

INMSS School Survey

11 June 2025 – 9 July 2025

Summary Analysis

Let's talk Kent



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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the Independent and Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) sector survey conducted by Kent County Council. It identifies key themes including attendance, off-site provision, fee structures, environmental considerations, and collaborative practices. These insights are intended to inform the development of a future service specification and contracting framework.

Survey Overview

A survey was published on the Kent County Council Let's talk Kent website¹ seeking views of schools in the INMSS sector to help shape a service specification for a new contract for placement of Kent's children and young people with significant and/or complex needs

The survey was launched on 11 June 2025 and closed on 9 July 2025.

In total 22 responses were received in that period. This report provides a summary of responses collated which have been grouped into thematic categories. A breakdown of the number of responses is provided in Appendix 1.

The next section outlines the key findings from the survey responses.

¹ [Non-Maintained Independent Special Schools - Market Engagement | Let's talk Kent](#)

Key findings for Service Specification

1. Child-Centred, Flexible Provision

- Prioritise individualised approaches tailored to each pupil's needs, especially for those with SEND.
- Avoid rigid thresholds (e.g., 40% off-site limits) that may not suit complex cases.
- Enable bespoke interventions including therapy, alternative timetables, and off-site learning.

2. Integrated Multi-Agency Support

- Strengthen collaboration between education, health, and social care to address root causes of absence.
- Ensure timely and coordinated responses to emerging needs.
- Promote shared responsibility across agencies for complex learners.

3. Parental Engagement and Voice

- Respect and incorporate parental preferences in placement and EHCP decisions.
- Simplify communication using accessible, jargon-free language.
- Provide early and inclusive involvement in planning and reviews.

4. Diverse and Quality-Assured Off-Site Provision

- Support a wide range of off-site options: work experience, therapeutic services, outdoor learning, and alternative education providers.
- Ensure all provision is monitored, quality-assured, and aligned with EHCP outcomes.
- Recognise school-led and supervised off-site provision as part of the educational offer.

5. Financial Fairness and Sustainability

- Acknowledge financial pressures on independent schools (e.g., VAT, loss of reliefs).
- Avoid blanket fee reductions; instead, adopt tiered or outcome-based funding models.
- Provide funding for new initiatives where schools are expected to deliver additional services.

6. Systemic and Structural Improvements

- Reform the EHCP process to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and collaboration.
- Assign named LA contacts to schools for consistency and relationship-building.
- Establish a Strategic Collaboration Framework (e.g., Kent-Independent Schools SEN Alliance).

7. Innovation and Resource Efficiency

- Encourage cost-effective practices: resource sharing, energy efficiency, and effective use of staff skills.
- Support digital tools like a “Pupil Passport” for real-time tracking and early intervention.
- Promote community partnerships and outreach to extend impact.

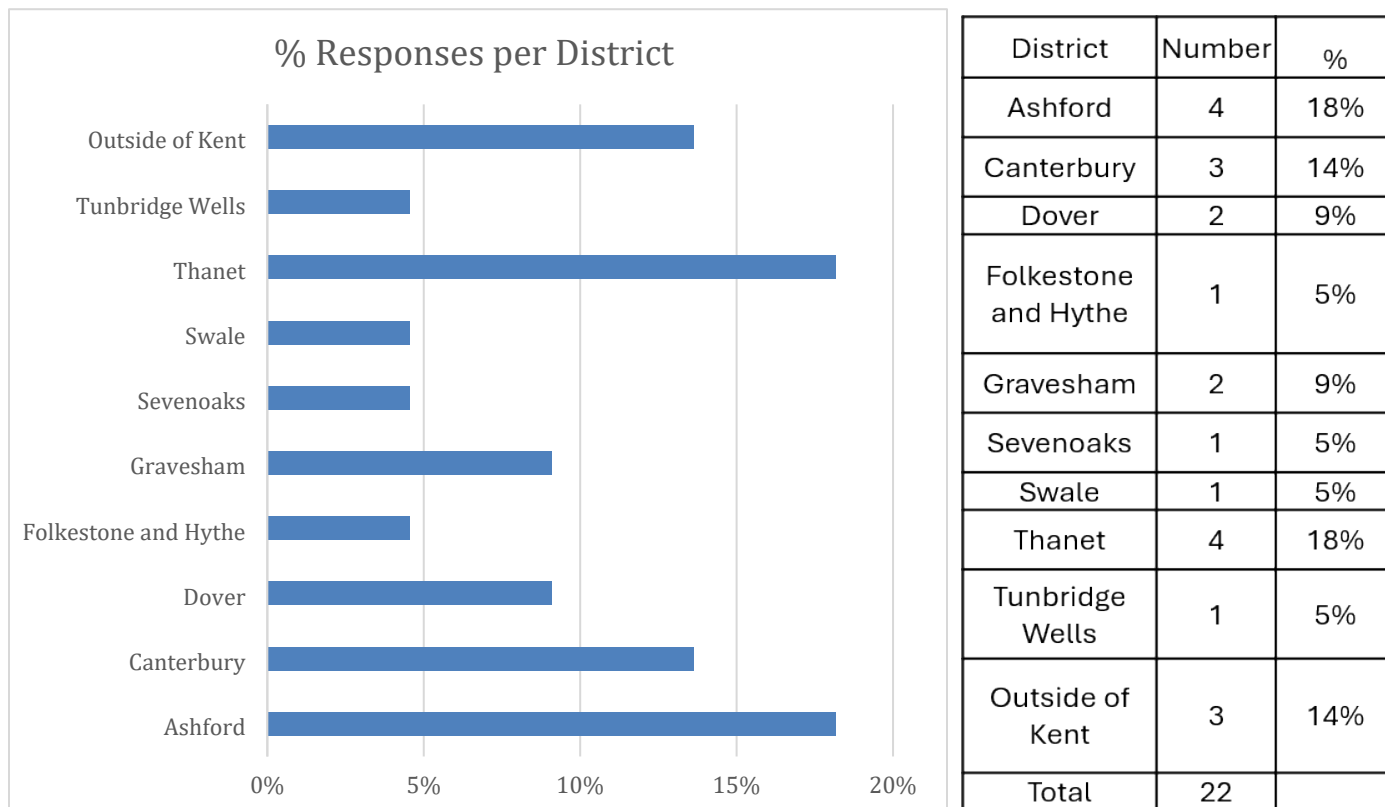
8. Accountability and Responsiveness

- Improve response times for placement decisions and funding confirmations.
- Track and update caseworker information regularly.
- Ensure transparency and feedback loops in all interactions with schools and families.

Appendix 2

Appendix 1: Data Tables and Graphs

Total number of responses – By district (including Schools Outside Kent)

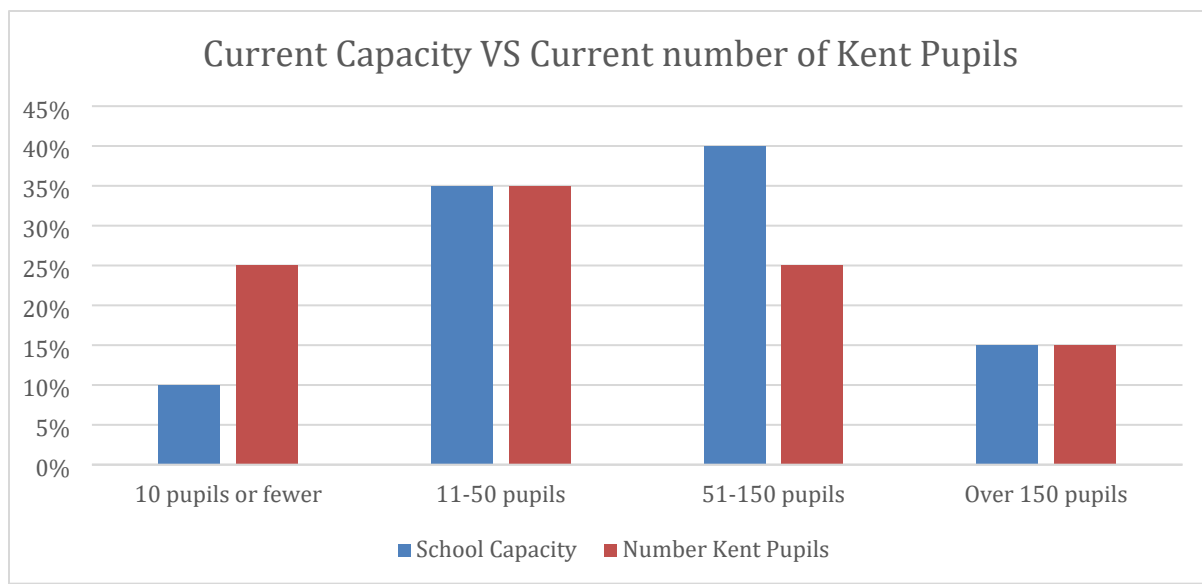


Total number of responses - by school capacity and current number of Kent pupils

What is the current capacity of your school?		
10 pupils or fewer	2	10%
11-50 pupils	7	35%
51-150 pupils	8	40%
Over 150 pupils	3	15%

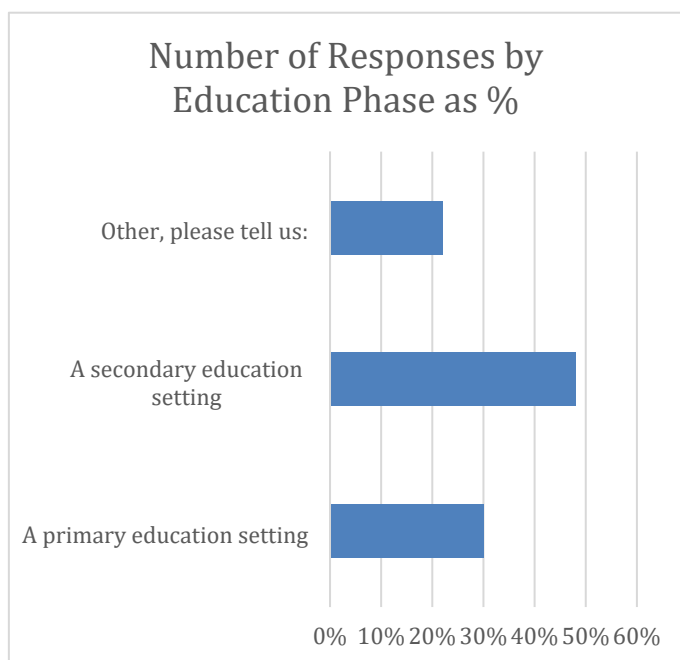
What is the current number of Kent pupils at your school?		
10 pupils or fewer	5	25%
11-50 pupils	7	35%
51-150 pupils	5	25%
Over 150 pupils	3	15%

Appendix 2



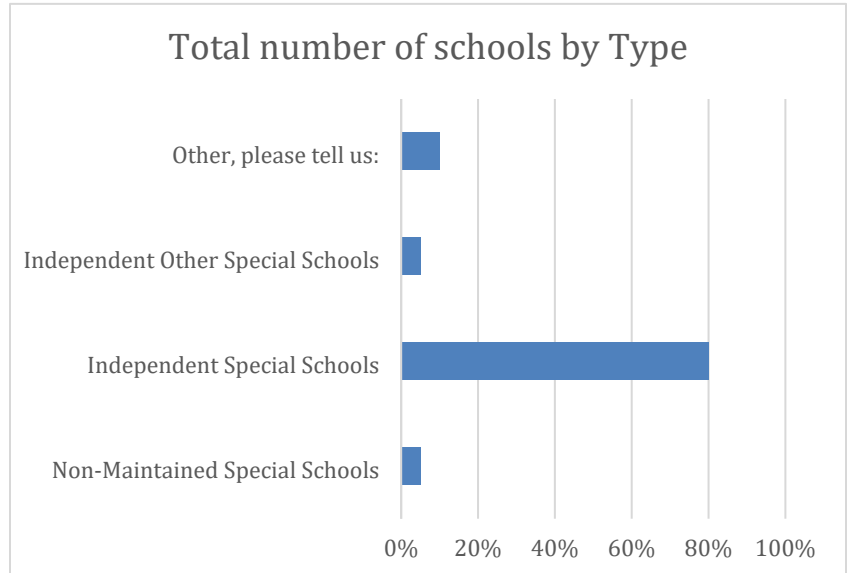
Total number of responses - by Education Phase

Are you a professional working in / with:		
A primary education setting	8	30%
A secondary education setting	13	48%
Other, please tell us:	6	22%

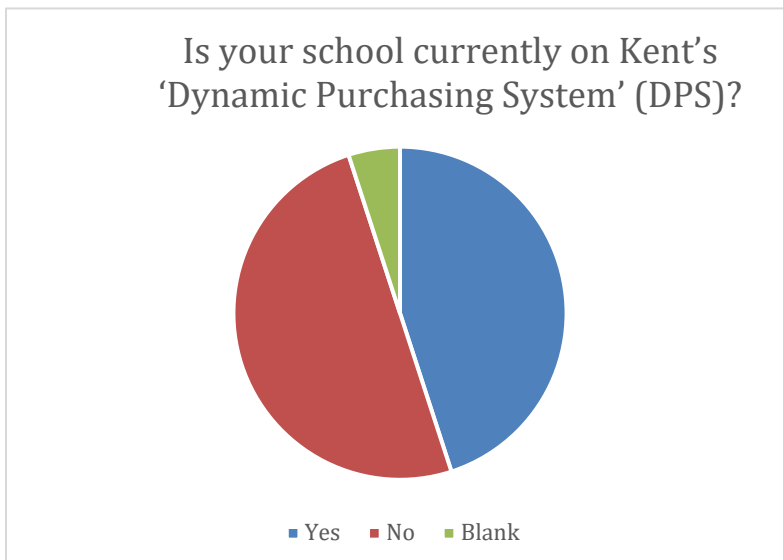


Total number of responses - by School Type

Total number and percentage by School Type		
Non-Maintained Special Schools	1	5%
Independent Special Schools	16	80%
Independent Other Special Schools	1	5%
Other	2	10%

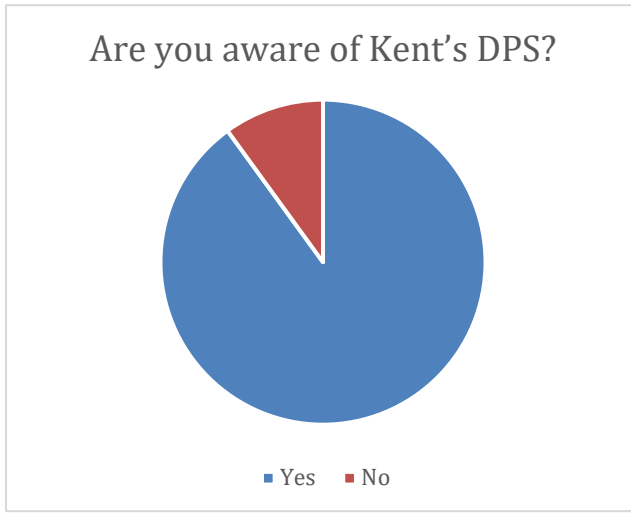


Total Number of responses - Breakdown by DPS/ non DPS



Is your school currently on Kent's 'Dynamic Purchasing System' (DPS)?		
Yes	9	45%
No	10	50%
Blank	1	5%

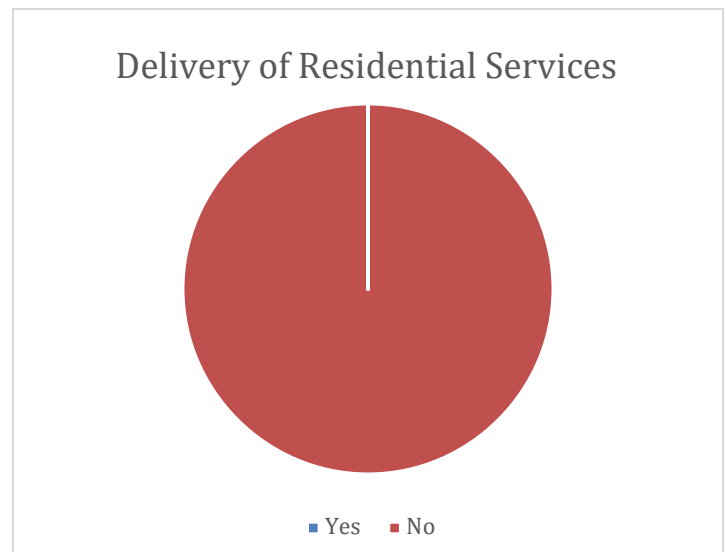
Summary of responses regarding schools' awareness of the Kent DPS Framework



Are you aware of Kent's DPS?		
Yes	9	90%
No	1	10%

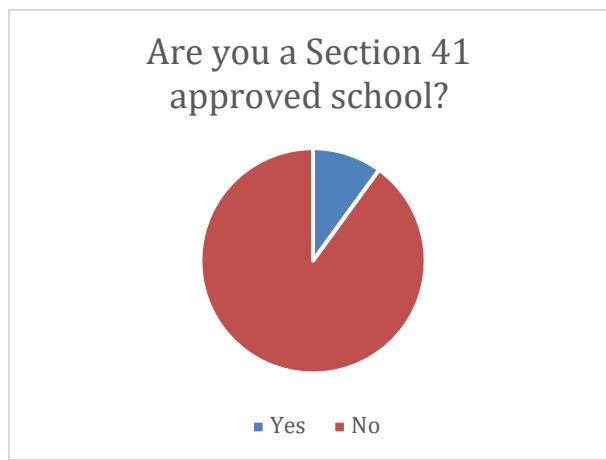
Number and percentage of respondents that deliver residential services

Delivery of Residential Services		
Yes	0	0%
No	20	100%



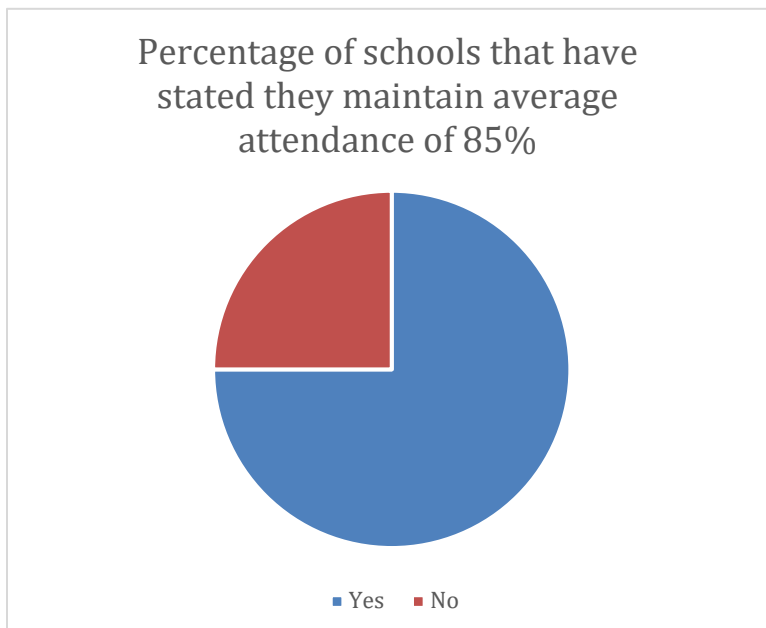
Respondent Breakdown: Section 41 vs Non-Section 41 Schools

Are you a Section 41 approved school?		
Yes	2	10%
No	18	90%



Number and Proportion of Schools Maintaining 85% Average Attendance

Do you currently maintain an average attendance of a minimum of 85% for the cohort of children and young people that you support?		
Yes	15	75%
No	5	25%

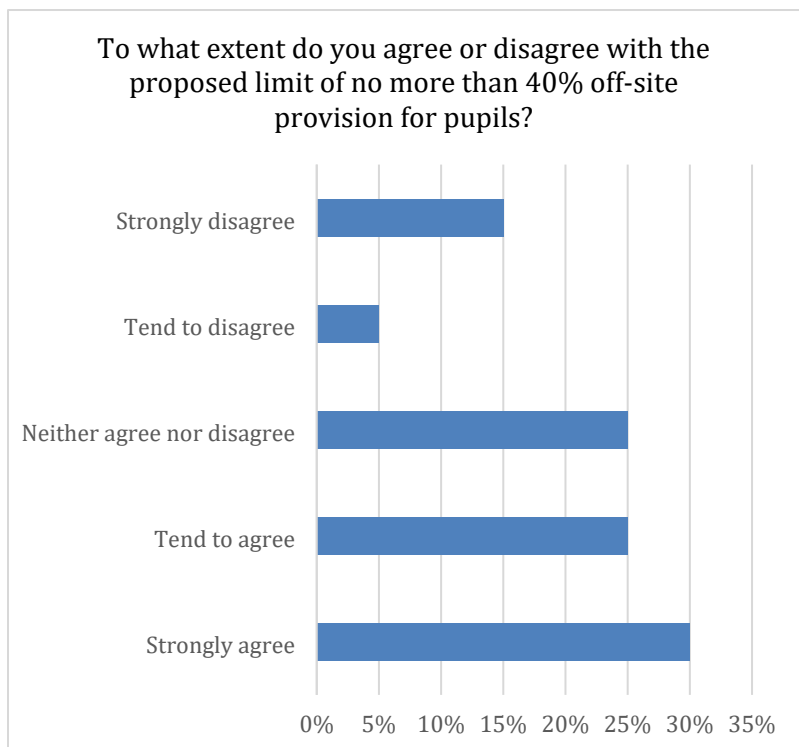


Appendix 2

Attendance Trends for Learners with Less Than 85% Attendance

Average Attendance
83%
73.79%
78%
79.2
0% - No pupils enrolled.

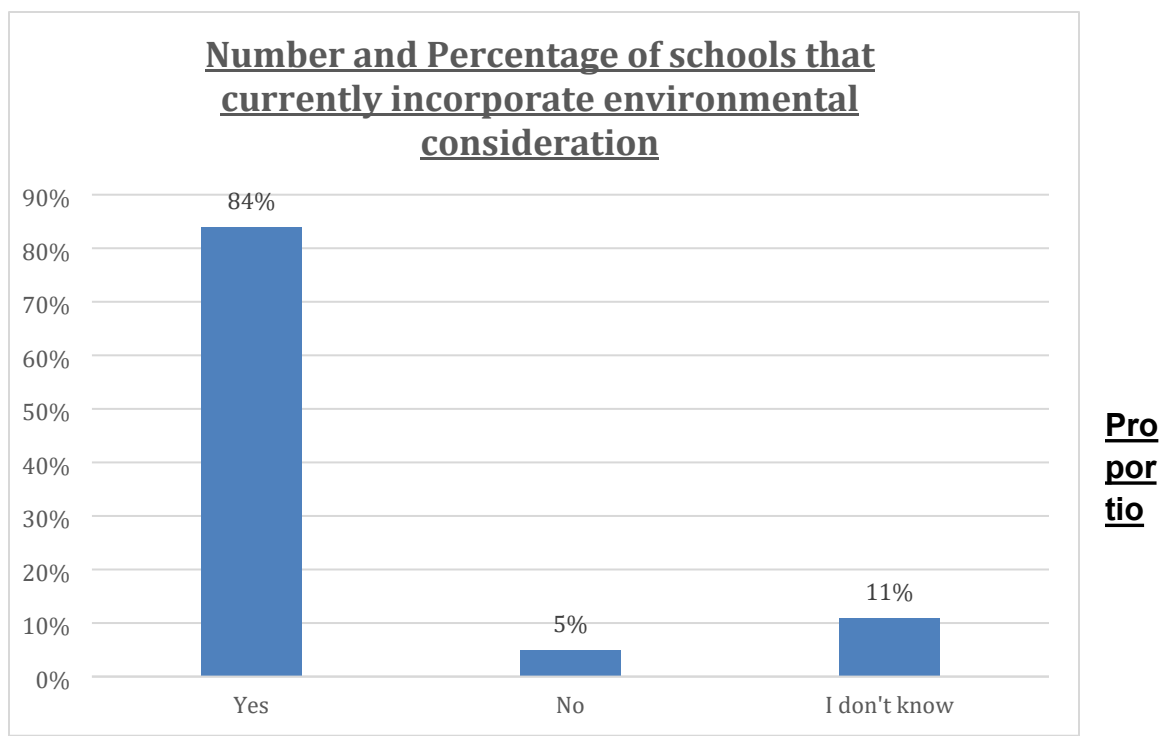
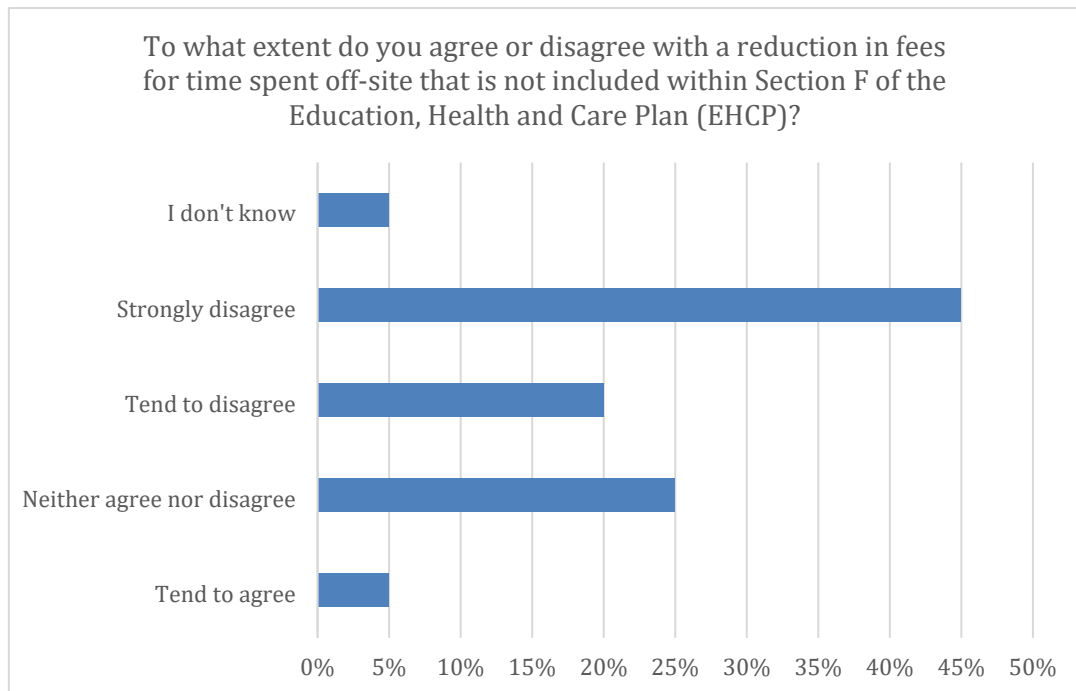
Stakeholder Views on the 40% Cap for Off-Site Pupil Provision



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed limit of no more than 40% off-site provision for pupils?		
Strongly agree	6	30%
Tend to agree	5	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	5	25%
Tend to disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	3	15%

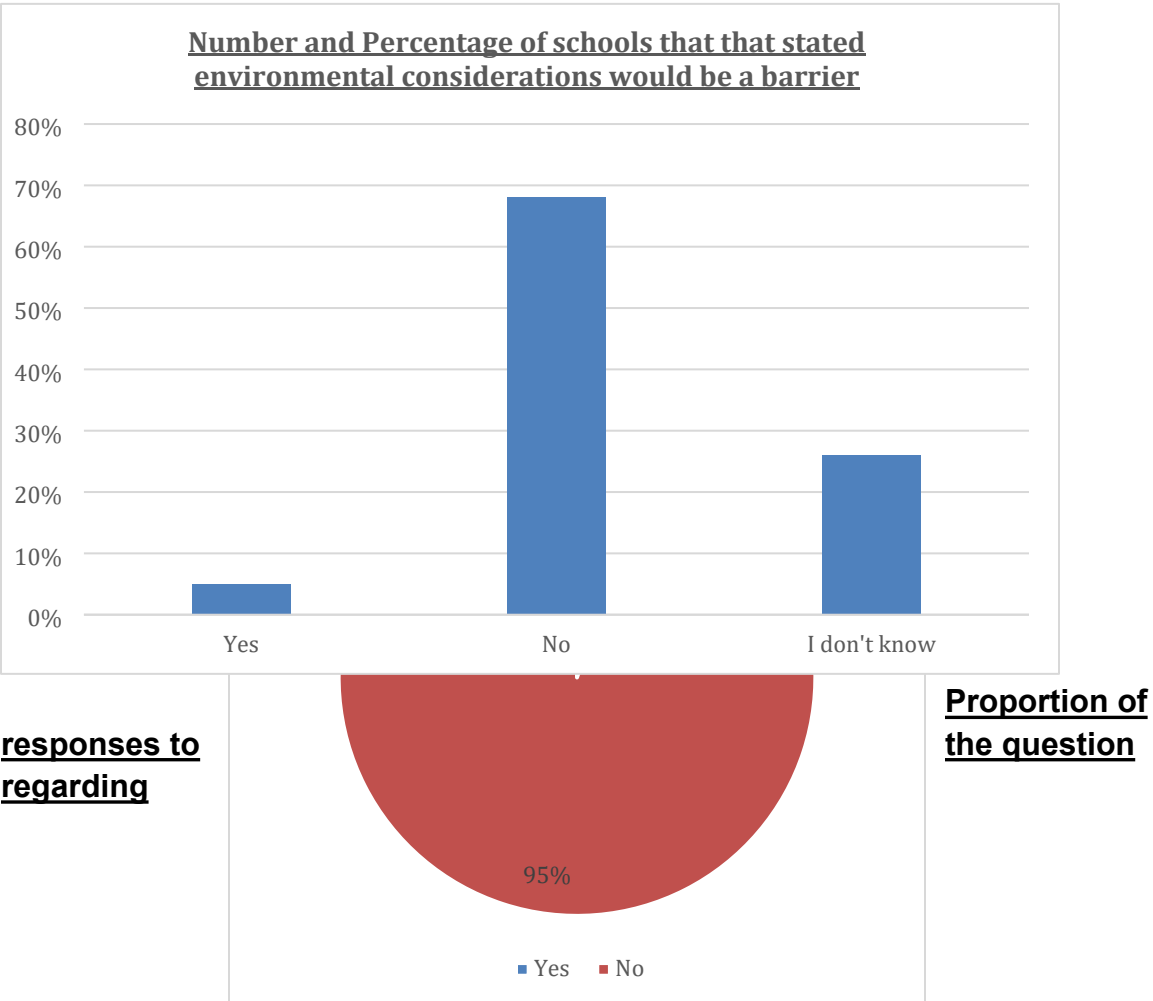
Appendix 2

Range of Opinions on Fee Reductions for Off-Site Support Not Included in Section F of EHCP



n of Schools Incorporating Environmental Considerations

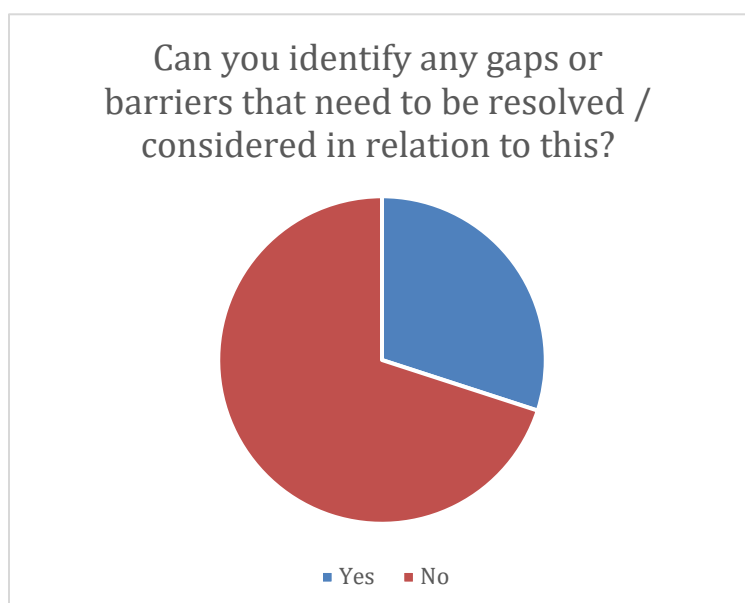
Proportion of schools that stated environmental considerations would be a barrier



circumstances under which following the SEND Code of Practice cannot be applied

Extent to Which Respondents Identified Challenges in Following the SEND Code of Practice

Can you identify any gaps or barriers that need to be resolved / considered in relation to this?		
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%



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