

# **Improving Services for Children and Young People Consultation**

**Final Results**

**October 2017**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

This consultation aims to understand the views and opinions on the Councils proposal to re-design existing services to create a new 'Early Help' service for children, young people and families.

It consisted of a formal quantitative survey, so that levels of agreement and disagreement with the proposal could be quantified, as well as focus groups to understand some resident's views in more depth. The survey was open to a wide variety of stakeholders, including the public, organisations, and young people who are users of the councils youth services.

The quantitative survey was available on the councils website, through paper copies within libraries and through the councils youth service. The council helped to ensure that stakeholders were aware of the consultation by promoting it on a comprehensive webpage, adverts on the BCC website homepage and across other local media; as well as through targeted communications including promotions through Bucks Family Information Service, social media and direct letter/email to parents through schools.

The consultation ran from 14 July 2017 to 16 October 2017, where the survey was completed by 1,991 residents, 365 organisations and 79 young people using Youth Services.

### **Residents**

The consultation was mainly completed by families with children (85%) who are the main target group for these services. Over half of this group had children aged under 5 in their household, (which is twice the proportion of the Buckinghamshire population profile for households with children) and respondents where their children had disabilities made up 22% of all respondents with children (which is seven times higher than the Buckinghamshire profile of children with disabilities). The profile of adults responding was similar to the Buckinghamshire profile across a range of other demographic characteristics.

Taking into account the proportion of people who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement with the proposal of 18% of residents.

Although there was 'net' agreement with the proposal overall, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement with the proposal. Where half of residents (50%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (32%) disagreed. Approximately two in ten residents (18%) either didn't have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn't know.

The proportion of people agreeing or disagreeing with the proposals was different for specific groups of people. For example, respondents whose children had disabilities or children aged 10-14 were more likely to agree with the proposals, and respondents whose children were aged under 5 or those providing further comments were more likely to disagree with the proposals.

Half of respondents provided further considerations or made further comments regarding the proposals, which were categorised into topics. The main topics raised were regarding 'Early Help' services (for example providing services that are open to all to use, wanting immediate help when needed though non-targeted services), 'Access' (for example providing local easy to access services), considerations regarding their understanding of the proposals ('clarity') and concerns regarding service closures.

## **Organisations**

Respondents could also complete the survey on behalf of an organisation, where the majority of the 365 respondents were from public sector organisations (54%). There were often a number of respondents from the same organisation.

Taking into account the proportion of respondents who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement with the proposal of 25%. As with residents, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement with the proposal. Where approximately six in ten of respondents from organisations (56%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (31%) disagreed. Approximately one in ten respondents (13%) either didn't have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn't know.

Organisations main comments or considerations fell into similar categories as those expressed by residents, including concerns regarding service closures, accessibility, their understanding of the proposal and its 'clarity'.

## **Youth Service Users**

The consultation was also open to children and young people who are users of the councils Youth Service to complete. A total of 79 young people aged between 14 and 24 completed the survey at these centres, where disagreement with the proposals was higher (at 52%) than residents or organisations and levels of agreement were also lower (at 11%).

## **Focus Groups**

Three Focus Groups took place with 16 people that were invited from a range of the current services provided to children, young people and families. Topics covered included 'Assessing Services', 'One Family Worker' and understanding what 'Early Help' means to the group.

## **Petitions**

While not part of the council's consultation the council notes two petitions relating to the proposals. The 38 Degrees petition with 2,222 signatures as at 16 October 2017 (regarding saving Children's Centres), and a Labour Party petition (also against Children Centre Closures), with 179 signatures as at 16 October 2017.

## Aims

This consultation aims to understand people's views and opinions regarding a broad range of services that support children, young people and families in Buckinghamshire; and how these services could be re-configured to provide support in different ways to the way that services are currently structured. These services are referred to as 'Early Help' services throughout this consultation document.

There are three overarching aims of the consultation

1. To understand residents and organisations strength of opinion regarding the councils draft proposals for re-configuring a range of 'Early Help' services
2. To understand residents and organisations considerations and comments regarding the draft proposals that they would like the council to take into account when re-configuring 'Early Help' services
3. To provide results that are sufficiently representative of key stakeholders from the broad range of services affected by the proposals to re-configure them, including:
  - Consulting with a broad range of stakeholders of the current services that would be re-configured under the proposals, including the public, organisations and children and young people using services
  - Providing an 'open to all' self-selecting consultation (survey) that enables all stakeholders to take part where they choose to do so
  - Gaining sufficient responses to understand the overall views and opinions of key stakeholders from the quantitative survey
  - Understanding the opinions of a broad range of groups of people and organisations, including differences of opinion by demographics, service usage and types of organisation.
  - Inviting a group of service users to discuss the proposals in more depth (through Focus Groups)
  - Considering the views of future service users of the 'Early Help' services

## Context to the consultation

Respondents were provided with an outline of the council's proposal for re-configuring Early Help Services within the consultation survey (below), with further detail available on the Councils website (appendix 1).

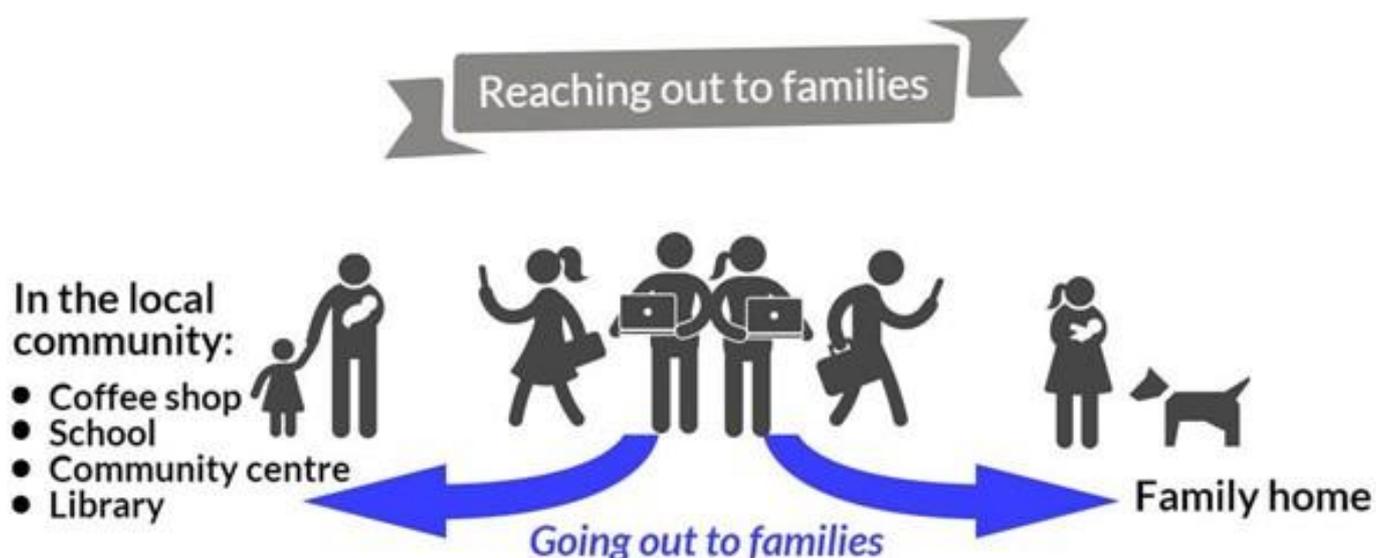
### **Outline of Early Help Proposal**

We want to understand your views on our proposed solution to bring together, all the people who work with children and young people aged 0 - 19, and their families, in those early days when problems are getting tough, by creating one service: the Early Help Service.

We want to:

- Support families earlier, so their circumstances improve quicker and problems don't become too difficult to manage
- Give families the tools to help them solve their own problems and also be more resilient in the future – so they know where they can go for help when they need it
- Work more collaboratively with schools and community groups to support children and young people to achieve their potential

This new service would be modelled around family workers who will be based in the community so they are closer to where the families who need our support live. This will mean they can reach out to these families to work with them at home or in places they are most comfortable. This could be a local community venue or a coffee shop. Informal venues like coffee shops are often preferred by families we have worked with who feel more able to have an open and honest conversation in a relaxed environment, creating a better relationship between the individual and the worker.



Note that background summary information to contextualise the Focus Groups was provided at the beginning of each of the Focus Groups.

## **Methodology**

### **Approach**

This consultation ran from 14 July 2017 to 16 October 2017, consisting of both a formal survey to understand the overall opinions and views of key stakeholders and three Focus Groups where representatives of service users were invited to discuss key elements of the draft proposal in more depth.

The formal survey asked for peoples and organisations opinions on their strength of agreement, or disagreement, with the Councils proposals to re-configure 'Early Help' services, as well as for any considerations or comments that they had on how these services are delivered or on the proposal.

The consultation was open to all stakeholders, through either an on-line survey which was promoted through a range of channels (see the section below) or through a paper based questionnaire in libraries to ensure that the survey could be completed without having to go online (replicating the same questions as the online survey). The online survey and the questionnaire were open to those aged 16 or over.

Market Research Society Guidelines stipulate that children under the age of 16 are not allowed to participate in research activities unless they have the consent of a 'responsible adult' (and the young person also wants to take part them self). In addition to parents, in some cases professionals can also be seen as adults who are responsible for children and young people while they are providing services to them. Considering these requirements, the council also made a paper based questionnaire available for Youth Service users to complete (again replicating the same questions as the online survey).

Focus Groups were undertaken by inviting service users from services in the scope of the draft proposal to understand more detail about the services they currently use, explore emerging issues from the consultation and what Early Help services mean to them. Attendees were recruited through the services included in the draft proposals, requesting two families per service per focus group. The services were: Youth, Adviza (Connexions), Family Resilience, Support for Parents (Barnados) and Children's Centres. Therefore a maximum of 10 representatives per focus group were expected. Three Focus Groups were run by Buckinghamshire County Council staff and took place during September in

- Aylesbury [8 invited, 7 participated – Family Resilience Service, Youth Service, Adviza Connexions Service represented. Children's Centres did not put forward any families in Aylesbury. Support for Parents representative didn't participate after confirming attendance.
- High Wycombe [7 invited, 4 participated – Support for Parents Service, Family Resilience Service, Youth Service, Children's Centre Service represented. Adviza Connexions Service didn't participate after confirming attendance
- Chesham [9 invited, 4 participated (plus 1 written response) – Support for Parents Service, Family Resilience Service, Children's Centre Service represented. Youth Services and Adviza Connexions services didn't participate after confirming attendance.

### **Sampling**

Market Research looks to understand the views and opinions of a population using a sample of the population of interest. The sample (or respondents) views are used to represent the views and opinions of the whole population so that a full Census of opinion (obtaining everyone's views) is not necessary – which can be impractical.

As the results of quantitative surveys are based on samples, Market Research uses statistical information to show the level of tolerance associated with results. The tolerance level is associated with a range of factors including the number of people responding to the survey. The information below provides a guide as to the level of tolerance (or confidence interval) that is generally associated with samples according to the number of people responding (note that other factors may also be taken into account including self-selection and geographic distribution).

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within a specified range. The following illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "95% confidence interval":

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90% ±	30% or 70% ±	50% ±
100 responses	6	9	10
200 responses	4	6	7
500 responses	3	4	4
<b>1,000 responses</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

For example, with a sample size of 1,000 where 70% give a particular answer, the chances are, that 95 out of 100 times in conducting surveys that the "true" value (i.e. the one which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of ±3 percentage points from the survey result (i.e. between 67% and 73%).

*NB: Strictly speaking the tolerances shown here apply only to random samples; in practice good quality quota sampling has been found to be as accurate.*

**Differences in opinion by group**

Respondents were asked to complete a wide range of 'classification' questions in the survey so that the views of different groups of people or organisation could be understood where they are statistically different from other groups.

The categories of demographics that were asked and used to examine difference for residents included: age, ethnicity, disability (of respondent and of their children), gender, socio-economic ACORN group for the area that the respondent lives in, working status, those with children, services that the household use, and place of work for those in employment.

Organisations were also asked a range of classification questions including the type of organisation that they are (e.g. private business, voluntary group etc) and their location.

## Other considerations

Please note that the consultation was open with the same questions from 14 July 2017 to 16 October 2017. On the 4 September 2017 further information regarding the proposal was provided – which is referred to as Phase 2 of the consultation (see appendix 1 for the full information provided and appendix 2 for the website explanation of phases 1 and 2).

The survey was open to all residents and people representing organisations to respond – participation was self-selecting. This was not a random sample of respondents and the sample was not stratified to reflect the proportions of the people responding according to the make-up of the Buckinghamshire population. Please see the respondents profile section for more information on how the profile of respondents compares to that of the Buckinghamshire population.

Note that respondents may have completed the survey a number of times (participation was anonymous), in the organisation survey for example there are often multiple responses from the staff of an organisation. When further information on the proposals was added at Phase 2 of the consultation, respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire for a second time if they had further information to add.

## **Promotion of the Consultation**

The consultation was published on 14 July 2017 at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) with a dedicated webpage, frequently asked questions and family case studies to ensure wide access. It was also available through the dedicated council 'Have your say' consultation pages.

As well as people being able to respond to the consultation online, printed copies of the survey were made available in all libraries across the county with a freepost address. The consultation was also completed with young people through group activities and one to one sessions in Youth Services, to ensure their views were captured with consent.

General promotion included:

- Comprehensive webpage and homepage advert on the BCC website
- MyBucks – council newsletter to 18,000 residents in August and October
- Weekly promotion through the BCC corporate social media channels (Facebook and Twitter)
- Local media coverage (15 online and print articles and various radio interviews and items)
- Posters in libraries and GP surgeries
- Articles and distribution through councillors, Local Area Forums and Parish Newsletters
- Promotion through internal staff newsletters, screens and other channels

Targeted communications included:

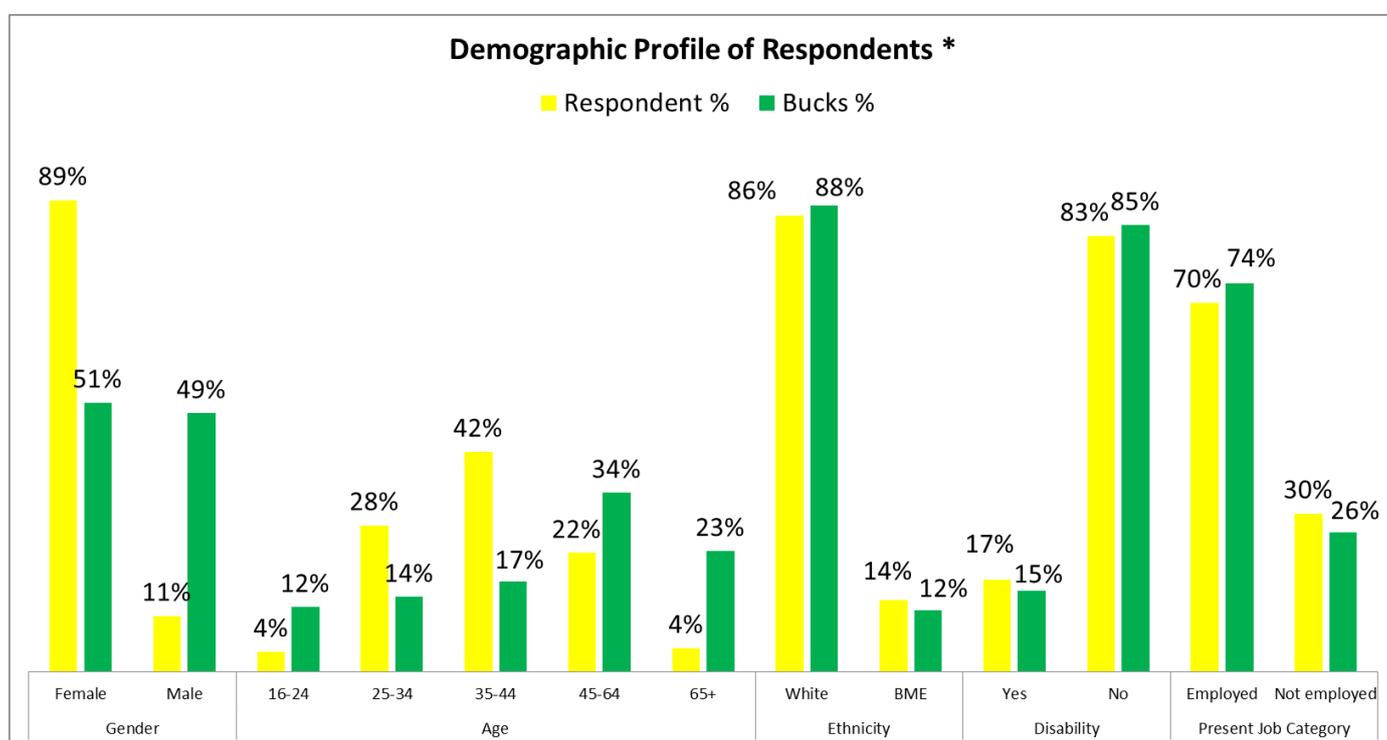
- Information sent to current early help service providers to share with their colleagues, clients and partners
- Targeted social media adverts using 'ACORN' data for those living in areas classified as 'Financially Stretched' and 'Urban Adversity' groups in Buckinghamshire (matched with being a parent/ a family)
- Promotion through Bucks Family Information Service, social media channels and website
- Articles and poster sent to local community and faith groups
- Direct letter/email sent to schools to distribute to parents as appropriate

Further detail regarding the proposal was added on 4 September. This information was available both online, as well as a supplementary document to sit alongside the printed consultation document that was sent to libraries. This was also promoted via all of the above channels.

## Respondent Profile

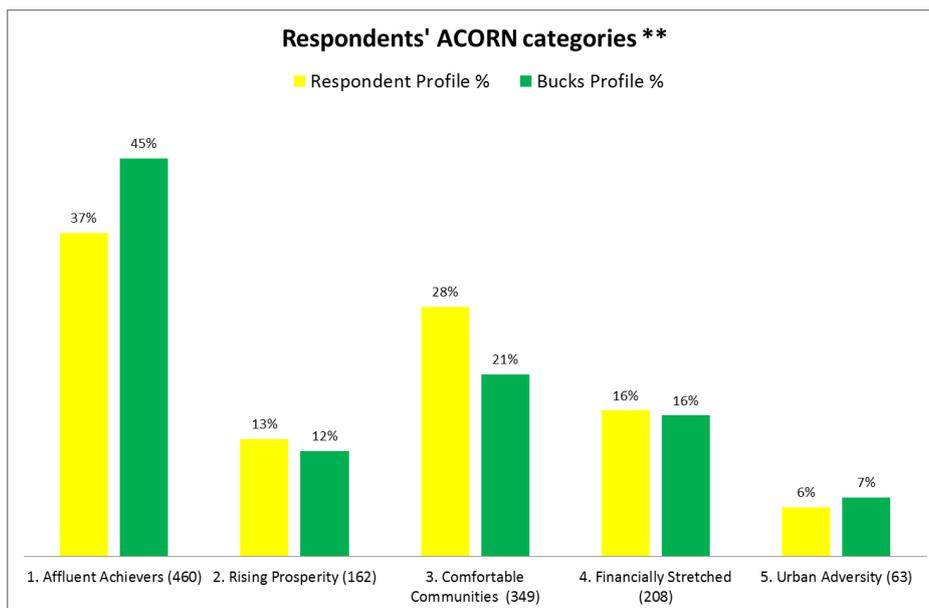
### Residents

1,991 residents responded to the survey. 89% of respondents were female, compared with 51% of the Bucks population. The 25-34 and 35-44 age groups (together 70% of respondents) over-indexed against the Bucks population in these two age bands (31%). Adults aged 35-44 formed the largest cohort overall (42% of respondents). In terms of Ethnicity, Disability and Employment Status, the respondent profile was very similar to the county profile, with the majority being white, not disabled and in employment<sup>1</sup>.

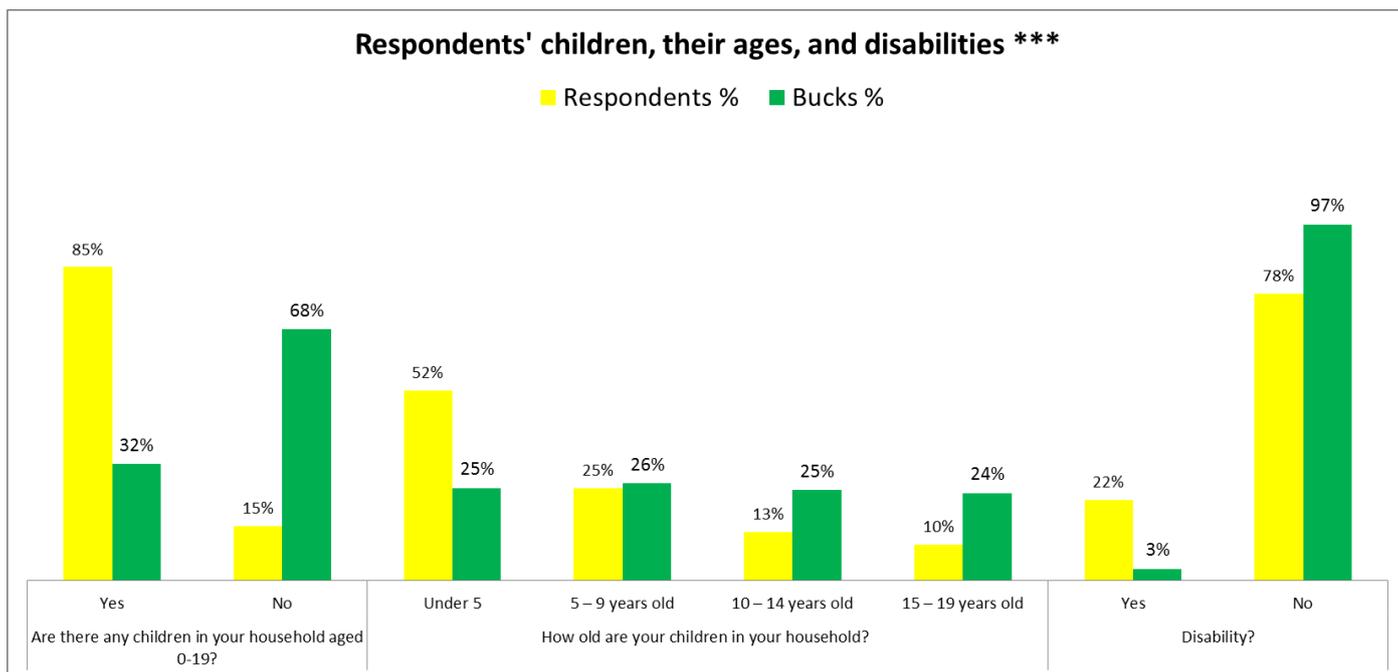


<sup>1</sup> Valid responses are those answering question 2 regarding agreement or disagreement with the Early Help proposal and those who provide their demographic information for each category above. Bucks profile is based on 16+, except Employment Status (16-74). The base number of respondents to questions on the following were: Gender (1738), Age (1991), Ethnicity (1668), Disability (1760), Employment Status (1741). BME refers to "Black or Minority Ethnic Groups".

The Acorn profile of respondents was representative of the Bucks population, particularly for the less affluent groups most in need and more likely to access services<sup>2</sup>.



The majority of respondents (85%) were families with children, compared with 32% of the Bucks population. Of the respondents with children, over half had children under 5 in the household - significantly higher than the Bucks profile (25%). The proportion of children with disabilities was seven times that of the Bucks population of children with disabilities<sup>3</sup>.

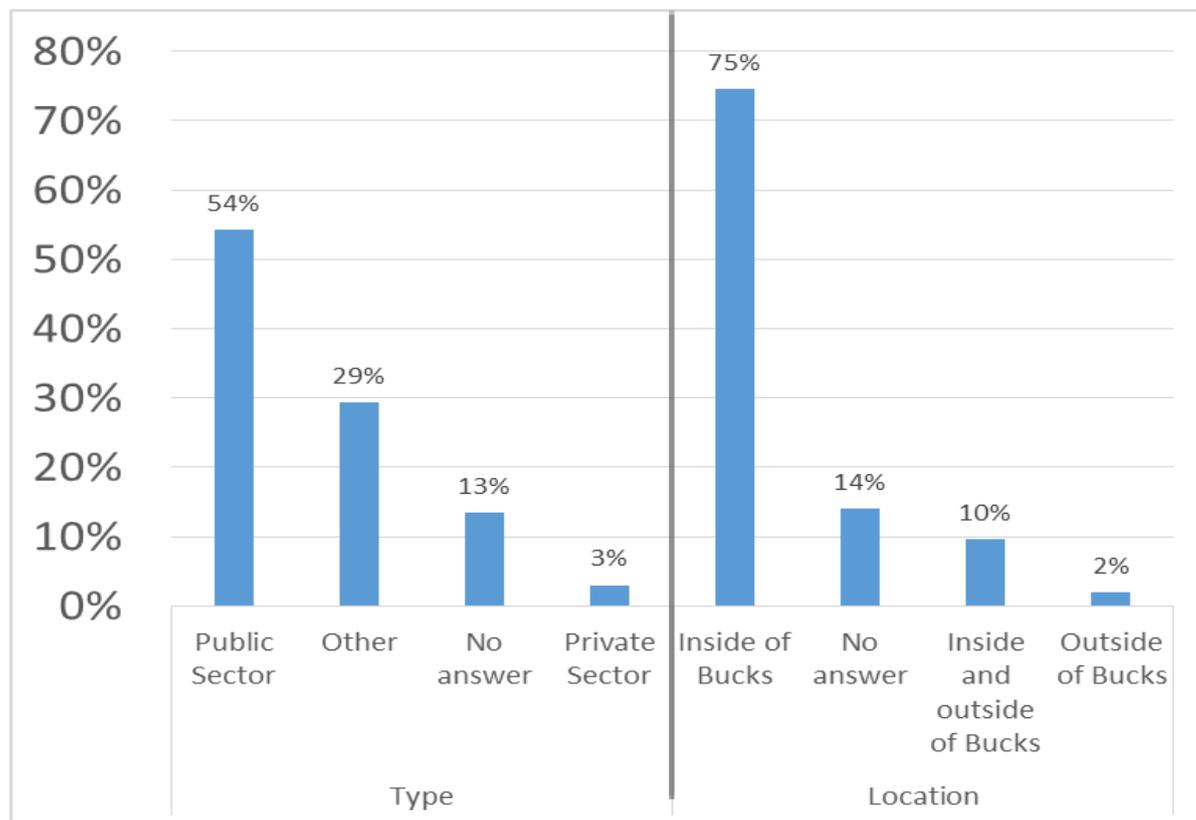


<sup>2</sup> Valid responses are those answering question 2 regarding agreement or disagreement with the Early Help proposal and those who provide their demographic information for each category above. Note that figures in brackets are respondent profile, for example results for the 'Urban Adversity' category would be accurate to +/- 14%. 1428 residents who responded were assigned an ACORN category, the remainder were "not private households" or uncategorised.

<sup>3</sup> Valid responses are those answering question 2 regarding agreement or disagreement with the Early Help proposal and those who provide their demographic information for each category above. Disability proportions based on 0-19 population. The base number of respondents to questions on the following were: Children in HH aged 0-19 (1763), Age of children in HH (based on households selecting children in age categories - 2048), Disability (1484)

## Organisations

Respondents could also complete the survey on behalf of an organisation, where the majority of the 365 respondents were from public sector organisations (54%)<sup>4</sup>. There were often a number of respondents from the same organisation.



<sup>4</sup> Three organisations submitted responses to the consultation by way of letter directly to the council, and are not included in the base figures for agree/disagree, but the comments raised have been included in organisation totals. This means that the question on agreement with the councils proposal is based on 362 respondents, but there were 3 additional respondents in the further considerations and comments section as well as the organisations characteristics section (365 respondents).

**Results**

The survey based consultation was open for three groups of stakeholders – the public, organisations and young people who are users of services.

**Residents**

Residents were provided with an outline of the Councils proposals to create a new ‘Early Help’ service (see context to the consultation above) and asked for their views and opinions regarding the proposals in the following questions.

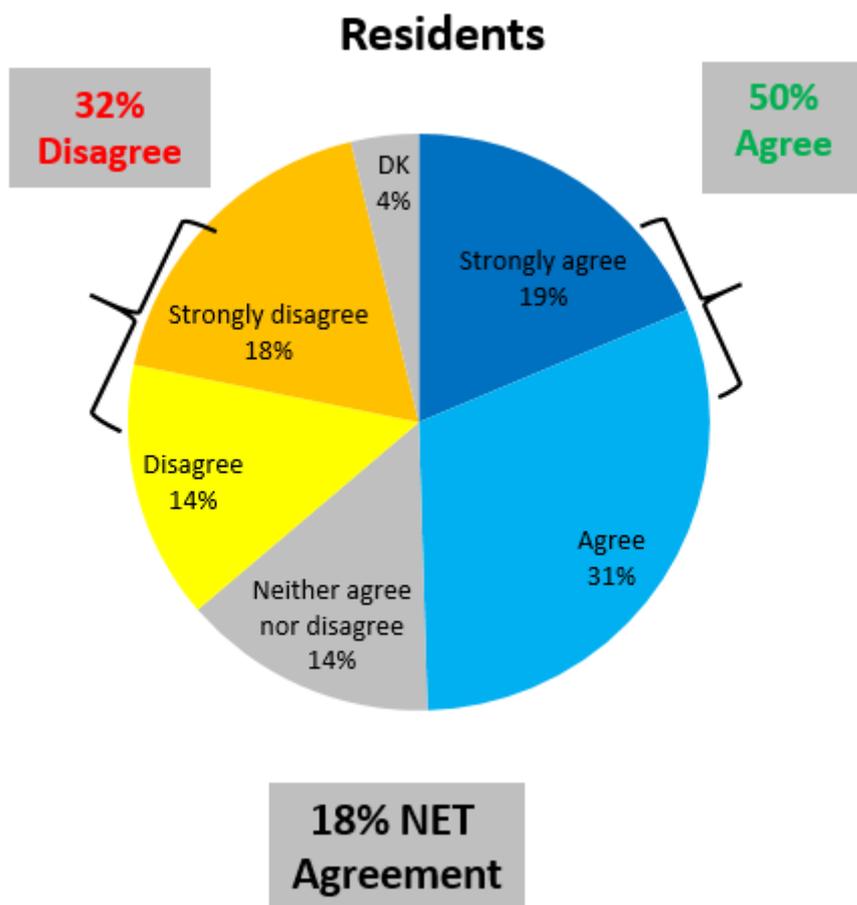
**Agreement with the proposals**

Residents were formally asked to give an opinion on whether they agree, or disagree with the proposals for a new Early Help service.

Taking into account the proportion of people who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement with the proposal of 18%.

Although there was ‘net’ agreement with the proposal overall, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement with the proposal. Where half of residents (50%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (32%) disagreed. Approximately two in ten residents (18%) either didn’t have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn’t know.

***Q3. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with our proposal for a new Early Help Service?***



Levels of agreement or disagreement with the 'Early Help' proposal were analysed for different groups of people according to their demographic characteristics, whether they made any further comments, or provided further considerations in any of the open text questions in the survey and by the phase of the consultation (phases 1 or 2 - to understand if there were differences in views when further information was provided regarding the proposal).

There were a limited number of differences for these different groups of people that were statistically different from other groups<sup>5</sup>, these included:

Groups expressing higher levels of agreement with the proposal

- **Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) staff/contractors** - are significantly more likely to express agreement with the proposal (a 10% difference – 59% for BCC staff or respondents from contracted services, compared to 49% for non-BCC related staff)
- **Gender** – agreement with the proposal was 11% higher for female respondents than male respondents (51% compared to 40%)
- **Households with 10-14 year olds** – agreement with the proposal is 10% higher for respondents whose children are aged 10-14 than those without children aged 10-14 (58% compared to 48%)
- **Children with disabilities** – respondents whose children have disabilities have levels of agreement with the proposal that are 8% higher than respondents who answered that their children did not have a disability (56% compared to 48%)
- **First and Second Phases** – agreement with the proposals was 7% higher in the first phase of the consultation (52% compared to 45%).

Groups expressing higher levels of disagreement with the proposal

- **Those with children aged 0-4** – respondents with children aged 0-4 in their household are more likely to express disagreement with the proposal (5% difference - 35% with children in their household, compared to 30% without 0-4's in their household)
- **Ethnicity** – those from Black or Minority Ethnic Groups (BME) are 7% more likely to disagree with the proposal than those from White Ethnic Groups (38% compared to 31%)
- **ACORN** – 44% of respondents from the 'Urban Adversity' ACORN category disagreed with the proposal, which was 13% higher than those from the 'Financially Stretched' category (31%), and 14% higher than the 'Affluent Achiever' category (30%).
- **Further comments** - Those who have made further comments or considerations (Q4 or Q5) regarding the proposal are 22% more likely to disagree with the proposal than those who didn't make a comment (41% vs 19%)
- **Younger residents** – 42% of those aged 16-24 disagreed with the proposal, compared to 31% of those aged 35-44 and 27% of those aged 55-64

Note that there were no statistically significant differences for those families who told us that they used any of the services listed in the survey<sup>6</sup>, compared to all other respondents, when considering the proportions of people who agreed or disagreed with the proposal.

<sup>5</sup> With a 95% confidence level. Respondent numbers consisting of: Households with children aged 0-4 (1020), without 0-4s (971). Households with 10-14 year olds (294), without 10-14 year olds (1697). Children with disabilities (326), children without disabilities (1158). BCC staff (192), non-staff (1799), First Phase (1279), Second Phase (712). Respondents making further comments (1249), not making further comments (742). Gender – females (1555), Males (183). Ethnic Group respondents – BME (225), White (1442). ACORN – 'Urban Adversity' (79), 'Financially Stretched' (235), 'Affluent Achievers' (522). Age – 16-24 yr olds (74), 35-44 yr olds (830), 55-64 yr olds (142).

<sup>6</sup> Including: Play Groups, Health and Wellbeing activities, Support Groups, Clubs, Buckinghamshire Family Information Service

Important considerations or comments

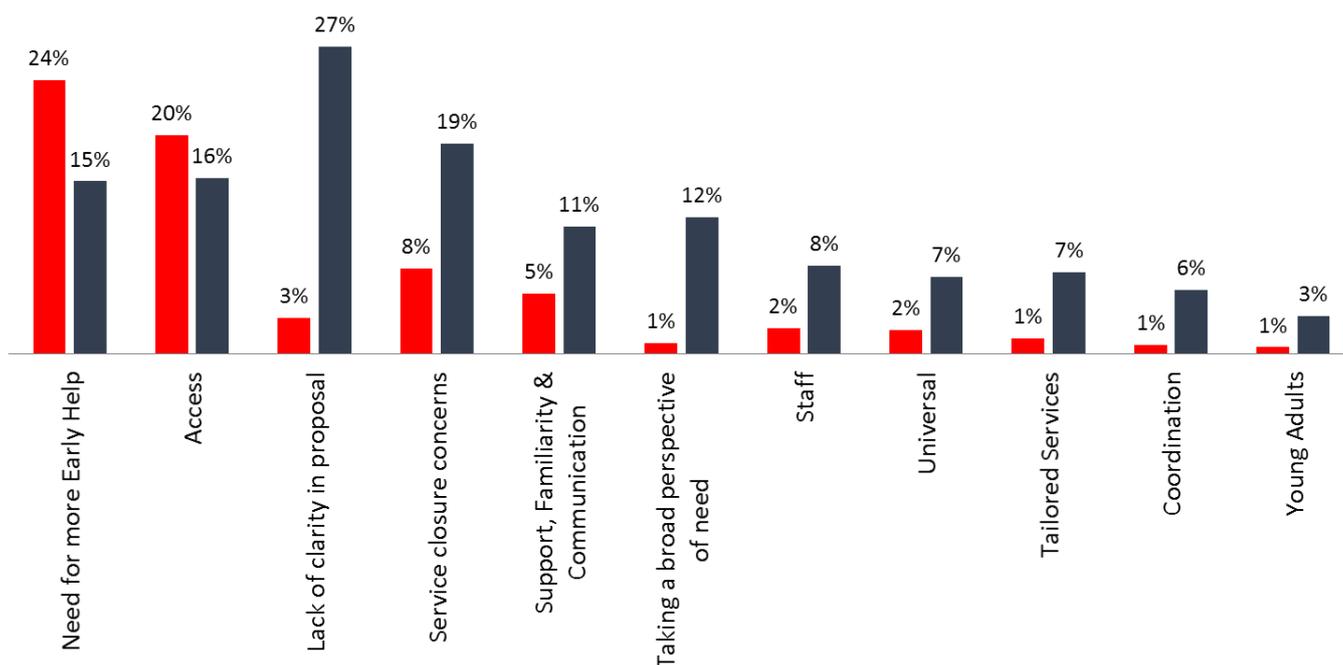
Respondents were asked what their most important considerations were when improving the way that services are delivered for children and families, as well as to let the council know if they had any other comments regarding the proposal.

These were both free text questions enabling respondents to let us know their opinions and views in their own words. To better understand the key themes that respondents raised, answers to these questions have been categorised into the most common themes that respondents raised. These themes appear in the graph below and show that the most common considerations or comments are regarding

- The need for more Early Help Services
- Accessibility
- The clarity of the proposal
- Service closure concerns

**Q4. When improving the way we deliver services for children and their families, what are the most important things we should consider?**

**Q5. Do you have any other comments on our proposal for a new early help service?**



A description of the main issues raised in each of these categories appears below. Note that verbatim quotes are shown in green for the two most mentioned categories:

- **The Need for more Early Help** – the need for a holistic 'prevention'
  - “The new proposal should continue to include a proactive element (such as the Children's Centres social activities) and not only be reactive” (Male aged 35-44, Wycombe District)*
  - “I also worry that the changes proposed merely want to focus on the disadvantaged but prevention is better than cure, Bucks council needs to maintain engagement with its families BEFORE 'help' is needed” (Female aged 35-44)*
  - “A community service as described above does not give parents the opportunity to seek immediate help if needed. The children's centres currently in existence allows parents to drop in anytime when they need support the most” (Female aged 25-34, Chiltern District)*
- **Access** - the need for a variety of locations, accessible locations and service opening timings.
  - “Services should be local and easy to find and access” (Female aged 35-44, Wycombe District)*
  - “Access to free activities like local stay and play” (Aged 35-44)*
  - “Accessibility for all, regardless of financial background” (Female aged 25-34, Wycombe District)*
  - “That in my local area the majority of people can afford to pay for all the things you provide for free and the people who really need to access them are choosing not to because they will be surround by rich people who don't understand their circumstances at all” (Female aged 25-34, Chiltern District)*
- **Service closure concerns** – across one or more services, closing 'places to meet' (including Children's Centres)
- **Lack of clarity in proposal** – the proposal was not clear to the respondent
- **Support, familiarity and communication** - need for familiarity/trust when using services
- **Coordination** – the need for more 'joined-up', one stop, and coordinated services
- **Taking a broad perspective on need** - proactively identify at-risk individuals and families, taking a more holistic approach e.g. societal causes of need for care
- **Staff** – having friendly, trustworthy and capable staff. This may also include a need for keeping specialisms and coincides with concerns that one Family Worker may not be sufficient to address the range of issues posed
- **Tailored services** - more tailored services, that would also help reduce concerns around having to repeat explanations regarding their circumstances and challenges a number of times to different services
- **Universal services** – concerns around how universal services (e.g. parent craft groups in children's centres) would fit into new proposal
- **Young Adults** – concerns that support is needed for older children and young adults

## Organisations

The same set of questions regarding the proposal for the new ‘Early Help’ service were asked of Organisations. This included an outline of the Councils proposals to create a new ‘Early Help’ service (see context to the consultation above) and respondents were asked to provide further comments as a representative of the organisation they work for.

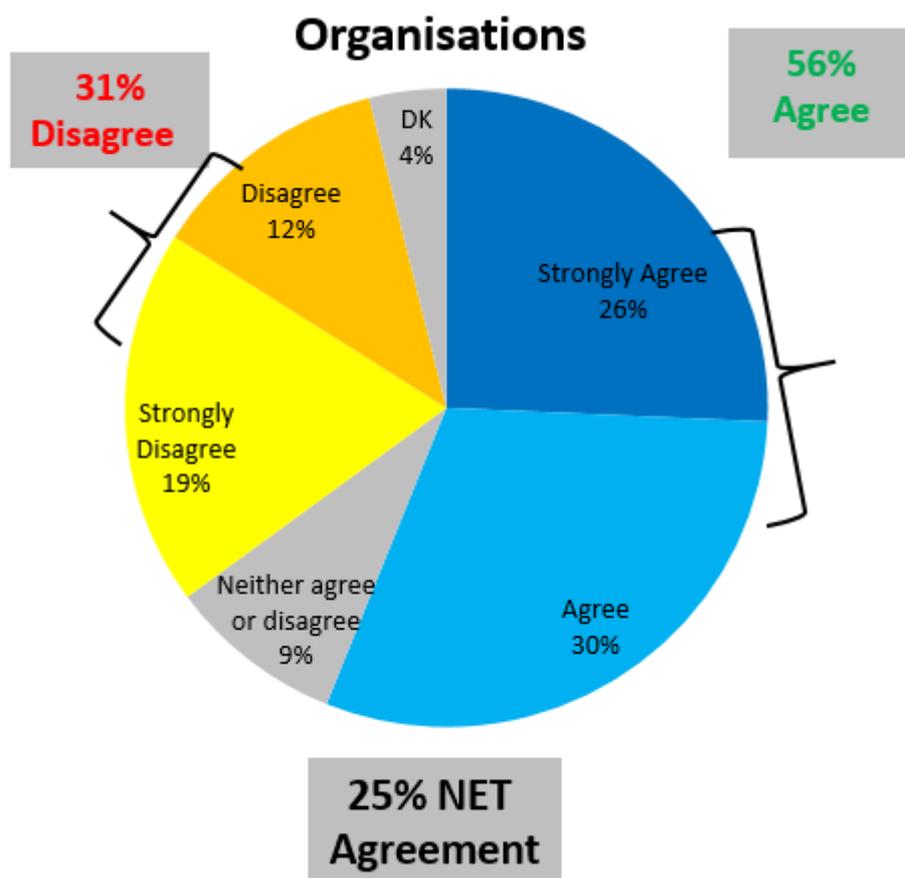
### Agreement with the proposals

Respondents were formally asked to give an opinion on whether they agree, or disagree with the proposals for a new Early Help service.

Taking into account the proportion of respondents who agreed, as well as those who disagreed with the proposal, there was net positive agreement with the proposal of 25%.

Although there was ‘net’ agreement with the proposal overall, as with residents, there were relatively high levels of both agreement and disagreement with the proposal. Approximately six in ten of respondents from organisations (56%) agreed with the proposal and three in ten (31%) disagreed. Approximately one in ten respondents (13%) either didn’t have a strong opinion (neither agreed nor disagreed) or didn’t know.

### **Q6. To what extent do you agree, or disagree with our proposal for a new Early Help Service?**



Base: All 362 responding as representatives of organisation (with valid answers to this question)

Levels of agreement or disagreement with the 'Early Help' proposal were analysed for different groups of respondents according to the organisations that they responded from, whether any further comments or considerations were made (in any of the open text questions in the survey) and by the phase of the consultation (phases 1 or 2 - to understand if there were differences in views when further information was provided regarding the proposal).

There were a limited number of differences for these different groups of people that were statistically different from other groups<sup>7</sup>, these included:

- **First and Second Phases** - Levels of agreement were 18% higher in the first phase of the consultation than in the second phase (64% agreement in the first phase, compared to 46% in the second phase). Levels of disagreement were also 22% higher for those responding in the second phase of the survey (44% disagreement in second phase, compared to 22% disagreement in the first).
- **Further comments**<sup>8</sup> - Those who have made further comments or considerations (Q7 or Q8) regarding the proposal are 3% more likely to disagree with the proposal than those who didn't make a comment (32% vs 29%)

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<sup>7</sup> With a 95% confidence level. Respondent numbers consisting of: First Phase (204), Second Phase (158). Respondents making further comments (310), not making further comments (52).

<sup>8</sup> Three organisations submitted responses to the consultation by way of letter directly to the council, and are not included in the base figures for agree/disagree, but the comments raised have been included in organisation totals. This means that the question on agreement with the councils proposal is based on 362 respondents, but there were 3 additional respondents in the further considerations and comments section as well as the organisations characteristics section (365 respondents).

Important considerations or comments

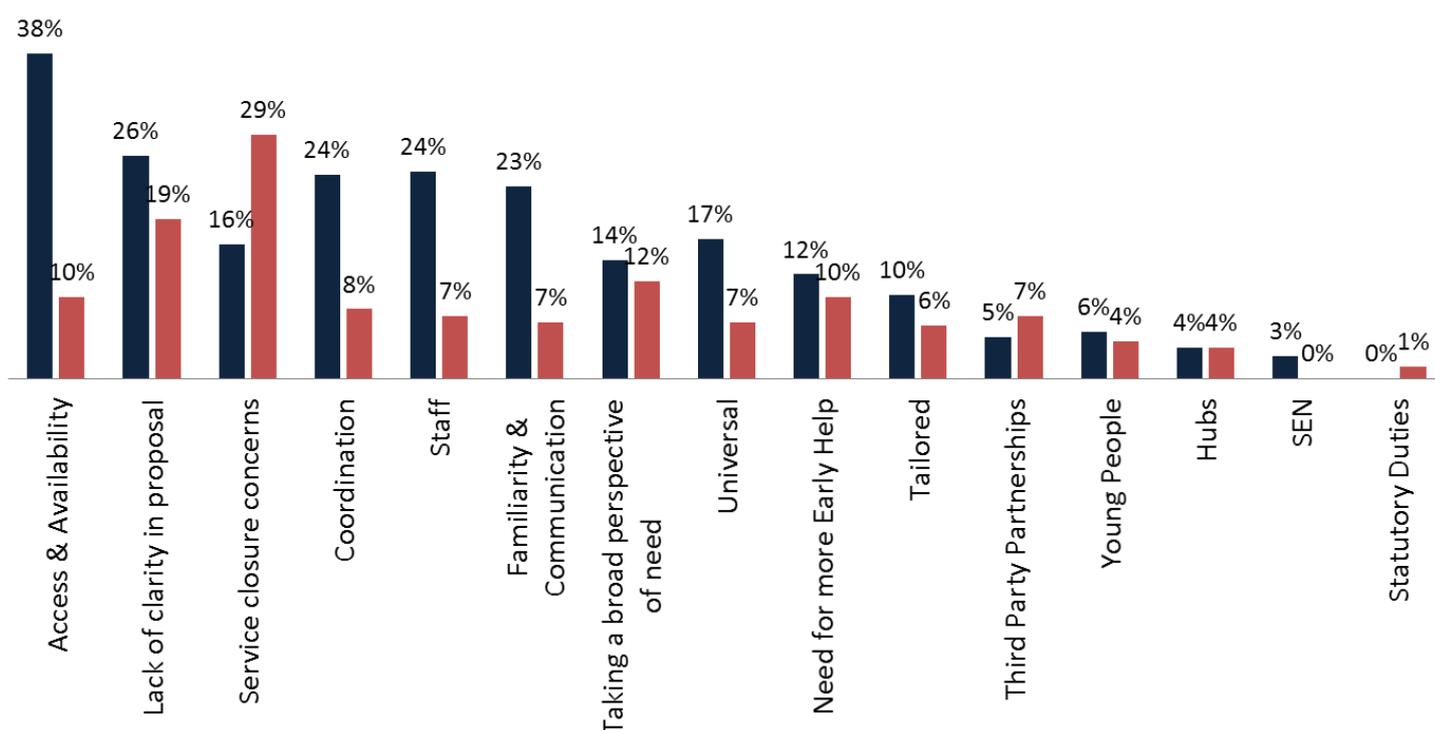
Respondents providing views as representatives of organisations were asked what their most important considerations were when improving the way that services are delivered for children and families, as well as to let the council know if they had any other comments regarding the proposal.

These were both free text questions enabling respondents to let us know their opinions and views in their own words. To better understand the key themes that respondents raised, answers to these questions have been categorised into the most common themes that respondents raised. These themes appear in the graph below and show that the most common considerations or comments are regarding

- Access and availability
- The clarity of the proposal
- Service closure concerns

**Q7. When improving the way we deliver services for children and their families, what are the most important things we should consider?**

**Q8. Do you have any other comments on our proposal for a new early help service?**



Base: All 365 organisations responding with valid answers to the consultation

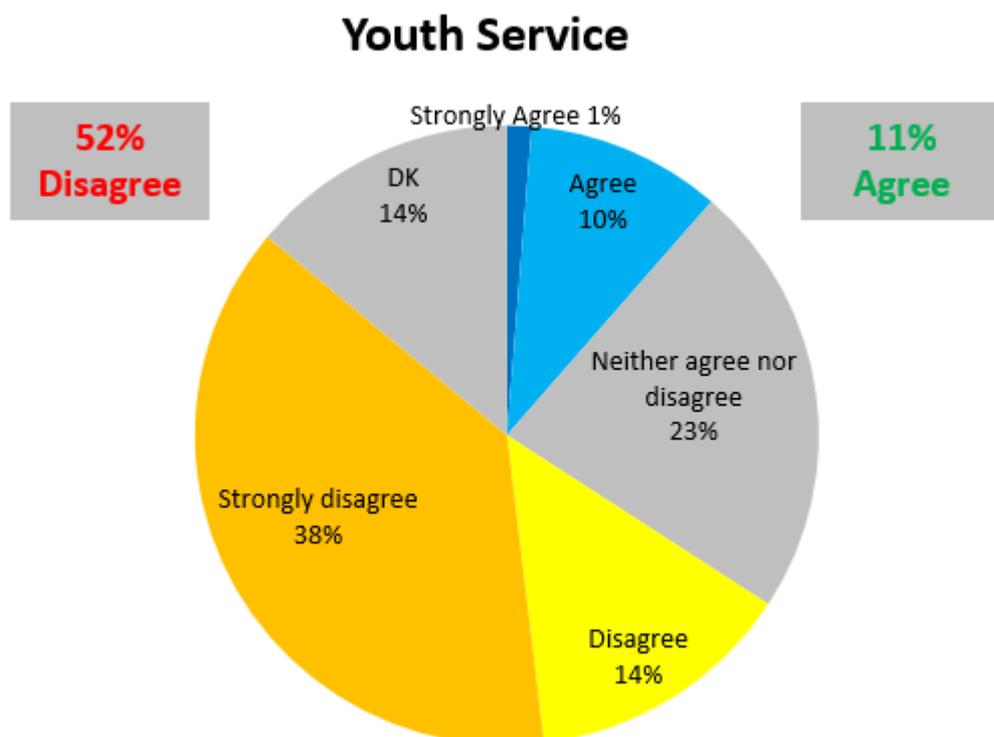
Organisations raised similar issues to residents (please see above description of the main issues raised in each of these categories above), with these additional themes:

- **Universal Access** – asking for the council to consider how access can be universal in the re-designed service
- **Third Party Partnerships** - how third party partnerships will fit in to new proposal and the re-designed service
- **Hubs** – asking for the council to consider providing more than the 9 hubs that were listed in the proposal
- **SEN** – ensuring that there are services that focus on children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and well as ‘Children with Disabilities’ service users delivered through Children’s Social Care.
- **Statutory Duties** – raising considerations and concerns regarding how the council will ensure that statutory needs are met

## Youth Service Users

Young people who attend the councils Youth Service were given the opportunity to take part in the consultation<sup>9</sup>. A total of 79 young people responded.

The graph below shows that five in ten (52%) respondents disagreed with the proposals for the new 'Early Help' service, a quarter of respondents (23%) neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal and one in ten (11%) actively agreed with the proposal. 14% didn't know whether to agree or disagree.



Base: All 79 residents responding with valid answers to this question

76 of the 79 young people who responded made further comments and provided further considerations for the proposals:

There were a number of comments or considerations regarding the continued availability of social activities, the closure of services, as well as help with transitions.

<sup>9</sup> Where the consent of the Youth Service Team was provided, acting as the responsible adult for those under 16 years of age.

Young people also raised whether staff would still have the right skills or expertise, that they do not want to have to 'tell their story' a number of times to professionals, the importance of confidentiality where respondents didn't necessarily want to share everything with their family, and how the council can ensure that vulnerable children are reached by a more targeted service.

A selection of verbatim comments from young people appears below:

*"Confidentiality - I do not want the whole family knowing my problems. I will have no one just for me."*

(Young Person, Under 16)

*"I like things how they are. It helps people like me."*

(Young Person, 16-24)

*"I think separate services should be kept...as its voluntary and I get to choose if I like my worker or not. This may conflict with my Mum's views."*

(Young Person, 16-24)

## Focus Groups

Residents participating in the focus groups provided further insights around how they use services and general opinions are views of services, including:

- **Accessing Services** (Topic 1) – including a range of preferences for how services are accessed and delivered, ranging from self-referral phone access to professional referrals and opinions regarding permanent and flexible service locations.
- **Universal Services Used** (Topic 2) – participants accessed a wide range of services including universal and targeted services.
- **One Family Worker** (Topic 3) – views on this topic ranged from it being easier to ‘tell your story once’ with less confusion of working with different professionals to recognising that it would be important to ‘get on with’ the family worker.
- **Accessing Information** (Topic 4) – participants source information from a wide variety of sources including the internet (which can be too broad and confusing), online forums or networks and through professionals that they are already in contact with.
- **Early Help** (Topic 5) – this topic considered what Early Help means, which participants described as family support, helping with parenting and challenging difficult behaviours and helping at crisis points. Some participants said this they saw this as only for families who have recently had children or it was only for children (not families).

## **Appendix 1 – supporting information**

A range of supporting information was provided for the consultation which is available from the following link:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/care-for-children-and-families/improving-early-help-services-for-children-young-people-and-families/>

## **Appendix 2 – Phase one and Phase two website explanation**

The information below shows how the additional information was introduced for phase 2 of the consultation (new information – 4 September 2017). Note that the full information provided appears in the link at appendix 1 above.

### **Webpage Content:**

#### ***Improving services for children and families in Buckinghamshire***

#### **Purpose of the consultation**

#### **NEW INFORMATION – 4 September 2017**

#### **You said, we're listening**

We are now mid-way through our consultation on improving early help services for children and families. Thank you to those of you who have already replied. Feedback so far shows that more detail about the proposal would be useful. We have added further information about the current services and how these would change with the proposed new service.

If you have already responded but now wish to add more, please complete the survey again. Responses already sent in will still be included. The consultation will now close on **16 October** to allow as much time as possible for responses.

#### **ORIGINAL INFORMATION**

Buckinghamshire County Council is seeking views on a proposed new approach to supporting children and families earlier to prevent them needing help from social care services in the future. The consultation is available online at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) until 22 September.

There has been a steady increase in the number of children and families needing support from children's services in the last few years. This, along with less money in the public purse means that we need to change some services to better help the children and families who need it the most.

We know that some of our current services don't always reach these children and families so we need to change that. We also want to join up services for families rather than them having to do so themselves. The consultation outlines proposals for a new approach to helping children and families, to ensure small problems don't get bigger and too difficult to manage. From money worries, parenting tips, behavioral issues right through to support with mental health and domestic abuse - the proposal is to work with families to tackle all of their problems at the same time.

Read the details of the consultation and have your say at [www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/earlyhelp) to help shape the future of early help services for children and families here in Buckinghamshire.