

Exclusions and SEND: A Survey

By Northants Parent Forum Group

The Background

Northants Parent Forum Group had feedback from parents that exclusions were an increasing issue.

These reports are a reflection of Department for Education figures which showed that pupils with SEN were six times more likely to be permanently excluded than those without SEN.

Our aim was to gather some statistical and rich text data locally to understand what parent's experiences of exclusions were and how this impacted on them. We included questions which specifically questioned them about so-called 'illegal exclusions' in order to discover if these had been experienced.

The survey ran for a number of weeks in April 2019 and was promoted via social media and our e-bulletin.

Demographics

There were 54 responses with a 74% completion rate.

Parents were asked to fill in a survey per child / young person (C/YP).

The vast majority of respondents (high 90%) reported that their C/YP had a special educational need, disability and / or medical condition.

The respondents reported their C/YP to be a mix of ages though no one responding had a child under 5 years old.

59% of those C/YP had a EHCP issued.

Respondents reported that the C/YP were in a mixture of special and mainstream placements.

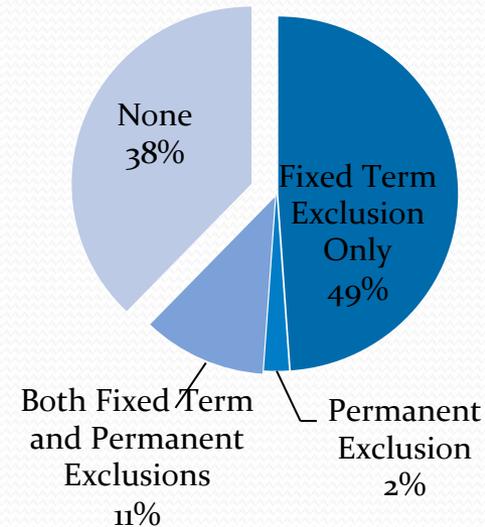
Exclusions

Respondents were asked if their C/YP had ever had a formal exclusion from school, those who answered this question said:

Though 38% of respondents said their C/YP had not had a formal exclusion 47% of those respondents reported that experiences that could be described as an 'informal or unofficial exclusion'

Informal or unofficial exclusions are described by Ambitious about Autism as any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, that is not formally recorded.

That equates to 80% of respondents reporting some type of official or unofficial exclusion.



Exclusion Formalities

When a C/YP is formally excluded, either fixed term or permanently, by a school then the law is clear:

- A letter must be written detailing the nature of the exclusion and the length of exclusion
- Work must be provided by the school for the first 5 days of the exclusions
- The Local Authority must provide work from day 6 of the exclusion

Only 11 respondents reported having a letter for each exclusion, 9 respondents reported never receiving a letter and a further 11 respondents reported a mixed experience of receiving letters.

17 respondents reported that school DID NOT provide work in the first 5 days of the exclusion

11 respondents reported that the Local Authority DID NOT provide work from day 6 and 2 others reported delays in receiving work.

5 respondents reported that their C/YP was left without a school placement due to exclusions.

Summary

Though this was only a small survey it highlights some significant issues, especially around the fulfilment of the legal formalities by schools and the Local Authority.

The free text statements from parents and carers who have experienced their C/YP being excluded were eye-opening; many had lost jobs and homes through exclusions and they noted impacts on the mental health of their C/YP and themselves.

This can only be viewed as a small pilot but it does raise enough issues to justify further research.

Northants Parent Forum Group would like to Thank all respondents and two things will now happen from this analysis:

- Free workshop with a solicitor regarding exclusions on 16.7.19 – tickets available via Eventbrite
- Presentation and circulation of this report to the Disabled Child and Young Person Delivery Group with view to further research being recommended.