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# Childcare and SEND Survey Report

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Family Voice  
Peterborough

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December 2019

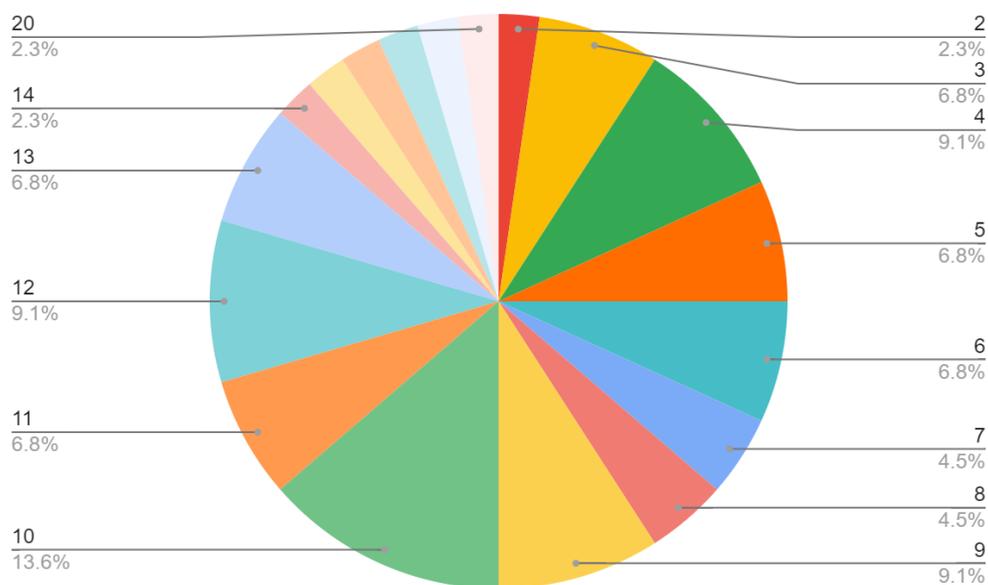
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## **Background**

Studies show that the cost of raising a disabled child can be exponentially higher than the cost of raising a typical child - with one recent study determining families have to pay out an average of £581 more per month to achieve the same standard of living.<sup>1</sup> Parent Carers are reporting to Family Voice Peterborough via face to face discussion that one of the reasons for them struggling financially is the lack of suitable childcare available to enable them to work. As a result this survey was created to gather more information with the intention of giving a snapshot view into whether or not this issue is widespread, and if so why parent carers are finding it so difficult to access suitable care for their children or young people.

## **Population**

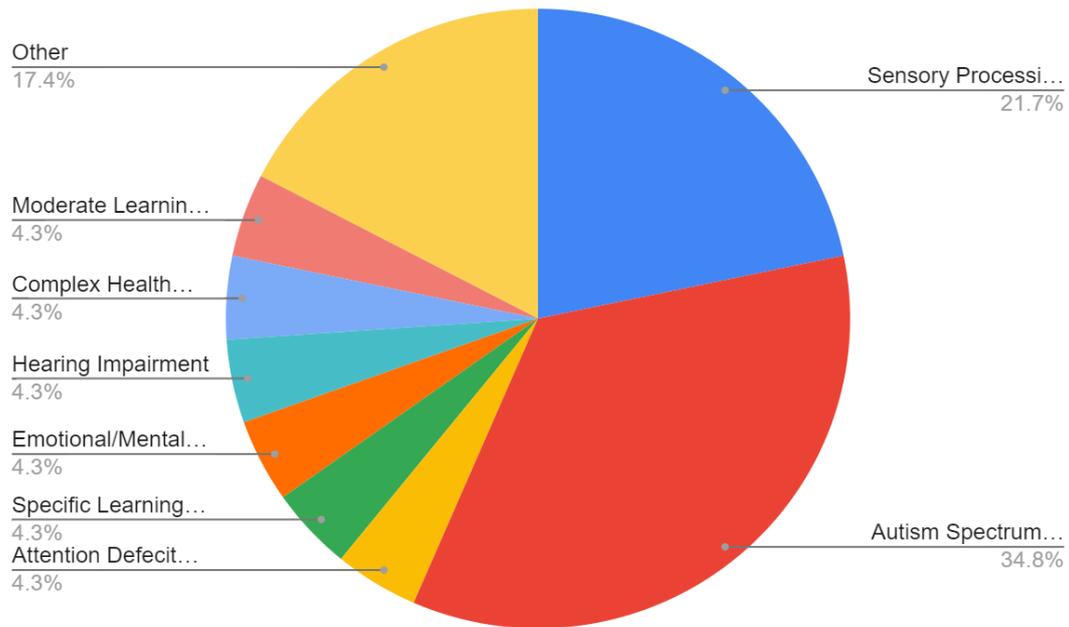
This survey was completed by 32 parent carers, representing a total of 44 children and young people. The ages of children and young people are as follows:



**Fig. 1 Ages of Children and Young People Represented within the survey**

Of these children and young people, 31 are male and 13 female, and 10 have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and 12 are in receipt of the care element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments.

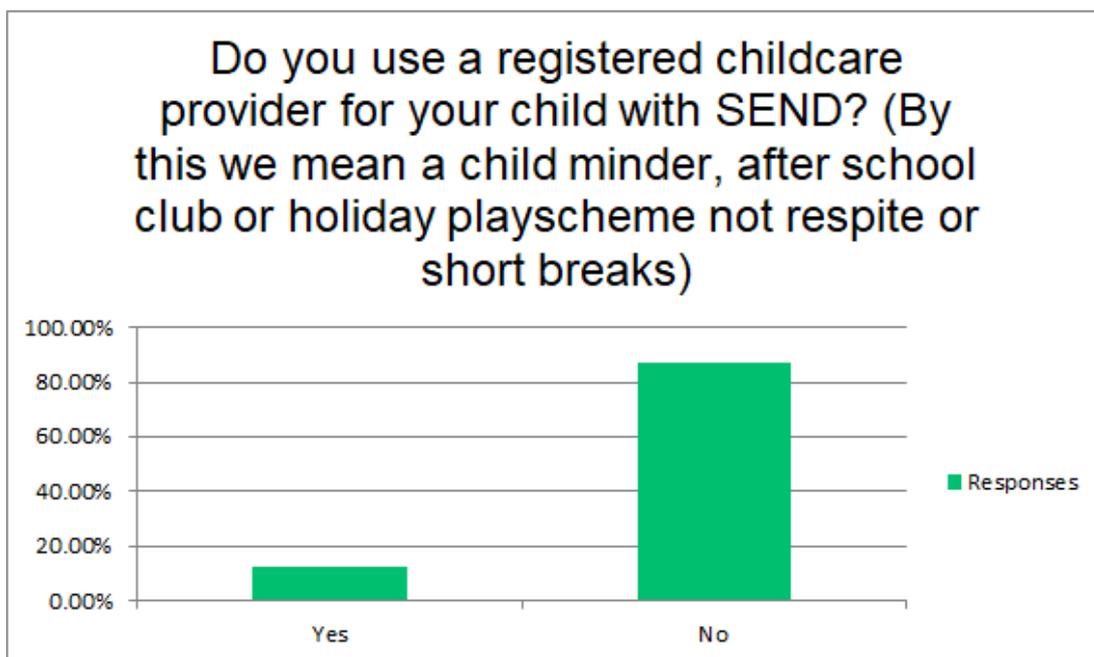
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/extra-costs/disability-price-tag/>



**Fig. 2 Area of Need for Children and Young People Represented within the survey**

There is a good cross section of areas of need represented within the survey. Autism Spectrum Disorder is the most common disability noted with other areas of need including sensory impairments, Social Emotional and Mental Health concerns and Complex Health needs.

### Breakdown of Responses

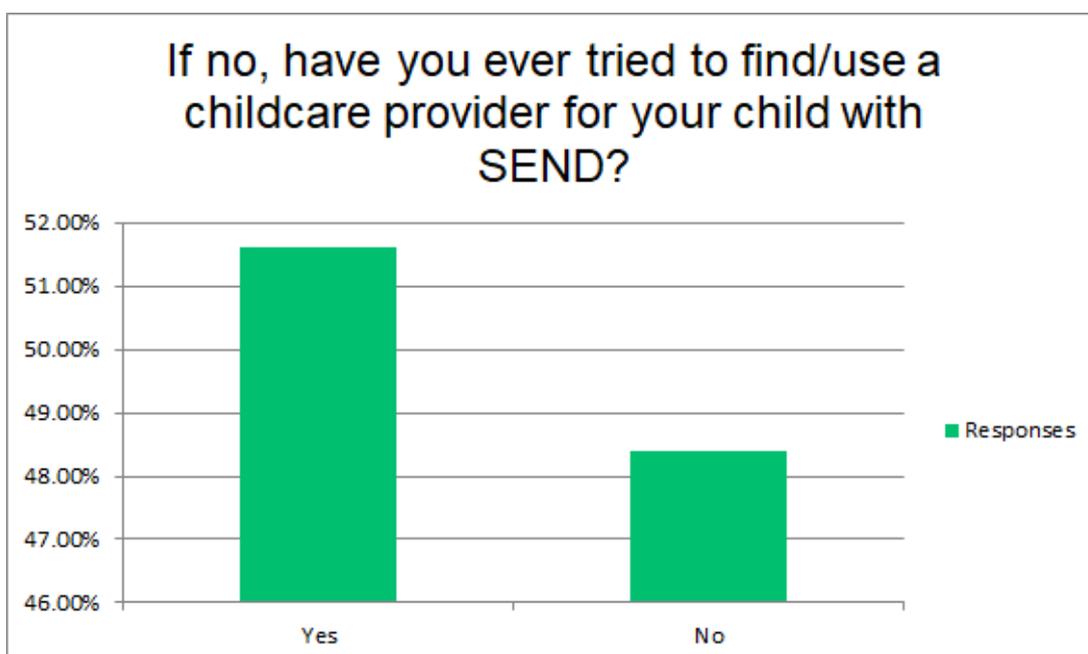


**Fig 3. number of parent carers who access childcare for their young person**

Over 80% of parents surveyed declared that they do not access registered childcare for their child or young person. Of those that responded in the positive the placements declared were:

- Alpha Kindergarten
- Challenge Sport and Education
- Orton Longueville Playgroup
- Ravensthorpe Primary School

No registered childminders, or outside of working hours support was declared.



**Fig. 4 Breakdown of parent carers attempts to find childcare**

Of the parent carers responding, half had attempted to find suitable childcare for their young people. Individuals were then asked to detail their experiences in looking for childcare, and share how successful their attempts were. The responses are detailed below:

When my children were younger I used a registered childminder who was aware of their additional/special needs and found out everything she could to help and support them.
Child did not like holiday club
They were unable to meet her needs
Non available locally On low income/benefits
I have recently split from my husband and have had to give up work. He was the stay at home parent. No childcare to fit around shifts and school drop offs.
Not qualified/not experienced, no availability, too expensive
Didn't want child to go to childminder with children who bullied him at school.
No central approved list Lack of training
Were unable to handle my working pattern
He wouldn't leave the house
No ability to give my child closer attention when needed. The provider had concerns that my child would be violent and hurt other children. Stated that they had not trained to support my child.
We used to use little tigers in Ravensthorpe and due to the needs of the eldest they refused to continue due to the high needs of the eldest
No suitable affordable placements with the right levels of flexibility
No one available to look after older child
Lack of communication on their part
didn't meet her needs
couldn't meet my son's needs due to lack of staff and him needing intimate care.

**Fig. 5 Parental explanations of why attempts to find childcare were unsuccessful.**

The above table shows a number of recurring themes relating to why parent carers feel unable to access childcare for their children and young people who have SEND. The most common is that providers are unable to meet the needs of the individual children - followed by a lack of training in SEND for providers and that child care is cost prohibitive.

Both my sons had/have Separation anxiety . Due to their additional needs the thought of a stranger looking after them is extremely distressing to them and so much so to the point that it's just easier for me to always look after them myself
Yes worried that they wouldn't be understanding of my child's needs
I'm worried they wouldn't know how to manage their behaviour and they get very anxious when not with a parent.
1 to expensive 2 struggle to trust
causes her a lot of anxiety
Not in work so not needed
don't need childcare
Was under the SENCO at her nursery placement
swop shift for with husband to look after child for work

**Fig. 6 Parental explanations of why they have not sought childcare**

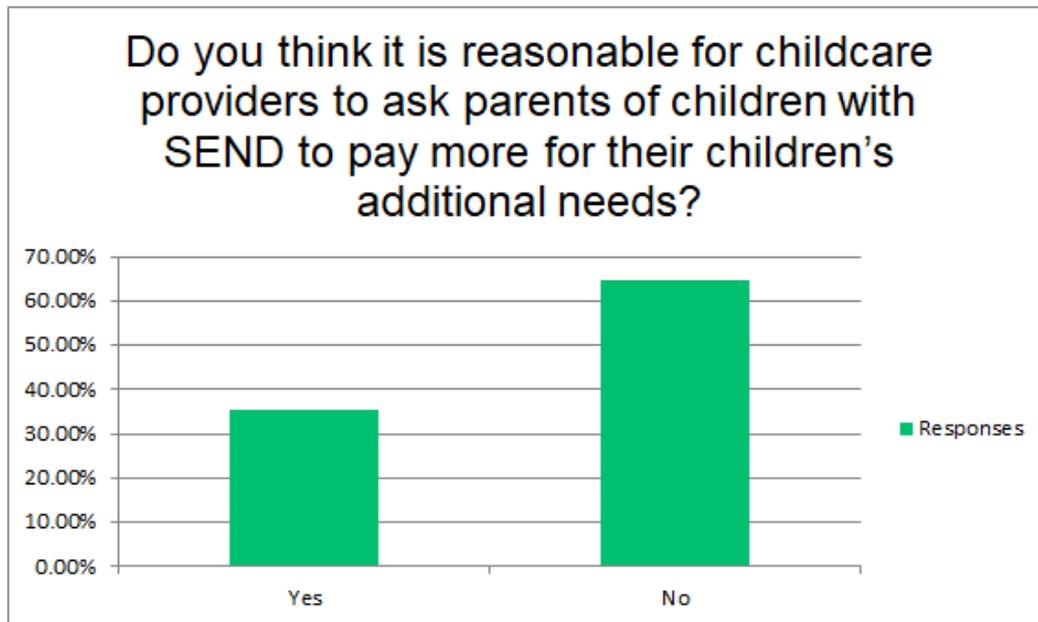
Reasons why parent carers have not sought childcare are mixed - with 44% of respondents stating they have not had a need to attempt to access childcare. For the remaining 56% the most common reason for not seeking childcare is a high level of anxiety - both separation anxiety from the child/young person and anxiety from parents that providers would not be able to effectively meet needs.

There aren't many childminders that will care for children with SEND but the one I used was brilliant and we had a good relationship and bond to enable tush's to talk freely and openly about the children.
Alpha are great as my child knows them and they are very flexible with her understanding her needs.
Anxious to leave
Very helpful and supportive for myself and my child.
good for physical health and socialising

**Fig. 7 Parental experiences of using childcare providers once they have found one suitable**

Of the five respondents who have successfully used a childcare provider, 80% report a really positive experience whereby their child's needs had been met and the parents felt

confidence in their providers. From this we can see that having appropriate childcare can make a real difference to wellbeing, both for the young person and their parent carer.



**Fig. 8 Parental view on the reasonableness of providers charging more to care for children with SEND**

Parent Carers were asked to state whether or not they felt it would be reasonable for providers to charge more to care for children with SEND, 65% responded that they thought it was not. Parents were then asked for more details on their choice, the responses are below:

Partial cost as if a child has DLA that could be used to fund some of the additional cost
If a child needs 1:1 care then parents should pay the cost of the member of staff's wages
What they are able to afford
Cannot put a price on it really but how is it possible for a parent - carer to ever seek employment if either no one is able to meet their child's needs or charge so much that even their job cannot cover the fees!!!
Not really sure
10%
None. It's discrimination
If they have to pay an additional person to support my child, I would be happy to help cover those costs if it enable my child to be part of the setting. I'd rather pay than my child be excluded and not be able to enjoy life.
I think it should receive an additional subsidy from central government, to enable parent carers to work without discrimination
Depends on earnings

as sometimes they need extra time spent
the child didn't ask for special needs everyone has third own needs and these should be taken into account
not much

**Fig. 9 Parental Responses to “If yes, how much extra do you think it is reasonable to charge?”**

I've never thought about it but they are still children and shouldn't be singled out because they have more needs. Childcare should adapt in their approach to care for SEN children more. This would benefit everyone.
We need some help with the costs or else, after our children will grow up and leave our home we will become unemployable! There's just no win in this situation...
I think we pay more for everything else already. Nappies, pads, not being able to go back to work, extra food ect.
All children should be same hourly cost
Because there is funding available, it's just getting the place and then them being willing to go through the extra processes
If they need 1:1 it should be at least partly assisted by government.
Because all children should be treated the same including costs
It's discrimination. Most parents can't afford it
They should get funding for send children and it's not fair parents of send children pay more, it's hard enough as it as finding suitable children without worrying about having to pay more.
Why there are still children at the end of the day and all should be treated the same extra money doesn't always mean extra care
because many people cannot afford extra and means testing is unfair as each child should be granted the same facilities
because childcare should be available to all
although needs are different they shouldn't have to struggle financially do have care for a child
a lot of parents don't have funding for it, no one asks to be in these situations no child should have to suffer for it
her needs should be met just like any other child
due to low income
A child doesn't ask to be born with SEND and shouldn't have to pay more to have their needs met. This does not feel like equality but feels more like discrimination

**Fig. 10 Parental Responses to “If no, why do think parents should not have to pay more for childcare?”**

Parents that do feel it is acceptable to charge more for childcare if a child has SEND appear to accept that if a child requires an extra member of staff, or an additional ratio of adult time then it would be reasonable to ask parents to contribute towards this, but there is an underlying theme of affordability running through the responses - there is a suggestion that requests for additional payments be means tested to ensure that it does not become a barrier to parents on a low income.

Amongst respondents who felt that it is not acceptable to charge more for childcare if a child has SEND the majority of respondents touched upon discrimination and unfairness in their explanations as to why. There is a feeling that all children should be treated equally - and that it would be discriminatory to charge more for a child to attend a setting by virtue of them having additional needs.

**Conclusions**

The responses to this survey indicate that accessing appropriate childcare is a concern for parent carers. Respondents feel that providers are inadequate trained to meet their children’s needs, and a majority feel that it would be discriminatory to ask parent carers to pay more for a better quality of provision. There are suggestions of centralised government funding to enable childcare providers to access adequate training for managing SEND, in hand with funding directly from them to top up the gap in managing the additional needs that may be present.