

Young people with special education needs and disabilities research summary

Background

Young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) find it harder to learn or access education than most young people of the same age. These young people may need extra or different help from that given to others. Portsmouth City Council (PCC) provides support for young people with SEND, therefore a consultation was commissioned to give young people in Portsmouth who have access SEND services the opportunity to provide their views about works well and what does not work well in relation to SEND provisions in the city.

Key findings

From conversations with several young people with SEND in Portsmouth we found that the young people are largely satisfied with the SEND provisions in the city. The majority of the young people we spoke to, highlighted that they know where to go if they need SEN support and on the whole they feel that they are listened to when discussing their needs.

Moreover, these conversations also highlighted that children and young people with SEND in Portsmouth feel they are able to be more independent and are given the opportunity to learn vital skills such as how to cook, how to tell the time and how to travel safely.

The young people we consulted feel that they are provided with good mental health support - a clear majority of the young people we engaged with agree that they 'receive good support for their mental health'. Similarly, young people feel they are given the right amount of opportunity to meet friends and socialise which helps in building a strong support network of likeminded peers. Most of the young people strongly felt that they are being provided with good educational support so that more options will be available to them in the future.

In contrast, when asked about the negative aspects of SEND services in the city and there were some common emerging themes; while the sampled young people voiced that they get good educational support, some young people were worried about their future as a person with SEND and if they will continue to get the SEND support once they leave education and go into employment. The research also revealed that some young people with SEND worry about discrimination from their peers. Some young people also voiced that it feels like some SEND agencies do not collaborate and they feel 'handed from one place to another'. Specifically, their concerns are that it makes a young person with SEND unable to adequately plan for their future if all organisations are not working together to provide the needed support.

Lastly, the research also sought to gain insight into the Portsmouth Local Offer website. The website is a collaboration between parents and carers of SEND children, young people and professionals to

help users find what is available in the area for those with SEN or disabilities. The consultation showed that the majority of the young people with SEND we spoke to have heard of the Local Offer website and nearly three quarters of the young people consulted voiced that they have used the website for finding out what services are available to support them. Of those individuals who had used the website, the majority were satisfied or very satisfied that they found what they were looking for.