

**Findings from the 2010 Annual Family
Support Survey:
North West Locality**

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Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010: North West 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 SPSS¹.

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 4 (23.7%) questionnaires were completed by respondents from the North West locality. 161 Questionnaires were returned as below from the Neighbourhoods which make up the North West locality:

Neighbourhood	%
Whitleigh	20.4
St.Budeaux	17.3
Ernesettle	17.3
Honicknowle	9.9
Manadon	9.3
Tamerton Foliot	8.0
Southway	8.0
K.Tamerton and W.Mill	4.3
Barne Barton	4.3
Widewell	0.6

Around 2 in 3 (63.2%) questionnaires were completed at groups and events organised by Parent Support Advisers, whilst around 1 in 4 (22.7%) were completed at the Parents on the Plaza event (Saturday 16 October 2010) and

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.

approximately 1 in 10 (1.9%) through various Parent Partnership parents groups and events.

2.0 Demography

The majority of respondents (91.1%) were female, while 8.9% were male.

2.0% of the respondents were under 20 years of age, whilst around 1 in 4 (24.8%) were aged 20-29 and just over 2 in 5 (43.4%) were aged 30-39. Approximately 1 in 5 (21.3%) were aged 40-49, 2.7% were aged 50-59, and around 1 in 20 (4.1%) were aged 60 or over.

The majority of respondents were White British (92.9%), whilst 3.2% indicated that they were Chinese or other, 1.3% Asian Black or Asian British and 0.6% Black or Black British.

3.0 Families Profile

Around 1 in 20 (4.5%) respondents indicated that they did not have any children living with them, whilst around 1 in 3 (29.4%) had one child living with them and approximately 2 in 5 (39.7%) had 2 children. Around 1 in 6 (14.3%) respondents had 3 children living with them and around 1 in 10 (12.3%) had 4 or more children living with them.

More respondents (73.3%) had children in the 5 -11 age group than in the under 5 group (40.2%), 12 - 15 group (29.8%) or 16+ group (10.3%).

Around 1 in 4 (25.5%) respondents indicated that they had a child living with them who had a disability whilst around 3 in 4 (74.5%) did not. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that they were a single parent (26.9%) whilst around 3 in 4 (73.1%) said they were not.

More respondents indicated that their employment status was part time (38.1%) than full time (13.1%). Around 2 in 5 (41.4%) indicated that they were full time parents/carers, whilst around 1 in 20 (3.9%) said they were not in paid work or education/training and 1.9% stated that they were in full time education/training. 1.3% of respondents said they were retired.

4.0 Findings from the North West Locality

4.1 Where and who do you go to for support

Where/ Who go to for support	%
GP Surgery	70.3
PSA	48.9
Teaching Staff	40.6
Children's Centre/Nursery	26.2
School Support staff	20.0
Health Visitor	19.2
Plymouth Parent Partnership	17.9
Community Police	15.8
Community/Voluntary Organisation	14.4
Social Worker	11.7
Midwife	6.2

Around 2 in 3 (70.3%) North West respondents indicated that they would go the GP Surgery (70.3%) when they need support; whilst around half would go to a PSA (48.9%) and approximately 2 in 5 (40.6%) would go to teaching staff. In the region of 1 in 4 would go to a Children's Centre/Nursery (26.2%), 1 in 5 would go to other school support staff (20.0%) or to a Health Visitor (19.2%).

Approximately 1 in 6 would go to Plymouth Parent Partnership or to a Community/Voluntary Organisation, whilst approximately 1 in 10 would go to a Social Worker (11.7%) and 1 in 20 would go to a Midwife.

4.2 What parents want more information/support about?

Want more information/support about:	%
Understanding and managing children's behaviour	52.4
Managing money/benefits/debt	42.4
Children's learning and development	42.4
Good approaches to parenting	31.7
Teaching children right from wrong	26.2
Understanding teenagers	25.5
Cyber safety/bullying	25.5
Childcare	16.9
Step family issues	8.2
Armed forces family issues	3.4

Around half (52.4%) the respondents from the North West locality wanted more information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', whilst around 2 in 5 wanted this in relation to either 'managing money/benefits/debt' or 'children's learning and development'.

More information/support on 'good approaches to parenting' was sought by around 1 in 3 respondents, whilst in the region of 1 in 4 wanted this in relation to 'teaching children right from wrong', 'understanding teenagers' and 'cyber safety/bullying'.

Approximately 1 in 6 wanted more information/support on 'childcare', whilst in the region of 1 in 10 wanted this in relation to 'step family issues' and 1 in 20 in relation to 'armed forces family issues'.

4.3 Where Family Support should be available

Where Family Support should be available	%
School	84.8
GP Surgery	63.4
Children Centre	37.2
Nursery	35.1
Community Centre	31.0
Parent Partnership	29.0
At Home	26.2
Library	22.7
Supermarket	11.2

Over 4 in 5 respondents from the North West locality considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a School (84.8%) and just under 2 in 3 thought it should be available at the GP Surgery (63.4%). According to around 2 in 5 respondents, 'Family Support' should be available from a Children's Centre (37.2%), whilst approximately 1 in 3 thought this should be available from a Nursery (35.1%), at a Community Centre (31.0%), or at Parent Partnership (29.0%).

Around 1 in 4 considered that 'Family Support' should be available 'At Home' and at a Library 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	57.9
In a group	40.6
Don't mind	25.5
Telephone help line	18.2
Electronically (Website)	15.1
DVDs/TV	8.9

Around 3 in 5 North West locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst approximately 2 in 5 would prefer this to be available via a group and 1 in 5 via a telephone helpline. Around 1 in 6 would like

it to be available electronically whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like it to be available via DVDs/TV. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that they didn't mind how help/support was made available.

4.5 Preferred days/times for help to be available

Family Support should be available:	%
During School time	37.9
Weekdays	34.4
24/7	33.1
Before and after school	21.3
Weekends	15.8
Evenings	15.1
School holidays	15.1

Around 2 in 5 respondents from the North West locality indicated that they would like help to be available 'during school time', whilst around 1 in 3 would like this available on 'weekdays' and '24/7'. In the region of 1 in 5 would like help to be available 'before and after school', whilst around 1 in 6 wanted it available at the 'weekends' (15.8%), in the 'evenings' (15.1%) and during the 'school holidays' (15.1%).

4.6 Likely sources of information about local services

Information Source	%
Leaflets	66.8
Word of mouth	61.3
Websites	50.3
Meetings	33.1
Posters	31.7
Phone calls	10.3

Around 2 in 3 (66.8%) North West locality respondents would obtain information about local services through reading leaflets; whilst in the region of 3 in 5 would obtain this through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (61.3%) and half would use websites.

Meetings and posters would be used by just over 1 in 3 respondents to source information about local services, whilst around 1 in 10 would obtain this by making phone calls (10.3%).

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

4.7.1 Grandparents

Grandparents look after children	%
Yes	59.7
No	40.3

Around 3 in 5 North West locality respondents indicated that grandparents looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 5 (18.6%) stated that this happened on a 'daily' basis, whilst around 1 in 10 said this occurred '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by grandparents 'weekly', whilst 1 in 5 said that they did this 'monthly' and around 1 in 4 'less than monthly'.

4.7.2 Friends

Friends look after children	%
Yes	22.9
No	77.1

Around 1 in 4 North West locality respondents indicated that friends looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 20 stated that friends did so 'daily', whilst around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by friends 'weekly', whilst 1 in 3 mentioned that this happened 'monthly' and around 2 in 5 'less than monthly'.

4.7.3 Aunts/Uncles

Aunts/Uncles look after children	%
Yes	25.6
No	74.4

Around 1 in 4 North West locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by Aunts/Uncles. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after 'weekly' by their Aunts/Uncles and a similar proportion said they did this 'monthly', whilst around half said that they did this 'less than monthly'.

4.7.4 Older children

Older children look after children	%
Yes	5.9
No	94.1

Around 1 in 20 North West locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by older siblings. Around 1 in 10 respondents stated that this took place '2-3 times per week', whilst 1 in 3 'monthly' and 56.2% 'less than monthly'.

4.8 The use of formal childcare provision

Formal Childcare provision	%
Private Nursery	12.5
Childminders (those with children aged 0-4)	9.3
Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)	5.0
School/Maintained Nursery	39.0
Pre School	20.3
Out of School provision (those with children aged 5-11)	20.3
Organised Activities for older children(those with children aged 5-11)	16.6

4.8.1 Private Nursery

Around 1 in 10 (12.5%) North West locality respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery'. Around 1 in 3 (33.3%) stated that their children attended 'daily', whilst a similar proportion attended '2-3 times per week' and an identical proportion attended 'weekly'.

4.8.2 Childminders (those with children aged under 5)

Around 1 in 10 (9.3%) 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'.

4.8.3 Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)

1 in 20 (5.0%) 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', around 1 in 3 attended 'weekly' and just over 1 in 6 (16.6%) 'monthly'.

4.8.4 School/Maintained Nursery

Around 2 in 5 (39.0%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery. Around half (47.6%) attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 3 (33.3%) attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 5 (19.0%) attended 'weekly'.

4.8.5 Pre School

Around 1 in 5 (20.3%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School. 45.4% attended 'daily', around 1 in 10 attended '2-3 times per week' and 45.4% attended 'weekly'.

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

1 in 5 (20.3%) 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 attended 'daily', 1 in 4 attended '2-3 times per week', around half attended 'weekly', whilst 1 in 6 attended 'monthly'.

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

1 in 6 (16.6%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Organised Activity'. Around 1 in 20 (5.8%) attended '2-3 times per week', whilst 70.5% attended 'weekly', around 1 in 10 (11.7%) attended 'monthly' and a similar percentage 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	24.8
No	75.2

Around 1 in 4 (24.8%) North West locality respondents did consider that there were services that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing. However, 3 in 4 considered this was not the case (75.2%).

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:

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.

4.9.1 Hours Available

"Schools. Stuff for parents mainly during day."

"A lot of the services that I know of are run during the day and most fathers will be working - sadly this is also true of the Saturday fathers club as most jobs are Mon - Sat based."

"Partner in Marines away a lot sees this as Mums role as here all the time!"

4.9.2 Early Years provision

"Toddler groups/ Early years."

4.9.3 Men's reluctance to ask for help and support

"Purely because I feel men find it harder to ask for support."

"They don't know whats around so don't know what to ask."

4.9.4 Services targeted at mums

"Not much information really advertised as being available for fathers in general. Every thing seems to be catered for mothers, too gender specific."

"Difficult with lots of mothers difficult to fit in."

"Most training course focus on mother and child interaction not a whole family approach."

4.10 Other comments made by respondents

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

4.10.1 Praise: Parent Support Advisers

"I know where the support is as I can go to my PSA and she'll find out for me."

"As a grandparent of children in the school I have found the P.S.A extremely helpful."

"The school PSA provide lots of support and is very informative and helpful. She is a crucial part of the school. The Surestart is also very helpful with pre-school children."

"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."

4.10.2 Praise: Parent Partnership

"Nice to find more support for struggling parents and the statementing process shouldn't be the only way to access other services."

4.10.3 Issues raised by Grandparents

"I have care of children full time as a long term placement (grandmother)."

"Working to look after the additional costs of looking after a residency order grandchild."

4.10.4 Parents with children who have additional/special needs

"It would be nice for my son with cerebal palsy to be able to go to outside activities with a carer or even go to the park but there is nothing there for him."

4.5 Concerns

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

"When I ask for help I find I get passed to someone else. Why is this?"

"I think dads need to be aware of parenting skills. How important it is to a childs healthy emotional well being. I feel dads need to know how important these things are."

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 North West respondents were a GP Surgery, followed by a PSA followed by teaching staff. 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 North West locality more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour' followed by 'managing money/benefits and debt'. The North West locality also had the second highest percentage of respondents who wanted more information/support on 'children's learning and development' and 'teaching children right from wrong'. An audit of Agencies providing such information within the North West 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 North West 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 North West 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 North West 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 5 North West locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst approximately 2 in 5 would

prefer this to be available via a group and 1 in 5 via a telephone helpline. Around 1 in 6 would like this to be available electronically whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like this to be available via DVDs/TV. Services delivering help/support within the North West 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 North West locality indicated that they would like help to be available 'during school time'; whilst around 1 in 3 would like it available on 'weekdays' and '24/7'. In the region of 1 in 5 would like help to be available 'before and after school', whilst around 1 in 6 wanted it available at the 'weekends' (15.8%), in the evenings (15.1%) and during the 'school holidays' (15.1%). Services delivering help/support within the North West locality should consider whether their opening times reflect the preferences outlined above.

5.6 Likely sources of information about local services

Around 2 in 3 (66.8%) North West locality respondents would prefer to obtain information about local services from leaflets; whilst in the region of 3 in 5 would through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (61.3%) and half would access such information via websites. 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 publications, in order to avoid marginalising fathers.