

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

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Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010: Plymstock 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 collated 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 5 (19.4%) questionnaires were completed by respondents from the Plymstock locality. 131 questionnaires were returned as below from the Neighbourhoods which make up the Plymstock locality:

Neighbourhood	%
Plymstock	38.3
Turnchapel, Hooe and Oreston	35.3
Elburton and Dunstone	16.5
Goosewell	9.7

Around 3 in 4 (71.7%) questionnaires were obtained via groups and events organised by Parent Support Advisers, whilst around 1 in 5 (22.1%) were completed at the Parents on the Plaza event (Saturday 16 October 2010) and around 1 in 20 (6.1%) were obtained through various Parent Partnership parents groups and events.

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.

2.0 Demography

The majority of respondents (86.7%) were female, while 13.3% were male.

Around 1 in 20 (5.5%) respondents were aged 20-29 and just over half (53.5%) were aged 30-39. 1 in 3 (33.0%) were aged 40-49, 5.5% were aged 50-59, and 1.5% were aged 60 or over.

The majority of respondents were White British (98.4%), whilst 1.5% were Chinese or other.

3.0 Families Profile

2.3% respondents indicated that they did not have any children living with them, whilst around 1 in 5 (20.3%) had one child living with them and 46.0% had 2 children. 1 in 4 (22.6%) respondents had 3 children living with them and around 1 in 10 (8.5%) had 4 or more children living with them.

More respondents (81.5%) had children in the 5 -11 age group than in the under 5 group (33.0%), 12 -15 group (33.0%) or 16+ group (13.0%).

Around 1 in 6 (15.6%) respondents indicated that they had a child living with them who had a disability whilst around 4 in 5 (84.4%) did not. Around 1 in 10 respondents indicated that they were a single parent (10.8%) whilst 89.2% said they were not.

More respondents indicated that their employment status was part time (48.4%) than full time (24.6%). Around 1 in 5 (20.7%) indicated that they were full time parents/carers and 0.7% said they were not in paid work or education/training. Approximately 1 in 20 (3.8%) respondents were in full time education/training and 1.5% said they were retired.

4.0 Findings from the Plymstock Locality

4.1 Where and who do you go to for support

Where/ Who go to for support	%
GP Surgery	77.0
Teaching Staff	44.0
PSA	34.3
School Support staff	18.3
Health Visitor	17.5
Children's Centre/Nursery	14.5
Com/Vol Orgn	11.4
Plymouth Parent Partnership	10.6
Community Police	9.1
Midwife	7.6
Social Worker	5.8

Around 3 in 4 (77.0%) Plymstock respondents indicated that they would go to the GP Surgery when they need support; whilst 44.0% would go to teaching staff and around 1 in 3 (34.3%) would go to a PSA. In the region of 1 in 5 would go to School support staff (18.3%), whilst around 1 in 6 would go to either a Health Visitor (17.5%) or a Children's Centre/Nursery (14.5%). Around 1 in 10 would go to a Community/Voluntary Organisation (11.4%), to Plymouth Parent Partnership (10.6%), or to the Community Police (9.1%) whilst around 1 in 20 would go to a Midwife (7.6%) or a Social Worker (5.8%).

4.2 What parents want more information/support about?

Want more information/support about:	%
Understanding and managing children's behaviour	39.2
Managing money/benefits/debt	34.3
Understanding teenagers	33.8
Cyber safety/bullying	33.0
Good approaches to parenting	31.2
Children's learning and development	30.0
Childcare	16.9
Teaching children right from wrong	16.1
Armed forces family issues	14.8
Step family issues	5.3

Around 2 in 5 (39.2%) respondents from the Plymstock locality wanted more information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', whilst around 1 in 3 wanted this in relation to 'managing money/benefits/debt' (34.3%), 'understanding teenagers' (33.8%), 'cyber safety/bullying' (33.0%), 'good approaches to parenting' (31.2%), and 'children's learning and development' (30.0%).

In the region of 1 in 6 wanted more information/support on ‘teaching children right from wrong’ (16.1%) and ‘armed forces family issues’ (14.8%), whilst 1 in 20 wanted it in relation to ‘step family issues’ (5.3%).

4.3 Where Family Support should be available

Where Family Support should be available	%
School	85.4
GP Surgery	65.6
Community Centre	31.2
Children Centre	30.5
Nursery	30.5
Parent Partnership	29.0
Library	29.0
At Home	11.4
Supermarket	6.1

Over 4 in 5 respondents from the Plymstock locality considered that ‘Family Support’ should be available from a School (85.4%) and around 2 in 3 thought it should be available at the GP Surgery (65.6%). According to around 1 in 3 respondents, ‘Family Support’ should be available from a Community Centre (31.2%), a Children’s Centre (30.5%), a Nursery (30.5%), Parent Partnership (29.0%), and a Library (29.0%). Approximately 1 in 10 thought it should be available ‘At Home’ (11.4%), and approximately 1 in 20 thought it should be available from a Supermarket (6.1%).

4.4 Preferred method of help/support

Prefer help/support to be available:	%
Individually	67.2
Electronically (Website)	30.5
Don’t mind	22.9
Telephone help line	22.9
In a group	16.7
DVDs/TV	9.1

Around 2 in 3 Plymstock locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst around 1 in 3 would like it to be available electronically and around 1 in 4 would like it available via a telephone help line (22.9%). Approximately 1 in 6 would like it available via a group (16.7%) whilst around 1 in 10 would like it to be available via DVDs/TV. 1 in 4 respondents indicated that they didn’t mind how help/support was made available (22.9%).

4.5 Preferred days/times for help to be available

Family Support should be available:	%
24/7	30.1
Weekdays	27.4
Evenings	27.4
During School time	22.1
Before and after school	19.0
Weekends	12.2
School holidays	10.6

Around 1 in 3 respondents from the Plymstock locality indicated that they would like help to be available '24/7', whilst around 1 in 4 would like it available on 'weekdays' (27.4%), in the 'evenings' (27.4%) and 'during school time' (22.1%).

In the region of 1 in 5 would like help to be available 'before and after school' (19.0%), whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like this at the 'weekends' (12.2%) and during the school holidays' (10.6%).

4.6 Likely sources of information about local services

Information Source	%
Word of mouth	66.4
Websites	64.8
Leaflets	64.1
Posters	29.7
Meetings	12.2
Phone calls	10.6

2 in 3 Plymstock locality respondents would obtain information about local services through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (66.4%), by using websites, or by reading leaflets (64.1%).

Posters would be used by just over 1 in 3 respondents to source information about local services, whilst around 1 in 10 would obtain it via meetings (12.2%) or by making phone calls (10.6%).

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

4.7.1 Grandparents

Grandparents look after children	%
Yes	62.9
No	37.1

Around 3 in 5 Plymstock locality respondents indicated that grandparents looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 20 stated that this happened on a 'daily' basis; whilst around 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 4 said this occurred 'monthly' and around 1 in 4 said they did this 'less than monthly'.

4.7.2 Friends

Friends look after children	%
Yes	46.5
No	53.5

Almost half (46.5%) the Plymstock locality respondents indicated that friends looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 5 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by friends 'weekly', whilst around 1 in 5 stated that this happened 'monthly' and just over half said this occurred 'less than monthly'.

4.7.3 Aunts/Uncles

Aunts/Uncles look after children	%
Yes	20.6
No	79.4

Around 1 in 5 Plymstock locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by Aunts/Uncles. Around 1 in 20 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by Aunts/Uncles 'daily' and the same percentage said they did this '2-3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents said that Aunts/Uncles did this 'weekly', whilst 2 in 5 said 'monthly' and 1 in 5 'less than monthly'.

4.7.4 Older children

Older children look after children	%
Yes	12.2
No	87.8

Around 1 in 10 Plymstock locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their older siblings. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that this

took place 'daily', whilst 1 in 3 said this happened 'weekly', 1 in 4 'monthly' and around 1 in 6 'less than monthly'.

4.8 The use of formal childcare provision

Formal Childcare provision	%
Private Nursery	16.2
Childminders (those with children aged 0-4)	6.9
Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)	6.9
School/Maintained Nursery	32.5
Pre School	27.9
Out of School provision (those with children aged 5-11)	22.6
Organised Activities for older children(those with children aged 5-11)	30.4

4.8.1 Private Nursery

Around 1 in 6 (16.2%) Plymstock locality respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery'. 1 in 6 stated that their children attended 'daily', whilst 2 in 3 attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 6 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.2 Childminders (those with children aged under 5)

Around 1 in 20 (6.9%) Plymstock locality respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 3 attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 3 attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 3 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.3 Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 20 (6.9%) Plymstock locality respondents who had a child in the 5 -11 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 6 attended 'daily', whilst half attended '2-3 times per week', 1 in 6 attended 'weekly' and a similar proportion 'monthly'.

4.8.4 School/Maintained Nursery

Around 1 in 3 (32.5%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery. Around half attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 3 attended '2-3 times per week' and in the region of 1 in 6 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.5 Pre School

Around 1 in 4 (27.9%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School. Around 1 in 10 attended 'daily', 3 in 5 attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 4 attended 'weekly'.

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

Around 1 in 4 (22.6%) 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'. 1 in 6 attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 5 attended '2-3 times per week', 1 in 5 attended 'weekly', 1 in 10 attended 'monthly' and 1 in 4 went 'less than monthly'.

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

Around 1 in 3 (30.4%) respondents who had a child in the 5-11 age group indicated that their child/ren attended an 'Organised Activity'. 36.6% attended '2-3 times per week', just under half went 'weekly' and 1 in 6 went '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	21.9
No	78.1

Around 1 in 5 Plymstock locality respondents did consider that there were services that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing whilst a similar proportion considered this was not 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 3 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

"Everything! Due to working away from home; relies on good communication between parents."

"As Fathers tend to work longer hours services are not available to them as they are generally 9 - 5 weekdays."

"Husband in Navy so difficult when away to access anything - many websites out of date for example."

4.9.2 Early Years provision

"Baby changing facilities."

4.9.3 Men's reluctance to ask for help and support

"Some dads don't know info to ask / how to ask etc."

"Wouldn't ask see it as my job!"

"Probably less likely to seek help."

4.10 Other comments made by respondents

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

4.10.1 Praise: Parent Support Advisers

"PSA in school is useful, easy way of getting assistance and I have used this service and found very helpful."

"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."

4.10.2 Concerns

"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."

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

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 Plymstock 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 Plymstock locality more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'understanding and managing children's behaviour', followed by 'managing money/benefits/debt'. Plymstock locality also had the highest percentage of respondents who wanted more information/support on 'armed forces family issues', 'understanding teenagers' and 'cyber safety/bullying'. An audit of Agencies providing such information within the Plymstock 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 Plymstock 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 Plymstock 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/supported would like

In the Plymstock 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 2 in 3 Plymstock locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst around 1 in 3 would like it to be

available electronically and around 1 in 4 would like it available via a telephone help line (22.9%). Approximately 1 in 6 would like it via a group (16.7%) whilst around 1 in 10 would like it to be available via DVDs/TV. 1 in 4 respondents indicated that they didn't mind how help/support was made available (9.1%). Services delivering help/support within the Plymstock 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 1 in 3 respondents from the Plymstock locality indicated that they would like help to be available '24/7', whilst around 1 in 4 would like it available on 'weekdays' (27.4%), in the 'evenings' (27.4%) and 'during school time' (22.1%). In the region of 1 in 5 would like it available 'before and after school' (19.0%), whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like help to be available at the 'weekends' (12.2%) and 'during the school holidays' (10.6%). Services delivering help/support within the Plymstock locality should consider whether their opening times reflect the preferences outlined above.

5.6 Likely sources of information about local services

2 in 3 Plymstock locality respondents would obtain information about local services through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (66.4%), by using websites or from leaflets (64.1%). Posters would be used by just over 1 in 3 respondents to obtain information about local services, whilst around 1 in 10 would obtain it via meetings (12.2%) or through phone calls (10.6%). 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.