

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

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January 2011

Findings from the Family Support Questionnaire 2010: South 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 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 4 (24.0%) questionnaires were completed by respondents from the South West locality. 164 Questionnaires were returned as below from the Neighbourhoods which make up the South West locality:

Neighbourhood	%
Stoke	17.6
Ford	15.2
Beacon Park and Pennycross	15.2
Devonport	15.2
Keyham	9.7
Stonehouse	8.5
North Prospect	7.9
City Centre	4.8
Ham	3.6
Morice Town	1.8

Around 2 in 5 (39.6%) questionnaires were obtained via groups and events organised by Parent Support Advisers, whilst 36.8% were completed at the 'Parents on the Plaza' event (Saturday 16 October 2010) and around 1 in 4

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.

(23.6%) were obtained through various Parent Partnership parents groups and events.

2.0 Demography

The majority of respondents (83.4%) were female, while 16.6% were male.

3.2% of respondents were aged under 20, whilst around 1 in 4 (24.3%) were aged 20-29 and just under half (49.3%) were aged 30-39. Approximately 1 in 6 (17.3%) were aged 40-49, 3.2% were aged 50-59, and 2.5% were aged 60 or over.

The majority of respondents were White British (91.0%), whilst 3.8% were Asian Black or Asian British, 3.2% Black or Black British and 1.9% were Chinese or other.

3.0 Families Profile

Around 1 in 20 (5.8%) respondents indicated that they did not have any children living with them, whilst around 1 in 3 (29.0%) had one child living with them and approximately 2 in 5 (39.3%) had 2 children. 1 in 6 (16.6%) respondents had 3 children living with them and around 1 in 10 (8.3%) had 4 or more children living with them.

More respondents (70.7%) had children in the 5 -11 age group than in the under 5 group (45.8%), 12 - 15 group (29.2%) or 16+ group (10.1%).

Around 1 in 4 (26.6%) respondents indicated that they had a child living with them who had a disability; whilst around 3 in 4 (73.4%) did not. Around 1 in 3 respondents indicated that they were a single parent (35.8%) whilst around 2 in 3 (64.2%) said they were not.

More respondents indicated that their employment status was part time (28.8%) than full time (21.7%). Around 1 in 3 (35.2%) indicated that they were full time parents/carers, whilst around 1 in 10 (8.3%) said they were not in paid work or education/training. Around 1 in 20 (4.4%) were in full time education/training, and 1.2% said they were retired.

4.0 Findings from the South West Locality

4.1 Where and who do you go to for support

Where/ Who go to for support	%
GP Surgery	64.4
PSA	46.7
Teaching Staff	44.0
Children's Centre/Nursery	22.1
Plymouth Parent Partnership	20.5
School Support staff	19.2
Health Visitor	17.6
Community/Voluntary Organisation	16.5
Community Police	13.1
Social Worker	11.1
Midwife	5.9

Around 2 in 3 in 4 (64.4%) South West respondents indicated that they would go to the GP Surgery when they need support, whilst 46.7% would go to a PSA and 44.4% would go to teaching staff. In the region of 1 in 5 would go to a Children's Centre/Nursery (22.1%), to Plymouth Parent Partnership (20.5%), or to School Support staff (19.2%). Approximately 1 in 6 would go to a Health Visitor (17.6%) or a Community/Voluntary Organisation (16.5%), whilst 1 in 10 would go to the Community Police (13.1%) or a Social Worker (11.1%). Around 1 in 20 would go to a Midwife (5.9%).

4.2 What parents want more information/support about?

Want more information/support about:	%
Managing money/benefits/debt	61.8
Understanding and managing children's behaviour	50.6
Children's learning and development	34.5
Good approaches to parenting	29.6
Understanding teenagers	26.3
Teaching children right from wrong	23.0
Childcare	19.7
Step family issues	8.5
Armed forces family issues	3.9

Around 3 in 5 (61.8%) respondents from the South West locality wanted more information/support on 'managing money/benefits/debt', whilst half wanted this in relation to 'understanding and managing children's behaviour'. More information/support on 'children's learning and development' and 'good approaches to parenting' was required by around 1 in 3 respondents, whilst in the region of 1 in 4 wanted this in relation to 'understanding teenagers' and 'teaching children right from wrong'. In the region of 1 in 5 wanted more

information/support on 'childcare' (19.7%), whilst 1 in 10 wanted it 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	86.1
GP Surgery	70.3
Parent Partnership	41.4
Children Centre	40.7
Nursery	39.6
At Home	34.8
Community Centre	34.8
Library	30.2
Supermarket	9.8

Over 4 in 5 respondents from the South West locality considered that 'Family Support' should be available from a School (86.1%) and 70.3% thought it should be available at the GP Surgery. According to around 2 in 5 respondents, 'Family Support' should be available from Parent Partnership (41.4%), a Children's Centre (40.7%) and a Nursery (39.6%).

Approximately 1 in 3 thought it should be available 'At Home' (34.8%), at a Community Centre (34.8%) and at a Library (30.2%), and approximately 1 in 10 thought it should be available from a supermarket (9.8%).

4.4 Preferred method of help/support

Prefer help/support to be available:	%
Individually	59.2
In a group	25.6
Don't mind	25.0
Telephone help line	23.0
Electronically (Website)	19.7
DVDs/TV	8.5

Around 3 in 5 South West locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst around 1 in 4 would like it via a group (25.6%) or a telephone helpline (23.0%). Around 1 in 5 would like it available electronically, whilst 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:	%
24/7	44.0
Weekdays	29.6
During School time	19.7
Weekends	16.4
School holidays	14.4
Before and after school	12.8
Evenings	11.8

44.0% of respondents from the South West locality indicated that they would like help to be available '24/7', whilst around 1 in 3 would like it available on 'weekdays' (29.6%) and around 1 in 5 'during school time' (19.7%).

In the region of 1 in 6 would like it available at the 'weekends' and during the 'school holidays', whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like this 'before and after school'(12.8%) and in the 'evenings'(11.8%).

4.6 Likely sources of information about local services

Information Source	%
Word of mouth	67.1
Leaflets	66.4
Websites	50.6
Posters	30.2
Meetings	24.3
Phone calls	15.7

2 in 3 South West locality respondents would obtain information about local services either through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (67.1%) or from reading leaflets (66.4%), and approximately half would use websites (50.6%).

Posters would be used by just over 1 in 3 respondents to obtain information about local services, whilst around 1 in 4 would obtain information via meetings (24.3%) and 1 in 6 through phone calls (15.7%).

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

4.7.1 Grandparents

Grandparents look after children	%
Yes	50.6
No	49.4

Around half the South West 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 6 said this took place '2 -3 times per week'. Around 1 in 4 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by grandparents 'weekly', whilst 1 in 10 said this occurred 'monthly' and around 2 in 5 'less than monthly'.

4.7.2 Friends

Friends look after children	%
Yes	26.9
No	73.1

In the region of 1 in 4 South West locality respondents indicated that friends looked after their children. Approximately 1 in 10 respondents indicated that their children were looked after by friends '2 -3 times per week' and 1 in 20 said they did so 'weekly'. Around 1 in 5 respondents indicated that friends looked after their children 'monthly' and 2 in 3 said they did so 'less than monthly'.

4.7.3 Aunts/Uncles

Aunts/Uncles look after children	%
Yes	23.6
No	76.4

Around 1 in 4 South West locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their Aunts/Uncles. 3.2% of the respondents indicated that their children were looked after by their Aunts/Uncles 'daily' and the same percentage said they did this '2-3 times per week'. Around 1 in 3 respondents said that Aunts/Uncles did this 'weekly', whilst 1 in 5 said 'monthly' and 45.1% 'less than monthly'.

4.7.4 Older children

Older children look after children	%
Yes	9.8
No	90.2

Around 1 in 10 South West locality respondents indicated that their children were looked after by older siblings. Around 1 in 20 stated that this took place daily and 1 in 5 said this happened '2-3 times per week'. 2 in 5 said that their older children did this 'weekly', whilst around 1 in 20 said this occurred monthly and around 1 in 4 'less than monthly'.

4.8 The use of formal childcare provision

Formal Childcare provision	%
Private Nursery	9.4
Childminders (those with children aged 0-4)	9.4
Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)	5.2
School/Maintained Nursery	37.8
Pre School	24.3
Out of School provision (those with children aged 5-11)	27.1
Organised Activities for older children(those with children aged 5-11)	32.4

4.8.1 Private Nursery

Around 1 in 10 (9.4%) South West locality respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a 'Private Nursery'. 1 in 3 stated that their children attended 'daily', whilst around half attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 6 'weekly'.

4.8.2 Childminders (those with children aged under 5)

Around 1 in 10 (9.4%) South West locality respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 6 attended 'daily', whilst a similar proportion attended '2-3 times per week' and around 2 in 3 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.3 Childminders (those with children aged 5-11)

Around 1 in 20 (5.2%) South West locality respondents who had a child in the 5 -11 age group indicated that their child/ren went to a childminder. Around 1 in 5 attended 'daily', whilst 4 in 5 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.4 School/Maintained Nursery

Around 2 in 5 (37.8%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a School/Maintained Nursery. Around 2 in 3 attended 'daily', whilst around 1 in 4 attended '2-3 times per week' and in the region of 1 in 10 attended 'weekly'.

4.8.5 Pre School

Around 1 in 4 (24.3%) respondents who had a child in the under 5 age group indicated that their child/ren attended a Pre School. Around 1 in 4 attended 'daily', 54.5% attended '2-3 times per week' and around 1 in 5 attended 'weekly'.

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

Around 1 in 4 (27.1%) 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 20 attended 'daily', whilst around half attended '2-3 times per week', 2 in 5 attended 'weekly' and approximately 1 in 10 attended 'monthly'.

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

Around 1 in 3 (32.4%) 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', 46.6% went 'weekly', 6.6% attended 'monthly' and 1 in 10 '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	26.3
No	73.7

Around 1 in 4 South West locality respondents did consider that there were services that fathers in particular experience problems in accessing whilst 3 in 4 (73.7%) considered this was not the case. Various additional comments were made by respondents who considered that fathers in particular do 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:

4.9.1 Hours Available

“Can’t get to parental training during working hours.”

“Fathers find it difficult to access most things as they are at work during most available things.”

4.9.2 Early Years provision

“Toddler groups and parenting groups.”

4.9.3 Men’s reluctance to ask for help and support

“Motivation - desire to do so.”

“Fathers leave it to mothers.”

4.9.4 Services targeted at mums

“Most groups always seem to be worded, ‘come & meet other mums etc”

“Most group meetings are mainly made up of women, which I would imagine is intimidating.”

“Everything is aimed at mums and families. My husband would not be comfortable at a coffee morning but would def. go to a children's football session with other dads.”

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.

4.10 Other comments made by respondents

7 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

"I use my PSA all the time."

4.10.2 Praise: Parent Partnership

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

4.10.3 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."

4.10.4 Concerns

"Having space and time to lead a good life, go to people if need help support / not being bombarded with stuff you have to do because you have been told you have to do it, by other people i.e. social worker, family support."

"It would help to have wheel chair access to schools in Plymouth as I can't get into my children's school."

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 South 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 South West locality more respondents wanted additional information/support on 'managing money/benefits/debt' followed by 'understanding and managing children's behaviour'. An audit of Agencies providing such information within the South West locality as well as more widely across the city should be undertaken so that parents wanting such information/support can be signposted effectively.

5.3 Where Family Support should be available

In the South 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 continuation of the PSA role is unclear, schools in the South 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/supported would like

In the South 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 South West locality respondents would prefer help or support to be available to them individually, whilst around 1 in 4 would like it via a group (25.6%) or a telephone helpline (23.0%). Around 1 in 5 would like it available electronically, whilst 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.

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. 44.0% of respondents from the South West locality indicated that they would like help to be available '24/7', whilst around 1 in 3 would like it available on 'weekdays' (29.6%) and around 1 in 5 'during school time' (19.7%). In the region of 1 in 6 would like it available at the 'weekends' and during the 'school holidays', whilst approximately 1 in 10 would like help to be available 'before and after school'(12.8%) and in the 'evenings'. Services delivering help/support within the South West locality should review the extent to which their opening times reflect the preferences outlined above.

5.6 Likely sources of information about local services

2 in 3 South West locality respondents would obtain information about local services either through word of mouth e.g. family, friend, GP, teacher etc. (67.1%) or from reading leaflets (66.4%), and approximately half would use websites (50.6%). 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 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.