Leeds Parent Carer Forum

Annual Survey 2026 — At a Glance

What 154 parent carers told us about SEND services in Leeds

154	26	2026
parent carers responded	Leeds postcode districts	survey year

The headline message

Families described both good support and serious difficulties. Support worked best when professionals listened, communicated clearly, understood the child and followed through. Problems were most likely when families waited without enough help, had to repeat their story or had to coordinate services themselves.

Education and EHCPs — a major concern

Education and EHCPs were among the most significant issues raised. Some families praised supportive schools, SENCOs and educational psychologists. Others described delays, outdated plans, missing provision and poor communication.

- An EHCP only helps if the provision written in it is delivered.
- Delays and slow amendments can leave plans out of date.
- Families want clearer updates during assessment, review and amendment.
- Children on SEN Support also need visible, accountable help.
- Positive experiences were linked to staff who understood the child and worked in partnership with families.

> *“Sensap don’t communicate or respond to emails even after stage 2 complaint asking for ehcp to be updated.”*

Families whose children had an EHCP were over-represented in the survey, so these findings describe respondents’ experiences rather than every Leeds family. More detail: Sections 3 and 6 of the full report.

What families valued

- Professionals who listened and took concerns seriously.
- Support tailored to the child and reasonable adjustments.
- Clear explanations, timely updates and a named contact.
- Practical information and peer support.

> *“My sons hospital stay was actually very positive and they went out of their way to support both myself and my son, made him feel comfortable and listened to all his needs.”*

Concerns across services

- Waiting without enough practical help or updates.
- Poor information-sharing across education, health and social care.
- Families having to chase services and coordinate support themselves.
- Too little support before needs reached crisis point.

> *“Information does not flow between services. Education, health and social care do not share information, so we repeat the same history again and again, and things fall through the gaps.”*

More detail: Sections 4, 5, 9 and 13.

Key findings and what families want next

42 of 57	**61 of 80**	**98 of 154**
could not access needed mental-health support	had not accessed sleep support	had heard of the Leeds Local Offer

Health and wellbeing

Families described referral delays, unclear responsibility, gaps in mental-health, sleep, feeding and therapy support, and positive hospital care where staff listened and made adjustments.

> *“Services passing responsibility to each other. No one taking accountability.”*

These figures use different follow-up question bases and should not be compared as if all 154 people answered each question. More detail: Section 7.

Assessment, short breaks and adulthood

- Practical support is needed before, during and after neurodevelopmental assessment.
- Short breaks could be excellent, but availability, continuity and accessibility were concerns.
- Preparing for adulthood should start earlier, with clear information and named support.

More detail: Sections 8, 10 and 11.

Information and support

Almost two-thirds had heard of the Leeds Local Offer (98 of 154; 63.6%). Among those who rated services rather than selecting “Not used”, 19 of 74 rated the Local Offer good or very good, and 30 of 67 rated LPCF good or very good. LPCF will use this feedback as an accountability baseline.

> *“I find that I get a lot of info by attending things such as PCF and listening to other parents.”*

More detail: Section 12. The survey did not ask a separate SENDIASS rating question.

What families want to happen next

- Timely EHCP decisions, current plans and delivery of agreed provision.
- Clear communication with families during assessments, reviews and amendments.
- Useful support while families wait — before needs reach crisis.
- Better access to mental-health, sleep, feeding, therapy and specialist support.
- Named contacts, regular updates and understandable decisions.
- Better coordination across education, health and social care.
- Accessible short breaks and earlier preparation for adulthood.
- Information that is current, easy to find and easy to read.
- Visible action after feedback, with progress reported back to families.

About the survey and full report

The survey was voluntary and describes the people who responded, not every SEND family in Leeds. Percentages use the number answering each question. The full report contains detailed findings, quotations, methods, comparisons and recommendations. Please contact LPCF via email info@leedsparentcarerforum.co.uk or phone 07423 436813 if you require this at-a-glance summary or the full report in another accessible format.