

**Findings from the 2010 Annual Family  
Support Survey: Locality Comparison**

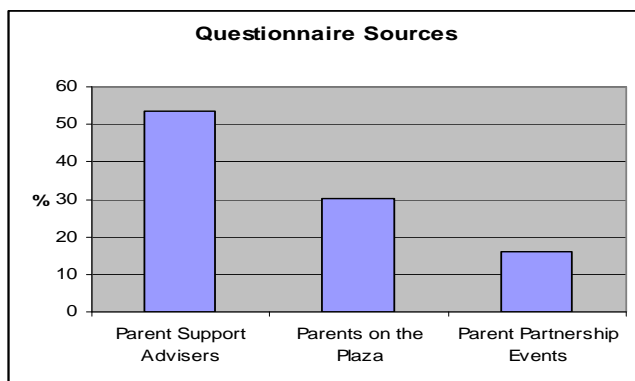
**Dr. Helen Phillips**

**December 2010**

## **Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010: Locality Comparison**

### **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 chart below shows the sources of the completed questionnaires.



### **2.0 Survey Respondents**

683 of the 716 (95.3%) questionnaires collated were completed by respondents from Plymouth, with coverage from all the 43 neighbourhoods in the city (see Appendix 1). 33 questionnaires (4.7%) were completed by respondents from outside Plymouth.

#### **2.1 Locality**

The following table shows the percentage of questionnaires received from respondents in each locality.

Locality	N=683 %
South West (SW)	24.0
North West (NW)	23.7
Plymstock (PSTCK)	19.4
Central and North East (CNE)	14.3
South East (SE)	9.5
Plympton (PTON)	9.1

<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**

### **2.2.1 Gender**

#### **(i) Plymouth Picture**

The majority of respondents (85.3%) were female, while 14.7% were males

#### **(ii) Locality Picture**

The great majority of respondents in all six localities were female, ranging from 82.5% in the SE to 91.9% in PTON.

### **2.2.2 Age**

#### **(i) Plymouth Picture**

1% of the respondents were under 20 years of age, whilst around 1 in 5 (18.8%) were aged 20-29 and just under half were aged 30-39. Approximately 1 in 4 were aged 40-49, 1 in 20 (4.5%) were aged 50-59, and 2.6% were aged 60 or over.

#### **(ii) Locality Picture**

Those aged under 20 were a very small percentage of the respondents from any of the six localities. Around 1 in 4 respondents from the NW, SE and SW were aged 20-29, as were 1 in 6 from the CNE and fewer than 1 in 10 from PTON and PSTCK. Around half the CNE, SW, PTON and PSTCK respondents were aged 30-39, as were 2 in 5 from the NW and SE localities. The percentage of respondents aged 40-49 ranged from just over 1 in 6 in SW to around 1 in 3 in PSTCK, whilst the percentage aged 50-59 ranged from 2.7% in the NW to 7.7% in CNE locality. Those aged 60+ were a very small percentage of the respondents from any of the six localities.

### **2.2.3 Ethnic origin**

#### **(i) Plymouth Picture**

The majority of respondents were White British (94.7%), whilst 2.5% indicated that they were Chinese or other, 1.6% Asian or Asian British and 1.2% Black or Black British.

#### **(ii) Locality Picture**

The great majority of respondents in all six localities were White British, ranging from 91.6% in S.E to 98.4% in PSTCK. 1 in 20 respondents in SE and PTON were Chinese or other, whilst just under 1 in 20 in SW were Asian or Asian British and a similar proportion were Black or Black British.

## 2.3 Families Profile

### 2.3.1 Number of Children living with you

#### (i) Plymouth Picture

Around 1 in 20 (4.7%) 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 around 2 in 5 (43.0%) had 2 children. 1 in 6 (16.6%) respondents had 3 children living with them and just under 1 in 10 (9.3%) had 4 or more children living with them.

#### (ii) Locality Picture

The percentage of respondents who indicated that they had one child living with them ranged from just under 1 in 5 in PTON through to around 1 in 3 in the SE, whilst those with two children ranged from just under 2 in 5 in the SE to around 2 in 3 in PTON. The percentage of respondents who had three children living with them ranged from 14.3% in the NW to just under 1 in 4 in PSTCK, and those with four or more children ranged from 1.6% in PTON to just over 1 in 10 in the NW.

### 2.3.2 Ages of children living with you

#### (i) Plymouth Picture

More respondents (71.0%) had children in the 5 -11 age group than in the under 5 group (41.5%), 12 - 15 group (28.4%) or 16+ group (13.6%),

#### (ii) Locality Picture

The following table outlines the percentage of respondents in each locality who have a child/ren in the specified age groups.

Ages of children living with you	CNE %	NW %	SE %	SW %	PTON %	PSTCK %
Under 5	44.4	40.2	55.7	45.8	27.8	33.0
5-11	62.2	73.3	60.6	70.7	78.6	81.5
12-15	28.8	29.8	24.5	29.2	22.9	33.0
16+	13.3	10.3	19.6	10.1	13.1	13.0

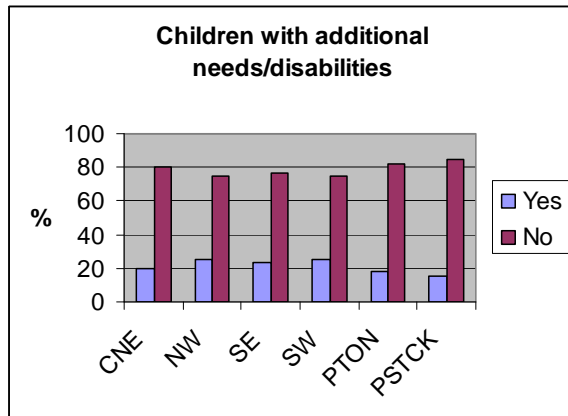
### 2.3.3 Children living with you who have a disability

#### (i) Plymouth Picture

Around 1 in 4 (22.3%) respondents indicated that they had a child living with them who had a disability whilst around 3 in 4 (77.7%) did not.

### **(ii) Locality Picture**

The percentage of respondents with a child/ren with additional needs/disabilities ranged from around 1 in 6 in the PSTCK locality to around 1 in 4 in the NW, SE and SW localities. See chart below.



### **2.3.4 Single parent**

#### **(i) Plymouth Picture**

Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that they were a single parent (27.1%) whilst around 3 in 4 (72.9%) said they were not.

#### **(ii) Locality Picture**

The percentage of respondents who indicated that they were single parents ranged from around 1 in 10 in PSTCK to over 1 in 3 in the SE and SW localities.

### **2.3.5 Employment status**

#### **(i) Plymouth Picture**

More of the respondents indicated that their employment status was part time (37.8%) than full time (23.3%). Almost 1 in 3 (29.6%) indicated that they were full time parents/carers, whilst around 1 in 20 (4.8%) said they were not in paid work or education/training, and 2.9% stated that they were in full time education/training. 1.6% of the respondents said they were retired.

#### **(ii) Locality Picture**

The numbers of respondents indicating that they were a full time parent/carer varied considerably across the 6 localities, ranging from just over 1 in 20 in PTON to around 2 in 5 in the SE and NW localities. The percentage of respondents indicating that they were in part time paid work ranged from

around 1 in 4 in the SE and SW localities to just under half in the PTON and PSTCK localities. The percentage of respondents indicating that they were in full time work ranged from just over 1 in 10 in NW to 1 in 3 in PTON.

The SW Locality had the highest percentage of respondents not in paid work or education/training (8.3%) and the highest percentage in full time education/training (4.4%) and the SE had highest number of retired respondents (3.2%).

### **3.0 Where and who do you go to when you need support?**

#### **3.1 Plymouth Picture**

Around 2 in 3 (69.8%) respondents currently go to the GP Surgery when they need support whilst in the region of 2 in 5 goes to teaching staff (43.9%) and a similar proportion go to a PSA (40.9%). Around 1 in 5 respondents go to a Children's Centre/Nursery (22.0%) and a similar proportion goes to other support staff in school when they need support (20.0%).

In the region of 1 in 6 go to Plymouth Parent Partnership (17.3%) or to a Health Visitor (17.0 %), whilst around 1 in 10 (12.5%) go to a Community/Voluntary Organisation. Around 1 in 10 respondents go to the Community Police (11.6%) when they need support and a similar number go to a Social Worker (10.9%) and approximately 1 in 20 (5.9%) go to a Midwife.

#### **3.2 Locality Picture**

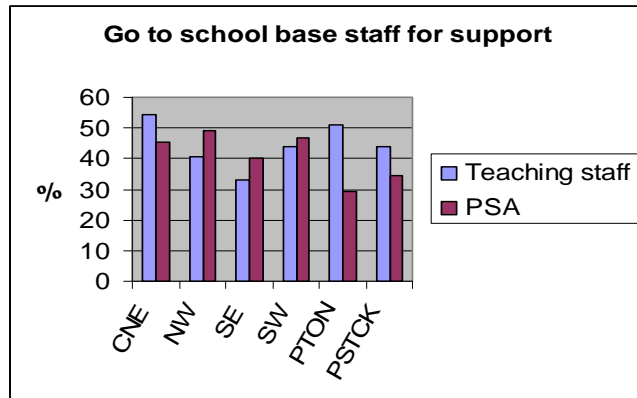
The top source of support in all six localities was a 'GP Surgery'. The second most favoured source of support was 'teaching staff' in CNE, PTON and PSTCK, whilst in NW, SE and SW it was a 'PSA'.

##### **3.2.1 GP Surgery**

Around 3 in 4 respondents in the S.E, PTON and PSTCK localities would go to a GP Surgery for support, as would 70.3% of those in the NW locality and around 2 in 3 living in CNE and SW localities.

### 3.2.2 School based staff

The chart below shows that more respondents in three localities (CNE, PTON and PSTCK) would go to teaching staff for support, whilst in the other three (NW, SE and SW) more respondents would go to a PSA seek support from a PSA.



### 3.2.3 Children's Centre

Around 1 in 4 respondents in half the localities (NW, SE and PTON) would go to a Children's Centre for support as would around 1 in 5 in the CNE and SW localities and 14.5% from PSTCK.

### 3.2.4 Other school support staff

Around 1 in 4 respondents in PTON locality would go to other school support staff for support as would approximately 1 in 5 in NW, SE, SW and PSTCK localities and in the region of 1 in 6 in the CNE locality.

### 3.2.5 Parent Partnership

Around 1 in 5 respondents in half the localities (SE, SW, PTON) would go to Parent Partnership for support as would around 1 in 6 in the NW and CNE localities and around 1 in 10 in the PSTCK locality.

### 3.2.6 Health Visitor

Around 1 in 5 of the respondents in 4 localities (CNE, NW, SW and PSTCK) would go to a Health Visitor when they need support, as would around 1 in 10 respondents from the SE and PTON localities.

### 3.2.7 Community/Voluntary Organisation

Around 1 in 6 of the respondents in the NW, SE and SW localities would go to a Community/Voluntary organisation for support as would around 1 in 10 respondents in the CNE, PTON and PSTCK localities.

### **3.2.8 Community Police**

Around 1 in 6 respondents in the NW locality would go the Community Police when they need support, whilst only approximately 1 in 10 of the respondents from the other 5 Localities would do so.

### **3.2.9 Social Worker**

Around 1 in 6 respondents from the SE locality would go to a Social Worker for support, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 10 of the respondents in NW and SW localities. Approximately 1 in 20 of the CNE and PSTCK respondents would go to a Social Worker for support as would 1.8% of those from PTON.

### **3.2.10 Midwife**

In each of the 6 Localities fewer than 1 in 10 respondents indicated that they would go to a Midwife for support.

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

### **4.1 Plymouth Picture**

The following table outlines the percentage of respondents in Plymouth who wanted more information/support on various issues. It highlights that there are two particular topics about which almost half considered they needed more information i.e. 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' and 'managing money/benefits/debt'.

Want more information/support about:	%
Understanding and managing children's behaviour	49.9
Managing money/benefits/debt	48.2
Children's learning and development	37.3
Good approaches to parenting	35.4
Understanding teenagers	28.2
Cyber safety/bullying	25.4
Teaching children right from wrong	21.7
Childcare	19.4
Step family issues	10.5
Armed forces family issues	7.5

## 4.2 Locality Picture

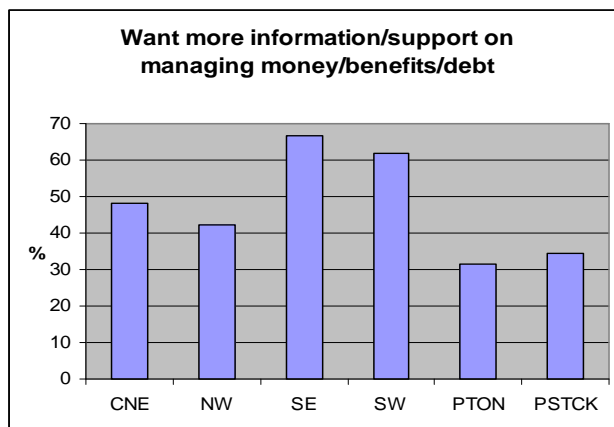
In 3 of the 6 localities (CNE, SE and SW) more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'managing money/benefits and debt' followed by 'understanding and managing children's behaviour'. In 2 localities (NW and PSTCK) more respondents wanted information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' followed by 'managing money/benefits and debt'. In the PTON locality more respondents wanted additional information/support 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', followed by 'children's learning and development'.

### 4.2.1 Understanding and managing children's behaviour

Almost 3 in 5 SE locality respondents wanted more information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', whilst this was the case for around half of the respondents from PTON, NW and SW localities and approximately 2 in 5 of those from CNE and PSTCK.

### 4.2.2 Managing money/benefits/debt

The following chart outlines the percentage of respondents in each locality who wanted more information/support on 'managing money/benefits/debt' and shows that the percentage wanting such information/support ranged from around 1 in 3 in PTON and PSTCK through to approximately 2 in 3 respondents from the SE locality.



### 4.2.3 Children's learning and development

Around half of the PTON respondents wanted more information/support on 'children's learning and development', whilst this was the case for around 2 in 5 from the CNE and NW localities. Around 1 in 3 of the respondents in the SE, SW and PSTCK localities wanted more information/support in this area.

#### **4.2.4 Good approaches to parenting**

Around 2 in 5 PTON and SE respondents wanted more information/support on 'good approaches to parenting', whilst this was so for 1 in 3 of those from CNE, NW, SW and PSTCK.

#### **4.2.5 Understanding teenagers**

Around 1 in 3 respondents in the CNE and PSTCK localities wanted more information/support on 'understanding teenagers', whilst this was the case for around 1 in 4 from the NW, SE, SW and PTON localities.

#### **4.2.6 Cyber safety/bullying**

Around 1 in 3 respondents in the CNE and PSTCK localities wanted more information/support on 'cyber safety/bullying', whilst this was the case for around 1 in 4 from the NW and PTON localities. Approximately 1 in 5 SW respondents wanted more information/support on this issue, as did 1 in 6 from the SE locality.

#### **4.2.7 Teaching children right from wrong**

Around 1 in 4 respondents from the NW, SE and SW localities wanted more information/support on 'teaching children right from wrong', whilst this was the case for around 1 in 5 of CNE respondents and 1 in 6 of those from the PSTCK locality.

#### **4.2.8 Childcare**

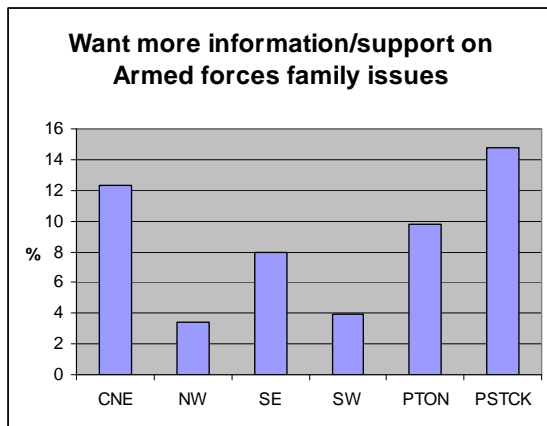
Around 1 in 4 respondents from the SE locality wanted more information/support on 'childcare', whilst this was the case for approximately 1 in 5 from the CNE and SW localities. Approximately 1 in 6 NW and PSTCK respondents wanted more information/support on this issue as did around 1 in 10 from PTON.

#### **4.2.9 Step family issues**

Around 1 in 4 respondents from the SE locality wanted more information/support on 'Step family issues', whilst this was the case for 1 in 10 respondents in the CNE, NW, SW and PTON localities and 1 in 20 in PSTCK.

#### 4.2.10 Armed forces family issues

The following chart outlines the percentage of respondents in each locality who would like more information/support on 'Armed forces family issues', and shows that the percentage wanting such information/support ranged from around 1 in 20 in the NW and SW through to 1 in 6 respondents from PSTCK.



#### 5.0 Where do you think Family Support should be available from?

##### 5.1 Plymouth Picture

The following table outlines the percentage of respondents in Plymouth who thought family support should be available from the sources listed. It highlights that the two most popular sources were a School followed by a GP Surgery.

Where Family Support should be available	%
School	84.4
GP Surgery	67.3
Children's Centre	36.5
Nursery	36.5
Plymouth Parent Partnership	34.9
Community Centre	32.2
Library	29.4
At Home	23.8
Supermarket	9.1

##### 5.2 Locality Picture

In all 6 localities more respondents considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a School, followed by a GP Surgery. The percentage of respondents who thought 'Family Support' should be available from a Children's Centre ranged from around 1 in 4 in CNE to over 2 in 5 in SE.

The percentage of respondents who preferred a Nursery as source of 'Family Support' ranged from around a third in CNE and PSTCK to 44.2% in PTON. Parent Partnership as a source of 'Family Support' was favoured by around 1 in 3 respondents in CNE, NW and PSTCK localities and by 2 in 5 in the SE, SW and PTON localities. Around 1 in 3 respondents in each of the 6 localities considered that a Community Centre should be a place for accessing 'Family Support'.

The Library as a source of 'Family Support' was favoured by between around 1 in 3 respondents in 5 localities (CNE, SE, SW, PTON and PSTCK) and by approximately 1 in 4 in the NW locality. The percentage of respondents who considered that 'Family Support' should be available 'At Home' ranged from around 1 in 10 in PSTCK to approximately 1 in 3 in SW and PTON. The least popular source of 'Family Support' in all 6 Localities was a Supermarket.

## 6.0 Preferred method of help/support

### 6.1 Plymouth Picture

The following table shows the percentage of respondents in Plymouth who preferred help/support to be available via various means and indicates that the two most popular means were help provided individually, followed by help provided in a group.

Prefer help/support to be available:	Percentage
Individually	62.1
In a group	28.9
Don't mind	25.3
Electronically (Website)	24.2
Telephone help line	23.5
DVDs/TV	9.5

### 6.2 Locality Picture

In all 6 Localities more respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually rather than by any other method. The provision of family support or help via a group was preferred by just over 1 in 6 PSTCK respondents, by 1 in 4 from CNE and SW localities, by 1 in 3 SE and PTON respondents and by 2 in 5 from the NW.

Electronic provision of family support was favoured by around 1 in 3 of those from CNE, SE and PSTCK and by 1 in 4 from PTON and 1 in 6 from the NW. The provision of family support or help via a telephone help line was preferred by 45.6% SE respondents, by around 1 in 4 from CNE, SW and PSTCK localities and by 1 in 5 from the NW and PTON. DVDs/TV were the least preferred method of providing help or support in all 6 localities.

## **7.0 Preferred days/times for help to be available**

### **7.1 Plymouth Picture**

Around 2 in 5 respondents indicated that they would like help to be available 24/7, whilst approximately 1 in 3 favoured 'weekdays' (31.7%). Just over 1 in 4 (25.9%) thought it should be available 'during school time' and around 1 in 5 considered it should be available in the 'evenings' (21.2%) and 'before and after school' (19.0%). Around 1 in 6 would like help to be available at the 'weekend' (16.5%) and during the 'school holidays' (15.0%).

### **7.2 Locality Picture**

In 4 Localities (SE, SW, PTON and PSTCK) the preferred hours for help to be available were '24/7' whilst in CNE more respondents indicated that would like help to be available on 'weekdays' and in the NW more wanted 'Family Support' to be available 'during school time'.

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

### **8.1 Plymouth Picture**

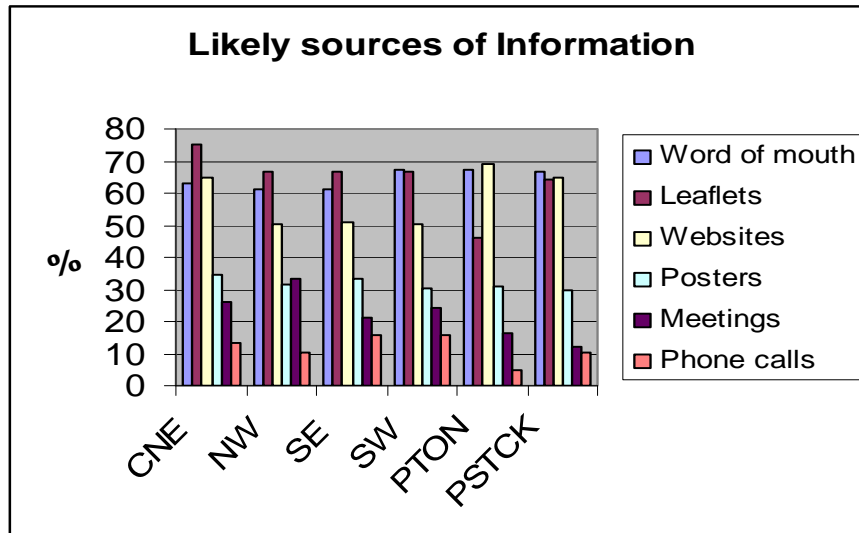
2 in 3 (66.6%) respondents would obtain information about local services via 'word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc.' or through 'leaflets' (64.3%) and just under 3 in 5 would use 'websites' (56.9%).

Around 1 in 3 parents (31.4%) indicated that they would use 'posters' to obtain information about local services and around 1 in 4 (23.2%) indicated that they would use 'meetings'. Only just over 1 in 10 would use 'phone calls' (12.9%).

In addition a very small number of respondents suggested that they would talk to their PSA if they needed information about local services, whilst others indicated that they would use local newspapers, school newsletters and 'Facebook.'

## 8.2 Locality Picture

Respondents' preferences for sources of information varied across the 6 localities as outlined in the chart below.



In NW and SE localities more respondents indicated that they would use 'leaflets', followed by 'word of mouth' whilst in CNE more would use 'leaflets' followed by 'websites'.

In the SW locality more respondents indicated that they would use 'word of mouth' followed by 'leaflets', whilst in PTON more would use 'websites' followed by 'word of mouth' and in PSTCK more would use 'word of mouth' followed by 'websites'.

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

### 9.1 Grandparents

#### 9.1.1 Plymouth Picture

Just over 3 in 5 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their grandparents (61.0%). Approximately 1 in 10 (8.0%) stated that grandparents did this on a 'daily' basis, whilst 1 in 5 said they did so '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their grandparents 'weekly', whilst 1 in 5 mentioned that grandparents did this 'monthly' and around 1 in 4 said they did so 'less than monthly'.

### **9.1.2 Locality Picture**

Around 3 in 4 PTON respondents indicated that Grandparents looked after their children, whilst this was the case for around 3 in 5 of those in CNE, NW and PSTCK and for around half the respondents in the SE and SW localities.

## **9.2 Friends**

### **9.2.1 Plymouth Picture**

Around 1 in 3 (31.6%) respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their friends. 1% stated that their friends did this on a 'daily' basis, whilst 1 in 20 (5.2%) did this '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 5 (19.0%) respondents indicated that their friends looked after their children 'weekly', whilst approximately 1 in 4 (25.3%) stated that friends did this 'monthly' and just under half (49.2%) said they did this 'less than monthly'.

### **9.2.2 Locality Picture**

Around half the PTON and PSTCK respondents said that friends looked after their children, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 3 of those from the SE and around 1 in 4 from the other 3 localities (CNE, NW and SW). The frequency with which friends looked after respondents children varied considerably across the 6 localities. (See individual Locality reports for details)

## **9.3 Aunts/Uncles**

### **9.3.1 Plymouth Picture**

Around 1 in 5 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their Aunts/Uncles (22.9%). Around 1 in 20 (3.9%) stated that Aunts/Uncles did this 'daily', whilst 1 in 10 said they did this '2-3 times per week'. Approximately 1 in 5 stated that Aunts/Uncles looked after their children 'weekly', whilst 1 in 4 did this 'monthly' and 2 in 5 'less than monthly'

### **9.3.2 Locality Picture**

Around 1 in 4 NW and SW respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their Aunts/Uncles, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 5 of those from the other 4 localities (CNE, SE, PTON and PSTCK). The frequency with which Aunts/Uncles looked after respondents children varied considerably across the 6 localities. (See individual Locality reports for details)

## 9.4 Older Children

### 9.4.1 Plymouth Picture

Approximately 1 in 10 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their older siblings (10.3%). Around 1 in 10 (11.4%) stated that their older children did this 'daily', whilst approximately 1 in 6 (16.3%) said they did this '2-3 times per week'. In the region of 1 in 3 stated that their older children looked after their children 'weekly', whilst 1 in 10 did this 'monthly' and 1 in 3 'less than monthly'.

### 9.4.2 Locality Picture

Around 1 in 10 respondents in 5 localities (NW, SE, SW, PTON and PSTCK) indicated that their older children occasionally looked after their siblings, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 5 respondents in CNE.

## 10.0 The use of formal childcare provision

### 10.1.1 Plymouth Picture

The following table shows the percentage of respondents in Plymouth who had a child/ren that attended various types of formal childcare.

Formal Childcare provision	%
Private Nursery	17.5
Child Minders (those with children aged 0-4)	9.2
Child Minders (those with children aged 5-11)	6.1
School/Maintained Nursery	37.5
Pre School	22.9
Out of School provision (those with children aged 5-11)	24.7
Organised Activities for older children(those with children aged 5-11)	27.0

### 10.1.2 Locality Picture

#### (i) Private Nursery

45.4% of PTON respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery' whilst this was the case for around 1 in 3 CNE respondents, 1 in 6 from PSTCK and approximately 1 in 10 in the other three localities (NW, SE and SW).

#### (ii) Child Minders (those with children aged under 5)

Around 1 in 10 respondents from CNE, NW, SW and PTON localities who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 20 in the other two localities.

### **(iii) Child Minders (those with children aged 5-11)**

Around 1 in 10 of the respondents from CNE and PTON localities who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 20 in the other four localities.

### **(iv) School/Maintained Nursery**

Around 2 in 5 respondents from CNE, NW, SE and SW localities who had a child under 5 indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery whilst this was the case for around 1 in 3 in the PTON and PSTCK localities.

### **(v) Pre School**

Around 1 in 4 SE, SW, PTON and PSTCK respondents who had a child/ren in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 5 in the NW and 1 in 6 in CNE locality.

### **(vi) Out of School Provision (those with children aged 5-11)**

Around 2 in 5 SE respondents who had a child/ren in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Out of School' provision, whilst this was the case for around 1 in 4 of those in the SW, PTON and PSTCK localities, and 1 in 5 respondents in the NW and 1 in 10 in the CNE.

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

Around half the respondents who had a child/ren in the 5-11 age group who lived in PTON indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Organised Activity', whilst this was the case for around 1 in 3 of those in the SW and PSTCK localities, and 1 in 5 respondents in the CNE and 1 in 10 in the SE.

## **10.8 Non Users of Formal Childcare**

### **10.8.1 Plymouth Picture**

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'.

### **10.8.2 Locality Picture**

There were slight differences between the 6 localities in terms of the reasons given by respondents for not using formal childcare. The main difference was

that the numbers who mentioned the 'cost of childcare' as a reason for not using formal childcare was slightly higher in the SE and SW localities.

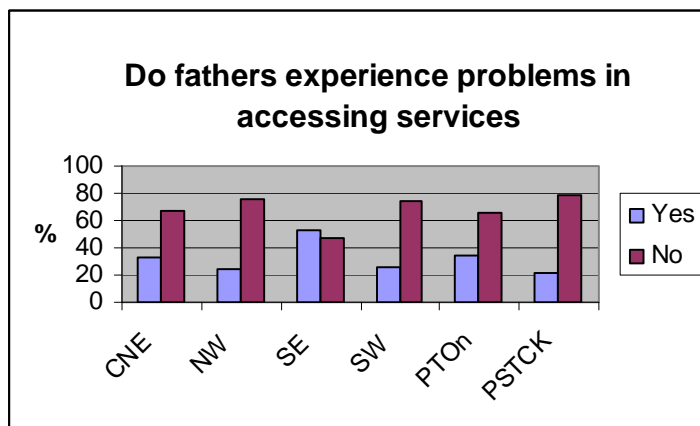
## 11.0 Do fathers experience problems in accessing services?

### 11.1 Plymouth Picture

Around 1 in 4 (28.8%) respondents did consider that there were services that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing, whilst around 3 in 4 (71.2%) did not think this was the case.

### 11.2 Locality Picture

The following chart shows the proportion of respondents in each locality who considered that there were services which fathers in particular experience problems in accessing. The proportions ranged from half in the SE through to 1 in 5 from PSTCK.



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:

#### (i) 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."* (CNE)

*"Time off to attend school events such as what we are doing with KS1 they are always within school day and can't get time off."* (PTON)

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

*"Lots of services are during the working day and female dominated." (PTON)*

### **(ii) Early Years provision**

*"Some playgroups only operate Monday- Friday. There are few weekend facilities that working fathers can access" (SE)*

*"Toddler groups and parenting groups." (SW)*

### **(iii) Men's reluctance to ask for help and support**

*"Fathers leave it to mothers" (SW)*

*"Men lack the motivation - desire to do so." (SW)*

### **(iv) Services targeted at mums**

*"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" (CNE)*

*"More advertisements for supporting males should be put in place." (CNE)*

## **12.0 Other comments made by respondents**

Many respondents took the opportunity to make additional comments. These have been grouped under the 5 key themes arising. An illustrative selection of quotes is listed under each identified theme.

### **12.1 Praise: Parent Support Advisers**

*"The PSA is amazing without her my relationship with the School would be very poor and the help and support she has provided to myself and my son who has Asd has been invaluable." (SW)*

*"Please don't get rid of PSAs as this is the only way I get to speak to head teacher. Our PSA is really good." (NW)*

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

*"The PSA in school is convenient and invaluable support - an emotional shoulder - a central point for advice - a valuable link with the community and agencies and groups in the wider Plymouth network." (PSTCK)*

### 12.1.2 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." (CNE)*

*"Having just met a member of Parent Partnership for advice - it's helpful having someone for support and guidance" (SE)*

### 12.1.3 Issues raised by Grandparents

*"No help at all to look after my Grandchild." (SW)*

*"I didn't realise there was support for grandparent/carers until today. I am a teacher so if I have concerns I talk to our PSA." (SW)*

*"I'm having to work to look after the additional costs of looking after a residency order grandchild." (NW)*

### 12.1.4 Parents with children who have additional/special needs

*"When trying to get information and support to get a diagnosis for our child's Aspergers syndrome and support available, it is obvious that there are not enough Educational Psychologists or Advisory Teachers for Communication Disorders in the Communications Interaction Team to support all the needs of children across Plymouth. They are all stretched to max with their case loads and need more support to do their jobs better. They have been very supportive when I pursue them but get the impression that there is never the time to really focus on children that are lower on the spectrum as our child is. I also know that other children who's parents I have met with a greater need for support are slipping through the net at a crucial time in their emotional and social development." (PTON)*

*"Have problems with getting my daughter assessed for ADHD at her Primary School. She's been there since Sept. I am dyslexic and dyspraxic myself and want her to get help before going to 2ndry sch." (SE)*

*"There's nothing for parents and other children of children with special needs - to support us. It would be good to have e.g. 1 x month - special activity/trip for sibling of SEN child so they can have a break when SEN child has respite activity." (PSTCK)*

### 12.1.5 Concerns

*“Parents need to have a priority in the city - services are needed to help the welfare of children.” (NW)*

*“More help is needed for families with children and parents with disabilities. At present the system is too difficult to ask for help and when you ask for help it is often refused.” (SE)*

*“Any working parents would struggle to access some services as limited availability normally restricted to Mon-Fri office hours.” (PSTCK)*

## **13.0 Next Steps**

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

### **13.1 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.

In the three most affluent localities (CNE, PTON and PSTCK) the top two sources of support were similar, with more respondents indicating that they would go to a GP surgery followed by teaching staff. However, in the three less affluent localities (NW, SE and SW) the position was different as the top two sources of support were a GP Surgery followed by a PSA.

These findings may suggest that parents in the less affluent localities are more comfortable in approaching a PSA for support than teaching staff. If this is the case then urgent consideration should be given to the ramifications for parents and for other agencies in Plymouth should the PSA role cease to exist.

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

Whilst it is clear that parents want more information on a wide range of issues, there are two particular topics about which almost half considered they needed more information i.e. 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' and 'managing money/benefits/debt'. Whilst the percentage wanting more information on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' has remained static since the 2009 Family Support Survey, the percentage wanting more information on 'managing money/benefits/debt' has more than doubled from 21.7% in 2009 to 48.2% in 2010.

In 3 of the 6 localities (CNE, SE and SW) more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'managing money/benefits and debt' followed by 'understanding and managing children's behaviour'. In 2 localities (NW and PSTCK) more respondents wanted information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' followed by 'managing money/benefits and debt'. In the PTON locality more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', followed by 'children's learning and development'.

An audit of Agencies providing such information in each of the 6 localities as well as across the city should be undertaken so that parents wanting this information can be signposted effectively.

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

In all 6 localities, more respondents indicated that 'Family Support' should be available from a School, followed by a GP Surgery. The percentage who considered that Family Support should be available from a School has risen slightly from 80.4% in 2009 to 84.4% in 2010, and the percentage who thought this should be available from a GP Surgery has decreased a little from 71.4% to 67.3% during the same time period.

Whilst schools provide Family Support in many different ways, the majority nevertheless have a PSA whose role had been pivotal in enabling schools to support their respective parents. Given that the continuation of the PSA role is unclear, Schools 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.

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

In all 6 localities, more respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually rather than by any other method. This was also the picture in the 2009 Family Support Survey. The popularity of groups as a way of receiving help/support was quite mixed, being preferred by just over 1 in 6 PSTCK respondents on one hand, through to 2 in 5 from the NW locality on the other. There also appears to be an increase in the numbers of parents who would like help to be available electronically. Services delivering help/support should think about how their delivery can best reflect the preferences outlined above.

### **13.5 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. In 4 Localities (SE, SW, PTON and PSTCK) the preferred hours for help to be available were '24/7' whilst in CNE more respondents indicated that would like help to be available on 'weekdays' and in the NW more wanted 'Family Support' to be available 'during school time'

Services delivering help/support should consider a flexible approach to delivery, given that much of the help currently available is restricted to weekdays, making access difficult for many working parents. Consideration should be given to making help available in the evenings, before and after school, at the weekend and during the school holidays.

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

Parents' preferences for sources of information varied to a small degree across the 6 localities. However it is clear that more of them are likely to obtain information about local services either by word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher or through leaflets. Use of websites has also gained in popularity since

the first Family Support Survey in 2007. Services should give consideration to the above information seeking behaviour and ensure that their information can be accessed accordingly.

### **13.7 Fathers accessing services**

Whilst most respondents do not believe that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing services, there is nevertheless a small minority who do believe this to be the case. The percentage of respondents who consider that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing services has decreased slightly from 32.3% in 2009 to 28.8% in 2010. Whilst this is encouraging, service providers should nevertheless be mindful of their opening times and the language used in their publications, in order to avoid the risk of marginalising fathers.

## Appendix 1

Neighbourhood	Percentage
Hartley and Mannamead	3.1
Crownhill	1.3
Leigham and Mainstone	1.4
Estover	0.4
Peverell	1.6
Higher Compton	1.3
Eggbuckland	3.2
Derriford	1.3
Glenholt	0.1
East End	2.0
Mutley and Greenbank	2.4
Efford	1.3
Mount Gould	1.1
Lipson and Laira	2.0
Ham	0.9
Keyham	2.3
Ford	3.6
Stoke	3.9
Stonehouse	2.0
North Prospect	1.9
Beacon Park and Pennycross	3.4
Morice Town	0.4
Devonport	3.3
City Centre	1.1
St.Budeaux	3.7
Whitleigh	4.3
Manadon	2.2
Tamerton Foliot	1.7
Widewell	0.1
Barne Barton	1.0
Kings Tamerton and Weston Mill	1.0
Ernesettle	4.0
Honicknowle	2.3
Southway	1.9
Elburton and Dunstone	3.2
Plymstock	7.3
Goosewell	1.9
Turnchapel, Hooe and Oreston	6.8
Woodford	1.7
Chaddlewood	2.3
Plympton St Maurice	1.4
Colebrook and Newnham	1.1
Yealmpstone	2.3
Plymouth Total (N=683)	100.0