

Short Breaks Consultation

February 2017

Introduction

Knowsley Council is currently reviewing its Short Break Service for Children and Young People.

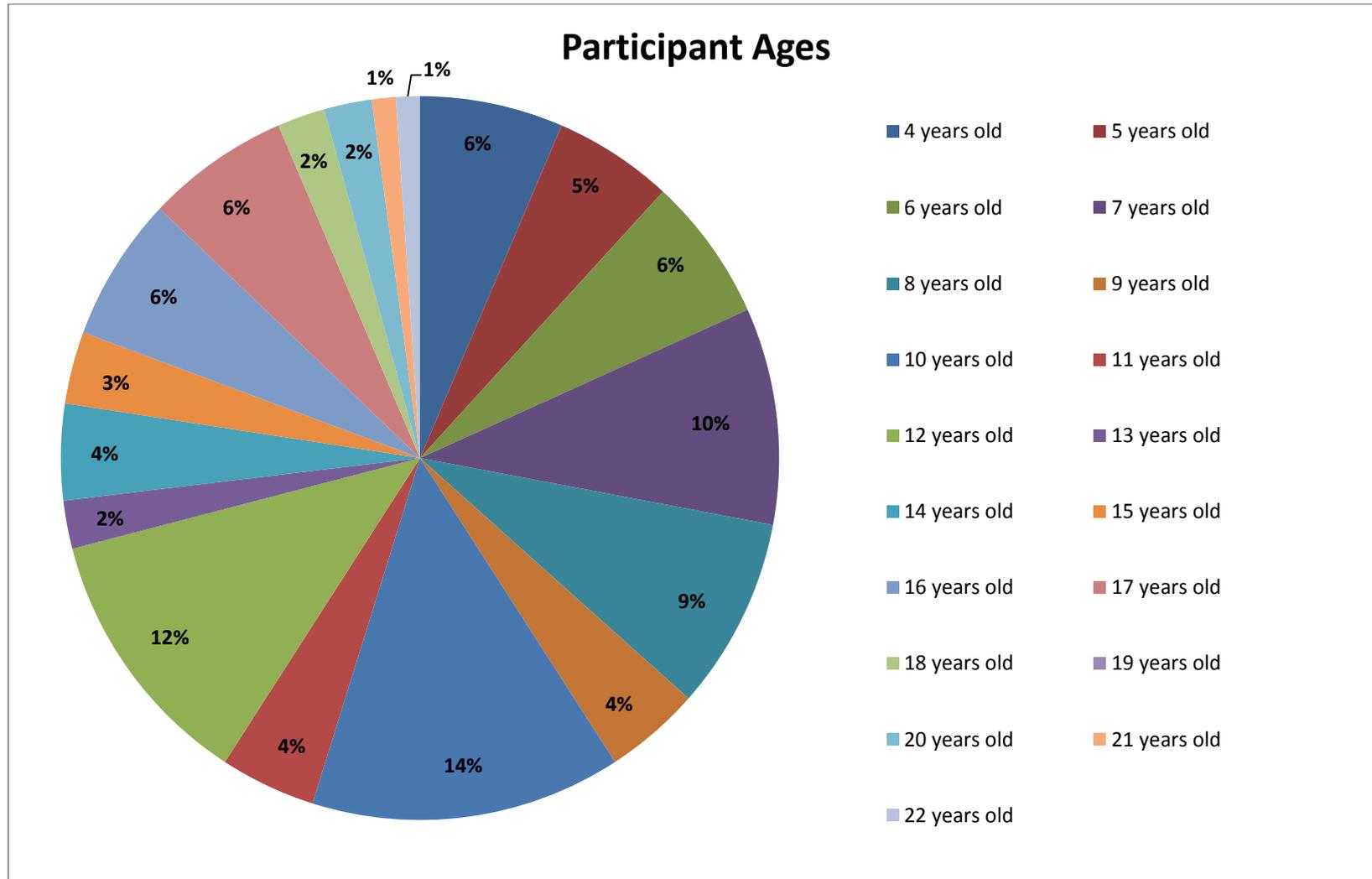
In order to get input about the current services and support, and find out what people might like and need; an electronic Survey Monkey questionnaire was created by the Planning Group.

This survey was then sent out through all short breaks providers, the Carers Centre and Knowsley Parent Carer's Voice to parents and carers.

The results and feedback received from the survey will help to inform the service review and shape and design future services within the Short Breaks Offer.

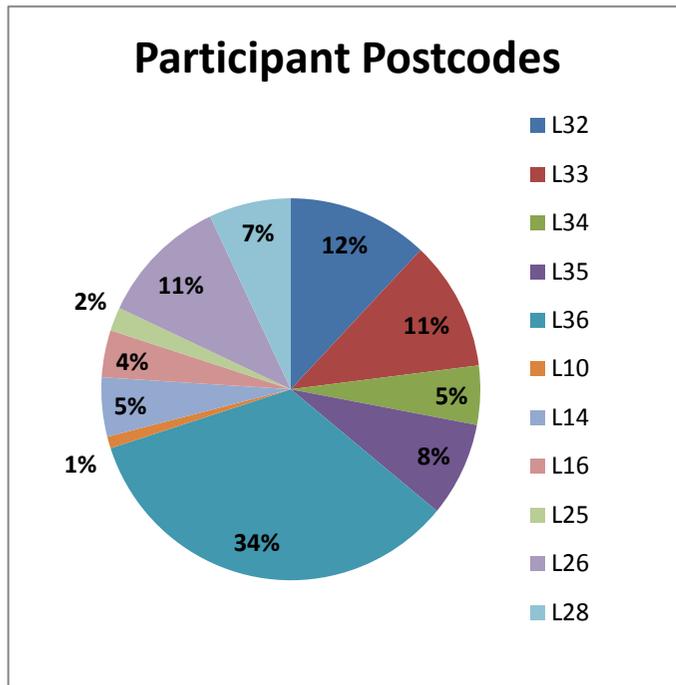
Q1. What is your child's age?

The charts below show the demographic breakdown of the respondents who participated in the consultation exercise.



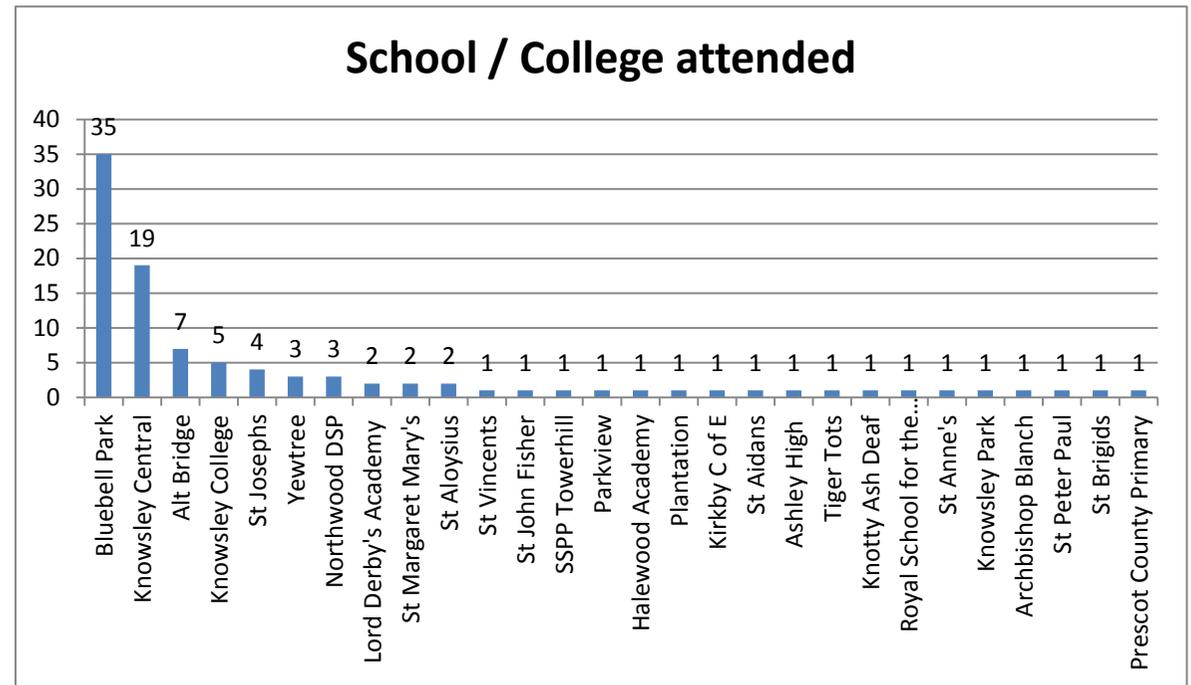
The bulk of responses (53%) were from the parents of children aged between 7-12 years old as shown above.

Q2. What is your postcode?



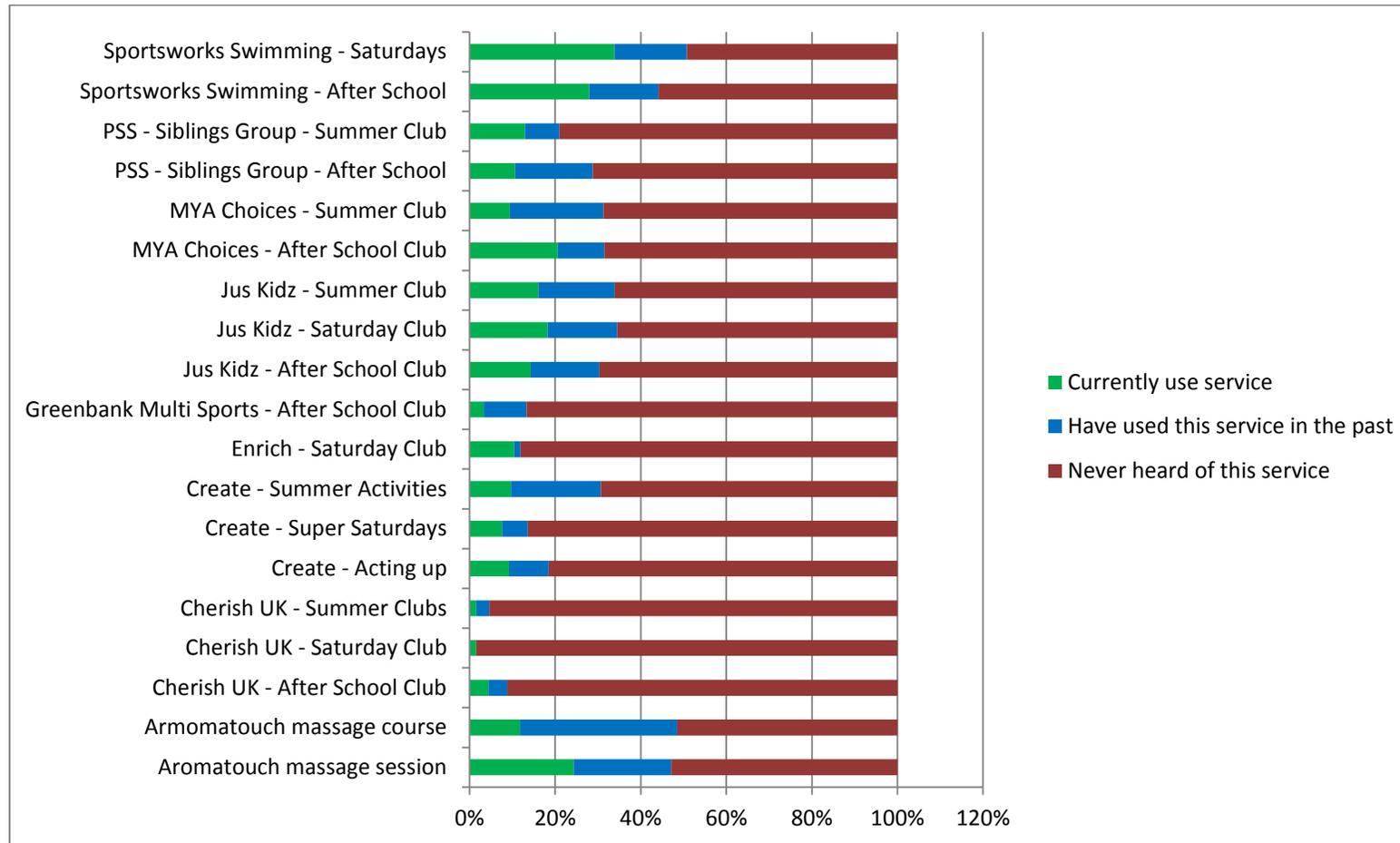
The majority of children live in L36 (Huyton postcode area), a large number of respondents also live in Kirkby (L32 & L33).

Q3. What School or College does your child currently attend?



Well over half of the responses show that children attend either Bluebell Park or Knowsley Central School.

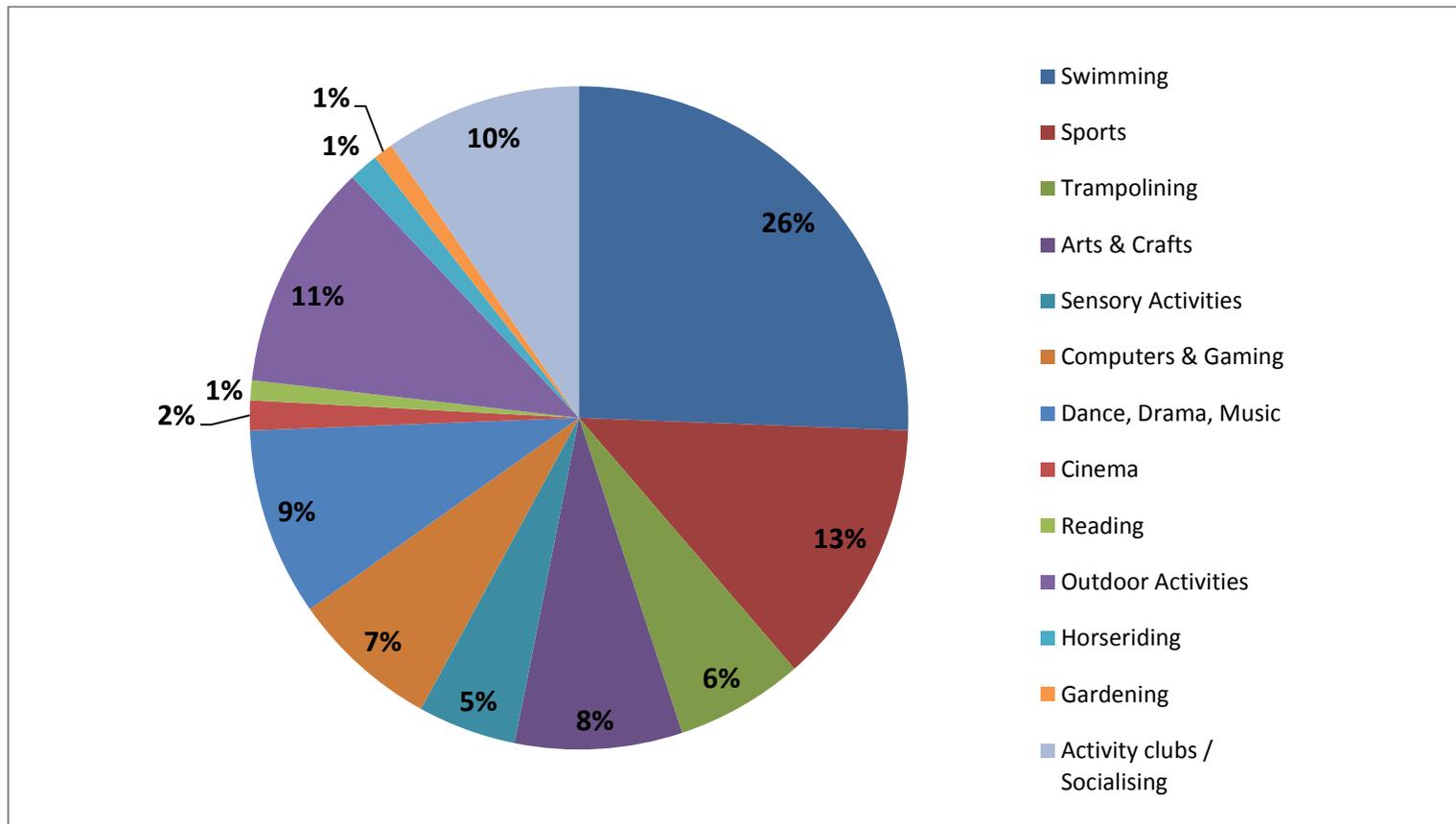
Q4. What short breaks provision does your child currently access or have you accessed in the past?



The results indicate that many of the respondents are unaware of what is available to them within the Short Breaks offer.

Swimming is well used both on a Saturday and also after school sessions. The Aromatouch massage sessions are also well attended and have also been accessed by many parents in the past. Some of the other groups or clubs may need to promote themselves more to ensure their services are known to families and that they can meet demand.

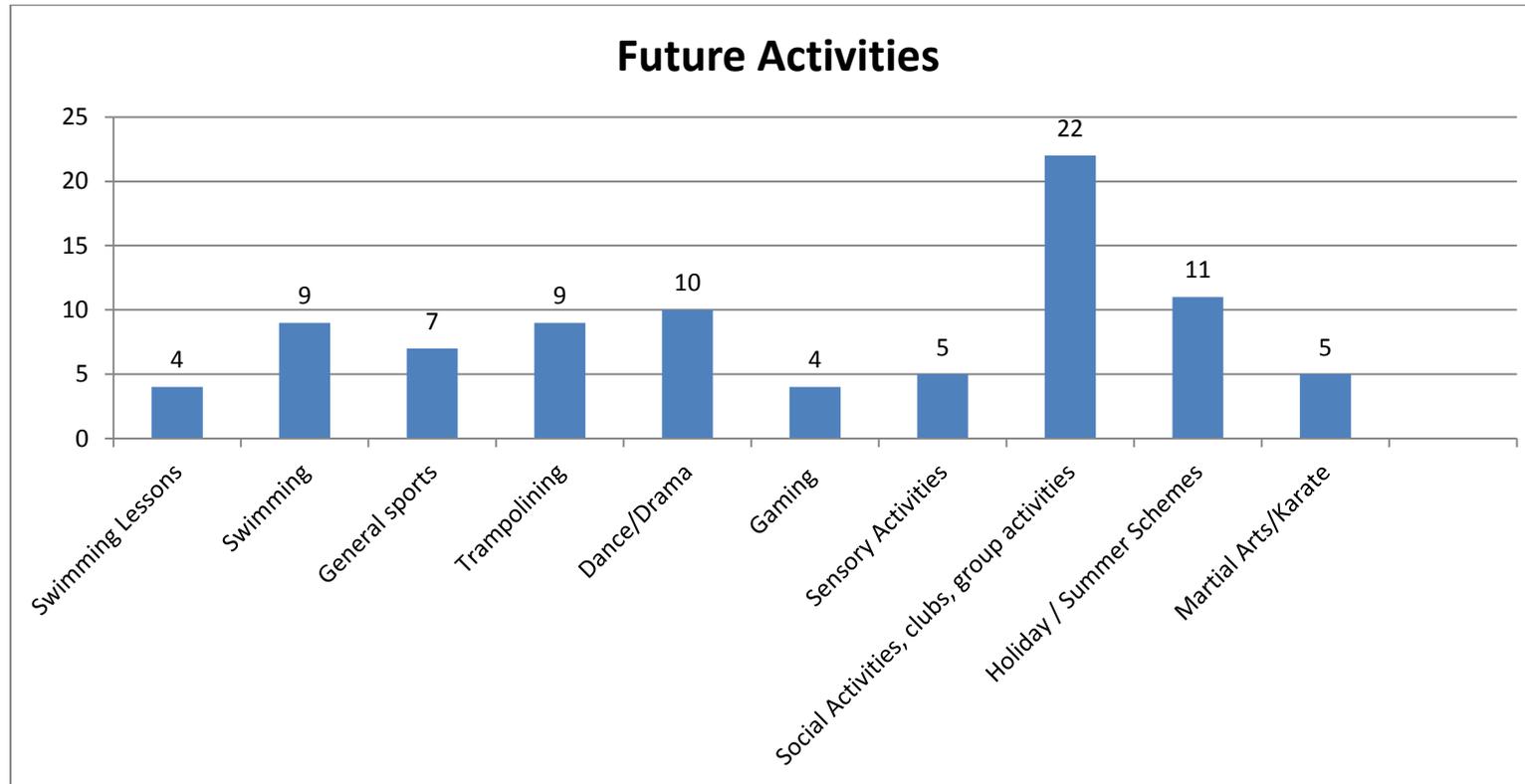
Q5. What activities does your child enjoy?



A quarter of those who responded said their child enjoys swimming with a further 13% enjoying other sports activities, including running and gymnastics.

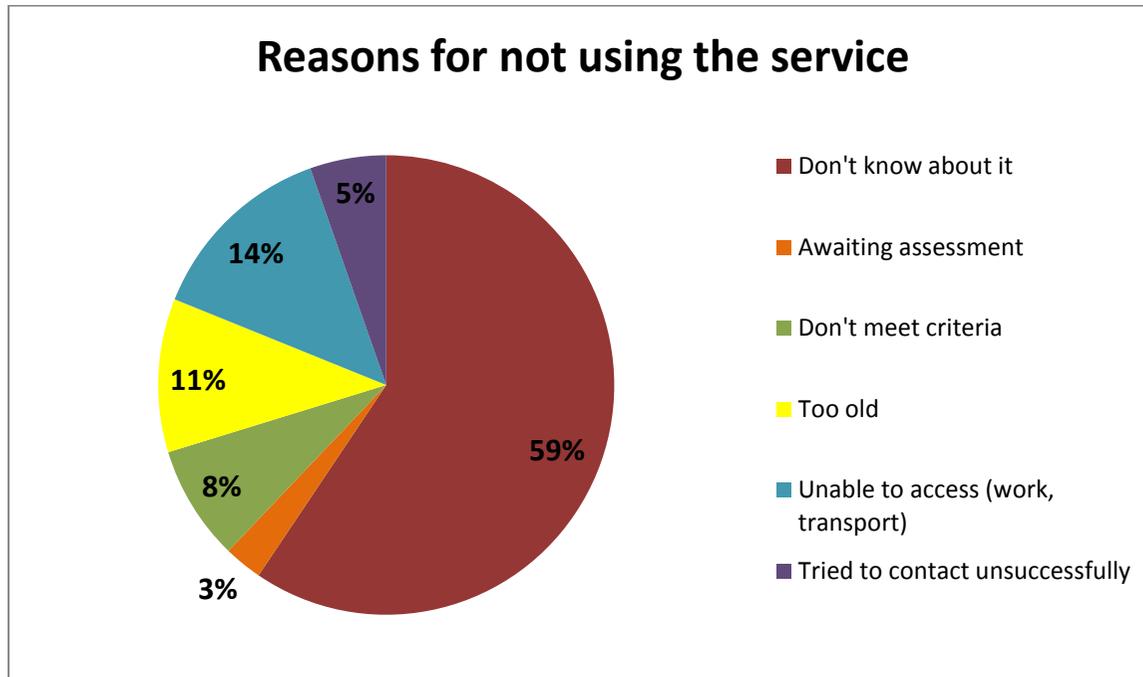
Parents mentioned that their children also enjoy or benefit from dance, drama and outdoor activities and groups or clubs where they are able to socialise with children of their own age with and without disabilities.

Q6. What activities would you like to be available for your child in the future?



Respondents selected a wide variety of activities that their children would be interested in having the opportunity to take part in. In particular, more social activities and age appropriate clubs where children and young people can get together would be welcomed.

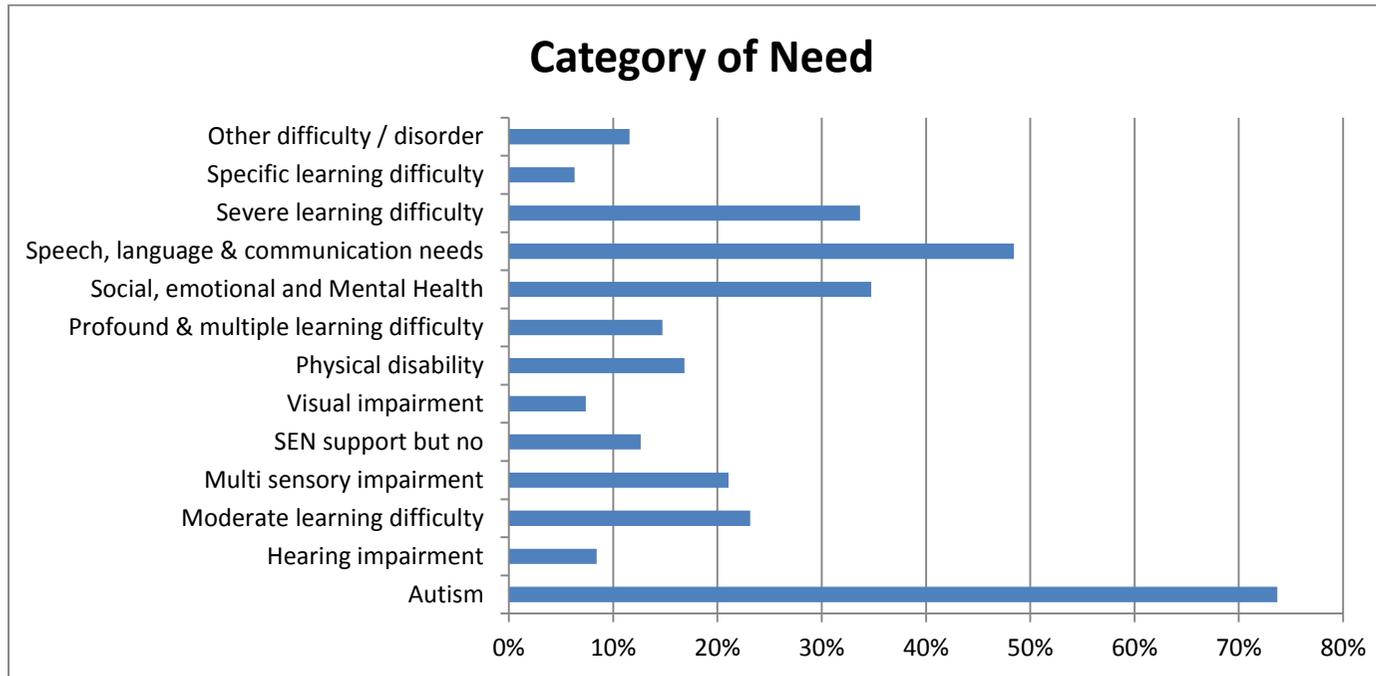
Q7. If you do not currently use the short breaks services in Knowsley, please tell us why



Over half of the responses from people who do not use the short breaks show that the promotion or publicity of the services and groups may need to be increased as many parents are still unaware of what is available.

Other considerations identified in the feedback were around accessibility including location and transport, as parents who work have told us that they often struggle to access activities, particularly where these are for a short duration of time.

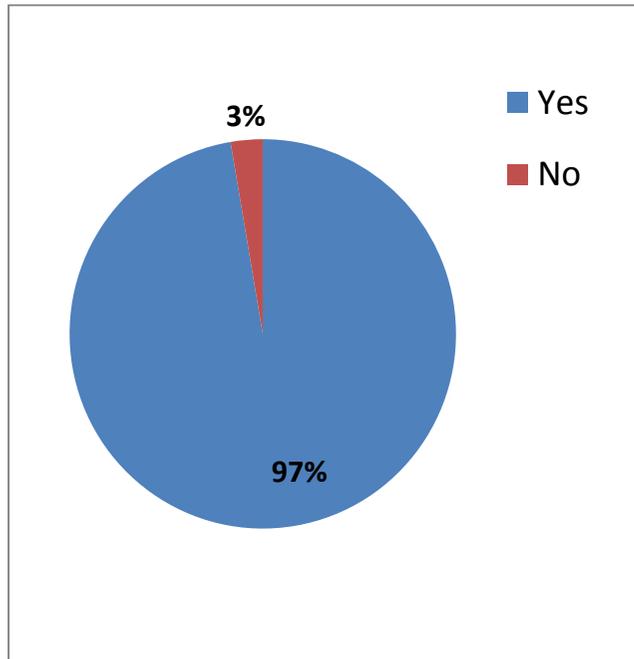
Q8. Please indicate which categories of need are applicable for your child / children



The results show that over 70% of children are affected by autism, with almost 50% having speech, language and communication needs. A number of parents also indicated that their children have severe learning difficulties and experience social, emotional and mental health issues.

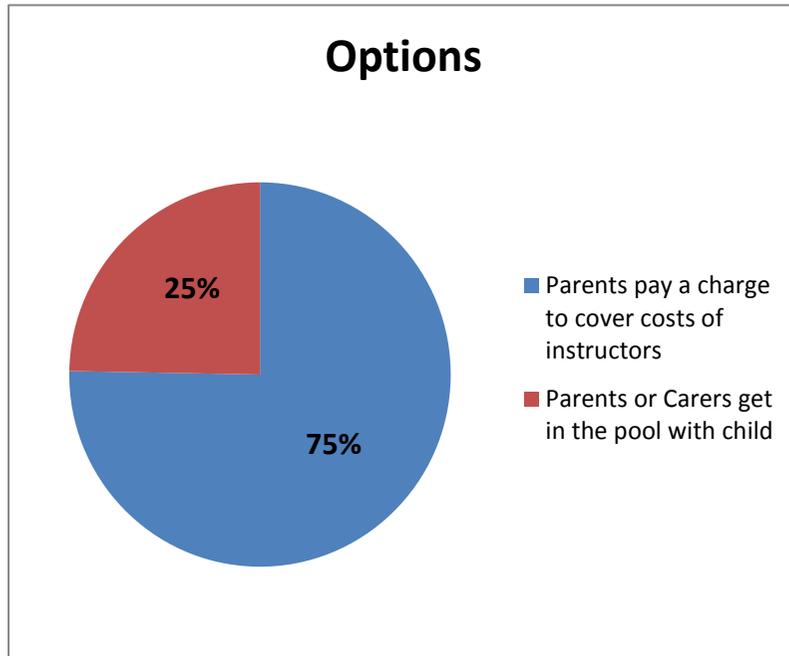
Respondents were able to select more than one option to this question where the categories applied to their child.

Q9. Do you feel that the provision your child attends is safe?



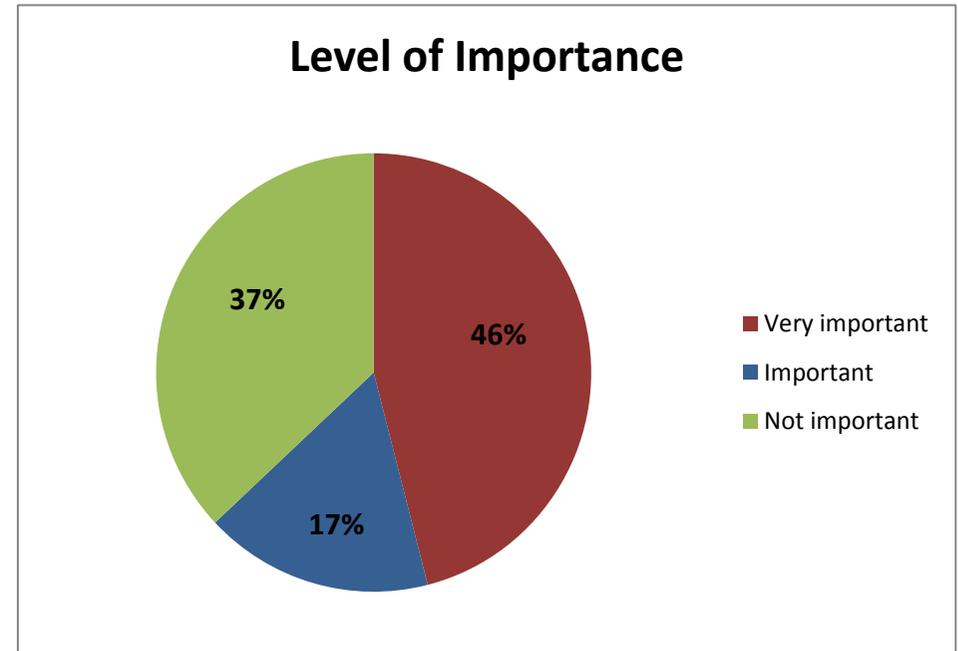
The majority of parents feel that the provision is safe for their children. Some of the additional comments mentioned about staff having more training to support their children, as many of their children are unaware of danger. Specialist training for staff was also mentioned, in particular around restraining

Q10. If we were to provide swimming lessons for children with Disabilities (not simply access to fun play sessions in the water), please tell us which of these options you would prefer.



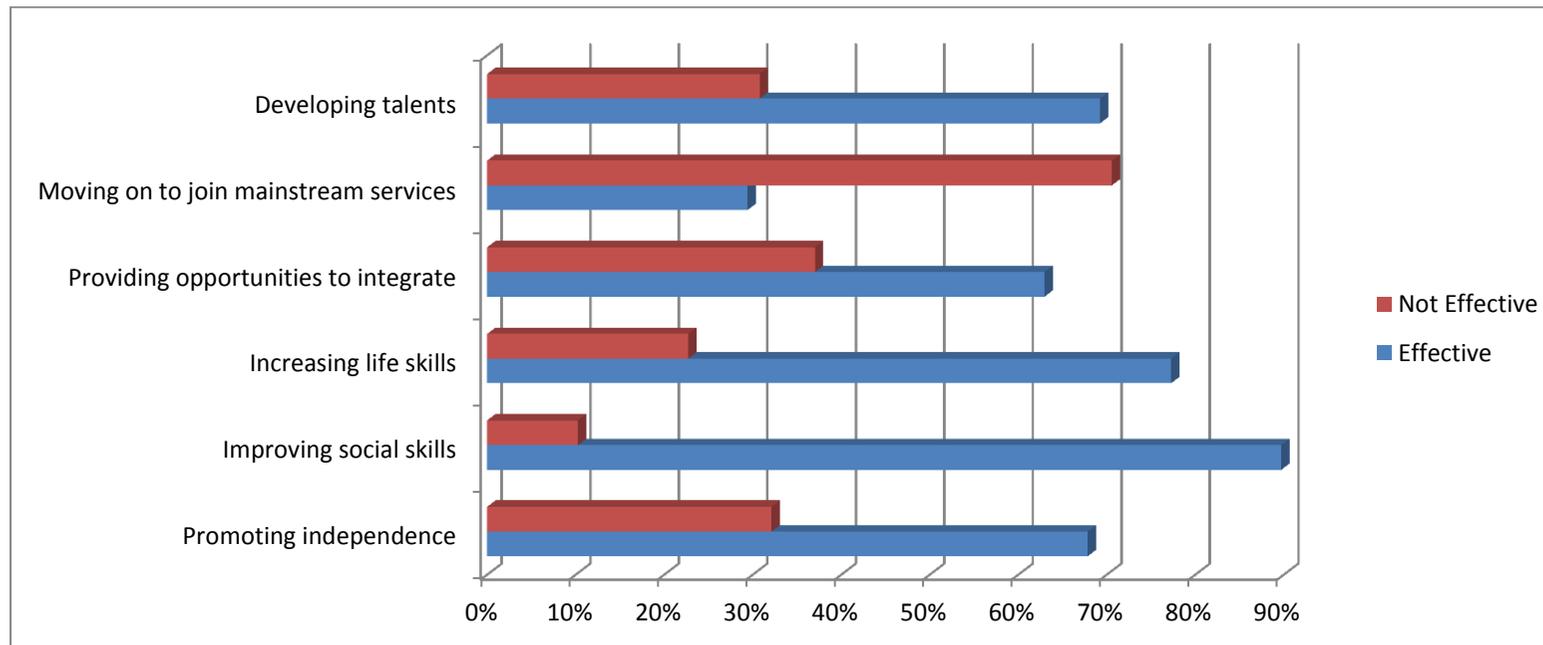
Three quarters of respondents would be happy to pay a charge (equivalent to what an average family would pay) to cover the costs of making sure there are enough instructors in the pool to support their children.

Q11. How important is it that non-disabled siblings are allowed to attend the swim / water play sessions?



Almost half of those who responded said this is very important to them for non-disabled brothers and/or sisters of their child to be allowed to engage in the swim sessions too.

Q12. How effective is the current provision you access for improving the following outcomes for your child?

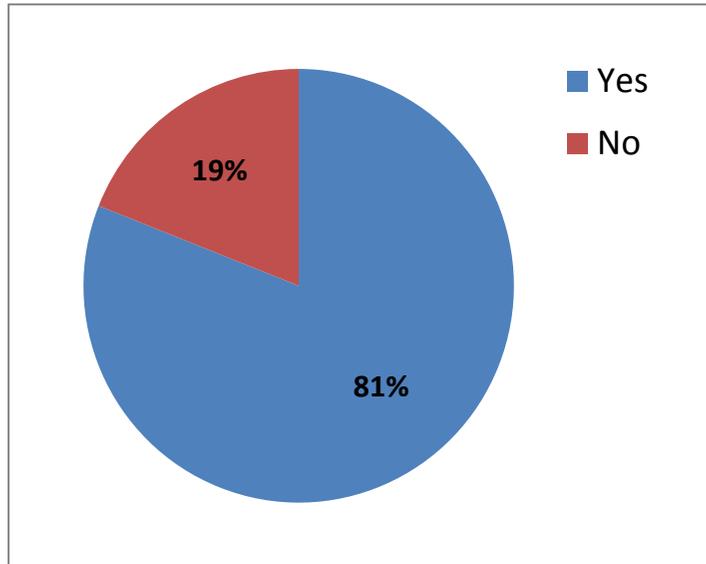


Overall, parents stated that they felt the current provision is very effective in improving their child’s social skills and also in helping to promote their independence and increase life skills.

The main area where parents do not feel current provision is effective is helping their children to move on to joining mainstream and other services with their non-disabled peers.

There was initially an issue with the set-up of this question which restricted answers, but once identified this was resolved successfully for future respondents. Additional comments were provided which helped to indicate parent’s responses in most cases.

Q13. Some short breaks activities currently need you to stay on the premises. Do you want these types of short breaks to continue?

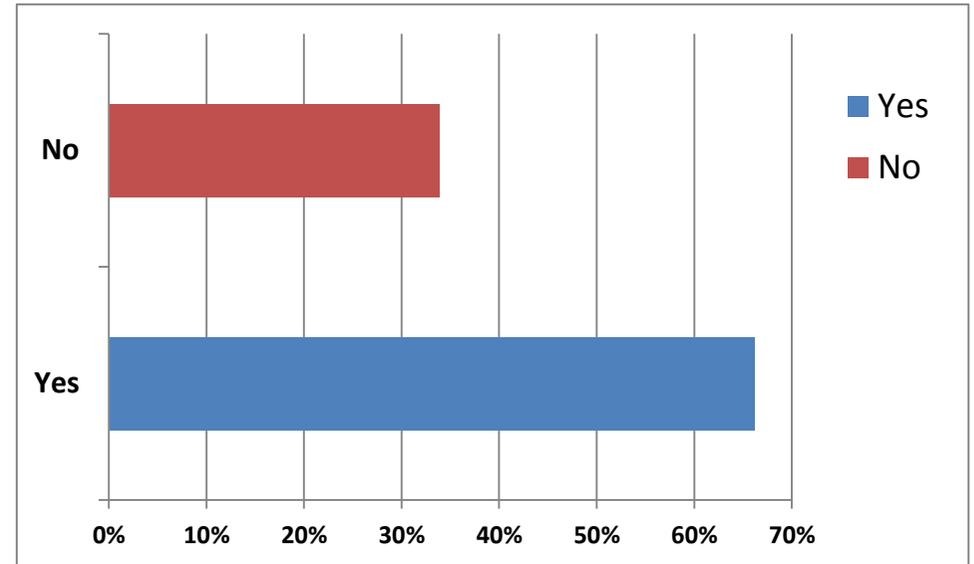


This is predominantly relevant for swimming and the majority of parents are happy for this to continue.

Additional comments suggested that some parents like to stay to watch their child as they also see this as an opportunity to speak to and catch up with other parents, receive and offer support and find out more about local groups or services.

Other parents do not feel it is long enough for them to class this as a short break, often due to travelling time.

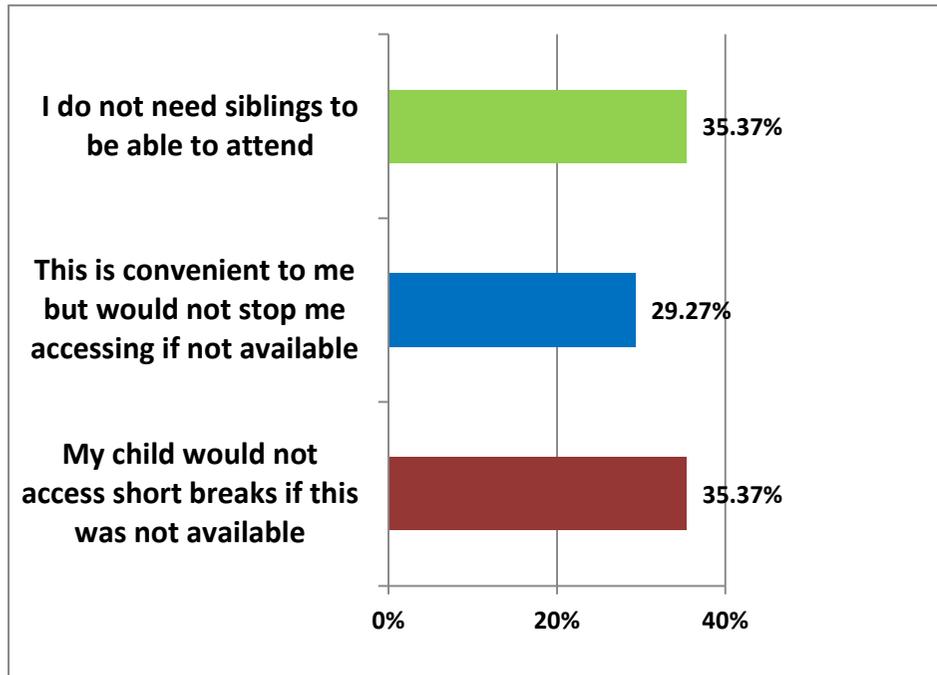
Q14. For those activities where you are free to leave your child, do you feel you have enough time to benefit from the short break?



A large proportion of parents feel they do have time to benefit, whilst others mentioned that travelling time restricts them being able to do much whilst their child is taking part in an activity.

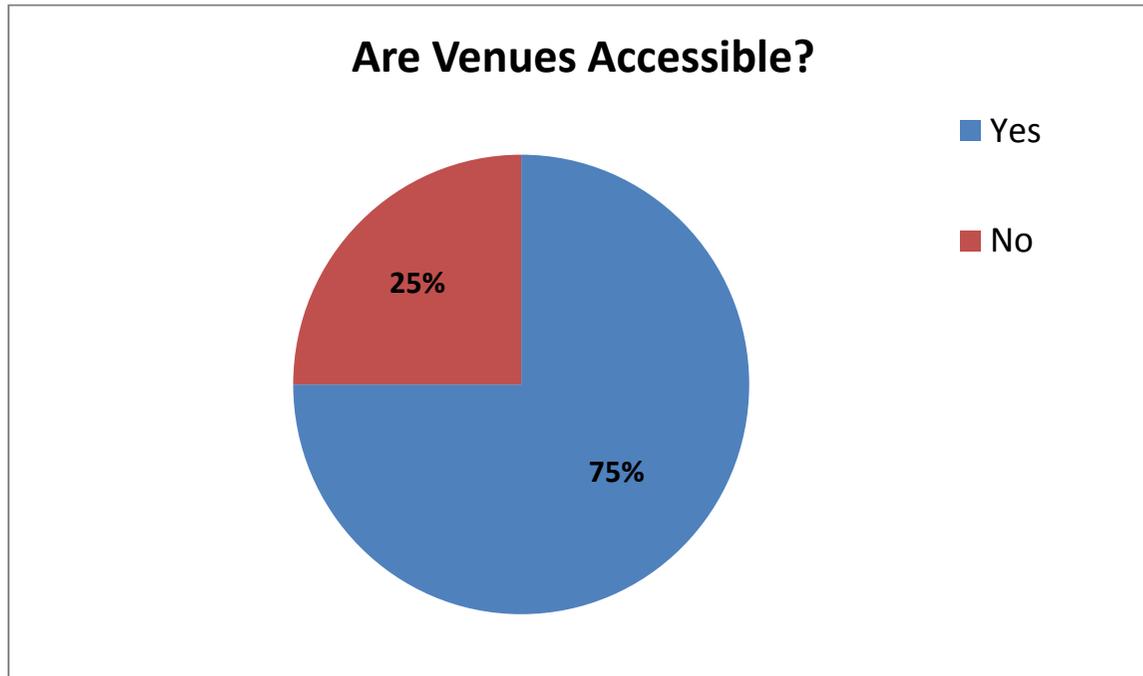
Some parents expressed that they are grateful for any time which allows them any break.

Q15. Some of the short breaks allow for siblings to attend. How important is it to you to allow siblings to also attend short break activities?



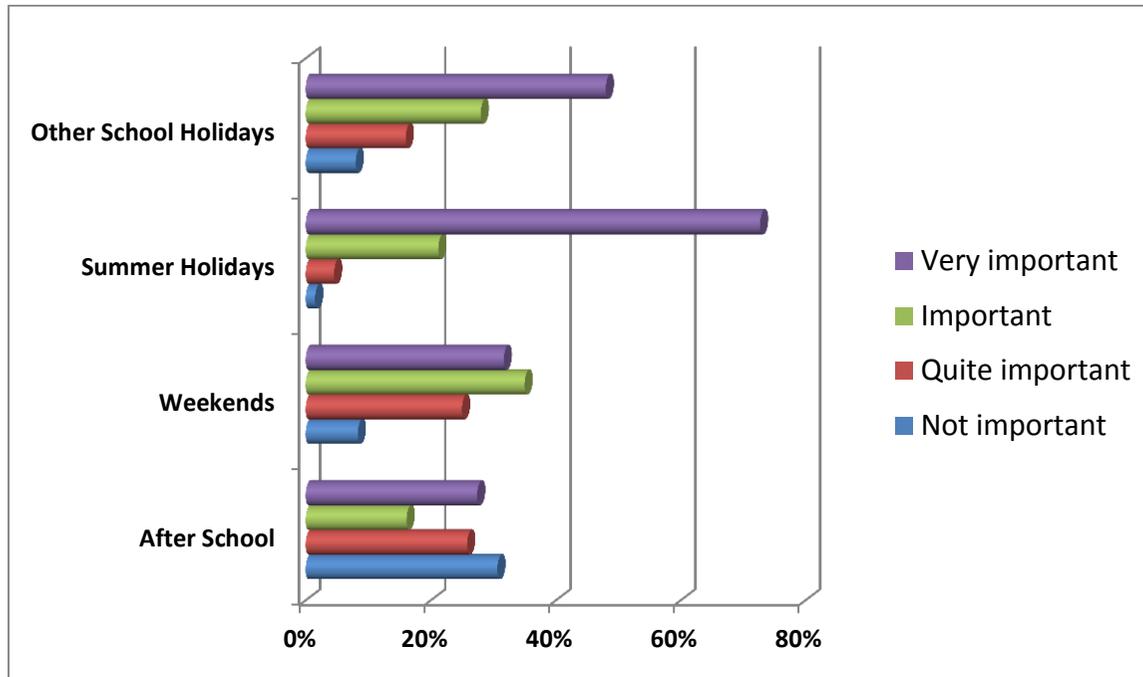
Responses to this question were fairly equally divided. Additional comments and feedback from parents indicated that often siblings enjoy and benefit from spending time doing activities together. This also allows parents to have a complete break, whilst all of their children are building bonds and socialising positively together with other children with and without disabilities.

Q16. Are the venues currently available through short breaks accessible and easy to get to?



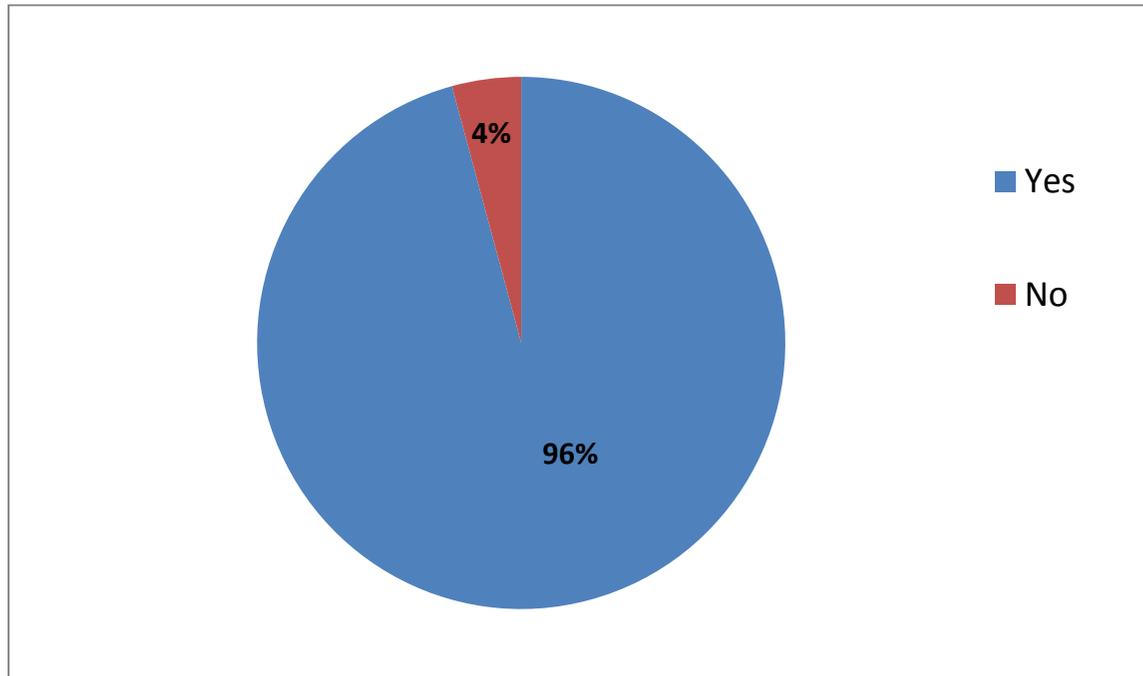
Three quarters of parents who responded feel that venues are accessible and easy to get to. Some parents did suggest that a number of venues are only accessible by car and as some parents don't drive, this can be an issue, especially in relation to having sufficient time to actually have a short break once transport to and from has been taken into consideration.

Q17. When are short breaks most needed / convenient for you?



The results show that summer holidays are the time when most parents feel short breaks are most important. This is because many children prefer a set routine and these are often the times when parents say they struggle the most to occupy their children. Further comments did acknowledge that parents do need short breaks at all of these times. After school seemed to be the time when those who responded felt there was less pressure on them and they would least need short breaks, weekends overall were still highlighted as an important time for parents to have access to short breaks.

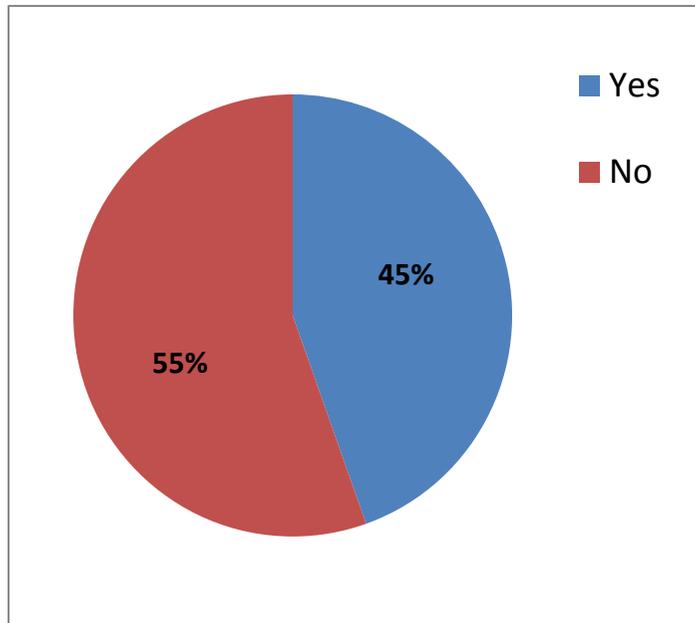
Q18. Do you think that we should continue to award small grants to local groups as part of the short breaks offer?



The majority of parents would like grant funding to local groups to continue. Parents feel strongly that this is important to ensure the future sustainability of small groups and also essential to enable them to support children and families.

Additional comments from parents who were not aware of the short breaks offer prior to this questionnaire would like to see that these groups are promoted and publicised more and that these groups are fully accessible to all.

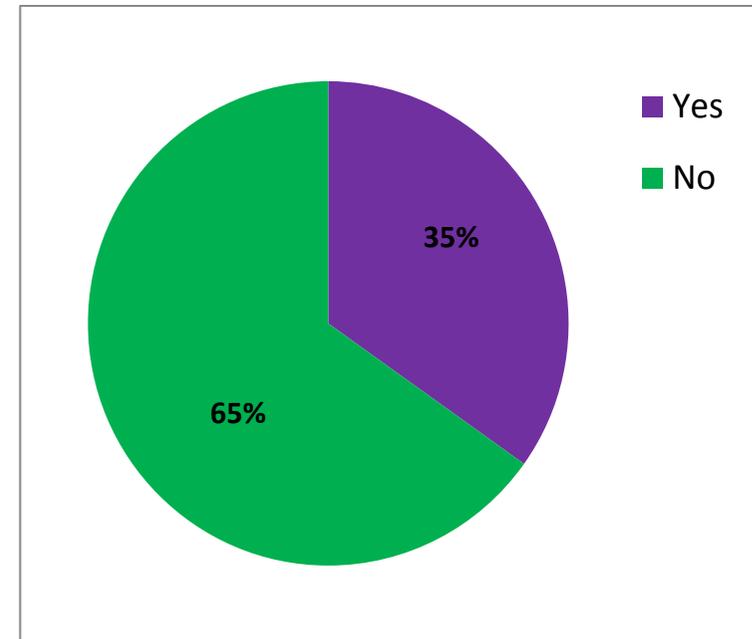
Q19. Are you aware of any of the local groups that will provide support and/or a way for you to give feedback on disability services?



Just over half of those who responded were not aware of local groups that can support them or other ways for them to put their views or feedback on disability services forward.

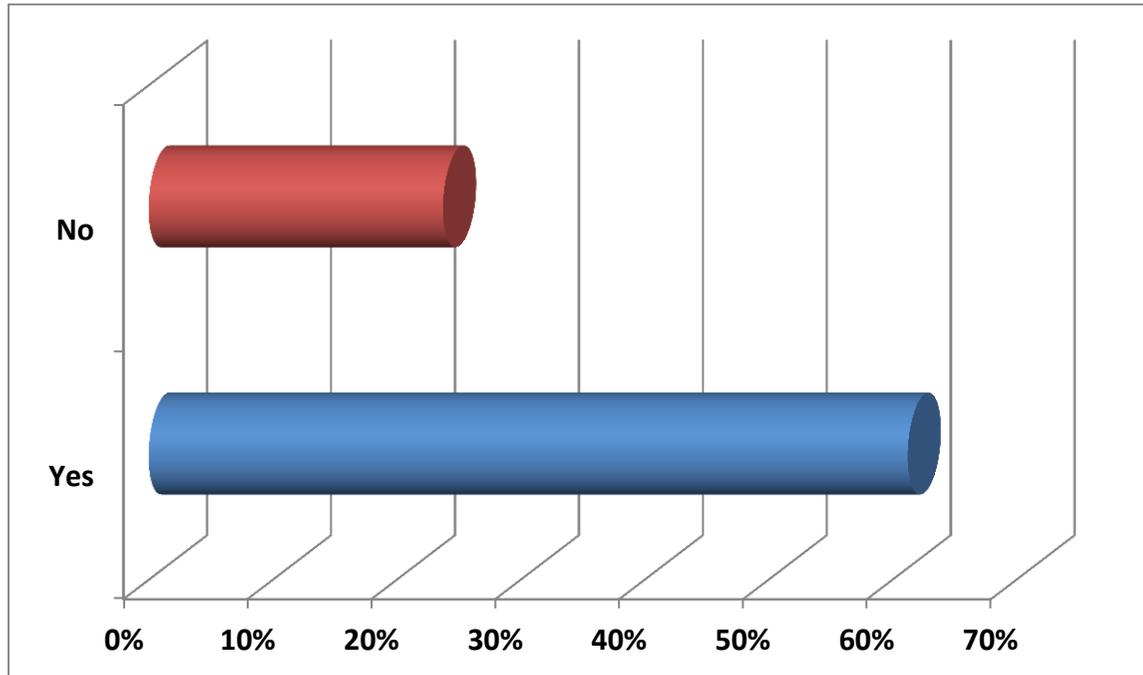
More promotion of these groups and services is needed in future to ensure people know about the support available to them and how they can raise any issues or offer feedback.

Q20. Is there anything these groups could do to improve their support to you or in helping you to share your views?



One third of those who responded said that groups could do more to improve support. Suggestions included providing more information and publicising what is available more widely.

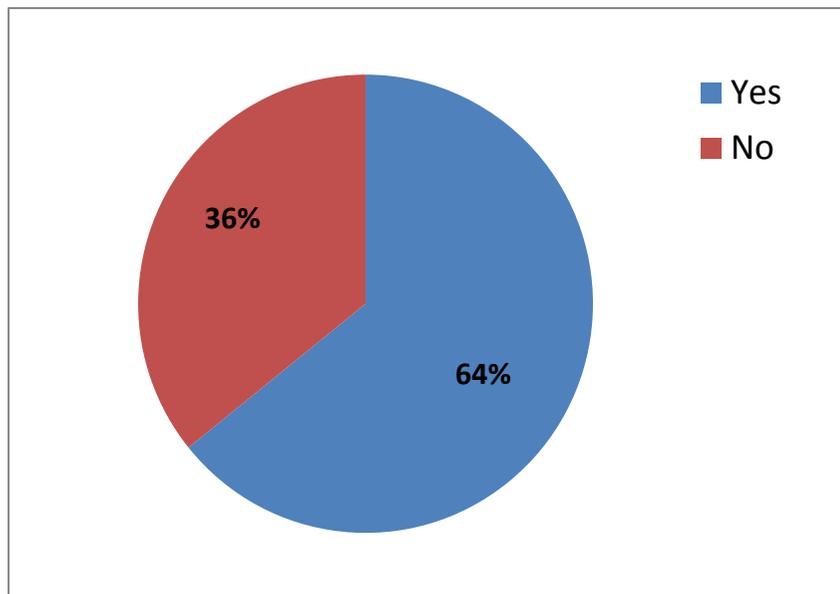
Q21. Are you given enough chance to provide feedback on the service/s you access or on the short breaks service in general?



Well over half of those who responded feel that they have enough opportunity to feedback on services.

Other comments said it would be good to have more information about what is available through the short breaks programme. Several people also mentioned that they had not been asked to provide any feedback before. It was suggested that further promotion of the short breaks team and offer is needed through various mechanisms, both online and offline.

Q22. Would you like to be supported to access more universal Activities (Leisure Centres, Youth Clubs, Scouts, Brownies etc.)?

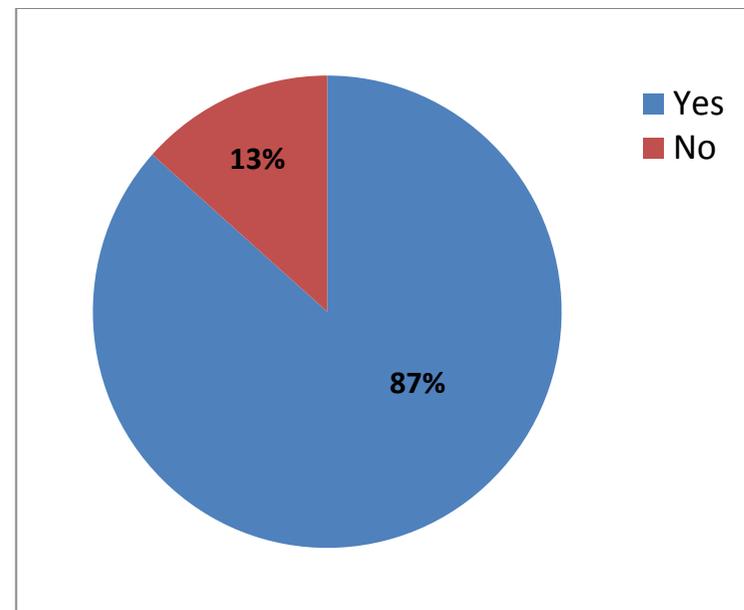


Many of the responses showed that parents would like the opportunity for their children to access more Universal services.

They commented that this would help with integrating their children and developing their social skills.

It was also mentioned that there is not enough understanding or patience in mainstream services to support their children.

Q23. Would you be prepared to pay for more of the clubs and activities similar to the cost of those activities that families without disabled children might choose to access?



The majority of people would be prepared and could consider paying for clubs and activities, especially if it means that the activities can continue.

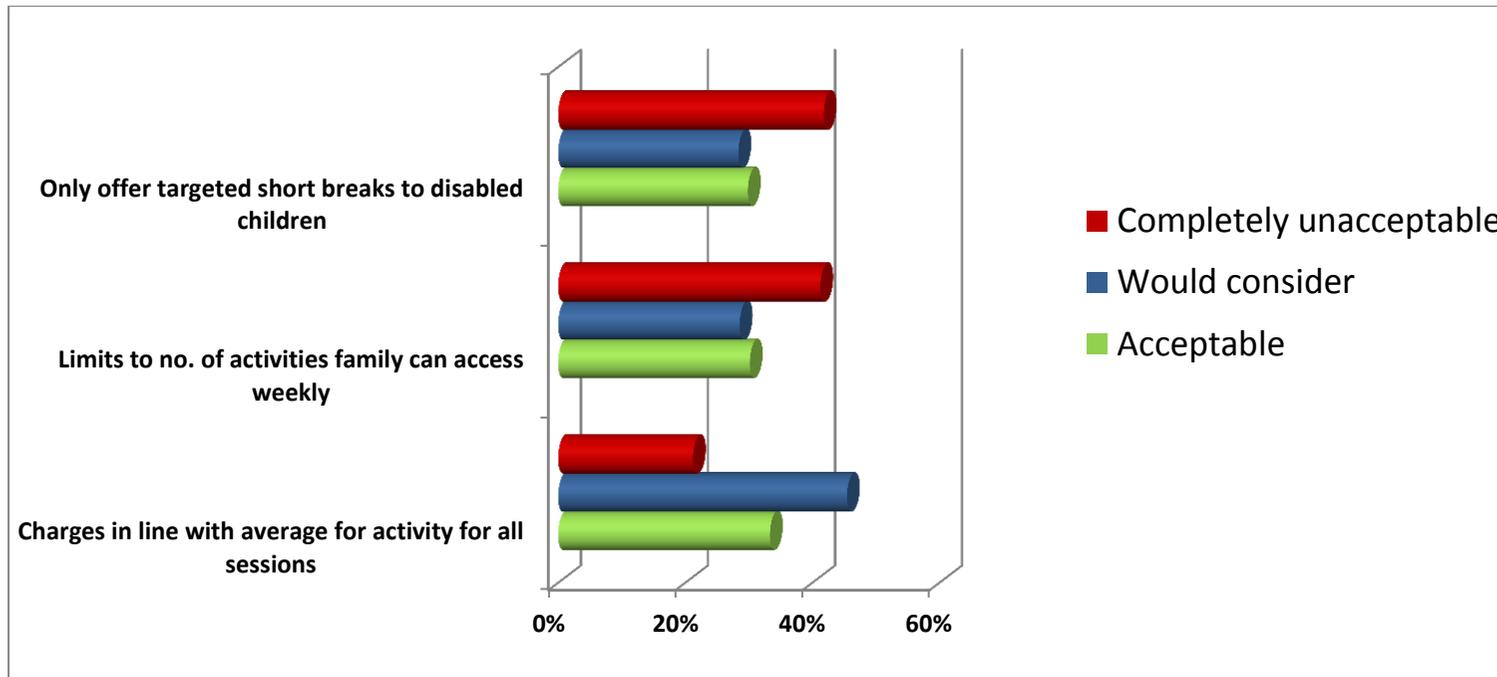
Q24. In your view, is it more important that the groups are only for disabled children or that the groups allow you/your child to get involved with mainstream groups and clubs for children?

From the comments received to this question, there was quite a mixed response. Many people think it is important for their children to mix with non-disabled children to enhance their social skills and personal development, but to also have clubs or sessions exclusively for children with disabilities to take part in activities but receive the extra support they need.

Comments also suggested that it would depend on the group or activity really as to whether this is possible to achieve as their children can struggle to communicate with non-disabled children.

Some parents said that they find it less stressful for their children if they are involved with groups or sessions solely for children with disabilities as they have difficulty conforming and there is not always the specialist support, understanding or patience in mainstream groups to support them.

Q25. We have a limited budget available to us for short breaks. This budget may be reduced further in the future. How acceptable would each of the following options be to you in order for us to maintain short breaks provision in future?



Responses to this question were fairly evenly split and show that generally parents are more likely to find it more acceptable or would be willing to consider paying charges which are in line with the average charge for activities, for all short break sessions.

Q26. Is there anything else you would like to say related to short breaks that you feel we need to know.

Parents said they would like more information about short breaks and what is available to them; many families have previously not accessed short breaks at all as they were unaware of them. Maybe a newsletter to ensure that information is communicated to families could be an option.

They want to be kept informed and know that activities are available to cater for their child's disability and needs. Parents want to be reassured that the activities are suitable and age appropriate for their child and that the right support, training and staffing is in place to facilitate this.

Parents who have accessed short breaks referred to them as being so important to their family, a life saver and they would not know what to do without them. The break gives parents the opportunity to fulfil their caring role better and enables them to relax and to have valuable time to themselves and also to spend time with their other non-disabled children.

The groups and activities are essential for these children to help them to grow in confidence and develop personally and socially. It is important for families that these groups continue to be supported to provide these activities.