

Strengthening approaches to the inclusion of pupils with additional needs in Kent

Workshops to discuss initial key findings and shape solutions

October 2019



Aims of the project

1

To engage those involved in supporting mainstream inclusion within the Kent local system.

2

To explore the barriers and challenges to effective inclusion of young people with additional needs in mainstream settings and schools.

3

To shape a shared strategic approach to fostering inclusion in mainstream settings and schools across Kent.

Agenda for today's discussion

1

Introduction and aims for today's discussion

2

The current context: Sharing and refining initial key messages

3

Future solutions: Considering what would help to strengthen inclusion

4

Next steps: Taking this work forward

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Current context of inclusion within Kent: The local area inspection

The local area SEND inspection (early 2019)

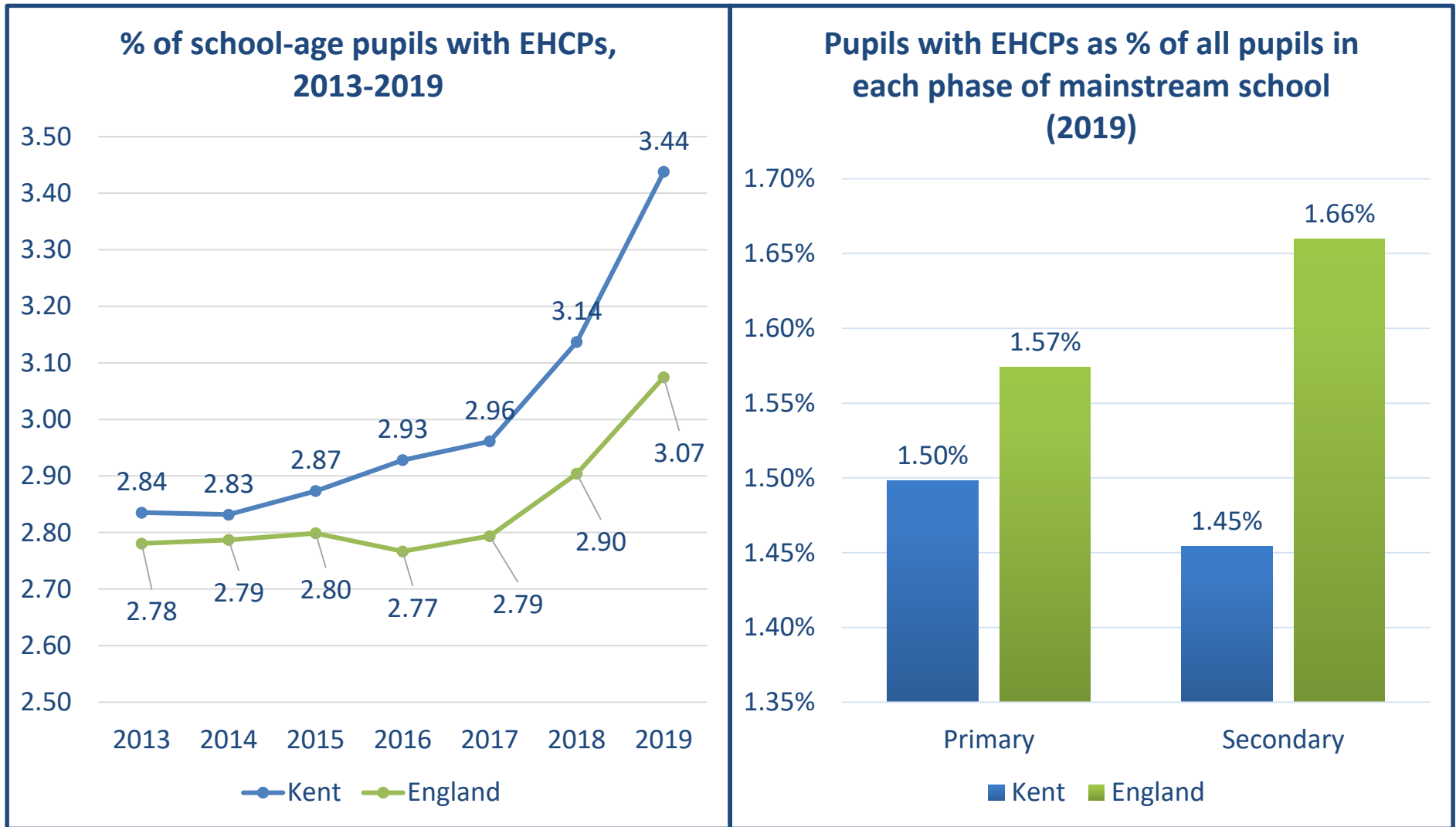
Some strong messages about the local system ...

'Too many children and young people with SEND do not get the support they need in Kent. Although many individuals, organisations and providers do their best, the fragmented system has created too many opportunities for the needs of these children to be missed. Parents are carers who contributed to the inspection are overwhelmingly negative about their dealings with the local area.'

... but some specific messages about the consistency and commitment to inclusion in Kent

'Not all schools and settings are willing to accommodate children and young people with SEND. One parent explained that eight of the 10 schools she contacted to discuss her disabled son did not want to offer him a place. The local area, including school and academy leaders, does not ensure that they reliably meet their duties in this regard.'

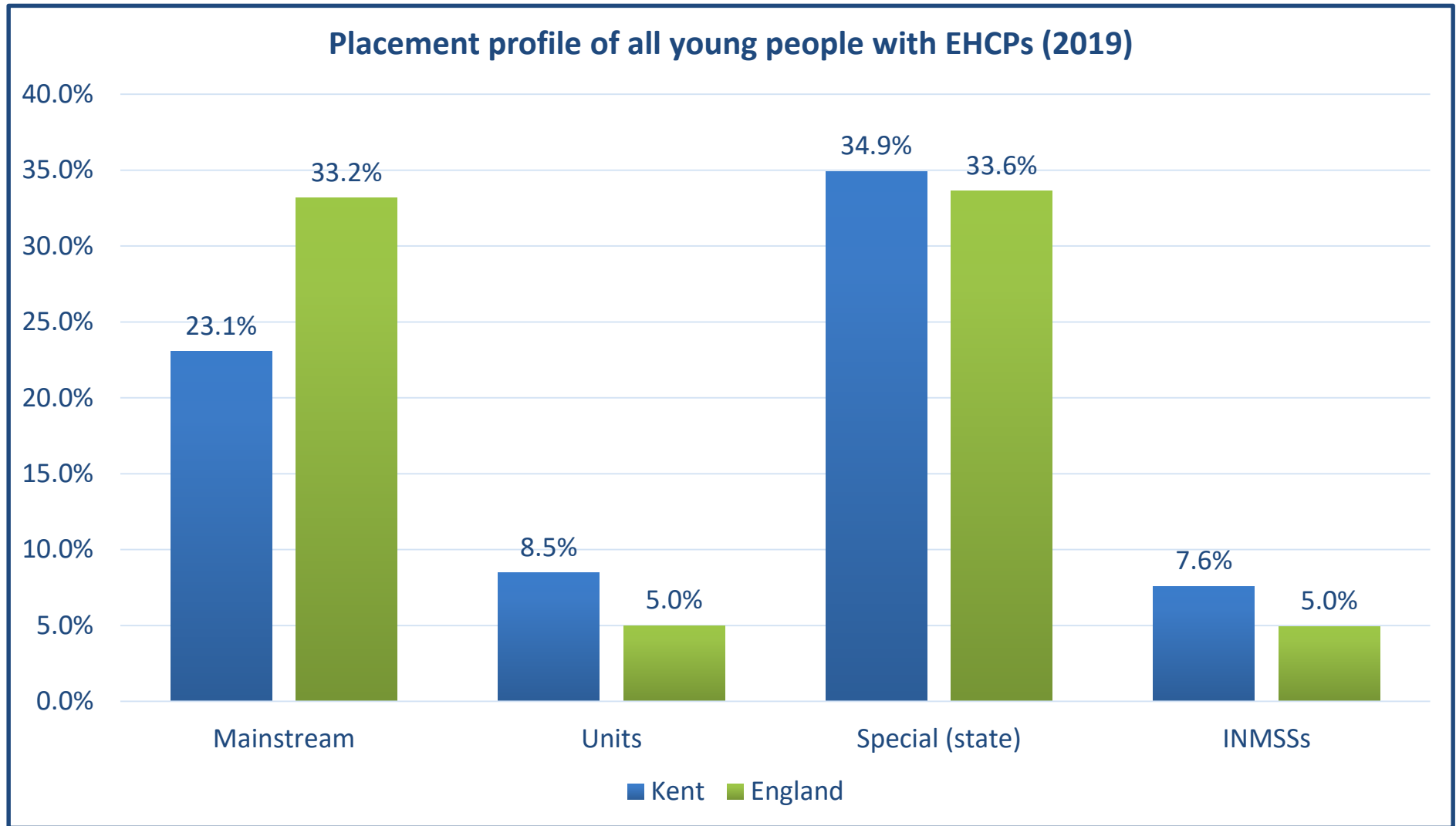
Current context of inclusion in Kent: Some key points from the data



Source: SEN in England 2019 (DfE).

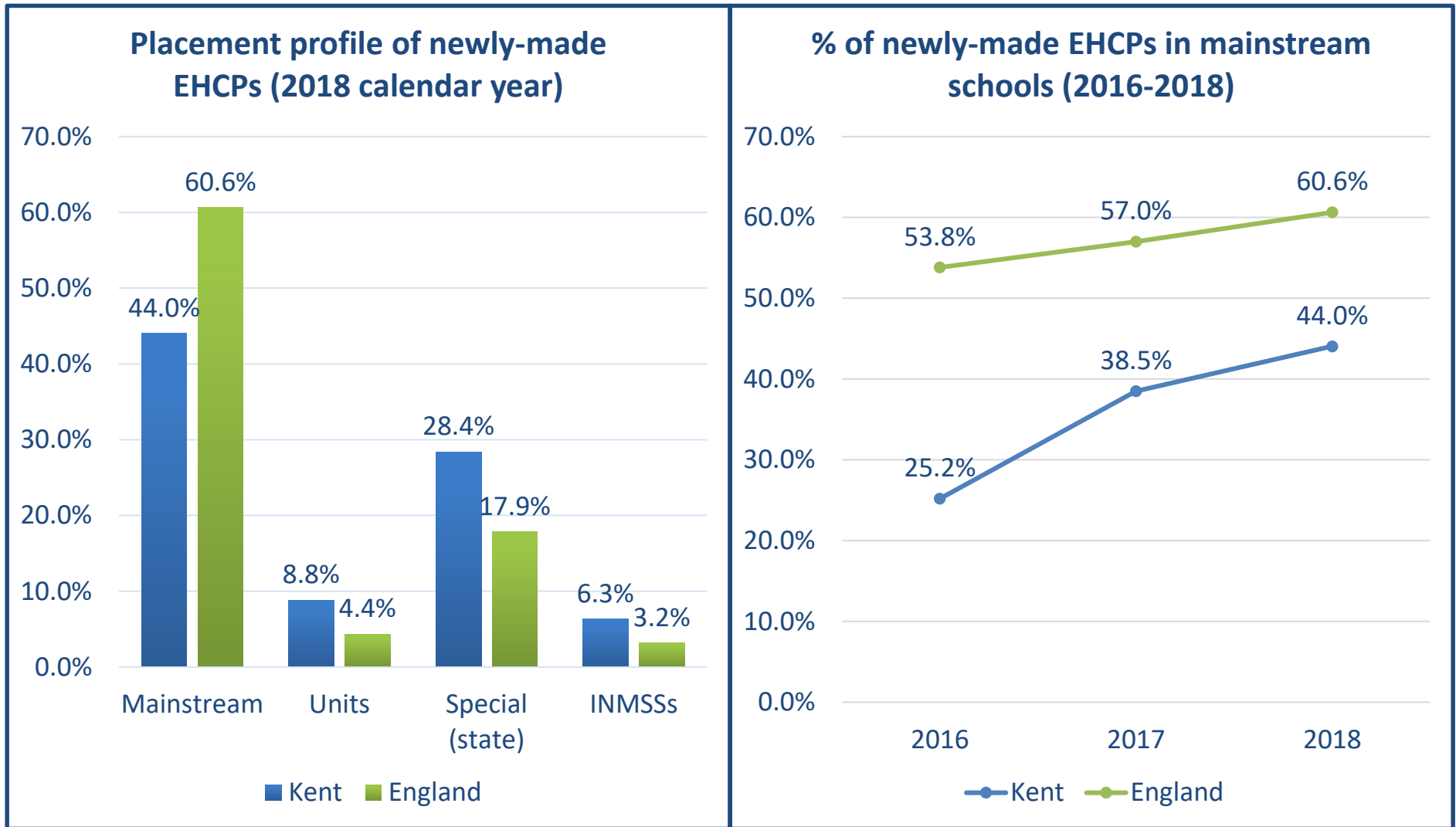
Source: SEN in England 2019 (DfE)

Current context of inclusion in Kent: Some key points from the data



Source: Statements of SEN and EHC Plans: England 2019 (DfE)

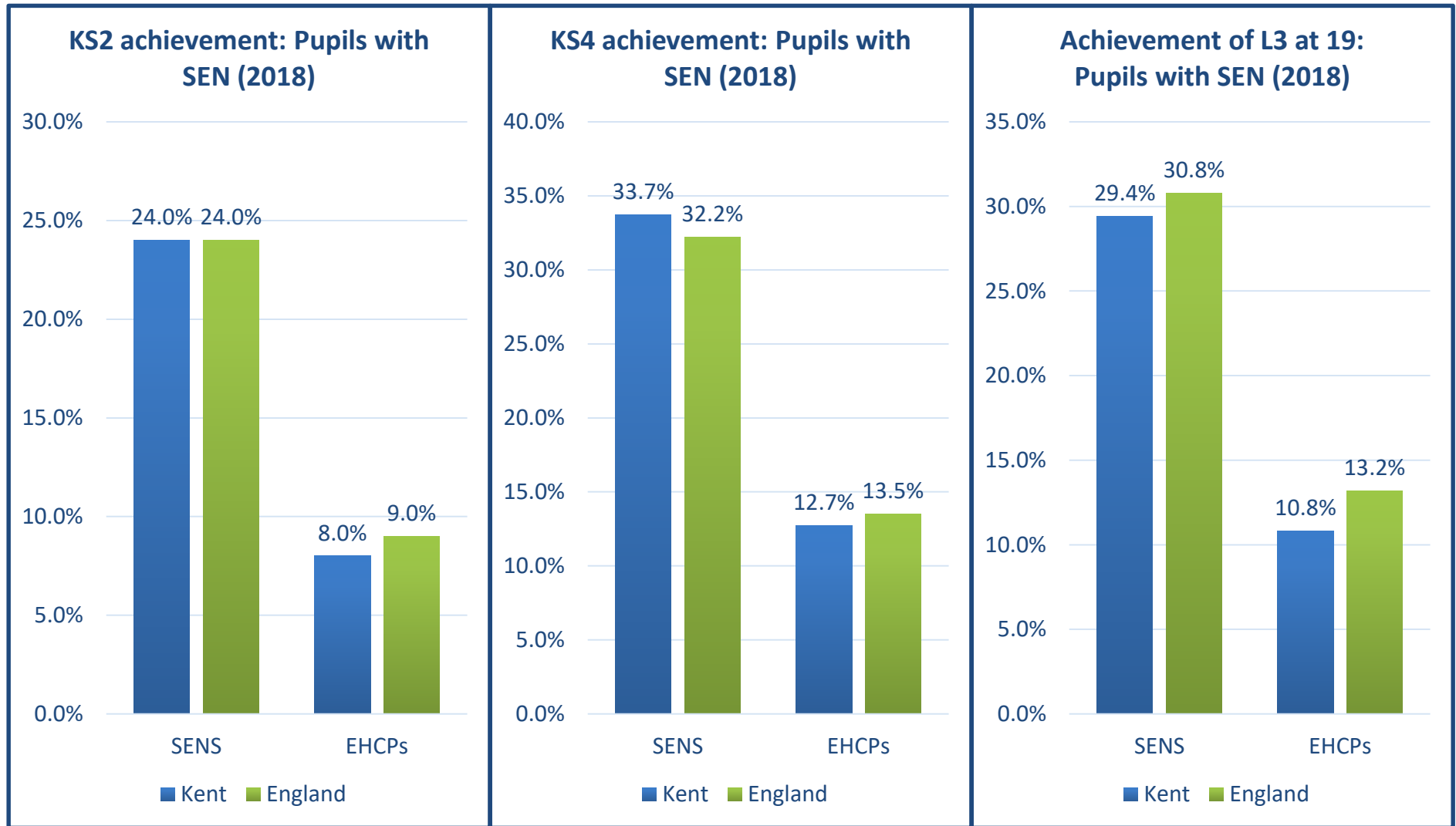
Current context of inclusion in Kent: Some key points from the data



Source: Statements of SEN and EHC Plans: England 2019 (DfE)

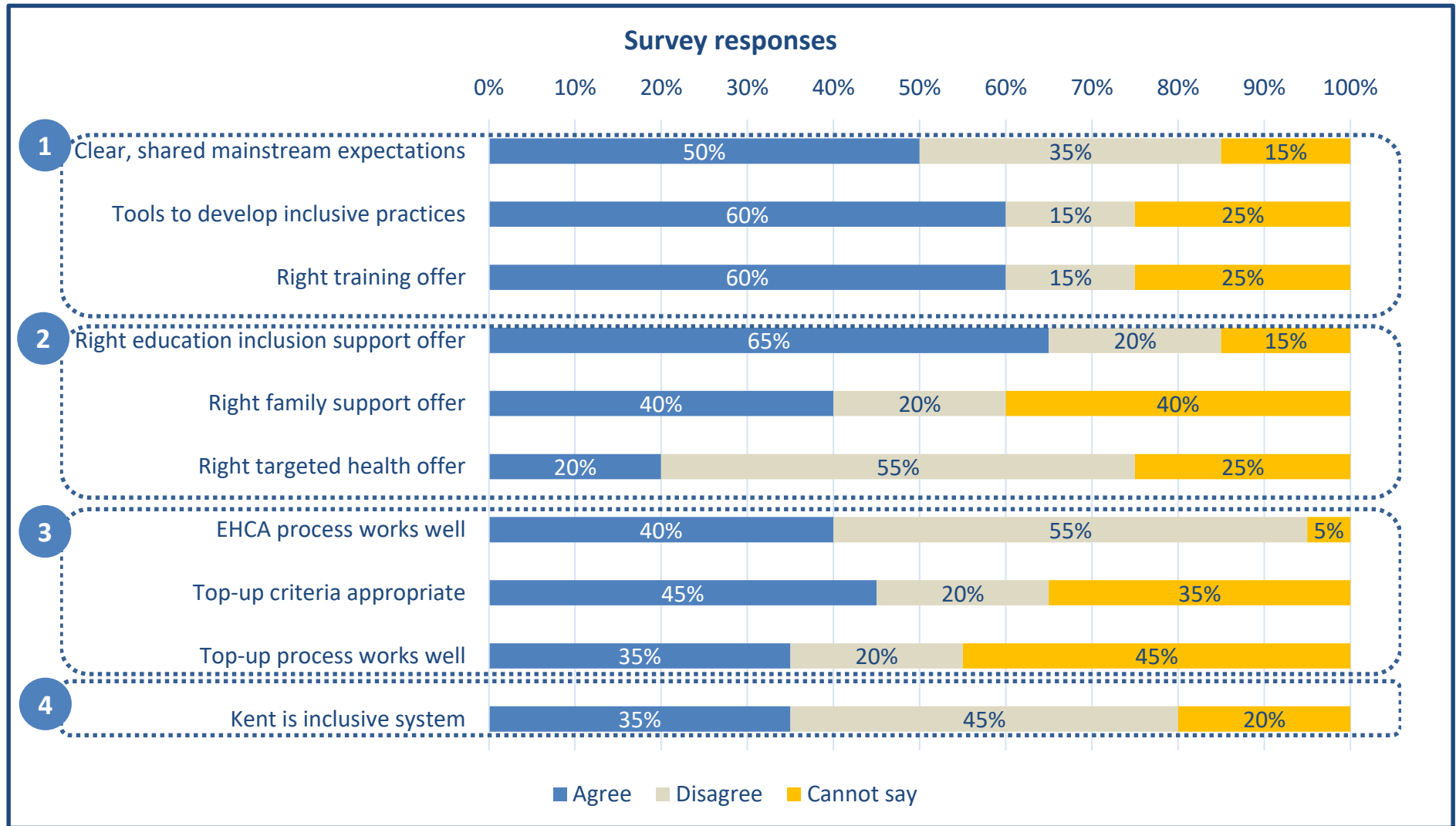
Source: Statements of SEN and EHC Plans: England 2019 (DfE)

Current context of inclusion in Kent: Some key points from the data



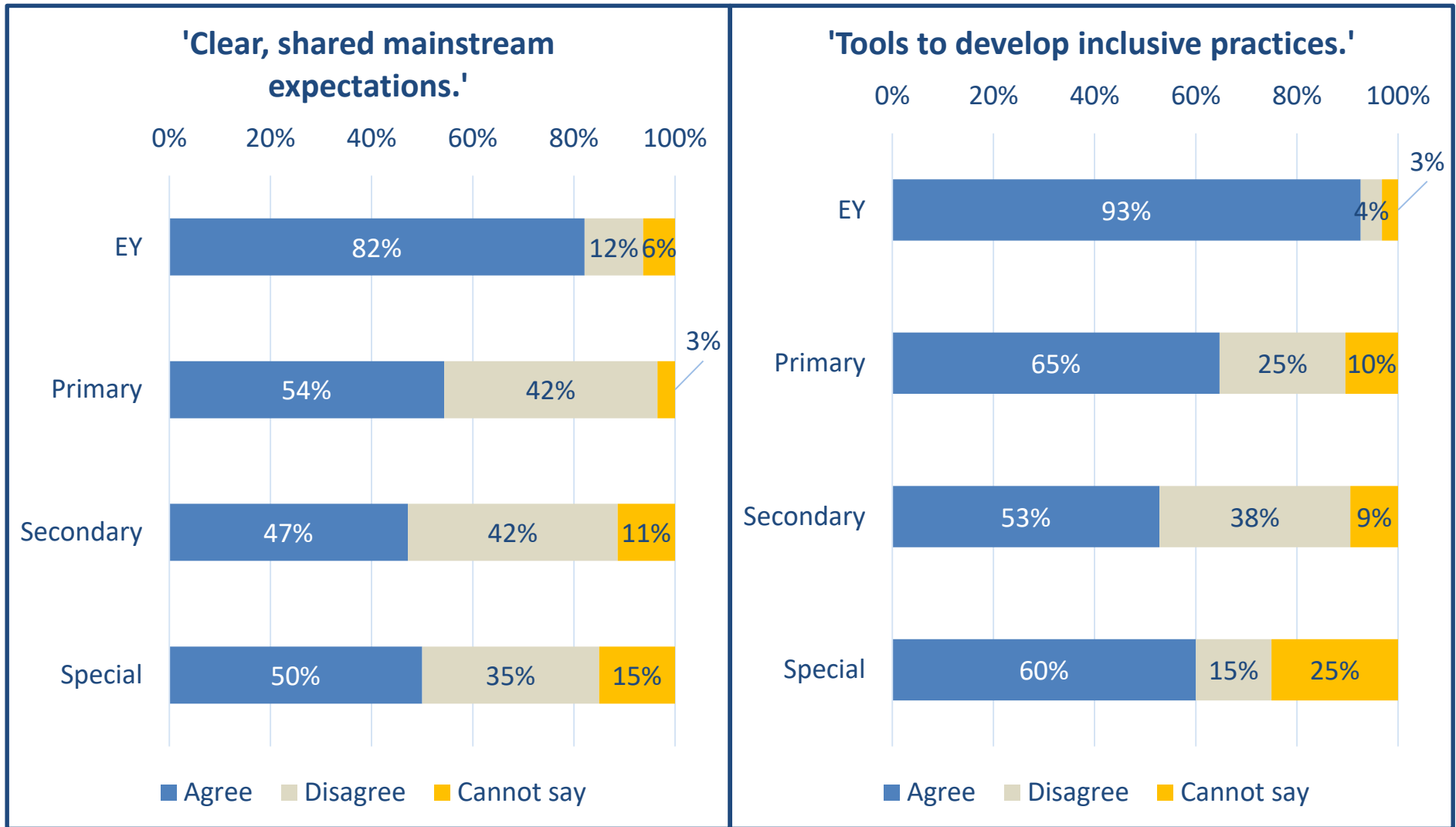
Sources: Xxx (DfE)

10 statements about aspects of system-level practice and whether these reflect the Kent system. (Organised around four themes.)

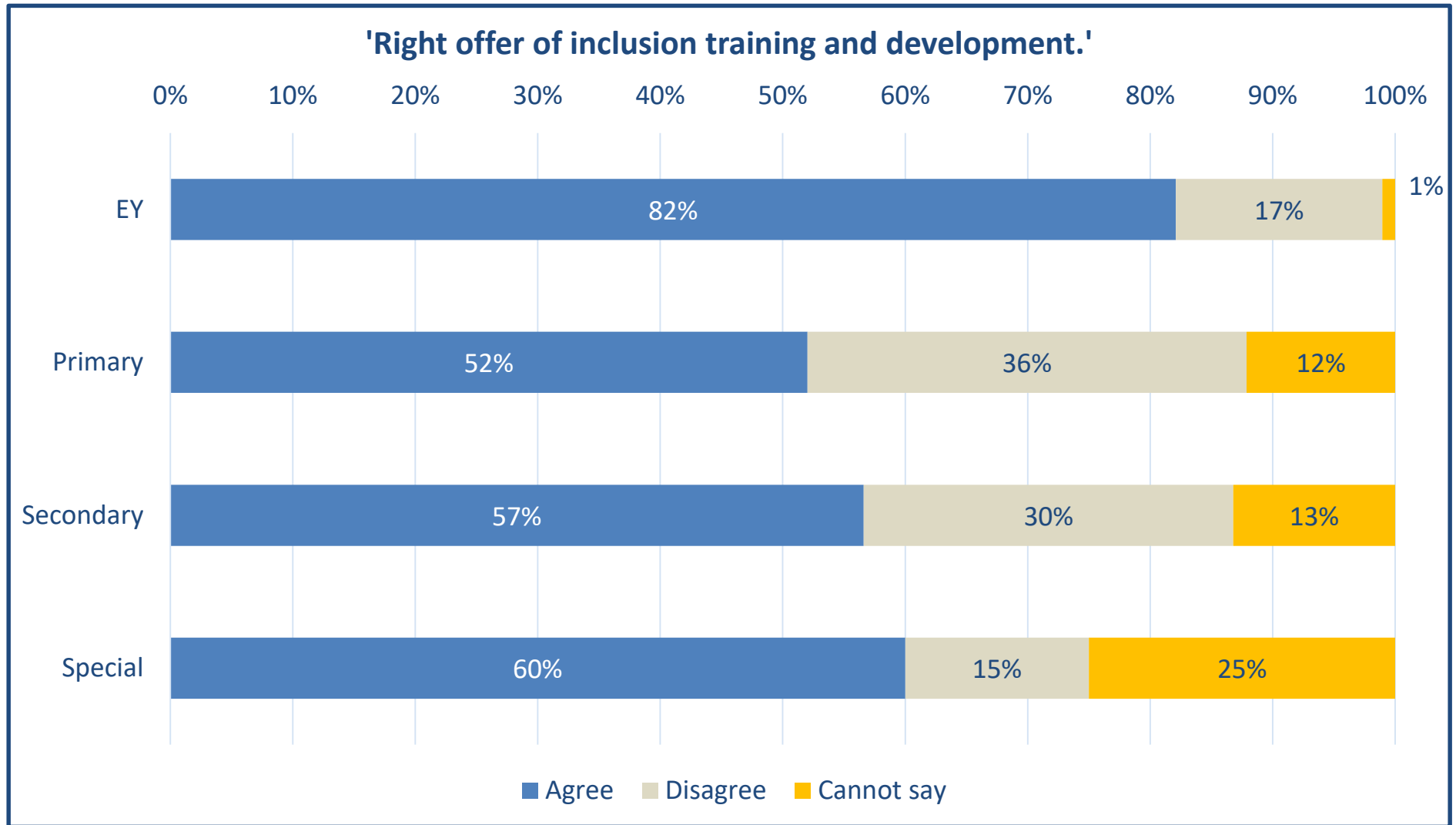


Source: Survey carried out during the second half of the summer term 2018/19. Responses = 353 (48% from primary schools, 27% early years (EY) settings, 15% secondary, 6% from special schools and AP providers, and 1-3% from other professionals. ("Primary" includes infant and junior schools; "special" includes special schools and AP providers.)

Theme 1: Expectations of and capacity for mainstream inclusion



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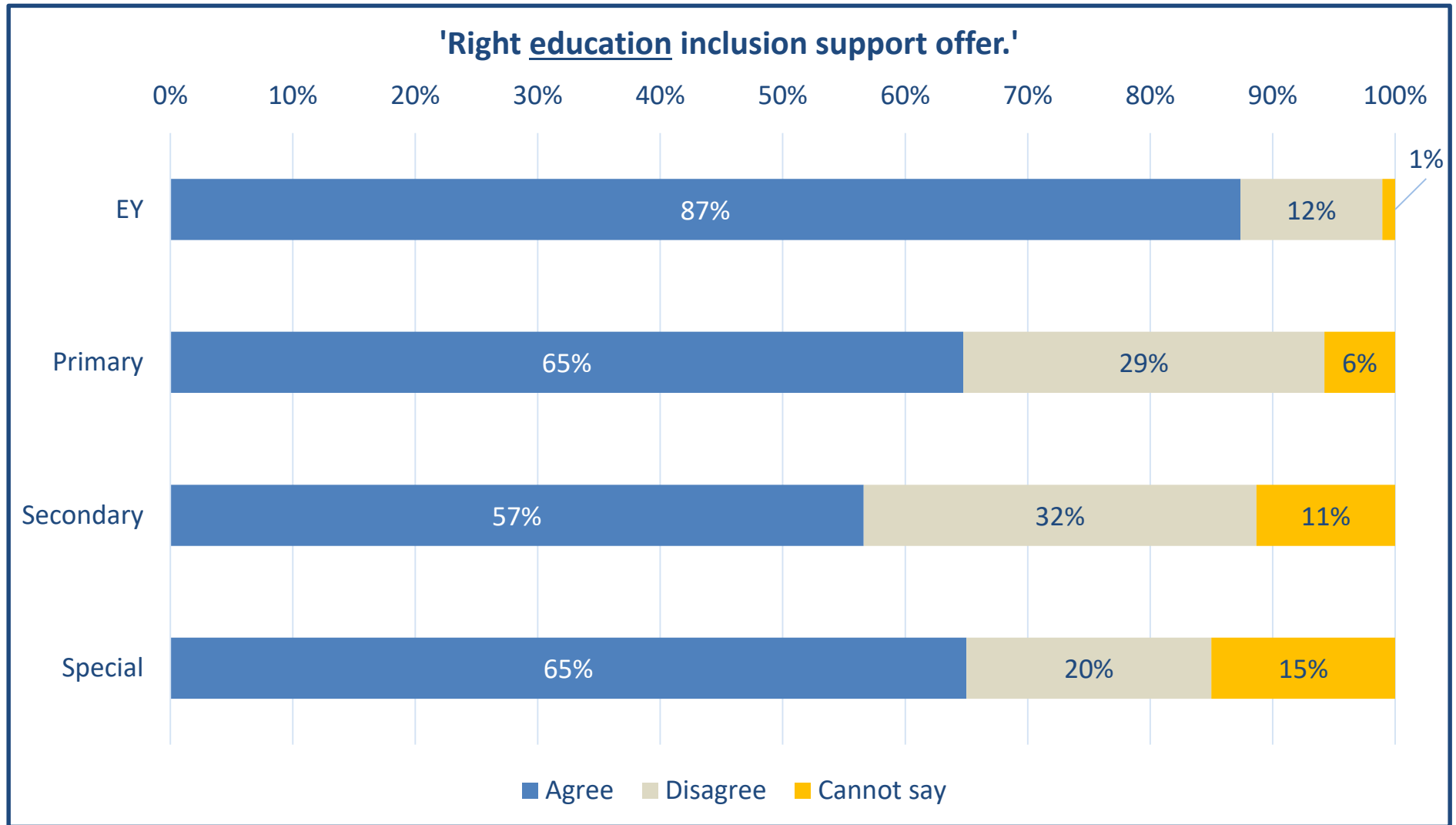
Expectations – strong message about inconsistency of expectations of what good inclusive mainstream practice looks like – some settings / schools less inclusive, more inclusive settings / schools being overwhelmed. Lack of recognition and challenge. What is the “Kent approach”? Strong desire for this to be co-developed and set out across all phases and stages.

Training – strong messages across all stages and phases about the need for there to be a core training offer to build whole-school capacity around inclusion – not just SENCOs, but classroom staff and leaders. A specific need was identified around mental health support.

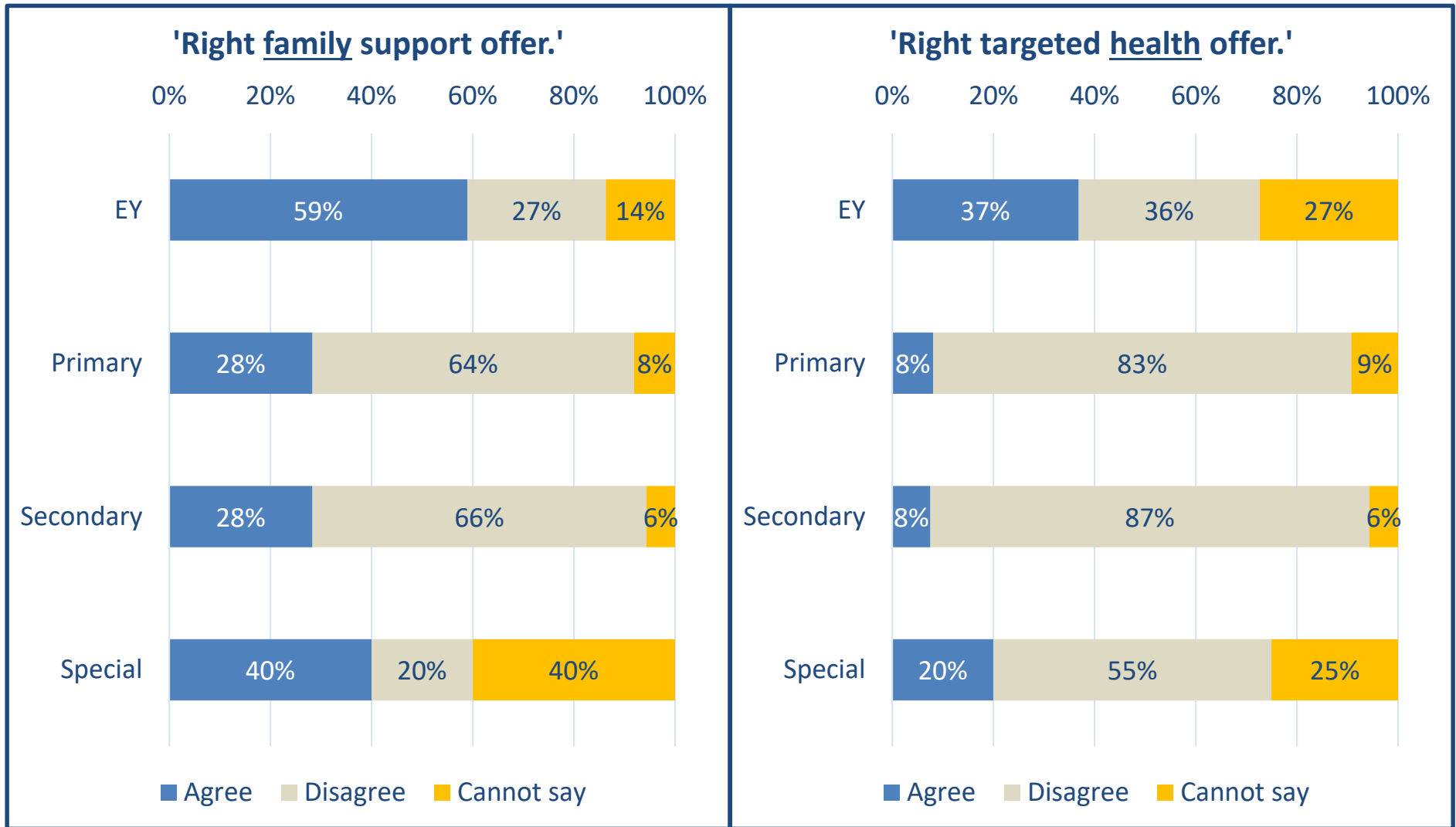
Flexibility – challenges around staffing capacity (early years), physical space (primary) and the curriculum (secondary) that limit capacity to be inclusive. (Some colleagues questioning how this should fit with duties around disability equality and making reasonable adjustments.)

Transition – strong messages from all stages and phases about the need to strengthen (a) the practice of transition (more of a planned, partnership approach) and (b) the continuity of external support across key transition-points.

Theme 2: Targeted support for inclusion



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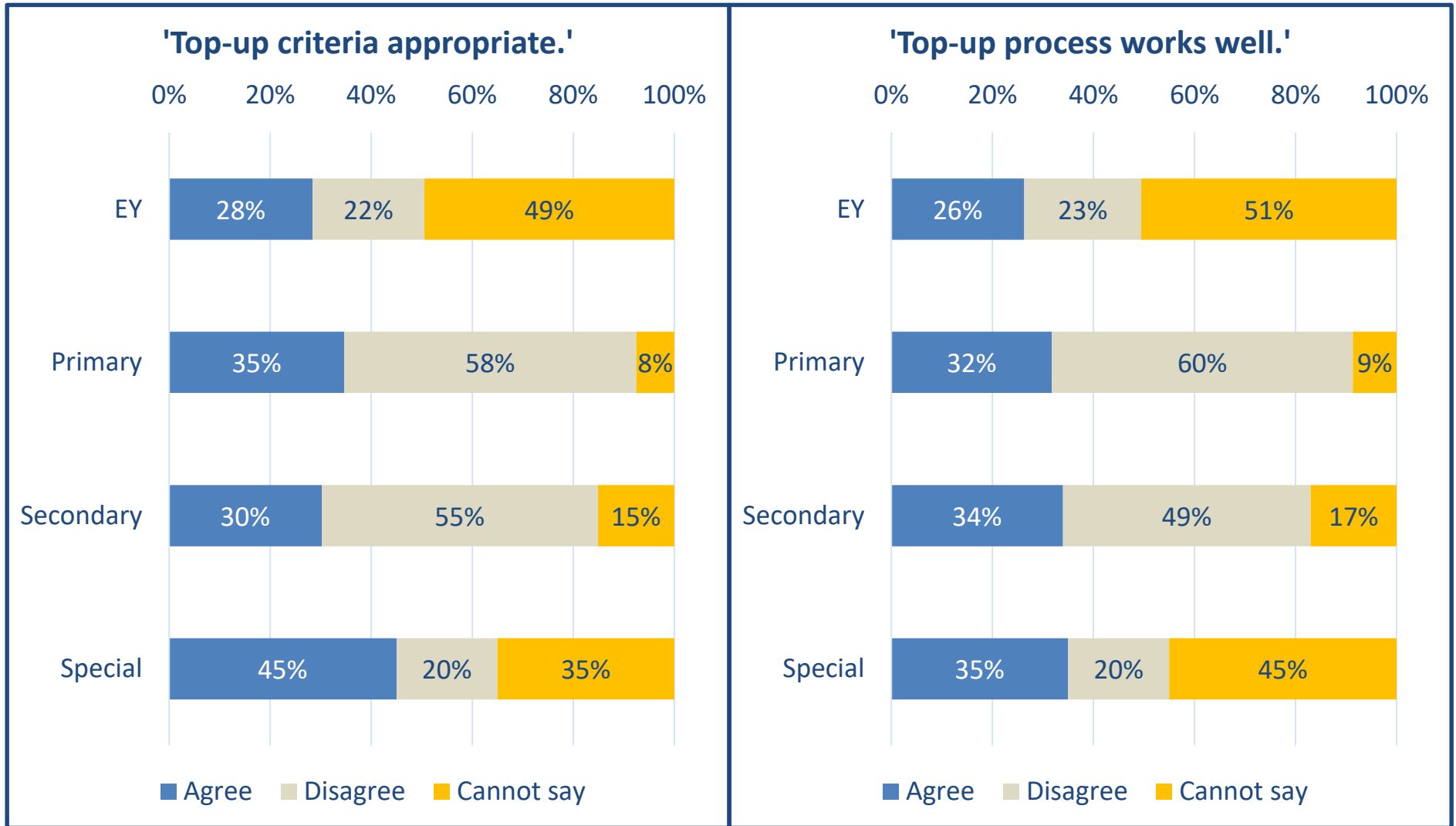
Join-up across services – a lack of a joined-up approach across education, health and care, especially between education and health-related services. As a result, a lack of (a) clear pathways of support for specific needs, and (b) consistent messages to parents – e.g. professionals advising parents to pursue EHCPs or specific placements.

Education inclusion services – generally positive about the quality of the offer of support when it could be accessed, but an issue of stretched capacity. A need to shift the focus from referral-based support focused on an individual pupil to a more pro-active, intensive, capacity-building approach.

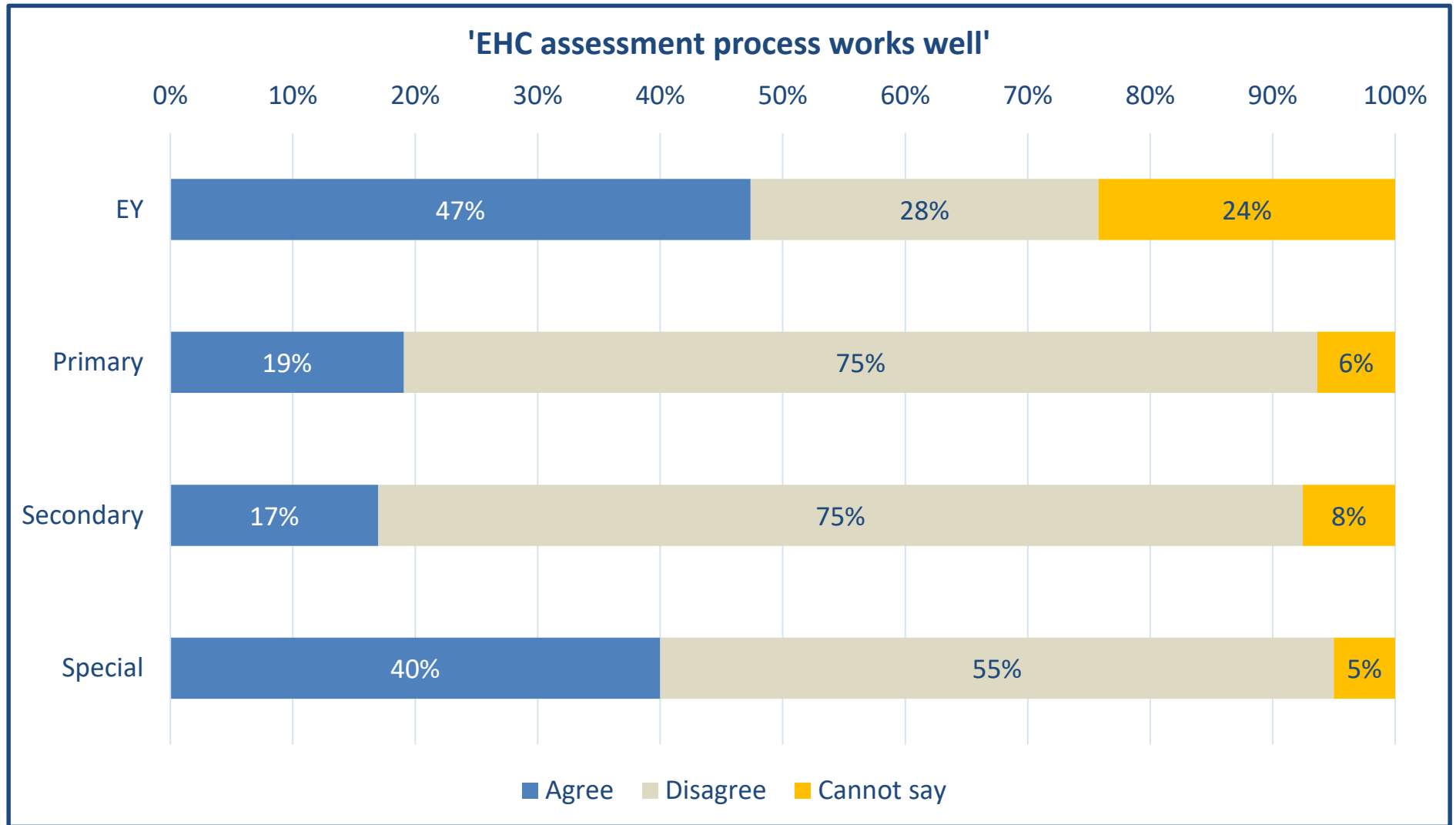
Holistic family support – generally positive about support when it could be accessed, but (a) difficulty accessing early help and inconsistent practices of joint working between education settings / schools and early help, and (b) lack of sustained engagement, limiting effectiveness. Concern that “challenging behaviour” being pushed down the EHCP route, not family support.

Support from health-related services – strong concerns about access to specific health-related services, particularly SaLT (early years) and mental health support (schools). Lack of access to advice and information, need for services to work more closely with and in schools. Concerns about inconsistent messages from health-related services re: education inclusion.

Theme 3: Core systems and processes



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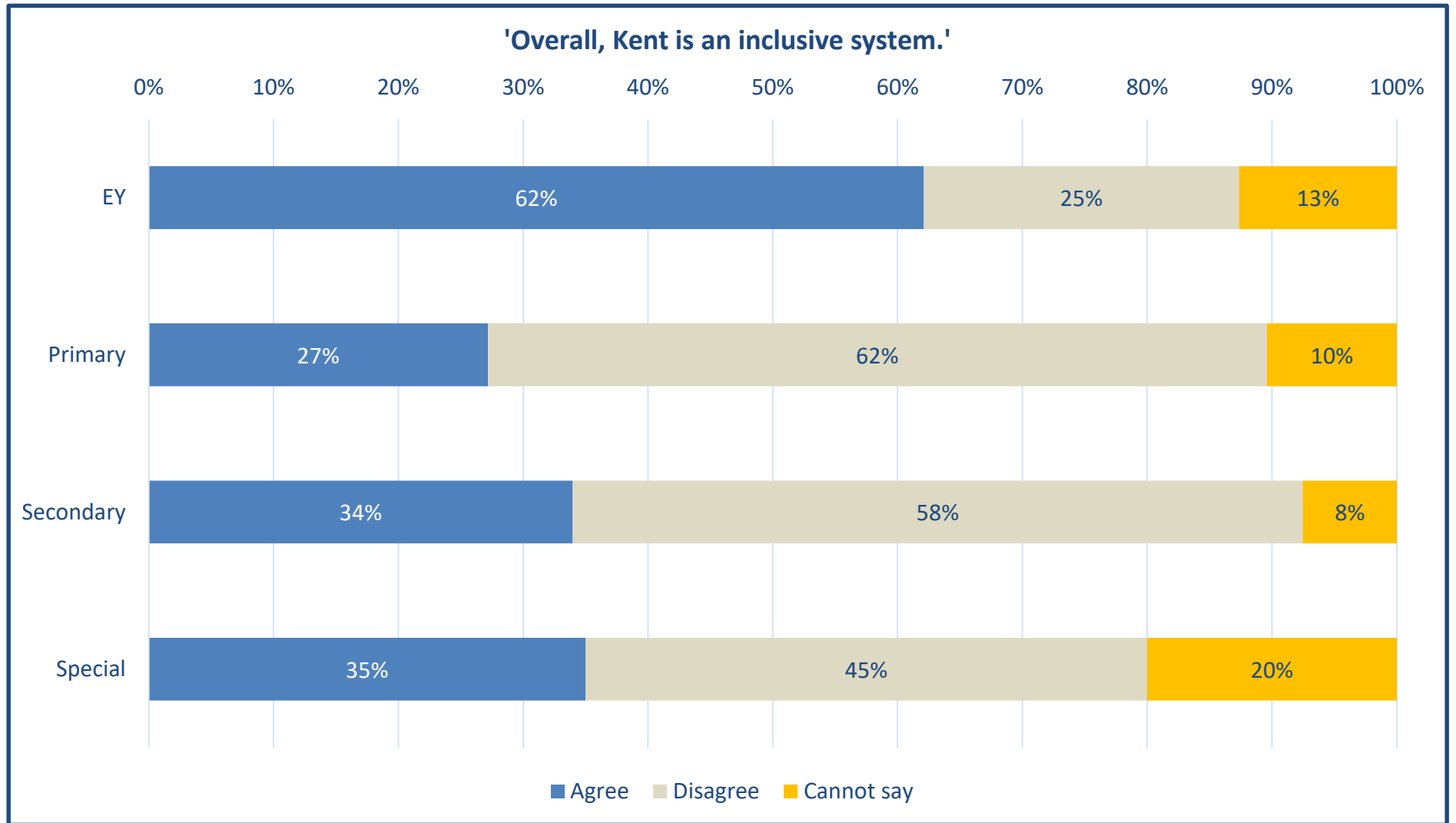
Theme 3: Core systems and processes

Communications and responsiveness – inconsistent communications and a lack of a consistently high-quality, responsive offer of support from county SEN services. Particularly from schools, a sense that decisions were taken by officers who did not have strong relationships and understanding of the schools where they were placing pupils.

Consistency of responses to requests for support – concern that decision-making about requests for support, specifically EHCPs, were not consistent. Sense that the system had been swayed by strong parental pressure for EHCPs or specific placements, resulting in children receiving EHCPs or placements that were not necessary for meeting their needs.

Paperwork and processes – strong message from across all stages and phases that paperwork related to requests for support was overly complex, bureaucratic and time-consuming. Not necessarily a demand to change thresholds, but rather streamlining processes to focus on what needed to inform decision-making without taking up disproportionate time to complete.

Theme 4: Overall views on the local system's support for inclusion



The current context: Testing and refining our key messages

Questions to discuss in groups

Reflecting on the key messages and findings presented, two questions to consider ...

1. **Is this a picture that you recognise? Is there anything with which you strongly agree and want to underscore? (Green cards)**
2. **Is there anything missing from this picture? Is there anything that surprised you? Is there anything that you want to challenge or add? (Red cards)**

Capture key points on the coloured cards with the marker pens (one point per card).

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Future solutions: Key messages from the survey

A. Mainstream inclusion: Expectations and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>What is the “Kent approach”?</u> Need to set out clear and consistent expectations of the hallmarks and expectations of good inclusive practice in Kent.• <u>Challenge non-inclusive practice</u> – improve transparency, reporting, and be able to differentiate professional disagreements about placements from non-inclusion.• <u>Training to build capacity</u> – whole-school inclusion; rolling, core offer of training for all staff.
B. Targeted support for inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Information</u> – improve information about pathways of support. Ensure consistent messages about how support pathways work across education, health and care.• <u>Advice and capacity-building</u> – greater capacity to provide advice without a formal pupil referral, support to work with schools to build capacity (including for pupils without EHCPs).• Strengthen the pathways around <u>mental health</u> and holistic <u>family support</u>.
C. Core systems and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Decision-making</u> – ensure criteria for accessing support are clearly communicated and understood, and consistently applied. Ensure processes foster collegiality and collaboration.• <u>Streamline paperwork</u> – ensure this is proportionate and focused on what is really needed.• <u>Transitions</u> – join up support across phases and stages, avoid unnecessary disruption.
D. Strengthening the overall system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Communications</u> – strengthen communications channels to all professionals involved in SEN and inclusion across Kent.• <u>Strengthen relationships</u> – ensure professionals feel part of a team approach to inclusion.• <u>Locality oversight and decision-making</u> – explore how to empower localities to have oversight of decision-making and strategic use of resources to foster transparency and inclusion.

Future solutions: Key messages from the survey

A. Mainstream inclusion: Expectations and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>What is the “Kent approach”?</u> What is needed to strengthen a set of core expectations?• <u>Challenge non-inclusive practice</u> – What is needed to improve transparency, capture instances of non-inclusive practice, and ensure the system is in a position to challenge appropriately?• <u>Training to build capacity</u> – What would this training offer need to include?
B. Targeted support for inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Information</u> – What information about support pathways is needed? In what form? How can we ensure that this is consistent across all agencies?• <u>Advice and capacity-building</u> – What are the areas where additional advice would be welcome? From where would you access this? What would help to build inclusive capacity?• <u>Mental health</u> and <u>family support</u> – What is needed to strengthen the offer of support here?
C. Core systems and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Decision-making</u> – What is needed to ensure a more collegiate and support process for requesting and making decisions about access to support?• <u>Streamline paperwork</u> – How could paperwork be streamlined and made more proportionate, without compromising consistency and rigour of decision-making?• <u>Transitions</u> – What steps could be taken to ensure more seamless support across transitions
D. Strengthening the overall system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Communications</u> – How could communications about SEND and inclusion could be improved?• <u>Strengthen relationships</u> – What is needed to foster a sense of collegiality and teamwork across agencies working to support young people with SEND and their families?• <u>Locality oversight and decision-making</u> – What is needed to foster collective, local oversight and strategic decision-making about the use of resources to support inclusion?

... and ... Are we confident that these sets of actions will help to address some of the challenges we have discussed? Is there anything else that is needed to strengthen inclusion in Kent?

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Next steps

Immediate next steps

- **Further workshops with mainstream settings and schools, inclusion support services, LA leaders and strategic partners.** (w/c 30 September and 7 October)
- **Collating all of the evidence and feedback gathered through this process.** (Second half of October)
- **Drawing together an overall summary and potential next steps.** (Late October)

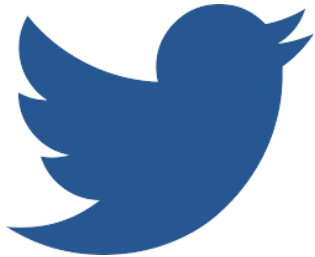
Final questions to discuss

- **How would you like to see this work – considering what is needed to strengthen inclusion across the local system in Kent – taken forward?**
- **What would be most useful to come out of this work?**
- **What is needed in terms of ensuring this work is taken forward collaboratively and with the involvement of all key partners?**

Continuing the discussion ...



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