Fleetwood SEND Consultation Report

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Parent & Carer Feedback Analysis – Pride in Fleetwood

Prepared for Board Meeting – July 2026

Executive Summary

The consultation gathered detailed feedback from parents and carers of children and young people aged 3 to 21 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) living in Fleetwood (See Appendix 1). The findings reveal significant gaps in local SEND provision, particularly around specialist education, inclusive community spaces, therapeutic support, and respite. While some existing services are valued, the overall message from parents is that **Fleetwood lacks the infrastructure, staffing, and specialist facilities required to meet the needs of its SEND population**.

Parents consistently describe Fleetwood as a place where SEND families must "fight for everything", where children are "pushed into unsuitable settings", and where "there is nothing for SEND children at all". Many families report travelling to Preston, Blackpool, or Lancaster for basic SEND appropriate activities, medical support, sensory play, and specialist schooling.

The £20 million Pride in Place investment presents a vital opportunity to address long-standing gaps in provision for Fleetwood's SEND population. By aligning funding with community-identified priorities, Fleetwood can build a cohesive, sustainable and fully inclusive SEND offer that strengthens families, reduces crisis, and ensures every child has access to meaningful opportunities within their local community.

Methodology

The consultation was designed to gather the views of parents and carers of SEND children and young people living in Fleetwood. A short online survey was used to collect feedback, focusing on current provision, gaps in support, and priorities for future investment.

The survey link was distributed through multiple trusted channels to maximise reach and ensure representation across the SEND community. It was shared via:

- School SENCOs
- Family Support Workers
- Social care teams
- Colleagues at Lancashire County Council
- Parents and carers on Play Inclusion Project (PIP) database
- Fellow local providers
- Social media platforms, through both Play Inclusion Project and the local authority

In total, 32 responses were received. While this number is lower than anticipated, it is consistent with known challenges in engaging SEND families in consultation activity. Parents of children with SEND often face significant time pressures, caring responsibilities, and barriers to participation. Additionally, the consultation took place during a busy period for school staff and families due to end-of-term commitments, which further impacted response levels.

Despite the modest sample size, the feedback gathered provides rich, detailed insight into the lived experiences of SEND families in Fleetwood. The themes identified are consistent, strongly expressed, and align with long-standing concerns raised through other local engagement routes. Responses were analysed thematically, with direct quotations used to illustrate key points.

FINDINGS

What Is Working Well

Across responses, only a small number of services were consistently identified as positive:

1.1. SEND Hubs in Primary Schools

Parents noted that the two primary SEND hubs are helpful, but insufficient for the scale of need.

1.2. Break Time Funding/ Youth Clubs

Break Time was frequently referenced across responses, with families identifying both positive experiences and significant barriers. Where accessible, Break Time sessions are valued and provide meaningful support; however, many families reported challenges securing hours, placements, or suitable provision.

Parents highlighted that Play Inclusion Project (PIP) is one of the few services consistently funded through Break Time that reliably meets their child's needs. PIP was described as *"fantastic"*, *"a massive help"*, and *"the only SEND group in Fleetwood."* Families emphasised that PIP offers safe, inclusive activities that their children would not otherwise be able to access:

"Play Inclusion Project works… Wish there were more groups like this." "My daughter absolutely loves going. The club gives SEND children access to clubs that otherwise wouldn't be available."

Some families also spoke positively about individual youth clubs such as the Boathouse and Break Time-funded sessions. These were appreciated by those who could access them, but feedback shows they are **not suitable for all SEND profiles**. Parents particularly noted gaps for children described as **"inbetweeners"** — those who do not fit neatly into mainstream or specialist provision and therefore struggle to secure appropriate Break Time support.

Overall, Break Time funding is seen as beneficial when available, but families consistently reported issues with accessibility, suitability, and limited options within Fleetwood.

Key Gaps Identified

Parents repeatedly highlighted systemic gaps across education, health, community spaces, and family support.

2.1 Lack of Specialist SEND School Places

This is the strongest and most consistent theme.

Parents report:

- No SEND school in Fleetwood.
- Over-subscribed SEND schools in Blackpool, Preston, Lancaster.
- Children forced into unsuitable mainstream settings.
- EHCPs not being met due to lack of placements.

“He has had to go to mainstream even though EHCP says special school.”

“More SEND schools with SEND teachers.”

2.2 Insufficient Trained Staff in Mainstream Schools

Parents describe:

- Teachers lacking training in autism, ADHD, trauma, sensory needs.
- Schools unable to meet needs due to staffing shortages.
- Children being misunderstood or labelled as “naughty”.

“Schools need better training… masking, trauma, ADHD.”

“Change schools’ attitude—stop putting struggling children in the base with naughty kids.”

2.3 Lack of Inclusive Community Spaces

Parents consistently requested:

- Sensory rooms
- Soft play
- Accessible parks
- Safe indoor play areas
- Purpose-built SEND facilities with hoists, changing beds, quiet rooms

“Fleetwood would benefit from a purpose-built building with a hoist, changing bed, sensory room.”

“We need SEND parks and SEND swim days.”

“There is nothing for SEND children at all… we need something like the Space Centre in Preston.”

2.4 Limited Social Groups & Youth Provision

Particularly for:

- “Inbetweeners” (children not severe enough for specialist services but not able to access mainstream)
- Older SEND teens (13–18)
- Non-Break Time families
- Children who do not drive or cannot travel

2.5 Lack of Therapeutic Support

Parents reported:

- Long waiting times
- No local counselling or therapy
- No follow-up after diagnosis
- No support for siblings or families

“Therapy, education and support.”

“More support for parents and siblings.”

2.6 Insufficient Respite

Many families requested:

- More Break Time hours
- Local respite services
- 1:1 befriending
- Holiday clubs for SEND children

2.7 Poor Accessibility of Medical Support

Families reported:

- No school nurses
- Delayed diagnosis
- Lack of SEND-aware medical care
- Need to travel to Blackpool or Preston for basic services

Of those who responded 5 felt that “nothing” was working well.

What Families Must Leave Fleetwood to Access

Parents consistently travel outside Fleetwood for the following:

- Specialist SEND schools (Preston, Blackpool, Lancaster)
- Sensory rooms / sensory play (Space Centre – Preston)
- Soft play suitable for SEND
- Football in non-echoey environments
- Zoo, Sealife Centre, attractions
- SEND-specific swimming sessions
- Therapeutic services
- Medical assessments and diagnosis

This demonstrates a need to invest in Specialist SEND facilities and services in Fleetwood due to the absence of specialist SEND infrastructure.

What Parents/Carers Would Change About Growing Up in Fleetwood

Themes emerging included:

3.1 Greater Understanding and Acceptance

“More awareness… children are different, not less.”

“Stop judging SEND children.”

3.2 More Inclusive Activities

“More activities where they can be themselves instead of being overwhelmed.”

3.3 Better School Support

“More empathy from teachers.”

“Flexible attendance for low-immune children.”

3.4 More Specialist Provision

“No child should be left to struggle in an unsuitable setting.”

3.5 A Safe, Accessible Town

Broken accessible equipment, unsafe parks, lack of quiet spaces were frequently mentioned.

Priority Areas Identified by Parents

Across all responses, the following priority investment areas emerged clearly:

4.1 Build a Purpose-Built SEND Facility in Fleetwood

Parents repeatedly described the need for a building with:

- Sensory rooms
- Soft play
- Hoists and changing beds
- Quiet rooms
- Accessible toilets
- Space for youth clubs, therapy, respite, parent groups
- SEND-friendly sports and fitness sessions

This is the single most frequently requested investment.

4.2 Increase Local SEND School Places

Options include:

- A new SEND school in Fleetwood
- Expansion of existing SEND hubs
- Specialist units within mainstream schools
- Satellite provision from existing SEND schools

4.3 Expand SEND Clubs, Holiday Provision & Respite

Including:

- Holiday clubs for ages 4–18
- Youth clubs for “inbetweeners”
- Teen SEND groups
- 1:1 befriending
- More Break Time hours
- After-school SEND clubs for working parents

4.4 Improve Training & Support in Schools

Investment in:

- Trauma-informed practice
- Autism/ADHD training
- Sensory-friendly teaching
- Flexible attendance policies
- On-site nursing support

4.5 Create Accessible Community Spaces

Including:

- SEND-friendly parks
- Rebound therapy
- SEND swimming sessions
- Outdoor spaces prioritising SEND families

- Beach wheelchairs

4.6 Improve Family Support & Navigation

Parents request:

- Help navigating diagnosis
- Support groups
- Sibling support
- Post-diagnosis follow-up
- Local therapeutic services

Conclusion

The consultation provides a clear and compelling message: Fleetwood's SEND community is underserved, under-resourced, and urgently needs investment. Parents are asking not for luxury, but for basic, essential provision that allows their children to be safe, included, supported, and able to thrive.

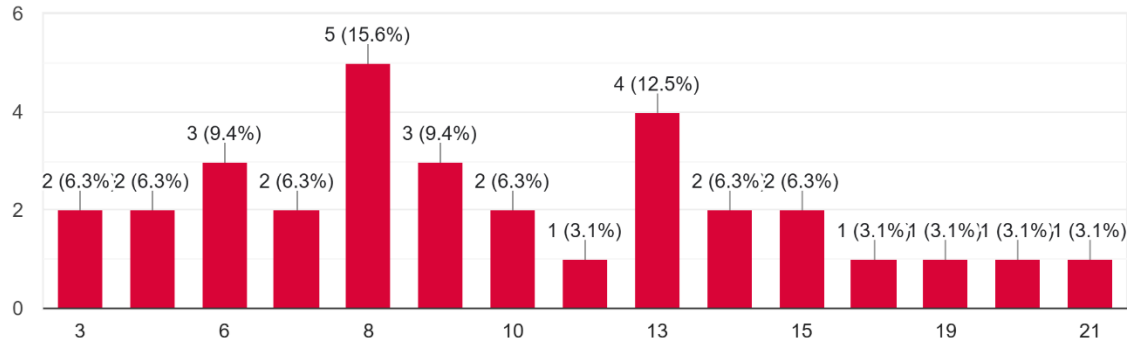
The Pride in Place funding represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform Fleetwood into a national example of inclusive community design, where SEND children and families are valued, supported, and able to access the same opportunities as everyone else.

This report provides a strong evidence base for prioritising SEND investment as a core component of Fleetwood's regeneration.

Appendix

Child's Age

32 responses



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6/22/2026 12:38:38	Down syndrome	15	Play Inclusion Project works, however there is no level of fitness for school age SEND. Evenings, weekends of gentle, easy to follow exercises would be helpful to my son, physically and mentally.	Diagnosis, my son had autistic traits that doctors won't acknowledge due to his Down syndrome, he has both.	Working with schools to help our kids, there's no nurse, and the attendance rate is a quite high expectation for our low immune kids to meet and also kids should be allowed out of term holidays, because my son can't handle the sounds of too many people, he want to bolt, which is unsafe for him, so he misses out or I get a fine, so we need understanding, compassion and fairness, not rigid rules for our SEND	Fitness program that our kids who can't move very well can access. My son has hyper mobility and some type of provision is needed on a regular basis that he can access so he thinks its fun,	Advice, football that is not in an echoey environment and his hearing and blood tests.	Nurses in school - he broke his leg once and didn't cry, so no-one knew until he couldn't walk and there was no nurse on site. Apparently the teachers are the new nurses now... and the nurses are the new teacher's training Teachers how to nurse, which I find is utterly bizarre. I'd like that to change, asap.
6/22/2026 19:14:39	AUDHD	8	The Boathouse Youth Club works well. However needed are clubs for the children who aren't severely disabled but not typical - "the inbetweeners". Holiday clubs for the same. Schools. Sensory rooms. Play areas. Counselling/therapy.	Schools - SEND units. Training for staff for ADHD, developmental trauma, masking etc.	Accessible clubs / settings. Safer / cleaner areas to play.	Counselling / therapy.	Sensory rooms. Soft play. Cleaner & more entertaining parks. Counselling/therapy.	The school knowledge, treatment, understanding, accessibility and acceptance.
6/22/2026 19:22:21	Autistic/ adhd	8	Send schools that have trained teachers in who are trained in Autistic and adhd kids . Like Cumberland School etc but more local	Send school	Safe place for them	A send indoor play area	Play areas And send schools are all out off fleetwood	Understanding and support safe areas
6/22/2026 19:41:44	Partial trisomy 13	21	More accessible parks and spaces	More SEN schools with SEND Teachers	More SEND social groups	spent on more	Special needs school in Preston- Tom Finney. Together we can do is based in Blackpool	More support for parents
6/22/2026 19:43:47	Autism, anxiety	19	Support workers	Budgeting for group sessions	suitable environment	maintenence of suitable environment	actual medical care	waiting times
6/22/2026 19:47:05	Autism	13	variety of activities	food budgeting	variety and quality of equipment	trips	N/A	more available support
22/06/2026 19:54:28A8:I13	Unsure	14	group dynamic with other young people and support from staff	food variety	variety of equipment and activities	N/A	N/A	Cleaner environment for the public
6/22/2026 20:01:02	dsylexia anxiety	14	allowence for creative works	milton street building back	artistic supplies	N/A	Medical services	recognition of metal disablities during younger school years
6/23/2026 19:09:09	ASD, ADHD, learning disability	13	PIP club Fleetwood	Accessible sports clubs that are frequent	Purpose built youth facility	Rest bite service	Nothing, everywhere is limited	Real community inclusion with age appropriate accessible activities
6/24/2026 9:50:13	Sensroy Processing Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder	15	Break Time sessions	Sensory Room/play area	More accessible buildings/facilities available for activities to take place in. Fleetwood would benefit from a purpose built building with a hoist, changing bed, sensory room etc.	More specialist SEND support and understanding in high school. SEND children need a more flexible approach towards attendance, teaching techniques etc. Better training for teachers is also required	Sensory play areas - The Space Centre in Preston	More opportunities to socialise and build friendships
6/24/2026 12:01:11	Learning difficulties- dyslexia & dyspaxia- ADHD	7	More youth clubs	Respite	More youth clubs	More sensory areas	Soft play, football	Nhs to be more quicker
6/24/2026 12:20:49	Global development delay non verbal Autistic	3	Nothing The current SEND system is failing too many children. There are simply not enough trained staff or specialist provisions available to meet the growing needs of children with SEND. Many schools and settings are doing their best, but they do not have the staffing levels, resources, or specialist support required to provide appropriate care and education for children with additional needs. As a result, children are not receiving the support they need at the right time. In Thornton, there are only a very limited number of schools that can genuinely meet the needs of children with SEND, and places within these settings are almost always full. This leaves families with very few options and often forces children into mainstream environments that are unable to adequately support their needs. Children who require specialist intervention should not be disadvantaged because of a lack of available places or resources. Instead, many are left waiting for support, struggling in unsuitable settings, and falling behind academically, socially, and emotionally. The children with the greatest needs are often the ones most affected by these shortages. Every child has the right to access an education that meets their individual needs. Until there is greater investment in specialist school places, trained staff, and SEND services, more children will continue to be overlooked and denied the support they deserve.	Send school for only children who really need it	More send support 1:1 availablity	More funding for schools/ nursery's for send support staff	Aiming higher charity Blackpool Safe spaces to play	If I could change one thing about growing up in Fleetwood for a child with additional needs, it would be the lack of support and specialist provision available to them and their families. It is deeply disappointing to see so many children struggling to access the help they need. There are not enough specialist school places, support services, or trained staff to meet demand, leaving many children waiting for assessments, interventions, or suitable educational placements. Families are often left feeling unsupported and having to fight for services that should be readily available. Children with additional needs deserve the same opportunities as everyone else, yet too many are being let down by a system that lacks the resources to support them properly. No child should be left to struggle in an unsuitable setting simply because there is nowhere else for them to go. More investment, specialist provision, and early support are urgently needed to ensure that children receive the help they need when they need it.
6/25/2026 11:17:24	Autism spectrum condition	6	Fleetwood lacks a lot for the Sen community. The two schools in Fleetwood with Sen specific hubs are a massive help for those children who need that support	mine can access and not have to specifically be	Offer afterschool clubs with Sen children in mind because although some of us do have Sen children we also need to be able to work and the lack of staffing around these makes it hard for any working parent to access support	More than one Sen group in the community for children to access as currently the only one is play inclusion and you have to be in receipt of break time hours	Anything that is remotely Sen friendly ie space centre is Preston.	Lack of support for children and families
7/2/2026 17:54:25	Autism AdHD & PTSD	20	More support in school to help the child stay in mainstream and teachers learn to understand there needs	Therapy	Support groups for older children	Get diagnosis quicker	Therapy , Education & Support	Change into schools attitude towards children who are struggling not put them in base with naughty kids
7/2/2026 17:56:52	ADHD and autisum	11	Nothing is working we need something for SEND kids	A exclusion unit for them to access when out of education	A calm, safe place when they can play, do nothing but be surrounded by sensory that can be accessed 7 days a week	Consider somewhere for children who need to burn of energy and be safe but still have a good time	Everything	Everything we have nothin here for them
7/2/2026 18:12:45	Adhd, none verbal	8	More play areas	More schools, correct equipment and staff	Safe place for children to explore	More support for families...rest bite	Suitable play areas, schools	For people to be more understanding of children with special needs, more safe paces equipped for children
7/2/2026 18:28:40	Global development delay, Autism, hyper mobility, Rare Genetic Neurological Disorder	13	Help understanding children are all different. Not to judge. More places for SEN support in the holidays..pip project etc	SEN support for the whole family	Older children love to play too. Our daughter is 13 but loves to draw paint etc there is nothing and she barely leaves the house. 1.1 befriending support	A free Fleetwood special needs group for children and parents of teens	We don't as we struggle to get her out of the house. Very vulnerable. Husband has cancer palliative care	To be understood and given a chance. We shouldn't have to fight for years for an EHCP
7/2/2026 18:33:48	Sen register , currently awaiting diagnosis	9	More send places closer than Lancaster Better training for staff in mainstream schools	Creating more send places	Better training and more understanding	Easier ways / more professionals to help parents navigate the maize of getting to diagnosis/help	Send/intervention education settings	More activities with trained staff
7/2/2026 18:55:01	Asd traits very delayed	10	Nothing	Easier access for assment	More help	Not being pushed away when turn 16	None	More places to go and more info if any places plus 16 as younger goo
7/2/2026 19:02:39	Autisum and GDD	5	There is nothing for send children at all we need something like the space center in Preston and also send parks and send swim days there is enough empty buildings to build a sensory play area also autisum play days	Sensory play area	Parks	Autisum play days	Everything Sen	To have more to do for them so they are included more
7/2/2026 19:07:10	Autisum Global development delay and processing disorder	8	More things for send children	More clubs	More inclusion projects	Sensory spaces	More places thay are inclusive for send children	Mpre sen schools
7/2/2026 19:40:23	Possible autism	3	Support group for SEN parents	Support for parents	Support for the siblings	Sen play group	Most support groups	A lot more awareness for other children and adults
7/2/2026 19:45:27	Ulcerative colitis, IBD,IBS, Small illuem has been not in school properly for 3 plus years.	16	Make it easier for send kids to get the help their need in school and in long term hospital admissions.	Long term hospital admissions. More support for said children in hospital with send needs.	More support for parents and full explanation included.	More support for other family members of send children ie brothers and sisters.	All of them due to his disability. Alot of people don't know what send is and what long term health problems is can cause and time they miss out in school due to illness.	More support to child and family members and more awareness in school and teachers fully understand what a send child needs are. More empathy from teachers and schools aswell.
7/2/2026 20:17:12	Epilepsy adhd	10	Fun day	Play groups	Outside swimming pool	Anything	Nothing	The old outdoor swimming pool
7/2/2026 20:25:29	Adhd, Autism	9	Not much. There is nothing for the inbetween SEND children it needs small groups and have actual things in Fleetwood for the people who don't drive. More support for the parents and not just classes.	Something for the inbetween SEND children specifically.	Small group activities that do not include sport for example arts and crafts.	Singing and dancing for SEND children in a small group	I do not drive so I cannot get to any other SEND things out of the area.	More support for the inbetween SEND children as there is 0 help for them and for people to have more understanding.
7/2/2026 21:48:56	Autism	7	Play Inclusion Project is great. Wish there was more groups like this	A Space Centre type venue	More specialised building to be hired by SEN Groups	A additional needs school in Fleetwood not just units within primary schools	Most things apart from swimming but the new people at YMCA seem abit naff and care more about money then our community	More understanding and more accessible paths, playgrounds etc. the accessible parts of playgrounds always seems to be broken
7/2/2026 22:00:53	Autism	6	Get more Special schools	Specail sen School	Better facilities	More support and activities	Everything	Better services

7/4/2026 22:50:30	Autism with global development delay and learning disability	5	Nothing is working well in Fleetwood, he was awarded 72 hours but Pip did not offer any place dispute us applying several times last year, so his hours were wasted and we got not respite or support or social time for him	A school holiday club for send kids from age 4 for all school holidays especially for working parents	A social club for all send kids from age 4	Support for parents of send kids	Everything from NHS we have had to go to Blackpool from our first concerns to diagnosis, now he is school age he has had no support medically	A Send school from reception, he has had to go to main stream even though EHCP says needs special education needs school, school have cared for him in nursery room all year and cannot provide for him going into year one in September and no send school placement yet offered. We started application when he was 1 year old and still overlooked unlike other kids we know with less needs
7/6/2026 17:30:18	Autism and Epilepsy	6	My Daughter attends the weekly and holiday groups in fleetwood with pip inclusion project and absolutley loves going. The club gives send children acsess to clubs that otherwise wouldnt be available.	Offer more hours with breaktime funding	More Send Clubs	More inclusivity within local parks	Soft plays, zoo, sealife centre. Any sort of attraction. Sensory rooms.	More inclusive clubs, wether that be youth clubs or parent and child play.
7/7/2026 10:39:03	Autism and GDD	8	More send knowledge within schools and training, having experienced mainstream and Sen school there is a lack of understanding in mainstream mainly because the school do not want to be too good and handling Sen children on account on ending up with more of them, it's takes away learning from the rest of the class as the spectrum is so broad it's not a case of all the children are the same, some need a lot more support than others but they do not have facility to do that. The difference from mainstream to Sen for a child having first experience is like night and day, our son has developed in lots of areas and goes in school happy and out of school happy and is full time , something never supported in mainstream.	Send school places, either more send schools local or start a provision within in mainstreams for those on the spectrum that may manage a little more but the school is supported with trained staff and things like sensory rooms and more autonomy with school curriculum	Council run swim lessons for Sen children with trained support staff, safety is a big factor for a lot of sen parents and having that as an option I think is something lacking especially in a coastal town	Follow up and support for families, some children are diagnosed young with a disability and you are left to navigate the following years, no follow up to see development and possibly additional diagnosis if applicable, no training to parents with skills or knowledge do the coming years, and more provision for working families, it's assumed if your working you can afford certain activities or help. So a lot of charity run help is based on no income or benefits, there are a lot of working families not in a financial positive situation,	Supported play groups like OJ's where it's secure and an inclusive family supported environment for our children	No support, no information or knowledge, it's assumed in Fleetwood if you have a child with autism, adhd etc your just trying to scrounge the system, this is massively incorrect, having experienced a life with a child with Sen, working full time and dealing with all elements of his care, fighting for an appropriate school, most times on lack of sleep and energy is sometimes just horrific, there isn't the level of support for parents there could be, I think a lot of children can benefit alot more if there is support and help to help the children a lot more, it will help them in the long run,
7/7/2026 18:30:21	ASD ADHD. LD	13	PIP are fantastic there is nothing else for our kids it needs to be extended to an older age as our children age out to quickly, they need longer	Play group / youth club for kids who are not known to PIP in a place where sound (old churches) is not an issue	Sensory area like space	Outdoor space that prioritise Send kids / families could incorporate beach wheelchair	Space Tiggers	Lack of education and judgement of society .Children need to be more integrated to be understood. Schools need to do better to be inclusive and teach that come children are different not less
7/7/2026 19:35:56	Autism	9	Nothing but SEN play areas are needed.	Play area especially for SEN children as some places only do once a week SEN Sessions	Sensory play like space in Preston but on a larger scale	More Sen swimming times rebound therapy	I haven't seen any and I've been here 2 years end of July	More activities for a child with additional needs. Where they can be themselves instead of going to activities with everyday children where it's far to noisy and then they end up getting upset and disregulated