## Secondary school workforce

The secondary school workforce was represented by a smaller percentage of respondents (13%) from the education sector. Respondents' roles included senior and middle leaders, teachers and teaching and learning support assistants.

Note: SENCOs are excluded from this analysis as it was not possible to identify which sector they worked within.

The majority of respondents (40%) were based in academies and maintained secondary schools (39%), with 6% from independent schools and 1% from pupil referral units. One hundred percent of this sector recognised the importance of SLC skills to the young people they work with but only a quarter of respondents (26%) felt 'very' confident in their ability to support SLC development. The lower levels of confidence reflect those of the primary workforce.

CONFIDENCE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SLC DEVELOPMENT

VERY   SOMEWHAT   NEITHER CONFIDENT OR NOT   NOT VERY   NOT AT ALL

6%   1%

10%

26%

57%
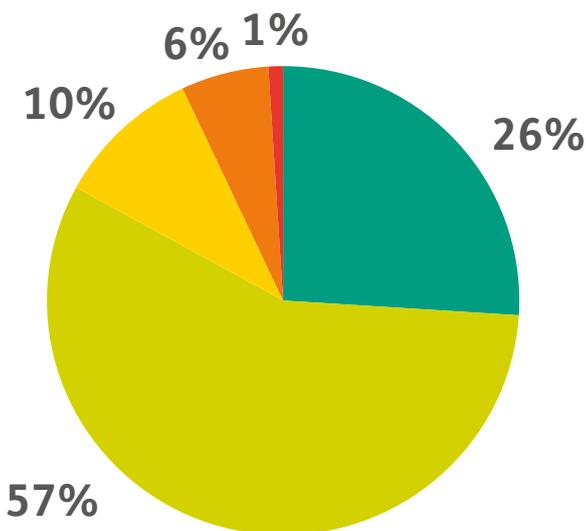
Initial Training and CPD

In accordance with responses from the primary workforce, nearly half of respondents (46%) reported they received no learning at all around SLC development in their initial training, rising to 57% for training to identify and support young people with SLCN. Only 9% reported they had received 'a lot' of initial training in SLC development, rising slightly to 10% for initial training in identifying and supporting those with SLCN. Although these findings are to be expected given the findings from the Carter Review (2015) and the high number of teaching assistant respondents, the figures are still concerning, considering the critical impact of the workforce.

AMOUNT OF INITIAL TRAINING RECEIVED

TYPICAL SLC   SLCN

NONE   A LITTLE   SOME   A LOT
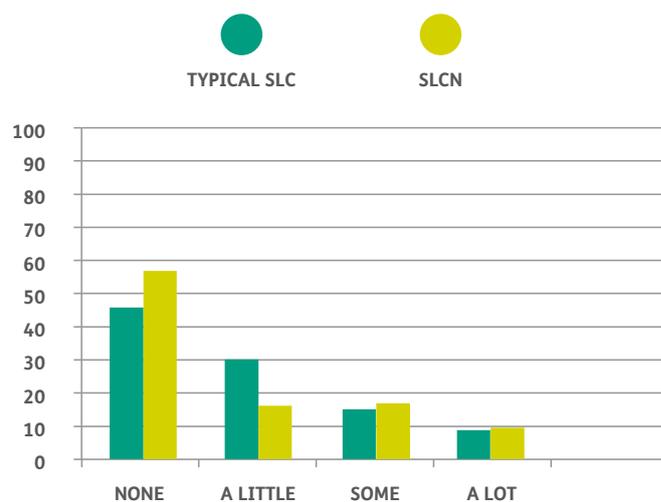
Given the importance of SLC skills for children and young people, particularly as they approach GCSEs and the transition into Further Education, it is alarming that more than a quarter (28%) of our survey respondents had received no CPD at all in SLC development. This figure rises to nearly a third (31%) with regards to learning around identifying and supporting children with SLCN, despite the fact that SLCN is the fourth most common primary SEN in secondary schools.

TYPICAL SLC **SLCN**
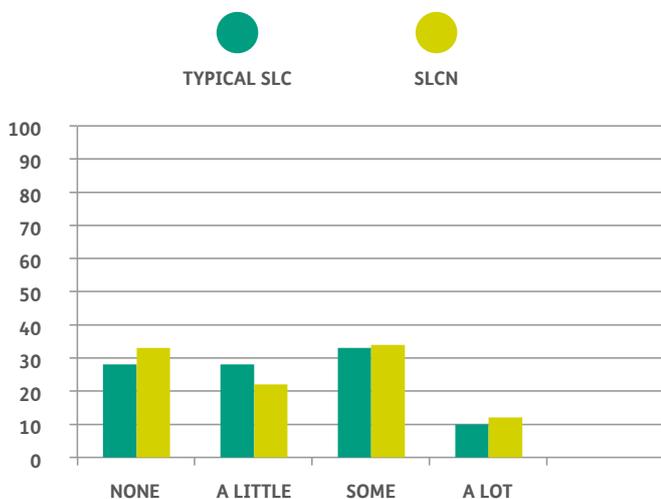
Barriers

Lack of budget (78%) and lack of time (74%) were reported to be the most significant barriers to accessing training and development opportunities, but nearly a third (29%) of respondents also reported that lack of support from senior management was a major challenge to accessing development opportunities.

Lack of relevant opportunities (64%) and staff capacity (60%) were also highlighted as slightly less significant barriers with 48% unsure of where to access information about available CPD opportunities.

Comments about barriers included:

Motivation and Preferences

This sector reports face-to-face training (52%) and formal, accredited training leading to a qualification (73%) as the preferred formats of CPD. Shadowing professional colleagues (41%) and opportunities to try out strategies in practice (50%) were also cited.

Whilst 20% of respondents liked to engage in online learning with tutor support only 16% like self-directed online learning and even less (2%) prefer webinars.

Ninety-one percent of respondents were motivated to improve their practice with 77% seeing it as essential for their role. Sixty-four percent felt that they need to gain a better understanding of SLC and SLCN whilst only 42% were motivated to engage in professional development because they work directly with a young person with SLCN.

The most important factors reported by respondents when considering which development opportunities to undertake included relevance to the role and cost. The individual needs of the young people they work with was also a significant influencing factor, as were location and quality of training.

"There are too many other CPD topics to cover therefore time becomes the biggest barrier"

"There are so many areas in SEN that I need to stay current in, SLCN CPD is for our speech therapist to cascade".

Training Needs

Half (53%) of the workforce feel they need learning around how to support children with SLCN and 47% feel they need learning around supporting young people who are learning EAL with their SLC development. Talking to parents about their child's SLC or SLCN was also identified by 43%, with only 5% of the workforce feeling there were no gaps in their learning. With this sector in particular, contact with parents is increasingly less and less, so raising a discussion around a child's SLCN is understandably a challenge, particularly if you lack the background knowledge on SLC.

This sector suggested INSET training days are prime opportunities for training in SLC but also wanted practical solutions (such as classroom strategies and progress measuring tools), accredited qualifications and blended or flexible learning options.

Other comments included:

These comments from respondents highlight the fundamental shift needed to make SLC integral to school practice and an essential part of the initial training process for all secondary school staff.

"I feel it should be part of initial teacher training"

"How to embed good practice in school curriculum"

"How to monitor good practice and ensure progress"