

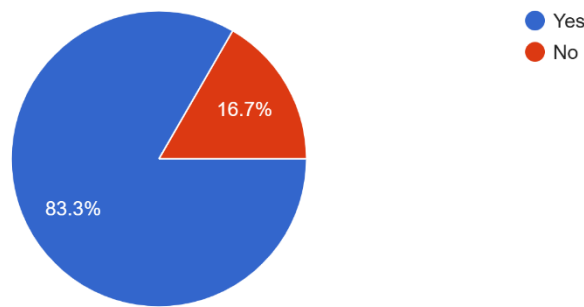
# STOCKTON

## PARENT CARER FORUM

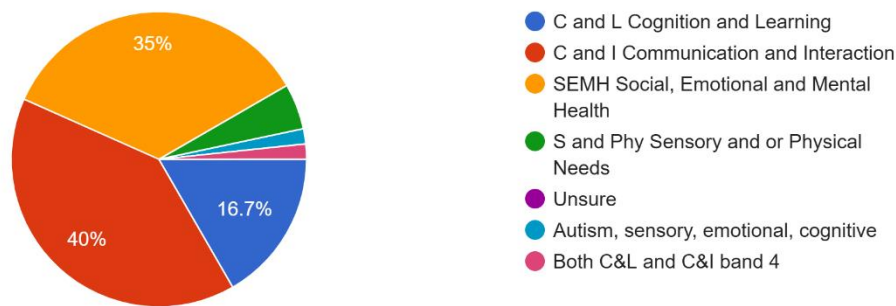
Evidence from Parent Carers regarding the current situation regarding Secondary ARPS in Stockton.

This information is in a raw state and not change it any way. Those comments in Red are direct quote that may be used when presenting evidence.

Does your child have an EHCP?  
60 responses

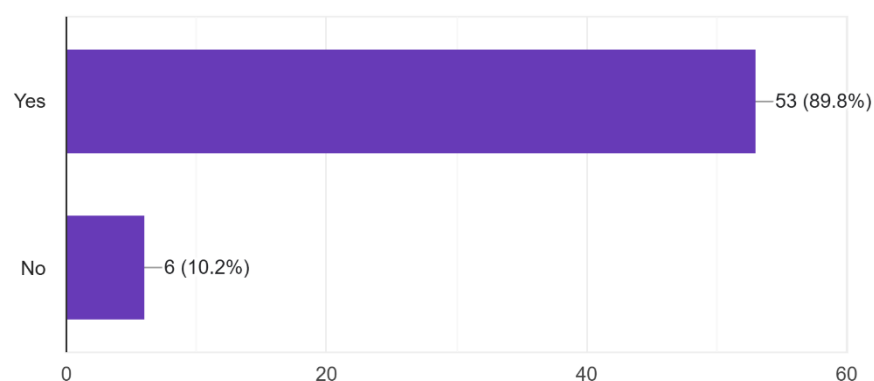


What is your child/young persons primary need  
60 responses



Do you have concerns that your child's needs can not be met in a Standard secondary mainstream school?

59 responses



**What are your current feelings about secondary education, thinking about your individual child's needs being met?**

I think smaller specialist provision would be best to meet needs. I have concerns that a base within a mainstream secondary would not provide the required support, leave vulnerable young people open to exploitation and would be in an overwhelming environment.

Child needs a small class size with high staff ratio, without an adequate provision child won't be able to be educated.

Very little options available locally and I know she wouldn't cope in a mainstream.

They haven't and didn't.

I'm starting to look at secondary schools for my child, who's in Year 5 now and going into Year 6 in September. I think the ARP is a great idea, but none of the schools offering it in Stockton are close to us. That makes it hard, as I don't drive and would struggle to get him there. One of the schools is just under the 3-mile rule, but there's no way my son could walk that far safely—he's never been able to walk to primary school on his own.

No suitable places

Child is being completely failed in mainstream school currently

He is now out of the borough in a specialist provision and thriving. No support whatsoever in Northfield School

**Would need specialist or sen unit. As none available would need specialist**

Absolutely dreading it. I feel sick with worry as feel because my child masks she isn't going to get her needs met. I believe as a parent she needs specialist but the LA believe her needs can be met through mainstream. I feel secondaries are so big and overwhelming and she is not going to cope. How are there going to be enough spaces for all the SEN children when only 3 schools have signed up?

Poor, staff not reading/following SEN plan

very concerned that mainstream will not be able to meet need but knowing specialist may not be appropriate either.

There is not enough support for children with SEN. SEMH in particular is not taken seriously. The secondary schools even more so are not built for children with SEN and SEMH. The whole system needs to be completely changed

The lack of SEMH provisions is concerning and the lack of SEND placements overall in secondary school. When considering research secondary school placements for SEND should have an increase in numbers compared to primary and recent research shows a demand for SEMH places. The current numbers are a huge reduction in placements from primary to secondary school, when children with SEND can experience greater challenges in secondary education, where increased academic demands/curriculum, social pressures, large environments and reduced individual support can exacerbate difficulties. This risks child having to be educated outside the area which increases costs e.g. transport. Mainstream provisions could increase the need for 1-1 support (increasing costs to the Local Authority). Mainstream schools can be tempted to say they can meet needs to spend the money on interventions across the board rather than the individual child. Some secondary schools have decided not to transfer over to the new ARPs/ SEND units and a survey of the local schools reasoning behind this would be beneficial. For a child who has come from an ARP or SEND unit - the current lack of places may mean they may have to attend a mainstream provision for secondary. Having a technical college such as the UTC south Durham more locally, which offers smaller class sizes and practical opportunities may be beneficial in our area. The moving of the skills academy (Billingham) into a large provision and closure of the endeavour unit has already significantly reduced opportunities for SEND children in Stockton. The widely used term 'Inclusion' in mainstream can mean 'exclusion' for some children with SEND.

Scared. Needs not being met in primary. EHCP refused and we have appealed. Child only goes to school at the moment because I work in the building.

It scares me that there isn't enough support or resources to meet needs at present

Very scared and sad

Not one of the secondary schools in Stockton who were consulted for a place for my child (6 schools) said they could meet his needs. They all declined to admit him. This has resulted in my child being educated at an independent school Outside of the LA as they were the only school that agreed they could meet his needs. The lack of secondary provision in the LA is appalling and the rates at which our vulnerable children are being suspended or permanently excluded when the provision isn't right needs serious consideration

Won't be met in mainstream

Secondary education has been as problematic as primary; my child is in NEAS Kiora but his needs are changing but they are still working from a EHCP that is several years old - an 8-year-old autistic boy is very different to a 14/15-year-old one

Not possible in big schools

Don't feel they can be met

My son won't cope; it will affect his mental health badly. I'm worried about him attending, I'm worried about the impact on my job and career. I'm worried he won't do well academically when the potential is there with the right setting and support.

Currently wholly inadequate, my child will be starting Y6 in September

My eldest currently has access to the base at an EMS which works well for her as she doesn't need support full time but I'm concerned about my youngest. She starts secondary in two years and will need more support than eldest which she will struggle to get with the way things are going.

They have not been therefore he missed a year of education because the school couldn't meet need and the SEND panel said they could and whilst they argued between them his mental health declined rapidly and he had no education.

There is a total lack of mainstream provision to meet the needs of my child's needs, even those with a 'sen' base. The fight for an EHCP has now progressed to tribunal, and I dare say we will need to fight for a secondary, specialist, placement, as even her current mainstream cannot meet her needs and have voiced concerns that she will not manage a mainstream secondary.

Won't be met

Only a specialist provision can meet my child's needs - however I have had to go out of LA area to find this

Scared about my child's future

I'm terrified. All I hear is horror stories about unmet needs and bullying.

My child is unable to cope in a standard mainstream as they need a higher level of SEMH/therapeutic/relational approach, but as they are academically able the options for secondary education in the area seem very limited

I don't think there are any options. My child's needs will not be able to be met in mainstream. Therefore, he needs a special school for secondary as the only other option, the only school in Stockton likely to be suitable is Abbey Hill. I have no idea yet if that school will be a good fit for him. He is going for into year 5 so nearly secondary age

Petrified to send her. Worried how secondary school will impact my daughter's health. Will they cater for my daughter's additional needs and support her? Three Primary schools failed her.

Not good enough current Ems place has not taken up Arp and are now saying they can't meet need.

My child currently can access a thrive room in primary but my concern is this won't be a provision in secondary we will ideally need a secondary with a base he can access when overwhelmed otherwise I can see him refusing school and developing anxiety over school undoing all the good progress he's made in primary school. If enough schools do not provide this then this limits bases to only those with the most severe needs limiting my son's ability to get the support he needs.

I feel. Secondary education has a massive jump in expectation and ability. My son is significantly younger mentally and emotionally than an 11-year-old which could lead peers and teachers to manage him differently in a detrimental way, if they are unable to meet him where his abilities are. My child is vulnerable socially, so having access to similar peer group is important and not being left with much more socially mature children which could impact him through bullying etc.

Secondary schools are only looking at results and do not want to be bothered with EMS or the new ARP. Although my child is lucky and at the moment the school have got things in place this has not been without a big fight, where the school kept saying they couldn't meet need but had not shown evidence that they were even trying.

It is a long way off for us but I am really concerned now.

My child has access to a hub within mainstream setting with a teacher who he goes to for anything. She has been a huge support for him in school. Without the hub he would not have managed his first year in senior school. They have also made reasonable adjustments to his school day and have been supportive throughout his first year.

I am concerned that I will struggle to find my child a suitable school place, it was a real struggle to get their primary school place when she had clear need and was not receiving an adequate education in mainstream, the lack of appropriate secondary school places is another thing to worry about for me and my child.

Scares me I honestly think my child will have to leave school education

I don't know of anywhere suitable

They won't be met he struggles every day in a small primary school and going in to a busy mainstream he won't cope at all

Worried they will not be able to stay with their classmates from primary school as the secondary school hasn't signed up

Not sure

Terrified she will not cope in mainstream.

Scary he will not cope and I fear the very worst for his mental health

She has a place in specialist and that should meet all needs but we didn't feel we had a choice.

Not being met

Horrendous, discriminatory, "one size fits all" box.

In secondary education, the number of students is high which is impeding individual care.

the current situation will not meet my child's needs

I find that the teachers don't put a lot of effort into understanding the child. My daughter is just coming to the end of Year 7 and they still haven't got a grasp on how to communicate with her, promote resilience and instil confidence. It seems like they're there to do a job, impart the information required for that lesson and that's it.

They are now, but still awaiting formal diagnosis

There is no clear guidance on what the provisions look like and how education is delivered or supported

Very scared about his transition and his welfare in future

I'm hoping in September the secondary school will look at helping with an ehcp

### **Why is having additional choice for your child's education important?**

To make the best choice for my child I need to consider a number of options

It's not about having an additional choice; a standard secondary mainstream is not a choice as doesn't provide the provision the child needs to be adequately educated. They would not receive an adequate education in a standard mainstream secondary as they are not equip for each other. Having an additional choice would involve having a choice from different placements which standard mainstream children get as they are able to choose from different secondary schools. When a child has Sen raising from their disabilities they need a different provision, **it's not about choice any more, it's about need.**

So, we can find the right provision for her, which considers all her factors not just the primary need listed on her EHCP and staff who have adequate training, knowledge and understanding of our children.

It's effected my child massively and he has lost 2 years of education he has left this year and has very little provision in place.

Having more choices for my child's education matters because not every school works for every child. Children learn in different ways, and it's important to find a place where they feel supported and can do their best. More options mean I can choose what's right for my child, not just what's available.

Scared. there is currently no suitable provision

Would love a smaller unit for her to thrive in

**He learns differently to others, so needs more support**

We understand our children the best and see their struggles when the mask comes off

So, we don't get school refusal from anxiety of her needs not being met

To help stabilise mental health and give the same/best opportunity as everyone else

education is a legal requirement therefore parents should be offered as much choice as possible. It's unfair for parents to face penalties when attendance falls due to unmet needs in mainstream and parents shouldn't feel like they have to sacrifice working to EHE. The benefits of a school (that can meet need and is the correct placement) far outweigh what I as a parent can offer via EHE, and if education is a legal requirement, then more choice and provision should be offered for my child's education, and such provision should be within my local area.

So that they can get the support they need

To give children with SEND the same opportunities, the right environment that enables them to be educated and develop to achieve their full potential.

My child is very academic but can't cope with the social side of being in a classroom. A chance for him to learn in a smaller, more understanding setting would be amazing

Otherwise, she may end up out of education

Each child is individual and unique - primary schools nurture children with needs. Mainstream secondary schools do not invest the same funding or expertise in their SEND children and this needs to change

**So, they feel they belong**

My sons went for a visit to an EMS base during transition, it was horrendous, why is it one approach? Why can't it be needs-led with a mix of provision to meet needs?

Put them in an environment to help them thrive

It's important for understanding support and for him to feel safe and have an education

So that he gets the best support, he can achieve the best he can, to support his mental health. I don't want this to knock his self-esteem when we've spent so many years getting to where we are now.

One size does not fit all, so the option of a provision that will give my child the best possible opportunity to reach her potential is vital, otherwise I will fail her, the school will fail her and the LA will fail her. My failure will not be for the want of trying though.

I'm more concerned that there isn't going to be enough places to meet the demand of those that need extra support.

Each child who has additional need is different and therefore mainstream does not always meet need. The mainstream settings try with the limited resources and you see children sharing equipment and TAs because funds are stretched but their voice is never heard even though they are in an educational setting seeing these children daily and knowing they cannot do anything to change the failings when they themselves are told they must find a way to meet need. The child's voice and choice should always be heard and instead the LA are seen to put SEND school provision in place when the children have one or 2 years left and the pressure is high to bring the child to where they need to be in education

More choice means better options for my child. It also means we can suitably assess each school and determine how and if they will meet her needs, as opposed to square peg, round hole, like we are currently.

**So that they can actually thrive to the best of their abilities**

With the correct support my child has successfully managed to remain in mainstream primary school however they are due to start secondary school September 2027 and worry without the correct support he will be excluded his current primary school are also worried as they feel it would be setting him up to fail if they don't provide what he requires to thrive which is extensive OT breaks and therapy continually throughout the school day and we need secondary school places who can accommodate these high needs.

My son is very bright with high aspirations but the current mainstream education system isn't set up to support him. Having more choice means we might have a chance of meeting his needs.

**My child has the ability to succeed in education in the right environment, with the right support.**

Children who don't have additional needs can list their choices 1-3. Because my son has high needs in cognition and learning and in communication and interaction the choice is taken away if we don't want to spend ages travelling to and from school

Gives us options, allows us to find an inclusive setting.

So, we can get the education they deserve

See all I've said above and in addition as the numbers of children needing support increases the provisions available need to increase in line in order that all children can access support. If bases or ARPs aren't available on a SEN plan and have to be EHCP only then how does a child like mine get any support? Support could be given so easily but it's always a fight why? Schools need to be made to provide for all children this should not be optional.

Additional choice means his needs are equally as important as mainstream children's. Not allowing him to access an education that can meet his needs is not acceptable and is not a great way of starting a child's life. Not providing choice means a child is less likely to find a job, have mental health issues. So, investing in our children means they have a chance to have the future they seek.

My child does need extra help in secondary school to keep on task. To help reassure when things are worrying, to be given time to process the work

Such a wide variety of needs and such limited flexibility in some schools.

Every child has different needs and levels of support obviously. Having choice gives parents more options of what is suitable for their child.

My child's well-being and educational attainment has improved dramatically in the few months they have been at special school as the teachers have the freedom to teach her in the ways she learns best (play, semi-formal curriculum, regular movement breaks, understanding of autism, smaller class size) to not have this choice was leading to poor mental health and my child not reaching their potential which was detrimental to them and others in the mainstream classroom

Because if he has the right setting, he will thrive proven when he left mainstream primary and joined an EMS

There is nothing no choices at the moment!

So, they can still thrive instead of just surviving

They should be treated like other children given the same support they're getting in primary school to allow them to remain with friends in secondary

To carry on the support given in specialist provision

She has struggled to attend in primary due to school-based anxiety. A smaller setting with the correct experience and understanding of her needs -ASD SPD SEMH anxiety communication would be a lifeline if she can't cope in mainstream.

Because another choice is the only option he cannot go into a mainstream secondary and don't meet the need for a full sen one so therefore where does my go?

To give them a package that meets additional needs

So, they can be the best version of themselves and thrive to their full potential.

smaller classes, teaching assistants, reader



My child is currently in EMS soon to be ARP he was put here by the LA; there is no way when he has finished year 6 will he be able to attend a secondary mainstream. Secondary is hard enough without additional needs.

So, parents have the option to make a choice, mainstream does not work for all children and it isn't as simple as what's written in black and white. My daughter would thrive in her learning in a specialist school however she would lose a lot of other skills we've spent 12 years building upon.

My child has made limited progress within her primary with daily support, trying to make sure that support continues so that slow and steady progress is made is vital. Otherwise, you run the risk of regressing even more.

I worry if his basic needs aren't met, he will deteriorate even more

For future role in career

Would you like to add anything else?25 responses

Not having adequate provision for children will undoubtedly put more pressure on specialist secondary schools. Resulting in the children who need specialist placement to more likely be placed out of area due to not enough places. This is equally likely for children needing a base or equivalent to be placed out of area so they can receive the necessary provision. All costing the LA more money due to not providing the provision that's needed (not wanted) in the local area.

Secondary needs to be quiet small classes and also offer gcse alternatives specialist dyslexia teachers and asd adhd teachers to help them cope with reading writing life growing up and also creative subjects to engage them or it won't work!!

Echp is difficult to get and exhausting to fight for. Child failing and school is just treating her a a neurotypical child and nowhere else for her to go

Stockton LA have been awful to deal with from day 1, there is absolutely no support just parental blame

Better training needed for mainstream teaching staff and better SEN provision

To often our children are forced to go into a setting that is clearly not right for them and this does irreparable damage

Offering a reduction in the number of GCSEs a child has to take and enabling them to attend an AP such as forest school or animal care may be beneficial for some children.

ARPS in primary work so well it's vital to keep that in high school

Sometimes walking a mile in the shoes of children and family's needs to happen. The LA is too far removed from what happens day to day and is making decisions and choices without understanding real impact

Not all mainstream suits our children why should a child fail before we can get the right support

It's the bigger picture not only does my son need the help and support without this it will affect me and my job, my husband and his job, it will affect our younger daughter. The meltdowns will be a huge impact on our daily life.

There is a significant and high need for more specialist provisions within mainstream schools. These must be large bases, but also just for those with SEN needs. One school allows both neurological and neurodivergent children into their unit, which in turn means there are far too many people in a sen base which would totally overwhelm my child.

The current provision is non-existent. I previously worked with North East Autism and there is either that or nothing. There is nothing in between.

**We need more secondary schools to step up to help our children to thrive rather than letting our children down and have to come out of educational settings.**

An ARP in secondary would not be suitable for my son as he would need 1 to 1 in any mainstream lessons. An SEN provision within a mainstream may have been an option but there are none. Mainstream schools are too focused on exams and results which is largely irrelevant to my son as he is unlikely to take regular exams but he is making some academic progress and I will be upset for him if this stops or slows down when no longer in mainstream

Education that works for everyone is a right and it is incumbent on those in charge to ensure this is done properly and fairly. Make councils fund this for all kids who need it not just those with EHCPs and make all school provide for our kids not just some.

Why were Egglesscliffe school given money towards their new building for EMS and now they decide they cannot do ARP, also money was given to Junction Farm for addition room for EMS to help Egglesscliffe, then Egglesscliffe decided it didn't work. Where was the plan for all this work? It is a lot of money wasted, why can Egglesscliffe take the money and run. Surely if they don't want to be a ARP they should be paying the money back. Stockton Council should be making sure the plans they have now will work and not go down the same route of wasting money like they have with Egglesscliffe

Secondary needs to be specialist for alot of children mainstream with gases just isn't suitable whatsoever

No

**If secondary's don't want an APR then they should ensure that they have adequate understanding, training and provision for children's special needs to support them to succeed in their secondary school.**

**To make the mantra every child / young person matter mean what it says**

The current system is not fit for purpose and to be honest not everyone seems to follow the same rules. It like the goal post are constantly being moved and the only people that are suffering are the children. There is big gap between specialist schools and children that are academic but unable to meet the demands of secondary mainstream and doing 11 GCSE. I also find it really frustrating that children that have been born in this country and parents have paid taxes to this country seemed to come second.

N/a

There should be more support given to parents to direct them in the right direction of what type of provision would be best for their child. It's a really daunting responsibility, as for my older daughter I unfortunately picked the wrong setting and she has now been out of education almost 2 years.

Help applying for ehcp

SPCF 14/07/2025

**Would you like to add anything else?**

Not having adequate provision for children will undoubtedly put more pressure on specialist secondary schools. Resulting in the children who need specialist placement to more likely be placed out of area due to not enough places. This is equally likely for children needing a base or equivalent to be placed out of area so they can receive the necessary provision. All costing the LA more money due to not providing the provision that's needed (not wanted) in the local area.

Secondary needs to be quiet small classes and also offer gcse alternatives specialist dyslexia teachers and asd adhd teachers to help them cope with reading writing life growing up and also creative subjects to engage them or it won't work!!

Echp is difficult to get and exhausting to fight for. Child failing and school is just treating her a a neurotypical child and nowhere else for her to go

Stockton LA have been awful to deal with from day 1, there is absolutely no support just parental blame

Better training needed for mainstream teaching staff and better SEN provision

To often our children are forced to go into a setting that is clearly not right for them and this does irreparable damage

Offering a reduction in the number of GCSEs a child has to take and enabling them to attend an AP such as forest school or animal care may be beneficial for some children.

ARPS in primary work so well it's vital to keep that in high school

Sometimes walking a mile in the shoes of children and families needs to happen. The LA is too far removed from what happens day to day and is making decisions and choices without understanding real impact

Not all mainstream suit our children why should a child fail before we can get the right support

Its the bigger picture not only does my son need the help and support without this it will affect me and my job, my husband and his job, it will affect our younger daughter. The meltdowns will be a huge impact on our daily life.

There is a significant and high need for more specialist provisions within mainstream schools. These must be large bases, but also just for those with SEN needs. One school allows both neurological and neurodivergent children into their unit, which in turn means there are far too many people in a sen base which would totally overwhelm my child.

The current provision is non-existent. I previously worked with North East Autism and there is either that or nothing. There is nothing in between.

We need more secondary schools to step up to help our children to thrive rather than letting our children down and have to come out of educational settings.

An ARP in secondary would not be suitable for my son as he would need 1 to 1 in any mainstream lessons. An SEN provision within a mainstream may have been an option but there are none. Mainstream schools are too focused on exams and results which is largely irrelevant to my son as he

is unlikely to take regular exams but he is making some academic progress and I will be upset for him if this stops or slows down when no longer in mainstream

Education that works for everyone is a right and it is incumbent on those in charge to ensure this is done properly and fairly. Make councils fund this for all kids who need it not just those with EHCPs and make all school provide for our kids not just some.

Why were Egglesscliffe school given money towards their new building for EMS and now they decide they cannot do ARP, also money was given to Junction Farm for addition room for EMS to help Egglesscliffe, then Egglesscliffe decided it didn't work. Where was the plan for all this work? It is a lot of money wasted, why can Egglesscliffe take the money and run. Surely if they don't want to be an ARP, they should be paying the money back. Stockton Council should be making sure the plans they have now will work and not go down the same route of wasting money like they have with Egglesscliffe

Secondary needs to be specialist for a lot of children mainstream with gases just isn't suitable whatsoever

No

If secondaries don't want an APR, then they should ensure that they have adequate understanding, training and provision for children's special needs to support them to succeed in their secondary school.

To make the mantra every child / young person matter mean what it says

The current system is not fit for purpose and to be honest not everyone seems to follow the same rules. It like the goal post are constantly being moved and the only people that are suffering are the children. There is big gap between specialist schools and children that are academic but unable to meet the demands of secondary mainstream and doing 11 GCSE. I also find it really frustrating that children that have been born in this country and parents have paid taxes to this country seemed to come second.

N/a

There should be more support given to parents to direct them in the right direction of what type of provision would be best for their child. It's a really daunting responsibility, as for my older daughter I unfortunately picked the wrong setting and she has now been out of education almost 2 years.

Help applying for ehcp