

# North Northamptonshire Parent Carer Voices (NPCV)

Young Peoples Survey of Special Educational  
Needs (SEND) Services: Analysis Report

August 2025

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# Introduction

North Northamptonshire Parent Carer Voices (NPCV) support families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across North Northamptonshire. The team is led by parent/carers themselves, who work in partnership with families, services and local organisations to improve and support the outcomes and experiences for families. Their overall aim is to influence meaningful and lasting change across Education, Health and Social Care for children and young people with SEND in North Northamptonshire.

NPCV have produced this survey to gather the views of children and young people themselves within the Local Authority, focusing on what matters most to them in their daily lives and support. The survey explored areas such as feeling safe at home and in school, having good relationships, being happy and healthy, having a say in decisions, feeling included in their community, overcoming challenges, and developing independence. It also asked about their goals, opportunities for learning and socialising, and the extent to which they feel supported by staff and services.

This is the first iteration of the Independent Young People's SEND Annual Survey for North Northamptonshire and will be repeated annually. The findings presented here provide an important baseline to measure future progress, ensuring that the voices of children and young people directly shape improvements in SEND services, and that their lived experiences remain at the heart of planning and delivery.

The report has been broken down into the following sections:

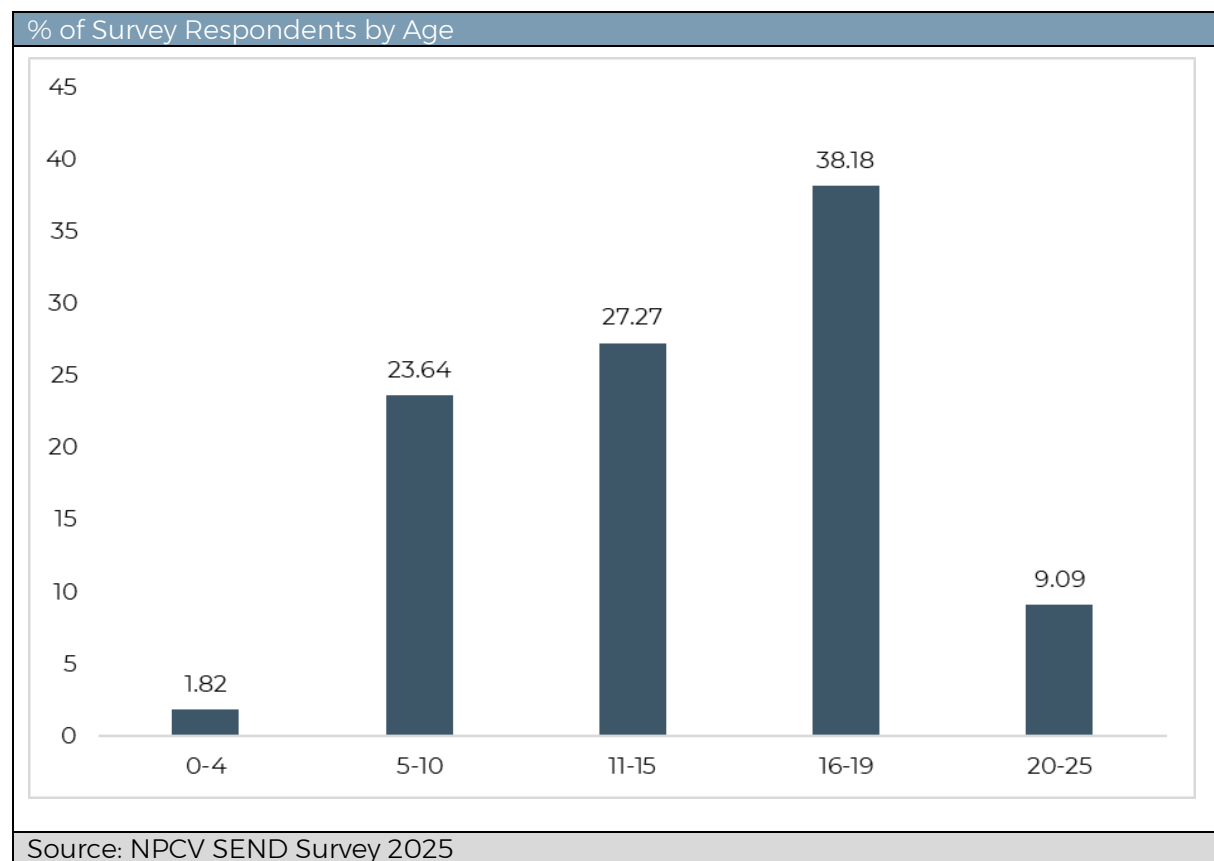
- The Characteristics of Children and Young People With SEND Need Across North Northamptonshire
- SEND Service Experience Across North Northamptonshire
- Voices and Experiences: Wellbeing, Relationships and Support

# The Characteristics of Children and Young People With SEND Need Across North Northamptonshire

This section provides a summary of the characteristics of the children with SEND need across North Northamptonshire including their age, location and educational setting.

## How Old Are You?

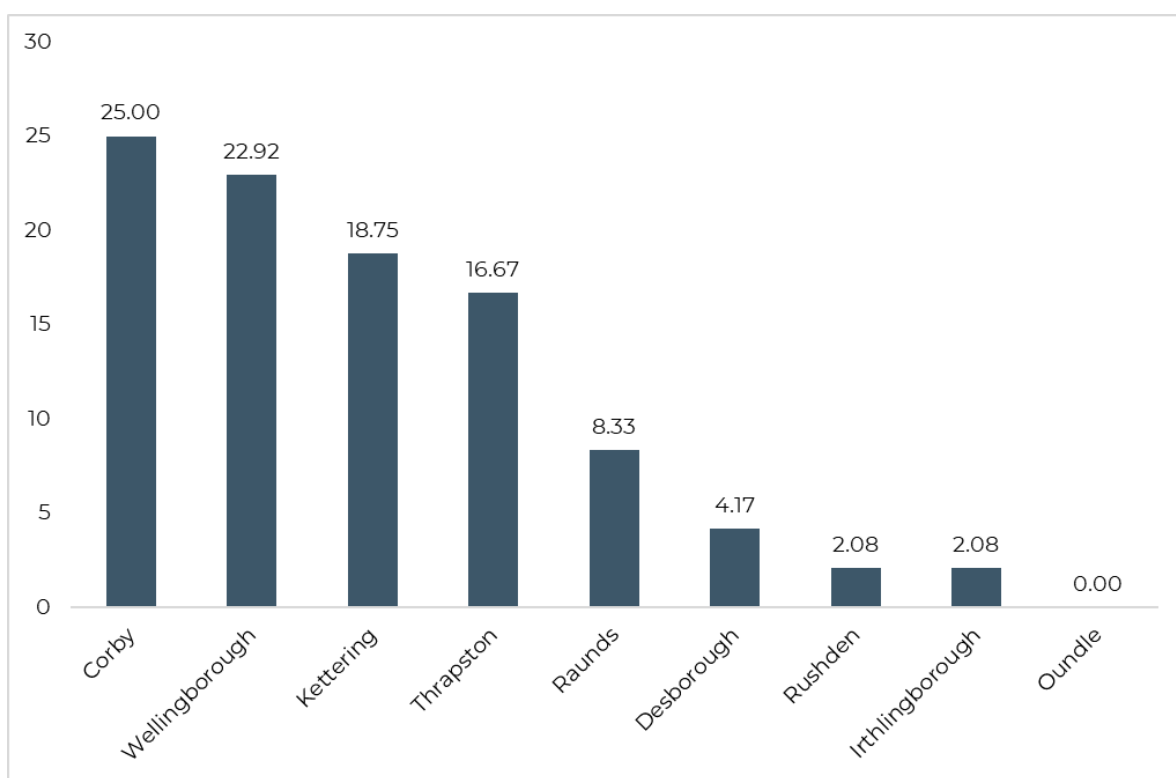
The majority of respondents to this survey were aged 16-19 (38.18%), followed by those aged 11-15 (27.27%) and 5-10 (23.64%). Only 9.09% of respondents were aged 20-25 and even less were aged 0-4 (1.82%).



## Where Do You Live?

The majority of children and young people who responded to the survey live in Corby (25.00%) and Wellingborough (22.92%), with smaller proportions from Kettering (18.75%), Thrapston (16.67%), and very few from towns such as Rushden, Irthlingborough (both 2.08%), and none from Oundle.

% of Survey Respondents by Location

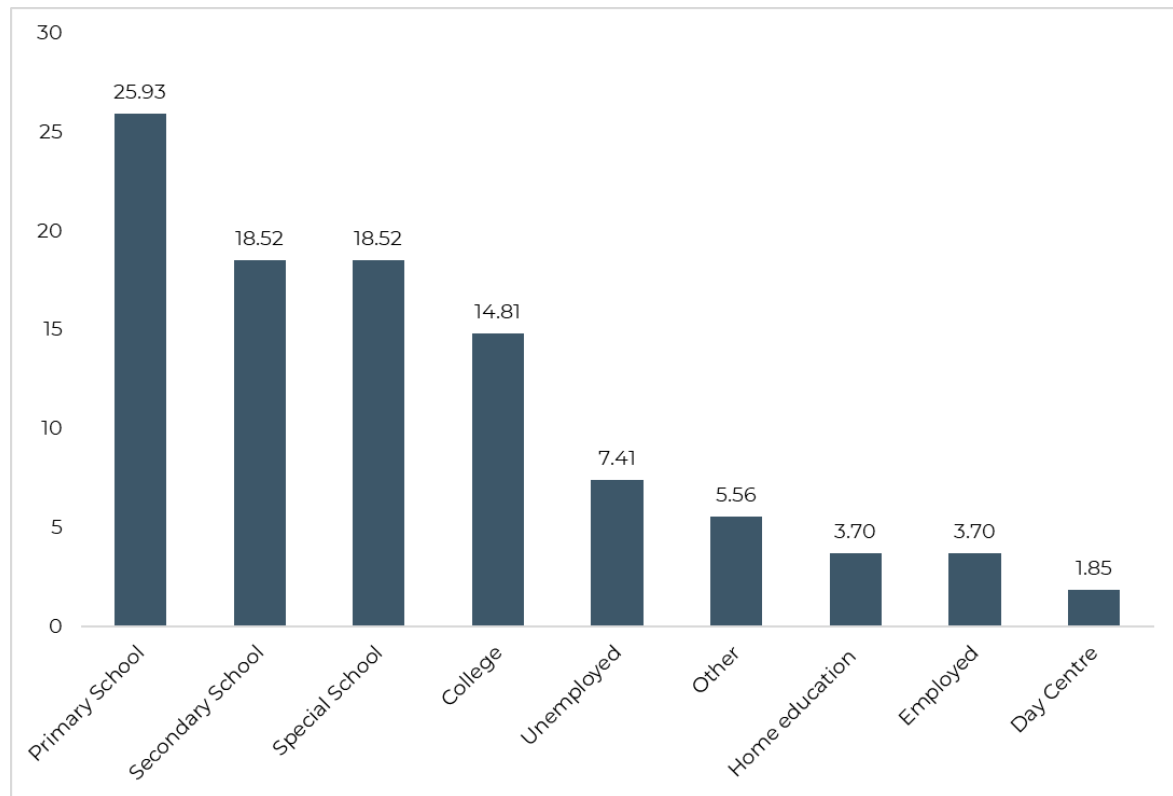


Source: NPCV SEND Survey 2025

## Which Setting Do You Attend?

Most children and young people who completed the survey attend Primary School (25.93%), followed by equal proportions in Secondary and Special Schools (18.52% each), with smaller numbers in College (14.81%), and fewer in other settings such as Home Education, Employment, Day Centres, or being Unemployed.

% of Survey Respondents by Educational Setting

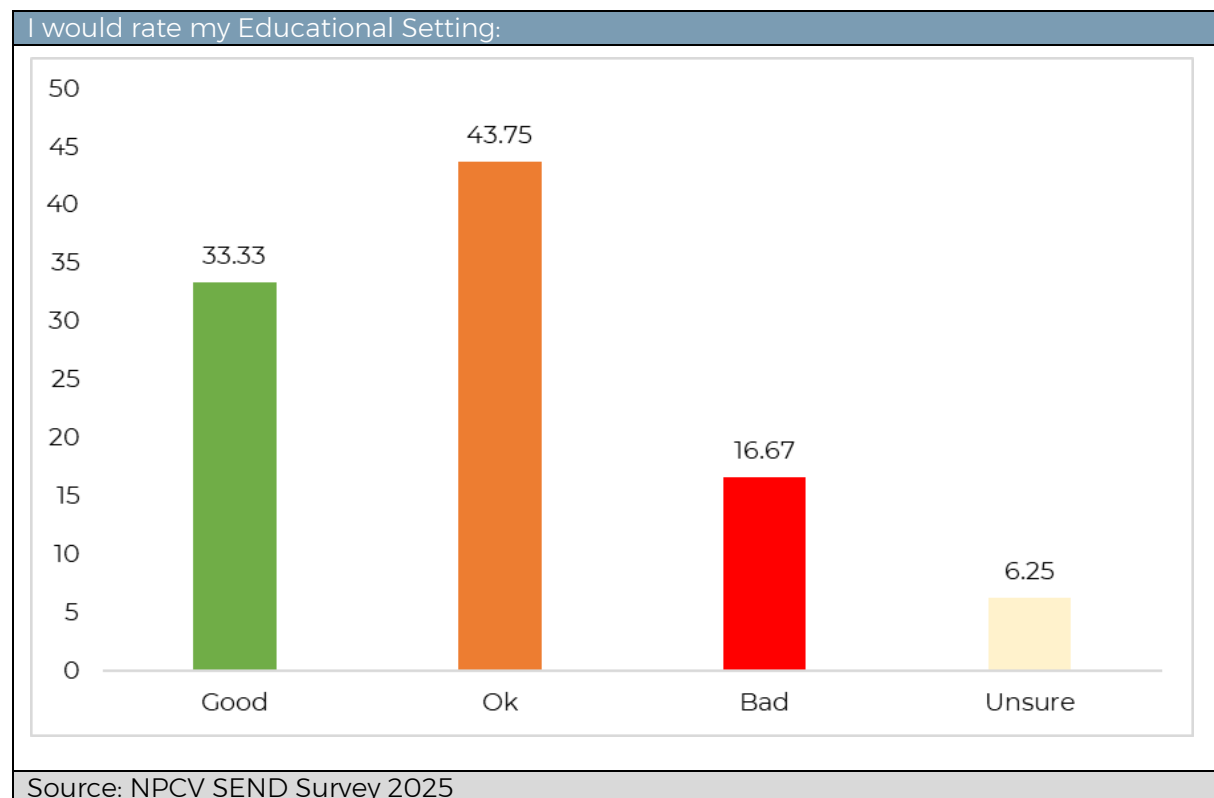


Source: NPCV SEND Survey 2025

# SEND Service Experience across North Northamptonshire

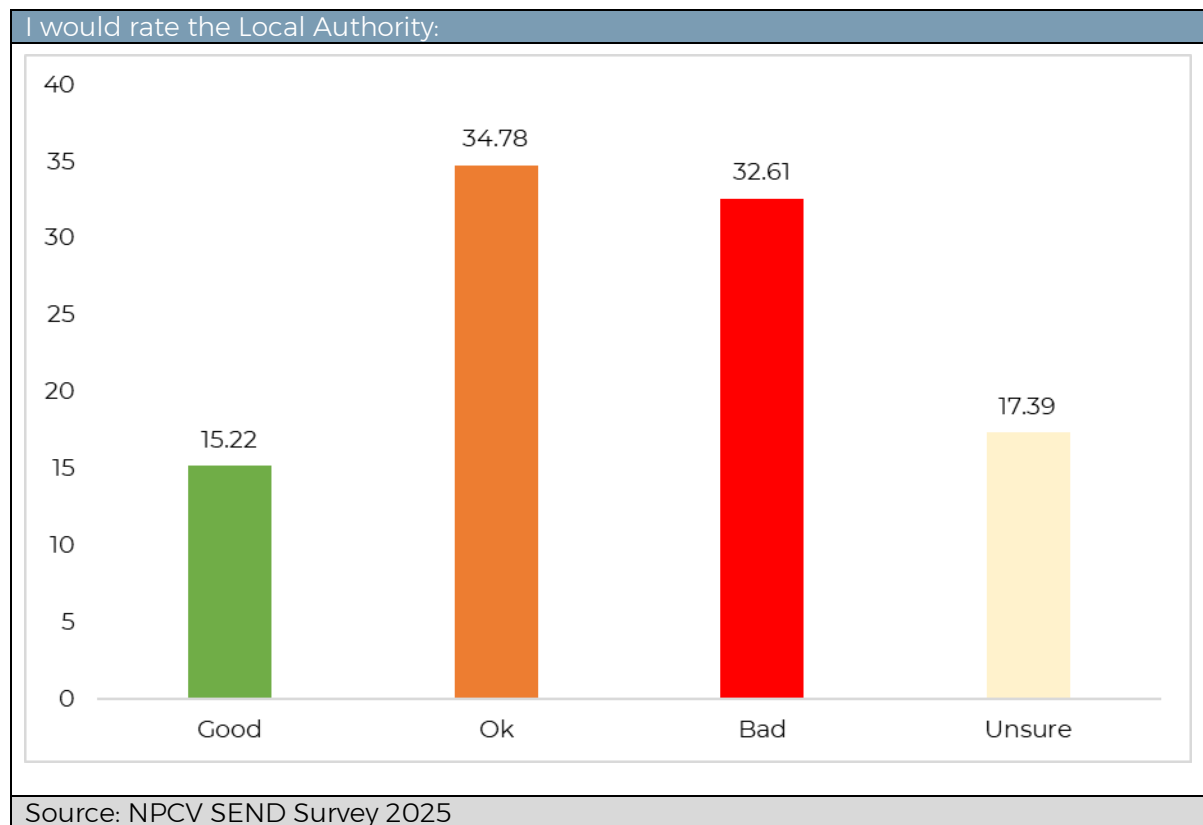
## Educational Setting

Nearly half of children and young people (43.75%) rated their educational setting as 'Ok', one-third (33.33%) rated it 'Good', while 16.67% rated it 'Bad' and 6.25% were unsure.



## Local Authority

As shown in the chart below, over one third of children and young people rated the Local Authority as 'Ok' (34.78%), while a similar proportion gave a 'Bad' rating (32.61%), with fewer rating it 'Good' (15.22%).



## Further Comments

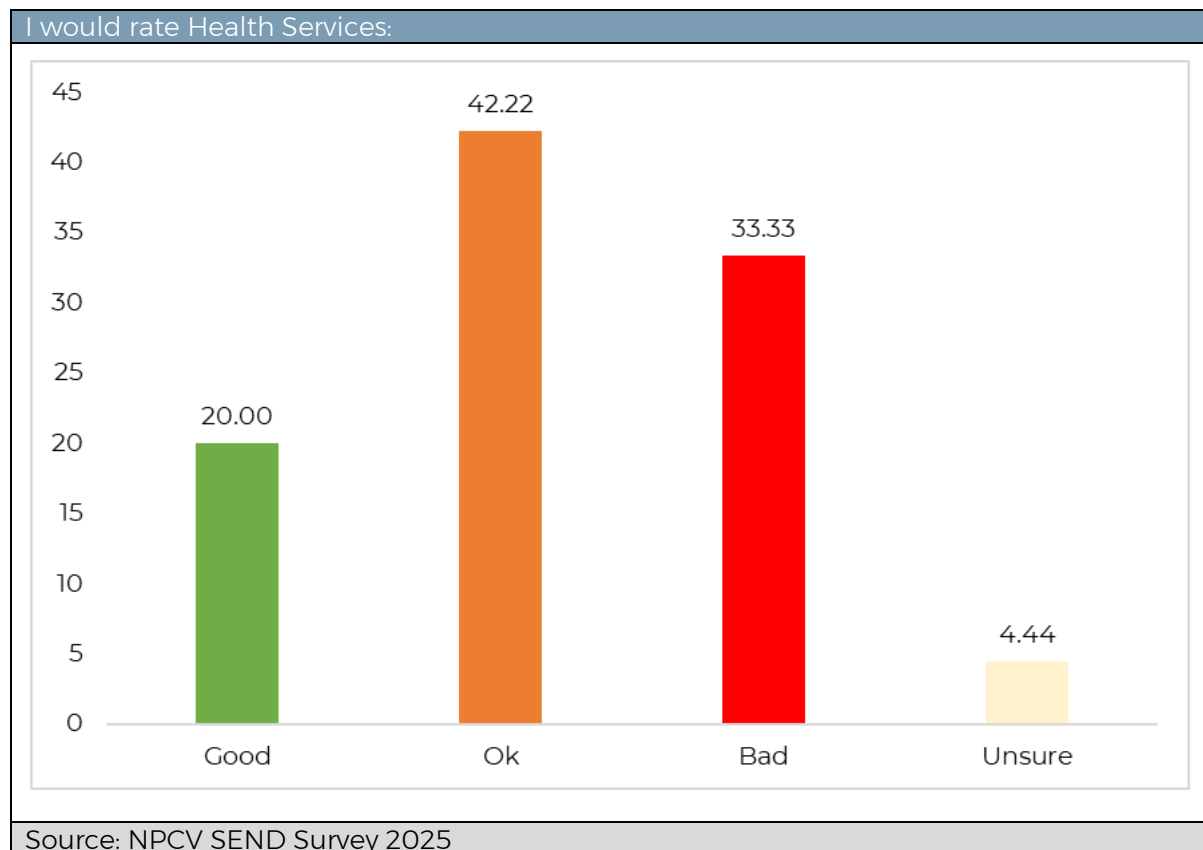
Some children and young people said they don't really know what the Local Authority does, and a few felt it stopped them from going to the school that would have been best for them. Many talked about long waits to get diagnosed, not enough help for them or their brothers and sisters, and parents having to keep "fighting" for the right support. A few said they have no education and feel no one listens, while others noticed some recent improvements but still think there's a long way to go:

- *"I know my mum had to fight to get me into my school. This still goes on and she now fights for my sister. It makes things hard at home. No education and no one listens or helps."*
- *"Took too long for mine and my sibling's diagnosis and haven't helped my sister that much."*
- *"I mean they are trying though, I guess? There have been improvements recently but we are still one of the worst in the country."*



## Health Services

The majority of children and young people rated health services as 'Ok' (42.22%), one-third rated them 'Bad' (33.33%), one-fifth rated them 'Good' (20.00%). Only a small proportion were unsure (4.44%).



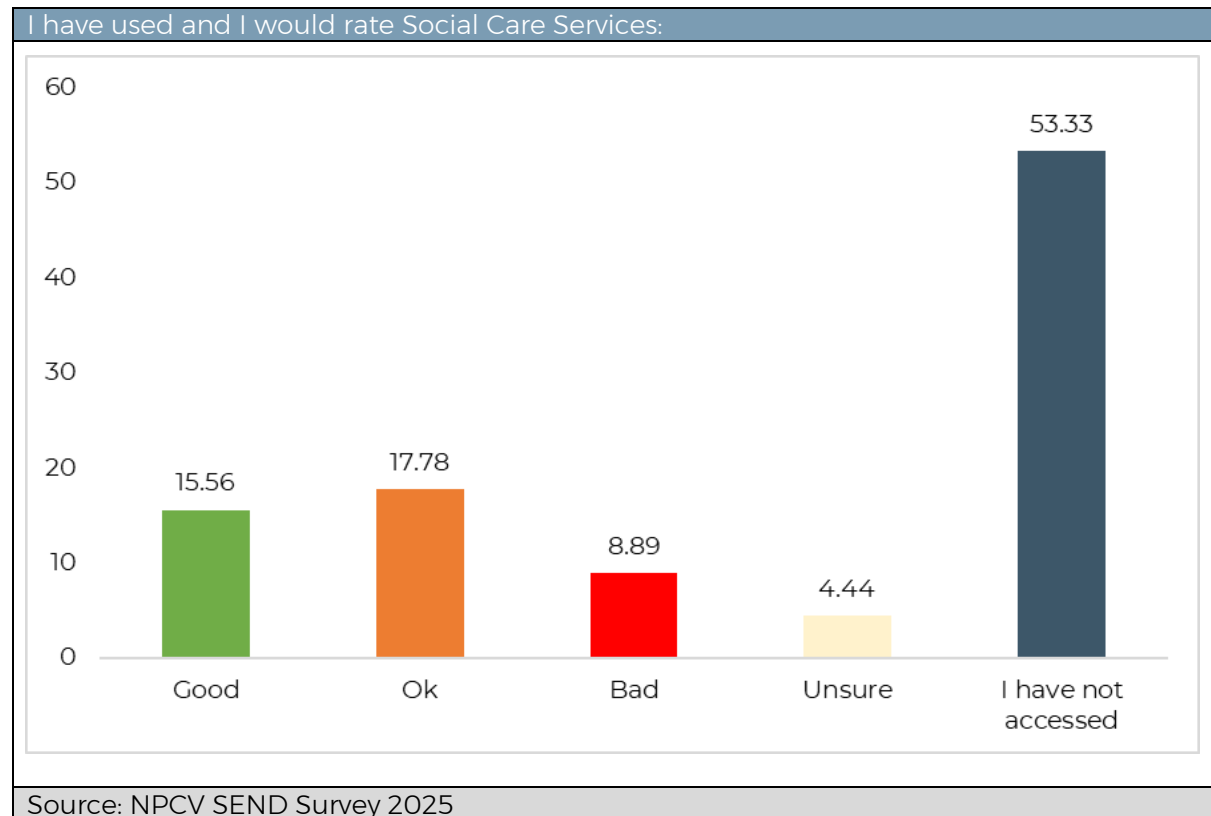
## Further Comments

Some children and young people said health staff are good at looking after them when they are ill, but many felt they wait far too long for ASD or ADHD tests and results - sometimes years. Some had to go private to get answers, but said these weren't always accepted by the NHS. A few also asked for more local help, especially for families with very poorly children:

- *"They are good at looking after my health when I'm sick. For tests for my autism, I had to go private. I had an ADHD test on a computer and we have already waited a further year for results. They say I have another 2-3 years to wait."*
- *"Took me over 8 years to finally get my diagnosis of autism and ADHD. Once diagnosed things got easier at school."*
- *"Waiting time too long for ASD/ADHD diagnosis and many private diagnoses are not recognised by the NHS."*
- *"More local support for families of palliative children."*

## Social Care Services

Over half of children and young people (53.33%) said they have not accessed social care services, while among those who have, 17.78% rated them 'Ok', 15.56% 'Good', 8.89% 'Bad', and 4.44% were unsure.



## Further Comments

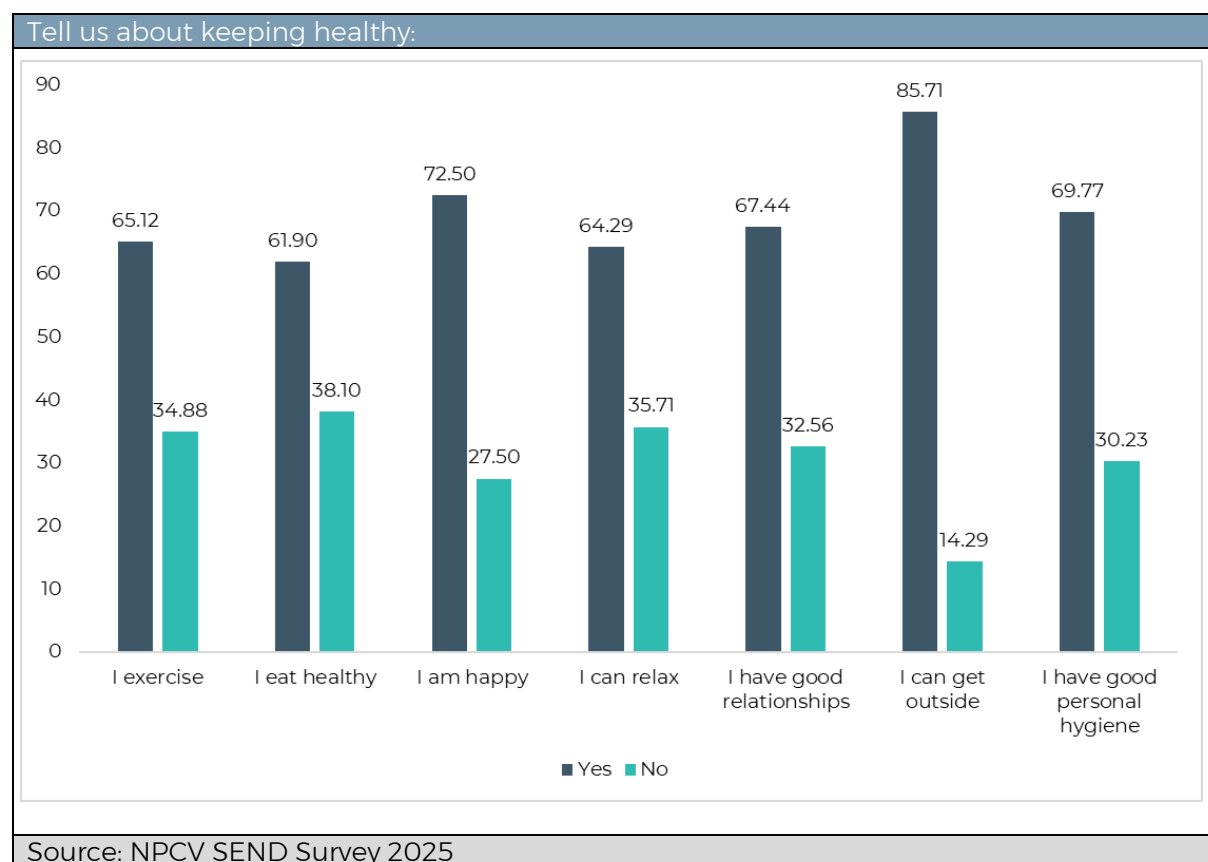
Some children and young people said they haven't used social care services, often because they were told they didn't need them even when their family or school asked for help. A few felt they got no help at all, while others said their school or family gave them the most support. One person said their transition worker was great:

- *"My family tried but we were refused support."*
- *"We have not used them. My brothers school tried to get us help and we were told we didn't need it."*
- *"My transition worker is great. My Mum helps me the most."*

# Voices and Experiences: Wellbeing, Relationships and Support

## Keeping Healthy

As shown in the chart below, most children and young people reported positive experiences in key wellbeing areas, with the highest proportion saying they can get outside (85.71%), followed by being happy (72.50%), having good personal hygiene (69.77%), good relationships (67.44%), exercising (65.12%), and relaxing (64.29%). Eating healthily was the lowest-rated positive response (61.90%), while between 14% and 38% of respondents answered “No” across the different wellbeing measures, suggesting notable room for improvement in all areas.



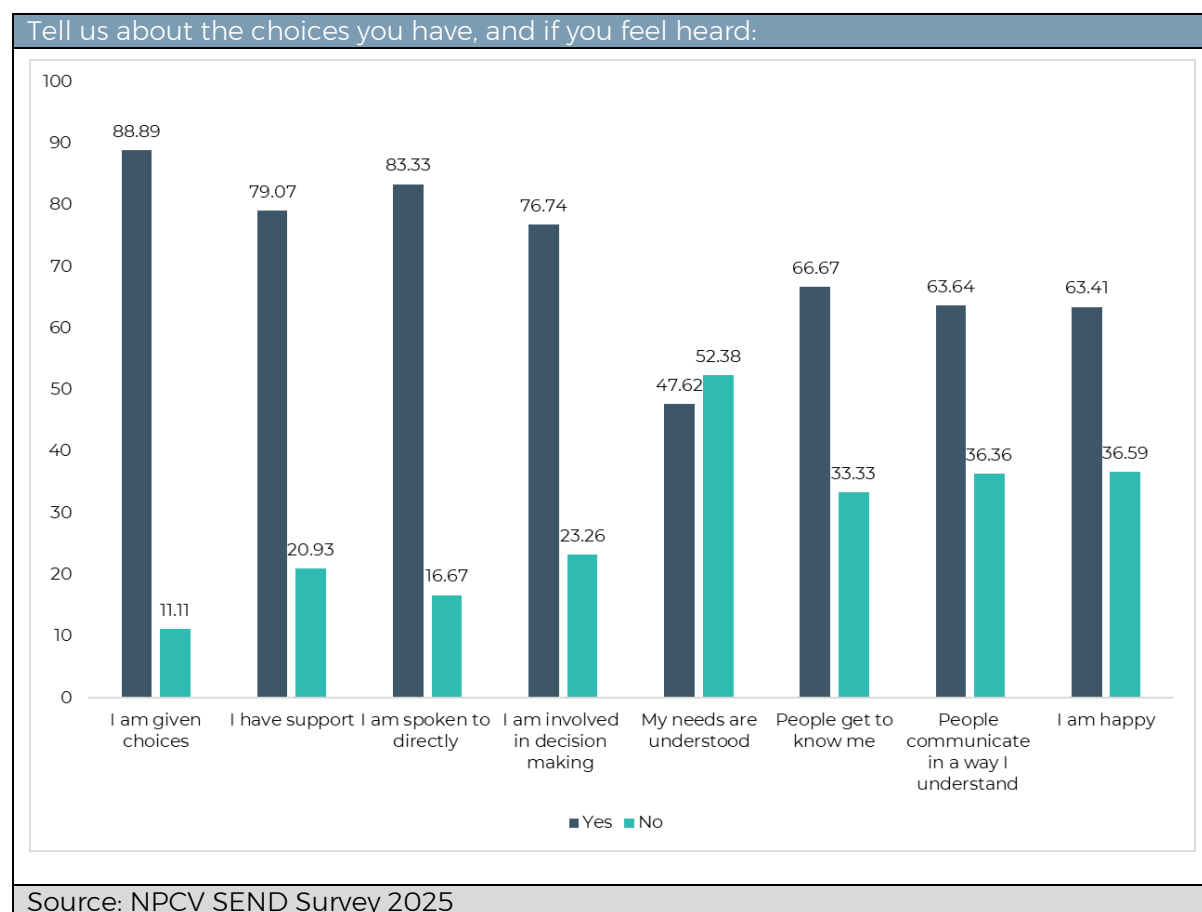
## Further Comments

Some children and young people said they need reminders or help to shower and brush their teeth, and a few don't like doing these things. Others talked about finding it hard to make friends, being bullied, or feeling lonely if they don't have a school place. Some said having 1:1 support helps them do more, and they enjoy activities and places that meet their sensory needs. A few felt their happiness changes from day to day and would like more chances to go out and join in with social activities:

- *"I struggle with friends and school and my teachers don't understand me. I get picked on and bullied even though I try hard to make friends. I don't like showering or brushing my teeth."*
- *"I would not say that I am happy, yet nor unhappy. I would like to get out a bit more and participate in some more social activities."*
- *"I have 1:1 support that allows all the above."*
- *"Lonely as I have no school place."*

## Choices and Feeling Heard

The chart below shows that while many children and young people report positive experiences in areas such as being given choices (88.89%), spoken to directly (83.33%), and having support (79.07%), there is a notable concern around whether their needs are understood. Over half (52.38%) said their needs are not understood - the highest 'No' response across all categories - suggesting a significant gap in how well services and staff recognise and respond to individual needs. This issue sits alongside other areas where more than a third of respondents reported challenges, such as people not communicating in a way they understand (36.36%) and not feeling happy (36.59%).



## Further Comments

Many children and young people said they feel happier and more supported at home, often by family members or certain teachers, than they do at school. Some said school doesn't listen to them, misunderstands their needs, or makes them feel like a problem. A few find it

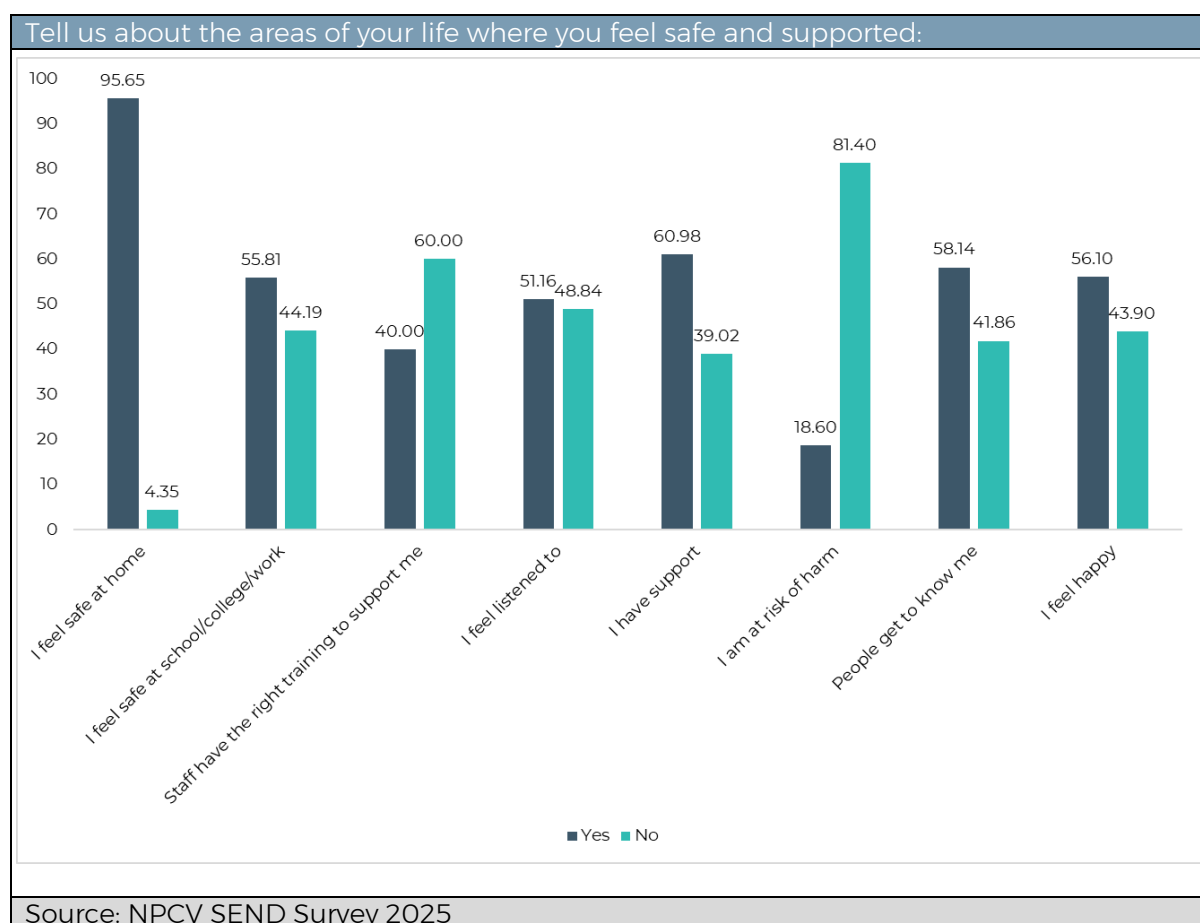
hard to speak sometimes or don't always understand what people are saying, and some feel there aren't many choices of what to do:

- *"I am always sad at school because of not being listened to. Sometimes I cannot speak and school think I am shy, but I just cannot speak sometimes. School do not support me. I feel like I'm a problem. I get support from my mum and family."*
- *"My family support me but no one else. I don't fit expectations and feel isolated everywhere."*
- *"Sometimes I don't understand what people are saying and there is not much choice of what to do."*
- *"I am happy at home. I'm not happy at school or out and about."*

## Feeling Safe and Supported

Most children and young people (95.65%) said they feel safe at home, but far fewer (55.81%) feel safe at school, college, or work. Only 40.00% believe staff have the right training to support them, and responses were almost evenly split on whether they feel listened to (51.16% 'Yes' vs. 48.84% 'No').

While the majority reported having support (60.98%) and not being at risk of harm (81.40%), smaller proportions feel personally known (58.14%) or happy (56.10%), indicating that even when safety and basic support are in place, building strong, understanding relationships and fostering overall wellbeing remains an area for improvement.



## Further Comments

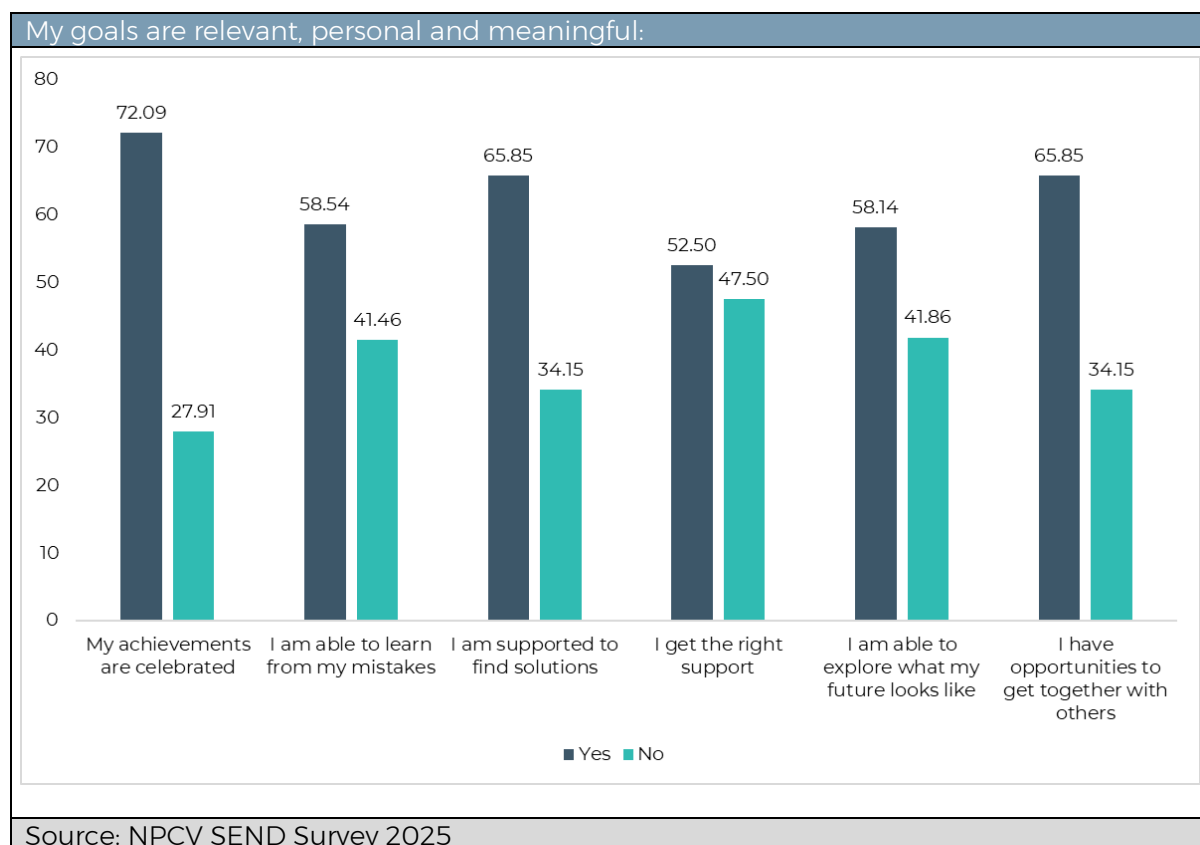
Further comments suggest that feelings of safety, support, and happiness are closely tied to school experiences, with several children and young people describing a lack of understanding from staff, particularly around hidden needs such as masking. For a few, home is where they feel happiest and safest, with less positive experiences in education settings:

- *"I want to go to a more appropriate school. No one understands that I mask."*
- *"School have never understood me or try to help with what I want. When they figure out what helps, it always gets taken away and then I find it hard again."*
- *"I feel happy at home."*

## Goals

The chart shows that most children and young people feel positive about certain aspects of their personal development and opportunities, with the highest proportion (72.09%) saying their achievements are celebrated, followed by being supported to find solutions (65.85%) and having opportunities to get together with others (65.85%). Just over half feel able to learn from their mistakes (58.54%) or explore what their future looks like (58.14%), while only around half (52.50%) feel they get the right support - making this the lowest 'Yes' response.

Across all areas, however, between a quarter and nearly half of respondents answered 'No', suggesting there are still significant gaps in ensuring consistent celebration, learning, support, and opportunities for all.



## Further Comments

While some children and young people are members of clubs or mix with peers at school, others said they rarely choose to socialise or prefer to stay at home. A lack of understanding and support for high maskers in school was raised, along with calls for more targeted workshops - such as preparing autistic young people for life at university - and concerns about the shortage of post-16 placements:

- *"No support for high maskers in school. They don't understand about masking."*
- *"I mix with others at school, but I'm always the one that gets hurt or shouted at. I don't feel supported. I see a therapist out of school that my mum set up. That helps me."*
- *"No school or college place so have no future."*

## Feeling Included

Just over half of children and young people reported feeling included and supported in their community (55.56%), have friends (52.38%) and are happy (52.63%), while slightly higher proportions felt they have access to the resources they need (60.98%) or opportunities available to them (59.52%).

However, a slightly higher proportion of respondents felt they *didn't* have confidence in their voice being heard and valued (51.22%) than those who did (48.78%), and only 38.64% felt there is a range of activities available to them. The most concerning finding is that fewer than two in five children said they know what to expect (36.59%), suggesting that uncertainty and lack of clear communication are significant issues for many.



## Further Comments

Some children and young people said they enjoy things like Saturday clubs, but many felt there aren't enough groups or activities for their age, especially for teenagers and young adults. A few said they would like to try new things but often feel left out, treated as "weird," or not listened to when they share how they feel. Others said they are happy at home or get support at school, but some weren't sure what "community" really means for them:

- *"I would like to try new things but I feel the odd one out. People make me feel like I'm weird and don't include me. If I say how I'm feeling I go unheard, like I'm bothering the teachers."*
- *"I have no place to go to do things that interest me."*
- *"There needs to be more social groups for 15-17 year olds."*
- *"I wish there were more clubs for 14 year olds."*

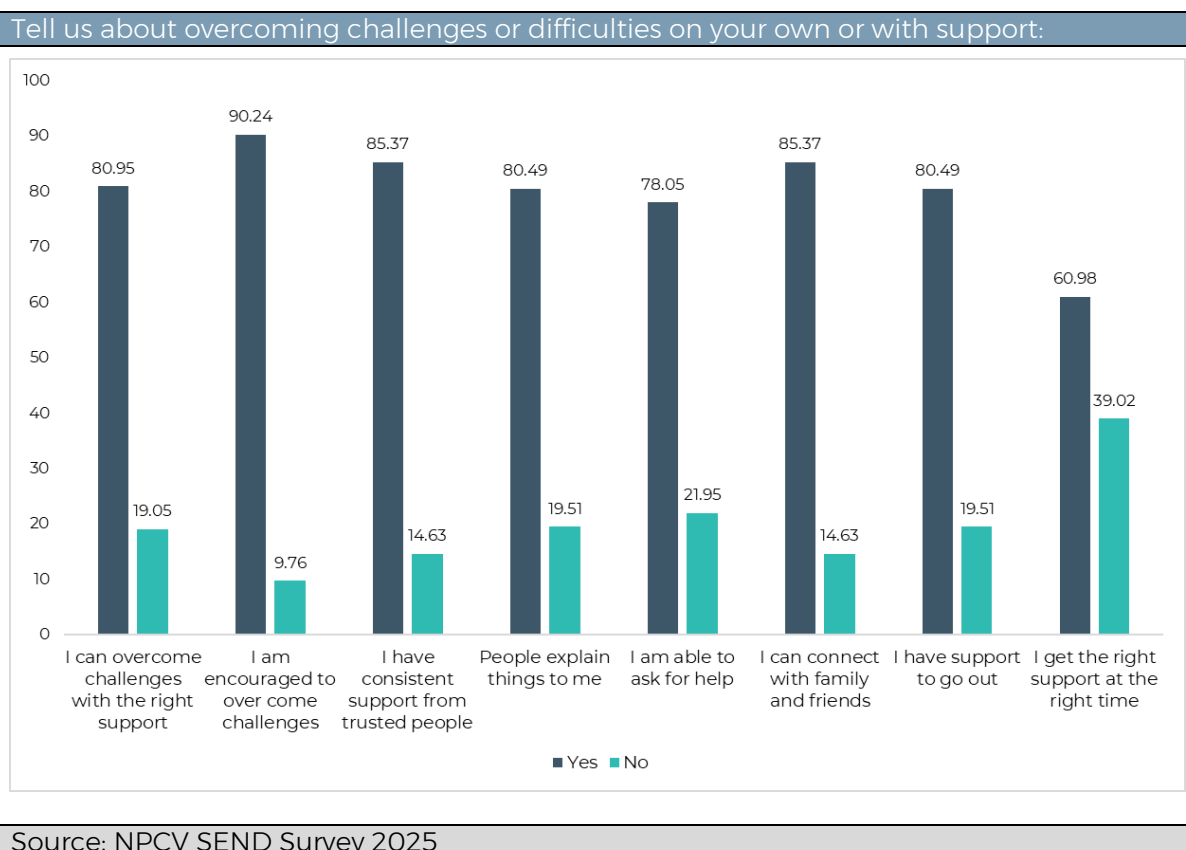
## Overcoming Challenges

This chart shows a notably more positive set of responses compared to previous topics, with large majorities of children and young people feeling well-supported to face challenges.

The majority of respondents (90.24%) said they are encouraged to overcome difficulties, have consistent support from trusted people (85.37%), are able to connect with family and friends (85.37%) and overcome challenges with the right support (80.95%). Similarly, most felt that people explain things to them (80.49%) and that they have support to go out (80.49%).

While still a majority, fewer said they are able to ask for help (78.05%) or get the right support at the right time (60.98%). These results remain more positive overall than those seen in areas such as safety, happiness, or inclusion. This suggests that when it comes to facing challenges and accessing trusted support, young people feel more confident and better equipped than in many other aspects of their lives.





## Further Comments

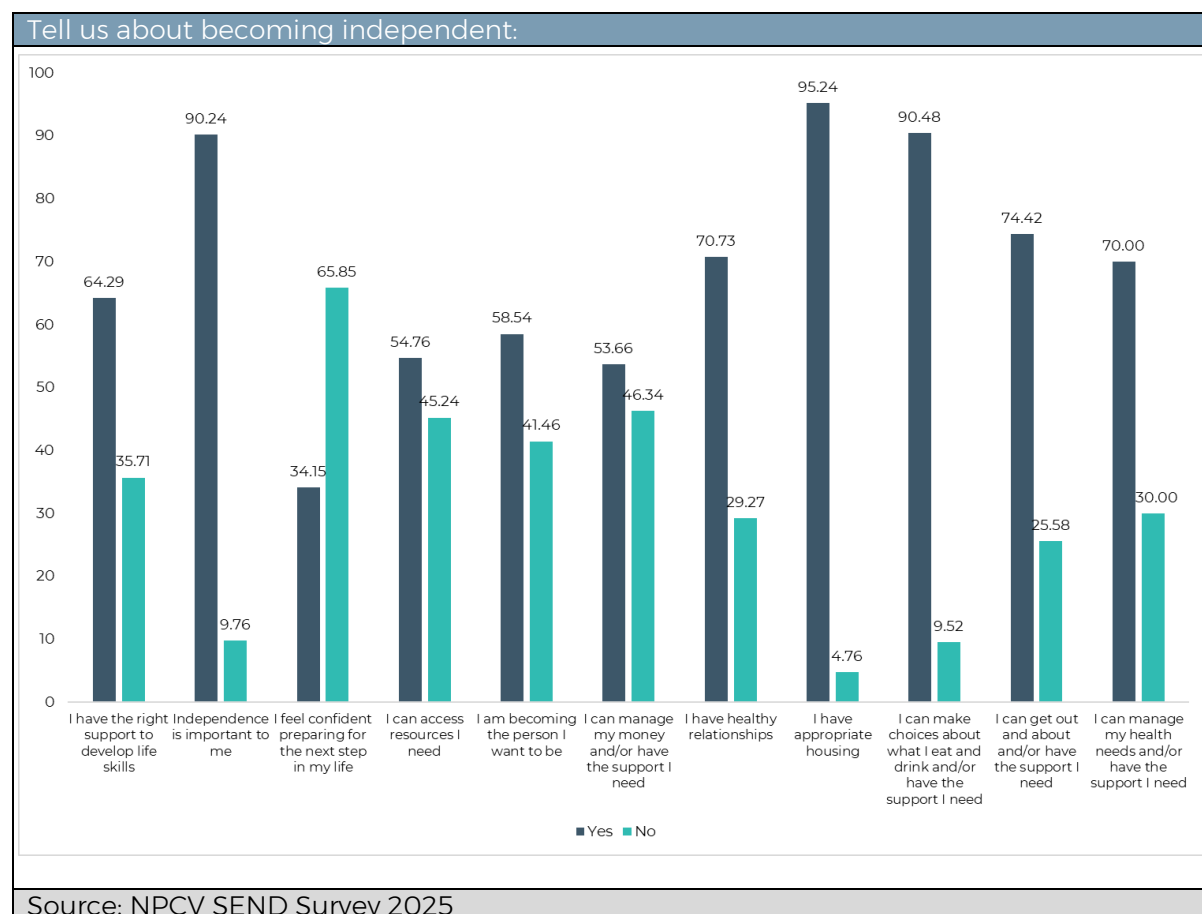
Further comments show that parents, especially mothers, are the main source of support for many children and young people. Several described how their mum or dad help them understand situations, explain when things go wrong, and work with them to find solutions. For some, family friends also play an important role, creating a space where they feel accepted and able to be themselves. However, others highlighted feeling lonely and isolated despite this parental support, with no other sources of help available beyond their immediate family:

- *"My mum and dad help me. My mum helps me understand lots of things and explains why things don't go right. She then helps to find ways to make them work. Our family friends have learnt how to support me and I can be me around them."*
- *"My support comes from mum and dad. There is no one else."*
- *"My parents help but I so lonely and isolated."*
- *"Only support I have is my mum."*

## Becoming Independent

The chart below shows varied experiences around independence, life skills and support. The strongest positive responses were for having appropriate housing (95.24%), being able to make choices about food and drink (90.48%) and valuing independence (90.24%). Large majorities also felt able to get out and about with support (74.42%) and manage their health needs with help (70.00%).

However, confidence in preparing for the next step in life was much lower, with only 34.15% responding 'Yes', and less than two-thirds (64.29%) having the right support to develop life skills. Access to resources (54.76%), managing money with support (53.66%) and feeling they are becoming the person they want to be (58.54%) also received more mixed responses, suggesting gaps in practical support for growing independence. Healthy relationships were more positive overall (70.73%), but the wide variation across responses highlights that while many young people feel secure in some aspects of independence, others face notable barriers in building skills and confidence for adulthood.



## Further Comments

Further comments show that family, particularly mothers, are the main source of support for many young people, helping them with health needs, finances, and day-to-day routines. Some explained how they rely on their mum to attend medical appointments, manage money, and feel safe, while others said they receive little or no support outside the home. A few highlighted difficulties with managing independence, such as struggling to control spending or eating habits, or being unable to go out or manage health needs alone. Suggestions were also made for more youth groups and better communication of available activities and provisions, reflecting a need for greater opportunities outside the home to build skills, confidence, and independence:

- *"I live with my mum and dad. Mum supports me with health and finance and things at home."*
- *"I don't feel supported by anyone other than mum."*
- *"There needs to be easier and wider dissemination of news, activities and provisions."*

# Conclusion

This first annual survey provides valuable insight into how children and young people with SEND in North Northamptonshire experience services, relationships, and opportunities in their daily lives. The findings show some areas of strength: many feel safe at home, value their independence, and are supported by trusted people - often family members - to overcome challenges. A majority also said their achievements are recognised and they are encouraged to keep trying when things are difficult.

At the same time, the survey highlights key areas for improvement. Many young people do not feel their needs are understood, face long waits for assessments, or describe feeling unheard and unsupported in education settings. Opportunities to socialise, build life skills, and prepare for adulthood are also limited, leaving some young people isolated or unsure about their future. Overall, the results underline the importance of listening directly to the voices of children and young people, addressing gaps in support, and working together to create more consistent, accessible, and inclusive services.