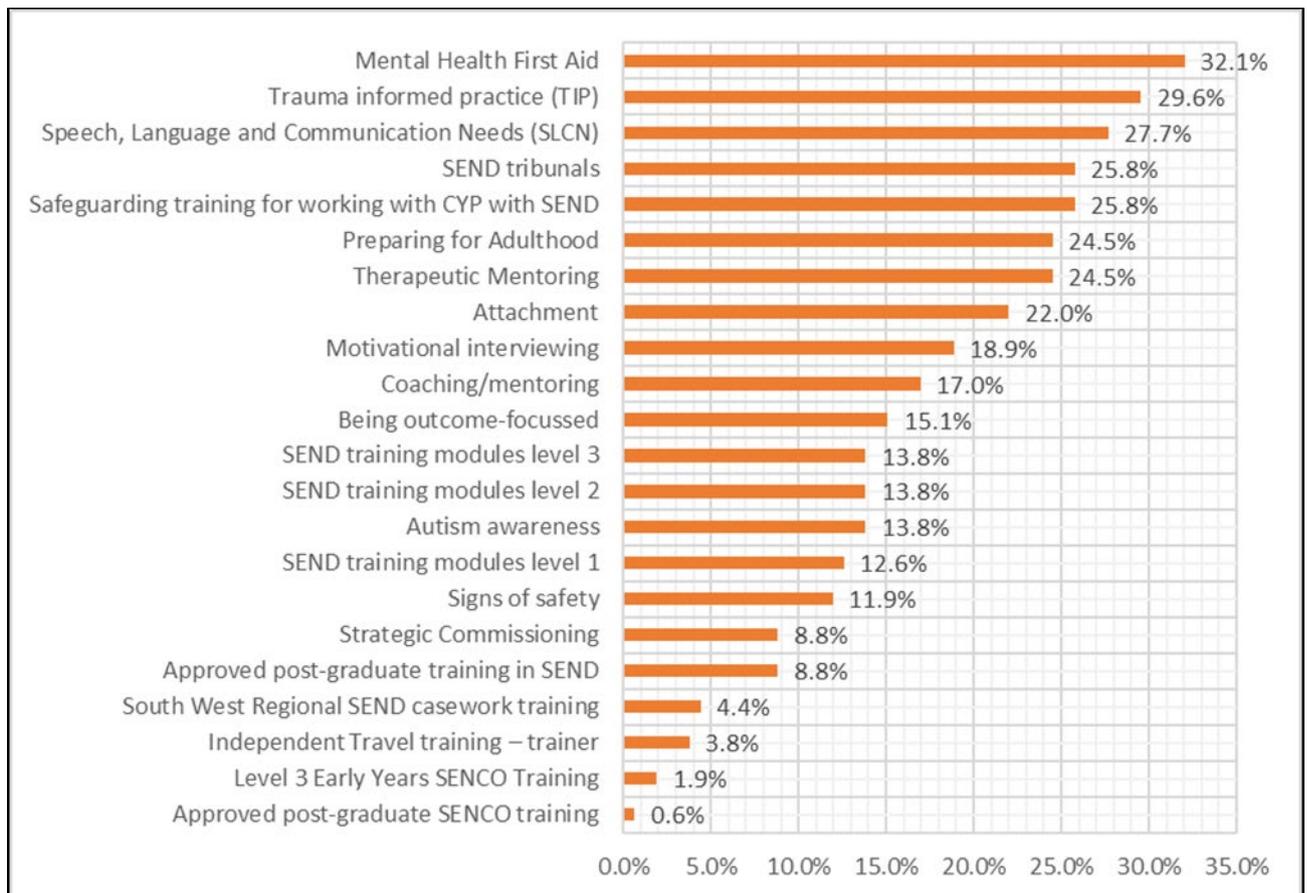
Question	2023 responses Strongly agree or agree	2021 responses Strongly agree or agree
Confidence in describing the 'golden thread' running through CYP EHC plans (Q36 2023, Q22 2021)	54.08% ↑	44.02%
Confidence in explaining what personal budgets are in my area to YP, parents/carers and professionals (Q18+19 2023, Q17+18 2021)	32.08% ↑ (average)	29.31% (average)
Confidence in supporting YP and parents/carers in using personal budgets to meet needs of CYP (Q20 2023, Q19 2021)	20.75% ↑	13.98%
Confidence in explaining difference between co-production and consultation (Q50 2023 and 2021)	60.37% ↑	54.54%
Confidence in empowering YP and parents/carers to be involved in service planning, design, evaluation (Q51 2023 and 2021)	62.26% ↑	52.15%
Understanding the benefits of keyworking/care co-ordinating (Q21+22 2023, Q34+35 2021)	59.94% ↑ (average)	58.88% (average)

What further training and/or information is needed?

The above two tables show there is need for increased knowledge/training in the following areas:

- the graduated approach
- being a Lead Professional,
- EHCPs and annual reviews including the 'golden thread'
- complex case panel
- voice of the CYP, co-production
- preparing for adulthood
- facilitating learning including providing training methods that are experiential and interactive
- personal budgets
- benefits of key working/care co-ordinating

In addition, respondents when asked what training they would be interested in undertaking to support them in their role (Q5) answered as follows:



A further consideration is that the current Local Offer platform expires by end March 2024 at the latest. Work is currently being undertaken to develop and launch a new Local Offer platform by Swindon Borough Council's (SBC's) Information Technology (IT) service before this expiry date. It is hoped that the Local Offer domain will remain, but until such time as the new platform is launched, this cannot be definitely confirmed. With a new Local Offer

platform will come the need to familiarise children, young people, parents/carers and professionals/practitioners again with the new website.

Comments and suggestions (Q61-67)

The following comments and suggestions were shared within the 2023 SEND Workforce Development Survey:

Q62. Do you have any positive examples you would like to share about improvements in relation to SEND since the last survey in June 2021?

Most common themes:

- Communication (5)
- Changes/improvements made (3)
- EHCPs (3)
- Staff/team changes (3)

"The continuum of provision document has been helpful for parents and professionals."

"Clearer info from SEND service on annual reviews."

"changes in the teams, increase in staffing, EPs attending Co-production meetings"

"It is really positive that Suzanne and Alexa from the EP service consistently attend SENCO Champions, as well as SSFV. We are also getting representation from the SEND service and paediatrics on some occasions."

"Early Years SENCo drop-ins (virtual) have been very successful and most sessions are fully booked."

"The reorganisation of the SEND team has allowed a greater focus on the PFA agenda. This is allowing greater challenge to schools and particular colleges to think about progression beyond education into employment.

"In the last 12 months we've supported our Tutors to complete CPD with the NCFE Level 2 Award in Autism Awareness, along with training on EHCPs for our Traineeships team"

It is also allowing a greater focus on the quality and timeliness of the Annual Review process.

Communication between services has improved and changes are being implemented more rapidly to meet statutory requirements. Joint training between Health and Education staff."

The quality of EHC Plans has greatly improved."

Q63. Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to how we can improve communication?

Most common themes:

- Technology issues (7)
- Knowing who to contact (6)
- Information sharing (4)
- Consistency (4)
- More frequent/regularly (4)

"Information available about who to contact when you need something."

"it would be helpful if decision makers attended TAF meetings or liaised with parents. Often caseworkers are not able to update families because cases have escalated"

"translate all important documents and letters so families fully understand information"

"Local Offer is very wordy, often out of date and not easily accessible for a lot of the parents and children"

"There are also cases where an EHCP issued names a provider who has said that they cannot meet need. In a particular case the EHCP was issued and the young person was never contacted by the provider and SEND did not follow up"

"there are fewer Full Team meetings within the SEND Team which previously had been beneficial"

"Scrap portal, it is not an efficient use of time, duplicates work for coordinators, and often is not working"

"There can be different messages depending on who you speak to at the SEND Service."

"Frustrating having to email the Send inbox when you know who it is you need to contact directly."

"communication with the SEND services team. As professionals, waiting for days for a response is not practical."

"It would be useful to receive acknowledgement from the [annualreviews@...email](mailto:annualreviews@...) address that annual reviews have been received... it would be useful to know who will be coordinating the administration of that review"

Q64. Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to how we can improve partnership working?

Most common themes:

- Communication (9)
- Multi-agency meeting attendance (7)
- More opportunities to meet/work with staff (4)
- Value/use professionals' knowledge (4)
- Training (4)

"[Social Care Teams] are making social care decisions of moving young people back to the LA and not consulting with SEND, this makes it hard to find a education place"

"Ensure all professionals involved are at Co-production meetings."

"I am only able to attend annual reviews or TACs/TAFs/EH meetings if schools pay for this"

"Stop pushing back EHCP requests on minor technicalities when the needs is obvious"

"Other professionals and agencies to attend meetings such as TAFs and annual reviews"

"Making sure that professionals' contributions are included in EHCPs"

"To be available where possible, it can be frustrating to receive a follow up emails suggesting to book on to a SENCO clinic."

"spent time emailing [CAMHS], and never received a response. The burden sometimes seems to lie with community paediatrics, and contacting someone in general paediatrics is much more difficult."

"Parents need more written information"

"It is difficult to keep track of who the caseworkers are for each student - this sometimes changes in the middle of the assessment process or at other key points - could a list of the caseworkers/schools they are responsible for be shared with the Advisory Teams."

"The workload increase for SENCOs since the Early Help Hub insisted on an Early Help Assessment for every single referral has been significant."

Q65. Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to how we can improve co-production?

Most common themes:

- Attendance at meetings (10)
- Communication (6)
- Earlier meetings (4)
- Capture CYP views (3)

"SENCOs training to all so they know what coproduction meetings are about - i.e. not banding and placement."

"Co-productions need to be offered to all parents"

"Getting the draft first is a huge help and gives me time to go through it with the parents"

"When there is a co-production meeting about a child's' EHCP it is only usually the SEND officer, school and parent who attend."

"Giving enough notice so that professionals can attend meetings, and not changing the date/time at the last minute"

"Move EHCP co-production meetings to the beginning of the process rather than the end, and make them truly multi-agency. Our 'co-production' meetings currently are not true co-production, they sign off on what has already been produced."

"As a lead for many children i have often been left out of the information required to support them."

"Treat the people that are coming to this as joint co-equals."

"Many of the Annual Reviews are still not attended by young people, and their views seem to be adult led."

"Ensure at least Co-ordinator, parents and school are 'face to face' to make communication clearer for parents"

"Ensuring that schools and education providers know how important it is for visits and observations to take place, to allow us to learn more about a young person and how best to communicate with them"

Q66. Do you have any comments or suggestions in relation to how we can improve training, skills and workforce development?

Most common themes:

- Wanting specific training (5)
- More access to courses (5)
- More training on offer (4)
- Face-to-face (3)
- Shared training (3)
- Practical examples (3)

"Annual meetings between schools, EPs, SALT and SENco to discuss the EHC process."

"shared training from the SEND team about processes and updates and in return Advisory Teams could also give training about specific areas relevant to the team"

"The training for safeguarding has been too generic and hard to get access to with only one or two sessions running a year"

"Increase the availability of the additional courses available, such as the Advanced Autism & BSL courses"

"I was not offered any training around annual review meetings and how to complete the form"

"effective advice/strategies especially when supporting children and young people who are non verbal or may have more complex needs."

"ensure all agencies are receiving the correct training and up to date training."

"Supporting schools financially so that teachers' time can be back filled to come on courses"

"Make the cost of training as low as possible, include real-life, practical examples and scenarios"

"Offer training on different days of the week and times to enable more people to join. Schedule each term a day/window for all to access the training."

Q67. Do you have any further comments or suggestions you would like us to consider around how we can improve our development of Swindon's SEND workforce?

"Better information for parents"

"Within the SEND Team the better use of technology in communication, file management and organising commonly used information. A look at some processes which appear to be overly bureaucratic and repetitive."

"It would be useful for correct terminology to be used for deaf children and young people. The term 'Hearing Impaired' is no longer considered acceptable and this information was shared with all SBC staff yet many people still use this term."

"Make sure the people doing the ECHP reports or making the decisions have more practical, hands-on experiences/observations/shadowing"

"More opportunities to share training, experiences and knowledge across professionals to ensure all young people are supported no matter what level they are accessing."

"Experience of what external professionals do and developing a relationship with them might improve the final reports (too much cutting and/or pasting without understanding can lead to contradictions in reports...)"

"More training for mainstream colleagues on inclusion."

"Face to face training. Time allocated specifically for training."

"More training and awareness of trauma informed practice"

"Make sure everyone works together with the same aims and goals for the CYPs and Adults"

"I still feel that there are frequently opportunities for SEND not to go to Mediation first."

What is the plan to improve?

As mentioned in the earlier section ‘What further training and/or information is needed?’, the SEND Inclusion and Training Officer recommends the following actions be taken:

- Training on personal budgets, including highlighting the information already available on the Local Offer website [Swindon Local Offer - Personal Budgets for SEND](#)
- Training around Preparing for Adulthood, including highlighting the information already available on the Local offer website [Swindon Local Offer - Preparing for Adult Life](#).
- Development of systems around joint working between Health and SEND for complex cases.
- Training around the different types of participation, including highlighting the information already available on the Local Offer website [Swindon Local Offer - Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy](#). In addition, Implementation of the participation training plan to support embedding knowledge learned through training.
- Targeted training around the Local Offer to be offered to Contact Swindon staff to support them to signpost young people, parents/carers, practitioners/professionals to the relevant parts of the Local Offer website [Swindon Local Offer - Home](#),
- Work with colleagues from Education, Health and Care to encourage them to complete SEND Training Module 2 (Local Offer, Advice and Information).
- Training around the legal framework around EHCPs – rolled out to SEND Statutory Team 20+21 November 2023.
- Including a one-page summary of the SEND, Inclusion and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-2028, to make it more accessible to the SEND workforce, and publishing it on the Local Offer [Swindon Local Offer - Swindon SENDi & AP Strategy 2023-2028](#). A one-page summary of the 2020-2023 SEND & Inclusion Strategy was previously published on the Local Offer.
- To establish a ‘Community of Learning’ for SEND Statutory Team to support team members to embed learning from training into daily practice. The recruitment of a SEND Practice Lead should support completion of this action.

It is noted that whilst in 2021 the whole of Children’s Services were required to complete the SEND Training Modules to a level suitable to their role, in 2022, there was a shift to managers only requiring new staff in many areas of Children’s Services to complete the SEND Training Modules. Given the results above and that the training needs since 2021 have not significantly improved, it is the recommendation of the SEND Inclusion & Training Officer that the SEND Training Modules revert to being mandatory for all staff within Children’s Services. This should not only improve learning/training above, but should support some of the recommendations within the recent ILAC inspection at SBC.

The SEND Training Modules are currently being reviewed and updated by a co-production task and finish group. In addition, new modules are planned covering additional topics including SEND travel assistance and co-production, which when launched should support the SEND workforce with improvement in knowledge.

What is happening about the next SEND Workforce Development survey?

The results of the SEND Workforce Development Survey 2023 will be fed into the appropriate Priority Group(s) of the SEND, Inclusion & Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-28 for their consideration. It will also feed into the Local Area SEND Workforce Development Strategy and Plan 2023.

In addition, once this report is approved and published on the Local Offer website [Swindon Local Offer - SEND Workforce Development Survey](#), planning will start for the next SEND Workforce Development survey to be rolled out in June 2025. It is important to regularly assess through a continuous development cycle the training and development needs of the SEND workforce within the Borough. This will enable SEND services in the Borough to continue to improve, and positively affect the lives of children, young people and families.

Within the communications plan for the SEND Workforce Development Survey, continued improvements to survey response rates will be planned, to ensure good representation of the views of the SEND workforce in Swindon.