

**Findings from the 2010 Annual Family
Support Survey**

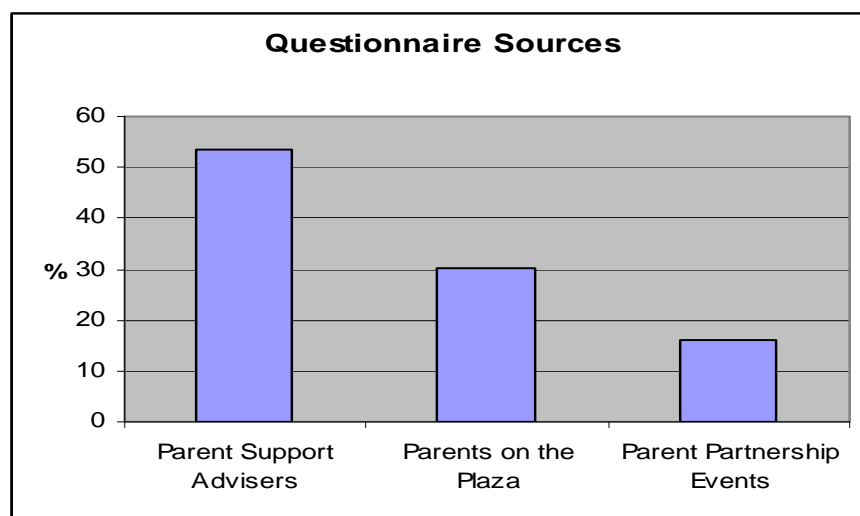
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December 2010

Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010

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 SPSS¹.



Over half (53.6%) the questionnaires were completed at groups and events organised by Parent Support Advisers across the city, whilst around 1 in 3 (30.3%) were completed at the Parents on the Plaza event (Saturday 16 October 2010) and 16.2% through various Parent Partnership parents groups and events.

2.0 Survey Respondents

The majority (95.3%) of questionnaires were completed by respondents from Plymouth, with coverage from all the 43 neighbourhoods in Plymouth (see Appendix 1). Around 1 in 20 (4.7%) were completed by respondents from outside Plymouth.

2.1 Locality

The neighbourhoods were aligned to the appropriate localities so that the following table could be produced, outlining the percentage of questionnaires received from respondents in each locality:

¹ 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.

Locality (N=683)	Percentage
South West	24.1
North West	23.7
Plymstock	19.4
Central and North East	14.3
Plympton	9.1
South East	9.1

Around 2 in 3 (67.2%) questionnaires were from respondents who live in the South West, North West and Plymstock localities, whilst around 1 in 3 (32.8%) were from respondents who live in Central and North East, Plympton and South East localities.

2.2 Demography

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

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.

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.

2.3 Families Profile

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.

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%)

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. 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.

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.

3.0 Where and who do parents go to for support

Where/ Who Go to for Support	Percentage
GP Surgery	69.8
Teaching Staff	43.9
PSA	40.9
Children's Centre/Nursery	22.0
Other support staff in school	20.0
Plymouth Parent Partnership	17.3
Health Visitor	17.0
Community/Voluntary Organisation	12.5
Community Police	11.6
Social Worker	10.9
Midwife	5.9

3.1 GP Surgery

Around 2 in 3 (69.8%) respondents currently go to the GP Surgery when they need support. Approximately 1 in 20 (4.5%) go 'once a week', whilst around 1 in 5 (20.1%) go 'monthly' and 3 in 4 (75.3%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.2 Teaching Staff

In the region of 2 in 5 (43.9%) respondents presently go to teaching staff when they need support. Around 1 in 10 (10.4%) go 'daily', whilst 1 in 20 go '2-3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 (23.5%) go 'weekly', a similar proportion (22.7%) go 'monthly' and almost 2 in 5 (38.8%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.3 PSA

Around 2 in 5 (40.9%) respondents currently go to a PSA when they need support. Approximately 1 in 20 (4.5%) go 'daily', whilst around 1 in 10 (10.8%) go '2-3 times a week' and 1 in 4 (25.6%) go 'weekly'. In the region of 1 in 5 (20.2%) go 'monthly' and around 2 in 5 (38.7%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.4 Children's Centre/Nursery

Around 1 in 5 (22.0%) respondents go to a Children's Centre/Nursery when they need support. Around 1 in 5 (19.6%) go 'daily', whilst about 2 in 5 (43.1%) go '2-3 times per week' and approximately 1 in 4 (24.2%) go 'weekly'. In the region of 1 in 20 (3.7%) go 'monthly' and just under 1 in 10 (9.0%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.5 Other support staff in school

Around 1 in 5 (20.0%) respondents go to other support staff in school when they need support. Approximately 1 in 20 (5.1%) go 'daily', whilst the same proportion go '2 -3 times per week' and around 1 in 4 (23.9%) go 'weekly'. Around 1 in 5 (19.7%) go 'monthly', whilst 45.8% go 'less than monthly'.

3.6 Plymouth Parent Partnership

In the region of 1 in 6 (17.3%) respondents go to Plymouth Parent Partnership when they need support. Around 1 in 20 goes 'daily' and the same proportion goes '2 -3 times per week', whilst around 1 in 4 (27.0%) go 'weekly'. In the region of 1 in 3 go 'monthly' (34.1%), whilst a similar proportion goes 'less than monthly' (31.7%).

3.7 Health Visitor

Around 1 in 6 (17.0%) respondents go a Health Visitor when they need support. Around 1 in 20 (4.3%) go '2-3 times per week', whilst about 1 in 10 (10.8%) go 'weekly', around 1 in 4 (24.7%) go 'monthly' and in the region of 3 in 5 (60.2%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.8 Community/Voluntary Organisation

Around 1 in 10 (12.5%) respondents go to a Community/Voluntary Organisation when they need support. Around 1 in 20 (4.1%) go 'daily'; whilst 15.2% go '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 3 (29.1%) go 'weekly'. In the region of 1 in 3 (29.1%) go 'monthly' and approximately 1 in 4 go 'less than monthly'. The two community/voluntary organisations most frequently mentioned by respondents were 'Parents Apart' and 'Jeremiah's Journey'

3.9 Community Police

Around 1 in 10 (11.6%) respondents go to the Community Police when they need support. About 1 in 10 (8.6%) go 'weekly', the same proportion go 'monthly' and just over 4 in 5 go 'less than monthly'.

3.9 Social Worker

Around 1 in 10 (10.9%) respondents go to a Social Worker when they need support. 1 in 10 go 'weekly', whilst 44.0% go 'monthly' and 46.0% go 'less than monthly'.

3.10 Midwife

Around 1 in 20 (5.9%) respondents go to a Midwife when they need support.

Approximately 1 in 4 (28.5%) go 'weekly' and the same proportion go 'monthly, whilst around 2 in 5 (42.8%) go 'less than monthly'.

3.11 Other

A small number of respondents indicated that they would go to other sources of support. This included School Nurses, CAMHS and the Child Development Centre.

4.0 What parents want more information/support about

Want more information/support about:	Percentage
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

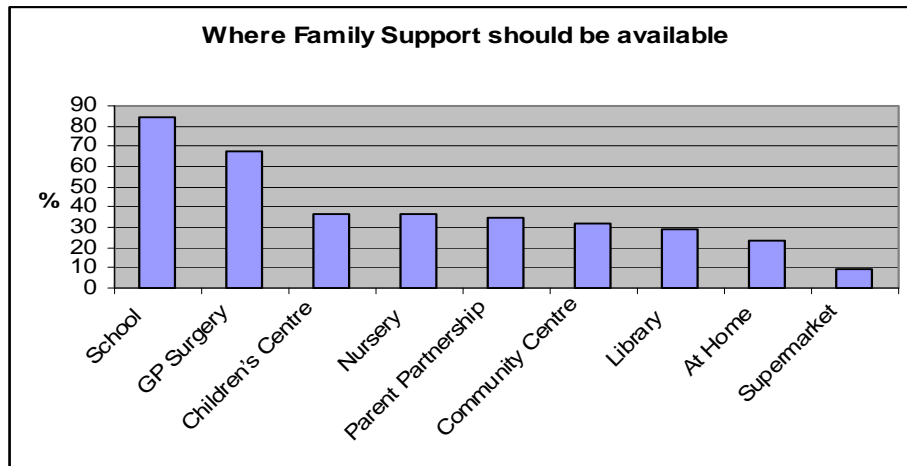
Around half the respondents wanted more information/support on understanding and/or managing children's behaviour and managing money/benefits and debt. Approximately 2 in 5 (37.3%) wanted more information/support on children's learning and development and around 1 in 3 (35.4%) wanted more information/support on good approaches to parenting.

Around 1 in 4 wanted more information/support on understanding teenagers (28.2%) and Cyber safety/bullying (25.4%), whilst around 1 in 5 wanted this in relation to teaching children right from wrong (21.7%) and Childcare (19.4%).

More information/support on step family issues was sought by just over 1 in 10 respondents (10.5%) and 7.5% wanted this in relation to armed forces family issues.

A very small number of parents also indicated that they would like more information/support on 'special needs'.

5.0 Where Family Support should be available



Around 4 in 5 respondents considered that 'Family Support' should be available from School (84.4%) and just over 2 in 3 (67.3%) thought it should be available at the GP Surgery. Approximately 1 in 3 respondents favoured this being available at a Children's Centre (36.5%), a Nursery (36.5%), at Plymouth Parent Partnership (34.9%), at a Community Centre (32.2%) and at the Library (29.4%). Approximately 1 in 4 (23.8%) respondents thought that 'Family Support' should be available at 'At Home' whilst only around 1 in 10 (9.1%) considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a Supermarket.

6.0 Preferred method of help/support

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

Just over 3 in 5 (62.1%) respondents would prefer help or support to be available individually, whilst around 1 in 4 favour a group (28.9%). The provision of help or support electronically (website) was preferred by around 1 in 4 (24.2%) with a similar number favouring a telephone helpline (23.5%). Just under 1 in 10 (9.5%) would wish help or support to be available via DVDs/TV. In the region of 1 in 4 (25.3%) respondents also indicated that they didn't mind how support is made available.

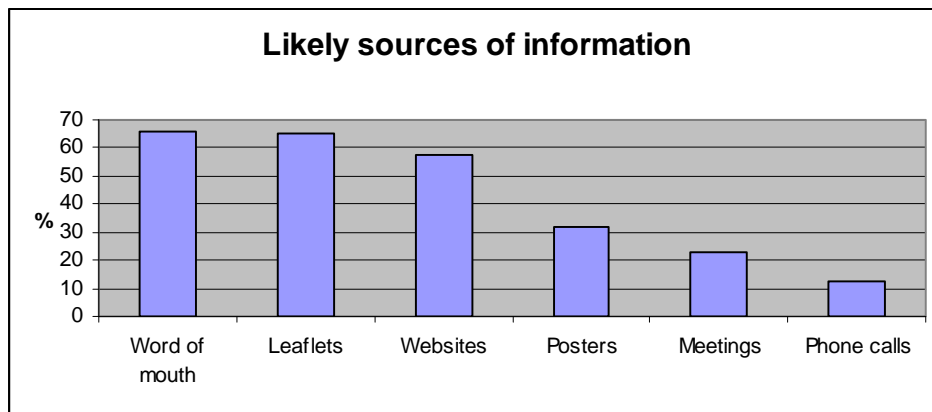
7.0 Preferred days/times for help to be available

Family Support should be available:	Percentage
24/7	38.2
Weekdays	31.7
During School time	25.9
Evenings	21.2
Before and after school	19.0
Weekends	16.5
School holidays	15.0

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%)

A very small number of respondents suggested that they 'didn't mind when help was available', whilst others favoured an 'appointment system' or a 'system that allows shift workers to access the help/support' they need'.

8.0 Likely sources of information about local services

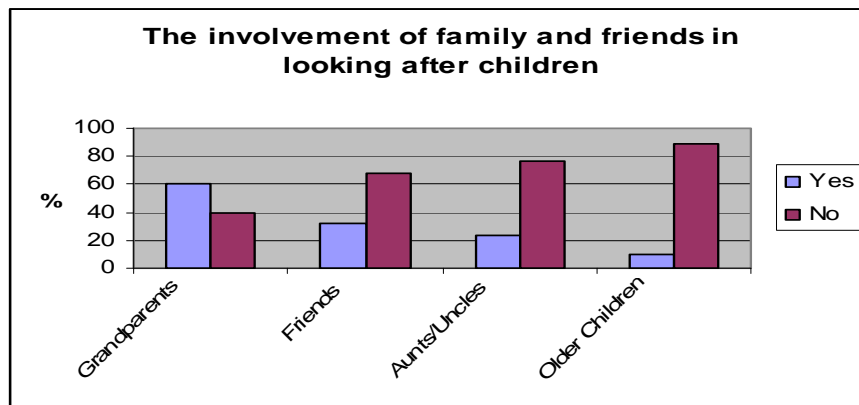


2 in 3 (66.6%) respondents would obtain information about local services via word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. or through leaflets (64.3%) and just under 3 in 5 would use websites (56.9%).

Around 1 in 3 parents (31.4%) indicated that they would use posters to get 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.'

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



9.1 Grandparents

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 this '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 this 'less than monthly'.

9.2 Friends

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'.

9.3 Aunts/Uncles

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'.

9.4 Older Children

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'.

9.5 Other

A very small number of respondents also indicated that their children were looked after by other members of their extended family e.g. ex-partners, cousins etc.

10.0 The use of formal childcare provision

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 Private Nursery

Around 1 in 6 (17.5%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery'. Around 1 in 4 (22.2%) attended 'daily', whilst just under half (46.7%) said they attended '2-3 times per week' and almost 1 in 3 (31.1%) stated that their children attended 'weekly'.

10.2 Child Minders (those with children aged under 5)

Around 1 in 10 (9.2%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 10 (11.5%) attended 'daily', whilst half attended '2-3 times per week' and just under 2 in 5 (38.4%) attended 'weekly'.

10.3 Child Minders (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 20 (6.1%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 5 (19.2%) attended 'daily', whilst approximately 2 in 5 (38.5%) attended '2-3 times per week', around 1 in 3 attended 'weekly' and just over 1 in 10 (11.5%) 'monthly'.

10.4 School/Maintained Nursery

Around 2 in 5 (37.5%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery. 55.1% attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 3 (29.2%) attended '2-3 times per week' and 15.7% attended 'weekly'

10.5 Pre School

Around 1 in 4 (22.9%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School. Around 1 in 4 (26.1%) attended 'daily', almost half (47.5%) attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 4 (26.1%) attended 'weekly'.

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

Around 1 in 4 (24.7%) 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'. 7.8% attended 'daily', around 1 in 3 (31.4%) attended '2-3 times per week', 2 in 5 attended 'weekly' and 1 in 5 attended 'monthly'.

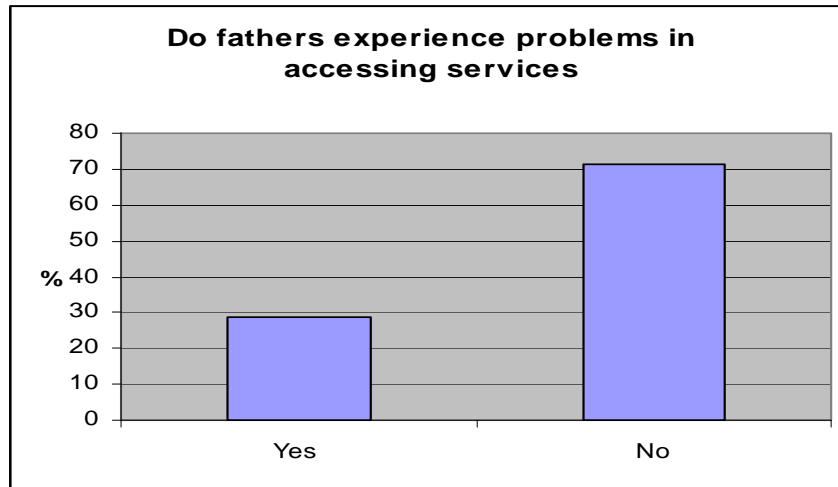
10.7 Organised Activities for older children (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 4 (27.0%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Organised Activity'. Around 1 in 4 (25.2%) attended '2-3 times per week', whilst 56.8% attended 'weekly', around 1 in 20 (3.6%) attended 'monthly' and around 14.4% attended 'less than monthly'.

10.8 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/dren 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'.

11.0 Do fathers experience problems in accessing services



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. 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 illustrative² selection of comments is listed under each identified theme:

11.1 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."

"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."

"Lots of services are during the working day and female dominated."

11.2 Early Years provision

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

"Toddler groups and parenting groups."

² 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.

11.3 Men's reluctance to ask for help and support

"Fathers leave it to mothers"

"Men lack the motivation - desire to do so."

11.4 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"

"More advertisements for supporting males should be put in place."

12.0 Other comments made by respondents

Many respondents took the opportunity to make additional comments in their responses to the questionnaire. These have been grouped under the 5 key themes arising. An illustrative selection of quotes are 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."

"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."

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

"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."

12.2 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."

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

12.3 Issues raised by Grandparents

"No help at all to look after my Grandchild."

"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."

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

2.4 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."

"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."

"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."

12.5 Concerns

"Parents need to have a priority in the city - services are needed to help the welfare of children."

"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."

"Any working parents would struggle to access some services as limited availability normally restricted to Mon-Fri office hours."

13.0 Next Steps

There are a number of practical steps that might address the seven key areas 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. 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 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: 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' and 'managing money/benefits/debt'. An audit of Agencies providing such information should be undertaken so that parents wanting this information can be signposted effectively.

13.3 Where Family Support should be available

Parents' top preference for where 'Family Support' should be available from was a School, followed by a GP Surgery. Whilst schools provide Family Support in many different ways, the majority nevertheless have a PSA whose role had been pivotal in enabling school's 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

It is clear that more parents would prefer help to be available to them individually rather than to receive it as a member of a group. 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 consider 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 isn't 'a one size fits all' answer to the question of when parents would like help to be available. Services delivering

help/support should consider a flexible approach to delivery, given that quite a lot 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 are more likely to obtain information about local services by 'word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher' and through 'leaflets'. Websites have also gained in popularity since the first Family Support Survey in 2007. Services providing information should give consideration to the above information seeking behaviour and ensure that their information can be accessed accordingly.

13.7 Fathers accessing services

Whilst it is clear that 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 their opening times and the language used in publications to avoid 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
Total (N=683)	100.0