A young boy with a physical disability is sitting at a desk in a classroom. He is smiling and holding a pencil. In the background, other students are visible at their desks, some of whom appear to be using assistive technology like blue chairs.

# pdnet NATIONAL BENCHMARKING SURVEY

# 2016

A national baseline measurement of support  
for learners with a physical disability

## Welcome

**pdnet is delighted to share the findings of this first national baseline of support for learners with physical disability (PD). The task is long overdue as until now there has been no national data collection for children and young people with physical disability, despite data showing there are over 30,000 learners nationally with physical disability as their primary special educational needs and disability (SEND) need, of whom almost half have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 89% of these learners overall attend mainstream educational settings.**

The main purpose of the pdnet survey was to gain insight and understanding of how learners with physical disability are supported in the national educational system. 60 Local Authorities (LAs) have taken part, enabling the first reliable baseline measurement to be established.

At a time when the educational landscape is changing rapidly, pdnet members have consistently raised concerns about the impact on learners with physical disability. They highlight inconsistency in how LAs and settings ensure that the right provision is in place to assess, support and improve outcomes for learners with physical disability. The main findings of the survey are supportive of this viewpoint.

The survey findings indicate that national support for physical disability is fragmented. There is inconsistent and inequitable provision between different LAs which will impact on a learner's educational entitlement. Worryingly, there has been a recent increase in pdnet colleagues saying that specialist support services are disappearing and they are unable to identify where future support will be accessed.

This is of particular concern as pdnet members also identify a lack of understanding and skills within the workforce to support learners with physical disability. Poor continuing professional development (CPD) and training opportunities and lack of a national qualification and quality standards, combined with dwindling specialist LA services paints a worrying picture for over 30,000 vulnerable learners.

We have endeavoured to present the survey findings in an accessible way capturing the role that specialist support plays in enabling and enhancing outcomes for PD learners - some of whom have become national icons and leaders. A more conventional statistical report can be obtained from [info@pdnet.org.uk](mailto:info@pdnet.org.uk).

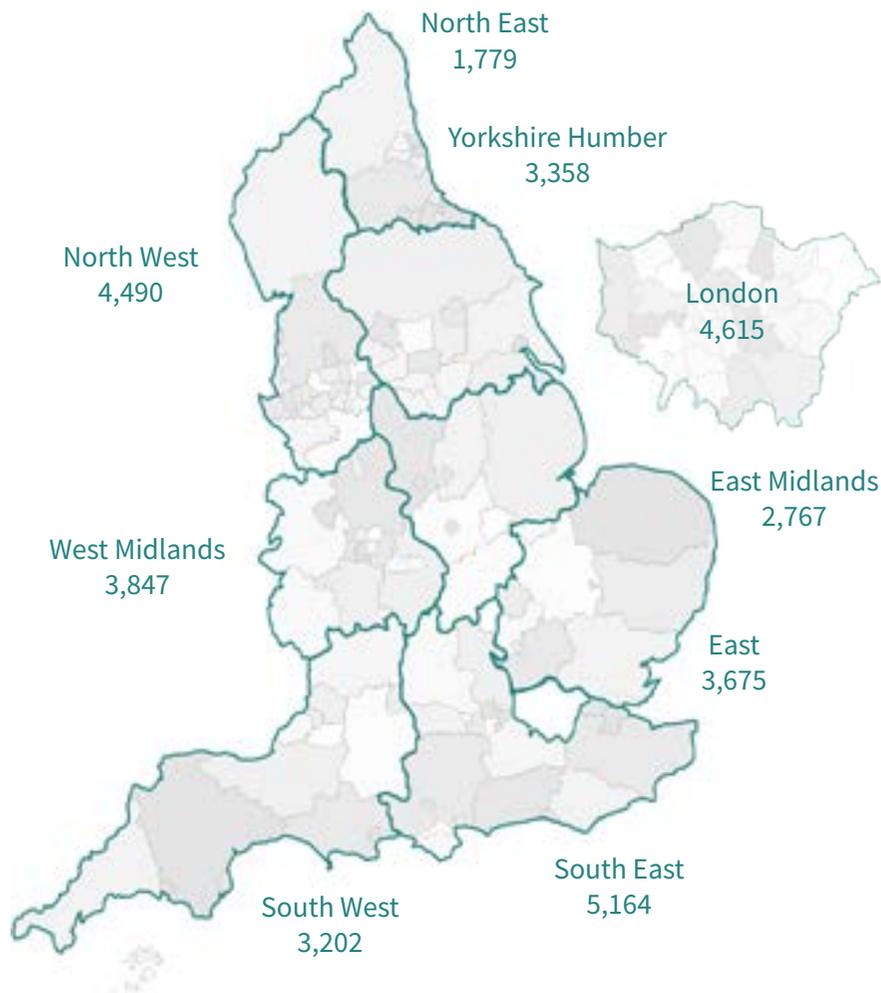
Di Caesar  
pdnet National Chair



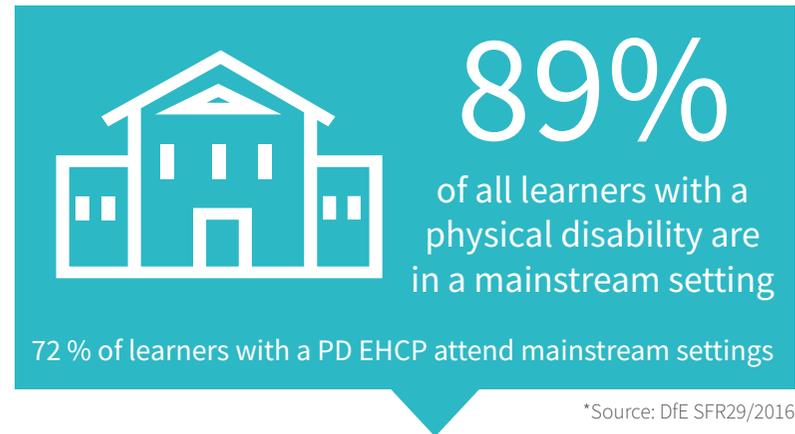
**pdnet** is the national network for all those supporting learners with a physical disability. To find out more and to become a member please visit [www.pdnet.org.uk](http://www.pdnet.org.uk)

## Prevalance of learners with a physical disability

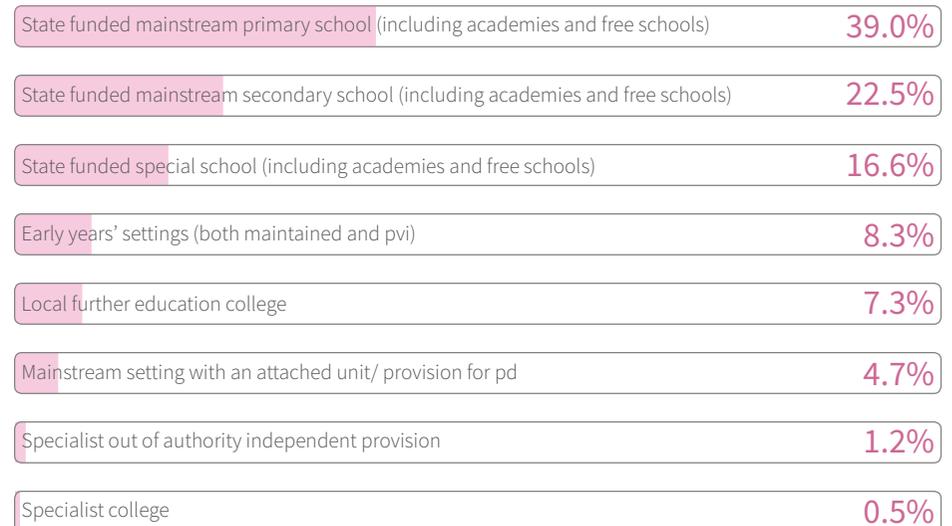
This map highlights the number of learners currently in English schools with a physical disability. The darker a Local Authority is shaded, the more prevalent physical disability is in their schools.



\*Source: DfE SFR29/2016



## Learners with a physical disability by setting



\*Source: pdnet Survey 2016

## How support for PD learners is funded

**44%** Centrally funded by the LA for specialist support for all pupils with PD

**30%** Other - the majority being through alternative mechanisms involving school forums or school funding

**10%** Centrally funded by the LA for those with significant needs (e.g. those with EHCPs/ Statements) and 'traded' for all other pupils

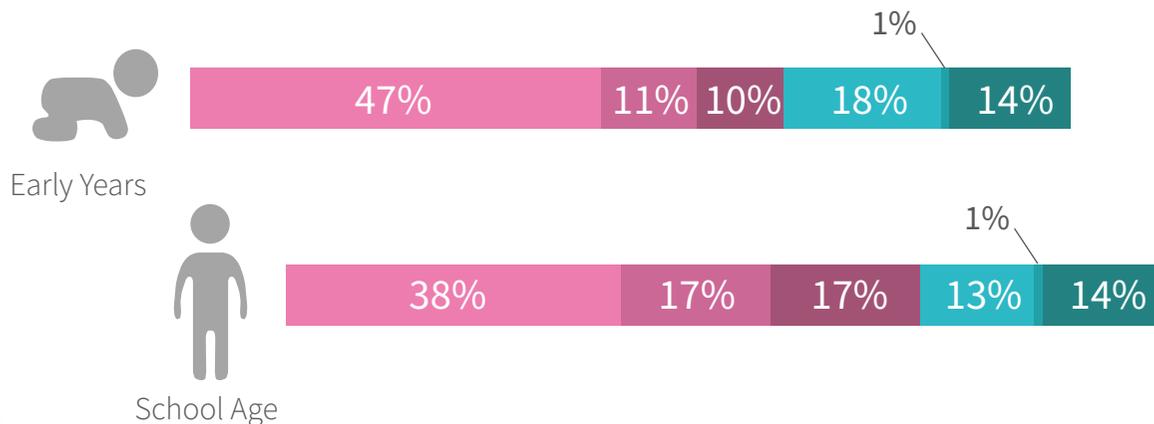


**8%** Delegated in part to individual mainstream schools with resource provision to fund all support and resources for PD pupils within those schools

**7%** Delegated in full to individual schools in the LA who purchase specialist support under 'traded services' arrangement

**2%** Delegated in full to a special or mainstream school with resource provision that then provides outreach to other schools

## How support for PD learners is managed



- Within a generic local authority SEN service
- Within a separate local authority PD service
- Delegated to a special school or a specialist unit/ provision
- Within a local area integrated service
- Centrally managed by an external (non-public sector) agency
- Other

## Francesca Martinez

Francesca Martinez is an internationally acclaimed stand up comedian. After a complication at birth she was diagnosed with Cerebral palsy as a toddler and when she asked as an adult how her parents felt at this point they said “You were Francesca, and completely normal to us”.

Francesca spent her teenage years starring in Grange Hill and secretly obsessing over the fact she was different. After a great reception for her first comedy workshop, she began to describe herself as “wobbly” and embrace her individuality. As her confidence grew she began to do stand up comedy and encourage others to love themselves. She realised that everybody is conscious of his or her image; an anxiety fuelled by mainstream media telling us beauty and physical perfection is the key happiness. She also spends time campaigning for disabled, refugees and

*“How YOU see yourself - not anyone else - is the thing that defines you.”*



## Hilary Lister

Hilary Lister is a record-breaking paraplegic sailor who uses an innovative technique of sucking and blowing on three straws to control her boat. She was a sporty child but at 11, she developed symptoms of a degenerative disorder that stopped her playing. By the time she began studying Biochemistry at Oxford she had lost all function in her legs. She became an accomplished clarinet teacher and also began a PhD. However, her symptoms worsened, her arms became immobile and she was unable to continue her studies and playing music. She felt as though she had lost everything.

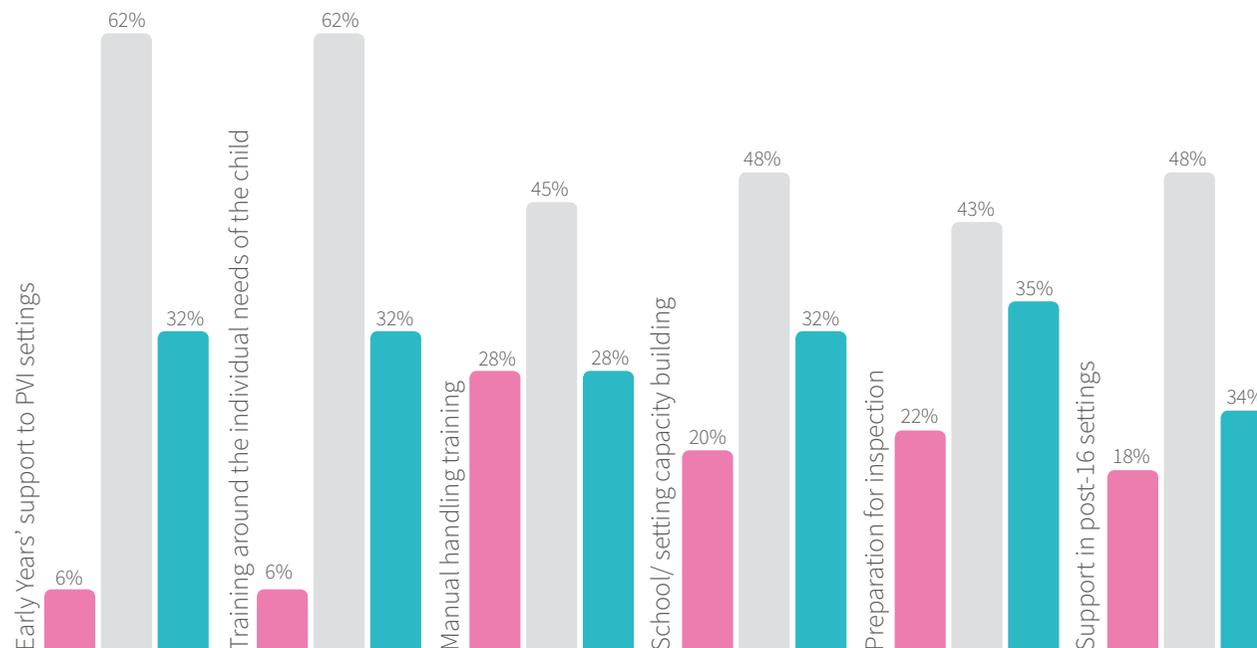
Hilary was introduced to sailing and just two years later she became the first quadriplegic to sail solo across the English channel. She went on to become the first female quadriplegic to sail solo around the Isle of Wight and the coast of Britain. She continues to push the boundaries of technology and challenge her body to achieve what others deem impossible.

*“When you spend 24 hours a day confined to a wheelchair, or a bed, sailing is the ultimate freedom. I have the wind in my hair and the spray in my face. I’m alive.”*



## Aspects of services that are traded

■ YES ■ NO ■ NO ANSWER



54%  
of LAs manage  
School Accessibility Plans



71%  
of LAs have their  
Accessibility Strategy  
available via their Local Offer

## Who contributes to the Accessibility Strategies?

Two-thirds of respondents said the Accessibility Strategy was written in consultation with a large range of stakeholders, including health and education professionals, as well as parent/carer groups. Those who did not explicitly name stakeholders, invariably stated the Accessibility Strategy was written by LA staff, usually those with a PD/SEND educational background, or commission/quality service.

## How is the strategy monitored?

Almost all who responded have some form of SEND Board or Group who do the monitoring. Although a few used performance management or quality assurance staff.

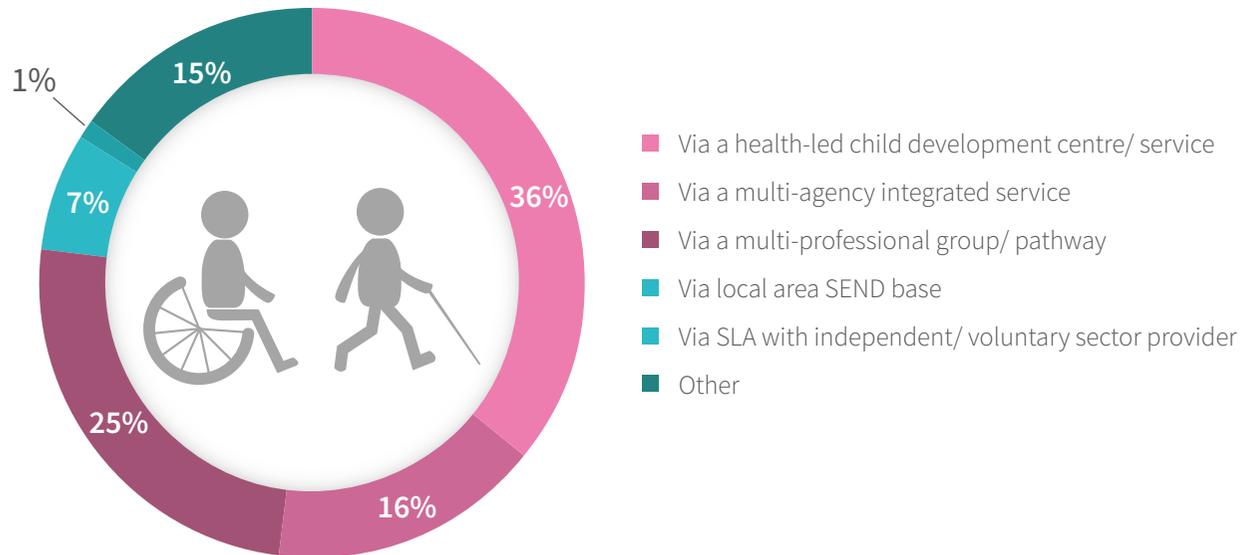
## Laurence Clark

Laurence Clark is a world-renowned comedian, presenter, writer, actor and campaigner. In his performances he challenges social perceptions of those with disabilities. Laurence was diagnosed with Cerebral palsy after complications at birth. Cerebral palsy interferes with nerve signals to muscles resulting in problems with posture, movement and co-ordination. Having been discouraged by the Careers Office at school to pursue drama, a career in IT was suggested. After completing his PhD in Computing and Molecular Biology, he decided to follow his dreams and began writing and performing comedy. Calling himself a 'sit down' comic, as he performs in a wheelchair, Clark uses images and videos combined with personal anecdotes and his own observations to provide thought-provoking humour. He believes if you can get people to laugh with you, it is far more powerful than any equality training. He was awarded Shortlist magazine's Funniest New Comedian and came runner-up in the BBC2 Entertain/Amused Moose Laughter Awards 2012.

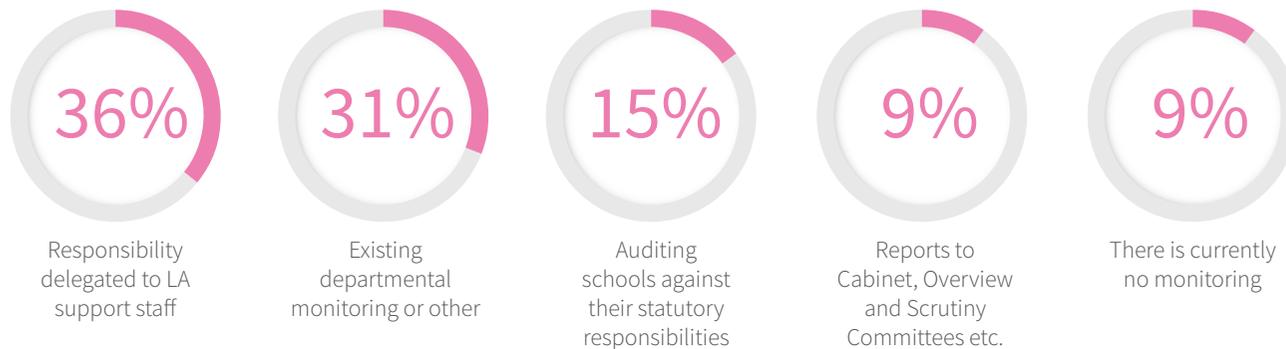
*"The mainstream media portrays disabled people as either inspirational or benefit scroungers; the middle ground that most of us occupy seems to have vanished."*



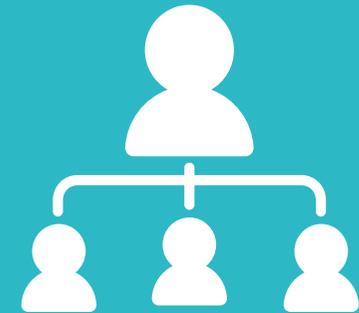
## How are the needs of PD learners assessed and identified?



## How is the progress of PD learners monitored?



## How is responsibility for PD learners managed in each LA area?



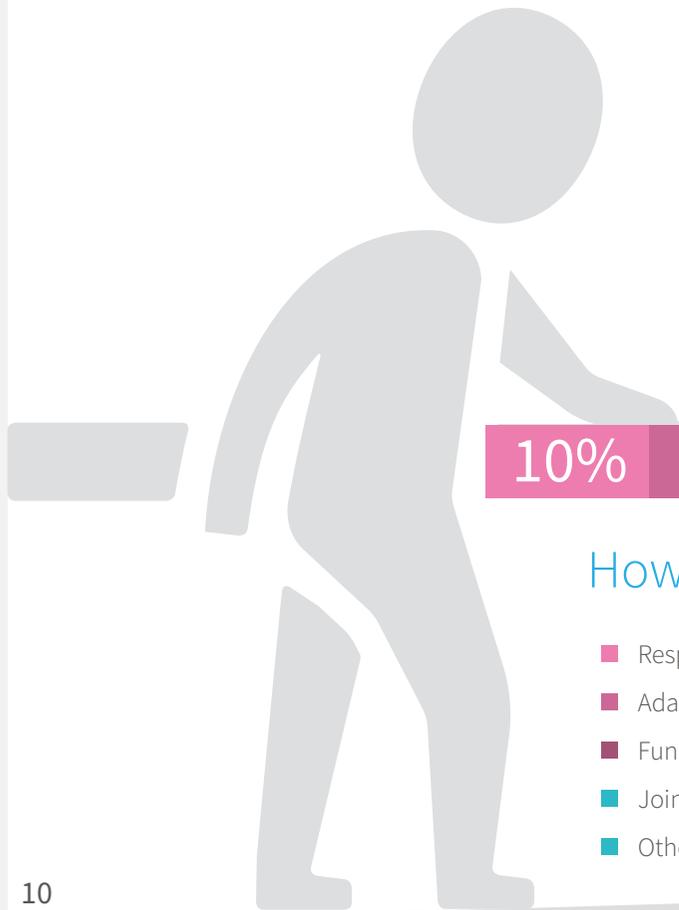
**61%** Delegated to a Head Teacher with responsibility for outreach support

**18%** A health professional within an integrated service/ structure

**14%** SEND service or other

**7%** A social care professional within an integrated service/ structure

## Building adaptations and specialist equipment for PD learners



 <p>Average spend per total child population</p>	<p>Building Adaptations</p> <p><b>£2.03</b></p>	<p>Specialist Equipment</p> <p><b>£1.60</b></p>
 <p>Percentage of LAs who held a central budget and were overspent</p>	<p>Building Adaptations</p> <p><b>28%</b></p>	<p>Specialist Equipment</p> <p><b>43%</b></p>
 <p>Percentage of LAs who reported a decrease in budget for 2016-17</p>	<p>Building Adaptations</p> <p><b>52%</b></p>	<p>Specialist Equipment</p> <p><b>36%</b></p>

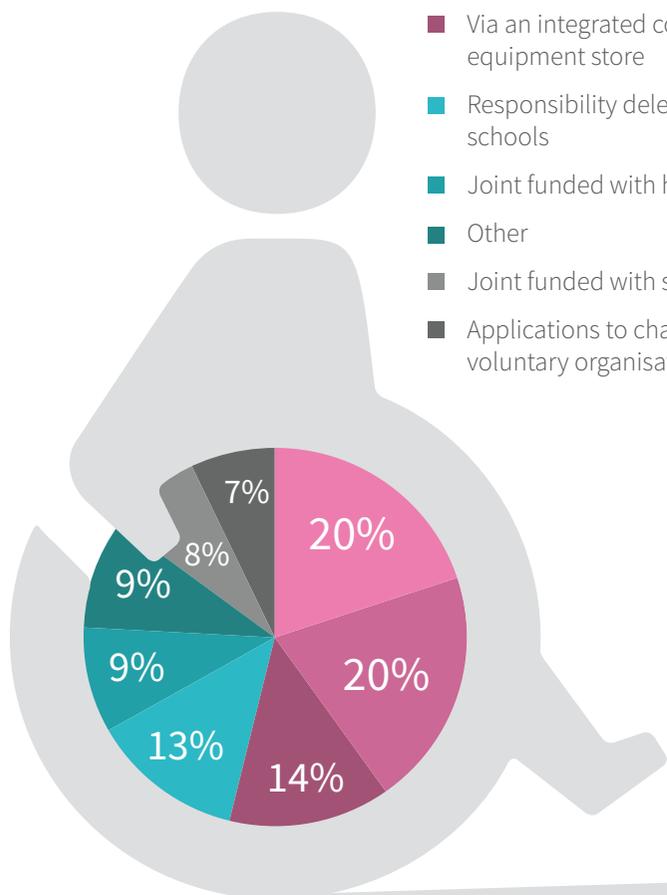


### How are adaptations in schools resourced?

- Responsibility delegated to all schools
- Adaptations funded in LA maintained schools only
- Funded from centrally held resources
- Joint funded with schools
- Other

## How is specialist equipment resourced?

- Funded from centrally held equipment budget
- Funded from High Needs' funding/ via EHCP funding
- Via an integrated community equipment store
- Responsibility delegated to all schools
- Joint funded with health/ social care
- Other
- Joint funded with schools
- Applications to charities and voluntary organisations



## How are specialist PD school staff employed?

	Teachers	Teaching Assistants
Employed and recruited directly by the LA - centrally based	28 <sub>LAs</sub>	13 <sub>LAs</sub>
Employed and recruited directly by the LA - school based	3 <sub>LAs</sub>	2 <sub>LAs</sub>
Employed and recruited directly by schools, but supported by the LA for CPD and Quality Assurance	2 <sub>LAs</sub>	8 <sub>LAs</sub>
Employed and recruited directly by schools with no involvement from the LA	4 <sub>LAs</sub>	4 <sub>LAs</sub>

## Other staff members that are employed to support PD learners

Resource/  
equipment  
Technicians

ICT  
Technicians

Dedicated  
Early Years/  
Portage Staff

Manual  
Handling  
Trainers

Admin/  
Secretarial



**pinet** Conference Contributor 2011

## Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE

Tanni Grey-Thompson is one of Britain's most successful paralympic athletes as a wheelchair racer.

Tanni was born with Spina Bifida and by age 7 her legs lost the ability to carry her weight and she became confined to a wheelchair. Tanni's family successfully fought with the local council for a place at a mainstream school and it was here she discovered a passion for sports. At age 13 she made the decision to pursue wheelchair racing and at 17 became part of the British team. Over her career she has won 16 Paralympic medals (11 gold), 13 Championship medals, held over 30 world records on track and won the London Marathon 6 times. Towards the end of her sporting career she has become a mother and since retiring begun a parliamentary career sitting in the House of Lords as an independent crossbench peer. She has debated on issues including disability rights, welfare reform and sports.

*"Being in a chair has never stopped me doing anything I've ever wanted to do, and so much of it is about the belief you have within yourself."*

## Richard Whitehead MBE

Richard Whitehead is an accomplished British athlete, competing in both the winter and summer paralympics, winning gold in the latter. In addition, he holds world records in both full and half marathon times for double amputees.

Richard is a congenital double amputee and as a child faced difficulties at school due to perceptions of others determining what he was and was not capable of. He and his family saw the potential that sport had in breaking down these barriers and set his sights on becoming a Paralympian.

His strength and determination grew and as technology developed, Richard achieved his childhood dream of completing a marathon. But he did not stop there. Upon discovering he was ineligible for the London Paralympics marathon, he instead entered the 200 meters sprint and won gold medal with a record-breaking time. He raised nearly £200,000 for Scope and Sarcoma UK by running an incredible 40 marathons in 40 days.

*“Life need not have limits. Having an opportunity in life is important but what defines you is what you do with that opportunity.”*



pdnet would like to thank ADCS, Local Authorities who took part in this survey and The SDSA without whom the first national survey of PD learners would not have been possible. We hope that the survey will be repeated on a bi-annual basis so that over time national benchmarking data is built, strengthened and extended to include achievement data for PD learners.

### Contributing Local Authorities:

- Barnsley Council
- Bedford Borough Council
- Birmingham City Council
- Bracknell Forest Council
- Bradford Council
- Brent Council
- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Calderdale Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Derby City Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Doncaster Council
- Dorset County Council
- Ealing Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Harrow Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Hounslow Council
- Hull City Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Islington Council
- Kent County Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council
- London Borough of Camden
- London Borough of Hackney
- London Borough of Havering
- London Borough of Lambeth
- Medway Council
- Middlesbrough Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Norfolk County Council
- North Lincolnshire Council
- North Somerset Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Portsmouth City Council
- Reading Borough Council
- Redbridge Council
- Rochdale Borough Council
- Salford City Council
- Solihull Council
- Southampton City Council
- St Helens Council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Stockport
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Stoke on Trent City Council
- Sunderland City Council
- Tower Hamlets Council
- Wakefield Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- West Berkshire Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Wirral Council