

Consultation Findings Report

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

**Prepared for: Buckinghamshire County
Council**

Prepared by: BMG Research

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Prepared for: Buckinghamshire County Council

Prepared by: BMG Research

Date: January 2019



Produced by **BMG Research**

© **BMG Research Ltd, 2019**

www.bmgresearch.co.uk

Project: 1614

Registered in England No. 2841970

Registered office:

BMG Research
Beech House
Greenfield Crescent
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 3BE
UK

Tel: +44 (0) 121 3336006

UK VAT Registration No. 580 6606 32

Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Member No. B4626

Market Research Society Company Partner

The provision of Market Research Services in accordance with ISO 20252:2012

The provision of Market Research Services in accordance with ISO 9001:2015

The International Standard for Information Security Management ISO 27001:2013

Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) Member Company

Registered under the Data Protection Act - Registration No. Z5081943

A Fair Data organisation

Cyber Essentials certification

The BMG Research logo is a trade mark of BMG Research Ltd.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
About this consultation	1
Views on the Council’s draft Early Help Strategy	1
Views on the service design options	1
Views on proposed centre closures and alternative building use.....	2
Key themes	2
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Background	3
1.2 About the consultation	3
1.3 Methodology	4
1.4 Public meetings and drop-in sessions	5
1.5 Additional information and responses	5
1.6 Approach to analysis and reporting	5
1.7 Promotion of the questionnaire.....	6
2 Council’s aims and priorities	7
2.1 Early Help Strategy.....	7
2.2 Views on Early Help Strategy	8
3 Views on the Council’s proposed options	13
3.1 Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services)	13
3.2 Option B: Network of family centres – the Council’s Preferred Option	17
3.3 Option C: Area-based family outreach model.....	24
3.4 Preferred options	29
3.5 Alternative suggestions	33
3.6 Future use of buildings	39
4 Preferences for location	41
4.1 Aylesbury Vale district	41
4.2 Wycombe district	42
4.3 Chiltern & South Bucks district	43
4.4 Priorities by respondent group and characteristics.....	43
5 Public meetings and drop-ins	44
5.1 Key themes from discussions.....	44

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

5.2	Specific queries and gaps in the information provided	45
5.3	Comments regarding alternatives.....	45
6	Additional views and comments	47
6.1	Support for children’s centres.....	47
6.2	Considerations for which centres to retain	48
6.3	Preferences for options	49
6.4	Other comments	49
	Appendix 1: Profile of respondents	50
	Appendix 2: Current use of services	60
	Appendix 3: List of participating stakeholder organisations	66
	Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations	67
	Appendix 5: Residents’ questionnaire.....	68

Executive Summary

The following executive summary provides an overview of the key findings from research conducted by BMG Research as part of Buckinghamshire County Council's public consultation exercise on its early help services.

This includes findings from engagements with 848 residents and stakeholder organisations in Buckinghamshire, including: a survey (completed by 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations) using a combination of online and paper questionnaires; public meetings (with 31 attendees) and drop-in sessions (with 53 attendees); and additional written responses submitted by eight residents and four stakeholder organisations.

About this consultation

Early help is about supporting families to do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. The County Council's early help services in the scope of this consultation include:

- **Universal services:** Buckinghamshire Family Information Service; children's centres.
- **Targeted services (children and families in need):** Connexions; Early Help Panels; Families First; Family Resilience; Barnardo's support for parents; Youth Services.

Following pre-consultation activities, three viable options were developed by the Council to be consulted on with residents and partners:

- Option A – Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services
- Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council's preferred option)
- Option C – Family outreach only

Views on the Council's draft Early Help Strategy

The Council provided an overview of its aims and priorities for early help as well as links to supporting documentation for residents and partners to consider. Around two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicated they agree with the Council's aims and priorities for its proposed Early Help Service, including a quarter (26%) who strongly agree. Only one-sixth (15%) disagree, while a similar proportion (15%) neither agree nor disagree.

Those in agreement with the Council's aims and priorities for early help are more likely to be stakeholders (94%), whilst parents and carers are the least likely to agree (60%).

Views on the service design options

Following provision of an overview of the three service design options and the option to review additional supporting information, respondents were first asked about their views on each option in isolation, then about their preferences from amongst these three viable options. Respondents were subsequently given the opportunity to suggest alternative options.

The following table summarises the findings from these questions, showing that over one-half of respondents agree with the Council's preferred Option B. This was both the option respondents are most likely to agree with in general (52%), and the preferred option out of the three viable choices (58%). It should be noted that several residents expressed concern about choosing between the three options, and felt the Council should provide further alternatives, including no change, something else, or none of the above.

	% agreeing with this option to deliver early help	% selecting this as their preferred 'viable' option
Option A– Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services	21%	26%
Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council's preferred option)	52%	58%
Option C – Family outreach only	9%	6%

Whilst only one-fifth of respondents (21%) agree with Option A, over one-quarter (26%) selected it as their preferred option. Notably, whilst Option B was the preferred option amongst all respondent groups, residents and particularly parent/carers are significantly more likely than others to prefer Option A (27% and 31% respectively). Respondents are also significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they are children’s centre users (33%), as such this group are less likely to be supportive of Option B overall (53%).

Option C was unpopular and considered to be unfeasible by the majority of respondents, with only 6% preferring this; however, Family Resilience Service users and non-users of early help services are more likely to prefer this (14% and 11% respectively).

Views on proposed centre closures and alternative building use

Whilst views are split given the number of children’s centres under consideration, the centres seen as the top priority for retention in the three districts are: in Aylesbury Vale, the Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children’s Centre (10%); in Wycombe, Mapledean Children’s Centre (6%); and in Chiltern/South Bucks, the Ivers Children’s Centre (5%).

Overall participants in this consultation are not happy at the idea of any children’s centres being closed at all, and strongly preferred the Council to consider finding ways to maintain current levels of service, or improved levels of service.

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agree with the Council’s aim that children’s centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, including 33% who strongly agree with this aim. Several respondents want the Council and its partners to work closely with community groups to ensure sufficient information and support is made available to those wanting to access buildings and develop activities and services within these.

Key themes

Whilst this consultation aims to understand preferences for early help services as a whole; significant emphasis was placed by participants on children’s centres, as these are the services most respondents were aware of, 67% of them having used these.

Both residents and stakeholders who participated in this consultation (including 47% of those responding to open response questions and those who attended public events), were keen to emphasise the value and impact of early help. Nearly one-third (30%) of survey respondents stated a preference for services to be improved, and one-quarter (25%) emphasised the importance of access to children’s centres both in terms of the services and professional staff, but also the local buildings where these could be found.

Nearly one-third (30%) of respondents explicitly stated in open responses that they did not want to see cuts to the early help services and 23% stated they wanted the Council to further expand services. As such there was also a view that the Council could do more to generate the funding needed through: exploring further payment models for services (such as renting out children’s centre buildings, or asking for donations or fees for certain sessions); identifying efficiencies in the Council’s services, staffing levels, and pay; further lobbying to central government; further applications for grants and partnership opportunities with charities; and delaying the decision for early help until the establishment of the Unitary Council in 2020.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report has been produced by BMG Research on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council to summarise the feedback gathered in its public consultation exercise on the Council's early help services.

Early help is about supporting families to do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. Early help encompasses a range of services and functions, some of which the Council is responsible for and looking to improve. Services are offered according to the needs parents and children are experiencing, with some being provided on a universal basis, and others being provided on a targeted basis. Need is assessed by support workers once parents or children access services and are used to determine how best to provide appropriate support. The threshold levels of need for different services range from 1 – Universal Services to 4 - Statutory Intervention, Acute/Child Protection. The following bullet points summarise the early help areas; however, those in italics were not in the scope of the consultation:

- **Universal services:** Buckinghamshire Family Information Service; children's centres; *Health Visitors; School Nurses; GPs; and Schools.*
- **Targeted services (children and families in need):** Connexions; Early Help Panels; Families First; Family Resilience; Support for parents (through Barnardo's); Youth Services; *Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service; Health Visitors; School Nurses; Family Nurse Partnership; Barnardo's 'RU Safe'; Social Care; and Police.*

The Council believes that early help services are currently not working as they should be, and that too many children are receiving support too late. Additionally, the Council is facing financial pressures and as a result has identified a savings target of £3.1 million from within early help services overall.

1.2 About the consultation

The County Council undertook a range of pre-consultation research as part of the review of early help services. The Council has published an options appraisal document which includes an overview of the different evidence considered as part of the decision to go out to public consultation, as well as a research report delivered in-house and a qualitative research report by BMG Research (these papers are available to view at www.bucks.cc.gov.uk/earlyhelp).

The qualitative research included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of proposals.

Pre-consultation research was carried out as part of the review of early help services. Quantitative research conducted by the Council looked at needs, population density and changing demand to identify where support should be targeted. Qualitative research was conducted by BMG Research which included in-depth interviews with residents and partners, as well as a workshop with both groups to ensure their views were included in the design of proposals.

This information was used to inform the development of proposed aims against which the Council would refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service, specifically:

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

The Council ruled out an option of 'no change' as this is not a financially sustainable way to keep providing early help services to meet the needs of children and families effectively.

Therefore, three viable options were developed by the Council to be consulted on:

- Option A – Current way of providing services but with a 30-35% reduction in all services
- Option B – Network of 14 family centres (Council's preferred option)
- Option C – Family outreach only

This consultation allowed the Council to engage with residents and partners to understand their views on the Council's aims for its early help service and the three options developed, as well as any alternatives.

1.3 Methodology

BMG was commissioned by the Council to deliver a questionnaire through which resident and partner views would primarily be captured, as well as attending public consultation meetings and drop-in sessions to ensure the questions and views raised in these were captured. In total there were 848 engagements from residents and stakeholder organisations in Buckinghamshire including: via the survey (completed by 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations) using a combination of online and paper questionnaires; public meetings (31 attendees) and drop-in sessions (53 attendees); and additional written responses submitted by eight residents and four stakeholder organisations.

1.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was available online and on paper to allow all residents in Buckinghamshire to participate. The questionnaire was designed by BMG in partnership with the Council and consisted of a combination of non-mandatory quantitative questions with the inclusion of four open response questions.

The online survey was made available to all via an open link and publicised through the Council's website, social media, children's centres, youth services, and libraries. In addition, over 4000 emails were sent out to residents who had engaged with early help services (including children's centres) as well as representatives of partner organisations. Additionally, paper copies of the questionnaire were sent to every children's centre and every library within Buckinghamshire, alongside information about the consultation and freepost envelopes so that these could be returned.

Children's centres, libraries and the general public were provided with details to contact BMG Research or the Council directly if they required any support completing the questionnaire, including translation services, to request additional paper copies, or to confirm parental consent arrangements if a respondent was under 16.

In total, 752 responses to the questionnaire were received, including 717 residents and 35 representatives of stakeholder organisations. Of these responses, 709 were received online and 43 via post. Further information about the demographics of respondents and their use of early

help services can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report. Information about participating stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3.

1.4 Public meetings and drop-in sessions

Buckinghamshire County Council held three public meetings for this consultation; this included a meeting during the day with a crèche provided. These meetings were convened on:

- Thursday 8 November 2018, 7pm – 8:30pm, Aylesbury (attended by 4 people)
- Monday 12 November 2018, 7pm – 8:30pm, High Wycombe (attended by 17 people)
- Monday 19 November 2018, 1pm – 2:30pm, Amersham (attended by 10 people)

The public meetings were attended by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, council officers and representatives from BMG Research. Each meeting included a presentation delivered by the Head of Early Help, followed by questions from members of the public. The presentation provided a summary of:

- the purpose of the consultation;
- what early help is and which services (universal and targeted) are within scope;
- pre-consultation work conducted;
- key drivers for changing the Council's Early Help services;
- the three options being consulted on, with particular focus on Option B, the Council's preferred option;
- locally specific information for each local area, particularly which centres in the local area the Council proposes to keep open under Option B; and
- the Council's plan for alternative uses for children's centre buildings.

In addition, three informal drop-in sessions were also arranged at children's centres, attended by council officers and representatives from BMG Research. These were held on:

- Wednesday 28 November 2018, 11am – 12:30pm, Steeple Claydon Children's Centre (attended by 13 people)
- Friday 30 November 2018, 9am – 10:30am, Disraeli Children's Centre (attended by 25 people)
- Monday 3 December 2018, 11:45am – 1pm, The Ivers Children's Centre (attended by 15 people)

1.5 Additional information and responses

Some stakeholder organisations and residents opted to submit their views to BMG outside of the questionnaire or forum format. Typically this involved freeform email and written information, and where relevant, supporting information. A total of 12 emails or letters were received by BMG in this way, comprising 4 from stakeholder organisations and 8 from residents. These were analysed alongside open response questions to the survey. The responses received from stakeholder organisations are published in Appendix 4 with their consent.

1.6 Approach to analysis and reporting

This report provides a summary of the key findings from the analysis of the responses to the Buckinghamshire County Council Early Help consultation.

The data from the surveys was imported and analysed by BMG exploring responses based on respondent type (resident or stakeholder), and other key factors (such as district of residence, demographics, service use, distance travelled to children's centres, or option preferences) where bases were sufficiently large for reliable analysis to be undertaken (with a minimum 20

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

responses). Differences are included based on these factors where questions are comparable and where these are statistically significant.¹

Tables and graphs are all labelled with a sequential 'Figure Number' and title. All tables and graphs have clearly labelled base sizes (for all sub-groups) and textual definitions of bases. The total of percentages shown in a table may vary slightly from 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Open response questions were used to generate code-frames to understand and quantify key themes wherever possible, and these are highlighted in this report. It should be noted that as analysis was conducted using open response data provided by respondents, it only represents the information provided. As such, whilst we indicate scale of experience among respondents, this cannot be considered as exhaustive.

Every effort was made to ensure people were aware of the consultation and to support access to complete the survey. The purpose of the survey was to enable all residents and stakeholder organisations the opportunity to inform the development of proposals for service changes. Given this approach a representative sampling approach was not applied and weightings are not used in this report. As such, the findings in this report should not be considered as representative of all users of early help services, or the population of Buckinghamshire as a whole.

1.7 Promotion of the questionnaire

The Council was responsible for promoting participation in the consultation process and undertook wide-ranging communications to encourage residents and partner organisations to complete the survey.

This included promotions via the press; social media; radio; website; My Bucks newsletter; parish council newsletters; schools and governors bulletins; emails sent to over 4000 early help service users; flyers and posters distributed to all libraries and children's centres; promotions via GP surgeries, youth centres, multi-cultural centres, churches and mosques.

In addition to the three public meetings and three drop-in events, officers attended seven Local Area Forum (LAF) meetings to provide a presentation on the proposals and answer any questions (North West Chilterns; Waddesdon; Beeches; Missendens; Wexham and Ivers; Amersham; Wendover).

¹ Independent t-tests were conducted at the 95% confidence level to identify where findings were statistically significant.

2 Council's aims and priorities

2.1 Early Help Strategy

Respondents to the survey were shown the following description of the Council's proposed aims and priorities and also referred to the consultation website for further information.

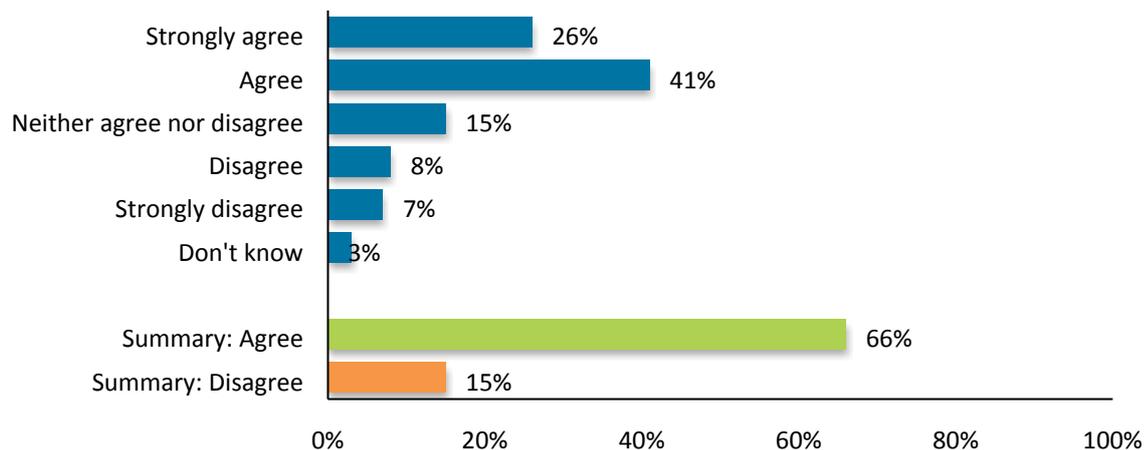
The Council's Early Help Service is designed to have clear responsibilities and to deliver support to families in partnership which enable improved outcomes for children and families, as set out in the draft partnership Early Help Strategy which can be found at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp

The Council is proposing to refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service with the following aims:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agree with the Council's priorities for its Early Help Service, including a quarter (26%) who strongly agree. Almost one-sixth (15%) disagree, while a similar proportion (15%) neither agree nor disagree, and 3% did not know.

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service?



Q6. Single answer allowed. Residents and stakeholders. Sample base=747

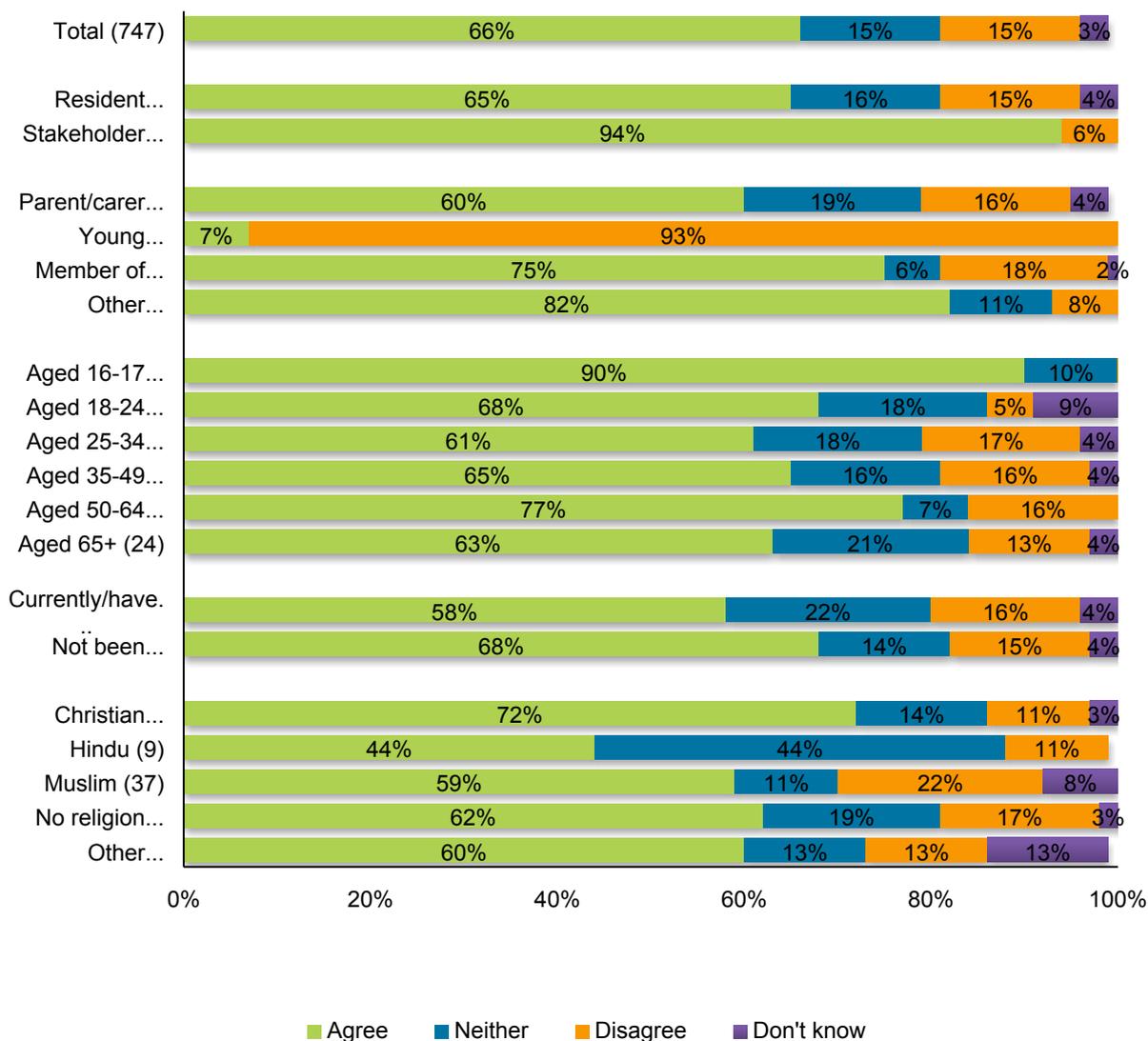
The total of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Stakeholders are significantly more likely than residents to agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service, with 94% of stakeholders expressing that view compared to 65% of residents. Parents and carers are the least likely to agree with those aims, with 60% doing so. Those aged 50-64 are the most likely to agree with the aims (77%), and those aged 25-34 are the least likely to do so (61%). Agreement is significantly higher among those identifying as

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Christian (72%), and significantly lower among those who are currently pregnant or have been within the last year (58%).

Figure 2: To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)

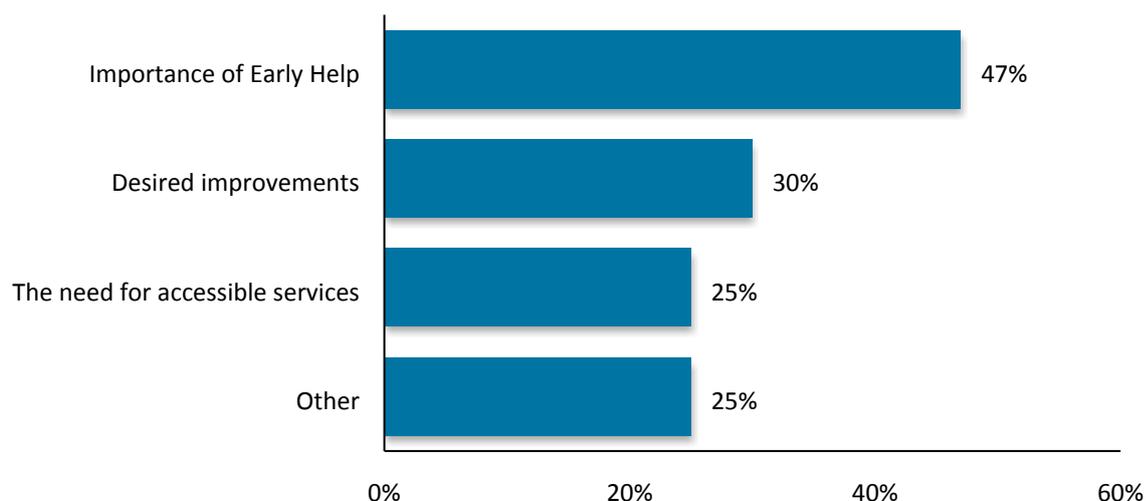


Q6. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample base shown in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

2.2 Views on Early Help Strategy

Many respondents (333) provided additional comments regarding their views on the Early Help strategy. Most often, these comments concerned children's centres, and in particular respondents noted the importance of the Early Help service and its effect on their life; the need for services to be accessible; improvements they would like to see; as well as a range of other points which are discussed further in this section.

Figure 3: Do you have any other comments on what the aims of the Council's Early Help service should be?



Q7. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 333

2.2.1 The importance of early help services

Just under half of those providing comments (47%, 158 respondents) stressed the importance of early help services, often sharing personal stories about the support offered by the children's centres, and the specific classes and services they and others have benefitted from:

"I am a regular user of the children's centre for my little girl for weigh in clinic and stay and play. At one session the service reached out to over thirty plus children from varying backgrounds. This is a vital service for the community."

Around one-sixth of the respondents (16% of those providing comments, 56 respondents) expressed their view that children's centres offer vital support for vulnerable people and children, with examples of this including support that had been provided to those that have faced issues such as mental health conditions and post-natal depression.

Some (14%, 48 respondents) explicitly stated that the Council should retain early help services as they stand currently or that the Council should not be reducing services or closing centres, questioning the need to make any changes, with several expressing the view that the Council should not be reducing any services or closing any centres:

"I cannot support any proposal that includes closing Children's Centres. In rural areas these are a vital outreach to new mothers, in particular the access to midwives for first time mothers is crucial, as well as meeting other new mums and sharing concerns, worries and also joys. I honestly don't know what I would have done in the first year of my baby's life without our local children's centre."

"keep all the current children's centres open with drop-in service available and stay and play sessions and other activities going on there."

Around one-tenth (10%, 32 respondents) talked about the importance of children's centres in improving a child's life chances and development, often noting that children's centres improve a child's life chances by dealing with any issues early, and that they will therefore be able to thrive and get off to a steady start in life. Some discussed the wider lifelong and societal benefits that this will bring:

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

"Families with young children need support. It is a major developmental stage for children and their parents need all of the support available to build the future generation as many of the conflicts and violent cultures we see, hear and live in are from children living in impoverished areas and who have disorganised attachments to their parents."

Similarly, a few respondents talked about impacts further down the line such as at school and when the individual joins the workforce.

A few (8%, 25 respondents) feel that children's centres need to reach more people and that their services should be available to all rather than limited to or targeted towards those deemed 'in need':

"It should not be closed to families who do not fit in the category or 'vulnerable'. As a middle class parent, I would not be entitled to any additional free support under many definitions but children's centres were and are invaluable for both of my children."

"Please don't only focus on vulnerable children and poor families. All new parents need help, especially where maternal mental health issues are at play – those are universal issues for which all should have easy access."

Others (around 6%, 20 respondents) noted that children's centres perform an important function in providing a social space for parents, allowing them to meet other parents with similar concerns and receive informal support, especially as having a new baby can be a lonely and isolating experience:

"Children's centres are one of the best ways to connect to local parents and to provide activities to do together. Community is key in helping parents not to feel lonely."

One stakeholder organisation further noted the impact centres can have on the wider family, and expressed their concern that issues will escalate in the absence of effective support, and therefore require more serious and costly intervention later on; this concern was also shared by four other respondents:

"This help is definitely given at a much earlier stage than it would be under any of your proposed models. It therefore prevents an escalation of issues and is therefore a financial saving to the authority and more importantly prevents families going into ruin. For example, giving support to a local family being evicted and made homeless; supporting families to come off benefits and return to work."

2.2.2 Improvements to existing services

Just under a third (30%, 99 respondents) made suggestions on improvements they would like to see to the current services. Most commonly, this concerned an expansion in the resources available within the service, which was mentioned by around one-tenth of respondents (11%, 38 respondents). Often these comments specifically mentioned funding:

"To better fund those services that are made available to families - not spreading itself so thinly that services are struggling."

In addition, a few individuals (4%, 14 respondents) talked about an expansion of resources but spoke specifically about particular sessions and activities they would like to see introduced or made more frequent.

Others (7%, 23 respondents) stated that they would like to see more pro-activity in engagement with families, and support being offered more quickly than is possible at the moment. A few (5%) would like to see more cohesion and communication across various services, sites and individuals, or expressed a desire to see the centres better integrated into the community:

"As a community representative, I believe that the centres & children services in general need to be more integrated with the community & be put to better use. There are several community companies / charities operating in Bucks that could offer real Early help to families & individuals. There needs to be more community cohesion!!"

Several (3%, 10 respondents) feel that further assistance should be available to those with specific needs:

"My disabled [young child] has been asked to leave his preschool after [a short period of time] there because they cannot fund his 1:1. There should be groups run for disabled children and their families to support them. Rainbows runs in Aylesbury but that is the only one."

One individual questioned how 'telling your story only once' would work in practice, with another disagreeing with the principle, preferring to tell their story directly:

"You say 'only tell a story once.' I don't like that I want workers to hear my story from ME. I want my voice heard, I don't want my story to become Chinese whispers."

2.2.3 Support must be local and accessible

Around a quarter of those providing comments (25%, 82 respondents) mentioned that key priorities should include accessibility of the support. Where this was expanded upon, individuals typically identified three different aspects to the broader issue of accessibility: the requirement for local support (noted by 33% of those mentioning accessibility, 27 respondents); ensuring the centres can reasonably be accessed by local residents using public transport (21%, 17 respondents); and appropriate opening hours (7%, 6 respondents). Around half of those discussing accessibility did not expand upon this.

Where comments were made around ensuring centres can reasonably be accessed by public transport, individuals often noted that some people without access to a car, particularly those in villages, could find it too difficult, time-consuming or costly to access a different centre in the event that their local centre closed, expressing scepticism that travelling elsewhere would be feasible:

"Improving access should bear in mind that some people don't drive or don't have access to a car. Closing children's centres but saying "oh you can come to [other children's centres]" doesn't work unless you can get there by car. Isolating new mothers is not helpful and children suffer."

Where comments concerned the importance of local services, in some cases this was because having a children's centre in their village was a vital source of support that would not otherwise have been reached:

"In a community with so many small towns and villages spread out, it is important to keep the currently available children's centre sites. I would not have been able to access as much early support post birth if it were not for the [local] centre being walking distance."

Additional comments in relation to the importance of local support concerned the value of a local centre in terms of developing a community feel and allowing local parents to meet and develop a network:

"I use the children centres stay and playgroups often, as I'm at home looking after my son. This service provides much needed interaction not only for my son but for myself during the week. If these groups were to go it would leave us very isolated in the community."

In other cases, comments in relation to the value of local support and the need for centres to be accessible by public transport expressed the view that many users of children's centres and the

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

most vulnerable individuals are more likely to lack their own transport and are therefore more reliant on the ability to access services within walking distance:

“Access for the most vulnerable is intimately linked with local supply. If you close the local centres those who are most vulnerable will be left out because they tend to be less able to travel.”

Examples of comments concerning opening hours included the view that opening hours should be extended, particularly to allow support outside of Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and also the need for clarity around opening hours.

2.2.4 Other points

Several individuals and stakeholders (5%, 16 respondents) expressed general agreement with the strategy; however, some of those questioned how the aims and principles of early help would work in practice with more limited funds, such as the following:

“We are supportive of the aspiration set out by the Council but concerned that it is within a context of reduced financial support.”

A few individuals (3%, 10 respondents) expressed concerns about combining and integrating services, particularly the potential to lose specialised support and staff, having the same services at the same sites for young children as well as teenagers with behavioural or other issues, and the potential for resources to be spread too thinly as a result.

Additionally, other respondents mentioned various issues outside of the scope of this consultation or outside the Council’s control (for example wider Council and central government spending); and a small number (2%, 5 respondents) expressed confusion about the information provided, in some cases seeking further information on the specific changes to be made.

3 Views on the Council's proposed options

The consultation sought separate feedback on each of the three options identified by the Council. For each option, an overview was given of what this would involve, with links available to further information. Respondents were then asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree with that option, and the impact they believe this would have on their family as well as families in Buckinghamshire in need of support. They were then asked to select their preferred option from the three provided by the Council, followed by two open response questions to capture any alternative ways the Council could provide early help services, and how the Council might deliver £3.1million in savings.

3.1 Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services)

Under Option A, the current range of services would remain broadly the same. The current 35 children's centre buildings will be retained but with a 30-35% reduction in opening hours. This would also mean a 30-35% reduction in the following services:

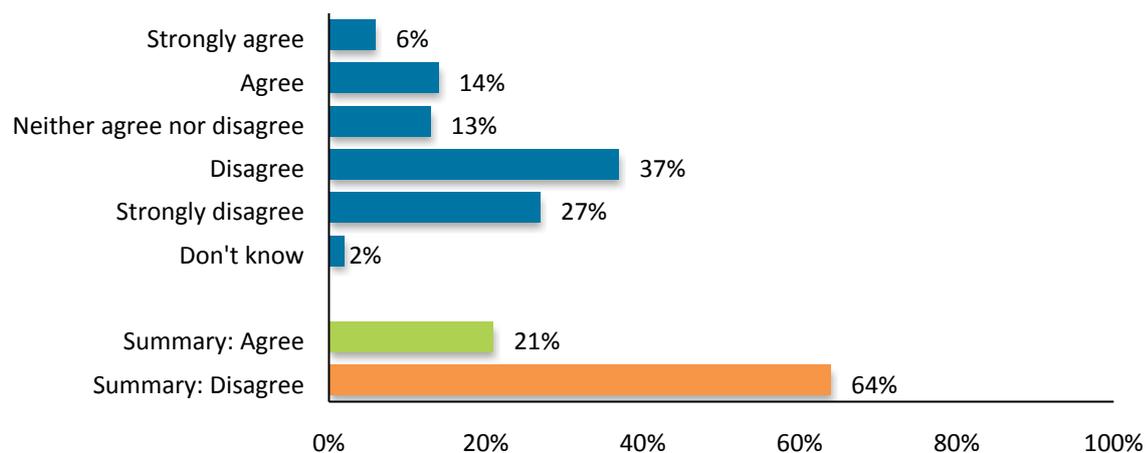
- Support for vulnerable children and families
- Youth services
- Bucks Family Information Service

Families who receive additional support through family resilience, for example, would also experience reductions in services. This is likely to mean that fewer vulnerable children receive support and there will be longer waiting times.

3.1.1 Level of agreement with Option A

The majority (64%) of respondents disagree with Option A for delivering an early help service, including a quarter (27%) who strongly disagree. Around a fifth (21%) agree, including 6% who strongly agree. An additional 13% neither agree nor disagree while 2% do not know.

Figure 4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A for delivering an Early Help Service?



Q8. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 748

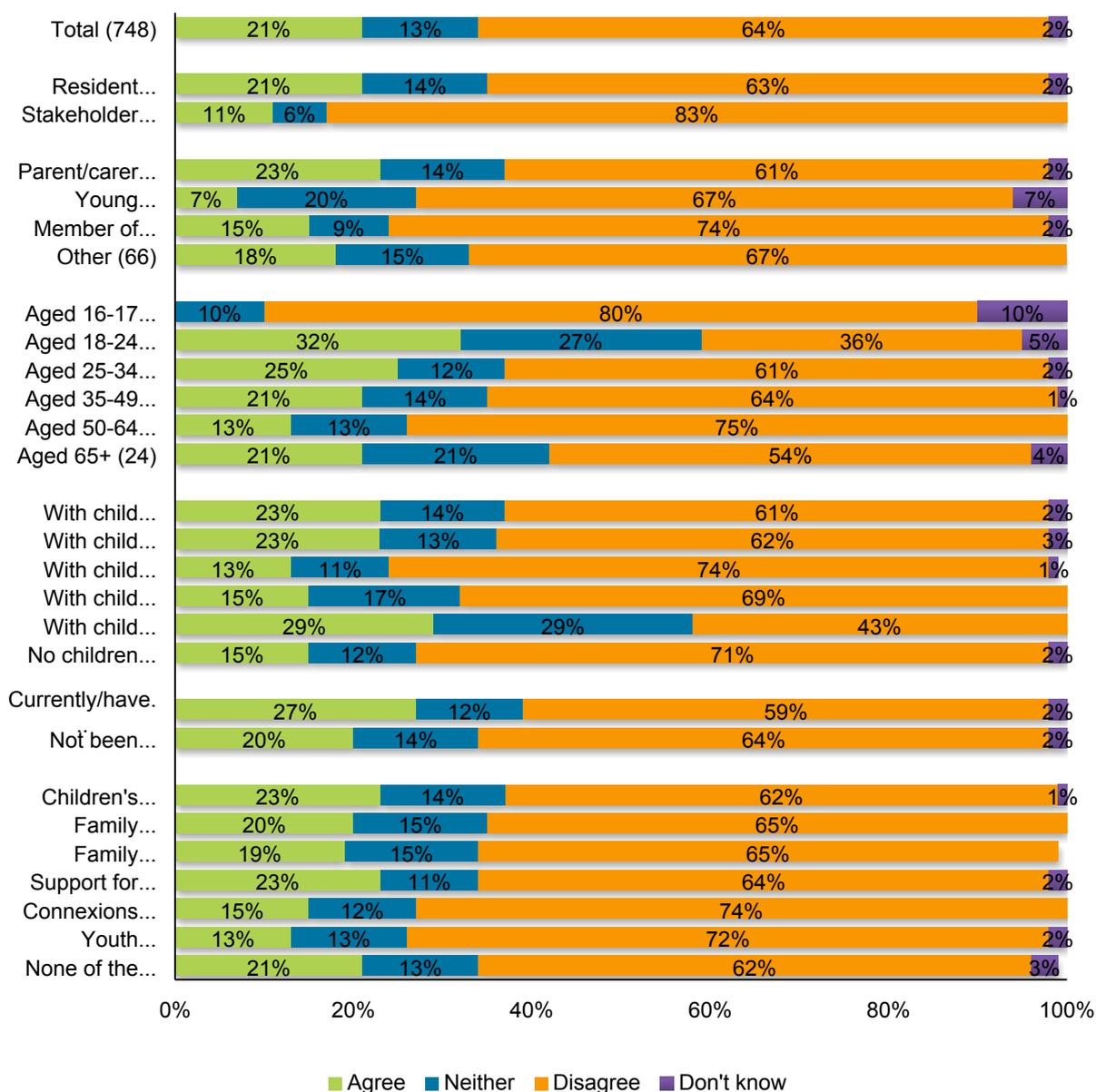
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Just over a fifth (21%) agree with Option A for delivering an early help service and agreement levels are significantly higher among parents/carers (23%), children centre users (23%), those

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

aged 25-34 (25%), those who are currently pregnant or had been in the last year (27%), and those with a child under 5 (23%). While almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents disagree with Option A, this is significantly higher among stakeholders (83%) and 50-64 year olds (75%).

Figure 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option A for delivering an Early Help Service? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)



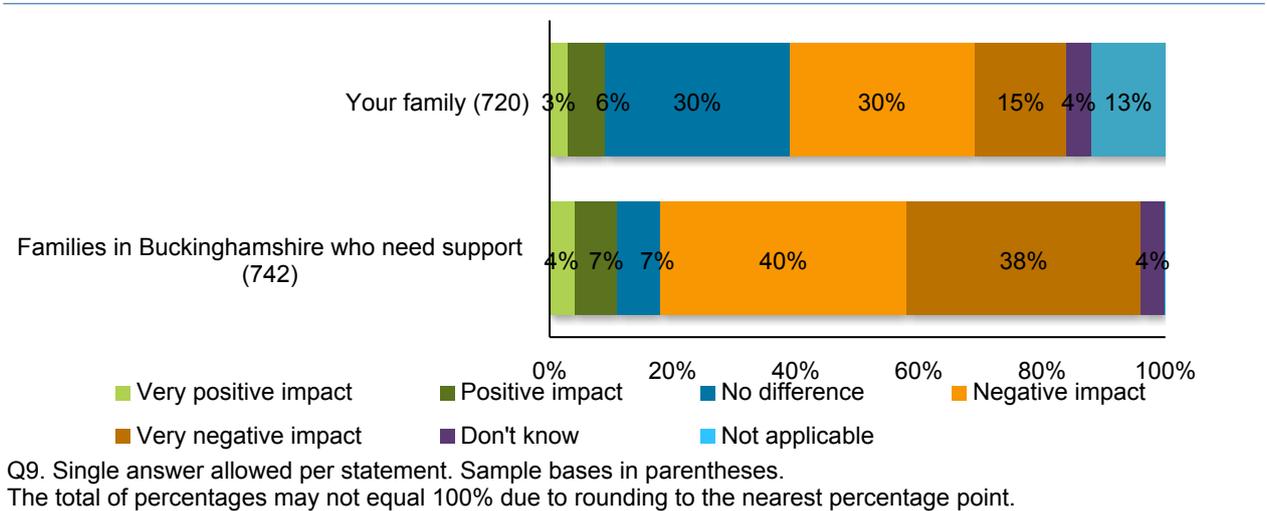
Q8. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.1.2 Impact of Option A

A very small proportion (3%) feel that Option A would have a very positive impact on their family, while an additional 6% believe it would have a positive impact. Around a third (30%) feel it would make no difference, and the same proportion (30%) think it would have a negative impact. A further 15% feel the impact would be very negative, while 4% do not know and 13% do not think this question is applicable to them.

Small proportions (4% and 7% respectively) feel that Option A would have a very positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, and 7% believe it would make no difference, while 40% think the impact would be negative and a similar proportion (38%) feel the impact would be very negative. An additional 4% do not know.

Figure 6: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on...

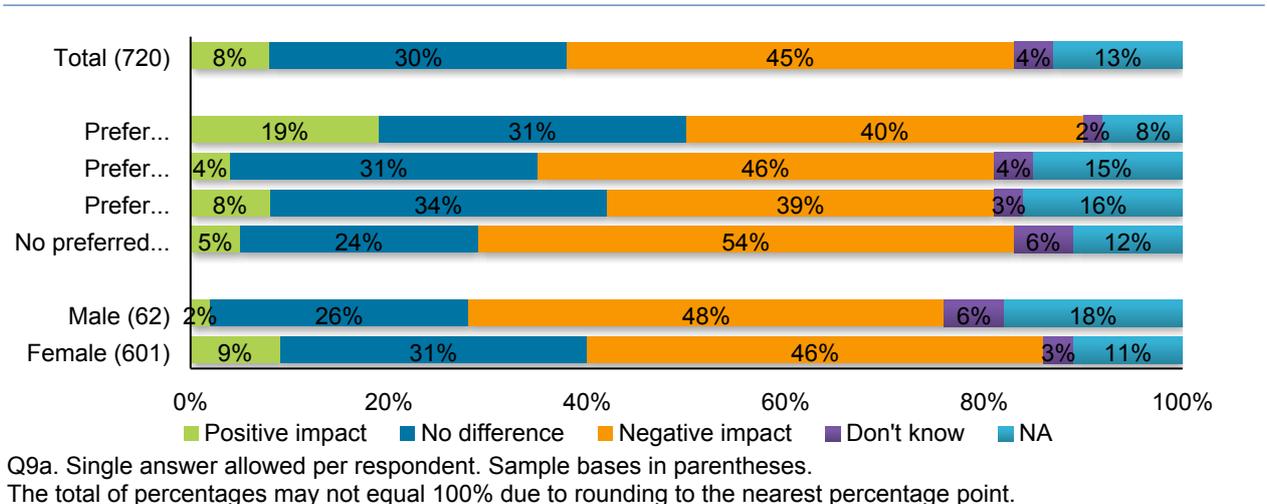


3.1.2.1 Impact on own family

Less than one-tenth (8%) of respondents feel that Option A would have a positive impact on their family, while almost half (45%) feel the impact would be negative. Even amongst those who later indicated that Option A is their preference of the options overall, less than one-fifth (19%) feel it would have a positive impact on their family, with 40% expressing the opposite view.

Women are significantly more likely to believe that it would have a positive impact on their family, but less than one-tenth (9%) expressed that view compared to only 2% of men.

Figure 7: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on your family? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)



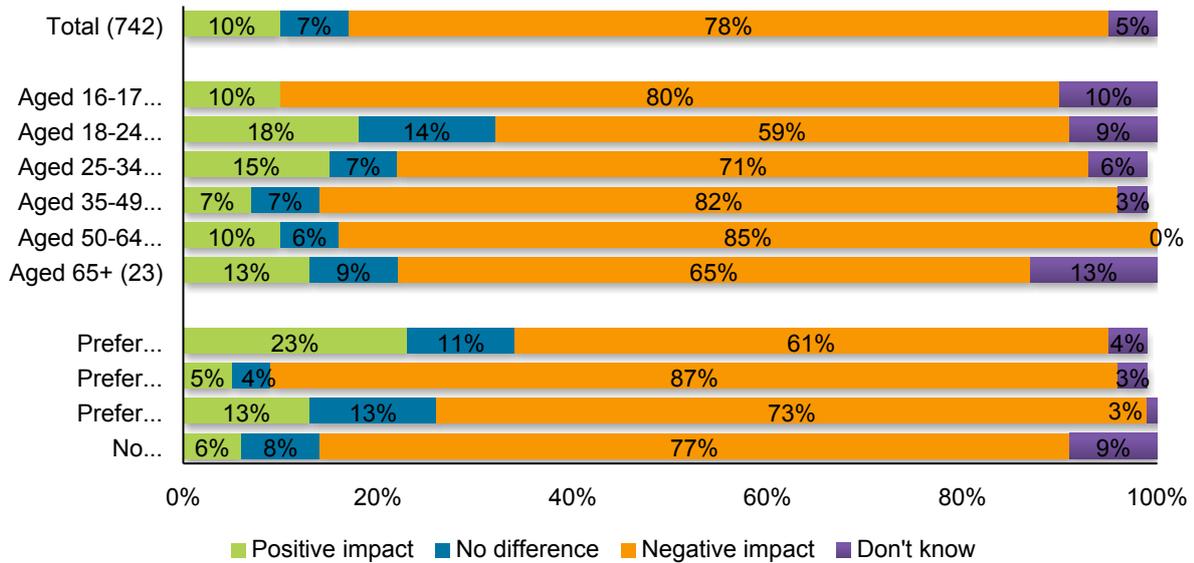
3.1.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

Around one-tenth (10%) believe that the Council selecting Option A would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, with over three-quarters (78%)

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

expressing the opposite view. Those aged 25-34 are significantly more likely to believe this would have a positive impact than respondents on the whole, but only 15% of this group hold that view. Amongst those indicating that they prefer Option A of the three options presented, less than one-quarter (23%) believe this would be positive while the majority (61%) believe this would have a negative impact.

Figure 8: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option A would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)



Q9b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.2 Option B: Network of family centres – the Council's Preferred Option

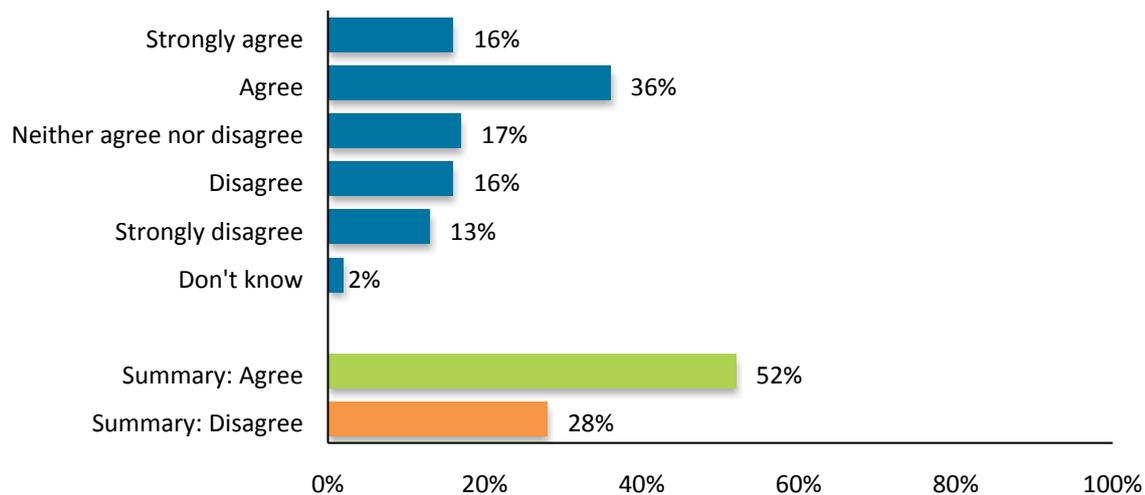
This is the Council's preferred option. Support for families will be delivered from 14 family centres that will provide a programme of activities for families with 0-19 year olds. Three of the centres (known as 'family centre plus') will also provide extra services where families can drop in to access support five days per week.

The family centres will continue to provide partner services e.g. health visiting. The family support teams will have a skills mix to ensure families get the right support at the right time. Families are supported by a lead practitioner who will work with the family, often in the home and coordinate the support families need to create a team around the family to help them tackle the issues they face.

3.2.1 Agreement with Option B

The majority (52%) of respondents agree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service, including 16% who strongly agree. Around a quarter (28%) disagree, including 13% who strongly disagree. Almost a fifth (17%) neither agree nor disagree with Option B, while 2% do not know.

Figure 9: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help Service?



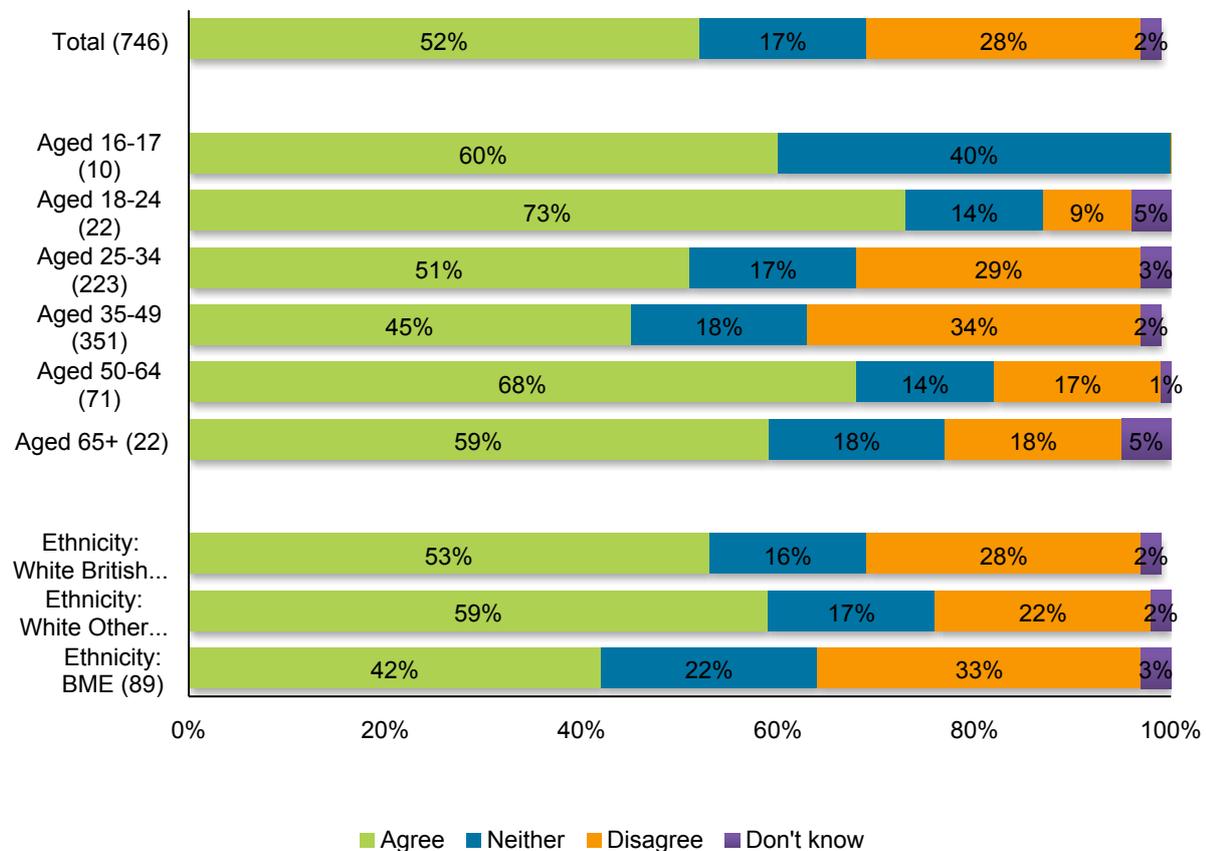
Q10. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 746

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

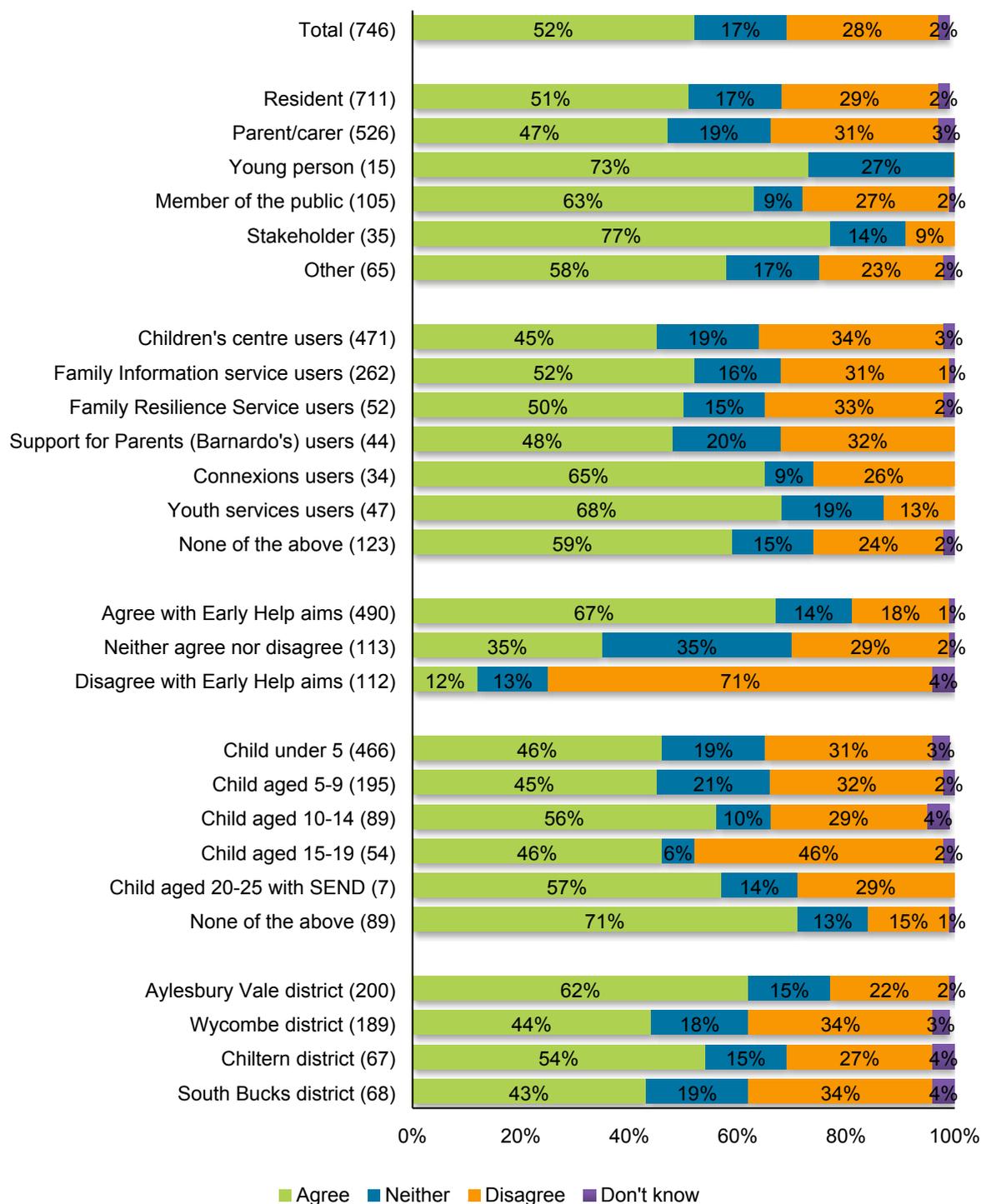
Overall, just over half (52%) agree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service, while just over a quarter (28%) disagree. Levels of agreement with this are significantly higher among those aged 50 to 64 (68%), Youth Services users (67%), and those living in the Aylesbury Vale district (62%). Levels of agreement are significantly lower than average amongst those aged 35 to 49 (45%), children’s centre users (45%), members of ethnic minority groups (42%), those with children under 5 (46%), those with children aged 5-9 (45%), and those living in the Wycombe district (44%). In all of these groups, the proportion in agreement with Option B for delivering Early Help remained higher than the proportion expressing the opposite view. Additionally, over three-quarters of stakeholders (77%) agree with Option B compared with around half (51%) of residents.

Figure 10: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service? (by respondent group)



Q10. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Figure 11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option B for delivering an Early Help service? (by other factors)



Q10. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.2.2 Impact of Option B

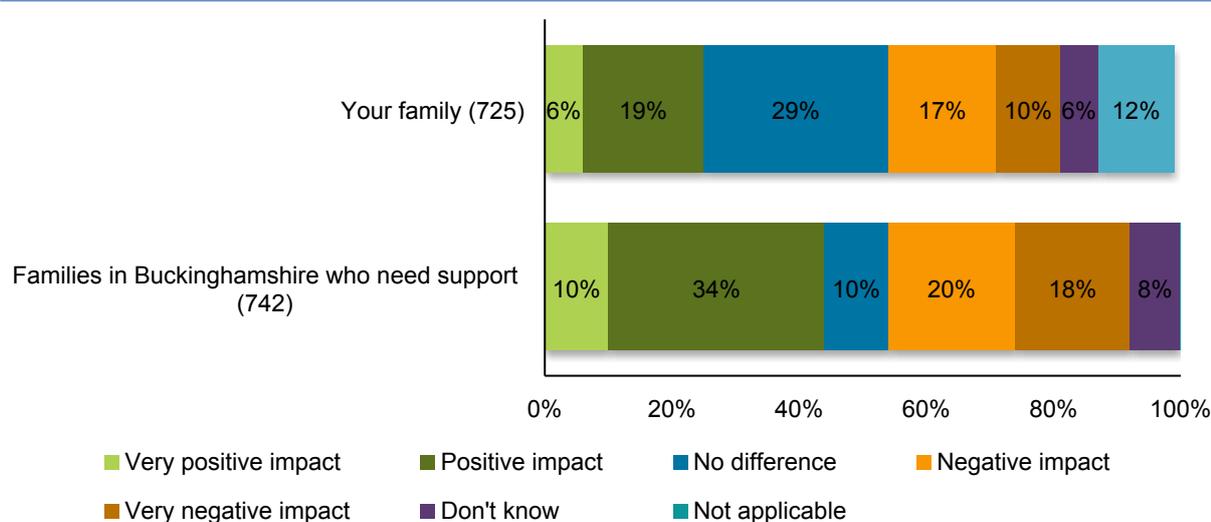
Around a quarter (25%) believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on their family, while just over a quarter (28%) stated the opposite.

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Those who believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on their family include 6% who think it would have a very positive impact. Almost a third (29%) feel it would make no difference, while 17% think it would have a negative impact, and 10% believe selecting Option B would have a very negative impact. An additional 6% do not know, and 12% stated that the question was not applicable to them.

One-tenth (10%) believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a very positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, while an additional third (34%) think it will have a positive impact. 10% feel it would make no difference, while a fifth (20%) feel it will have a negative impact, and a similar proportion (18%) stated that the impact would be very negative. A further 8% do not know.

Figure 12: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on...



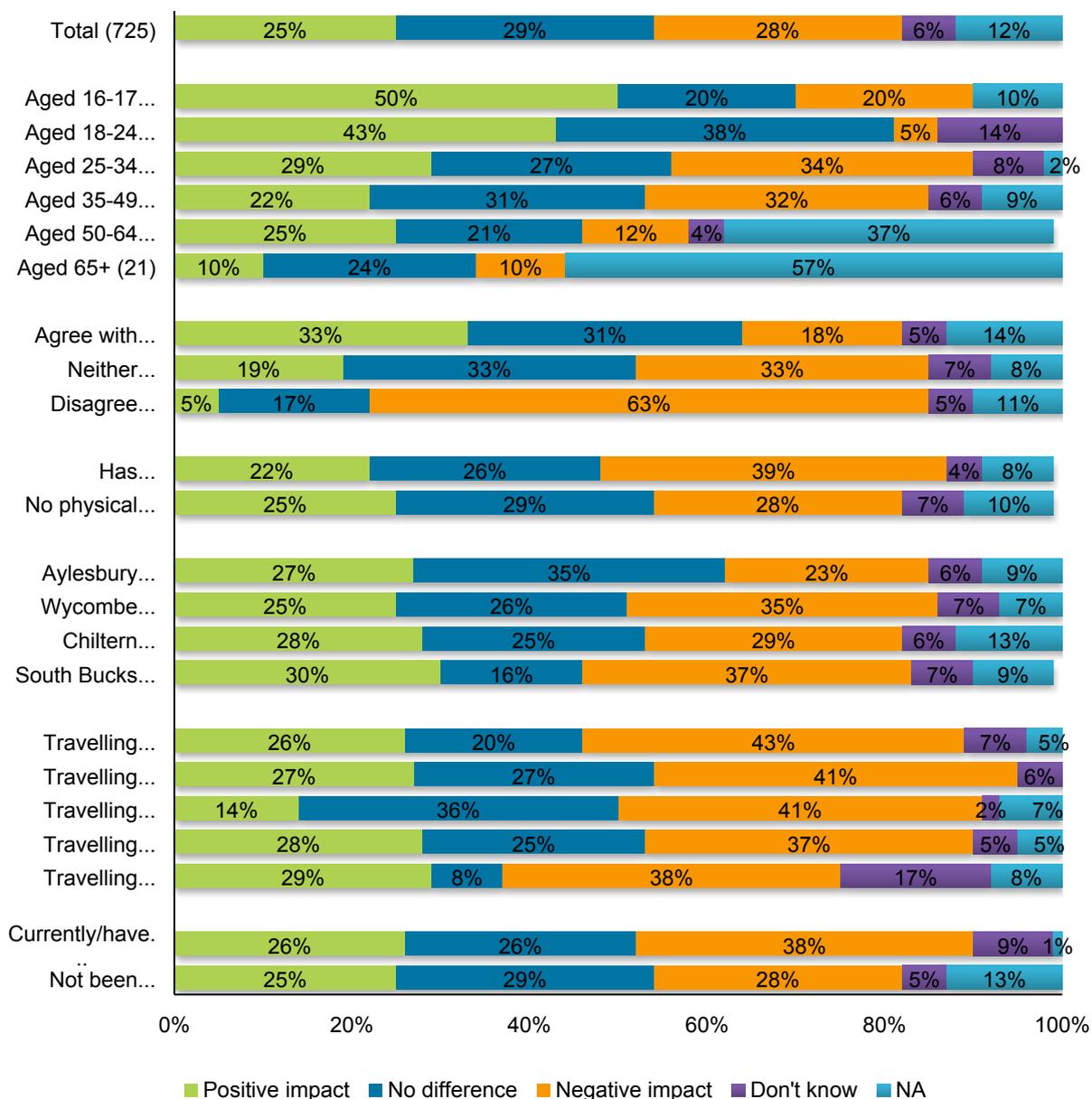
Q11. Single answer allowed per statement. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.2.2.1 Impact on own family

The proportion of those expressing the view that Option B would have a negative impact on their family is higher amongst those with physical or mental health issues (39%), Wycombe district residents (35%), those travelling under a mile to their furthest children's centre (43%), those travelling between 1 and 3 miles to their furthest children's centre, and those travelling 3-5 miles to their furthest children's centre (both 41%). Additionally, those aged 25-34 are significantly more likely to state this will have a negative impact, with 34% expressing that view, while 32% of 35-49 year olds also share that opinion, alongside 38% of those who are currently pregnant or have been in the last year. It should be noted that all three groups are more likely to see this question as applicable to them.

Those in agreement with the aims of early help as set out in the consultation are significantly more likely to believe Option B would have a positive impact on their family, with a third (33%) expressing that view. Amongst those who disagree with the aims for early help, a majority (63%) believe Option B would have a negative impact on their family, with only 5% expressing the opposite view.

Figure 13: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on your family? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)



Q11a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.2.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

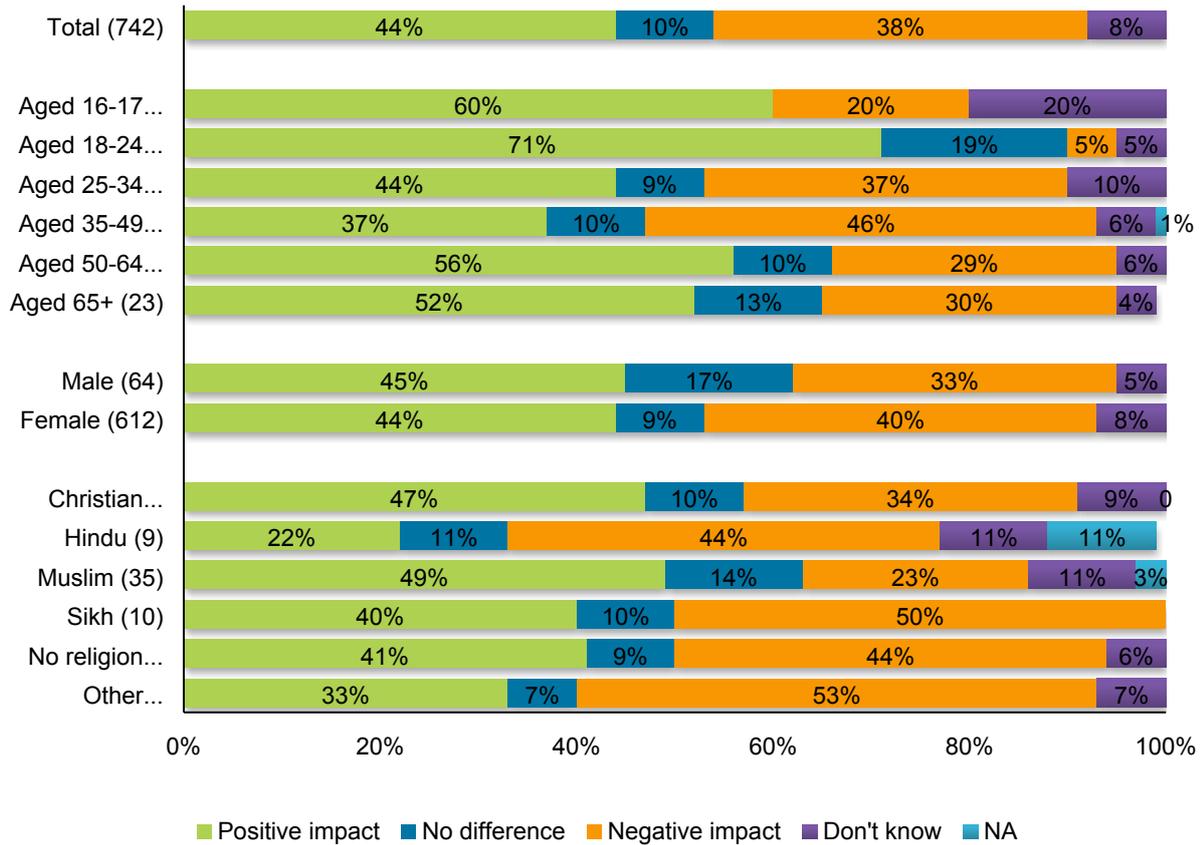
Overall, a higher proportion of respondents believe that the Council selecting Option B would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support than believe the opposite (44% cf. 38%). Stakeholders are significantly more likely to believe this would be positive, with 69% expressing that view compared to 38% of parents and carers; 42% of the latter group expressed the opposite opinion.

The proportion of those who expressed the view that Option B would have a positive impact on families in Buckinghamshire is significantly higher among those aged 50-64 (56%), Youth Services users (59%), and those residing in the Aylesbury Vale district (56%).

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

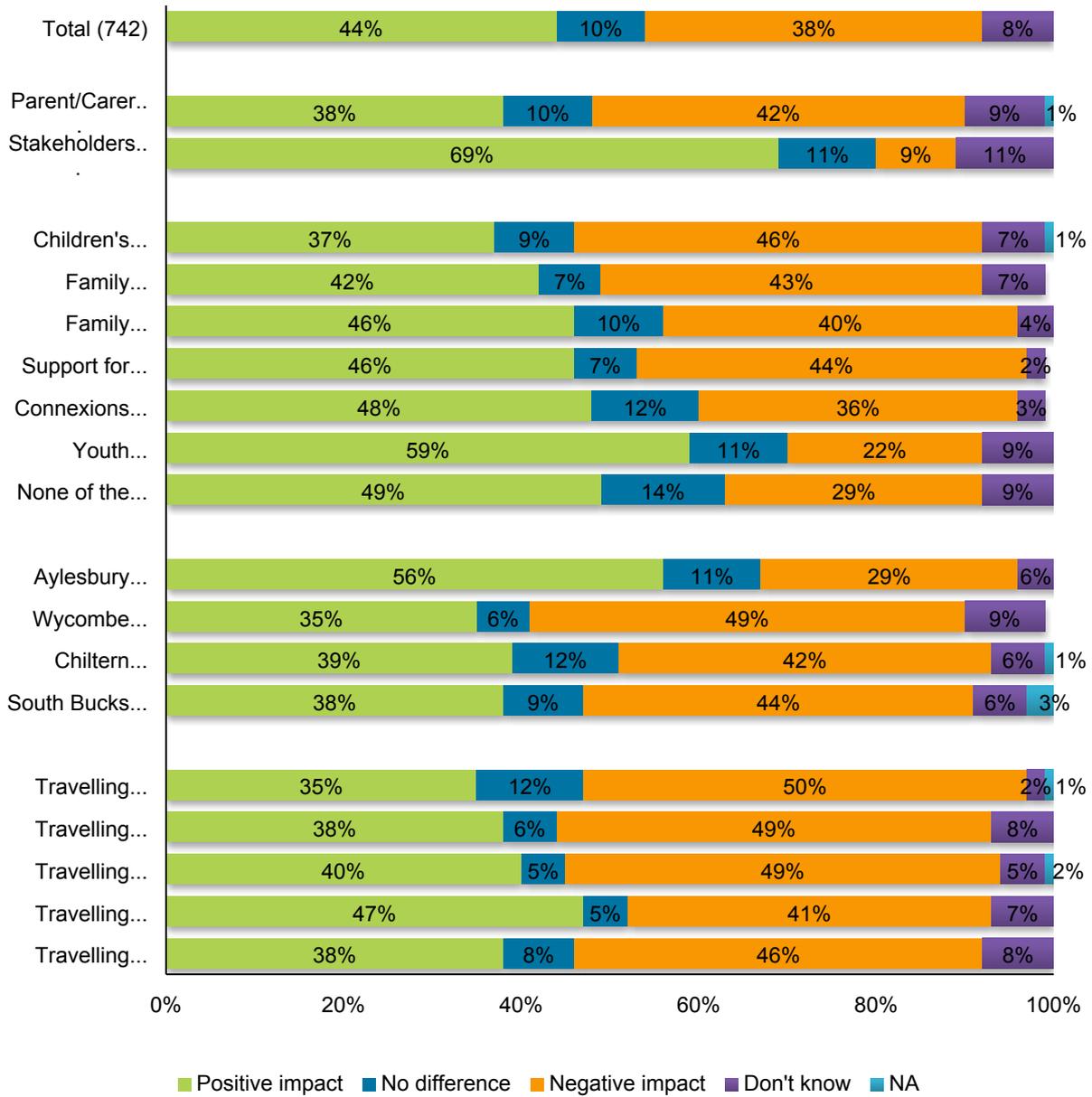
Conversely, whereas 38% of respondents overall believe Option B would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire, this is significantly higher among those aged 35-49 (46%), children’s centre users (46%), women (40%), those residing in the Wycombe district (49%), those travelling less than a mile to the furthest children’s centre that they use (50%), those travelling between 1 and 3 miles to their furthest children’s centre (49%), and those of no religion (44%).

Figure 14: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic groups)



Q11b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Figure 15: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option B would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by other factors)



Q11b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.3 Option C: Area-based family outreach model

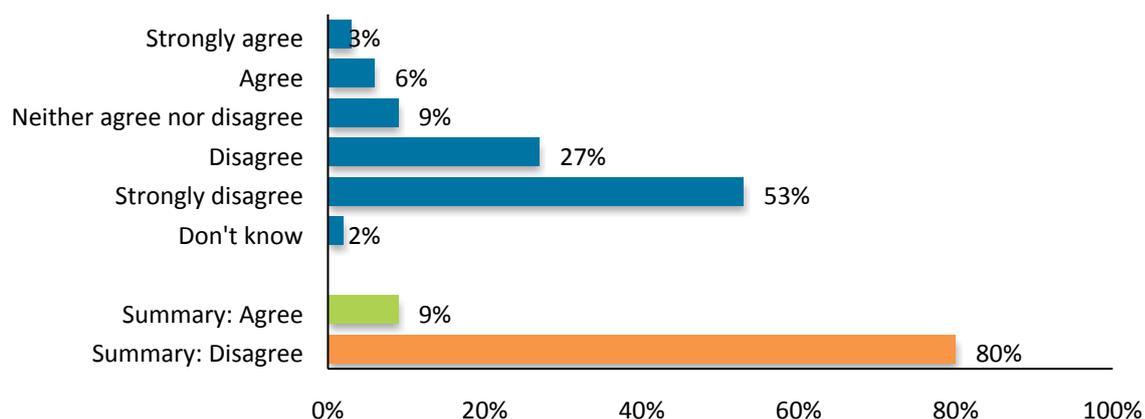
This will provide a new integrated service to support families with children 0-19 years old. The Council services will be focused on targeted work with families only. There would be three area teams working from office bases, but these would not be open to the public. This means family support being provided at the family’s home, in school and at local places like libraries and community centres.

There will be no universal provision and no children’s centres would be retained by the County Council.

3.3.1 Agreement with Option C

Around four-fifths (80%) of respondents disagree with Option C as a model for delivering an Early Help service, including over half (53%) that strongly disagree. Less than one-tenth (9%) agree with Option C, with 3% strongly agreeing. Around one-tenth (9%) neither agree nor disagree, while 2% do not know.

Figure 16: To what extent do you agree or disagree with Option C for delivering an Early Help Service?



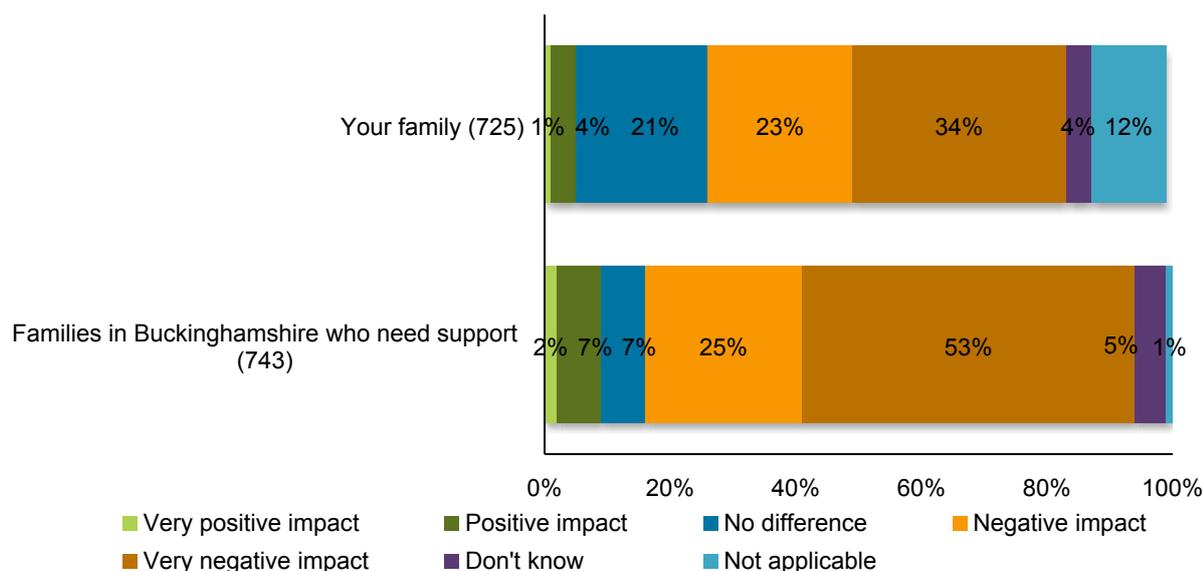
Q12. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 743
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Given the high proportion of respondents who disagree with Option C, levels of disagreement across respondent groups and demographics are mostly consistent, with very few significant areas of difference.

3.3.2 Impact of Option C

A small proportion (5%) of respondents believe that Option C would have a positive impact on their family, with 1% feeling this would have a very positive impact. A majority (57%) feel this would have a negative impact, including a third (34%) thinking this impact would be very negative. A fifth (21%) feel it would make no difference to their family, while 4% do not know and 12% feel the question is not applicable to them.

Over three-quarters (78%) of respondents feel that Option C would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, including a majority (53%) believing this impact would be very negative. Around one-tenth (9%) feel the impact would be positive, including 2% thinking it would be very positive. 7% believe it would make no difference, 5% do not know, and 1% feel this is not applicable.

Figure 17: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on...

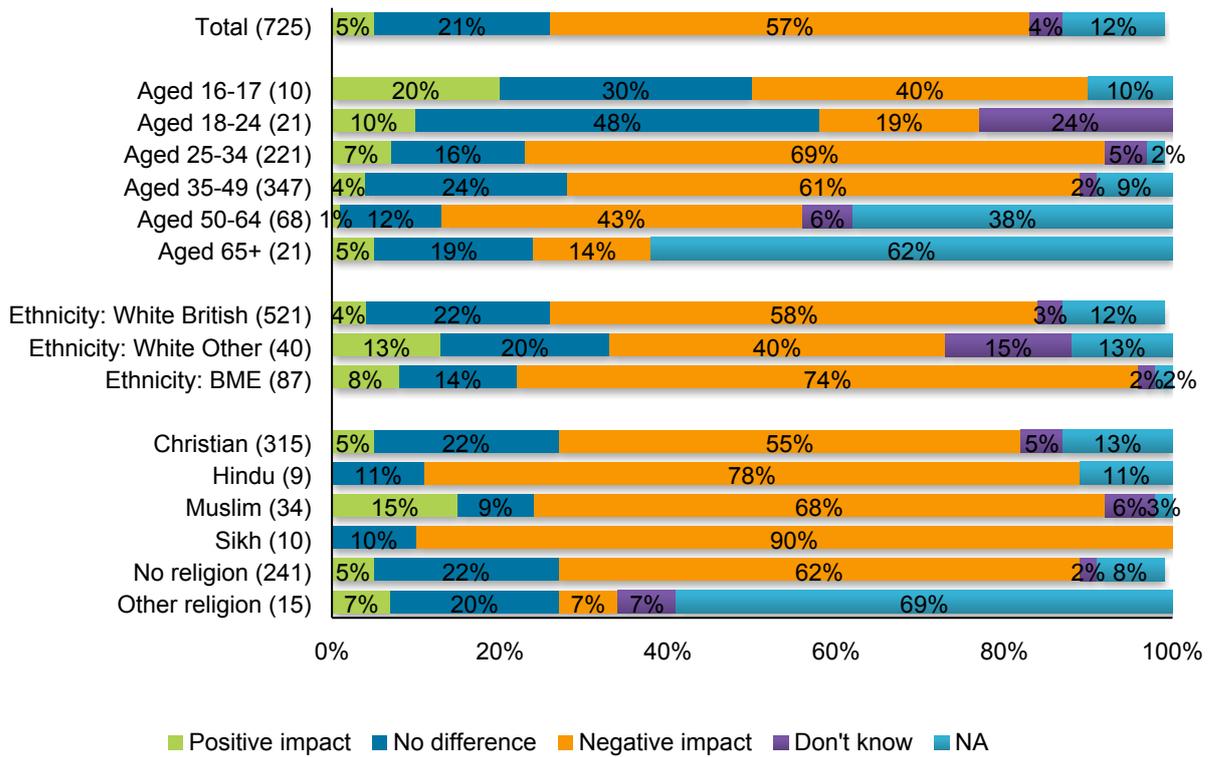
Q13. Single answer allowed per statement. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.3.2.1 Impact on own family

The tendency of individuals to believe Option C would have a negative impact on their family is consistent across all demographic groups. Particularly, large majorities of those aged 25-34 (69%), children's centre users (72%), those with children under 5 (70%), and those who are currently or have been pregnant within the last year (77%) are of this view, likely because these groups are more likely to be personally affected than most other groups; the proportion of those feeling that the question is not applicable to them would support this interpretation.

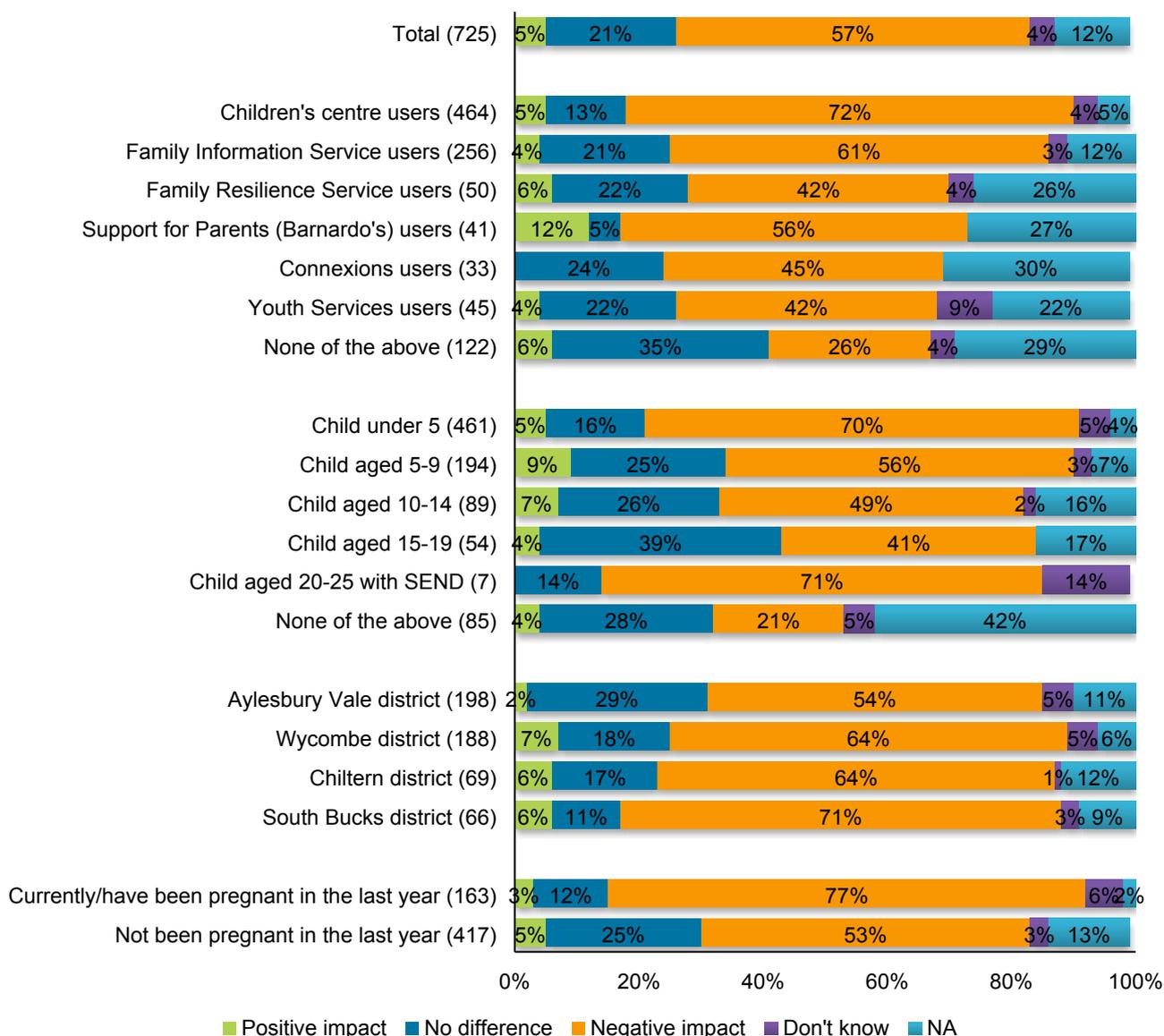
The proportion of those who believe Option C would have a negative impact on their families is also significantly higher than the average amongst those aged 35-49 (61%), members of an ethnic minority (74%), South Buckinghamshire district residents (71%), Wycombe district residents (64%), and those of no religion (62%).

Figure 18: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on your family? (by demographics)



Q13a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Figure 19: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on your family? (by other factors)

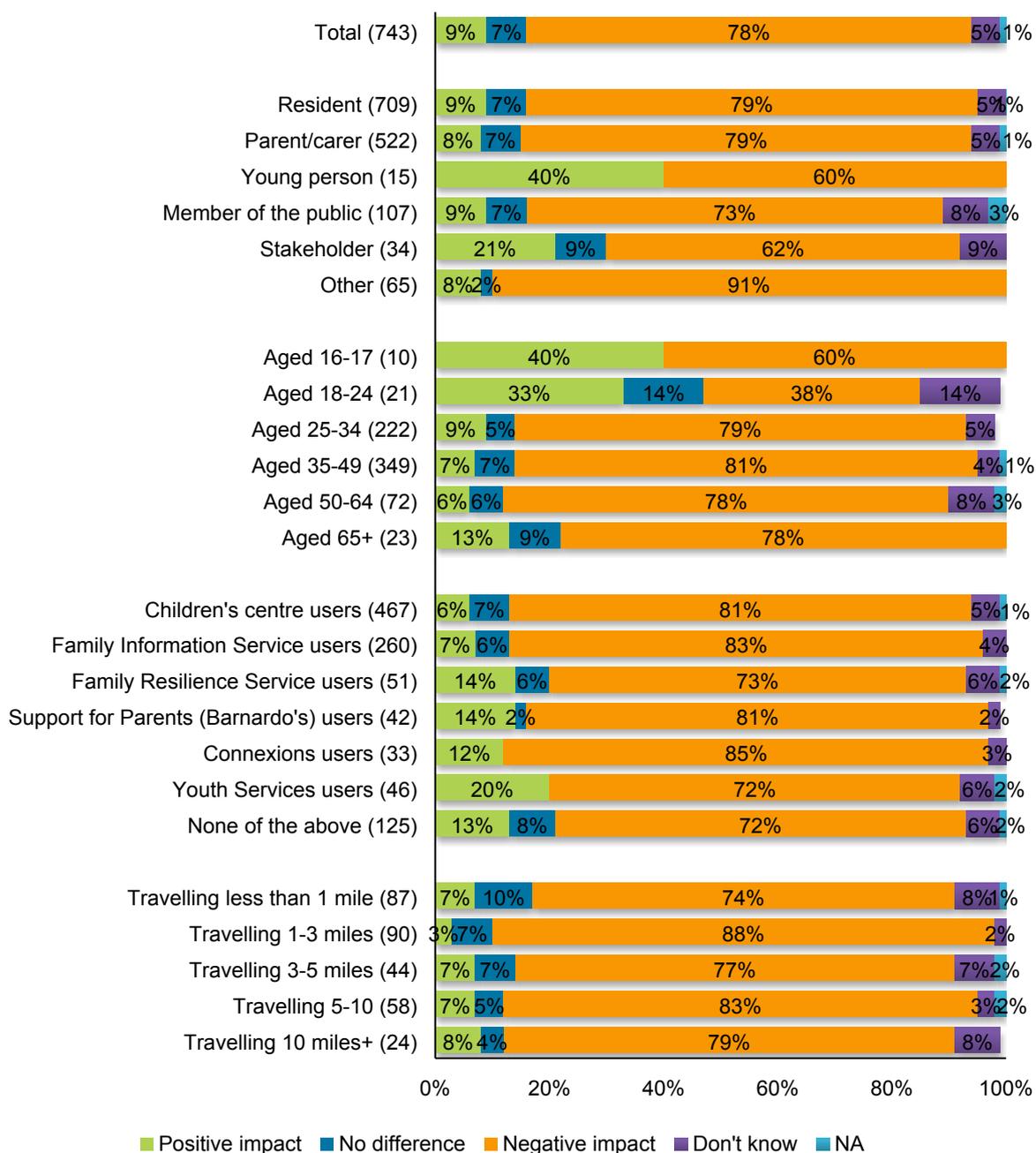


Q13a. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses.
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.3.2.2 Impact on families in Buckinghamshire

While a large majority of all demographic groups believe Option C would have a negative impact on families in Buckinghamshire who need support, this is particularly strong among those aged 35-49 (81%), children's centre users (81%), and those who travel 1-3 miles to visit their furthest children's centre (88%). While around four-fifths of parents (79%) believe Option C to be negative in this regard, only 62% of stakeholders hold the same view.

Figure 20: What level of impact do you think the Council selecting Option C would have on families in Buckinghamshire who need support? (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)

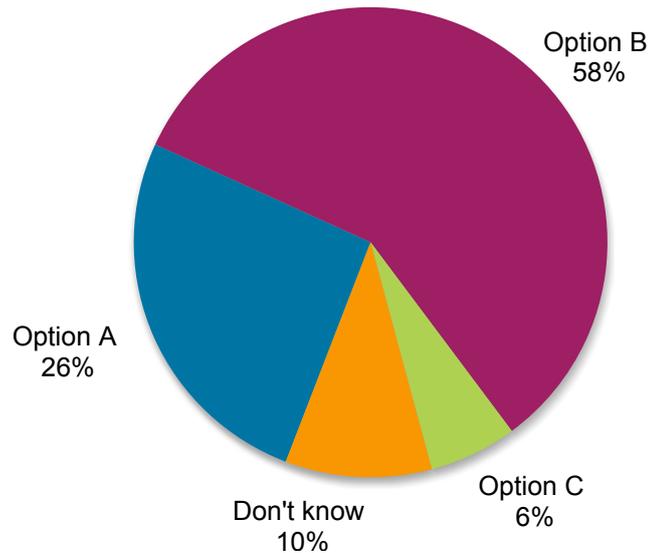


Q13b. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.4 Preferred options

When asked, a majority (58%) of respondents prefer Option B out of the three options presented within the consultation, while around a quarter (26%) prefer Option A and 6% selected Option C. A further 10% said they do not know. It should be noted that there was no option to select 'none of the above' or an alternative option within this specific question, as the Council was keen to understand respondent's preferences out of the viable options for change; instead respondents were able to skip the question (17 chose to do this), and an open response question was included to capture views on alternative ways the Council could provide early help services.

Figure 21: Of the options presented, which is your preferred option?



Q14. Single answer allowed. Sample base: 740

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

The following sections further explore these preferences based on respondent groups and demographics. Due to the very low proportion of respondents who selected Option C as their preference, most of these comparisons focus on where Options A or B is the preferred option.

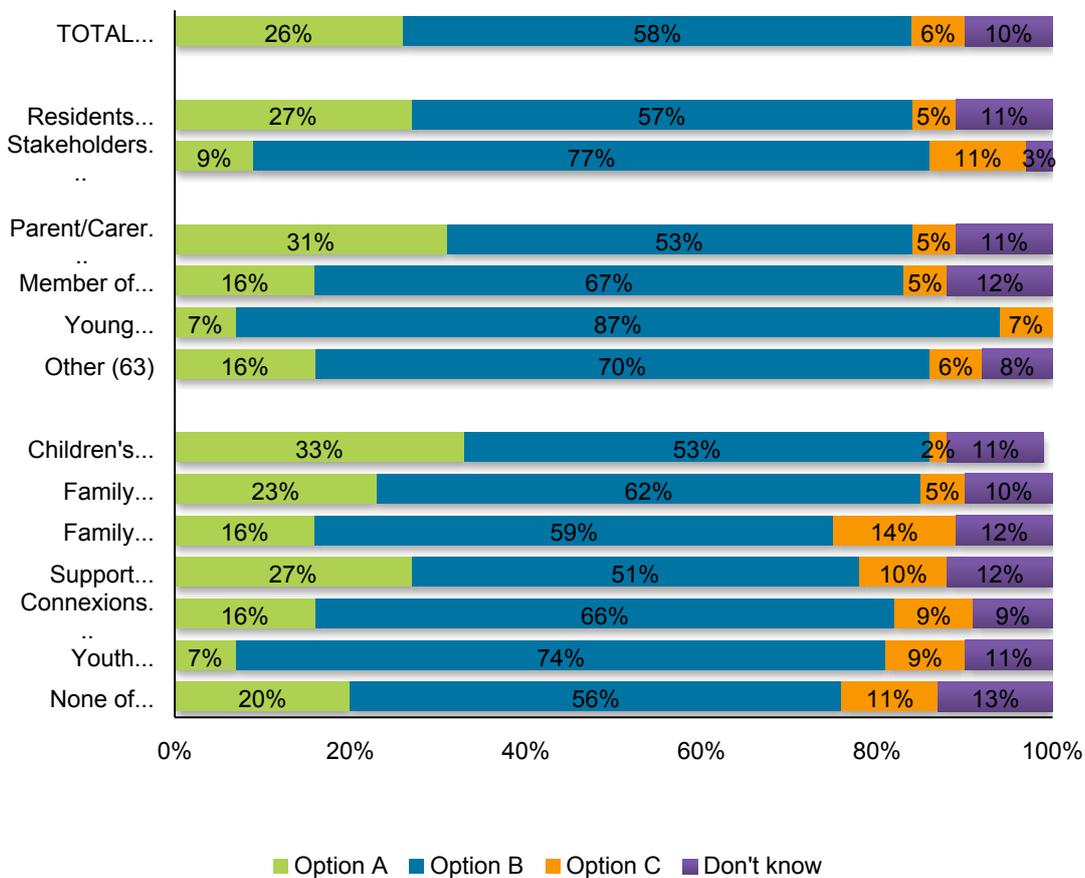
3.4.1 Option preference by respondent group

Whilst Option B is the preferred option amongst all respondent groups, residents and particularly parent/carers are significantly more likely than others to prefer Option A (27% and 31% respectively). Respondents are also significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they were children’s centre users (33%), as such this group are less likely to be supportive of Option B overall (53%).

Stakeholders and wider members of the public are more likely to prefer Option B (77% and 67% respectively).

Whilst Option C is unpopular across all demographic groups, Family Resilience Service users and non-users of early help services are more likely to prefer this (14% and 11% respectively).

Figure 22: Option preferred by respondent group

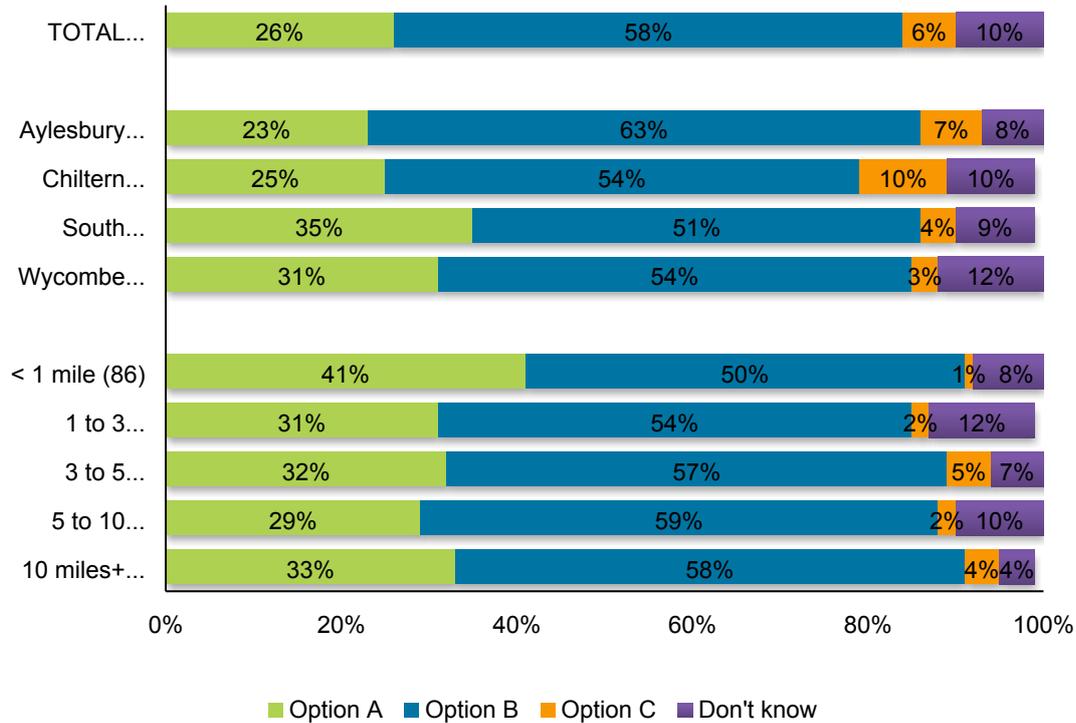


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.4.2 Option preference by district lived in and distance travelled to furthest children's centre

There are no significant differences identified between the district lived in and likelihood to support the different options. However, those who travelled less than one mile to their furthest children's centre are significantly more likely to support Option A (41%).

Figure 23: Option preferred by district lived in and distance travelled to furthest children's centre

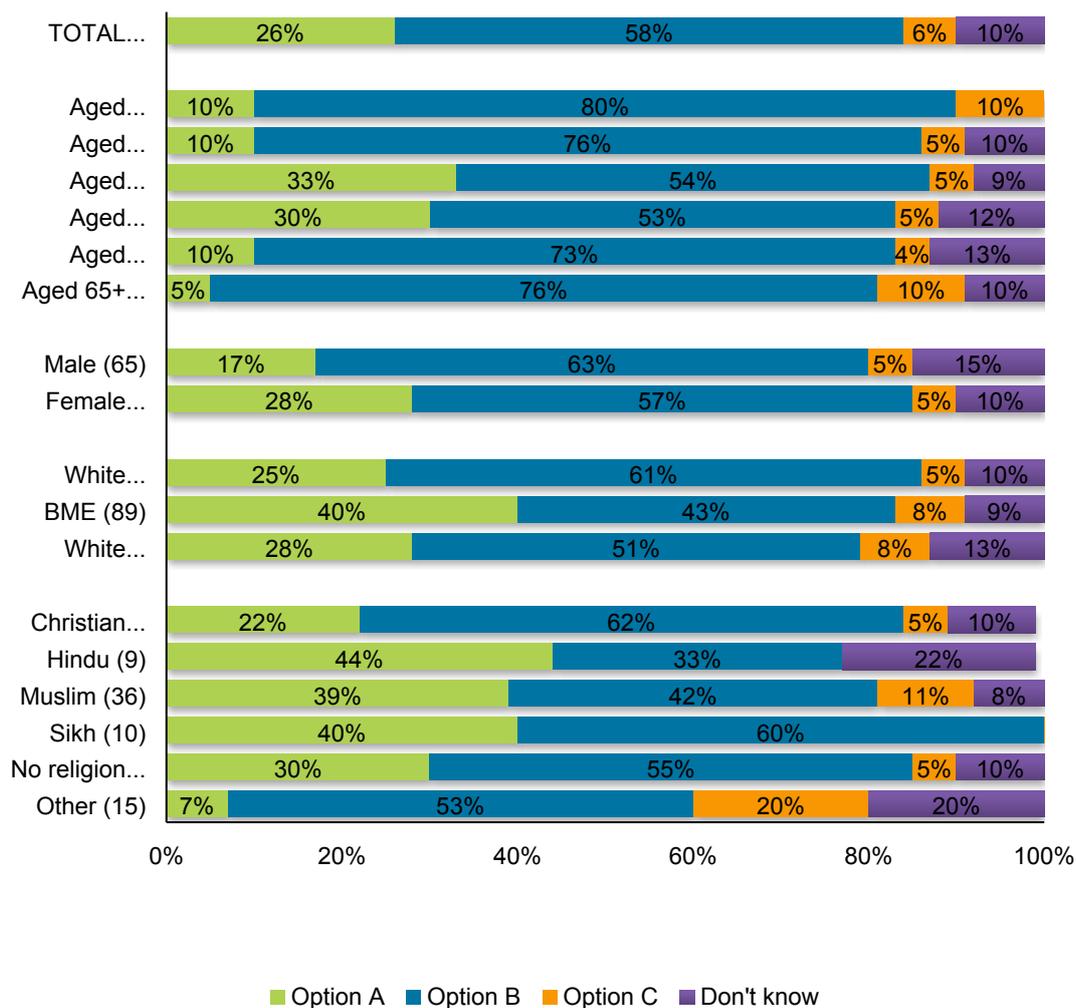


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.4.3 Option preference by demographics

Again, whilst Option B is the preferred option amongst all respondent groups (except Hindus where a very small base size applies), some significant differences are identifiable by demographics. Respondents are significantly more likely to prefer Option A if they are: aged 25 to 34 or 35 to 49 (33% and 30% respectively); female (28%); or from a BME background (40%). Those identifying as Christian are significantly more likely to prefer Option B, with 62% doing so, while Muslims are significantly less likely to prefer Option B (42%).

Figure 24: Option preferred by respondent group

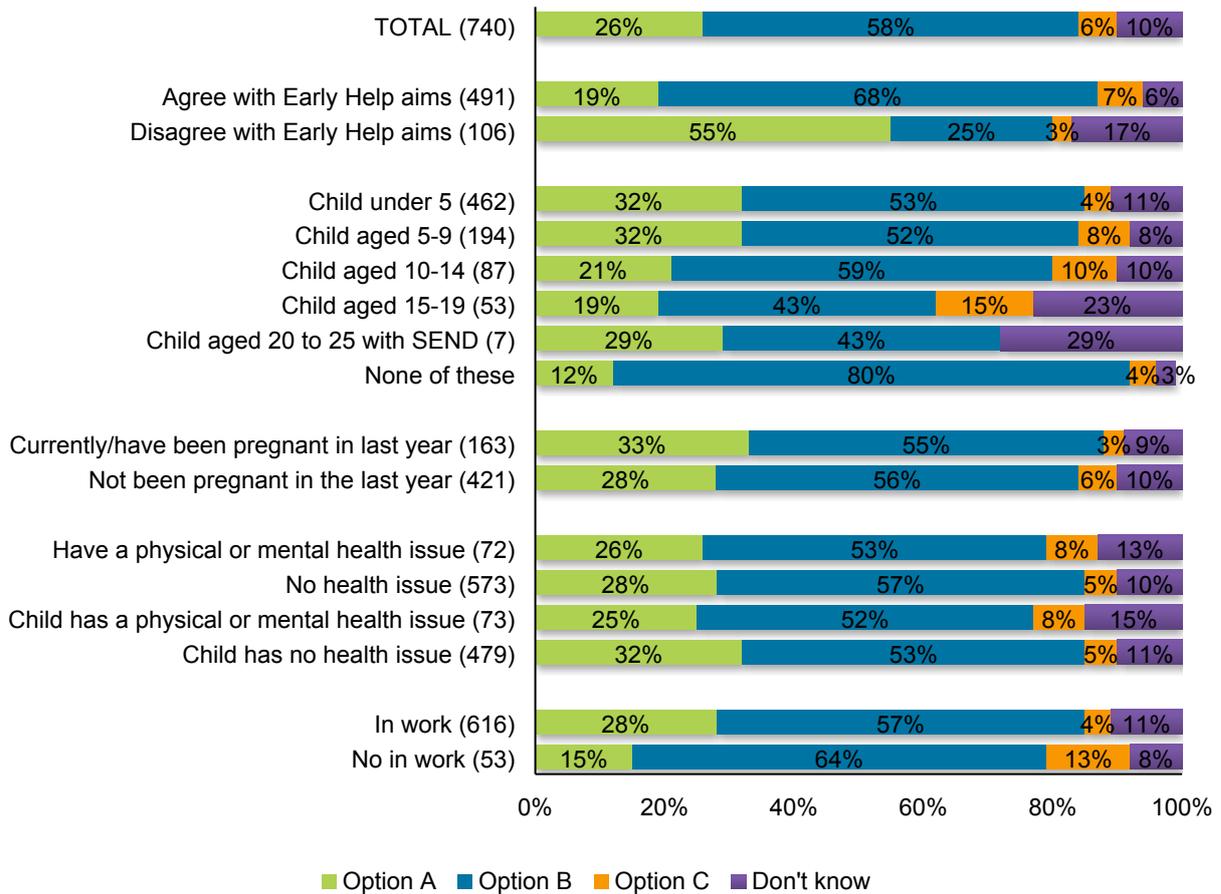


Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.4.4 Option preference by other factors

When other wider factors are taken into consideration, whilst Option B is the overall preference, Option A is more likely to be the preference when: the respondent does not agree with the Council's aims for Early Help (55%); if they have a child under 5 or aged 5 to 9 (32% for each); if the respondent is currently or has been pregnant in the last year (33%); or if the respondent is currently in work (28%).

Figure 25: Option preferred by other factors



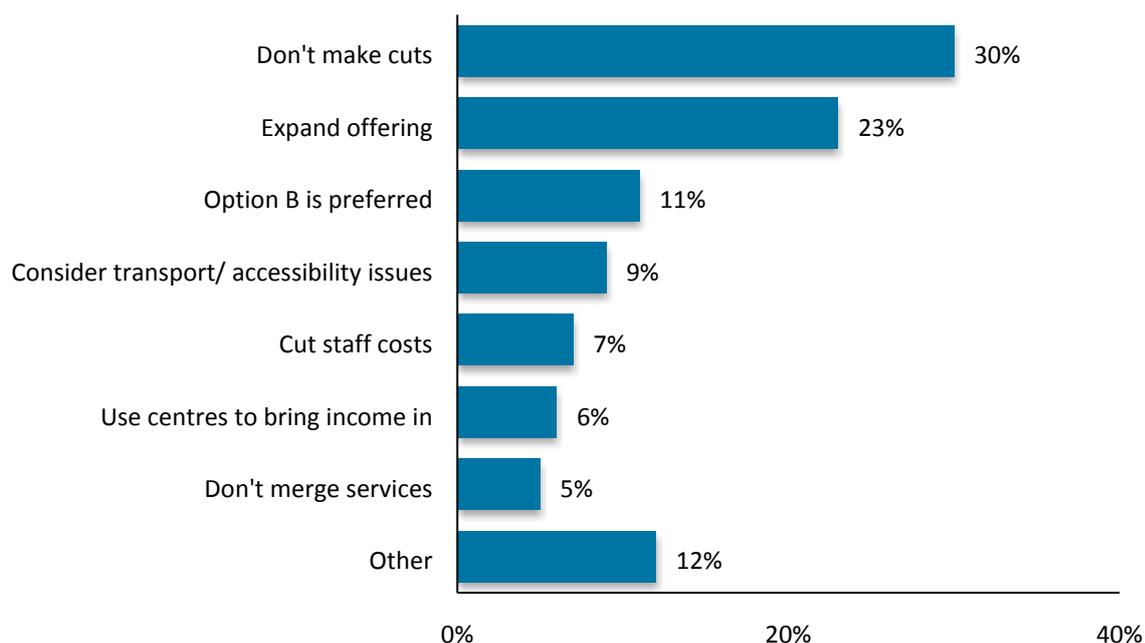
Q14. Figures shown are the proportion of each category preferring Option A. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

3.5 Alternative suggestions

3.5.1 Alternative ways to deliver early help

After being asked for their views on the three options put forward by the Council, respondents were asked about any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described within the three options. 265 respondents provided comments – the key themes are summarised below.

Figure 26: Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described in options A, B, or C?



Q19a. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 265

Many (30%, 80 respondents) expressed the view that the Council should not be making cuts to early help services, typically feeling that the Council should simply retain the existing services and make no changes, in some cases making a clear plea to 'keep the children's centres open'. Where individuals elaborated on their reasoning, some talked about the support offered by the current early help system, the importance of having somewhere to go locally to receive support and somebody to talk to, and that any cuts or changes to service offering will affect vulnerable or less affluent people and families. Other examples of comments raised include references to new housing developments in the county, believing that maintaining services will be important due to the demand generated, with a couple noting that the Council will generate funds through council tax on these additional properties. A few (2%, 6 respondents) argued that making changes would simply create additional workload for other areas, or that problems would escalate and require more costly intervention at a later stage.

One respondent evidenced the volume of support for maintaining the current level of centres and services by sharing a petition conducted between October 2017 and January 2018 which obtained over 3,000 signatures in opposition to the Council's previous proposal to replace the 35 children's centres with 9 hubs.²

Other respondents (23%, 60 respondents) believe that the Council should not just maintain the current offering, but expand upon it. Where individuals went into more detail on this, several (4%, 10 respondents) expressed the view that more support should be continued later on in life as support may appear to 'expire' at a certain age and needs may therefore not be dealt with. Other examples of comments around expanding service offering queried whether the charitable and voluntary sector could do more to provide services and particularly 'fill in the gaps' if Council provision at a particular centre were to be decreased or cease altogether.

² The petition can be found here <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-buckinghamshire-s-children-s-centres>

Where respondents used this question to state their preferred option and their reasoning, this was most commonly in support of Option B (11%, 28 respondents did so). In some cases this was with a caveat, with examples including further training being required, or suggesting locally-specific tweaks to the proposed geographic spread of the sites – expressing concern about 'gaps' in service offering in certain areas (particularly the north of the county) leaving residents there without local services. Where individuals explained their support for Option A, this was often because of a desire to retain some local presence so that people would have somewhere to access services, and that keeping the centres open was important in case further funding became available in the future so services can be 'scaled-up':

*"Every effort should be made to keep ALL the children's centre's open even if this means *temporarily* reducing the service... once the centres are closed they'll be gone forever, keep them open with a view to increasing services again when more money is available."*

Some (9%, 24 respondents) specifically noted the importance of transport issues, especially the concern that those living in rural areas would struggle to access services if their local centre were to close. Examples of this include: the concern that service users often lack access to their own transport – some respondents noted their own lack of transport - and public transport connecting them with a different centre may be limited and inconvenient; the importance of local services in reaching people in their vicinity and making sure people use the services and help available to them; and the possibility of utilising council-run minibuses to connect residents with local centres.

Several comments (7%, 19 respondents) concerned cutting staffing costs. Often this was not expanded upon, but where respondents were more specific, in many cases their view was that pay for senior staff and directors should be cut, while others advised pay cuts for all staff or pay cuts based on performance, and a few suggested that the Council should employ fewer staff.

Several respondents (6%, 16 respondents) feel that the children's centres could be used to provide income. Examples of this include: renting out the space to private organisations and individuals; charging a small fee for services, with some suggesting such a charge would be means-tested; and a further comment recommending the Council looks at sponsorship opportunities from businesses related to children, education, food and exercise. Similarly, others (5%, 12 respondents) expressed the view that money could be raised to expand or maintain provision through obtaining funds from central government, raising council tax, or using the Council's reserves.

A handful of respondents (5%, 12 respondents) expressed the view that merging services would be a mistake, with examples of this including the concerns that specialisation would be lost, and that merging children's centre services with targeted services aimed at older children would be a mistake due to the issues around safety and the need for the centres to provide a comfortable environment.

A small number of others (3%, 9 respondents) feel that any decisions on changes to early help should be delayed until the new Unitary Council takes effect, often noting that this is expected to save around £18million per annum and suggesting that part of this money be used for early help services:

"I am not selecting any options because I don't think such a big decision should be made until the new unitary is formed when we will have a clearer idea of resources available."

It should be noted, however, that the announcement regarding the Unitary Council came during the middle of the consultation period, after many individuals had already submitted their response.

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Examples of other comments given include whether the voluntary sector could be used to increase provision, or the desire for a solution involving various elements of more than one option, such as a blend between Option A and Option B to maintain some presence and support across all areas, or incorporating elements of Option C in using teams to perform outreach work inside communities lacking local centres. Other respondents feel that none of the options were appropriate:

"The three options are wholly inadequate. All the options are bad for families and the communities you pretend to serve."

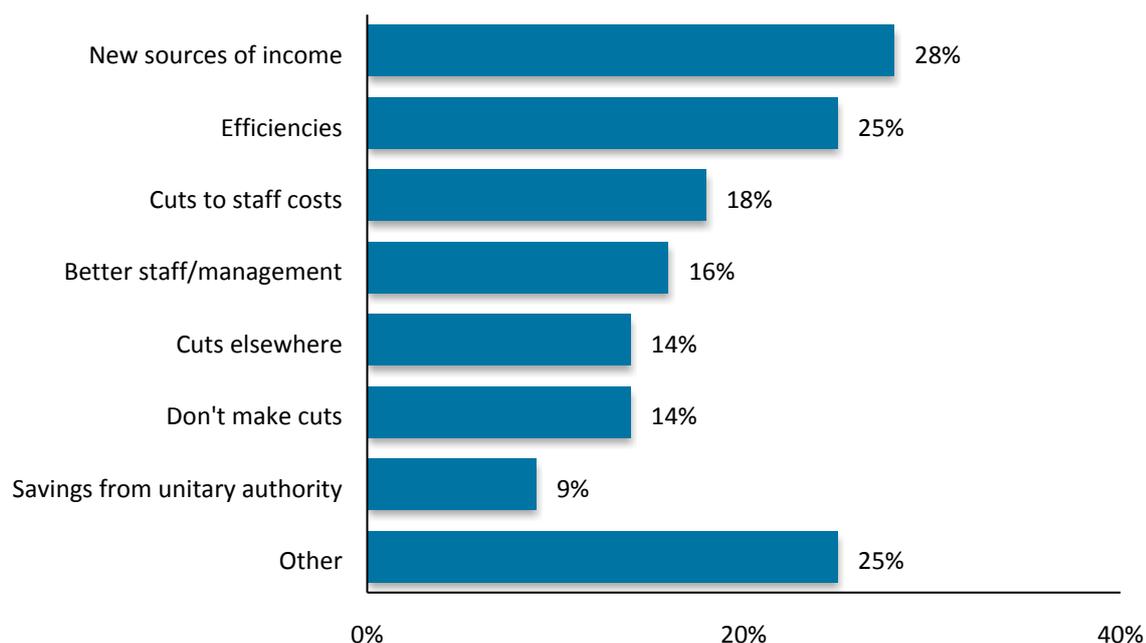
3.5.2 Alternative ways to make savings

Respondents were also asked for their suggestions on alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1 million in savings per annum. 304 provided comments, although several questioned why this was asked of the public, or felt that they wouldn't be able to answer:

"This is not an area that I feel I can comment on, as I have no idea how much things cost to run and how many provisions the County fund."

The key themes are summarised below.

Figure 27: Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1million in savings per annum?



Q19b. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base = 304

Many (28%, 85 respondents) raised the possibility of the Council obtaining additional funds as an alternative to cutting the early help budget. Among the suggestions raised were: renting out children's centre buildings (or spaces within them); charging a small fee for certain sessions or asking for donations; obtaining further funds from central government; raising council tax; raising income through various taxes or charges; and bringing new business into the county. Where respondents expressed support for renting out children's centre buildings, they often feel that children's centres would be a particularly appropriate venue for certain events such as children's birthday parties due to the toys available. In relation to comments about a small charge for certain sessions or services, some respondents suggested this be on a voluntary

basis, while others were not specific, and a few suggesting this charge be applied to specific sessions, or means-testing this in some way. Where raising council tax was mentioned, these comments often specifically referred to wealthier people and more expensive houses. A few feel that the Council should either simply 'refuse' to accept cuts or apply pressure on the government to increase funding, perhaps in conjunction with other councils:

"How about joining with other councils and telling central government that there is not enough money to support families properly, rather than continually attempting to manage increasing cuts."

Others (25%, 75 respondents) feel that such savings could be made through greater efficiency across the Council's spending as a whole; few of these comments specifically mentioned early help services. Many of these comments spoke in general terms about overhead or administration costs without specific suggestions for how such savings could be achieved. Where respondents elaborated on this, this was most commonly regarding a desire to see more shared use of facilities across the Council's estate, and running certain services out of alternative locations such as libraries and community centres. Other examples of suggestions noted include: further use of digital technology; assessing the quality of services and the demand for these and making cutbacks accordingly; reducing energy consumption, perhaps through the use of more energy efficient equipment, reducing duplication across public sector services; better communication and marketing to the general public; more communication and information sharing across Council departments; and cutting the costs of restructuring and consulting.

Some (18%, 54 respondents) expressed the view that savings can be achieved through cutting staffing costs. In many cases, individuals specifically highlighted the pay of senior staff as an area where savings could be made, while others endorsed more general pay cuts for staff across the Council. A few comments stated that these savings would be achieved through cutting the number of staff without mentioning cuts to pay. Other examples of suggestions raised included performance-related pay cuts, and reducing the number of agency staff.

A smaller number (16%, 48 respondents) feel that savings could be made through improved staff and management. Specifically, respondents highlighted: better management of sub-contractors, particularly re-negotiating these contracts or bringing work in-house; better management of staff including re-organising staff structures; the use of more volunteers, particularly in running sessions and other activities at children's centres; and for more flexibility in staff working practises, such as more meetings being conducted via teleconferencing facilities rather than face-to-face, and more staff working from home in order to make savings on office costs.

Others (14%, 43 respondents) suggested that cuts should be made to other areas of the public sector budget, so as to protect the current budget for early help services. Where these comments highlighted specific areas of spending, this most commonly concerned what many believe to be 'non-essential' roadworks, particularly changes to the road layout in High Wycombe, such as the following:

"There has been unnecessary roadworks going on in Wycombe town centre, redesigning road layouts. This in my view is a complete waste of council money. Stop any of this future work and invest it into our children."

Similarly, a few feel that repairs to roads could be conducted in a more efficient way, and that this could save money:

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

“Change the way the roads are repaired. Patching pot holes in the current model means repeated repairs of one hole as the repairs do not last. I think the council should consider bringing road repairs back in house.”

Other aspects of the Council budget identified by a few respondents as potential areas for funding cuts included the marketing department, street lighting, adult education, and libraries. Additionally, various comments (5%, 14 respondents) concerned areas of spending which would be matters for central government rather than the Council, such as HS2 and welfare, while other comments expressed their desire to see a change in government – all out of the scope of this consultation.

Some individuals (14%, 42 respondents) passionately feel that the Council should not be making cuts in this area, in some cases believing the Council should instead be increasing the budget, typically feeling that early help is a vital area of the Council’s budget. Some talked about the support that early help and children’s centres in particular can provide, and that this is crucial support for vulnerable or underprivileged people. Several comments questioned the ideological or practical basis for cutting funding, often stating that the UK is a rich country and should not need to make such cuts. However, it was typically unclear whether their comments were aimed at Buckinghamshire County Council or central government. A few reasoned that saving money in this area and reducing support would create additional problems, by allowing issues to go unresolved and therefore escalate to the point where more serious (and costly) intervention is required:

“Ensure Early Help really is effective early in a child’s life. Families who are currently in need but not reaching thresholds appear to miss support early on and then need more significant support later.”

It was felt by some respondents that other buildings owned by the public sector, such as schools, libraries and community centres, could be further utilised as spaces from which to deliver certain services, and that this would save costs on facilities.

On 1st November 2018, during the middle of the consultation period, it was announced that Buckinghamshire would be moving to a single Unitary Council from 2020. Some individuals who provided their response prior to that announcement had already suggested saving money by closing or merging councils, though most were not specific about supporting a move to a single Unitary Council. As noted previously, following the announcement, several noted that the money this will save should be used to maintain the existing early help budget or that any changes should be delayed until the new council takes effect, often specifically noting the estimated £18million of estimated savings per annum:

“Buckinghamshire is becoming a unitary in 2020 that is forecast to make an £18 million saving. It seems common sense to wait until after this change in structure to make any cuts that will be detrimental to the families you purportedly serve... I can see no strong reason to rush through this decision now.”

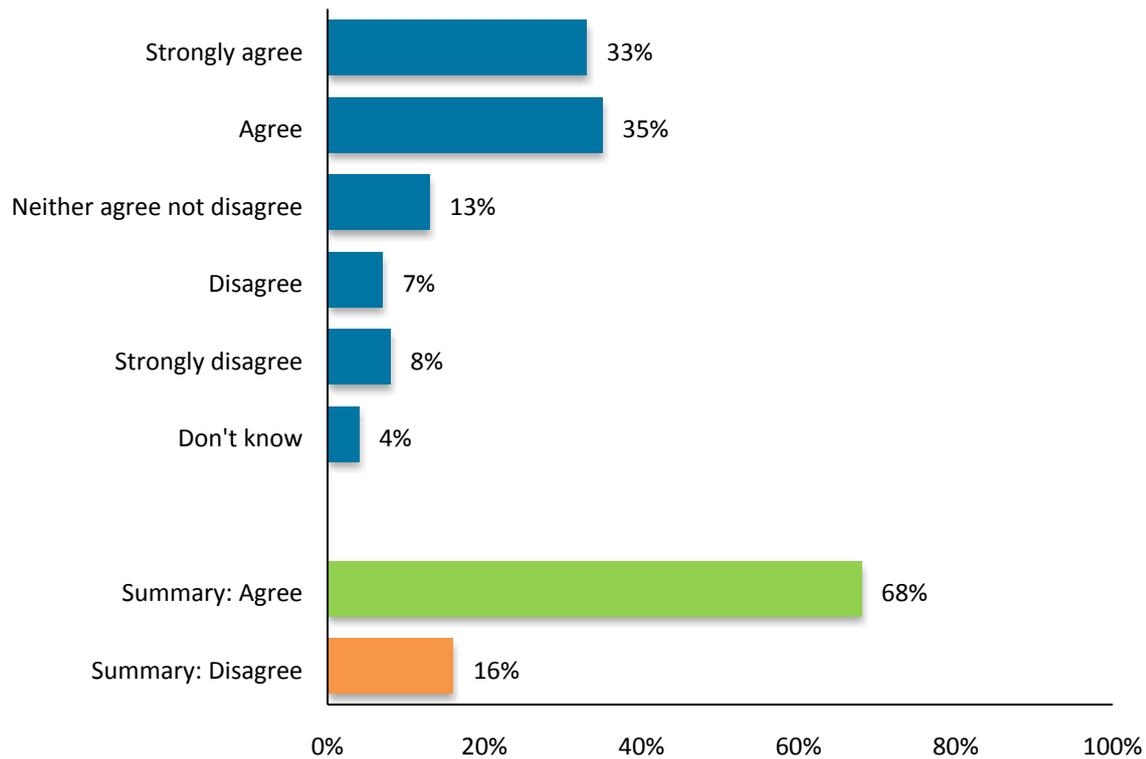
This view was also expressed and support for this evidenced through the submission of a petition to delay the decision to make any changes to children’s centres until after the formation of the Unitary Council. This petition obtained 356 signatures between the 12th and 13th December 2018.³

³ The petition can be found here: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-buckinghamshire-s-children-s-centres-delay-decision-as-it-should-be-made-by-the-new-council>

3.6 Future use of buildings

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents agree with the Council's aim that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early years' provision. This included 33% who strongly agree with this aim. Around one in six respondents disagree with this aim, whilst 13% neither agree nor disagree, and 4% do not know.

Figure 28: Agreement that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early year's provision



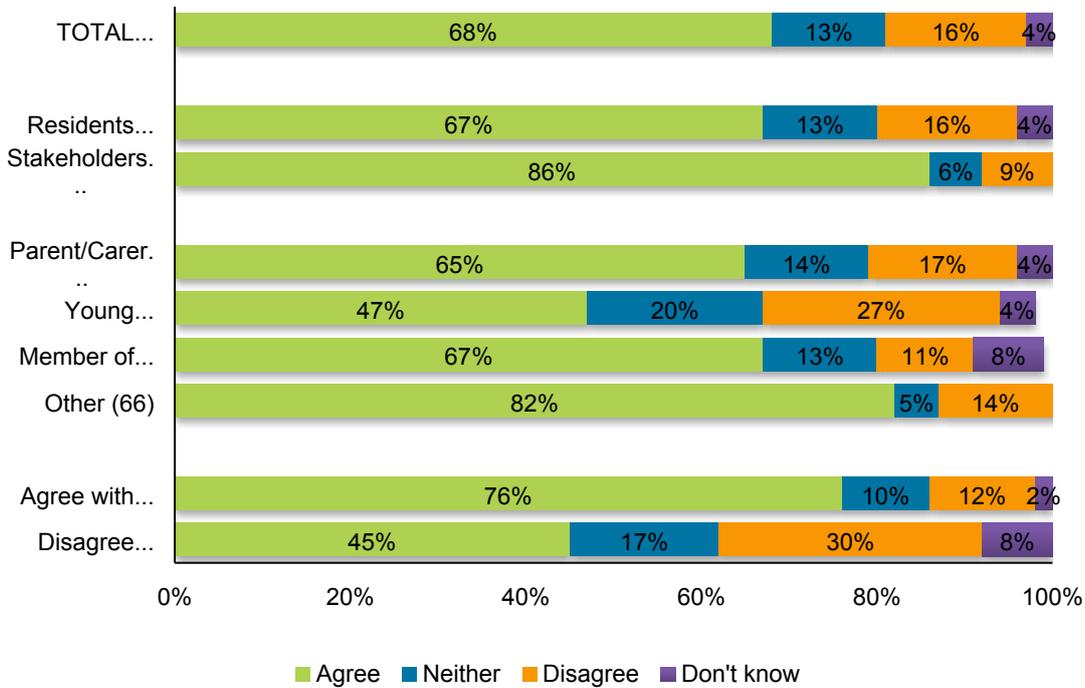
Q16. Single answer allowed. All respondents. Sample base: 744

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

Respondents who agree with this aim were significantly more likely to be stakeholders (86%); significantly less likely to be parents or carers (65%); and those in agreement with the Council’s aims for early help are also significantly more likely to agree with this aim regarding the future use of buildings(76%).

Figure 29: Agreement that children's centre buildings proposed for closure should continue to be used for community benefit, particularly early year’s provision (by demographic and respondent groups of interest)



Q16. Single answer allowed per respondent. Sample bases in parentheses. The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

4 Preferences for location

The following tables show the children’s centres respondents indicated a preference to keep open. Respondents were asked to select the children’s centre which was their top priority to remain open and up to four additional centres they would consider a priority. It should be noted that due to the number of children’s centres under consideration, detailed analysis cannot be undertaken based on respondent types (although it is provided where possible); however, two things should be considered when reading these tables:

1. Respondents may be more likely to comment upon children’s centres in areas local to them due to greater familiarity.
2. Residents may have been more likely to respond in areas where the Council identified children’s centres for closure.

4.1 Aylesbury Vale district

In the Aylesbury Vale district the children’s centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open, and that are also seen as the top priorities for remaining open are:

- Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre (24% think it is a priority overall, and 10% think it is top priority).
- Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrendon) Children’s Centre (19% think it is a priority overall, and 4% think it is top priority).
- Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children’s Centre (12% think it is a priority overall, and 4% think it is top priority).
- Buckingham Children’s Centre (13% think it is a priority overall, and 3% think it is top priority).

Figure 30: Respondents' priorities for keeping open (Aylesbury Vale district)

Children’s Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
Aylesbury (Southcourt)	68 (10%)	104 (15%)	172 (24%)
Aylesbury (Berryfields: Quarrendon)	30 (4%)	105 (16%)	135 (19%)
Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst)	30 (4%)	82 (12%)	112 (16%)
Buckingham	19 (3%)	72 (11%)	91 (13%)
Wendover	10 (1%)	57 (8%)	67 (9%)
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) (Broughton)	10 (1%)	56 (8%)	66 (9%)
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook)	7 (1%)	54 (8%)	61 (9%)
Aylesbury (South West)	4 (1%)	47 (7%)	51 (7%)
Wing Children’s Centre	14 (2%)	33 (5%)	47 (7%)
Waddesdon & Whitchurch	1 (*%)	40 (6%)	41 (6%)
Ivinghoe & Pitstone	14 (2%)	23 (3%)	37 (5%)
Haddenham	11 (2%)	22 (3%)	33 (5%)
Steeple Claydon	8 (1%)	18 (3%)	26 (4%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

4.2 Wycombe district

In the Wycombe district the children’s centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open (either as a priority or a top priority) are:

- High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children’s Centre – 25%
- Wycombe (Disraeli) Children’s Centre – 17%
- Wycombe (Millbrook) Children’s Centre – 16%
- Mapledean Children’s Centre (Wycombe Abbey) – 14%

Whilst the same four sites are also seen as top priorities for remaining open, these are in the following order:

- Mapledean Children’s Centre (Wycombe Abbey) – 6%
- Wycombe (Disraeli) Children’s Centre – 5%
- Wycombe (Millbrook) Children’s Centre – 4%
- High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children’s Centre – 4%

Figure 31: Respondents’ priorities for keeping open (Wycombe district)

Children’s Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
High Wycombe (Castlefield)	29 (4%)	150 (22%)	179 (25%)
Wycombe (Disraeli)	39 (5%)	82 (12%)	121 (17%)
Wycombe (Millbrook)	30 (4%)	86 (13%)	116 (16%)
Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey)	43 (6%)	53 (8%)	96 (14%)
Hamilton Road (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	16 (2%)	68 (10%)	84 (12%)
Wycombe (Hampden Way)	17 (2%)	63 (9%)	80 (11%)
Wycombe (East) (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	8 (1%)	67 (10%)	75 (11%)
Marlow (Foxes Piece)	18 (3%)	52 (8%)	70 (10%)
Hazlemere & Loudwater	16 (2%)	54 (8%)	70 (10%)
Risborough	16 (2%)	50 (7%)	66 (9%)
Wooburn Green & Bourne End	7 (1%)	35 (5%)	42 (6%)
Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley	8 (1%)	21 (3%)	29 (4%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

4.3 Chiltern & South Bucks district

In the Chiltern and South Bucks district the children’s centres which were most frequently selected as a priority for keeping open (either as a priority or a top priority) are:

- Beaconsfield Children’s Centre – 13%
- Chesham (Waterside) Children’s Centre – 11%
- Amersham Children’s Centre – 10%
- The Ivers Children’s Centre – 10%
- The Chalfonts Children’s Centre – 10%

However, when we look at the centres which are most likely to be seen as the top priorities for staying open this list changes as follows:

- The Ivers Children’s Centre – 5%
- Newtown Children’s Centre – 5%

Figure 32: Respondents' priorities for keeping open (Chiltern and South Bucks)

Children’s Centre	Top priority for keeping open n (%)	A priority for keeping open n (%)	Total selecting n (%)
Beaconsfield	15 (2%)	79 (12%)	94 (13%)
Chesham (Waterside)	11 (2%)	66 (10%)	77 (11%)
Amersham	13 (2%)	56 (8%)	69 (10%)
The Ivers	36 (5%)	32 (5%)	68 (10%)
The Chalfonts	6 (1%)	62 (9%)	68 (10%)
Denham & Gerrards Cross	13 (2%)	51 (8%)	64 (9%)
Burnham	14 (2%)	46 (7%)	60 (8%)
Newtown	34 (5%)	25 (4%)	59 (8%)
Farnham	6 (1%)	29 (4%)	35 (5%)
Prestwood & Missenden	4 (1%)	18 (3%)	22 (3%)

Q17. Respondents could select one top priority and up to four additional priorities. Sample base = 712 for top priority, and 677 for other priorities. The centres the Council proposes to retain under Option B are shown in bold.

4.4 Priorities by respondent group and characteristics

As noted previously, due to the number of children’s centres under consideration, detailed analysis cannot be undertaken based on respondent types; however, we have provided a summary of where centres are more likely to be a top priority by different respondent groups:

- 14% of stakeholders chose High Wycombe (Castlefield) and 6% chose Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) as their top priority.
- 15% of respondents from BME backgrounds chose Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey), 10% chose the The Ivers, and 7% chose Denham & Gerrards Cross, and 5% chose Burnham as their top priority.
- 26% of Muslim respondents chose Mapledean (Wycombe Abbey) and 6% chose Chesham (Waterside) as their top priority. 13% of Christian respondents chose Aylesbury (Southcourt) as their top priority.
- 19% of respondents who were not in work chose Aylesbury (Southcourt) as their top priority.

5 Public meetings and drop-ins

The following chapter provides a summary of the key themes emerging from the public meetings and drop-in sessions. It should be noted that discussions at these events mostly focused on the impact changes to early help would have on children's centres.

The following table provides a summary of the events and the number of attendees at each.

Type of event	Location	Number of attendees
Public meeting	Aylesbury	4
Public meeting	High Wycombe	17
Public meeting	Amersham	10
Drop-in session	Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	13
Drop-in session	Disraeli Children's Centre	25
Drop-in session	The Ivers Children's Centre	15

5.1 Key themes from discussions

5.1.1 Impact of children's centres

Attendees at the public meetings and drop-in sessions often strongly stressed the benefits of children's centres and the impact they have had on their lives, praising the staff and their ability to identify individuals with emerging needs through open-access sessions. The centres could therefore intervene and offer support to prevent these escalating further, signposting to other support services where appropriate. Some shared personal stories to illustrate the impact of support from children's centres in dealing with issues such as post-natal depression, anxiety, helping reduce the social isolation faced by many new mothers, and valuing the 'non-judgemental' nature of this support in contrast to the 'stigma' attached to targeted services.

It was felt that reducing the number of centres in general would put the availability of such support at risk, and residents and stakeholders across the different events were keen to stress their concerns related both to their local centre, but also to centres across Buckinghamshire. This point was particularly raised at The Ivers, where they felt that they did not believe it should be a case of 'either/or' between this and other centres. Similarly at the Disraeli centre, some raised a perception that they were being 'penalised' for being from an area that was less deprived, even though they still might need support.

5.1.2 Transport issues

Many residents feel that a lack of adequate, reliable public transport, particularly in rural areas, would mean people without a vehicle would face severe difficulties accessing services without a local centre. They particularly feel that mothers carrying children and pushchairs would not access services if this involved an inconvenient journey of several miles to their nearest centre, perhaps involving multiple buses and lengthy waits for infrequent services. Therefore, some people may 'slip through the net' and not receive the support they require to prevent their needs from escalating.

Transport and travel time and convenience was a particular concern raised by residents and stakeholders at drop-in sessions at Steeple Claydon and The Ivers centres.

5.1.3 The need for savings and creation of a Unitary Council

A few individuals sought clarity on budgetary figures, particularly how the new budget would compare to the existing budget, when this would take effect, and the level of cuts made to the relevant budgets previously. There was a sense of frustration that the Council needed to make these savings, particularly from services which were viewed as having a strong impact on people's lives.

Following the announcement that Buckinghamshire will be moving to a single Unitary Council from 2020, subject to parliamentary approval, some questioned why it was necessary to change early help and whether these changes could be delayed until the new council comes into being. It had been publicised that this change is expected to lead to savings of £18m per annum, leading to queries about whether some of this money can be used to maintain or improve the existing early help services. Others questioned whether it was appropriate to make any decisions on the future of early help at this stage, given that the new council may take a different view and have additional funds available.

5.2 Specific queries and gaps in the information provided

Many questions were raised concerning the Council's decision process, how it developed the proposals under Option B as outlined in the materials, the substance of the proposals themselves, and the execution of this, particularly:

- Why two open access sessions at each centre was deemed the right level.
- The factors the Council explored when deciding which centres it proposes to remain open under Option B.
- The thought process involved in determining that 14 sites was the most appropriate level, and whether this could be increased at all e.g. to 20 centres.
- Whether changes were necessary given the savings of £18m per annum achieved by the creation of a Unitary Council, and the reserves of the district councils.
- The services that will be offered in Haddenham Children's Centre, and the locations involved.
- Whether Southcourt Children's Centre will be extended in order to become a family centre plus site.
- The extent to which support would be made available for the voluntary sector to be able to develop and run alternative sessions.
- Concerns about the Council's ability to support more people with fewer centres and fewer staff, and the mechanisms through which needs could be identified.
- Details on the numbers of families to be reached by each centre.
- The impact of these changes on the level of staffing.

Further questions were asked about the number of responses received to date; why the efforts to link more closely with Health, early years providers, schools and others was not done already; and whether the Council have made efforts to obtain further funding through engagement with central government.

5.3 Comments regarding alternatives

As noted previously, many residents expressed their belief that their local centre should remain open under the Council's Option B. Others enquired about how the new family centres proposed under Option B will accommodate additional visitors, raising concerns such as parking and the space within the buildings (and at particular sessions), and any plans to expand capacity. Further alternatives and considerations were also put forward.

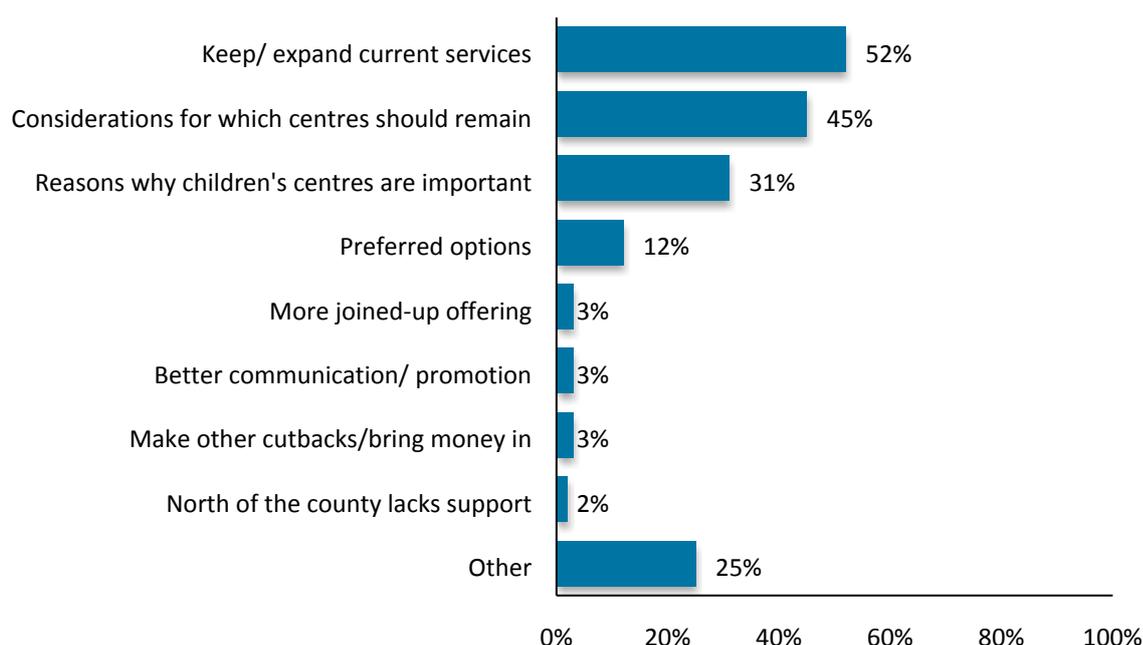
Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

- One resident felt that Haddenham village hall should be utilised because of its size, its use by residents from surrounding villages who may face difficulties travelling further, and also the local housing developments which will drive further demand.
- Another noted that some the Hampden Way children's centre was the most convenient for them as other local centres are difficult to access due to limited parking and bus services.
- A further individual noted the relatively high levels of deprivation in Iver and felt that this should therefore be prioritised for retention, especially as limited public transport would make it difficult to access any other centre; this concern was also expressed by many residents at the Ivers Children's Centre drop-in, particularly that a visit to a different children's centre would involve changing bus three times and a high fare.
- At the Steeple Claydon drop-in, many comments were made concerning the unsuitability of Buckingham Children's Centre, which was off-putting even to those who were able to travel there.
- At the Disraeli Children's Centre session, the drop-in nature of the centre and its use as a community hub were seen as distinct, and some residents felt more could be done to establish community-ran groups here.
- Some residents felt further information was needed regarding how local communities and groups could work with the Council to ensure the delivery of alternative sessions in their local areas.

6 Additional views and comments

Respondents were given an opportunity at the end of the consultation questionnaire to provide any other relevant information they believe the Council should consider. 299 respondents offered additional thoughts. Due to the nature of this question, respondents used this to express a wide range of views on various topics, as summarised in the table below and explored further in this chapter.

Figure 33: Please provide any other relevant information you believe the Council should consider.



Q22. Open text response, subsequently coded into categories. Comments may fall into several categories. Sample base: 299

6.1 Support for children's centres

Over half (52%, 155 respondents) used the open response question to express their support for children's centres and their belief that they should all remain open, often stating that they oppose the idea of reducing funding, closing any children's centres, or reducing the services they offer. Generally, this was accompanied by praise for the children's centres, their staff, the quality of services provided, and the support they offered in dealing with issues, often sharing personal stories of the sessions they have attended, the issues they faced and the importance of the support from the children's centres in dealing with those issues. In some cases, respondents named a particular children's centre that has provided support (typically the one they used most often or that was local to them), often expressing their hope that the centre will remain open. Some also expressed the view that the children's centre offer should be expanded, sometimes explicitly stating that this should involve more funding or additional sessions.

Similarly, many (31%, 94 respondents) spoke in further detail about their support for children's centres and the reasons their services are important. In particular, individuals noted that the support they provide can go towards vulnerable people and children, and how vital this support

Early Help: Consultation Findings Report

can be to them. Others talked about the value that children's centres can have in allowing people to meet other local parents and provide valuable social contact, particularly as parenting can be a lonely, isolating experience. Similarly, a few talked about the impact of children's centres as something of a hub for the community, playing a role in building a community feel, and bringing people of different backgrounds together. Other examples of reasons given in support of children's centres include: helping the life chances of children by giving them some support earlier in life, in some cases allowing children to become more sociable; the belief that an investment in children's centre services and dealing with issues before they escalate and become more serious would prevent the need for a more serious and costly intervention at a later stage; and the importance of the support they have received from children's centres in dealing with mental health issues. Several expressed concerns that some people may 'slip through the net' and not receive the support they require if a local children's centre was not available, as children's centres currently are a good way to identify those with issues and signpost them to extra support if required.

6.2 Considerations for which centres to retain

A large proportion (45%, 134 respondents) also offered their thoughts on the factors they believe should be taken into account to inform the Council's decision on which option to take and which centres would remain open and which would close if Option B is selected. Often, these comments concerned accessibility issues and the requirement for local support to be available, particularly in rural areas, as some people might be unable to reach support due to the distance involved, lack of personal transport and the limited public transport available, as well as the potential expense of travel rendering it an unattractive or impossible option for low-income families. One stakeholder organisation specifically thought that the logistics of travelling to the centres from different areas should be considered. A few expressed their view that, as a result of these factors, some people would no longer visit children's centres, and that issues may escalate as a result. More specifically, several respondents noted that residents in Iver and the surrounding area in particular may be left some distance away from their nearest centre with limited public transport available locally to connect them to another centre.

Several (8%, 24 respondents) respondents feel that deprivation should be an issue for the Council to consider, particularly in ensuring centres in more deprived areas of the county are prioritised for retention. Similarly, a letter from a parish councillor in Iver expressed the view that the relative deprivation in Iver as demonstrated by official sources means that retaining a site there should be prioritised, particularly compared to Beaconsfield.

Respondents also noted various other factors that they believe the Council should consider. Examples of this include: the current usage of the centres; the parking available, whether at the site itself or in the surrounding area; the size and suitability of the buildings themselves; ensuring that the spread reflects population centres and new housing developments; maintaining a geographical spread across the county; and the quality of the staffing and support available at the different centres. In relation to these issues, some expressed their concern that the remaining centres would not be able to accommodate the additional demand due to a lack of space or parking available, with others expressing concerns that more people needing to drive in order to access support would be damaging for the environment and/or increase congestion. A few expressed concerns about converting the children's centres to family centres, feeling that including teenagers with behavioural or other issues alongside support for young mothers and their children would create a less comfortable environment and raise issues around safety.

In relation to the geographic spread, some particularly feel that the north of the county, far south of the county, or the east side of High Wycombe would not be covered adequately by the 14

family centre sites the Council proposes under Option B. The leader of the East Wycombe Independent Party, as well as two of its district councillors representing Micklefield expressed their concerns that the closure of the centres at Hampden Way and Micklefield (Wycombe East) children's centres would leave the east of Wycombe without a centre, and local residents would need to take two buses run by different operators to access their nearest centre. Similarly, Castlefield Community Centre urged the Council to reconsider the geographical spread if it does go with Option B given its concerns about access to centres for residents in East Wycombe in particular, and one stakeholder organisation noted that all of the proposed family centres in High Wycombe under Option B are on the same side of the town.

Castlefield Community Centre, a project of the Karima Foundation, submitted an additional written response to BMG Research regarding their proposal that the Castlefield site "be looked at holistically, with a view to transform current services and to enable the formation of a true community hub, providing better quality outcomes for the community". The Karima Foundation expressed their hope to work with the Council to provide long-term services for children at Castlefield Community Centre.

A few individuals feel that factors concerning the quality of the buildings themselves and the facilities available should be taken into consideration, particularly in relation to parking and access, with some expressing concerns that the remaining centres would not have the space to accommodate additional demand.

6.3 Preferences for options

Some (12%, 37 respondents) commented directly on the three options the Council put forward in its consultation, and elaborated on their reasons for preferring one or another. In some cases, respondents criticised all of the options on offer, believing none of them to be an appropriate model for delivering early help services, and stating that their preference would be for things to remain as they are with no cuts to funding. Several expressed support for Option B, believing it to be the best option in the consultation, with a few stressing the need to maintain some degree of universal open access. A few preferred Option A, typically because it would mean all centres remain open and people would still have access to local services. Option C was generally criticised where it was mentioned, typically because this might stigmatise services or their users and fail to pick up individuals with needs without the universal offer.

6.4 Other comments

Due to the nature of this question, respondents expressed views on a wide range of topics relating to early help. Examples of these comments include: the desire for a more 'joined-up' service offering with better communication across services and departments (3%, 10 respondents); the possibility of making cutbacks in other (often unspecified) areas or to bring additional funds into the service (3%, 8 respondents); the need for clearer and more effective communication regarding the services and sessions available at particular locations (3%, 8 respondents); and a lack of support currently for the north of the county outside of Aylesbury (2%, 6 respondents).

Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

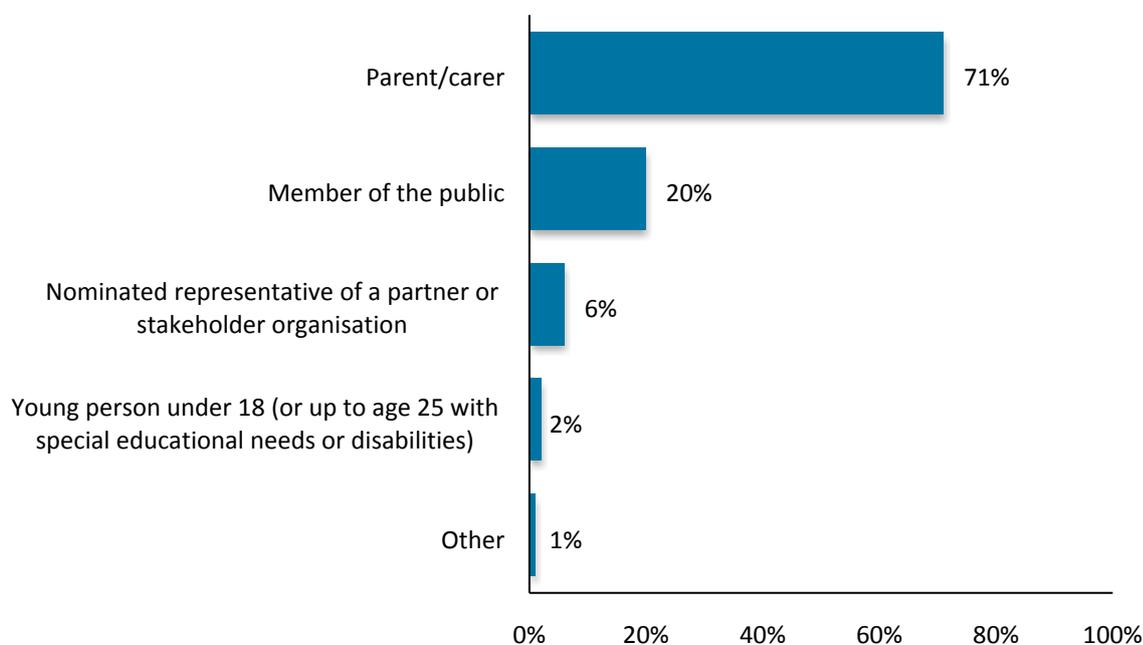
Appendix 1 provides amalgamated information about the respondents to this consultation. Where possible, due to availability of data, it provides comparisons with the wider Buckinghamshire population.

Analysis for this report explored the extent to which there were significant differences based on these groups, and where key differences emerged these are highlighted in the report.

Respondent types

Over two-thirds (71%) of respondents indicated that they are responding as a parent or carer, and one-fifth (20%) described themselves as a 'member of the public'. 6% of responses were received from nominated representatives of a partner or stakeholder organisation, while 2% of responses were from young people under 18. 1% identified as something else.

Figure 34: Are you responding to this consultation mainly as a ...



Q1. Single answer allowed, Sample base=752

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

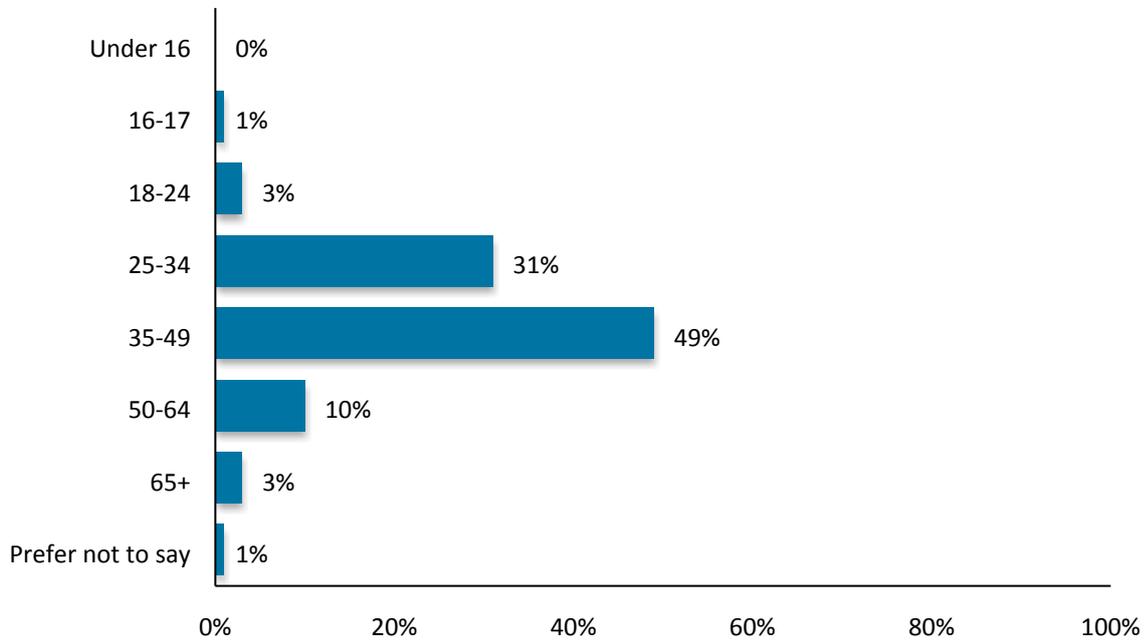
Resident demographics

Age of respondents

Approximately half (49%) of respondents to the consultation are aged 35-49, and just under a third (31%) of respondents are aged 25-34. 10% of respondents are aged 50-64, 3% are aged 18-24, 3% came from the over 65s, and 1% of individuals responding to the consultation are aged 16-17. A further 1% preferred not to say. Where respondents were aged under 16, they were instructed to obtain parental consent and instruct a parent or guardian to contact BMG. They would then be sent a link to allow them to complete the questionnaire. However, nobody from this age group completed the questionnaire.

It should be noted that this does not reflect the demographics of Buckinghamshire as a whole. It is estimated that 21% of the county’s population are aged under 16; 2% are 16-17; 7% are 18-24; 11% are 25-34; 20% are 35-49; 20% are 50-64; and 19% are aged 65 or older.⁴

Figure 35: Which of the following age brackets are you in?



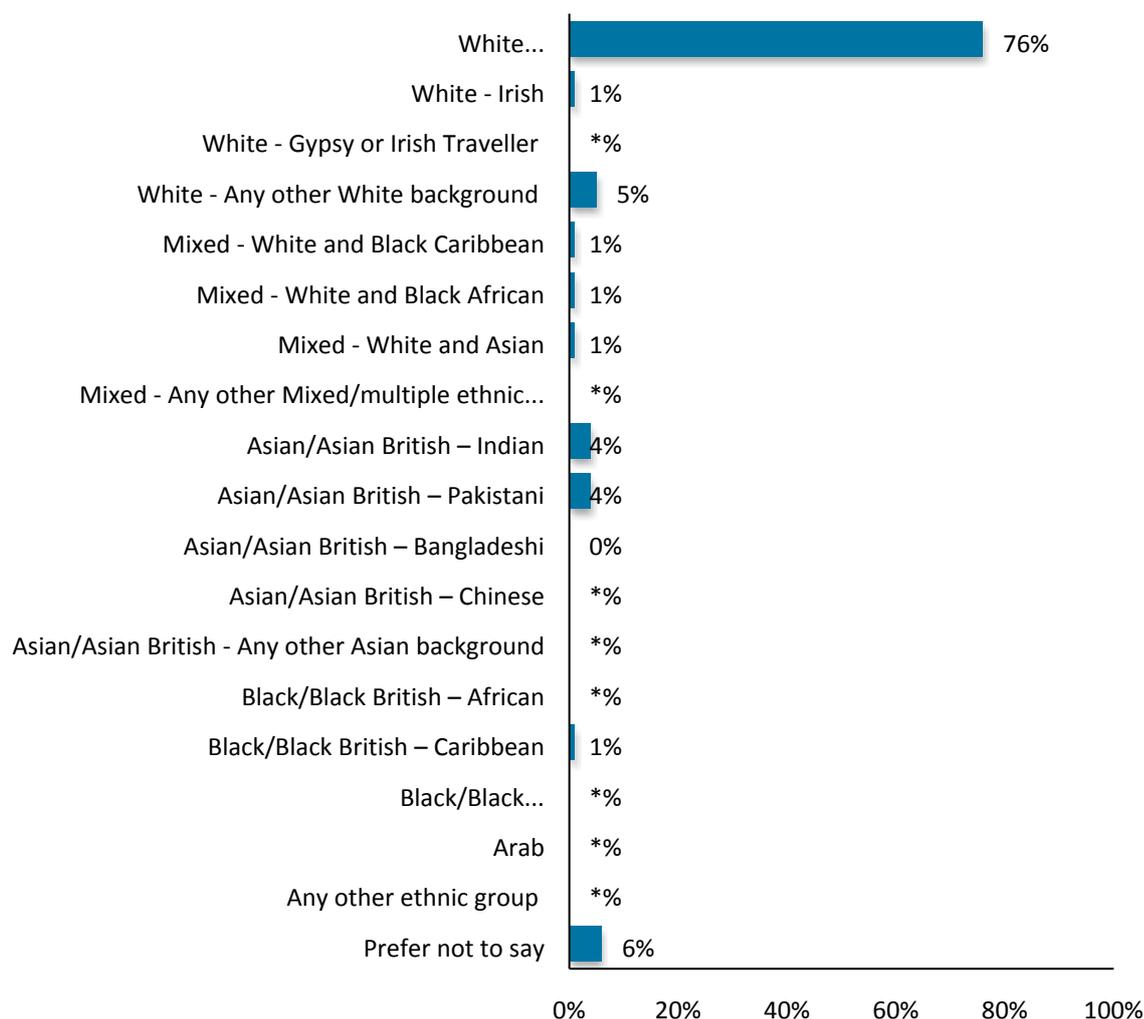
Q2. Single answer allowed. Residents only (not stakeholders). Sample base=712
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

⁴ Population data obtained from ‘Projections Data – Single Years of Age (Dec2014) available here: <https://www.bucksc.gov.uk/services/community/research/population/>

Ethnicity of respondents

Three-quarters (76%) of consultation respondents identified as White – English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish; this group accounted for 81.1% of Buckinghamshire’s population in 2011.⁵ 6% of survey respondents preferred not to disclose their ethnic background. 5% identified themselves as from a White background other than British, Irish or Gypsy/Irish Traveller, 4% as Indian, 4% as Pakistani, 1% as White Irish, 1% as Mixed – White and Black Caribbean, 1% Mixed – White and Black African, 1% Mixed – White and Asian, 1% as Black Caribbean. Other respondents identified as White (Gypsy or Irish Traveller), another mixed ethnic group, Chinese, Other Asian, Black African, Other Black, Arab, or another ethnic group not mentioned (less than 0.5% in all cases). These figures are all broadly comparable to the population of Buckinghamshire as a whole, according to the 2011 census.

Figure 36: Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?



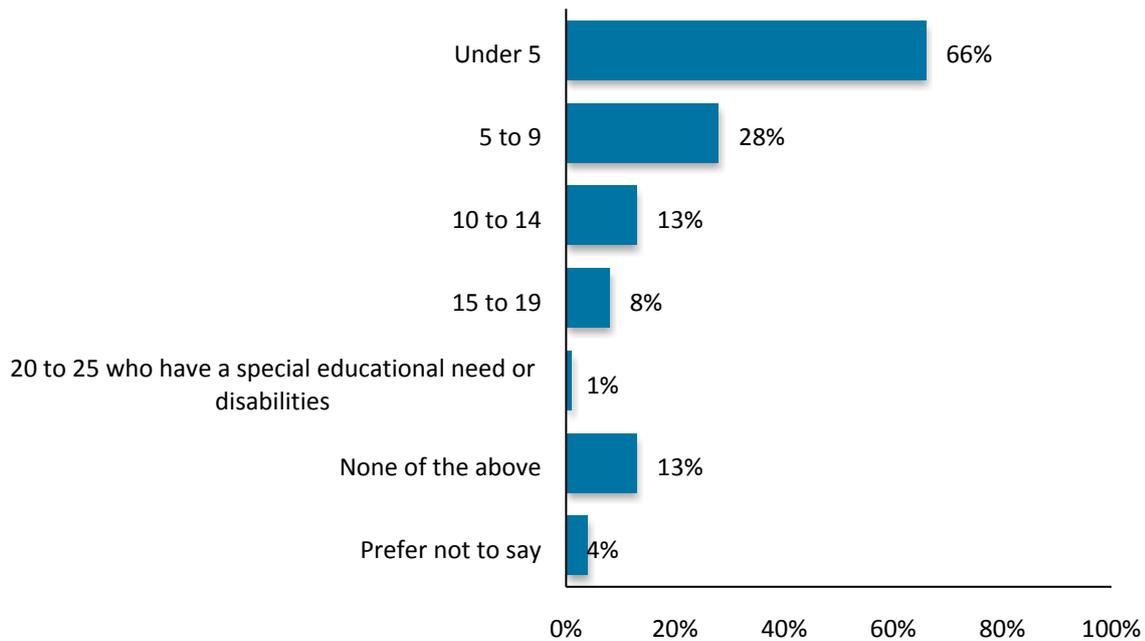
Q20. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 701
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

⁵ 2011 Census data available here:
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf_/http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/research/2011-census/

Parental/caring responsibilities

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents have parental or caring responsibilities for Under 5s, around a quarter (28%) have such responsibilities for children aged 5 to 9, 13% for 10-14 year olds, 8% for 15 to 19 year olds, and 1% for those aged 20-25 with special educational needs or disabilities. 13% had no such responsibilities and an additional 4% preferred not to disclose this information.

Figure 37: Are you the parent of or a carer for children in any of the following age groups?

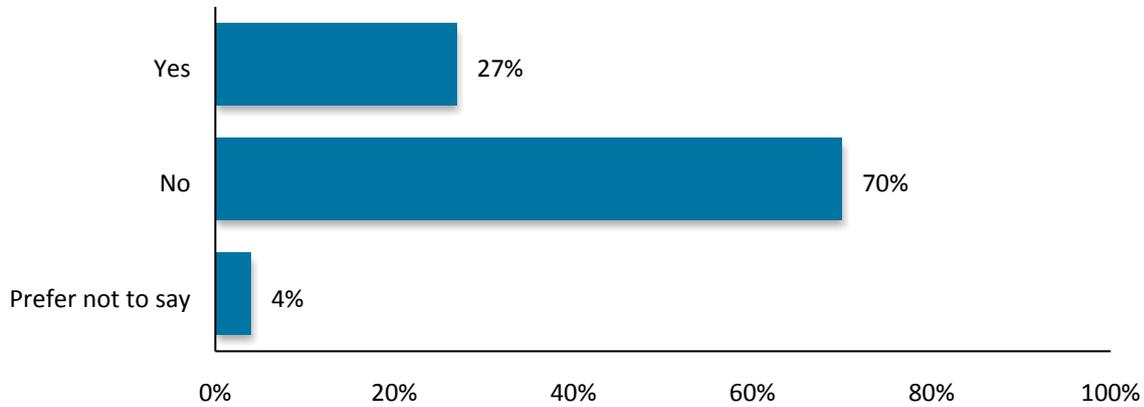


Q21. Multiple answers allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 712
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Pregnancy

Just over a quarter (27%) of female respondents who did not skip the question were either currently pregnant or had been in the last year, while 70% had not been and 4% preferred not to say.

Figure 38: Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?

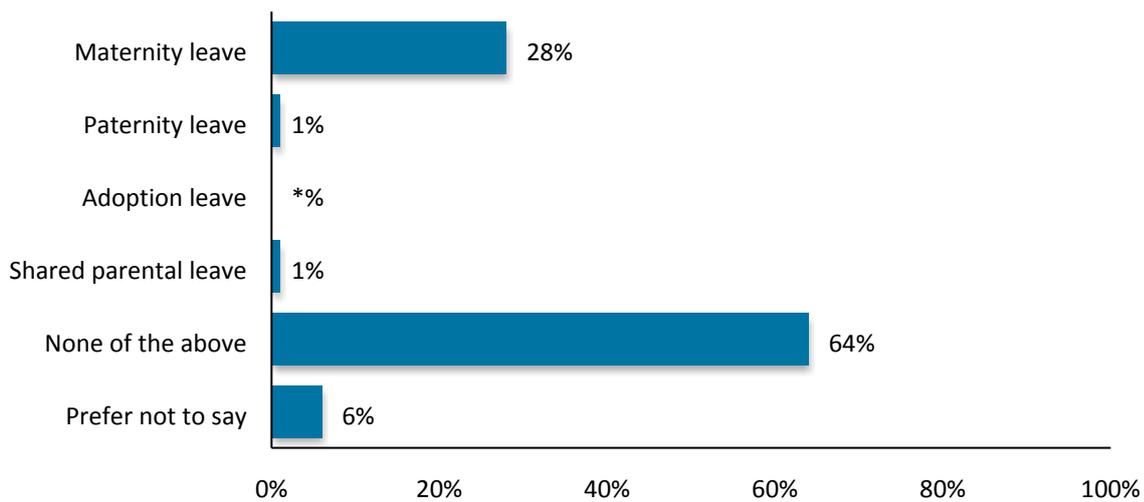


Q22. Single answer allowed. Female residents only. Sample base = 614
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Types of leave

Almost two-thirds (64%) had not taken any of these forms of leave in the past year, while around a quarter (28%) had taken maternity leave in that time period, with 1% taking paternity leave, 1% shared parental leave, and less than 0.5% adoption leave. A further 6% declined to answer this question.

Figure 39: Have you taken any of the following types of leave within the past year?



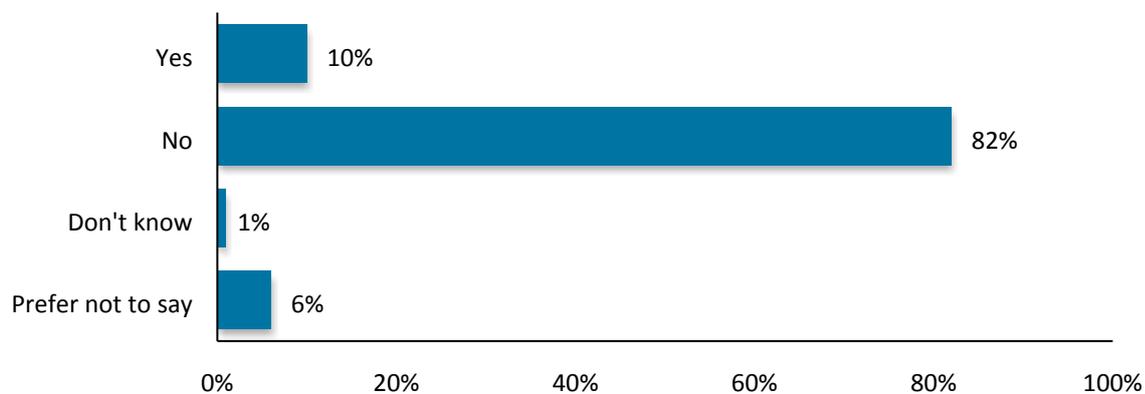
Q23. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 682
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Health issues

Around one-tenth (10%) of respondents identified themselves as having a longer term physical or mental health condition or illness which reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, while four-fifths (82%) said this was not the case, 1% did not know and 6% preferred not to say.

According to the 'Healthy places, healthy futures: growing great communities' report: "It is estimated that one in eight men (12.5%), and nearly one in every five women (19.7%) in Buckinghamshire have a common mental health disorder such as anxiety or depression."⁶ Although this gives some indication of the extent of mental health conditions, this does not provide comparable data as this does not include physical health conditions.

Figure 40: Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?



Q24. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 705

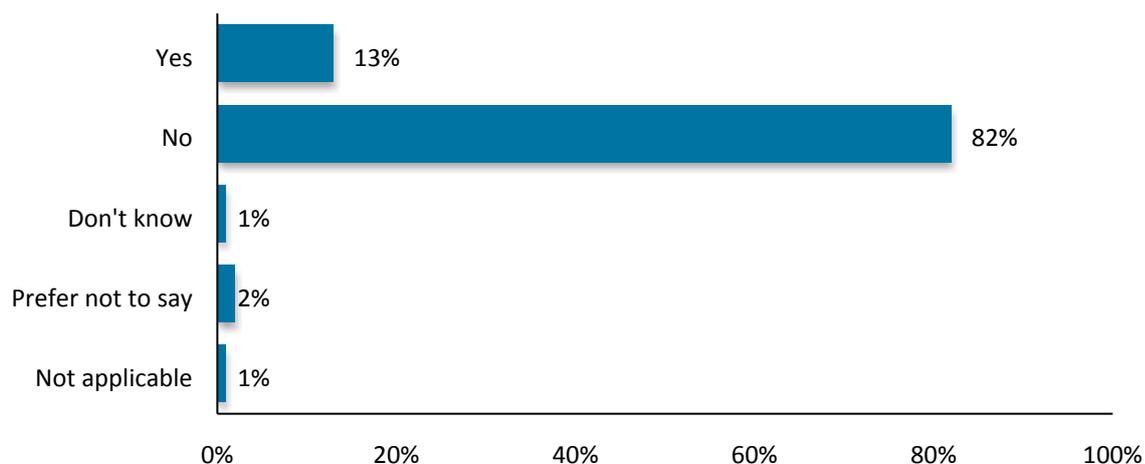
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Four-fifths (82%) of respondents do not have any children with long-term mental or physical health problem, while 13% said this is the case. 1% do not know, 2% preferred not to say, and 1% stated this is not applicable to them.

⁶ The report can be found here:

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s120937/Healthy%20Places%20Healthy%20Futures%20D PH%20Annual%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

Figure 41: Does your child or one of your children have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces their ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

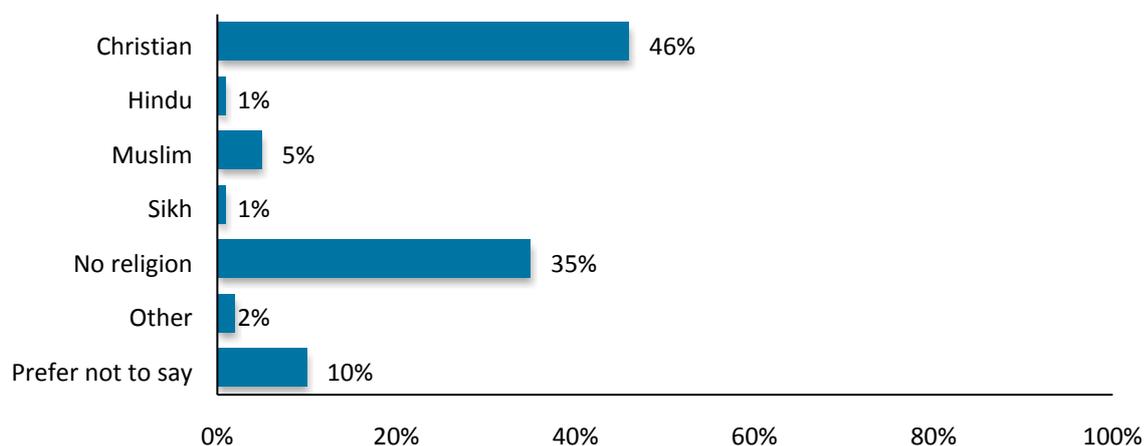


Q25. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 586
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Religion

Just under half (46%) of consultation respondents identified as Christian; at the 2011 census, 60.5% of Buckinghamshire's residents did so. The 'no religion' group accounts for over a third (35%) of questionnaire respondents, compared with 24% of Buckinghamshire's residents as a whole. A further 5% of survey respondents identified as Muslim, while 1% were Hindu, 1% Sikh, and an additional 2% belonged to a different religion; these figures are all broadly similar to the proportions given by Buckinghamshire residents overall at the 2011 census.⁷

Figure 42: Which of the following best describes your religion?



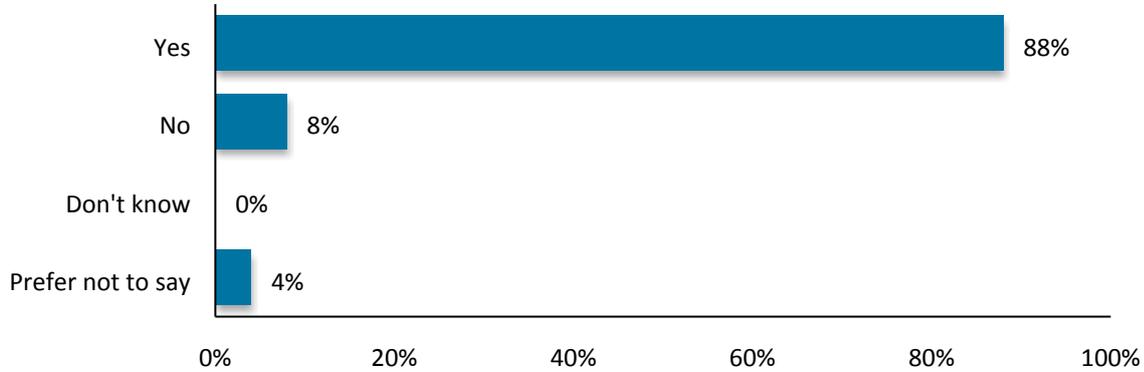
Q26. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 703
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

⁷ 2011 Census data available at:
https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140712011717tf_/http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/community/research/2011-census/

Working status

A large majority (88%) of individuals stated that somebody in their household is in work at the moment, while for 8% this is not the case, and an additional 4% preferred not to say.

Figure 43: Is anyone in your household in work at the moment?

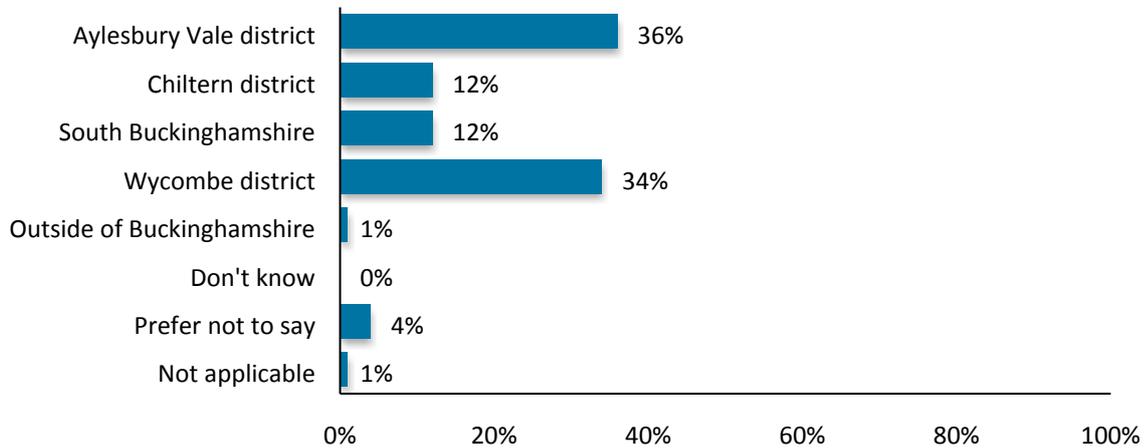


Q27. Single answer allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 704
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

District

Over one-third (36%) of the respondents are from the Aylesbury Vale district, a further third (34%) are from Wycombe district, and nearly one-quarter (24%) are from Chiltern and South Bucks.

Figure 44: Which of the following districts in Buckinghamshire do you live in?



Results derived from Q28 and Q29. Residents only. Sample base = 560
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Stakeholder profiles

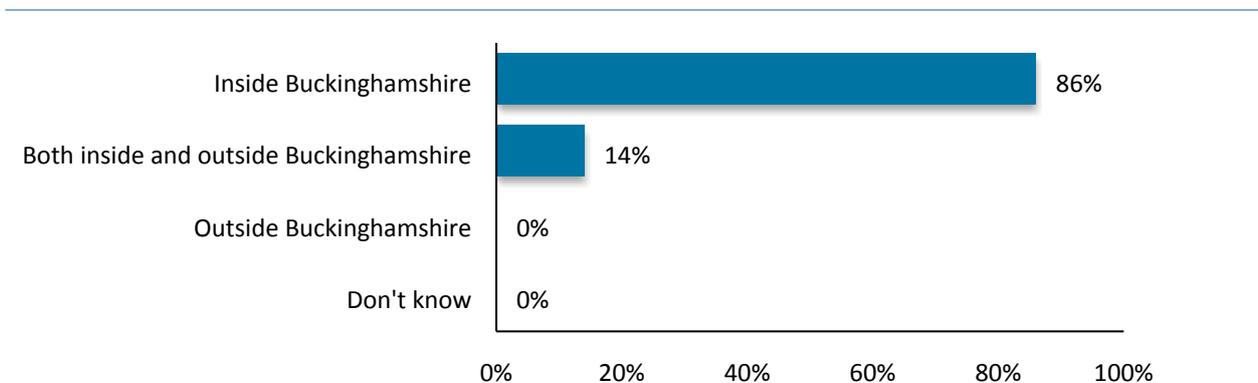
Organisations involved

35 questionnaire responses were received from people who identified as nominated representatives from a range of organisations including: schools, children’s centres, partner organisations, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Organisation location

The large majority (86%) of stakeholder representatives stated that their organisation operates solely within Buckinghamshire, while the remainder (14%) operate both inside and outside the county.

Figure 45: Where does your organisation operate?

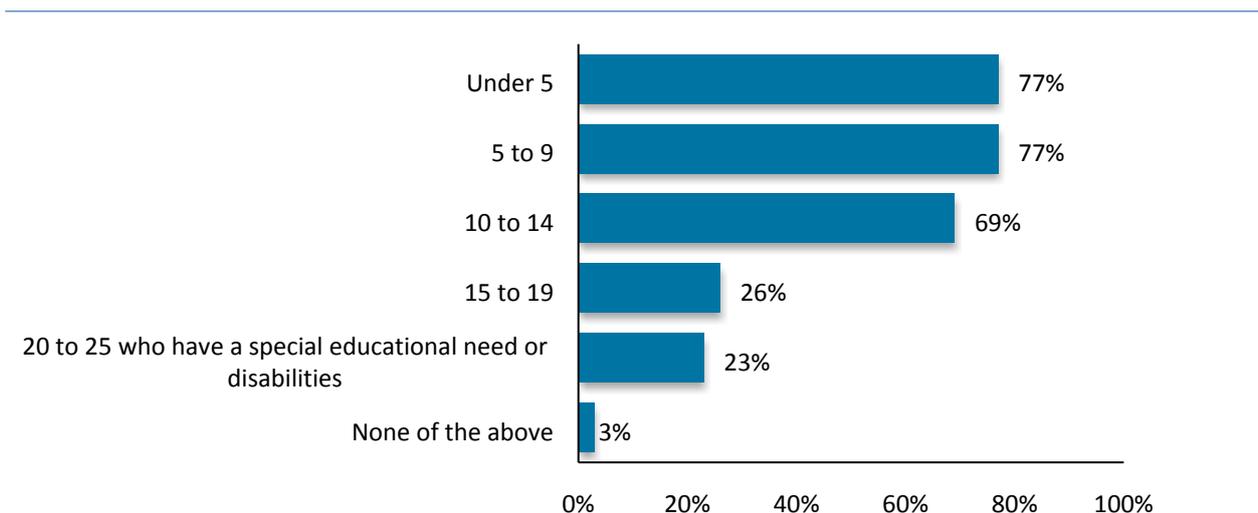


Single answer allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 35
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Age of families supported

Over three-quarters (77%) of the stakeholder organisations provide support for families with children aged under 5, and the same proportion (77%) said this was the case for 5-9 year olds. Over two-thirds (69%) offer support to 10-14 year olds, while around a quarter (26%) work with people aged 15-19, and a similar proportion (23%) work with those aged 20 to 25 with a special educational need or disability.

Figure 46: Does your organisation provide support for families with children in any of the following age groups?



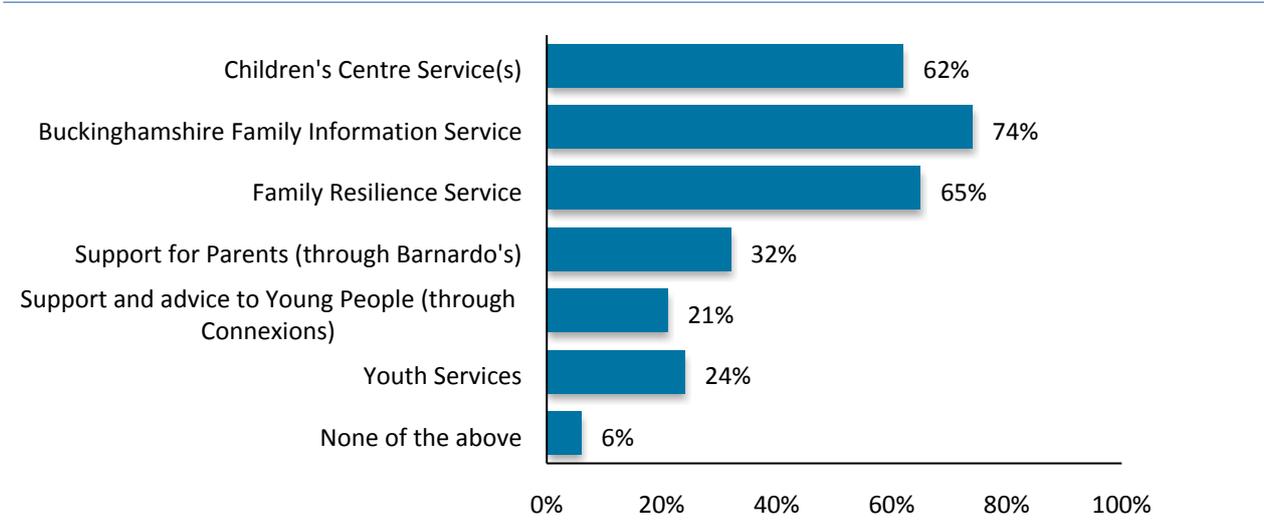
Multiple answers allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 35

Services worked with

Almost three-quarters (74%) of the stakeholders work closely with the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service, almost two-thirds (65%) work closely with the Family Resilience Service, and a similar proportion (62%) work closely with children's centre service. Smaller proportions

work closely with Support for Parents through Barnardo's (32%), Youth Services (24%), and Support and advice to Young People through Connexions (21%).

Figure 47: Which, if any, of the following services has your organisation worked closely with in the past year?



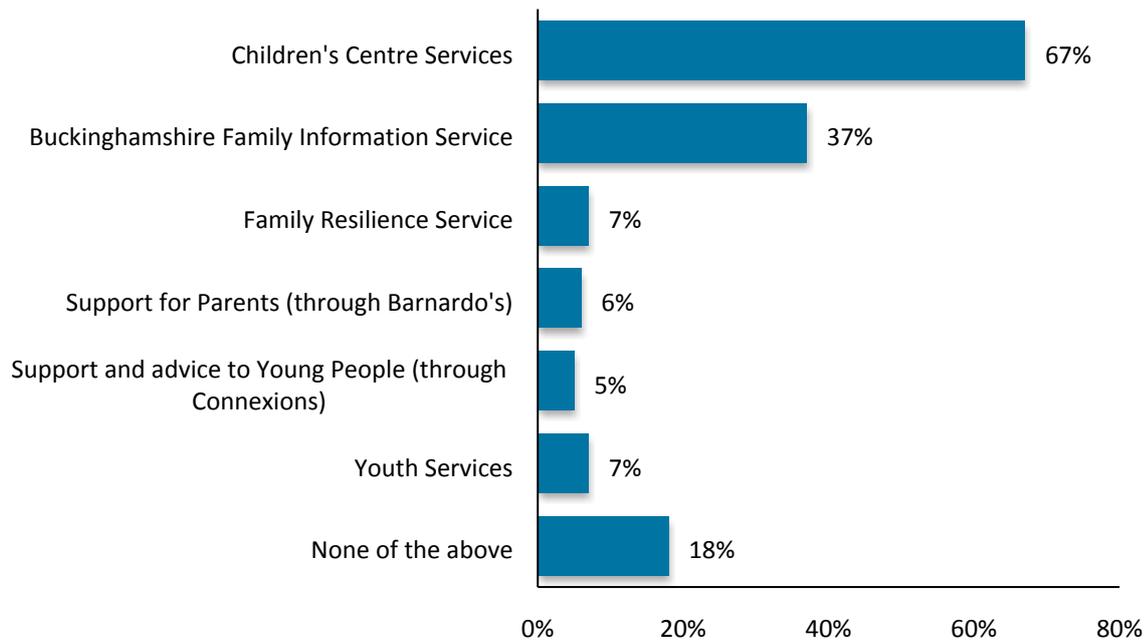
Multiple answers allowed. Stakeholders only. Sample base = 34

Appendix 2: Current use of services

The following figures show respondents' current use of early help services.

The services used

Figure 48: Which, if any, of the following County Council services have you used in the past year?

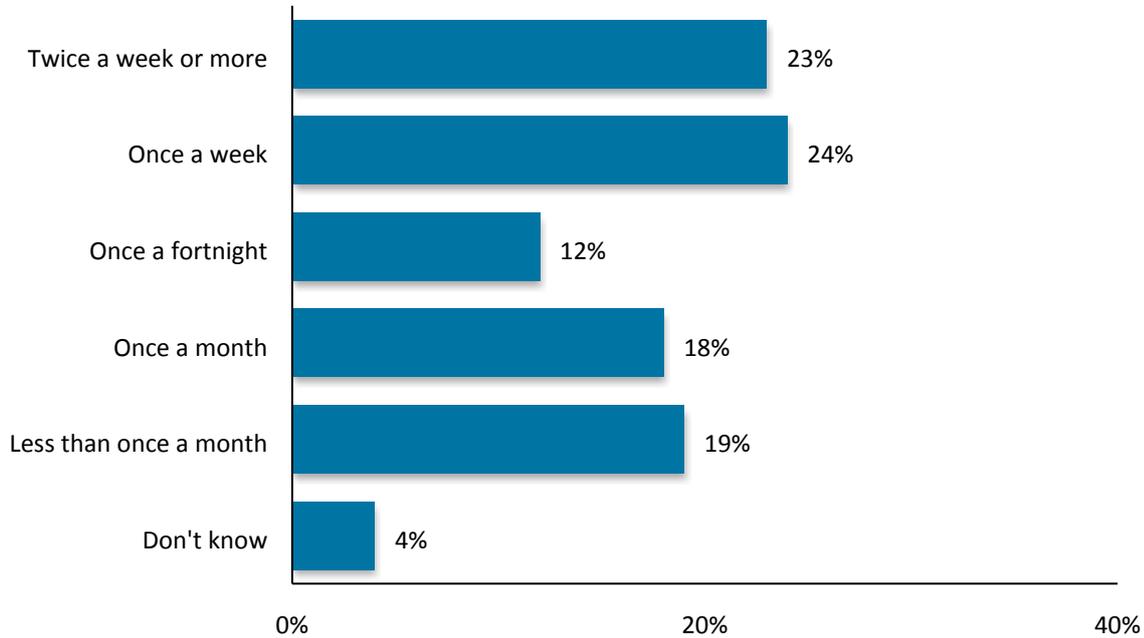


Q3. Multiple answers allowed. Residents only. Sample base = 707

Frequency of use

Children's Centre services

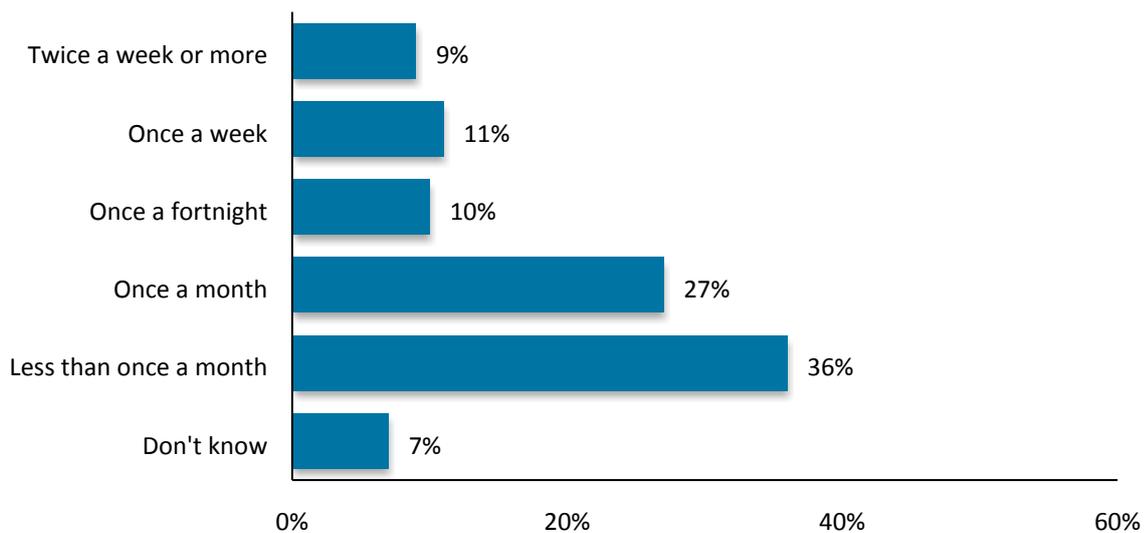
Figure 49: Typically, how often have you used Children's Centre services in the past year?



Q4a. Single answers allowed. Residents using children's centres only. Sample base = 468
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Buckinghamshire Family Information Service

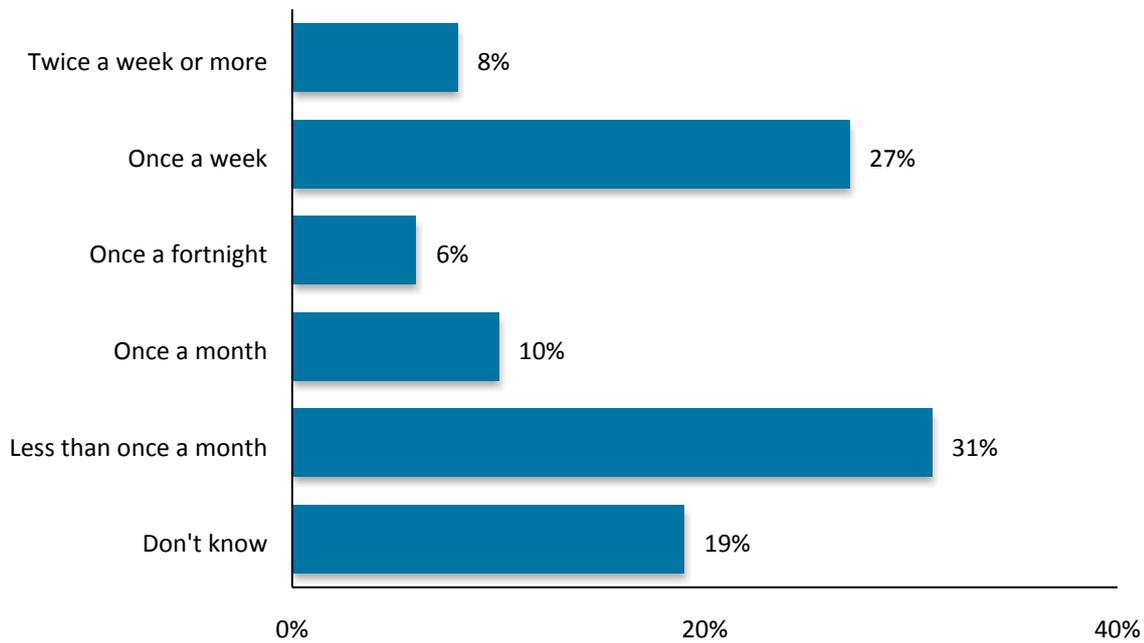
Figure 50: Typically, how often have you used the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service in the past year?



Q4b. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 259
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Family Resilience Service

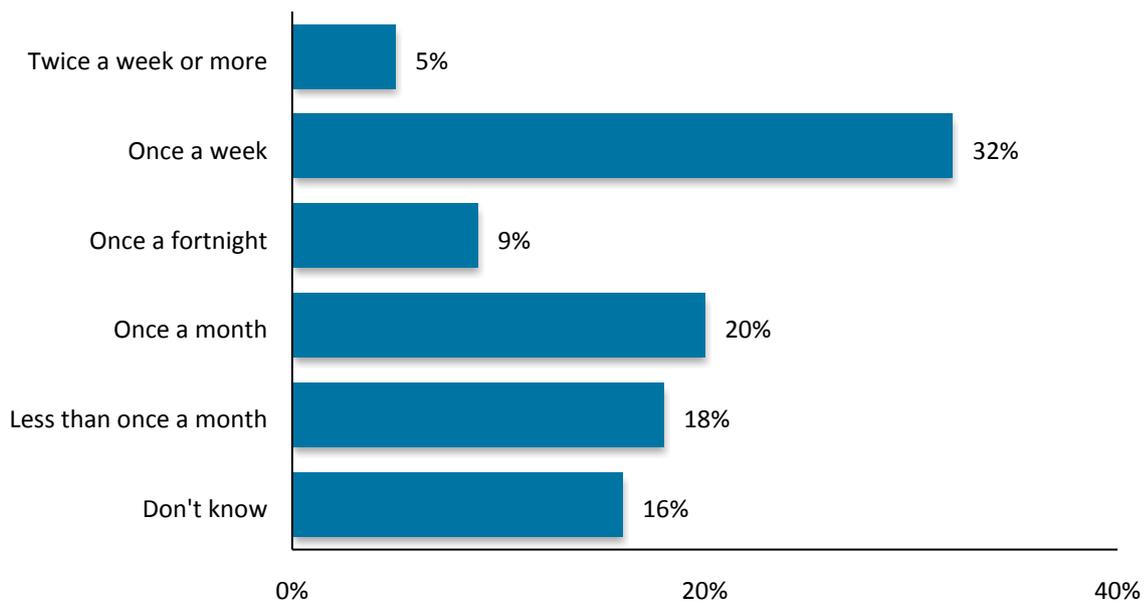
Figure 51: Typically, how often have you used the Family Resilience Service in the past year?



Q4c. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 52
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Support for Parents (through Barnardo's)

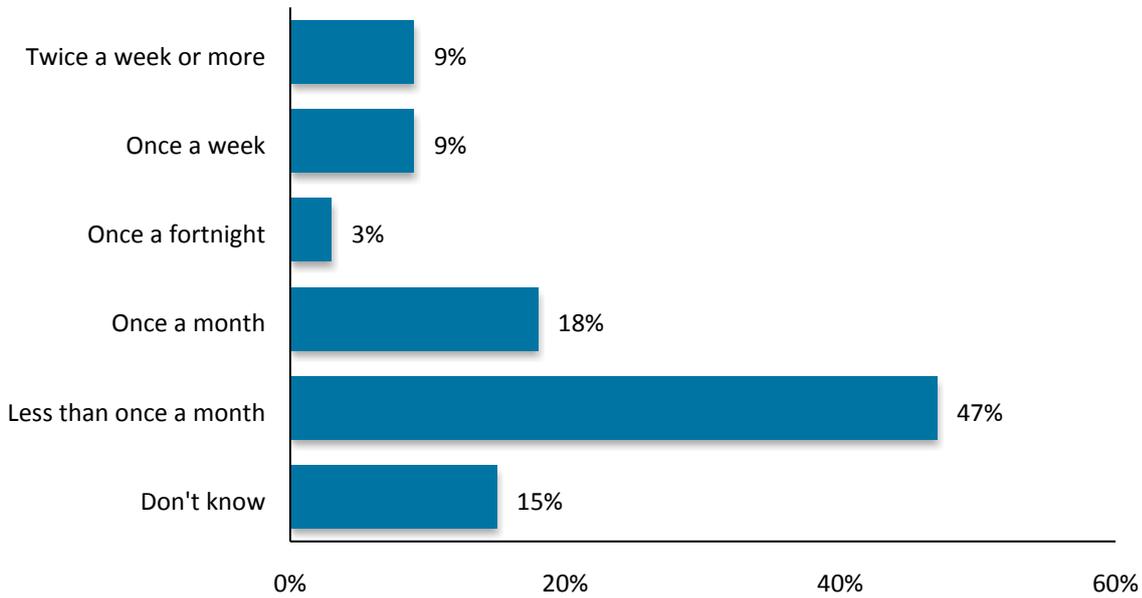
Figure 52: Typically, how often have you used Support for Parents (through Barnardo's) in the past year?



Q4d. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 44
The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)

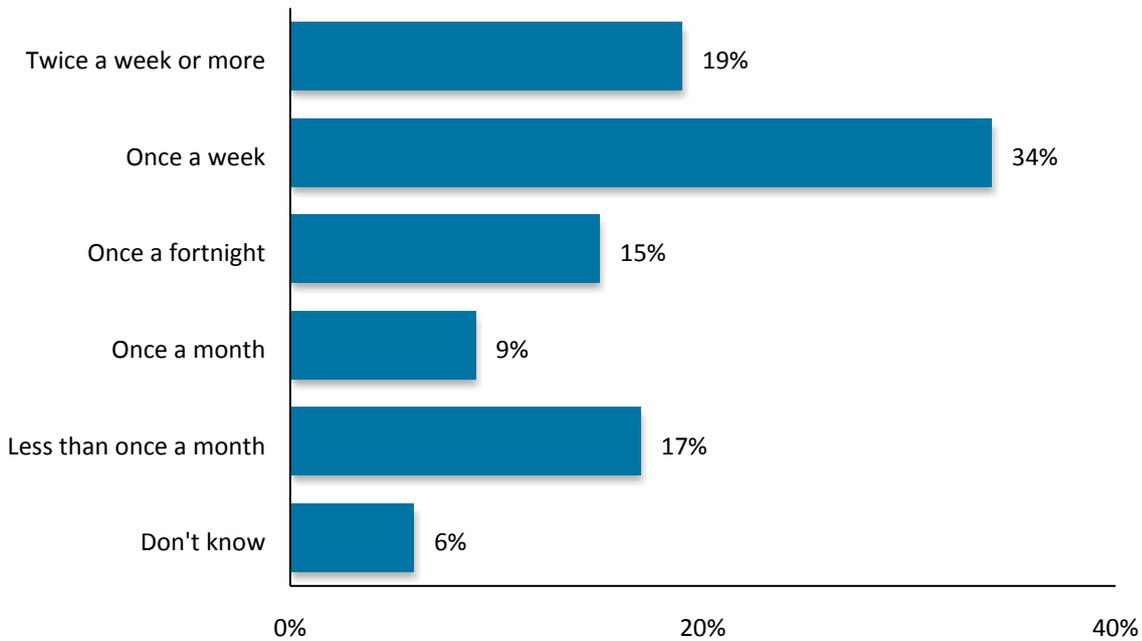
Figure 53: Typically, how often have you used Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions) in the past year?



Q4e. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 34
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

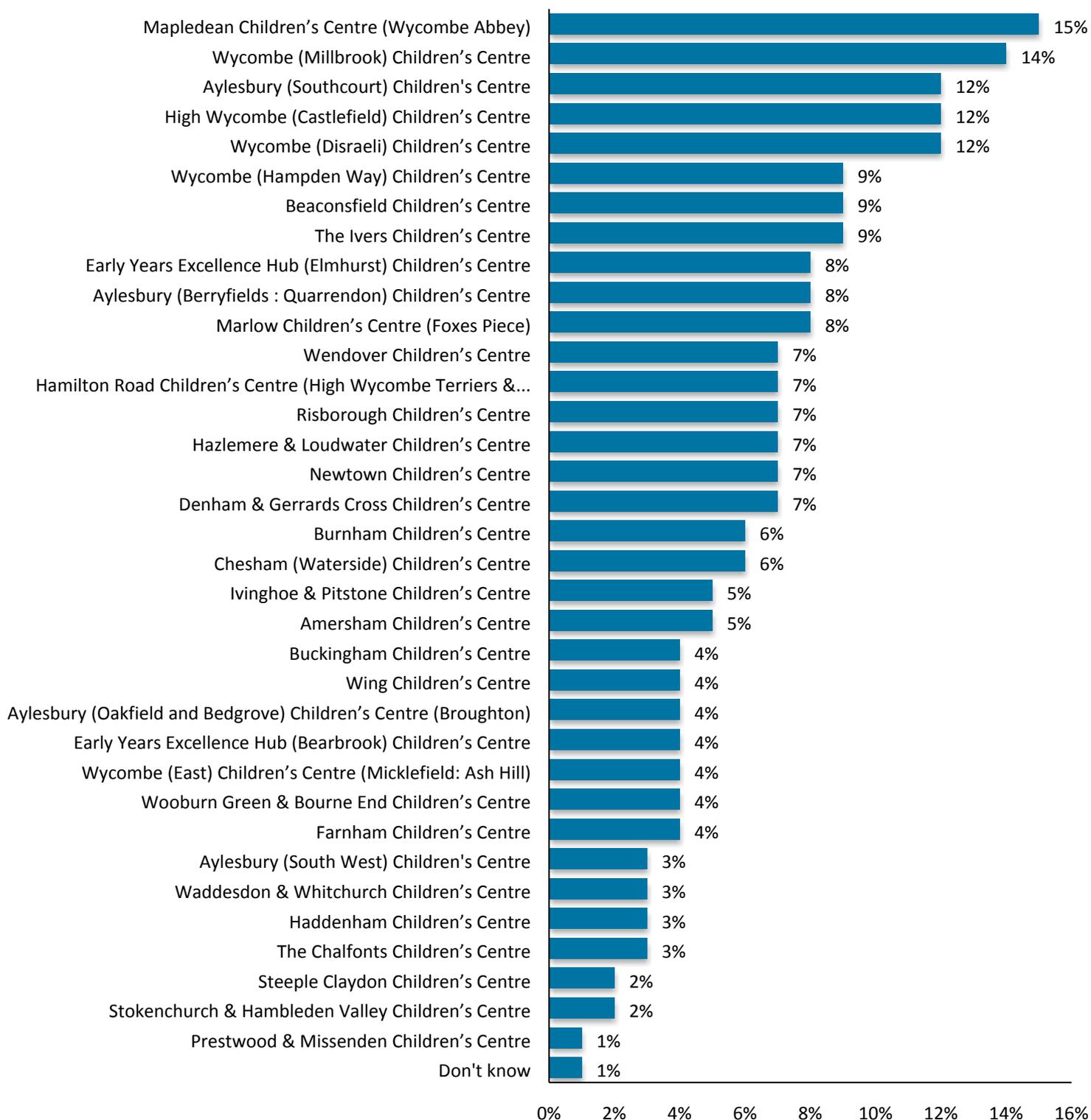
Youth Services

Figure 54: Typically, how often have you used Youth Services in the past year?



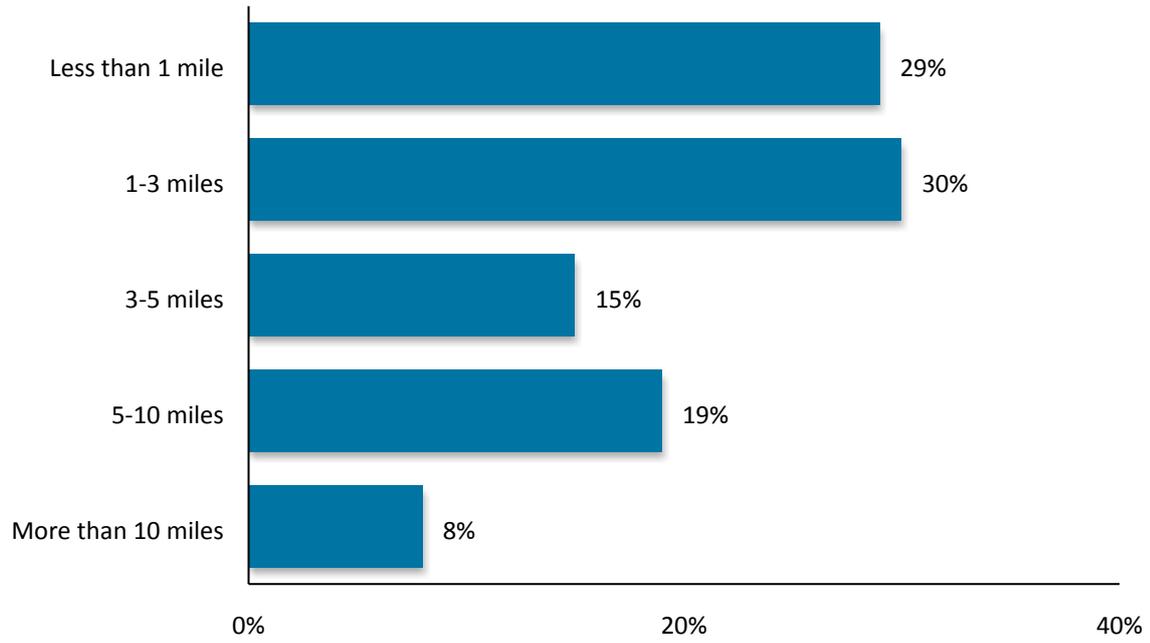
Q4f. Single answers allowed. Residents using the service only. Sample base = 47
 The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Figure 55: Which children's centres have you used in the past year?



Q5. Multiple answers allowed. Sample base=469

Figure 56: How far individuals have travelled to their furthest children's centre



Results derived from Q5 and Q28. Sample base=304

The total of percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding to the nearest percentage point.

Appendix 3: List of participating stakeholder organisations

The following table provides an overview of stakeholder organisations who responded to the consultation. Please note, organisations were not required to provide their name in their response.

Name
Action for Children
Adviza
Animal Antiks
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Bucks Primary PRU
Castlefield Community Centre (Karima Foundation)
Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale
Citizens Advice in Buckinghamshire, comprising: Citizens Advice High Wycombe, Citizens Advice Chiltern, and Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale
Cllrs Matt Knight and Andrea Baughan, Wycombe District Council councillors for Micklefield
Empower to Cook CIC
Families and Carers Together in Buckinghamshire (FACT Bucks)
Leap (County Sport Partnership)
East Wycombe Independent Party
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Spurgeons
The Disraeli School and Children's Centre
The Growing Together Federation

Additionally, anonymised responses were received from the following types of organisations:

- x10 primary schools
- x5 infant schools
- x2 pre-schools
- x1 junior school
- x1 secondary school
- x2 other respondents from health-related organisations
- x1 current provider of children's centres

Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

The following are additional responses from stakeholder organisations where they have provided consent for these to be published.

Proposal from Castlefield Community Centre (Karima Foundation)

Representation for the Buckinghamshire County Council
Early Years Consultation

12th December 2018



A Project of the



Rutland Avenue • High Wycombe • Buckinghamshire • HP12 3LL

Summary

1. Castlefield Community Centre (CCC) welcomes the opportunity to inform the Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) Early Years (EY) consultation, in particular for the High Wycombe district.
2. CCC recognise the current EY provision requires change in response to funding constraints and to provide more effective outcomes.
3. This response proposes that the Castlefield site be looked at holistically, with a view to transform current services and to enable the formation of a true community hub, providing better quality outcomes for the community and potential financial benefit for the Council to help contribute towards the required £3.1 million savings.
4. CCC has a well-established track record of working with the local authorities over the years on a variety of projects, most noticeably its partnership with Wycombe District Council (WDC) and realising a financial saving of £1.165m across the life of the lease for CCC.
5. CCC particularly draw your attention to the support this proposal has from Steve Baker MP, BCC Library Service, BCC Councillor Hussain, WDC Community Services, WDC Councillors Asif, Graham & Hanif, Wycombe, Thames Valley Police (TVP), Wycombe Tamil Community Association and a wider group of organisations CCC work with on a regular basis. Annex A has individual letters of support for your attention.
6. These stakeholders unreservedly support our aspirations and have complete confidence in our ability as an organisation to deliver this through existing collaborative working arrangements.
7. CCC hope this submission will be the catalyst for further dialogue between us and the Council before any decision is approved to ensure the best interests of the community of Castlefield are served.

Response to Consultation

8. CCC believe efficient, effective and sustainable improvements can only be achieved through a collective and collaborative response from statutory and community services. We welcome the approach the Council has set out in its strategy. CCC are pleased to see the Council's recognition of the role the community plays in helping improve services and delivering sustainable long-term solutions. Working in partnership, community and statutory resources can achieve a more meaningful and impactful change.
9. CCC agree with the visions and priorities set out by the Council for EY services.
10. It is reassuring that the Council has recognised the need to build on the resilience of communities, which allows them to invest scarce resources to build capability rather than creating dependencies.

Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

11. As a community organisation CCC do not advocate the closure of any Centres and therefore our preferred option is A. Taking forward option A will also present an opportunity, where appropriate, for community led provision to increase across the district and this should be fully explored.
12. However, if the Council progress with their preferred Option B, CCC would urge them to review the geographical spread of the proposed Centres before approval. Option B as it stands does not provide equitable access for all residents, most notably on the Eastern side of High Wycombe. Under Option B some provision is in close proximity to one another and in other areas there will be no accessible provision. The distribution of the proposed provisions needs to be revisited and the noticeable gaps addressed.
13. The Council stated in the consultation documents that further planning work will be undertaken in relation to their preferred option. This will include *surveying sites in preparation for possible refurbishment of buildings. The Council will also engage with site owners and other organisations on possible alternative uses of children's centre buildings to maximise their use for the benefit of children and families.*
14. As leaseholder of the Castlefield site since October 2014 and taking into consideration points 10 and 13 (above), CCC are disappointed at having not been involved nor invited to take part in discussions during the Council's two visits to Castlefield.
15. CCC requested a site meeting via Officers on 21st November 2018 and were informed that at this stage in the process a meeting with all organisations was not possible. CCC therefore feel that a real opportunity to help understand our aspirations has been missed and hope the Council is able to make time before the decision-making process to meet with us to discuss how we can work in collaboration to develop future plans for the Castlefield site.
16. There needs to open and honest dialogue between all agencies operating in the area. CCC will work with the Council to bring about strategic change and improve outcomes for the community, whilst offering value for money.
17. Despite not being a part of the site discussions, CCC believe it would be useful to provide additional information via this consultation specially relating to our work at Castlefield. CCC are presenting an opportunity for the Council to work with us to ensure there is effective utilisation of the site to allow service provision to further grow and develop.

Background

18. In October 2014, The Karima Foundation took over from WDC management of CCC on a 25-year lease. Our team provides a wealth of experience including individuals with expertise in project management, educational, health, social care, youth work and finance. Many of our committee members hold positions of senior leadership in both the public and private sectors.
19. The site consists of CCC and Castlefield Children's Centre which is currently occupied by Action for Children (AFC). We are responsible for all aspects of maintenance for the CCC building and all communal areas across the Castlefield site. Under the current arrangement AFC & BCC are invoiced on a quarterly basis for their proportion of the communal costs and report quarterly CCC performance data to WDC. The management, maintenance and cost relating to the Castlefield Children's Centre does not fall under our remit and is overseen by AFC.
20. The Community Asset Transfer realised a number of benefits for WDC:
 - No impact on delivery of services
 - Public access secured
 - Achievable within public sector legal and procurement parameters
 - Local management of the asset resulting in increased community use of an underutilised asset
 - Helping an active local community organisation to develop and grow its services further
 - A **financial saving of £1.165m** across the life of the lease
21. In the last four years, under our management the accessibility and usage of CCC has increased significantly and there is now a wide range of activities and provision for all age groups. CCC have formed strong links with statutory organisations, schools, community groups and the community as a whole and have established a flourishing centre that is a vibrant part of the community.
22. The current summary of activities delivered from CCC (unique weekly participants) is as follows:

• Castlefield Community Library (100)	• Aflah Nursery (30)
• Supplementary School (100)	• Adult learning courses (70)
• Autism Spectrum Club (10)	• Beaver & Scouts (28)
• Taekwondo Club (60)	• Archery (30)
• Brazilian Jujitsu Club (105)	• Aerobics (12)
• Basketball Club (15)	• Boxercise (30)
• Special Mums' Club (16)	• Tamil Community Prayers (30)
• Tuition Groups (40)	• Yoga (15)
• Youth Club (30)	• Future Leaders Programme (30)
23. In addition to these activities CCC provide a venue for Social Services, WDC, BCC and private hirers as required. CCC have long term agreements with providers such as Aflah Nursery, AFC Bucks Activity Project and Wycombe Wanderers (Fit & Fed) by providing them with a venue to deliver their services from.

Appendix 4: Additional responses from stakeholder organisations

24. Aflah Nursery has been operating from CCC since January 2017. The Nursery runs 38 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday in accordance with the Bucks term dates. Their current provision provides 15 hours of universal funded entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds with parents having the option to take up the 30 hours of universal free entitlement.
25. CCC secured the future of the Castlefield Community Library after we took over management and running of the library from BCC in 2015. This project is an example of partnership working with BCC to reduce the impact of tough financial decisions by providing a community led solution. The library relocated from Castlefield School to CCC and is open three days a week and staffed by our team of community volunteers facilitating for 100+ visitors a week.
26. AFC Bucks Activity Project provide a range of activities for disabled children aged 5 to 19 years. CCC are privileged to have worked with them for the last two years providing them with a venue from which they can run their services.
27. The Fit & Fed (a Wycombe Wanderers) project helps families that "*feel the pinch*" during school holiday, by providing children and their families with cooking tutorials, fun physical activities and a free meal, ensuring children go back to school fit and healthy. A significant number of local families engage with the project, with the support of local schools and CCC being paramount to its success.
28. The Supplementary School runs a once a week provision offering basic skills, numeracy, literacy and personal, social and emotional development through activities for children from the age of 5 to 9. This is currently operating at capacity.
29. CCC work closely with Thames Valley Police on community related matters and have representation on the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to help develop a community-based approach to policing.
30. Over the last four years CCC has gained considerable experience managing the facility, running services and activities and working in collaboration with statutory and community groups. All activities and service provisions are now well established, with CCC providing a safe and convenient venue for all our users.
31. The CCC is operating at capacity and the opportunity to offer more diverse services and to grow existing services is restricted.
32. As a result of our success, CCC are in the final stages of agreeing a freehold lease with WDC which will be legally signed off by the end of December 2018.

Our Aspirations

33. Whichever option is chosen; this review offers a timely opportunity to look at (where possible) how the community can work in collaboration with the Council to deliver services.
34. CCC is requesting a dialogue with the Council for the Castlefield site to be looked at holistically to allow for services to grow for the local and wider community. Opportunities are available to reconfigure services across the whole site allowing for its transformation into a true community hub.
35. Our aspirations are to:
 - a. **Work closely with providers on site to ensure service provisions is delivered in a safe and secure environment with qualified staff**
 - b. **Better utilise the capacity currently available on site, especially during evenings and weekends**
 - c. **Broaden community based services that are provided at the site**
 - d. **Provide a holistic management solution for the site to include the Castlefield Children's Centre**
36. Through collaboration we will realise synergies that will deliver high quality effective outcomes for the community that will be sustainable, cost effective and provide value for money in line with the appropriate safeguards and legal obligations.
37. CCC welcomes the opportunity to discuss this further to ensure all options are thoroughly explored and the best interests of High Wycombe residents, in particular the community of Castlefield are served.

Khaim Shabbir
Trustee
Castlefield Community Centre (Project of the Karima Foundation)
Rutland Avenue
High Wycombe
Bucks
HP12 3LL

Letter from the chair of the East Wycombe Independent Party



EAST WYCOMBE
INDEPENDENTS

East Wycombe Independent Party
Nabeela Rana (Chair)
16 Hunters Hill
High Wycombe
Bucks
HP13 7EW

11th December 2018

Early Help Consultation

As the Chair of the East Wycombe Independents I write on behalf of our 50 members and over 1000 supporters in the eastern wards of High Wycombe.

We are opposed to the closure of the Children's Centres at both Hampden Way and Micklefield (Wycombe East) as this leaves a whole area of Wycombe without a Family or Children's Centre.

The Centre in Micklefield has already been run down and offers almost no services so this will skew responses to the consultation, as there will be very few families who have regularly used that centre for several years now.

The Totteridge and Bowerdean Centre at Hampden Way is in a Housing Association property so is under threat.

Our members want to see improved Children's Centres or a Family Centre in East Wycombe. The thought that there would be no Family Centre between High Wycombe town centre and Beaconsfield is unacceptable and contrary to the principles of accessible Early Help set out in the proposals.

Yours Sincerely,

Nabeela Rana

Chair, East Wycombe Independents

Appendix 5: Residents' questionnaire

Pro_1614

About you

Q1 Are you responding to this consultation mainly as a...? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Parent/carer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Nominated representative of a partner or stakeholder organisation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young person under 18 (or up to age 25 with special educational needs or disabilities) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>Please specify</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Member of the public | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Q2 Which of the following age brackets are you in? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

If you are **under 16** and would like to share your views in the consultation you will need the permission of a parent or carer to do so. Please ask your parent or carer to contact Elizabeth Davies Research Director – BMG Research, by phone on 0121 333 6006 or by email on Elizabeth.Davies@bmgresearch.co.uk and we will arrange for a copy of the consultation questions to be sent to you.

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Under 16 | 16-17 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q3 Which, if any, of the following County Council services have you used in the past year? **Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <p>Children's Centre Service(s)
Families with 0-5 year olds are provided with support through a mixture of open access provision such as stay and play sessions and targeted support, through one-to-one advice and guidance to running parenting groups. Centres also provide an element of outreach for families in need of additional support.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Support for Parents (through Barnardos)
A service that co-ordinates volunteers to work with families with children 0-8. It provides practical support in the home with parenting, accessing benefits and services.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Buckinghamshire Family Information Service
This service is a free and impartial information service dedicated to helping families with children and young people aged 0-19 (or up to 25 for children with a disability) access a wide range of support such as childcare information and services available to children with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)
This contract includes managing the Council's statutory data collection duties in regard to young people (post 16) as well as mentoring support. It also provides support for young people in secondary special schools as part of their progression towards adulthood.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <p>Family Resilience Service
This service provides support to families who are in need of additional support due to the complexity of or multiple issues they face</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>Youth Services
This is a targeted referral-based service, working with young people aged 11 to 25 identified as in need of support. The service provides 1:1 support for young people and small group work to support social and emotional development and to develop personal skills.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | None of the above | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Pro_1614

Q4 Typically, how often have you used the following services in the past year?
Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following (if you have not used these services please select 'not applicable')

	Twice a week or more	Once a week	Once a fortnight	Once a month	Less than once a month	Don't know	Not applicable
Children's Centre Service(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Buckinghamshire Family Information Service	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Family Resilience Service	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Support for Parents (through Barnardos)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Support and advice to Young People (through Connexions)	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Youth Services	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q5 If you have used children's centre services, which children's centres have you used in the past year? **Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wendover Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazlemere & Loudwater Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Berryfields : Quarrendon) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mapledean Children's Centre (Wycombe Abbey)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckingham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Newtown Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wing Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hamilton Road Children's Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Amersham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (South West) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marlow Children's Centre (Foxes Piece)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children's Centre (Broughton)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risborough Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Beaconsfield Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Chalfonts Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (East) Children's Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steeple Claydon Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Disraeli) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haddenham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wycombe (Millbrook) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				The Ivers Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

About the Council's strategy and priorities

The Council's Early Help Service is designed to have clear responsibilities and to deliver support to families in partnership which enable improved outcomes for children and families, as set out in the draft partnership Early Help Strategy which can be found at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp

The Council is proposing to refocus its support for families in a new Early Help Service with the following aims:

- Supporting vulnerable children and families to enable them to thrive and achieve real, positive outcomes.
- Integrating services wherever possible to create stronger partnerships which make effective use of all resources and improve family and community resilience.
- Improving access and reducing duplication to enable children and families needing our support to tell their story only once.
- Evidencing the impact of early help to reduce cost pressures on statutory services.

For more information please see the Council's consultation summary document at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

Q6 To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed aims for its Early Help Service as set out above?
Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 Do you have any other comments on what the aims of the Council's Early Help service should be?
Please write in the box below

Pro_1614

Options for consideration

We want to understand your views on the different options for early help services being considered by the Council. Before responding, we recommend you read the consultation summary document which you can find at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

Please note, we will first ask some specific questions about your views on each of the options, and then you will be given the opportunity to share your views and reasons for these in more detail in an open response question.

Option A: Current model (less 30-35% reduction across all services)

The current range of services would remain broadly the same. The current 35 children's centre buildings will be retained but with a 30-35% reduction in opening hours. This would also mean a 30-35% reduction in the following services:

- Support for vulnerable children and families
- Youth services
- Bucks Family Information Service

Families who receive additional support through family resilience, for example, would also experience reductions in services. This is likely to mean that fewer vulnerable children receive support and there will be longer waiting times.

Further information about this option is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

Q8 To what extent do you agree or disagree with **Option A** for delivering an Early Help Service?
Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9 What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting **Option A** would have on:
Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Option B: Network of family centres – Council’s Preferred Option

This is the Council’s preferred option. Support for families will be delivered from 14 family centres that will provide a programme of activities for families with 0-19 year olds. Three of the centres (known as ‘family centre plus’) will also provide extra services where families can drop in to access support five days per week.

The family centres will continue to provide partner services e.g. health visiting. The family support teams will have a skills mix to ensure families get the right support at the right time. Families are supported by a lead practitioner who will work with the family, often in the home and coordinate the support families need to create a team around the family to help them tackle the issues they face.

Further information about this option, including a map of proposed family centre locations, is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children’s centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

Q10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with **Option B** for delivering an Early Help Service?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11 What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting **Option B** would have on:

Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Option C: Area-based family outreach model

This will provide a new integrated service to support families with children 0-19 years old. The Council services will be focused on targeted work with families only. There would be three area teams working from office bases, but these would not be open to the public. This means family support being provided at the family’s home, in school and at local places like libraries and community centres.

There will be no universal provision and **no children’s centres** would be retained by the County Council.

Further information about this option is available in the consultation summary document which you can find at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children’s centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

Q12 To what extent do you agree or disagree with **Option C** for delivering an Early Help Service?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13 What level of impact (either positive or negative) do you think the Council selecting **Option C** would have on:

Please put a cross (x) in one box for each of the following

	Very positive impact	Positive impact	No difference	Negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know	Not applicable
Your family	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Families in Buckinghamshire who need support	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Pro_1614

Q14 Of the options presented, which is your preferred option? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Option A: Current model
(less 30-35% reduction
across all services)

Option B: Network of
family centres

Option C: Area-based
family outreach model

Don't know

Q15a Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council could provide early help services not described in options A, B, or C? **Please write in the box below**

Q15b Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways that the Council can deliver £3.1million in savings per annum? **Please write in the box below**

Q16 Under options B & C, some or all, children's centre buildings would be closed as children's centres and proposed to be used for other activities. Further details on possible alternative uses of the buildings are set out in the consultation summary (see page 11) which you can find at www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp or paper copies of the consultation summary document are provided at the children's centre or library where you picked up this questionnaire.

To what extent do you agree with the Council's proposed approach of seeking to ensure that if children's centres are proposed for closure that the buildings continue to be used for community benefit, and specifically for early years provision (for example extra nursery places) where there is local need?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q17 The following list includes all of the children’s centres currently open in Buckinghamshire. Under Option B (the Council’s preferred option) 14 children’s centres would be kept open with an extended widened role to provide support to all families with children aged 0-19 (children’s centres currently support families with children aged 0-5).

Those in bold are the ones the Council would propose to keep open under Option B, and all would be closed under Option C.

Using the list that follows, please tell us which centre is your top priority for keeping open (select one from column A) and which others you would prioritise (select up to 4 from column B). Please note, you cannot select the same centre in both column A and B. **Please note this list continues overleaf.**

Please put a cross (x) in the boxes you want to select

	(A) Top priority for staying open?	(B) Select up to 4 other children’s centres
Aylesbury (Southcourt) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Elmhurst) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Berryfields : Quarrendon) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckingham Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wing Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (South West) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aylesbury (Oakfield and Bedgrove) Children’s Centre (Broughton)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early Years Excellence Hub (Bearbrook) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waddesdon & Whitchurch Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steeple Claydon Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Haddenham Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wendover Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ivinghoe & Pitstone Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapledean Children’s Centre (Wycombe Abbey)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Wycombe (Castlefield) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hamilton Road Children’s Centre (High Wycombe Terriers & Amersham Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marlow Children’s Centre (Foxes Piece)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risborough Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Hampden Way) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (East) Children’s Centre (Micklefield: Ash Hill)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Disraeli) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe (Millbrook) Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stokenchurch & Hambleden Valley Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazlemere & Loudwater Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wooburn Green & Bourne End Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newtown Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amersham Children’s Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pro_1614

Burnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beaconsfield Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Chalfonts Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prestwood & Missenden Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farnham Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Denham & Gerrards Cross Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chesham (Waterside) Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Ivers Children's Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would prefer to use another location, please specify where this would be	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>		

Q18 Please provide any other relevant information you believe the Council should consider. This might include:

- information on your preferred or least preferred options and your reasons for this;
 - your thoughts on how the different options might affect your family or others;
 - any suggestions for alternative options you think the Council should consider;
 - any reasons the Council should keep a particular children's centre open, or why it should consider closing one;
- or
- anything else you would like to add.

Population questions

The following questions tell us more about you and help us to make sure we have captured views from a cross section of people. We recognise that you might consider some of these questions to be personal or sensitive, in which case you are free not to answer them. The information you provide will be used for the sole purpose of ensuring that we can understand the views and experiences of different groups of people to inform the Council's decisions about Early Help services.

Q19 I identify my gender as... **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Something else (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q20 Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
White – Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British – Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
White - Any other White background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black/Black British – African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black/Black British – Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - White and Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed - Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic group (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian/Asian British – Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Q21 Are you the parent of or a carer for children in any of the following age groups? **Please put a cross (x) in as many boxes as apply**

Under 5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 25 who have a special educational need or disabilities	None of the above	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q22 Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q23 Have you taken any of the following types of leave within the past year? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Shared parental leave	None of the above	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>					

Pro_1614

Q24 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces your ability to carry-out day-to-day activities? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q25 Does your child or one of your children have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more which reduces their ability to carry-out day-to-day activities?

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q26 Which of the following best describes your religion? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please cross (x) and write in the box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Q27 Is anyone in your household in work at the moment? **Please put a cross (x) in one box only**

Yes	No	Don't know	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q28 What is your home postcode? This information will be used to ensure people from across Buckinghamshire have taken part, it will also be used to understand people's preferences for service locations. If you do not want your information to be used in this way, please select 'prefer not to say' or you can choose to provide only the first part of your postcode **Please write in the box below**

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Prefer not to say

Q29 Which of the following districts in Buckinghamshire do you live in? This information will be used to ensure people from across Buckinghamshire have taken part, it will also be used to understand people's preferences for service locations. If you do not want your information to be used in this way, please select 'prefer not to say'.

Please put a cross (x) in one box only

Aylesbury Vale district	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chiltern district	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Buckinghamshire district	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wycombe district	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Many thanks for taking the time to share your views in this consultation.

By completing and returning this questionnaire to us, we will take this as your consent for us to process and analyse the data you have provided.

Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. BMG Research abides by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and data protection laws at all times, including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. You have the right to access your data at any time as well as withdraw your consent to participate.

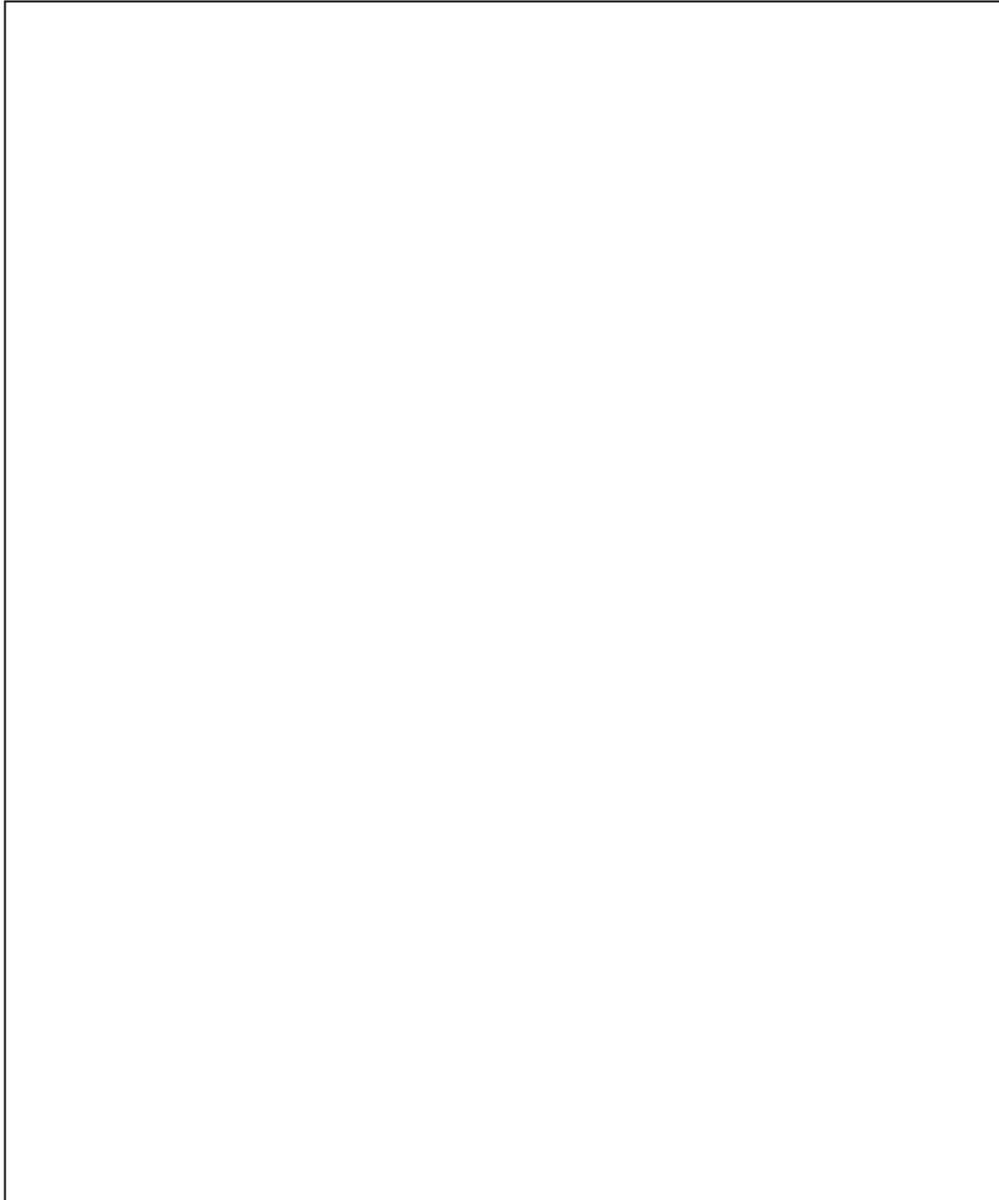
You can find out more information about our surveys and what we do with the information we collect in our Privacy Notice which is here www.bmgresearch.co.uk/privacy

We will not include any information about you that may be identifiable in our reporting for Buckinghamshire County Council unless you provide permission for us to do so.

The results of this consultation will be published and help inform a decision by the Council's Cabinet in March 2019. A report will then be published which will detail the decisions made and the reasons for doing so.

Continuation page

If you would like to expand on your responses to any of the free text boxes in this questionnaire please do so on the following page.



Appendix 6: Statement of Terms

Compliance with International Standards

BMG complies with the International Standard for Quality Management Systems requirements (ISO 9001:2015) and the International Standard for Market, opinion and social research service requirements (ISO 20252:2012) and The International Standard for Information Security Management (ISO 27001:2013).

Interpretation and publication of results

The interpretation of the results as reported in this document pertain to the research problem and are supported by the empirical findings of this research project and, where applicable, by other data. These interpretations and recommendations are based on empirical findings and are distinguishable from personal views and opinions.

BMG will not publish any part of these results without the written and informed consent of the client.

Ethical practice

BMG promotes ethical practice in research: We conduct our work responsibly and in light of the legal and moral codes of society.

We have a responsibility to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and dissemination of data, in the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings and in the maintenance of standards commensurate with professional integrity.

We recognise we have a duty of care to all those undertaking and participating in research and strive to protect subjects from undue harm arising as a consequence of their participation in research. This requires that subjects' participation should be as fully informed as possible and no group should be disadvantaged by routinely being excluded from consideration. All adequate steps shall be taken by both agency and client to ensure that the identity of each respondent participating in the research is protected.

With more than 25 years' experience, BMG Research has established a strong reputation for delivering high quality research and consultancy.

BMG serves both the public and the private sector, providing market and customer insight which is vital in the development of plans, the support of campaigns and the evaluation of performance.

Innovation and development is very much at the heart of our business, and considerable attention is paid to the utilisation of the most up to date technologies and information systems to ensure that market and customer intelligence is widely shared.

