

**Findings from the 2010 Annual Family  
Support Survey:  
Central and North East Locality**

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## Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010: Central and North East Locality

### 1.0 Introduction

The Annual Family Support Survey was carried out starting in October 2010 with the Parents on the Plaza Event. 716 Questionnaires were returned across Plymouth in 2010, which is an increase of 147 over the 569 collated in 2009. The responses were analysed by Plymouth Parent Partnership using SPSS<sup>1</sup>.

The majority (95.3%) of questionnaires were completed by respondents from Plymouth, with coverage from all the 43 neighbourhoods in the city. Around 1 in 20 (4.7%) were completed by respondents from outside Plymouth. The table below outlines the percentage of questionnaires received from respondents in each locality:

Locality (N=683)	%
South West	24.0
North West	23.7
Plymstock	19.4
Central and North East	14.3
South East	9.5
Plympton	9.1

Around 1 in 6 (14.3%) questionnaires were completed by respondents from the Central and North East locality. 98 questionnaires were returned as below from the Neighbourhoods which make up the Central and North East locality:

Neighbourhood (N=98)	%
Eggbuckland	22.4
Hartley and Mannamead	21.4
Crownhill	12.2
Peeverell	11.2
Higher Compton	9.1
Derriford	9.1
Leigham and Mainstone	8.1
Estover	5.1
Glenholt	1.0

Around 3 in 5 (59.0%) questionnaires were completed at groups and events organised by Parent Support Advisers, whilst around 1 in 3 (30.6%) were completed at the 'Parents on the Plaza' event (Saturday 16 October 2010) and approximately 1 in 10 through various Parent Partnership parents groups and events.

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<sup>1</sup> Plymouth Parent Partnership analysed the questionnaire using SPSS (originally Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a computer program that can be used to analyse data.

## **2.2 Demography**

The majority of respondents (84.5%) were female, while 15.5% were male.

1.1% of the respondents were under 20 years of age, whilst around 1 in 6 (16.6%) were aged 20-29 and just under half (47.7%) were aged 30-39. Approximately 1 in 4 were aged 40-49, 1 in 10 (7.7%) were aged 50-59, and 2.2% were aged 60 or over.

The majority of respondents were White British (96.6%), whilst 2.2% indicated that they were Chinese or other and 1.1% Black or Black British.

## **3.0 Families Profile**

Around 1 in 10 (7.6%) respondents indicated that they did not have any children living with them, whilst just over 1 in 4 (26.3%) had one child living with them and 45.0% had 2 children. Around 1 in 6 (15.3%) respondents had 3 children living with them and around 1 in 20 (5.4%) had 4 or more children living with them.

More respondents (62.2%) had children in the 5 -11 age group than in the under 5 group (44.4%), 12 - 15 group (28.8%) or 16+ group (13.3%).

Around 1 in 5 (20.2%) respondents indicated that they had a child living with them who had a disability; whilst around 4 in 5 (79.8%) did not. Around 1 in 3 respondents indicated that they were a single parent (31.3%) whilst around 2 in 3 (68.7%) said they were not.

More respondents indicated that their employment status was part time (40.0%) than full time (24.4%). Almost 1 in 4 (24.4%) indicated that they were full time parents/carers, whilst around 1 in 20 (5.5%) said they were not in paid work or education/training and 2.9% stated that they were in full time education/training. 2.2% of the respondents said they were retired.

## 4.0 Findings from the Central and North East Locality

### 4.1 Where and who do you go to for support

Where/ Who go to for support	%
GP Surgery	68.1
Teaching Staff	54.5
PSA	45.4
Children's Centre/Nursery	19.3
Health Visitor	18.1
Other support staff in school	16.0
Plymouth Parent Partnership	14.7
Community/Voluntary Organisation	10.4
Community Police	7.9
Midwife	6.8
Social Worker	5.6

Around 2 in 3 (68.1%) Central and North East respondents indicated that they would go the GP Surgery when they need support, whilst just over half (54.5%) would go to teaching staff and 45.4% would go to a PSA. In the region of 1 in 5 would go to a Children's Centre/Nursery (19.3%) or to a Health Visitor (18.1%) whilst around 1 in 6 would go to 'other school support staff' (16.0%) or to Plymouth Parent Partnership (14.7%).

Approximately 1 in 10 would go to a Community/Voluntary Organisation (10.4%) or to the Community Police (7.9%) whilst around 1 in 20 indicated that they would go to a Midwife (6.8%) or a Social Worker (5.6%).

### 4.2 What parents want more information/support about

Want more information/support about:	%
Managing money/benefits/debt	48.3
Understanding and managing children's behaviour	42.6
Children's learning and development	38.2
Good approaches to parenting	34.9
Understanding teenagers	30.3
Cyber safety/bullying	30.2
Childcare	20.2
Teaching children right from wrong	19.1
Armed forces family issues	12.3
Step family issues	10.1

Around half the respondents from the Central and North East locality wanted more information/support on 'managing money/benefits/debt', whilst around 2 in 5 wanted this in relation to either 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' or 'children's learning and development'.

More information/support on 'good approaches to parenting', 'understanding teenagers' and 'cyber safety/bullying' was required by around 1 in 3 respondents. Approximately 1 in 5 wanted more information/support on 'childcare' and 'teaching children right from wrong', whilst in the region of 1 in 10 wanted this in relation to 'armed forces family issues' and 'step family issues'.

#### 4.3 Where Family Support should be available

Where Family Support should be available	%
School	84.2
GP Surgery	69.6
Parent Partnership	33.8
Nursery	30.3
Community Centre	30.3
Library	30.3
Children Centre	26.9
At Home	19.1
Supermarket	11.2

Over 4 in 5 respondents from the Central and North East locality considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a School (84.2%) and just over 2 in 3 thought it should be available at the GP Surgery (69.6%). According to around 1 in 3 respondents, 'Family Support' should be available from Parent Partnership (33.8%), at a Community Centre (30.3%), or at a Library (30.3%).

Around 1 in 4 considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a Children's Centre (26.9%) whilst just less than 1 in 5 felt that it should be available 'At Home' (19.1%) and around 1 in 10 considered this should be available from a Supermarket (11.2%).

#### 4.4 Preferred method of help/support

Prefer help/support to be available:	%
Individually	74.1
Electronically (Website)	29.2
Don't mind	25.8
Telephone help line	24.7
In a group	23.5
DVDs/TV	7.8

Around 3 in 4 Central and North East locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst approximately 1 in 3 would like it to be available electronically. Around 1 in 4 would prefer help or support to be available via a telephone helpline or a group, whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like it available via DVDs/TV.

#### 4.5 Preferred days/times for help to be available

Family Support should be available:	%
Weekdays	38.2
During School time	32.5
24/7	30.3
Before and after school	24.7
Evenings	21.3
School holidays	20.3
Weekends	19.1

Around 2 in 5 respondents from the Central and North East locality indicated that they would like help to be available on 'weekdays' (38.2%), whilst approximately 1 in 3 would like this available 'during school time' and '24/7'. In the region of 1 in 4 wanted help to be available 'before and after school' whilst around 1 in 5 wanted help to be available in the 'evenings' (21.3%), the 'school holidays' (20.3%) and at the 'weekends' (19.1%).

#### 4.6 Likely sources of information about local services

Information Source	%
Leaflets	75.2
Websites	65.1
Word of mouth	63.2
Posters	34.8
Meetings	25.8
Phone calls	13.4

Around 3 in 4 (75.2%) Central and North East locality respondents would obtain information about local services via leaflets, whilst in the region of 2 in 3 would use websites (65.1%) or word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc.(63.2%)

Posters would be used by just over 1 in 3 (34.8%) respondents as a source of information about local services, whilst just over 1 in 4 would prefer meetings (25.8%) and around 1 in 10 phone calls (13.4%).

## 4.7 The involvement of extended families/friends in looking after children

### 4.7.1 Grandparents

Grandparents look after children	%
Yes	62.6
No	37.4

Around 3 in 5 Central and North East locality respondents indicated that grandparents looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 20 (6.1%) stated that this happened on a 'daily' basis, whilst 1 in 4 said they did this '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by grandparents 'weekly', whilst 1 in 6 said that this occurred 'monthly' and around 1 in 5 'less than monthly'.

### 4.7.2 Friends

Friends look after children	%
Yes	27.2
No	72.8

Around 1 in 4 Central and North East locality respondents indicated that friends looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 20 stated that friends did this 'daily', whilst around 1 in 10 said they did so '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 3 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by friends 'weekly', whilst 1 in 10 mentioned that this happened 'monthly' and around 2 in 5 'less than monthly'.

### 4.7.3 Aunts/Uncles

Aunts/Uncles look after children	%
Yes	21.5
No	78.8

Around 1 in 5 Central and North East locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their Aunts/Uncles. Approximately 1 in 10 stated that this occurred on a 'daily' basis, whilst around 1 in 5 said that Aunts/Uncles did this '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after 'monthly' by Aunts/Uncles and around 2 in 5 said this happened 'less than monthly'.

### 4.7.4 Older children

Older children look after children	%
Yes	6.3
No	93.7

Around 1 in 20 North East and Central locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their older siblings. 2 in 5 respondents stated that this took place on a 'daily' basis, whilst 1 in 5 'monthly' and 2 in 5 'less than monthly'.

#### **4.8 The use of formal childcare provision**

Formal Childcare provision	%
Private Nursery	30.2
Childminders (those with children aged 0-4)	13.9
Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)	9.6
School/Maintained Nursery	39.5
Pre School	16.6
Out of School provision (those with children aged 5-11)	11.2
Organised Activities for older children(those with children aged 5-11)	20.9

##### **4.8.1 Private Nursery**

Around 1 in 3 (30.2%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery'. Approximately 1 in 3 (33.3%) respondents stated that their children attended 'daily', whilst a similar proportion attended '2-3 times per week' and the same percentage attended 'weekly'.

##### **4.8.2 Childminders (those with children aged under 5)**

Around 1 in 10 (13.9%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Approximately 1 in 6 (16.6%) attended 'daily', whilst 2 in 3 (66.6%) attended '2-3 times per week' and approximately 1 in 6 (16.6%) attended 'weekly'.

##### **4.8.3 Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)**

Around 1 in 10 (9.6%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Half attended '2-3 times per week' and the same percentage attended 'weekly'.

##### **4.8.4 School/Maintained Nursery**

Around 2 in 5 (39.5%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery. Approximately half (47.6%) attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 4 (23.0%) attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 10 (9.5%) attended 'weekly'.

#### 4.8.5 Pre School

Around 1 in 6 (16.6%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School. 45.4% attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 10 (9.5%) attended '2-3 times per week' and around 45.4% attended 'weekly'.

#### 4.8.6 Out of School (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 10 (11.2%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Out of School' provision. Respondents added that their child/ren attended 'breakfast clubs', 'after school clubs' and 'holiday clubs'. Around 1 in 10 (9.5%) attended 'daily', around 1 in 4 (23.8%) attended '2-3 times per week', approximately half (47.6%) attended 'weekly' and 1 in 5 attended 'monthly'.

#### 4.8.7 Organised Activities for older children (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 5 (20.9%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Organised Activity'. In the region of 1 in 20 (5.8%) attended '2-3 times per week', whilst around 3 in 4 (70.5%) attended 'weekly', around 1 in 10 (11.7%) attended 'monthly' and a similar proportion attended 'less than monthly'.

#### 4.8.8 Non Users of Formal Childcare

The three main reasons provided by respondents for not using formal childcare were that they did not need formal childcare, their child/ren were too old to attend, or that the cost of formal childcare was prohibitive. A few parents stated that they did not use formal childcare provision because 'it didn't meet their child/ren's additional/special needs', whilst others mentioned that they would 'not leave their children with strangers'.

### 4.9 Do fathers experience problems in accessing services

Problems in accessing services	%
Yes	33.3
No	66.6

1 in 3 (33.3%) Central and North East locality respondents did consider that there were services that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing. However, 2 in 3 considered this was not the case (66.6%).

Various additional comments were made by respondents who considered that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing services. These have been grouped under the 4 key themes arising. An illustrative<sup>2</sup> selection of comments is listed under each identified theme:

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this document the researchers have sought to achieve a balanced selection of comments from respondents to illustrate the range of views expressed. All comments are typed exactly as

#### **4.9.1 Hours Available**

*"Most of the services only seem to be open / available during the normal working day when most dads are at work. I think they can sometimes feel a bit left out."*

#### **4.9.2 Early Years provision**

*"Playgroup etc are intimidating for men."*

#### **4.9.3 Men's reluctance to ask for help and support**

*"Embarrassment / stubborn."*

*"All due to men not admitting to problems."*

#### **4.9.4 Services targeted at mums**

*"We understand most services are directed at mums. Dads need to be specifically targeted to enable them to engage."*

*"Although support services are not always gender specified they do always seem to aim/encourage females. This can I guess put male parents off from going. More advertisements for supporting males should be put in place."*

#### **4.10 Other comments made by respondents**

Five respondents took the opportunity to make additional comments These have been grouped under the three key themes arising.

##### **4.10.1 Praise: Parent Support Advisers**

*"Thank god for PSA, a real life line."*

*"My P.S.A. had been a brilliant support to myself, husband and daughter - she has been a lifeline."*

*"Our PSA has left from E.C.C\* - I don't feel that as parents we have been kept very well informed about the situation. She was a great support when in post."*

##### **4.10.2 Praise: Parent Partnership**

*"I recently contacted Parent Partnership with an issue re: my son who has a disability. They were able to help and support me to resolve the issue satisfactorily."*

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received with no change to spelling, grammar, punctuation etc.

#### **4.10.4 Parents with children who have additional/special needs**

*"Groups / clubs for ASD children are badly needed in Plymouth."*

### **5.0 Next Steps**

There are a number of practical steps that might address the seven key issues that emerge from this survey:

#### **5.1 Where and who do parents go to for support**

It is evident that parents are not a homogeneous group. Parents go to a variety of agencies for support. The pattern of usage by parents of agencies and specific professionals is likely to be influenced primarily by the age of their child/ren and by their knowledge and experience of using them previously. The three preferred sources of support identified by Central and North East respondents were a GP Surgery, followed by teaching staff, followed by a PSA. Given the popularity of PSAs as a source of support for parents, urgent consideration should be given to the ramifications for parents and other agencies in the locality should the PSA role cease to exist.

#### **5.2 What parents want more information/support about**

Whilst it is clear that parents want more information on a wide range of issues, in the Central and North East locality more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'managing money/benefits and debt' followed by 'understanding and managing children's behaviour'. The Central and North East locality also had the second highest percentage of respondents who wanted more information/support on 'armed forces family issues'. An audit of Agencies providing such information within the Central and North East locality as well as across the city should be undertaken so that parents wanting this information/support can be signposted effectively.

#### **5.3 Where Family Support should be available**

In the Central and North East locality, as in the other 5 localities, more respondents considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a School, followed by a GP Surgery. Whilst schools provide Family Support in many different ways, the majority nevertheless have a PSA whose role has been pivotal in enabling schools to support their respective parents. Given that the continuation of the PSA role is unclear, schools in the Central and North East locality will need to consider how they will enable Family Support to be made available after March 2011. Many parents indicated that they would like Family Support to be available at a GP Surgery, and consideration should be given to exploring whether this is feasible within the locality.

#### **5.4 The type of help/support parents would like**

In the Central and North East locality, as in the other 5 localities, more respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually rather than by any other methods. Around 3 in 4 Central and North East locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst approximately 1 in 3 would like it to be available electronically. Around 1 in 4 would prefer help or support to be available via a telephone helpline or a group, whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like it to be available via DVDs/TV. Services delivering help/support within the Central and North East locality should think about how their delivery can best reflect the preferences outlined above.

#### **5.5 When parents would like help to be available**

The evidence makes clear that there is no single time range within which parents would like help to be available. Around 2 in 5 respondents from the Central and North East locality indicated that they would like help to be available on 'weekdays' (38.2%), whilst approximately 1 in 3 would like it available 'during school time' and '24/7'. In the region of 1 in 4 wanted help to be available 'before and after school' whilst around 1 in 5 wanted it available in the 'evenings' (21.3%), the 'school holidays' (20.3%) and at the 'weekends' (19.1%). Services delivering help/support within the Central and North East locality should consider whether their opening times reflect the preferences outlined above.

#### **5.6 Likely sources of information about local services**

Around 3 in 4 (75.2%) Central and North East locality respondents would prefer to obtain information about local services via leaflets, whilst in the region of 2 in 3 would access such information via websites (65.1%) or through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (63.2%) Services providing information should reflect on the above information seeking behaviour, and ensure that their information can be accessed accordingly.

#### **5.7 Fathers accessing services**

Whilst most respondents do not believe that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing services, there is a small minority who nevertheless do believe this is the case. Service providers should be mindful of this with regard to both their opening times and the language used in their publications, in order to avoid marginalising fathers.