



Families First Partnership – Social Care Reforms

Awareness, Engagement & Consultation Feedback & Analysis for Children, Young People, and
Families

July – October 2025

Executive Summary

The Families First Partnership (FFP) is a national reforms programme aimed at transforming children's social care by delivering earlier, more effective support to families. It introduces a new **Family Help Model**, which replaces fragmented services with coordinated, multi-agency support tailored to family need. Key features include integrated **Family Help Teams**, a **Single Assessment and Plan**, a revised **Threshold of need document**, and a **Lead Practitioner** to guide families through their support journey. The programme also strengthens child protection through **Muti-Agency Child protection teams (MACPTs)** and promotes family **Group Decision Making** to keep children safely within their families wherever possible.

Between July and October 2025, Sefton Council's Children's services led a borough-wide engagement programme to raise awareness of the Families First Partnership (FFP) and gather feedback from children, young people, and families. The aim was to gain meaningful insight into lived experiences, identify key challenges and areas for improvement, and use this understanding to ensure the programme is appropriately tailored to meet the needs of the community.

The initiative reached over 600 families through 25+ groups, 20 community events, resulting in 637 completed surveys, ensuring a broad and inclusive representation of lived experiences.

The engagement revealed strong support for the FFP's vision, alongside clear calls for improved communication, earlier intervention, and more coordinated service delivery. Key findings from the engagement activities include:

- Strong engagement with children aged 5 to 12, resulting in 62% of overall responses.
- Adult engagement made up 17.71% of the overall responses.
- 11.20% identified themselves as Parents/carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
- Overall, 18.67% reported using SEND services, both Social Care and The Family Hubs were used by 16.18% of respondents, followed by 15.35% using CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health services).

- Among young people aged 13–18, the services most identified as being accessed were School Nurse (14.75%), Youth Services (13.93%), and Social Care (13.9%).
- 47.7% of families said they were happy or very happy with current support, while just 16.6% expressed dissatisfaction and the remaining 35.7% responded as neutral.
- 64.16% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed they feel safe and supported by services.
- 57.5% said they know where to go when they need help.
- Only 33.33% agreed they “only have to tell their story once,” highlighting a need for better service continuity and communication.
- Among children aged 5–12, teachers, someone else at school and parents/carers were identified as the most common sources of help.
- When asked about the improvements they most wanted to see, families ranked getting help earlier as the top priority (59%), followed by more support for parents/carers (57%) and more support for young people (47%).
- Engagement preferences vary, while surveys remain popular overall. 50% of young people said they do not want to be involved in shaping services, signalling a need for more youth-friendly approaches.

Feedback also highlighted nine key themes, including access to services, communication and information sharing, mental health support, inclusion and accessibility, financial barriers, education and SEND provision, facilities and local Hubs, specific health and development needs and domestic abuse services. Families expressed a desire for more inclusive, accessible, and well-promoted support options, particularly for early years and home-schooled children.

Recommendations include developing a centralised digital hub, expanding early years support, improving communication, addressing financial barriers, and enhancing SEND services, domestic abuse services, and a review of what early help should be going forward. These

insights will guide strategic planning and ensure that the voices of children, young people, and families remain central to Sefton's transformation journey.

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Language Disclaimer

Acknowledging that language carries different meanings and emotional weight for different individuals. Certain terms may be perceived as uncomfortable or triggering depending on personal experiences and cultural contexts. In preparing this report, every effort has been made to use language that is widely considered inclusive, respectful, and appropriate within the current professional and social landscape.

Where specific terminology has been used, it reflects the most accepted usage at the time of writing.

Within the appendix of this document, you will find:

- A list of commonly used acronyms related to the Families First Partnership, Sefton Council, and those referenced throughout the report. This has been included to support clarity and ensure consistent understanding of terminology.
- Links to three relevant government documents. These have been provided to give readers quick access to key national guidance and policy frameworks that underpin the context and recommendations within this report.

Introduction, Background & Objectives

The Families First Partnership (FFP) is a national reforms programme aimed at transforming children's social care by delivering earlier, more effective support to families. It introduces a new Family Help Model, which replaces fragmented services with coordinated, multi-agency support tailored to family need. Key features include integrated Family Help Teams, a Single Assessment and Plan, a revised Threshold of need document, and a Lead Practitioner to guide families through their support journey. The programme also strengthens child protection through Multi-Agency Child protection teams (MACPTs) and promotes family Group Decision Making to keep children safely within their families wherever possible.

Recognising the scale and significance of these changes, Children's Services delivered a programme of engagement between July and October 2025. The objectives were to:

- Introduce the Families First Partnership programme to children, young people, families.
- Build shared understanding of the programme's aims, principles, and potential impact.
- Create space for open dialogue about the proposed reforms.
- Capture the views of children, young people & families to inform future development.
- Identify practical enablers and barriers to implementation.
- Understand how children, young people, and families want to be involved in shaping future services.
- Understand how children, young people, and families want to stay informed about the programme going forward.

Methodology

To ensure broad and inclusive engagement with children, young people, and their families, regarding the Families First Partnership programme, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify key locations and diverse cohorts across Sefton. This helped target areas where inclusive engagement could take place. The identified engagement points included:

- Libraries during Story and Rhyme time sessions
- Active Sefton events held in the evenings
- Various Aiming High events
- Family Hub fun days
- Venus migrant coffee mornings
- Local food banks
- Community centres
- Events specifically held for our cared for children and young people.
- Local churches
- Adult learning centres
- Chameleon's and Alder Hey's Youth Forum
- CVS linking into their wide reach of partners.
- Sefton Young Advisors
- Sefton Parent Carers
- The Living Well Bus
- Sefton's Youth Bus
- Equal Voice Network
- Faith Forum
- Careers Connect

- SASHA – (African Caribbean Heritage Association)
- Schools (including The Virtual School)

Direct engagement was undertaken with each group to understand the most effective and preferred ways to facilitate participation with children, young people, and families in discussions around the programme. Drawing on these insights, a range of engagement methods were implemented to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all participants.

Engagement methods included:

- **Survey:** To enhance reach and ensure the survey was inclusive, accessible, and effectively promoted, a multi-channel strategy was implemented through the following actions:
 - **Consultation with Young people:** To enhance the accessibility and engagement of surveys for children and young people, Sefton Young Advisors were consulted, alongside input from a care experienced young trainee within Sefton. The Sefton Young Advisors, a team of trained young people with lived experience of local services, collaborate with organisations to ensure that youth voices are authentically included in decision-making processes. They developed a Youth Voice and Participation Toolkit—a resource designed to support professionals in effectively involving young people in shaping services. The Young Advisors subsequently delivered training to Sefton staff on the use of this Toolkit, with the intention of equipping staff to engage directly with children and young people during the summer of 2025. Both the Young Advisors and the care experienced trainee also contributed feedback on the survey questions, refining the language and format to better reflect the perspectives and understanding of the intended audience.
 - **Printed Materials:** Posters featuring QR codes were displayed in council and partner buildings, alongside leaflets and newsletters distributed throughout the community, all linking to the survey.
 - **Digital Platforms:** The survey was hosted on both the Sefton Council website and the "Your Sefton, Your Say" platform, with links also made available via the

staff intranet to encourage internal sharing. Digital materials were created to meet web accessible needs.

- **Partner Networks:** The survey was emailed to partner organisations who further disseminated through large WhatsApp groups, social platforms, and other community channels.
- **Social media:** Targeted posts were shared across social media platforms to increase visibility and encourage participation from a broader audience.
- **Local Press:** A press release was issued to raise public awareness and promote the survey across the borough.
- **In-Person Engagement:** Team members from Children's services attended local events to distribute paper copies of the survey and provide direct support to individuals completing it.
- **Dedicated webpage:** To further support ongoing engagement and ensure transparency, a dedicated webpage was developed as a centralised location for updates related to the Families First Partnership programme. This webpage will continue to serve as a hub where children, young people, families, and the wider community can:
 - Access an overview of Families First Partnership.
 - Access the latest information and key documents about the programme.
 - View upcoming engagement opportunities and events.
 - Find links to surveys and other interactive tools.
- **Open-community dialogue:** Sefton's Children's Transformation Team attended community events to facilitate real-time discussions. At these events, children, young people, and adults were encouraged to share their views, ask questions, and respond to proposals through open dialogue.

These varied methods were designed to reach a broad cross-section of children, young people, and families enabling both qualitative and quantitative data collection. The survey aimed to gather feedback on awareness, understanding, and perceptions of the Families First Partnership, including its current strengths and the challenges it faces.

Feedback Summary

This section provides a structured summary of the survey questions used during the engagement process, along with the responses gathered from children, young people, and their families. To enhance clarity and alignment with the engagement objectives, the information is organised into five thematic areas:

1. **Tell Us About You** – capturing demographic and background information.
2. **Service Engagement** – exploring experiences of accessing and interacting with services.
3. **What Works Well** – identifying positive aspects and strengths of current service provision.
4. **What Could Be Better** – highlighting areas for improvement and unmet needs.
5. **Looking Ahead** – gathering views on future priorities and aspirations for service development.

The aim is to clearly communicate the results and perspectives of children aged 5-12, young people aged 13-18 and the overall feedback collected in the survey for 13+ which includes the perspectives captured from adults. These insights have been drawn from both the auto-generated reports linked to the survey questions on the Your Sefton, Your Say platform, as well as the verbal feedback collected during engagement events as detailed in appendix B, C and D. These results will be used to support ongoing service development and decision-making.

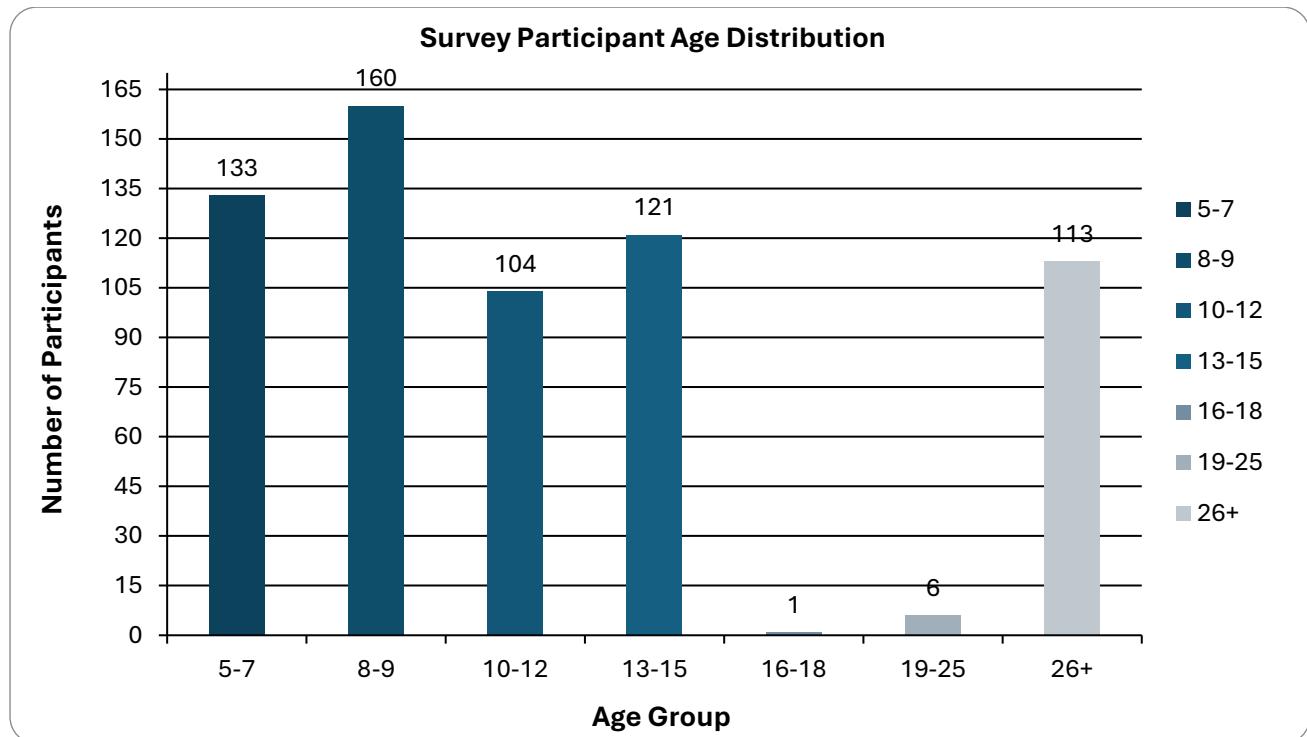
1. Tell Us About You: Age and Role Representation

To ensure a diverse range of perspectives were captured, participants across both surveys were asked to share their age group and those completing the older survey were also asked to

indicate their position within the family. This included whether they were a child, young person, parent or carer, a parent/carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) or identified in another way. The following section provides an overview of the demographic data collected.

1.1 Data collection from both surveys (5-12 and 13+)

The table below outlines the age groups who responded to the survey:



1.2 Insights reflected from all age groups:

High Representation Among Younger Age Groups: A significant proportion of responses came from children aged 5 to 12, who made up over 62% of the total participants. This indicates strong engagement from primary-aged children.

The 8-9 age group had the highest number of participants, contributing 25.08% of the total collected from children. This suggests that the survey was particularly accessible or relevant to this age range.

The 10-12 and 13-15 age groups together accounted for 35.27%, showing that the survey also reached a substantial number of older children and early teens.

Lower Engagement from Older Age Groups: Participation from those aged 16 and above was notably lower, with only 1.1% of responses coming from ages 16–25. This may reflect differences in interests or accessibility.

Adult Involvement: The 26+ age group made up 17.71% of responses, which includes parents and carers contributing to the survey.

Out of those that identified themselves to be parents/carers, **11.20% identified themselves as Parents/carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).**

With 638 total participants, the survey gathered a broad range of responses, particularly from children and young people, providing a useful snapshot of engagement across age groups.

2. **Service Engagement:** Frequently used services and key figures of support.

This section explores feedback from both the 13+ and 5–12 surveys, focusing on which services children, young people, and their families have engaged with over the past two years. The data is broken down to highlight overall trends, as well as specific insights from young people aged 13–18. It also includes reflections from younger children (5–12), who were asked who helps them when they need support. Together, these findings offer a broad view of service engagement across age groups and help identify where support is most commonly accessed—and where visibility may need to be improved.

2.1 Data collection from survey 13+:

Families completing the **13+ Survey** were asked to select from a list which services they have been involved with in the last 2 years.

The below table shows the results collected from the survey for 13+, showing both the overall results, alongside the results collected from young people aged 13-18:

Option	Percentage Overall	Percentage of young people aged 13-18
Youth services	9.54%	13.93%

Family Hubs	16.18%	2.45%
Social care	16.18%	13.93%
School Nurse	11.20%	14.75%
Change Grow Live	3.73%	2.45%
SEND (Special Educational Needs Disabilities) services	18.67%	9.01%
CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health services)	15.35%	12.29%
None of the above	46.89%	54.91%
Other (please specify)	7.47%	7.37%

2.2 Analysis of the overall feedback from survey 13+:

Overall, the most frequently accessed service was SEND, used by 18.67% of respondents.

Both Family Hubs and Social Care were each reported by 16.18% of participants, while CAMHS followed closely at 15.35%. School Nurse services were used by 11.20%, and Youth Services by 9.54%. A smaller proportion, 3.73%, accessed support through Change Grow Live. Notably, 46.89% of respondents indicated they had not accessed any of the listed services.

7.47% of respondents selected “other” and some specified the following services:

- Early Help and Youth Early Help Team
- SENDCO support and school assessment pathways
- Autism and ADHD diagnosis pathways, including support from Alder Hey
- Stay and Play and Kinder World
- Library groups
- Bambi (breastfeeding group)
- Marie Clarke and The Brunny community centre (The Brunswick community centre)
- Health Visitors and Adoption Services
- Social Services and Social Workers
- Therapy services, mentioned multiple times
- TAS (Team Around the School), and Buddy Up
- Aiming High programmes

- Community Gardens
- Responses indicating uncertainty, such as “I don’t know” or “I am not sure”

2.3 Analysis of the feedback collected from young people aged 13-18:

Whilst SEND services were most accessed overall, young people aged 13-18 frequently selected School Nurse (14.75%), Youth Services (13.93), and Social Care services (13.9). This suggests that their support needs are more closely linked to school-based and youth-focused services, rather than specialist or diagnostic pathways.

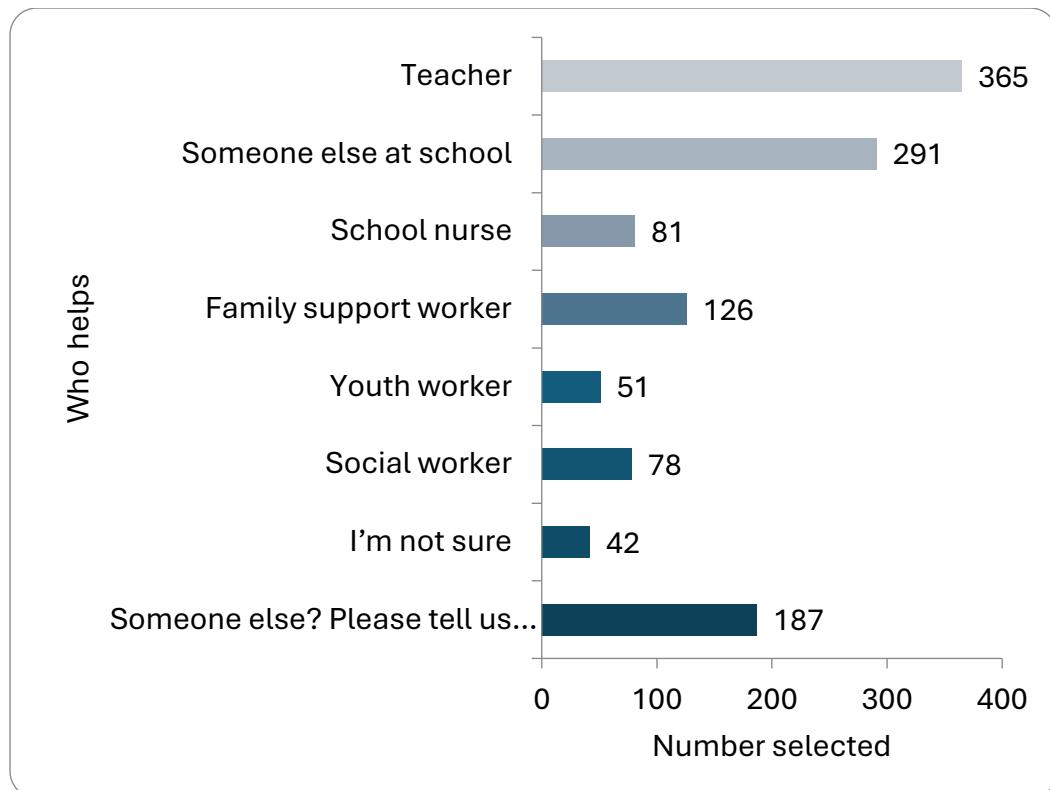
2.4 Insights from survey 13+:

This indicates a broad engagement with both formal and informal support networks, highlighting the importance of community-based and school-linked services. As nearly half of all respondents didn’t access any listed services and some young people expressed uncertainty about what support they’ve used, this suggests a need to improve visibility and clarity around available services, especially for young people.

2.5 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

Children completing the **5-12 survey** were asked who helps them, by selecting from a list, with an additional option where respondents could add in who helps them.

The below table shows the results collected:



2.6 Analysis of the feedback collected from Children aged 5-12:

Most Children said that when they need help, it is either a teacher or someone else at school who provides help. Where children selected “someone else” as offering help, most children specified that it was either a parent or carer that helped them as represented in the table below:

2.7 Insights from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

This reflects the central role of **trusted adults in educational and home environments** in providing help and guidance to younger children.

3. What works well: Understanding strengths

This section explores how children, young people, and their families engage with support services, with a focus on identifying which services are most accessed and where improvements in visibility and accessibility may be needed. The findings are drawn from three sets of feedback: overall responses from the survey aimed at families with children aged 13 and above, specific insights from young people aged 13–18, and responses from children aged 5–12 who completed a separate age-appropriate survey.

3.1 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

We asked families completing the 13+ survey to rate how happy they are with the support available in Sefton. The table below presents the overall feedback to this question, alongside insights specifically gathered from respondents aged 13 to 18:

Satisfaction Option	Overall results	Ages 13-18 results
Very Happy or Happy	47.7%	45.9%
Neutral	35.7%	45.9%
Unhappy or very Unhappy	16.6%	8.2%

3.2 Insights from respondents ages 13 to 18:

Just under half of respondents (47.7%) said they were happy with the support available in Sefton, while 35.7% felt neutral and 16.6% expressed dissatisfaction. Among 13–18-year-olds, satisfaction was slightly lower (45.9%), but only 8.2% reported being unhappy—suggesting generally positive sentiment with some uncertainty.

Comments revealed that many young people feel supported through school, but outside services are less visible or accessible. Several respondents said they didn't know what support was available or how to access it, highlighting gaps in awareness and communication. Others shared positive experiences of being listened to and respected, while some noted inconsistent service quality.

Overall, the feedback suggests that while support is appreciated by many, there is a need to improve visibility, consistency, and youth engagement across services in Sefton.

3.3 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

To explore what children aged 5–12 feel is working well, we asked whether they like the people who currently support them. The results are shown in the table below:

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	270	68.01%
Sometimes	119	29.97%
No	8	2.02%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

3.4 Insights from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

Most children (68%) said they **like** the people who help them, with a further 30% saying they **sometimes** like them. Only 2% responded negatively. These figures suggest that most children experience their support as positive, meaningful, and helpful.

Some children provided comments to explain their choice. These comments provide valuable insight into *why* this support is working well and several key themes emerged:

- **Kindness and emotional safety:** Children frequently mentioned that helpers are kind, non-judgmental, and make them feel calm and safe. For example:

“They do it in a kind way and don’t laugh or judge”

“It calms me down and I don’t get stressed”
- **Practical and responsive help:** Many children appreciated being supported when they were stuck or struggling, especially with schoolwork:

“The teacher helps when I struggle on my work”

“They help me get better at maths, so I know what to do”
- **Consistency and presence:** Children valued adults who were reliably available and attentive:

“They always come to me”

“If I am sad, they talk to me, if I’m stuck, they help me.”
- **Positive emotional impact:** Some children described how support made them feel better overall:

“It makes things happier.”

“It feels nice.”

In summary, the data shows that children value support that is **kind, consistent, responsive, and emotionally safe**. These qualities appear to be central to their positive experiences and should be prioritised in any efforts to strengthen support systems.

3.5 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Families completing the 13+ survey were asked to share how often they feel heard by professionals. The table below outlines the overall responses, alongside specific insights from those aged 13 to 18.

Response Option for feeling heard	Overall results	Ages 13-18 results
Always	17.01%	3.57%
Mostly	29.05%	26.79%
Sometimes	34.44%	44.64%
Mostly not	12.45%	7.14%
Never	7.05%	17.86%

3.6 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Compared to the overall group, a smaller proportion of young people 30.36% said they “always” or “mostly” feel listened to, a drop of nearly 16 percentage points from the overall figure 46.06%. The largest group among young people selected “sometimes” 44.64%, suggesting that while they are occasionally heard, it’s not consistent or dependable. 24.99% of young people said they “mostly not” or “never” feel listened to — notably higher than the overall figure of 19.5%. This points to a need for more youth-focused communication strategies and relational approaches.

3.7 Data collection from survey aimed at 13+:

Families completing our **13+ Survey** were invited to rate their agreement with four statements about their experiences with services in Sefton. The table below presents the overall feedback alongside insights specifically gathered from respondents aged 13 to 18:

I feel safe and supported by the services I've used. (Overall responses)	I feel safe and supported by the services I've used. (Respondents ages 13-18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 64.16% Neutral: 19.17% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 16.67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 51.63% Neutral: 45.08% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 3.27%
I know where to go when I need help. (Overall responses)	I know where to go when I need help. (Respondents ages 13-18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 57.5% Neutral: 25.83% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 16.67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 62.29% Neutral: 27.04% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 10.65%
The people who support me understand my family's needs. (Overall responses)	The people who support me understand my family's needs. (Respondents ages 13-18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 48.33% Neutral: 35% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 16.67% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 46.7% Neutral: 43.44% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 9.83%
I only have to tell my story once. (Overall responses)	I only have to tell my story once. (Respondents ages 13-18)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 33.33% Neutral: 26.67% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree or Strongly Agree: 22.95% Neutral: 46.72% Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 30.32%

3.8 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Overall, most respondents felt safe and supported (64.16%) and knew where to go for help (57.5%). Young people aged 13–18 showed slightly less confidence in feeling safe (51.63%) but were more likely to know where to seek help (62.29%).

Perceptions around services understanding family needs were similar across both groups, though younger respondents were more likely to feel neutral (43.44% vs. 35%).

The lowest agreement came from the statement “*I only have to tell my story once*,” with just 33.33% of all respondents and 22.95% of young people agreeing. This highlights a clear need to improve service coordination and reduce repetition.

4. What could be better: Understanding what needs to change

This section highlights what children, young people, and families feel needs to improve within current support services, focusing on priorities such as earlier access to help, clearer information, and stronger support for families. Feedback is drawn from the overall 13+ survey, responses from young people aged 13–18, and comments from children aged 5–12.

4.1 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Respondents completing our survey for ages 13+ were asked to rank what they would most like to improve about current services. The table below shows the most prioritised improvement overall from all respondents combined alongside the results from young people ages 13–18:

Service Improvement Option	Overall results	Results from ages 13-18
Getting help earlier	59	25
Having one main contact person	27	13
Better communication between services	15	6

More support for parents/carers	57	28
More support for young people	47	23
Easier to understand what help is available	40	21

4.2 Data analysis Over:

Across both groups — young people and parents/carers — the most frequently **prioritised improvements were:**

- **Getting help earlier**
- **More support for parents/carers**
- **More support for young people**

These results highlight a shared concern around early intervention, family support, and direct services for young people.

4.3 Data analysis from ages 13-18:

Young people aged 13–18 placed slightly more emphasis on support for parents/carers, while parents and carers overall most frequently selected getting help earlier. Both groups also showed notable interest in making it easier to understand what help is available, though this was a slightly higher priority for young people.

Less frequently prioritised, were having one main contact person and better communication between services, suggesting that while coordination and clarity are valued, they may be seen as secondary to more immediate support needs.

4.4 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

These insights point to a clear need for accessible, timely, and family-inclusive support systems that are easy to navigate and responsive to both young people and their carer's.

4.5 Data analysis from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

Children aged 5–12 were asked to share their thoughts on what could be improved. Here are the key themes identified from the comments, along with a representative quote for each:

- **Support and Help**

"If I could get help quicker because in English when I need help, they was slow and I was crying because I was stuck and I did not get help in time so I cried and I was stuck."

This theme reflects a strong desire for timely and consistent support from adults, teachers, and services.

- **Friendship and Kindness**

"Some people to be kind to me and not to lie to anybody."

Many comments highlight the importance of kindness, empathy, and having friends who treat them well.

- **Family Relationships**

"My family should stop shouting at me every day."

Children and young people often mentioned wanting better relationships at home, less conflict, and more emotional support from family members.

- **School Environment**

"I move somewhere else in my seat because everyone distracts me."

This theme includes suggestions for improvements in school settings, such as more playtime, better classrooms, and fewer distractions.

- **Emotional Wellbeing**

"Everyone gets along and no arguing. More patience if people shared things. Peace."

Comments under this theme reflect a need for emotional safety, calm environments, and support for managing stress and feelings.

4.6 Insights from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

These comments reflect a mix of practical suggestions and emotional needs, reinforcing the importance of listening to children's voices when shaping services. Children are asking for environments that are not only supportive and inclusive, but also emotionally safe, respectful, and responsive to their everyday experiences, both at home and in school.

5. Looking ahead

This section explores what respondents identified as being the key factors that would make accessing support easier, as well as their preferences for involvement in shaping services and how they would like survey results to be shared. These insights provide a forward-looking perspective on how support systems can be improved to better meet the needs of both young people and the wider community.

5.1 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Respondents aged 13 and over were asked to select all the factors they felt would make it easier to access support when needed. The chart below compares the responses specifically from young people aged 13–18 alongside the overall responses, showing how each group prioritised the options:

Option	Overall Percent	Percentage of young people aged 13-18
A single place to ask for help	47.30%	39.34%
Quicker response times	42.32%	44.26%
More support in schools	53.11%	63.93%
More support in the community	38.17%	31.96%
Clearer information about services	37.34%	34.42%
Other (please specify)	7.05%	5.73%

5.2 Data analysis Over all:

When asked what would make it easier to access support, overall respondents highlighted three main priorities:

- **More support in schools**
- **A single place to ask for help**
- **Quicker response times**

Other suggestions included clearer information about services and more community-based support, though these were less frequently selected.

5.3 Data analysis from ages 13-18:

Young people placed the greatest emphasis on **support in schools**, with nearly two-thirds (63.93%) identifying this as a priority—significantly higher than the overall response (53.11%).

Quicker response times were also important, chosen by 44.26% of young people.

By contrast, **a single place to ask for help** was selected by 39.34% of young people, making it less of a priority for this age group compared to the overall response (47.30%).

5.4 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

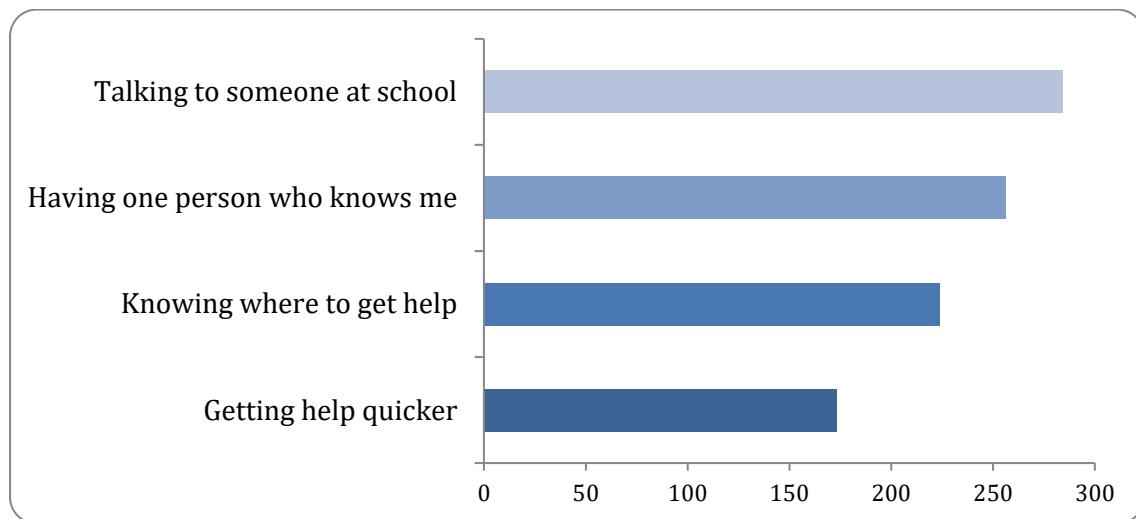
Overall, the findings suggest that young people are particularly focused on receiving support where they spend much of their time — in schools — and value quick, responsive help.

Meanwhile, adults may be more concerned with system navigation and access points. These insights can help inform how services are designed and delivered to meet the needs of both young people and those who support them.

Other areas such as **clearer information about services** and **more support in the community** were selected by smaller proportions of both groups, though still represent important areas for improvement.

5.5 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

Children aged 5–12 were also asked to select as many options as they wished from a list of factors that could help them access support when needed. Their responses are presented in the chart below:



5.6 Insights from survey aimed at ages 5-12:

The data shows that children in this age group are particularly focused on support being available in familiar and accessible places, such as schools. They also value being able to get help quickly and having clear, simple ways to ask for it. While their preferences may differ slightly from older age groups, the underlying message is consistent: children want support that is easy to reach, responsive, and embedded in the environments they trust.

These findings highlight the importance of designing support systems that are visible, approachable, and responsive to the needs of younger children, particularly within school settings where they spend much of their time.

5.7 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Respondents completing the survey for ages 13+ were asked how they would like to be involved in shaping services. The below table represents overall how respondents voted alongside how young people aged 13-18 voted:

Option	Percent overall	Percentage of young people aged 13-18
Surveys like this	45.64%	30.32%
Focus groups or workshops	30.71%	16.39%
Youth or parent panels	23.24%	13.11%
Creative activities (e.g. art, video, storytelling)	23.65%	25.40%
I don't want to be involved	27.80%	50.81%
Other (please specify)	4.15%	4.91%

5.8 Data analysis Over all:

The most preferred method among all respondents aged 13 and over was **completing surveys**, selected by 45.64%. Creative activities such as art, video, and storytelling were chosen by 23.65%, showing some interest in alternative engagement formats.

Notably, **27.80% of respondents indicated they did not want to be involved in shaping services**, which suggests a need to explore why some people feel disengaged or uncertain about participation.

These findings indicate that while traditional methods like surveys remain popular, there is room to diversify engagement approaches and address barriers to involvement.

5.9 Data analysis from ages 13-18:

Young people showed different preferences compared to the overall group. Only **30.32% selected surveys** as their preferred method, making this option less appealing for this age group.

Creative activities were slightly more popular among young people (**25.40%**) than the overall group, suggesting that expressive, interactive formats may resonate better with them.

A significant insight is that **half of young people (50.81%) said they did not want to be involved in shaping services**, nearly double the overall rate. This highlights a need to understand why engagement feels less meaningful or accessible for younger respondents and to develop approaches that build trust and confidence in their input.

5.10 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Responses from young people aged 13–18 differed notably from the overall group of respondents aged 13 and over. The most striking difference is that **half of young people (50.81%) do not want to be involved**, compared to 27.80% overall. This signals a need to understand barriers and explore more youth-friendly, meaningful ways to involve them in shaping services.

These insights suggest that while traditional methods like surveys and focus groups are still relevant and overall preferred, there is a clear need to explore more creative, youth-friendly approaches to engagement. Additionally, efforts should be made to understand and address the reasons why many young people may not currently wish to be involved, ensuring their voices are heard in ways that feel meaningful and accessible to them.

5.11 Data collection from survey aimed at ages 13+:

Respondents completing the survey for ages 13+ were asked how they'd like to see the results of this survey; the overall responses are presented in the below chart, alongside the responses from young people ages 13-18:

Option	Percent Overall	Percentage of young people aged 13-18
A summary on the council website	40.66%	24.59%
A short video or animation	22.82%	31.96%
A newsletter or email update	32.78%	13.11%
A community event or meeting	21.58%	12.29%

I don't want to see the results	21.99%	39.34%
Other (please specify)	3.73%	1.63%

5.12 Data analysis Over all:

Most respondents prefer a **summary on the council website (40.66%)**, followed by **newsletters or email updates (32.78%)**. Interest in **short videos or animations (22.82%)** and **community events (21.58%)** suggests some appetite for creative and in-person options, though digital formats remain the priority.

5.13 Data analysis from ages 13-18:

Young people prefer short videos or animations (31.96%) over traditional formats, suggesting that visual and creative methods are more engaging for this age group. Interest in a summary on the council website (24.59%) and newsletters (13.11%) is much lower, indicating that text-heavy updates may not resonate.

Community events were selected by only 12.29%, showing limited appeal for in-person formats. Notably, 39.34% said they don't want to see the results, highlighting a need to explore why engagement feels less relevant and how to make updates more meaningful for young audiences.

5.14 Insights from survey aimed at ages 13+:

This feedback highlights the importance of tailoring communication formats to meet diverse needs. Whether through visual summaries, detailed reports, or interactive dashboards, the responses suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective. Understanding these preferences will help ensure that future survey results are shared in ways that are both accessible and engaging for all stakeholders.

**The full survey reports can be found in the Appendices under Appendix B & C.*

Key Themes from Feedback

The following section incorporates feedback from both the quantitative survey data and qualitative insights gathered through verbal contributions during events. This approach ensures that the views of children, young people, and families are fully represented, including valuable perspectives shared by families that may not have been captured within the survey responses. The feedback revealed nine overarching themes, outlined below:

1. Access to Services and Support

- Families highlighted that support services such as baby massage are in high demand, with many reporting long waiting lists and limited availability. This feedback points to the value families place on these services and the opportunity to expand access to better meet their needs.
- Families of pre-school aged children highlighted an opportunity to strengthen support before school age, as some parents would welcome more guidance and resources during this early stage.
- Home-schooled families and those outside mainstream education highlighted a need for more inclusive service provision, as they often feel current support does not fully reflect their circumstances.

“There is no help available to help new parents with advice on starting a child’s education journey.”

2. Communication and Information Sharing

- Many participants expressed difficulty in finding out what services exist and how to access them.
- There is a strong desire for a centralised platform or “one-stop-shop” for information.

“It’s hard to know what events and services there are as everything is all over the place and I just stumble across it.”

3. Mental Health and Emotional Support

- Parents, particularly those raising children with SEND, shared that they would benefit from more accessible emotional and mental health support, recognising the importance of wellbeing in their parenting journey.
- Dads and working parents expressed a desire for support that better reflects their specific needs and circumstances, highlighting an opportunity to develop more targeted and flexible services.

“As a dad, I personally struggled to come to terms with my child’s SEND diagnosis... I felt I had no one to talk to.”

4. Financial Barriers

- Costs of uniforms, swimming, and extracurricular activities were cited as barriers to participation.
- Families requested subsidised or free activities, especially during school holidays.

“Uniforms can be expensive and impact on finances... We would like to access swimming more, but this can be quite costly.”

5. Education and SEND Support

- Families recognised schools as a vital source of support, and acknowledged the dedication of staff, while also noting that schools are often stretched in meeting the diverse needs of students.
- Families shared that clearer guidance and more timely support around EHCPs, special school placements, and early advice would help them feel more confident and better informed throughout the process.

“Despite my daughter being diagnosed with autism aged 3, she is now 8 and only just getting an EHCP.”

6. Inclusion and Accessibility

- Working parents expressed a desire for more flexible scheduling of events, suggesting that varied timings could help increase participation and engagement.

- Families from diverse backgrounds shared their appreciation for inclusive hubs and expressed interest in greater cross-borough collaboration to strengthen community connections and access to support.

“We love the activities the family hubs offer but activities and support outside of the hub are not well advertised.”

7. Facilities and Local Hubs

- Families appreciate the support offered by Family Hubs, though awareness could be improved. Many families also make use of a range of other community services, highlighting the importance of clear information and signposting to ensure everyone can access the support available.
- Libraries and community centres are seen as valuable spaces for child-friendly activities.

“It’s good to have activities for kids within local libraries... More activities should be implemented.”

8. Specific Health and Development Needs

- Families requested more targeted support around things such as potty training, perimenopause, ADHD, and complex medical needs.

“I find challenges with potty training my toddler... Family centres should offer extra support like workshops.”

9. Domestic Abuse (DA) Support

- Families highlighted the importance of domestic abuse (DA) support and expressed a desire for services that are more diverse, accessible, and responsive to diverse needs—pointing to an opportunity to strengthen and expand current provision.

“Having one provider and one option isn’t adequate.”

**A full list of captured quotes can be found in the Appendices under Appendix D.*

Recommendations

These recommendations are shaped by the voices of children, young people and families who participated in the engagement activity and survey. They are closely aligned with the principles of the and Families First Partnership and the wider social care reforms. They aim to strengthen early intervention, promote inclusive and accessible services, and foster collaborative working across sectors and boroughs. By responding to the lived experiences shared by families, these proposals seek to support a more joined-up, preventative approach—ensuring that children, young people, and their families receive the right help at the right time, in ways that reflect their diverse needs, circumstances and community.

1. Develop a Centralised Digital Hub

- Create and promote a dedicated webpage as a centralised location for updates, events, and service information.
- Ensure it is accessible, regularly updated, and promoted via schools, social media, and community partners.

2. Expand Early Years and Pre-School Support

- Introduce more workshops and one-to-one sessions for parents of babies and toddlers on topics like sleep, weaning, and potty training and ensure families are aware of how to access these.
- Increase visibility of Family Hubs and ensure they cater to early years.

3. Improve Communication and Promotion

- Use social media more effectively to promote events and services.
- Distribute leaflets and newsletters through schools and community centres.

4. Address Financial Barriers

- Where possible provide subsidised access to extracurricular activities such as swimming, music, and sports.
- Utilise new tools such as LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) to help families maximise their income.
- Explore voucher schemes for low-income families.

5. Strengthen SEND and Mental Health Support

- Improve coordination between schools and external services.
- Offer targeted support for parents, including those with perimenopause/ADHD, ensuring dads are also included.
- Introduce a health/social care passport to reduce the need for families to repeat traumatic histories.

6. Increase Accessibility and Inclusion

- Schedule events outside of standard working hours.
- Ensure home-schooled families and those outside mainstream education are included in support offers.

7. Enhance Domestic Abuse Services

- Consider expanding the range of DA support providers and ensure services are trauma-informed and accessible.

8. Review Early Help Pathways and Crisis Prevention

- Designate leads to oversee early help plans and ensure families receive joined-up, consistent support.
- Ensure communication for community-based hubs offering drop-in advice, parenting support, and mental health guidance reaches families.
- Continue to offer targeted training to strengthen staff ability to identify early signs of need and respond effectively.

Next Steps

Building on the insights gathered through extensive engagement with children, young people, and families, the following next steps will guide the continued development and implementation of the Families First Partnership programme:

Co-Production Sessions

Host a series of co-production workshops with children, young people, and parents/carers to collaboratively shape future services. These sessions will focus on:

- Exploring lived experiences in more depth.
- Co-designing practical solutions to identified challenges.
- Ensuring inclusive representation across age groups and communities.

Development of the Single Assessment Plan

Begin the design of a unified assessment framework that supports consistent, family-centred practice across services. This will include:

- **Naming the plan** in consultation with families and professionals to ensure clarity and ownership.
- **Defining core components** of the plan, including what information should be captured, how it will be used, and how families will be involved.
- **Aligning the plan** with the principles of Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection reforms.

Creation of the Threshold Document

Develop a clear and accessible threshold document to support decision-making and ensure consistent understanding across agencies. This document will:

- Clarify levels of need and appropriate responses.
- Promote shared language and expectations across services.
- Co-produced with partners and families to reflect real-world experiences.

Digital Hub Launch and Promotion

Build and promote a centralised digital hub to improve access to information, updates, and engagement opportunities. This will serve as a “one-stop-shop” for families and professionals.

Development of a Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach

Development of a multi-disciplinary team will begin. This will bring services like education, health, early help, SEND, and social care into a single, place-based framework.

Key actions include:

- Establishing a co-located Multi- Disciplinary Team (MDT) to coordinate support, reduce duplication and escalation into statutory services.
- Engaging Family Connectors to strengthen links between services and families.
- Using schools and community hubs as anchor points for access and engagement.
- Piloting the model locally with a test-and-learn approach to inform wider rollout.

The pilot aims to improve coordination, reduce duplication, and ensure families receive timely, joined-up support.

Feedback Loop and Transparency

Share the results of this report in formats preferred by respondents (e.g., visual summaries, detailed reports) and maintain regular updates to demonstrate how feedback is being acted upon.

Conclusion

This report has captured a wide range of insights from children, young people, and families across Sefton, offering a valuable reflection of their lived experiences, priorities, and aspirations. While many families expressed appreciation for the support currently available - particularly through schools, Family Hubs, and trusted professionals - there is a clear and consistent call for earlier, more coordinated, and more inclusive support.

The findings highlight both strengths to build upon and areas where change is needed. Families want to feel heard, understood, and supported without having to navigate complex systems or repeat their stories. They value accessible information, timely intervention, and services that reflect the diversity of their circumstances. Importantly, they have shown a strong willingness to be involved in shaping the future of local services.

The recommendations outlined in this report are grounded in this feedback and are designed to support the delivery of the Families First Partnership's vision: a joined-up, preventative approach that places families at the heart of decision-making. By continuing to listen, co-produce, and act on what matters most to families, Sefton is well-placed to lead meaningful transformation and ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to thrive.

Appendices

Appendix A: Glossary of terms.

This appendix contains a glossary of clear definitions of key terms used throughout the report and across Sefton council to support understanding and consistency surrounding The Families First partnership. The definitions provided reflect the most accurate and up-to-date understanding available at the time of publication. Please note that language and terminology in social care and education can evolve, and interpretations may vary across different contexts. Every effort has been made to ensure clarity and accuracy; however, readers are encouraged to consult relevant guidance or professionals for the most current information where needed.

CHAT – Children’s Help and Advice Team

CMS – Case Management System

CIN – Children in Need

CP – Child Protection

CPP – Child Protection Plan

DfE – Department for Education

DSP – Designated Safeguarding Partners

FAST – Family Advice and Support Team

FFCP – Families First for Children Pathfinder

FFP – Families First Partnership

FGC – Family Group Conferencing

FHLP – Family Help Lead Practitioner

FGDM – Family Group Decision Making

ICB – Integrated Care Board

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer

LCPP – Lead Child Protection Practitioner

LSP – Lead Safeguarding Partner

MACPT – Multi-Agency Child Protection Team

MDT – Multidisciplinary Team

PRU – Pupil Referral Unit

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

TAS – Team Around the School

VCS – Voluntary and Community Sector

Appendix B: Results report for survey aimed at 5–12-years.

This appendix contains the full survey report automatically generated by the 'Your Sefton, Your Say' platform, presented exactly as retrieved from the site.

Families First Partnership Survey 5–12-year-olds.

<https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/strategic-support/00638f7f>

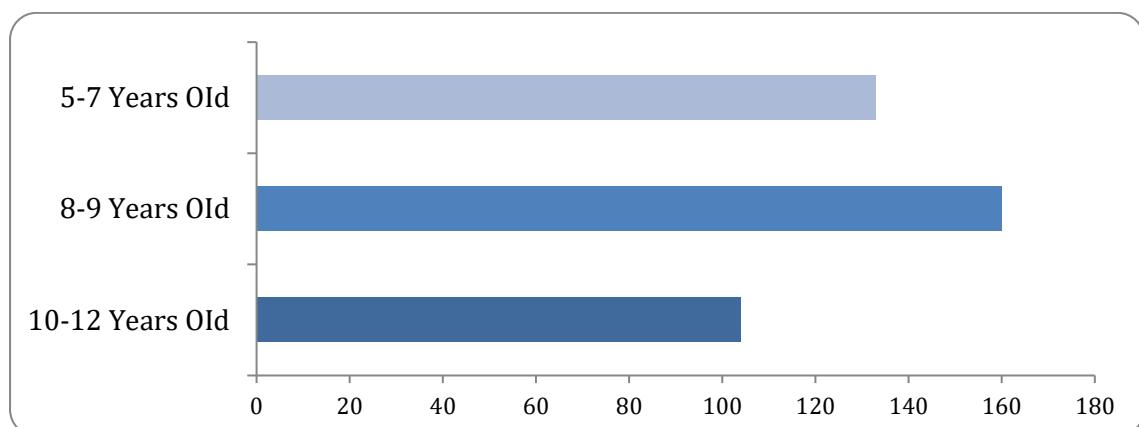
This report was created on Friday 05 December 2025 at 16:11

The activity ran from 25/07/2025 to 30/09/2025.

Responses to this survey: **397**

1: How Old Are You?

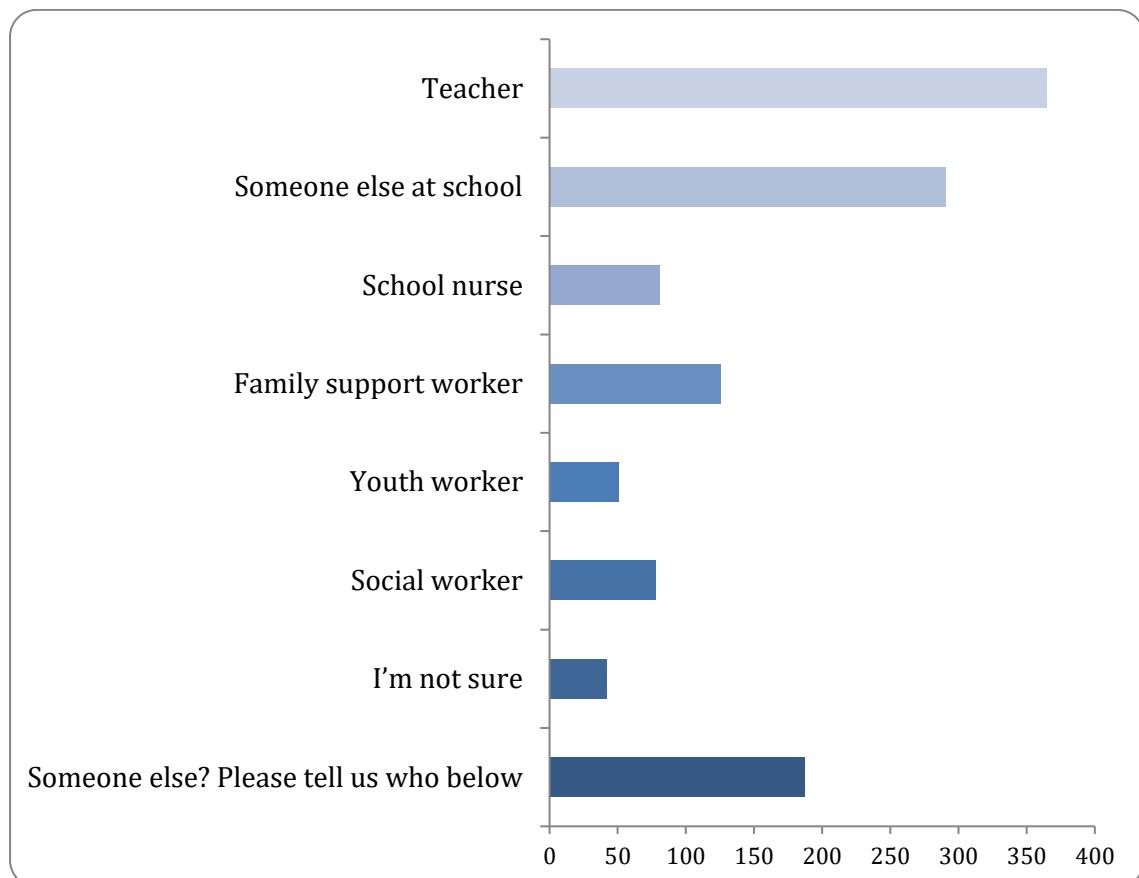
There were 397 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
5-7 Years Old	133	33.50%
8-9 Years Old	160	40.30%
10-12 Years Old	104	26.20%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

2: Who helps you in life? (Tick as many as you like)

There were 397 responses to this part of the question.

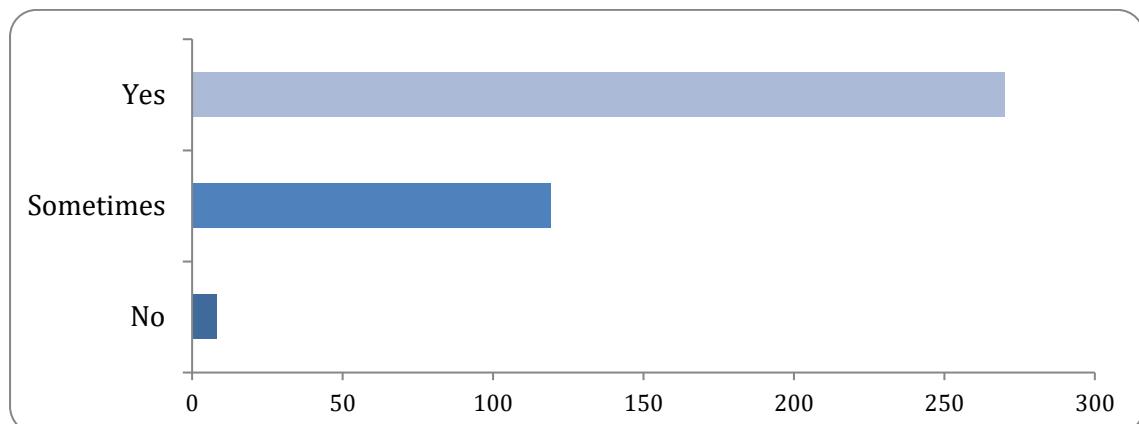


Option	Total	Percent
Teacher	365	91.94%
Someone else at school	291	73.30%
School nurse	81	20.40%
Family support worker	126	31.74%
Youth worker	51	12.85%
Social worker	78	19.65%
I'm not sure	42	10.58%
Someone else? Please tell us who below	187	47.10%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

There were 76 responses to this part of the question.

3: Do you like the people who help you?

There were 397 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	270	68.01%
Sometimes	119	29.97%
No	8	2.02%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

4: What do you like most about the help you get?

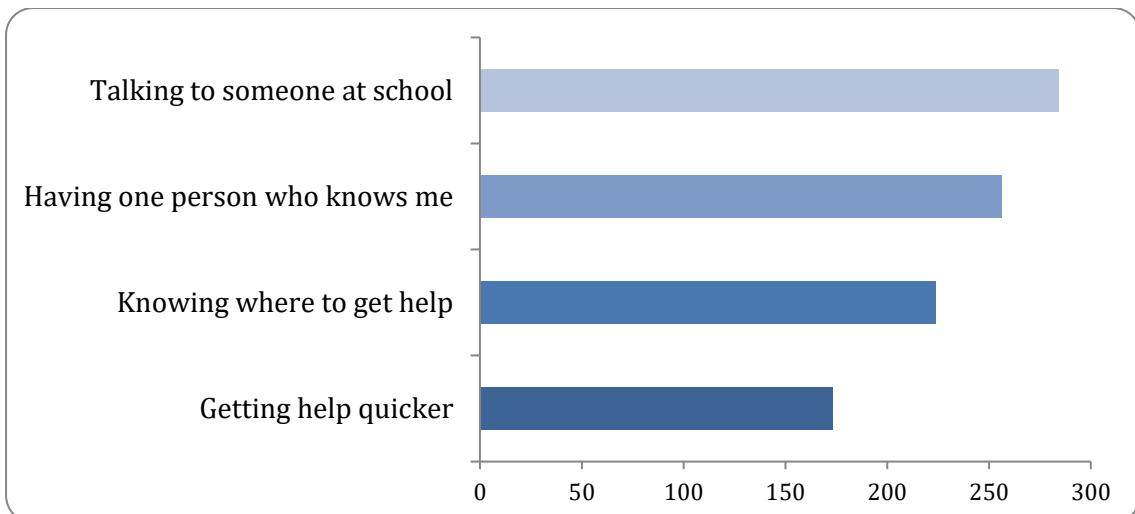
There were 397 responses to this part of the question.

5: Things could be even better if...

There were 397 responses to this part of the question.

6: What would help you get support when you need it? (Tick as many as you like)

There were 397 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Talking to someone at school	284	71.54%
Having one person who knows me	256	64.48%
Knowing where to get help	224	56.42%
Getting help quicker	173	43.58%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Appendix C: Results report for our survey aimed at ages 13-18 years and 18+.

This appendix contains the full survey report automatically generated by the 'Your Sefton, Your Say' platform, presented exactly as retrieved from the site.

Families First Partnership Survey 13-18 and Adults

<https://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/strategic-support/families-first-partnership-survey-12-18-and-adults>

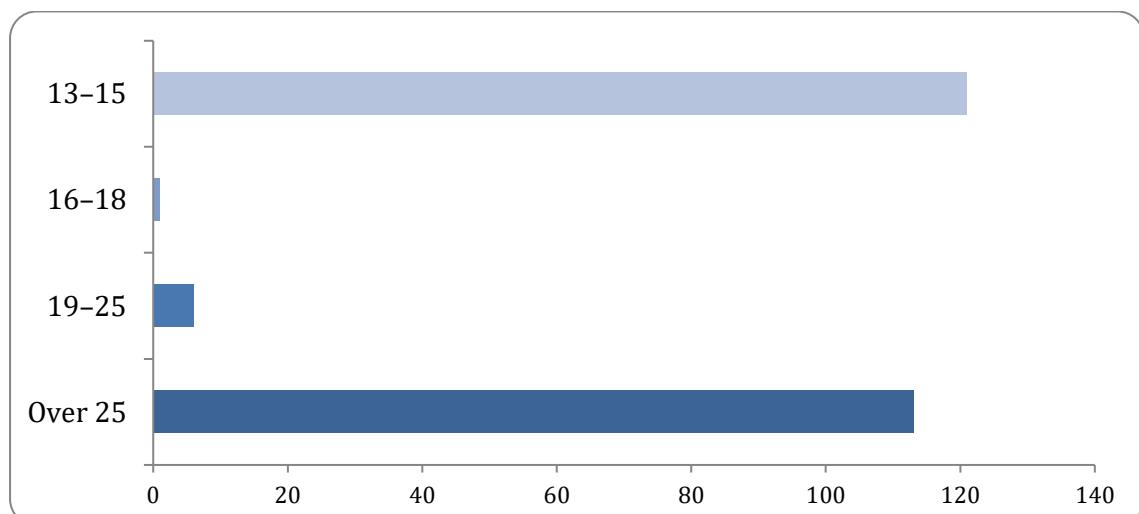
This report was created on Friday 05 December 2025 at 16:07

The activity ran from 23/07/2025 to 10/10/2025

Responses to this survey: **241**

1: How Old Are You?

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.

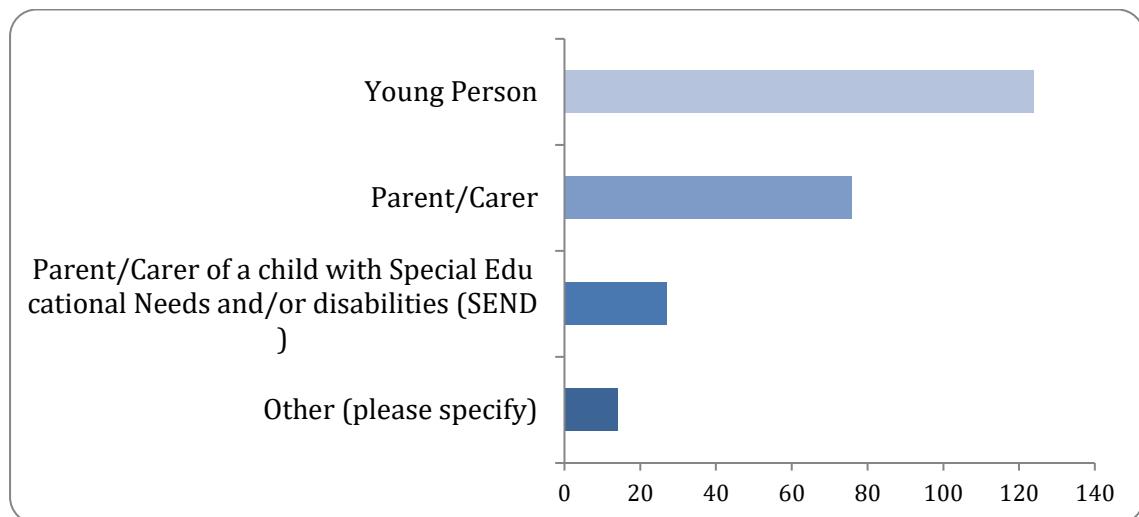


Option	Total	Percent
13-15	121	50.21%
16-18	1	0.41%
19-25	6	2.49%
Over 25	113	46.89%

Not Answered	0	0.00%
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2: Are you:

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



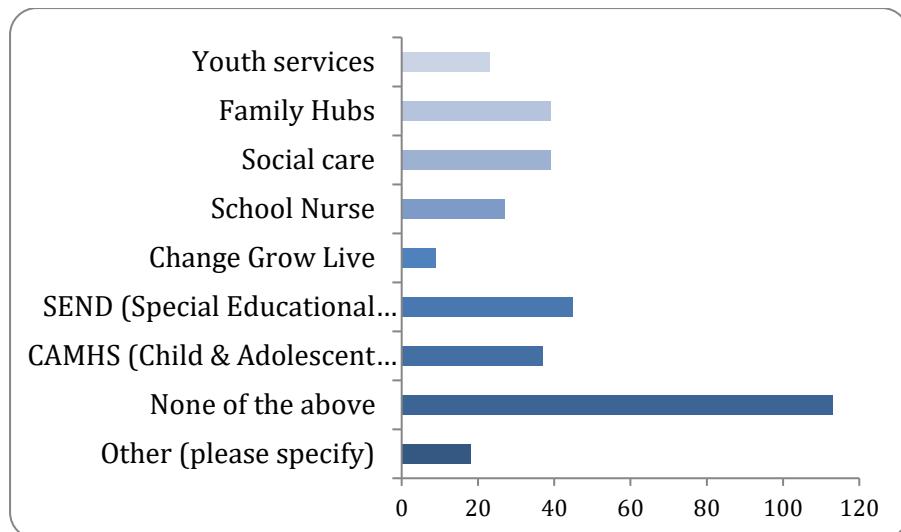
Option	Total	Percent
Young Person	124	51.45%
Parent/Carer	76	31.54%
Parent/Carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND)	27	11.20%
Other (please specify)	14	5.81%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Other

There were 22 responses to this part of the question.

3: Have you or your family been involved with any of the following services in the last 2 years?

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



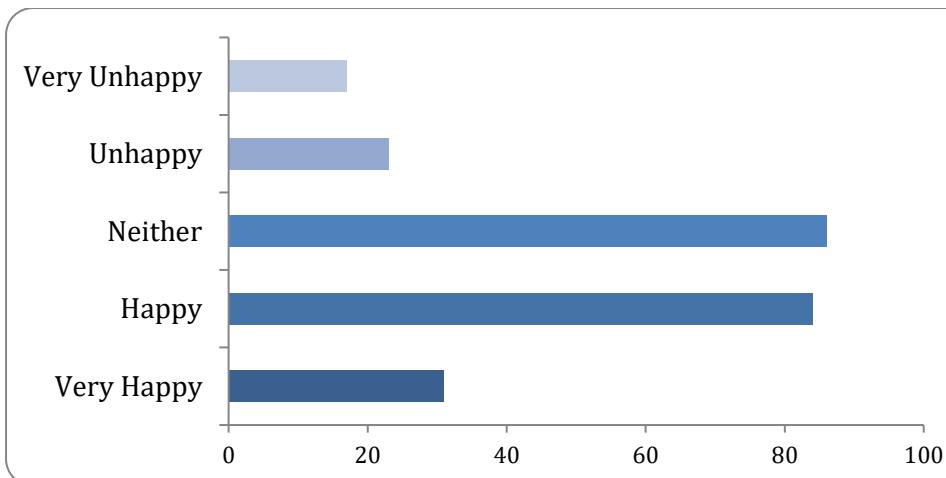
Option	Total	Percent
Youth services	23	9.54%
Family Hubs	39	16.18%
Social care	39	16.18%
School Nurse	27	11.20%
Change Grow Live	9	3.73%
SEND (Special Educational Needs Disabilities) services	45	18.67%
CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health services)	37	15.35%
None of the above	113	46.89%
Other (please specify)	18	7.47%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

other

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

4: How happy are you with the support available in Sefton? And why?

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



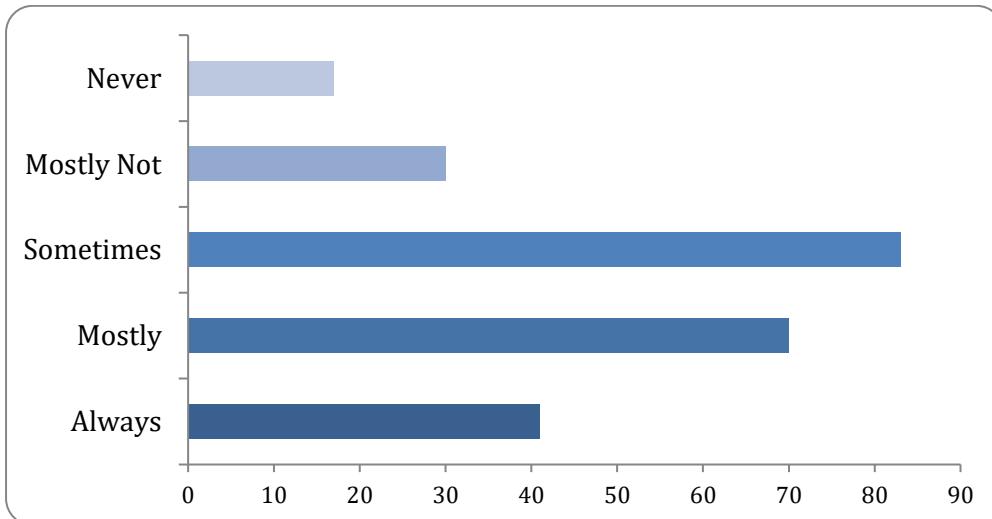
Option	Total	Percent
Very Unhappy	17	7.05%
Unhappy	23	9.54%
Neither	86	35.68%
Happy	84	34.85%
Very Happy	31	12.86%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Tell Us Why

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.

5: Do you feel listened to by professionals? Why have you answered in this way?

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



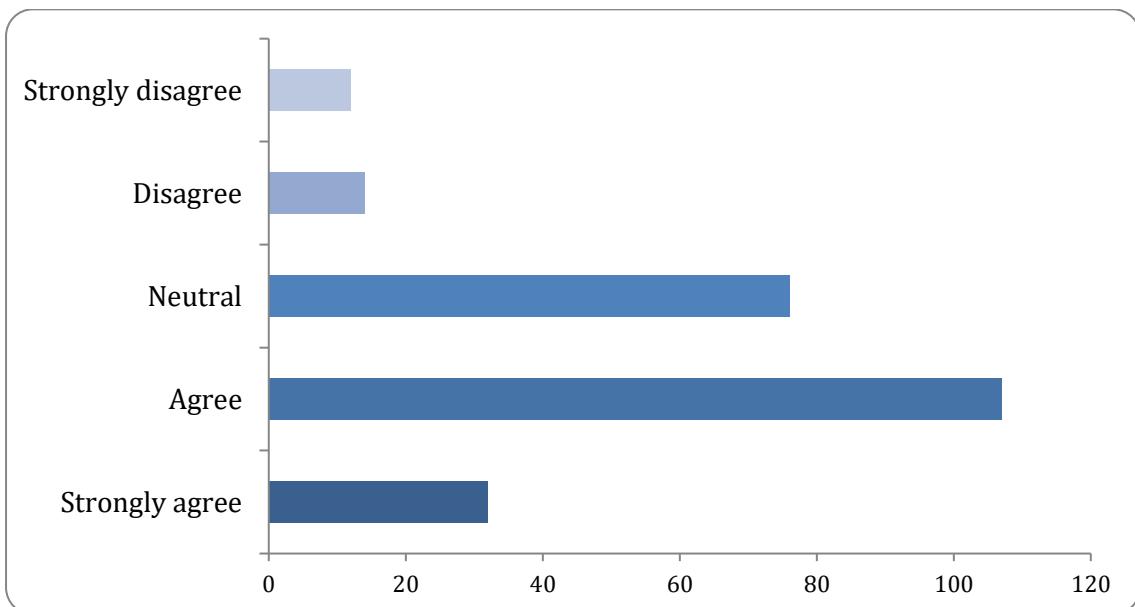
Option	Total	Percent
Never	17	7.05%
Mostly Not	30	12.45%
Sometimes	83	34.44%
Mostly	70	29.05%
Always	41	17.01%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Tell Us Why

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.

6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

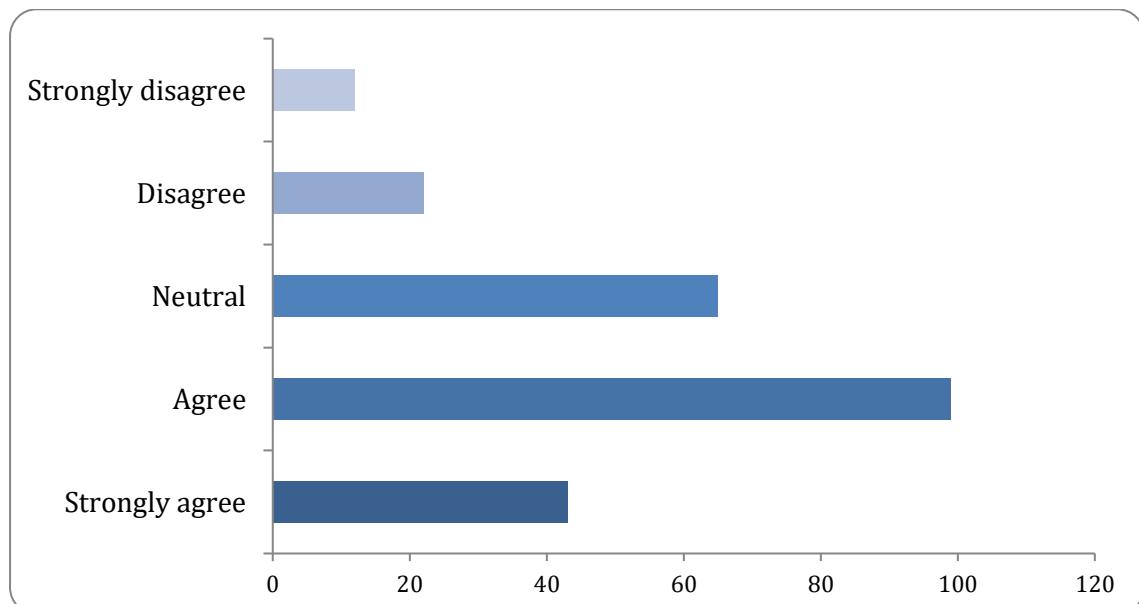
There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	4.98%
Disagree	14	5.81%
Neutral	76	31.54%
Agree	107	44.40%
Strongly agree	32	13.28%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? - I know where to go when I need help

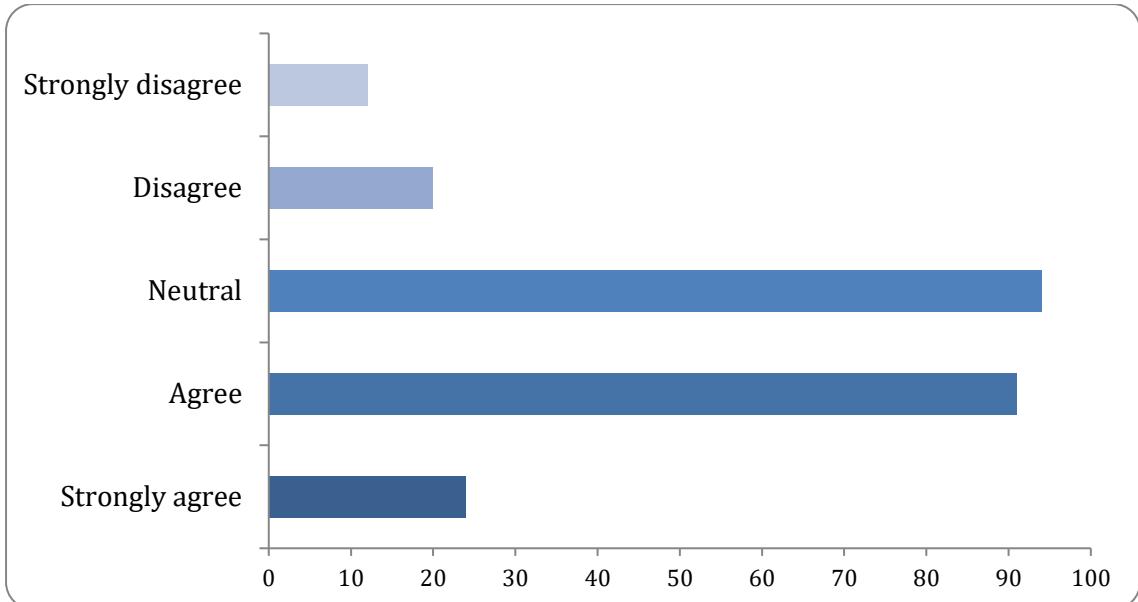
There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	4.98%
Disagree	22	9.13%
Neutral	65	26.97%
Agree	99	41.08%
Strongly agree	43	17.84%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? - The people who support me understand my family's needs

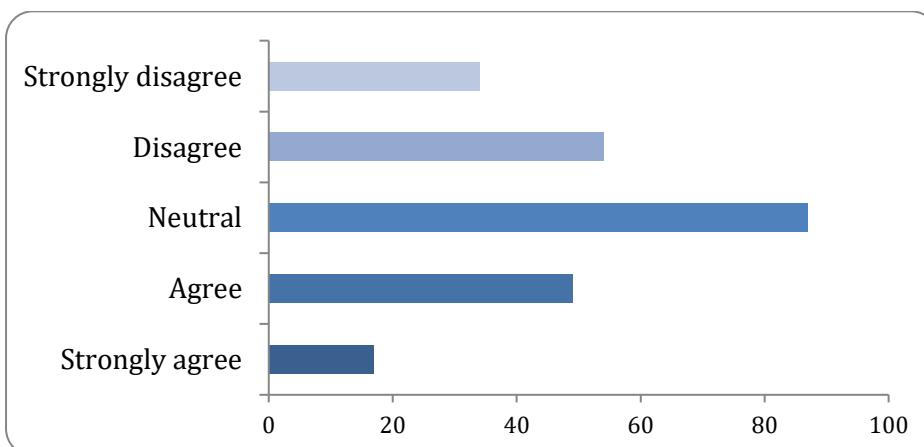
There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly disagree	12	4.98%
Disagree	20	8.30%
Neutral	94	39.00%
Agree	91	37.76%
Strongly agree	24	9.96%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? - I only have to tell my story once

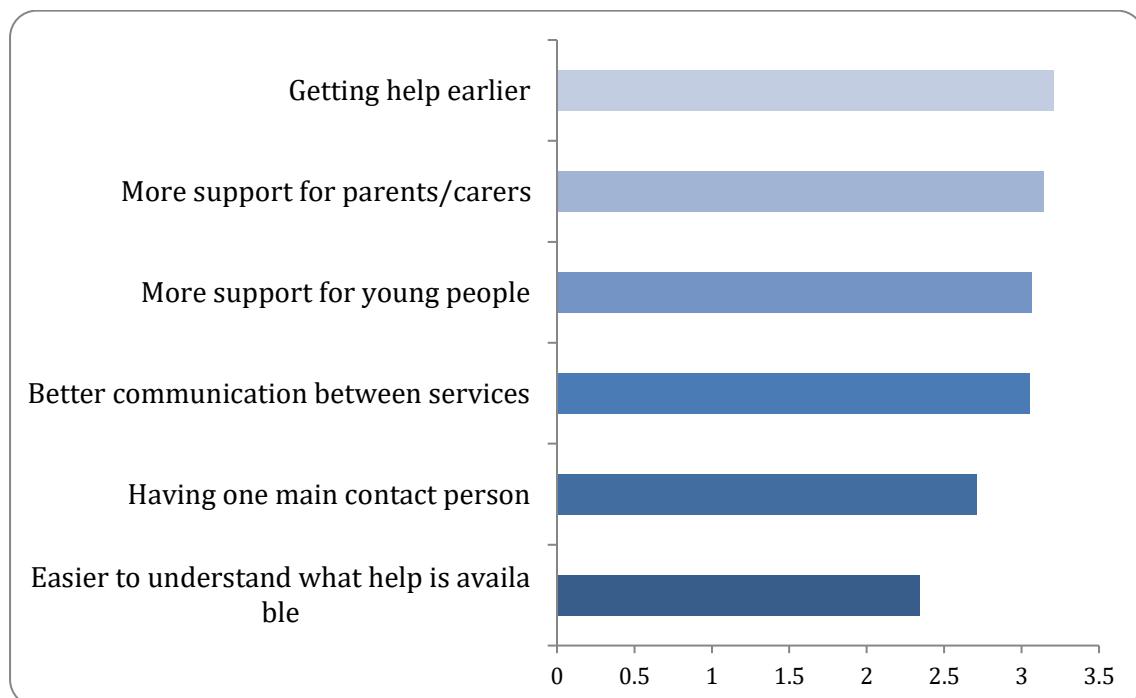
There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Strongly disagree	34	14.11%
Disagree	54	22.41%
Neutral	87	36.10%
Agree	49	20.33%
Strongly agree	17	7.05%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

7: What would you most like to improve about current services? Please rank your answers from 1 - 6, with 1 being the most important.

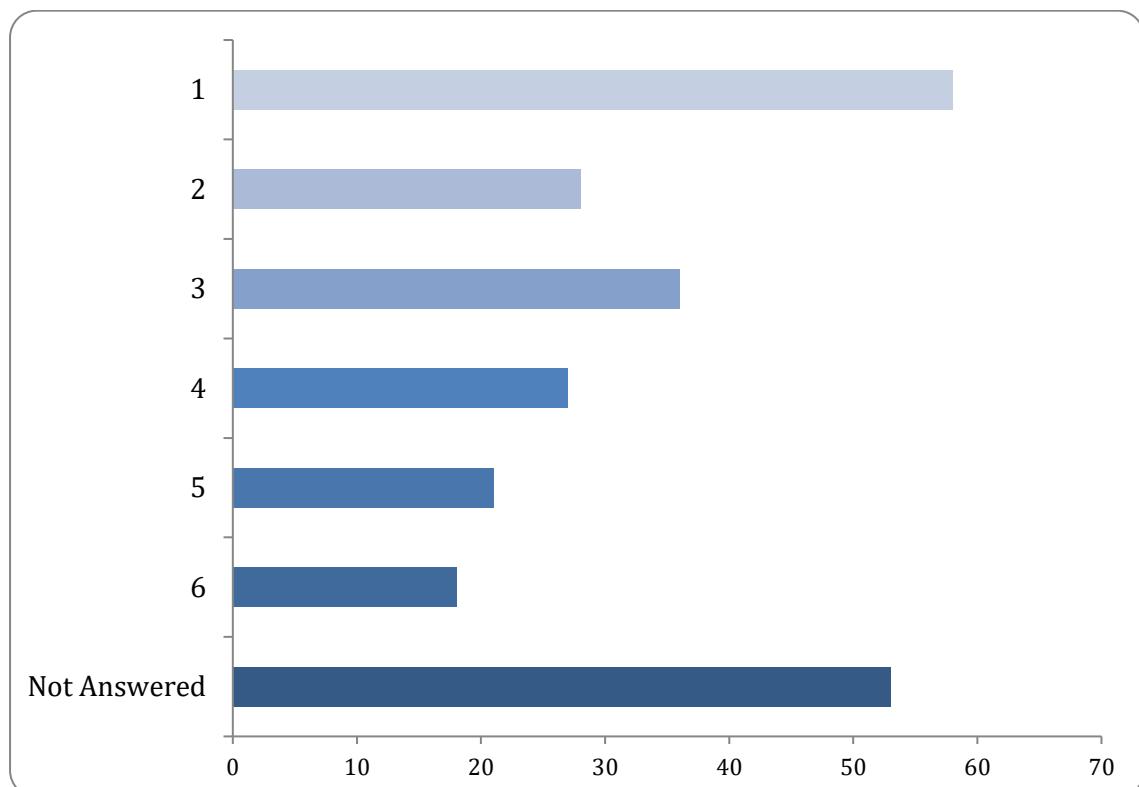
Ranking of 'Most like to improve'



Item	Ranking
Getting help earlier	3.21
More support for parents/carers	3.14
More support for young people	3.06
Better communication between services	3.05
Having one main contact person	2.71
Easier to understand what help is available	2.34

Most like to improve - Getting help earlier

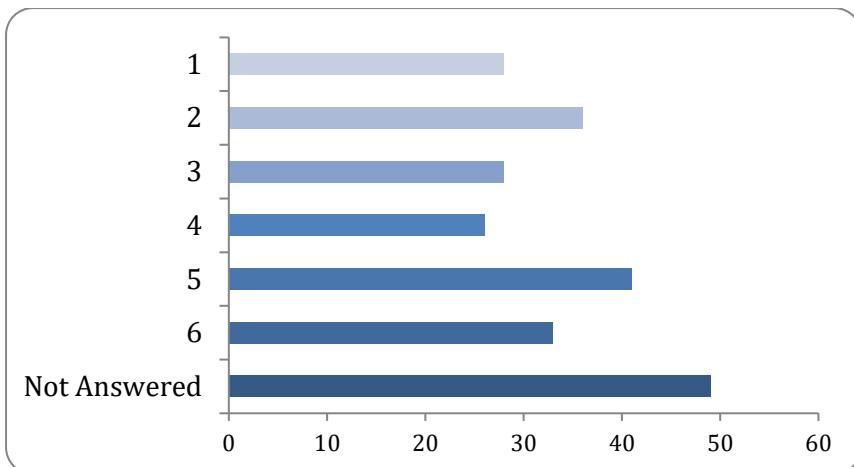
There were 188 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	58	24.07%
2	28	11.62%
3	36	14.94%
4	27	11.20%
5	21	8.71%
6	18	7.47%
Not Answered	53	21.99%

Most like to improve - Having one main contact person

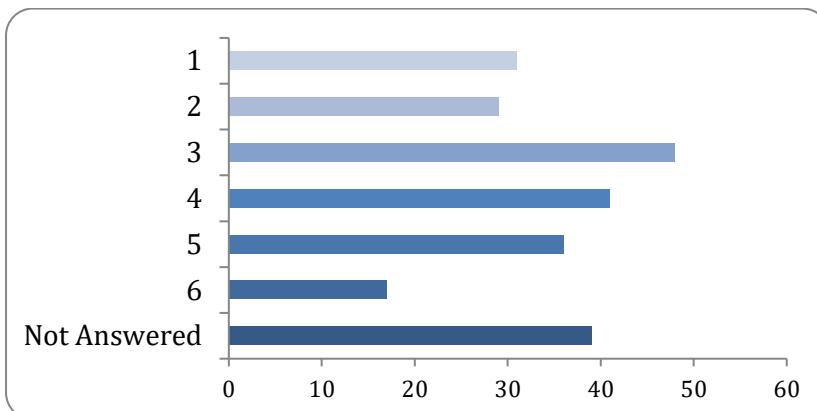
There were 192 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	28	11.62%
2	36	14.94%
3	28	11.62%
4	26	10.79%
5	41	17.01%
6	33	13.69%
Not Answered	49	20.33%

Most like to improve - Better communication between services

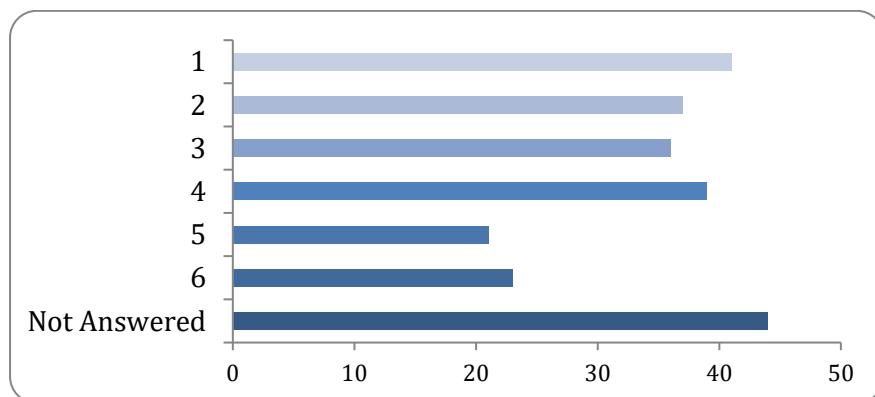
There were 202 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	31	12.86%
2	29	12.03%
3	48	19.92%
4	41	17.01%
5	36	14.94%
6	17	7.05%
Not Answered	39	16.18%

Most like to improve - More support for parents/carers

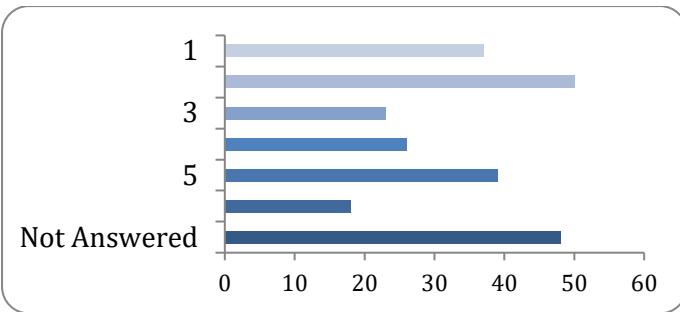
There were 197 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	41	17.01%
2	37	15.35%
3	36	14.94%
4	39	16.18%
5	21	8.71%
6	23	9.54%
Not Answered	44	18.26%

Most like to improve - More support for young people

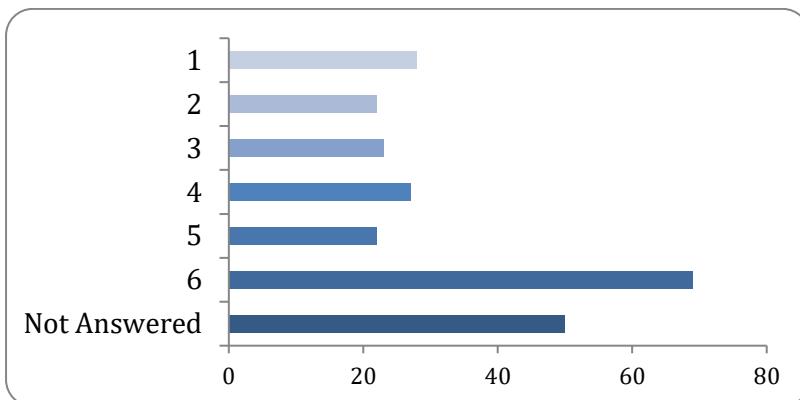
There were 193 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	37	15.35%
2	50	20.75%
3	23	9.54%
4	26	10.79%
5	39	16.18%
6	18	7.47%
Not Answered	48	19.92%

Most like to improve - Easier to understand what help is available

There were 191 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
1	28	11.62%
2	22	9.13%
3	23	9.54%
4	27	11.20%
5	22	9.13%
6	69	28.63%

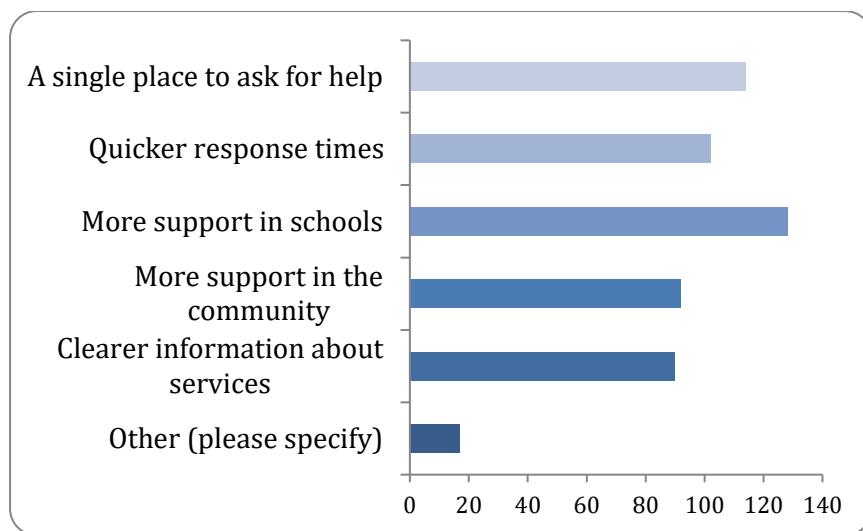
Not Answered	50	20.75%
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Other improvements

There were 42 responses to this part of the question.

8: What would make it easier for you to get help when you need it? Tick all that apply

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



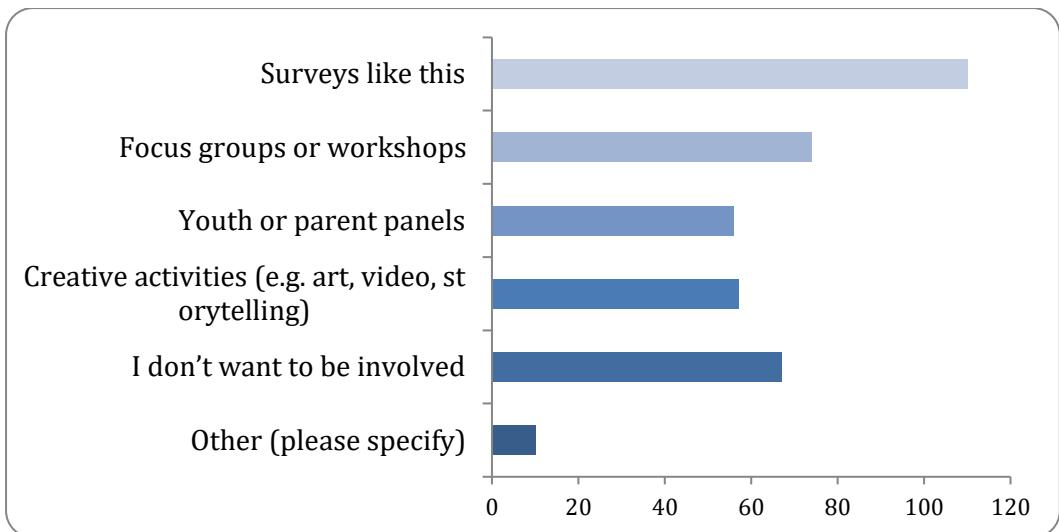
Option	Total	Percent
A single place to ask for help	114	47.30%
Quicker response times	102	42.32%
More support in schools	128	53.11%
More support in the community	92	38.17%
Clearer information about services	90	37.34%
Other (please specify)	17	7.05%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

other

There were 40 responses to this part of the question.

9: How would you like to be involved in shaping services? (Tick as many as you like)

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



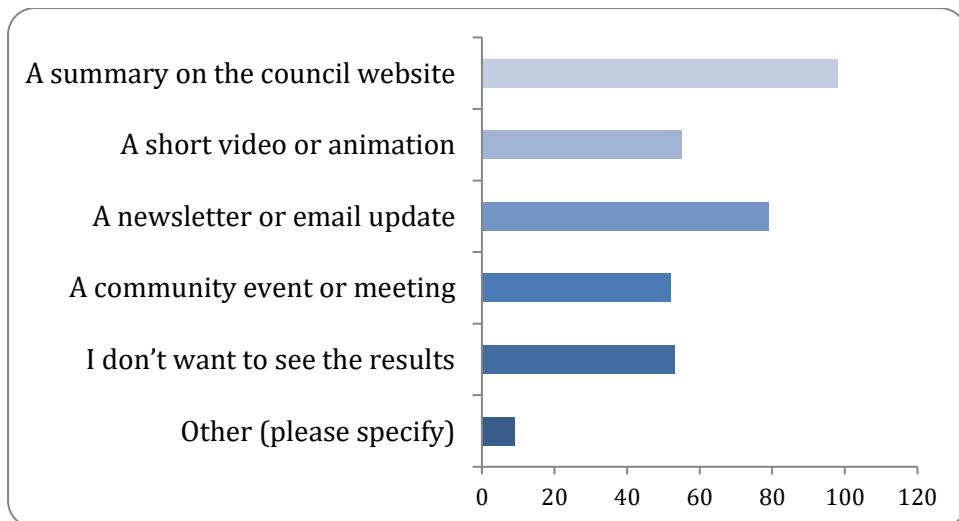
Option	Total	Percent
Surveys like this	110	45.64%
Focus groups or workshops	74	30.71%
Youth or parent panels	56	23.24%
Creative activities (e.g. art, video, storytelling)	57	23.65%
I don't want to be involved	67	27.80%
Other (please specify)	10	4.15%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

other

There were 20 responses to this part of the question.

10: How would you like to see the results of this survey shared? (Tick as many as you like)

There were 241 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
A summary on the council website	98	40.66%
A short video or animation	55	22.82%
A newsletter or email update	79	32.78%
A community event or meeting	52	21.58%
I don't want to see the results	53	21.99%
Other (please specify)	9	3.73%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

other

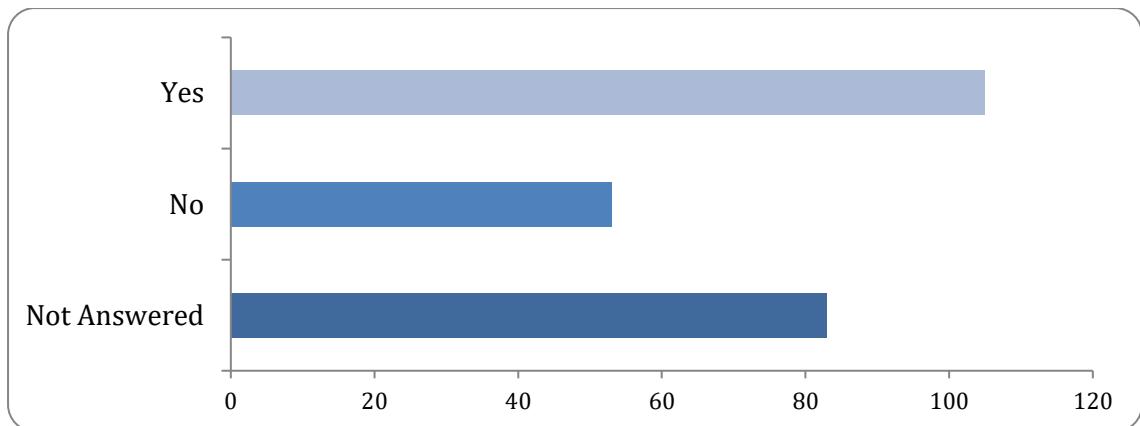
There were 18 responses to this part of the question.

11: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience or ideas for change?

There were 129 responses to this part of the question.

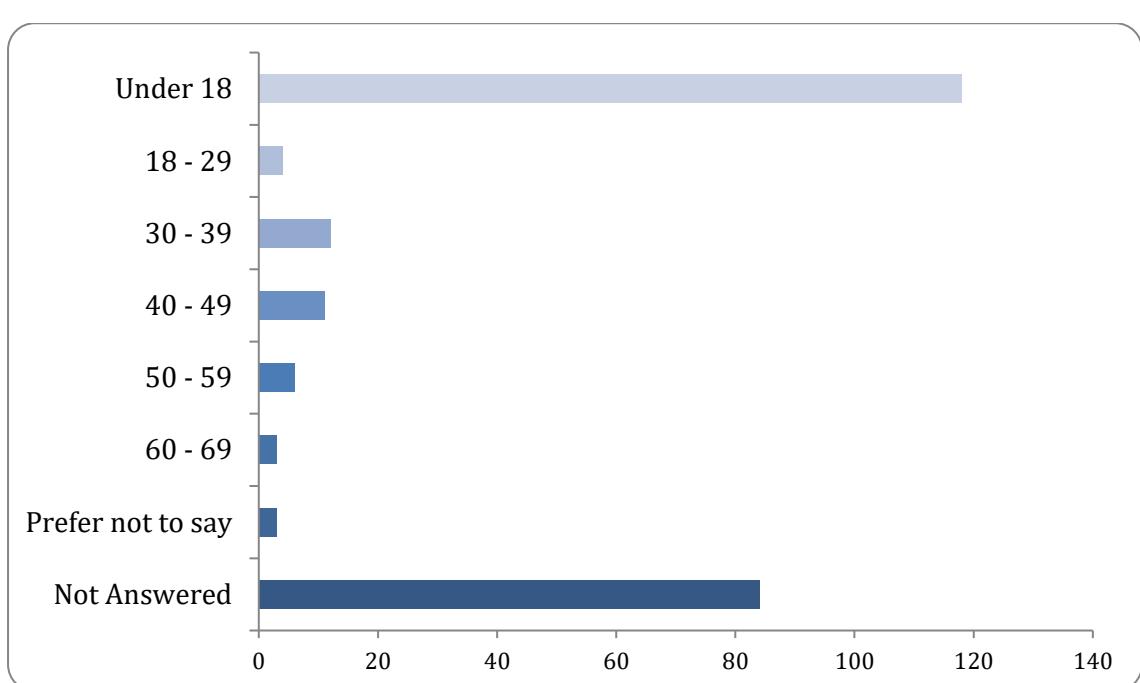
12: Do you give consent to providing your details, in accordance with the Privacy Notice?

There were 158 responses to this part of the question.



13: How old are you?

There were 157 responses to this part of the question.

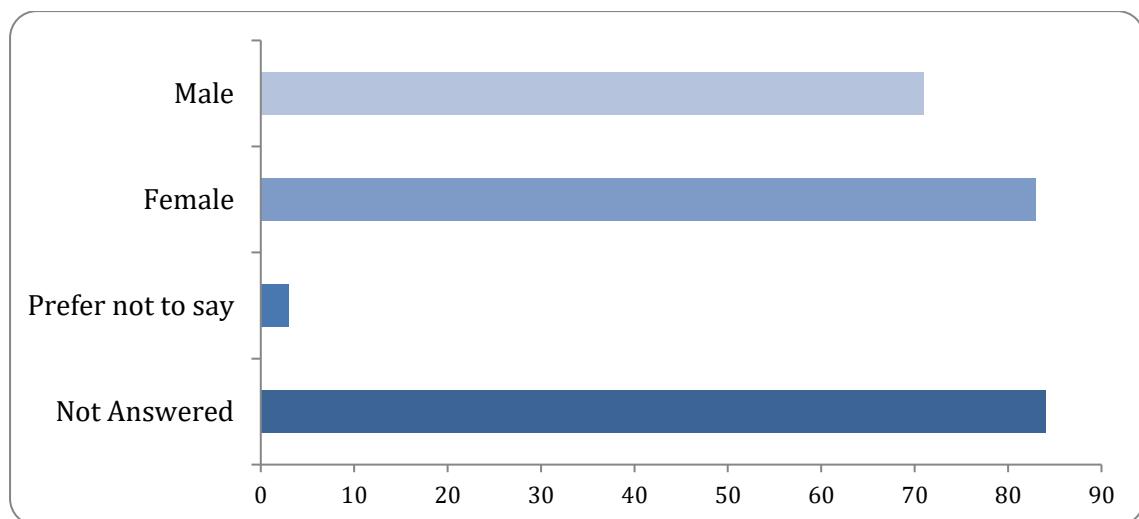


Option	Total	Percent
Under 18	118	48.96%
18 - 29	4	1.66%
30 - 39	12	4.98%

40 - 49	11	4.56%
50 - 59	6	2.49%
60 - 69	3	1.24%
70 - 79	0	0.00%
80 - 84	0	0.00%
85+	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	3	1.24%
Not Answered	84	34.85%

14: Sex

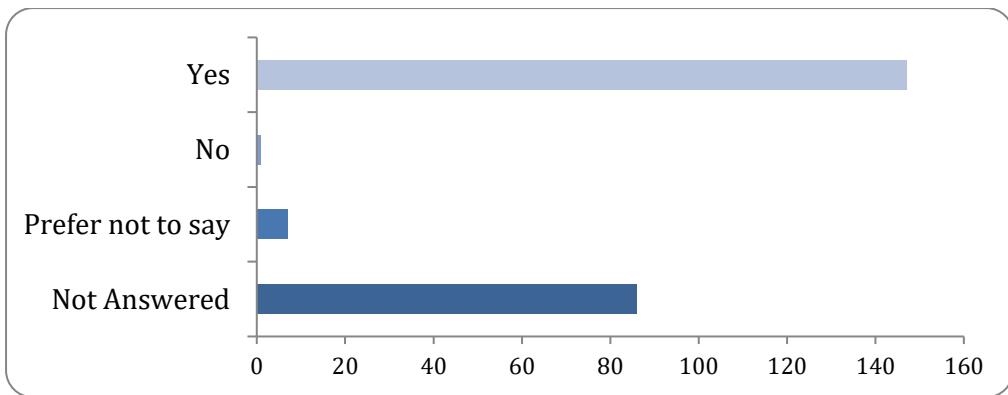
There were 157 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Male	71	29.46%
Female	83	34.44%
Prefer not to say	3	1.24%
Not Answered	84	34.85%

15: Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

There were 155 responses to this part of the question.

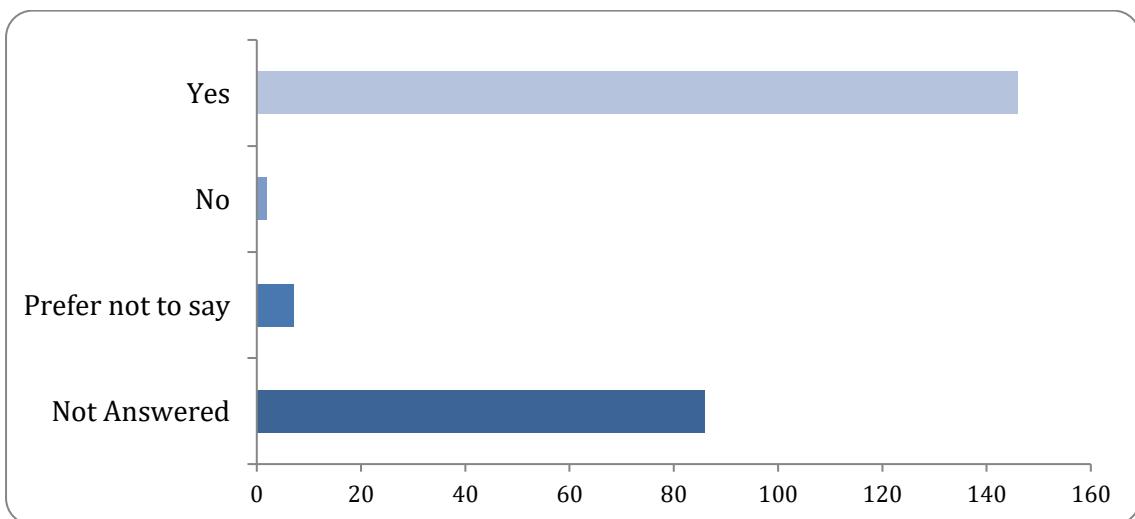


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	147	61.00%
No	1	0.41%
Prefer not to say	7	2.90%
Not Answered	86	35.68%

16: Do you currently live as your birth sex?

Gender identity

There were 155 responses to this part of the question.

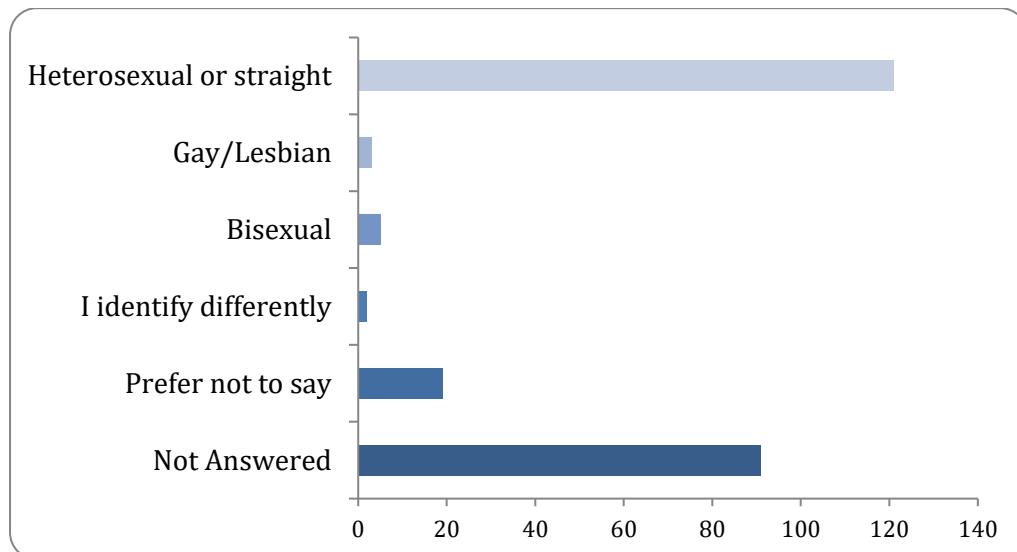


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	146	60.58%
No	2	0.83%
Prefer not to say	7	2.90%
Not Answered	86	35.68%

There were 5 responses to this part of the question.

17: Relationships - How would you describe your sexual orientation?

There were 150 responses to this part of the question.



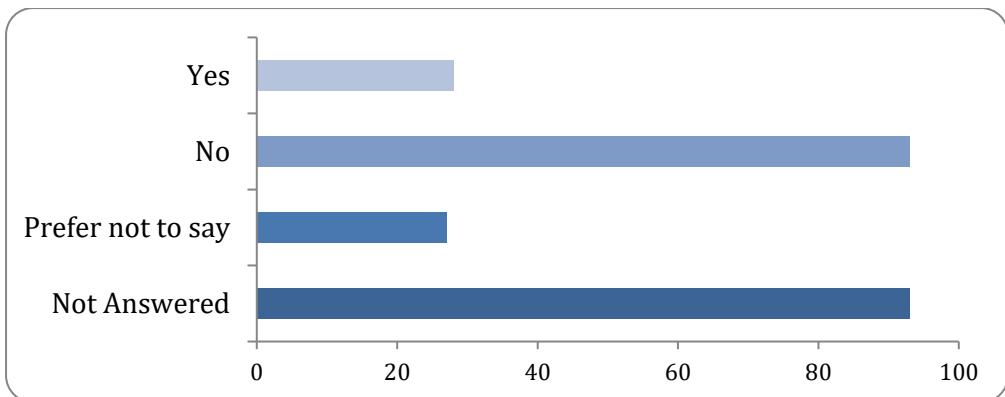
Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual or straight	121	50.21%
Gay/ Lesbian	3	1.24%
Bisexual	5	2.07%
I identify differently	2	0.83%
Prefer not to say	19	7.88%
Not Answered	91	37.76%

Please tell us how you identify.

There were 15 responses to this part of the question.

18: Are you currently cared for by Sefton Council?

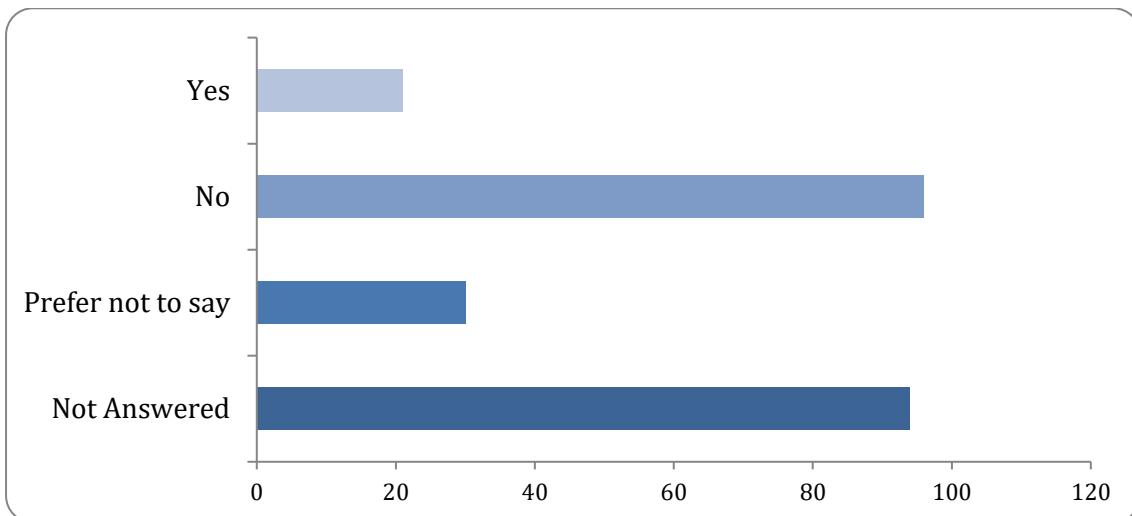
There were 148 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	28	11.62%
No	93	38.59%
Prefer not to say	27	11.20%
Not Answered	93	38.59%

19: Have you ever been cared for as a child by Sefton Council or another council?

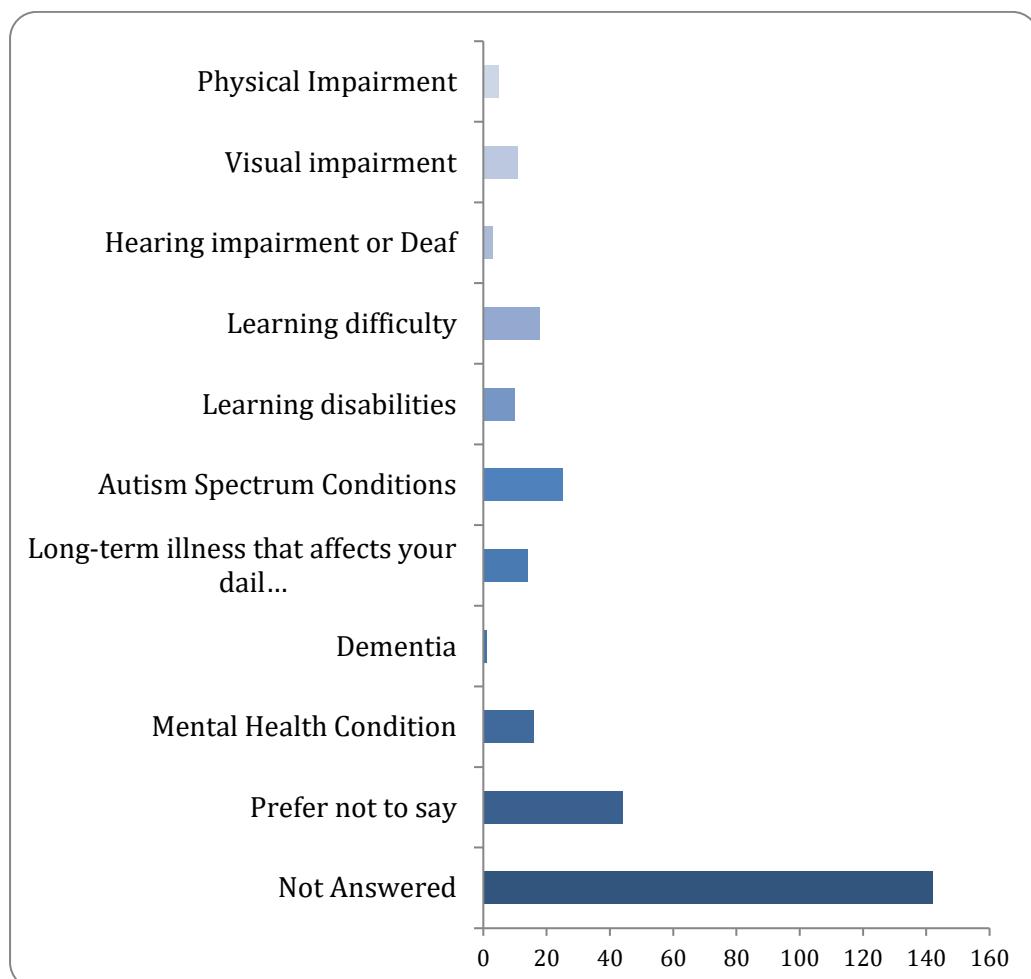
There were 147 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	21	8.71%
No	96	39.83%
Prefer not to say	30	12.45%
Not Answered	94	39.00%

20: Disability: Do you have any of the following (please tick all that apply):

There were 99 responses to this part of the question.

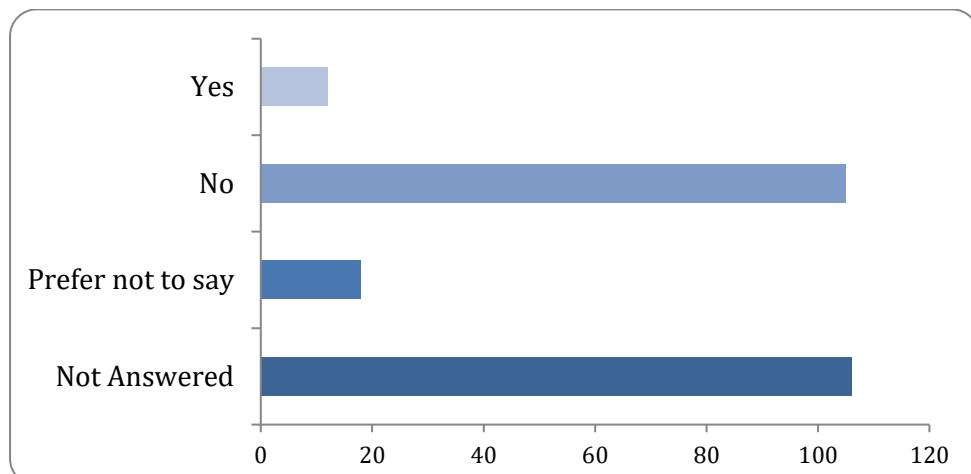


Option	Total	Percent
Physical Impairment	5	2.07%
Visual impairment	11	4.56%
Hearing impairment or Deaf	3	1.24%
Learning difficulty	18	7.47%
Learning disabilities	10	4.15%
Autism Spectrum Conditions	25	10.37%
Long-term illness that affects your daily life	14	5.81%
Dementia	1	0.41%
Mental Health Condition	16	6.64%
Prefer not to say	44	18.26%
Not Answered	142	58.92%

21: If you have Cancer, diabetes, or HIV this is seen as a disability under the Equalities Law. Or you have selected any of the boxes in the question above.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

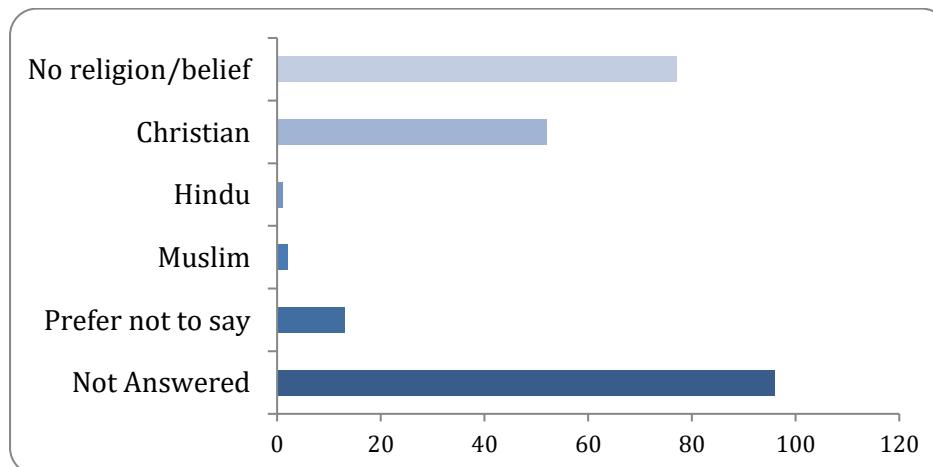
There were 135 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	12	4.98%
No	105	43.57%
Prefer not to say	18	7.47%
Not Answered	106	43.98%

22: What is your religion or belief?

There were 145 responses to this part of the question.

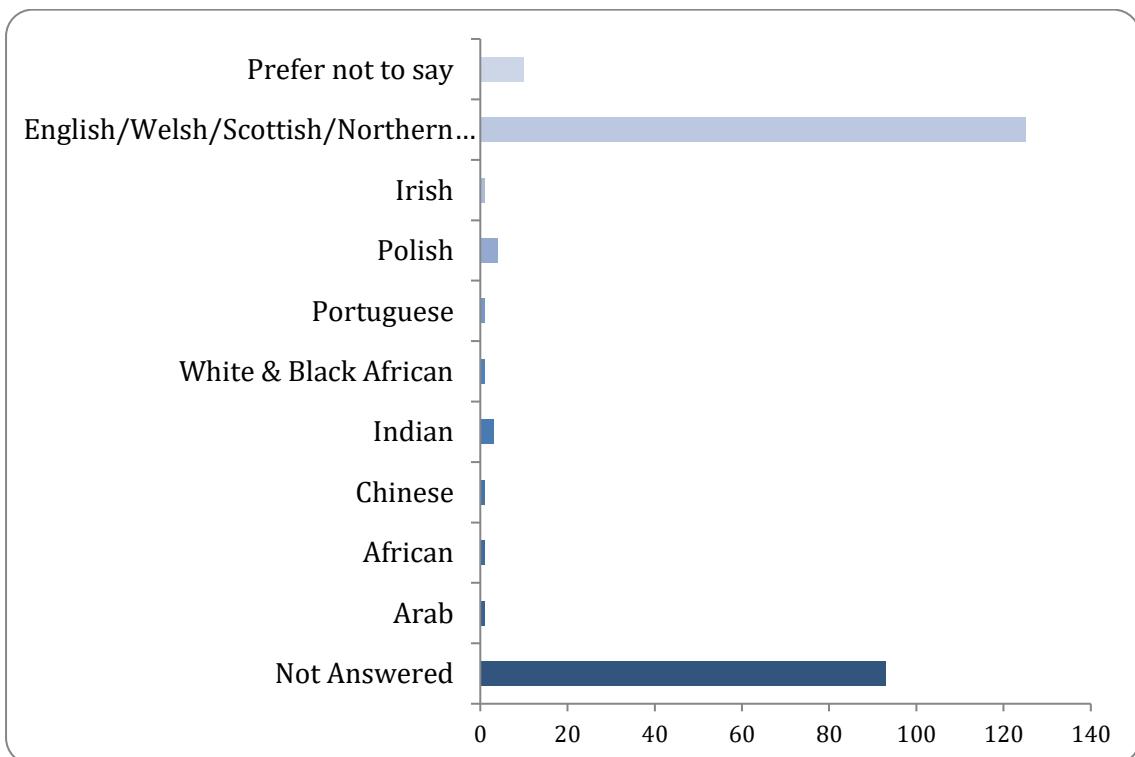


Option	Total	Percent
No religion/belief	77	31.95%
Christian	52	21.58%
Hindu	1	0.41%
Muslim	2	0.83%
Jewish	0	0.00%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Buddhist	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	13	5.39%
Not Answered	96	39.83%

There were 12 responses to this part of the question.

23: Race and ethnicity – do you identify as:

There were 148 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Prefer not to say	10	4.15%
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	125	51.87%
Irish	1	0.41%

Gypsy or Irish Traveler or Roma	0	0.00%
Polish	4	1.66%
Portuguese	1	0.41%
Latvian	0	0.00%
Lithuanian	0	0.00%
White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00%
White & Black African	1	0.41%
White & Asian	0	0.00%
Indian	3	1.24%
Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Pakistani	0	0.00%
Chinese	1	0.41%
African	1	0.41%
Caribbean	0	0.00%
Arab	1	0.41%
Not Answered	93	38.59%

Other ethnic background (please describe)

There were 23 responses to this part of the question.

Appendix D: Event summaries, anonymized comments, and representative quotes report.

This appendix contains summaries, anonymized comments and representative quotes taken from Children, young people and adults during the whole engagement period.



Families First Partnership – Social Care Reforms

Verbal Feedback from Children, Young People and their Parents/Carers

July – October 2025

Introduction/Overview:

This report provides a summary of representative verbal feedback gathered from approximately 300 parents, carers, children, and young people during community engagement events held between July and August 2025. It also includes estimated attendance figures for each event. The feedback has been analysed to identify key themes, challenges experienced by families, and their proposed solutions for improving services and support within the Families First Partnership.

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Reach and Representation Across Engagement Events:

The below table lists a series of dates, community events attended, the intended target audience of the group and an approximate total of the families in attendance on that date.

Event Date	Event Name	Event target audience	Approximate total of families at the event
29/07/2025	Maghull Library	Pre-school children - Parents and Carers	25
30/07/2025	Sefton Active Park Nights - Maghull	CYP 5+ and Parents/Carers	10
04/08/2025	Sefton Active Park Nights - Formby	CYP 5+ and Parents/Carers	7
04/08/2025	Aiming High event - Ages 6-10 @ Rowan Park	CYP 6-10yrs and Parents / Carers	15
05/08/2025	Aiming High event - Ages 11+ @ Netherton Activity Centre	CYP 11+ and Parents / Carers	5
05/08/2025	Family Hubs Fun Day @Marie Clarke Centre	CYP and Parents/Carers	30
05/08/2025	Sefton Active Park Nights - Litherland	CYP/Parents/Carers	7
06/08/2025	Southport Library	Pre-school children - Parents and Carers	25
08/08/2025	Crosby Library	Pre-school children - Parents and Carers	20
11/08/2025	Bootle Library	Pre-school children - Parents and Carers	8
13/08/2025	Family Hubs Fun Day @Talbot Street	CYP/Parents/Carers	5

14/08/2025	The Brunswick Community Centre	CYP/Parents/Carers	15
15/08/2025	Evangelical Church Southport	Parents	2
19/08/2025	Netherton Park Community Association	CYP/Parents/Carers	30
20/08/2025	Cared for Lakeside activities	CYP	7
20/08/2025	Venus Family Fun Day	CYP/Parents/Carers	2
21/08/2025	Family Hubs fun day @ Litherland	CYP/Parents/Carers	15
26/08/2025	Family Hubs fun day @ Marie Clarke	CYP/Parents/Carers	30
27/08/2025	Litherland Youth Community Centre: Food bank distribution	CYP/Parents/Carers	2
29/08/2025	Venus migrant coffee morning	CYP/Parents/Carers	20
29/09/2025	Aiming High Celebration Event – Netherton Activity centre	CYP/Parents/Carers	70
02/09/2025	Workforce road show event – Bottle Town Hall	Workforce/Parents	4 (Parents attended)
Total			300

Representative quotes and conversations captured

Following each community engagement event, attending team members were asked to document and summarise the key conversations held; the representative comments below reflect the insights gathered across all groups:

1. *"There is no help available to help new parents with advice on starting a child's education journey".*
2. *"A lack of availability within existing events/support groups, there's endless waiting lists".*
3. *"I am not originally from the UK, so we find the community aspect of being able to visit the Family Hubs and engage in activities such as these family event days helpful. We are based in Bootle, but frequently visit all of the Hubs i.e. The Marie Clarke centre, Litherland and Netherton hubs. We have family/friends in a neighbouring borough (Knowsley-Kirkby) who also have children, and it would be better if we were able to engage in events like this together."*
4. *"Uniforms can be expensive and impact on finances, which restricts us from being active over summer. We would like to access swimming more, but this can be quite costly. We found out about this event through social media, centres could be a bit more tactical with how and when they release information for events so that families have enough notice and can plan financially".*
5. *"We love the activities the family hubs offer but activities and support outside of the hub are not well advertised."*
6. *"Often when someone is at breaking point, you feel isolated and have no one to talk to. When I suffered with my mental health, my family were also going through the same thing and so I couldn't reach out to them. When my mum was sectioned, I found it difficult to get information about my mums wellbeing and location, and I was often passed around between departments and professionals which took its toll on my own mental health."*
7. *"More PCSO's are required specifically around areas where children go. We also need more activities and facilities for children to get engaged. We also need more support for*

elderly people as information from the council is not reaching out to the right people, maybe utilise some of the underused or abandoned buildings."

8. "Sefton services have been very helpful to my family, we feel very lucky. But when my son was diagnosed it was hard because there was too much information, I couldn't take it all in"."

9. "I'm a parent but I also work in a school, parents of SEND children often feel they have no support and don't know where to get help. As parent myself I feel schools seem to be at the heart of family help and often parents ask the schools for support - if more partners linked with schools or were based within them, schools would be better equipped and informed to share where and how support could be offered that currently doesn't sit with schools i.e. finance support

10. "It's good to have activities for kids within local Library's as we live closer, and kids are engaging well here (Rhyme time). More such kind of activities should be implemented through Council."

11. "Working parents find it overwhelming to get engaged with activities being offered for their children as they are not always offered outside of normal working hours".

12. "As a dad, I personally struggled to come to terms with my child's SEND diagnosis, there was very little support available specifically for dads. My mental health was impacted during the early stages of diagnosis, and I felt I had no one to talk to. I wish there would have been more help and advice available regarding choosing appropriate school settings that met his needs, as a lot of time was wasted in the wrong school setting, early advice and support on choosing mainstream vs SEND specific schooling would have been of huge benefit".

13. "The lack of support available from professionals for pre-school aged children/babies. Most professionals kept sign posting me to schools, but my baby was not of school age, leaving me feeling lost with no one to advise until they reach school age."

14. "I am still made to repeat traumatic events over and over again. I would like to see a health/social care passport detailing all the events/history which is accessible by all

professionals to avoid families having to repeat their stories/trauma in order to gain help and support.

15. "Exclusion that home schooled parents and children face, we are often being signposted to schools for support, I felt this was not the appropriate advice that should have been offered. I would like to see support available outside of the education settings, maybe in community centres or health centres."

16. "As a parent I prefer providing feedback either in a survey but it's also good to talk openly like this."

17. "It's hard to know what events and services there are as everything is all over the place and I just stumble across it. It would be good to have a one-stop-shop where I can find out about everything there is available to me."

18. "The meetings for SEND support and beginning of EHCP, we needed to attend to receive support take place in Formby Nursery but we live/work in Bootle, this is the only place that offers this."

19. "A lot more could be done with social media to promote events/support services as this is where people are looking - Alder Hey do this very well."

20. "We struggled to find dedicated specialist nursery/EY provision, it would be useful to have a directory of these support services as currently we are relying on word of mouth to know where to go."

21. One mum spoke about reaching out for support from TAS EH worker, who they found out about through their school newsletter. This was due to suspected ASD for her daughter and requesting support for this. They praised the EH worker very highly and said they "helped myself and my daughter a lot and made significant progress". They then began receiving support from the SW in TAS team and spoke very negatively about this. They agreed that EH worker remaining involved (like a FHL) would have helped her a lot. They said they have never accessed support in Family Hubs, and I had to explain what these were as they had only ever accessed EH through TAS in school. She was very familiar with Netherton Park

Centre and said she has accessed there almost daily throughout the years when her older children were younger.

22. "I don't know which services work together and what they already know about me."

23. "I find challenges with potty training my toddler. I got support from my health visitor initially and though it was helpful at the beginning stage it didn't fully help me and my child." She suggested "family centres should offer extra support like workshops, one to one session for children facing challenges like this."

24. "I have lots of gratitude for the support provided by the Complex needs Team. The team have been very helpful, understanding and responsive to my child's specific medical and development needs."

25. "My friends, who need help, won't contact social services because they're scared of them. The stigma is a huge barrier to access".

26. "There is a divide between rich and poor in how you can support your children. If you are rich, you can afford extra clubs like guitar lessons, swimming, sports clubs, etc. How does a family with less income afford this, especially if they have multiple children. In other countries it is compulsory for children to attend extra activities, and if they can't afford it, they are supported with this. Sefton should support families with less income to pay for their children to attend out of school clubs.

27. "My daughter has a child diagnosed with autism, and 2 other children (1 ADHD and 1 being assessed for autism) - it's really hard to get help and you feel like you have to fight for everything. They also didn't feel like it was fair how some children got additional support or special school places compared to others - how are they selected because she didn't feel this was fair from what she has seen and experienced."

28. "It's been really hard and despite my daughter being diagnosed with autism aged 3, she is now 8 and only just getting an EHCP. I found it difficult to find where to get help and often feel passed from 'pillar to post'. It's so hard 24/7, I never get a break, and this has affected my own mental health."

29. "There needs to be more support available for parents' experiencing perimenopause and ADHD because this combination can be very challenging to cope with. I personally struggled to get proper support on it. Many women are in this situation, especially those who are working full time. Stress and hormonal changes make life feel unbalanced. There should be more flexible support sessions for women as this can help them manage their health and can cope with any difficult situation."

30. "We need more Hub centres like Litherland but across various areas."

31. "Sports and other activities should be more accessible, and you should bring down the cost. Things like swimming, football, dance and music lessons are expensive. If council funded more of that every child could join."

32. "Need for family advocates both within Family Help and MACPT – ideally these would have life experience and have experienced services – however they would need to be independent and not directly employed by Sefton".

33. "Support needs to be community based".

34. "Need to consider more services and offers to support victims of DA – having one provide, and one option isn't adequate".

35. "Information sharing between agencies is the single biggest difference we need to address – for instance probation not sharing with other agencies".

36. "Thinking about police comms – a DV victim was told when perpetrator was coming out of prison – though not when they were sentenced and went into prison".

37. "The people who help me at school could make a calm room. I think everyone should have privacy when they want privacy".

38. "If people own up and say sorry when they've done something wrong".

39. "If the people that help me were around at all times".

40. "If we had a worry colouring sheet or task".

41. "If we could be in school longer than 6 hours".

42. "They stop supporting you and leave you, so it would be better if they stayed".

Themes identified from verbal feedback

The following section outlines the key themes that emerged from verbal feedback collected during community engagement activities, highlighting recurring issues, concerns, and suggestions shared by participants:

1. Access to Services and Support

Limited availability and long waiting lists for support groups and events.

Families feel unsupported during early childhood stages, especially before school age.

Need for community-based support, not just school-linked or hub-based.

Family advocates are requested—ideally with lived experience, but independent from Sefton Council.

2. Communication and Information Sharing

Families struggle to find out what's available; information is scattered.

Strong desire for a centralised “one-stop-shop” for services and events.

Social media is underused; better promotion and timing of event info is needed.

Inter-agency communication is a major concern—especially:

Probation not sharing info with other services.

Police communication gaps (e.g., DV victims not informed when perpetrators are sentenced).

3. Mental Health and Emotional Support

Parents report mental health challenges, especially around SEND diagnoses and trauma.

Lack of support for dads, and for parents dealing with perimenopause and ADHD.

Suggestion for a health/social care passport to avoid repeating traumatic histories.

4. Inclusion and Accessibility

Working parents struggle to attend events due to timing.

Home-schooled families feel excluded from mainstream support.

Families from diverse backgrounds value inclusive hubs but want cross-borough collaboration.

5. Financial Barriers

Costs of uniforms, swimming, sports, and clubs limit participation.

Requests for subsidised or council-funded activities to ensure equal access.

Concern about inequality between rich and poor in accessing enrichment opportunities.

6. Education and SEND Support

Schools are central to support but overburdened.

Need for better coordination between schools and external services.

Delays in EHCPs, unclear special school placement criteria, and lack of early advice.

7. Facilities and Local Hubs

Family Hubs are appreciated but not well known to all.

Requests for more hubs across Sefton and better use of underused buildings.

Libraries and community centres are seen as valuable well rooted spaces for child-friendly activities.

8. Specific Health and Development Needs

Families want more support around:

Potty training

Perimenopause

ADHD

Complex medical needs

Suggestions include workshops and one-to-one sessions tailored to these challenges.

9. Domestic Abuse (DA) Support

Current DA support is seen as too limited—only one provider and one option.

Families request more diverse and accessible services for victims.

DRAFT

Appendix E: Government Guidance & Strategic Vision

This appendix provides links to three government documents that are relevant to this report.

- [**Families First Partnership Programme Guide – GOV.UK**](#)
Official programme overview including Family Help, child protection, and partnership expectations.
- [**Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive – GOV.UK**](#)
Policy statement detailing the government's reform vision and priorities for children's social care.
- [**National Framework for Children's Social Care – GOV.UK**](#)
Sets outcomes and expectations for local authorities and safeguarding partners.