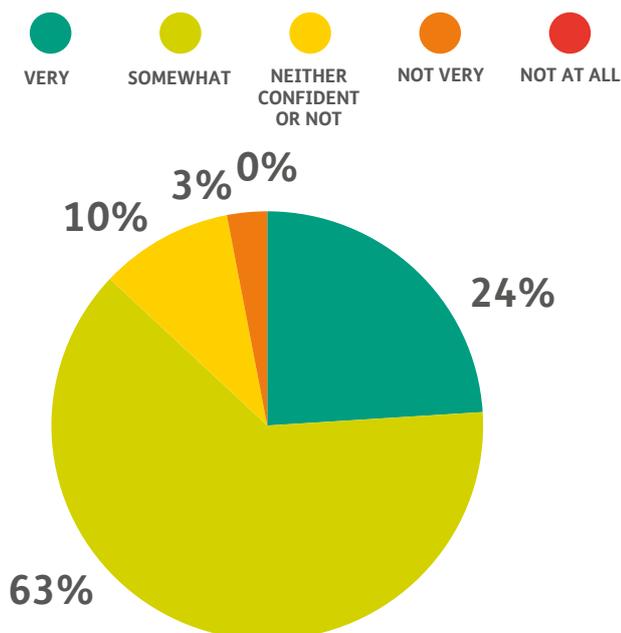


SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS COORDINATORS (SENCOs)

SENCOs made up 7% of respondents in this consultation and included individuals working in this role across all age ranges and across a wide range of organisations including maintained schools, academies, and PVI's. They were separated from teachers for separate analysis due to their particular role in coordinating and delivering support for children and young people with SEN, and therefore their critical role with SLCN.

One hundred percent of respondents recognised the importance of SLC skills for children and young people but worryingly only a quarter (24%) of SENCOs reported they felt very confident about their ability to support the development of these skills. This leaves a gap of three quarters of the SENCO workforce (76%) not fully confident in their ability to support and identify children and young people with SLCN. Given that often the responsibility for referrals to specialist services is passed to the school SENCO this may be a contributing factor to the under identification of children with SLCN.

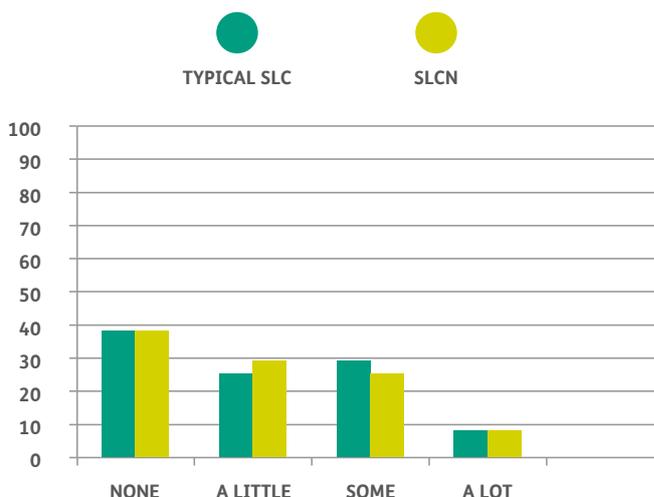
CONFIDENCE IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SLC DEVELOPMENT



Initial Training and CPD

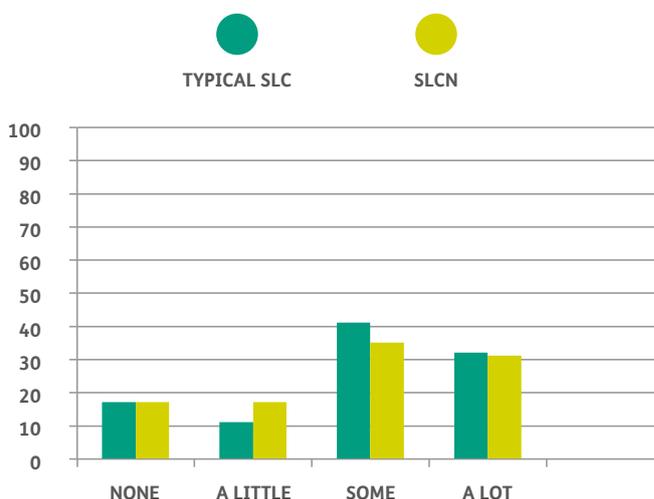
Nearly two thirds of SENCOs (62%) reported that they had received little or no learning at all in typical development of SLC in their initial training, increasing to 67% who lacked learning around identifying and supporting children and young people with SLCN.

AMOUNT OF INITIAL TRAINING RECEIVED



Reassuringly however three quarters (73%) have received 'some' or 'a lot' of CPD in typical SLC in their current role and two thirds (64%) in identifying and supporting SLCN. This still leaves a significant knowledge gap of nearly one fifth (17%) of SENCOs yet to receive any training or learning around SLC or SLCN; this is a concern given their specific role in cascading their knowledge, skills and support to teachers and other school staff.

AMOUNT OF CPD RECEIVED



Barriers

Lack of budget was reported by two thirds (69%) of SENCOs as a significant barrier to accessing CPD opportunities despite most respondents feeling that support from management wasn't a significant barrier. Lack of staff capacity (51%) was also identified as a challenge as well as time (43%) and lack of relevant opportunities (41%). SENCOs were the one group that did however access the Local Offer for information about development opportunities, with 20% reporting this was the case.

Motivators and Preferences

Three quarters of SENCOs (74%) identified face to face training as their preferred format of CPD with half also preferring:

- Formal, accredited training leading to a qualification (55%)
- Opportunities to try out approaches in practice (50%)
- Mentoring/shadowing/coaching opportunities with specialist colleagues (48%)

Nearly a third preferred to engage in informal professional development opportunities such as reading around a topic in their own time (30%) but surprisingly none of the respondents favoured webinars and only 10% liked online learning routes (self-directed or with tutor support).

Nearly all of SENCOs' major motivation for undertaking CPD in SLC was to improve their practice (89%) with an encouraging 85% of respondents seeing it as essential to their role. Eighty-one percent also felt they needed a better understanding of SLC/SLCN, despite only 30% of SENCOs working closely or directly with a child or young person with a need. Given that SLCN is the most common primary SEN in primary schools and the fourth most common in secondary it is worrying that only 30% of SENCOs believe they work closely with a child or young person with SLCN.

Training Needs

Supporting children learning EAL with SLC development was highlighted as a training need with nearly two thirds (61%) of this group, in accordance with responses across the education sector. Approximately half (46%) of SENCOs felt they also needed more professional development around talking to parents about SLC and SLCN. None of the respondents felt they had received sufficient CPD in their current role.

Over a quarter of SENCOs also suggested INSET and whole school or class training as opportunities for CPD.

“We have more and more children every year with significant speech and language difficulties. It is becoming a priority training area.”

“There are pressures to support children with a variety of barriers. The general perception around SLCN is that it is a developmental issue that will just need time to address itself”

“Expensive for courses, not a huge choice either”

