



Cheshire East Family Survey

August 2018



OFFICIAL



Executive Summary

Families are the experts on what helps and supports them. We want to know how well we are supporting the families we work with so that we can improve how we work in the future.

In Cheshire East, we have adopted [Signs of Safety](#) as our way of working with families, because this will support us to achieve the type of service that children, young people, parents and carers have told us they want; one which is open, honest and clear about what professionals think and about what could happen, one which listens to them, and creates plans **together with** them.

We carried out the Cheshire East Family Survey over 5 weeks from 21st May to 22nd June 2018 to find out what families thought about our services and the support they receive.

We asked eight questions where people were asked to say how they felt from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. These questions were based on what is important in Signs of Safety practice, so we could assess how well we are using Signs of Safety in our work with families. This survey was carried out six months after the first people in Cheshire East were trained to use Signs of Safety, so we were expecting it to show that there were a lot of areas that we could improve on. We also asked three open questions so people had the opportunity to tell us what they thought about our services in their own words.

A total of 140 people completed the survey; this included at least 31 children and young people (22%), 101 parents and carers (72%), and two extended family members or family friends (1%).

Six people (4%) chose not to tell us whether they were a child or young person, parent/ carer, friend or family member.

Most responses were received from families working with the Cheshire East Family Service (37%), Child in Need and Child Protection Teams (29%) and the Youth Engagement (Prevention) Team (15%). There were some differences in response rates between teams which needs to be understood. We would like to increase the number of responses from all teams for next year, as we think the number of responses is quite low, particularly for some teams, and we would like to hear from as many families as possible.

Summary of the findings:

Overall the results of the survey were very positive, and the vast majority of families felt listened to, understood why services were involved and what they were trying to achieve, and were pleased with the support and help they were receiving. Children and young people's experiences were generally very similar to that of parents and carers.

Parents and carers were generally more likely than children and young people to strongly agree, and children and young people were more likely than parents/ carers to say they neither agreed nor disagreed, which indicates that we may not be communicating with and including children and young people as well as we do with parents/ carers. Families were less sure about whether their plan was helping them; this was our weakest area.

The high level of positive responses may reflect that the survey was completed by families with the strongest relationships with their workers. This is something we will try to explore with teams when we try to understand the difference in response rates.

What families said is working well:

- **Help and support:** People said that their workers had helped them and their families and had improved their lives. They thought the advice and support they received was good and that they were glad to have someone they could turn to for help and advice.
- **Relationships with workers:** People found their workers caring, supportive, friendly, open and honest. They felt listened to, understood and supported.
- **Communication:** People liked that workers did what they said they would do and were kept informed about what was happening. They liked that workers were available, flexible, and quick to respond.

What families said we should change:

- **Relationships:** Some people felt that they were being judged by workers or said how important it is to not feel judged. People wanted workers to have an open mind and see things from different perspectives.
- **Improve communication:** Although some people's experiences of communication had been good, some people

had experienced delays in communication. People wanted to be fully informed in a timely way, and for dads to be included as equals. Some people thought it seemed that workers were too busy and possibly services should have more staff.

What we will do:

- **Responses:** Explore why different response rates were received from different teams, and look at what we could do to increase the response rate next time so we can hear from more families
- **Relationships:** We will continue to improve our relationships with families – we will be more curious, keep an open mind, ask more questions, and explore what is working well, as well as what people are worried about, so families don't feel judged and are recognised as the experts on their own families.
- **Communication:** we will continue to improve our communication with families, keeping our language simple and avoiding jargon, keeping people informed about what's happening, communicating our worries and goals in clear statements and sharing these with everyone at each meeting.
- **Involving children and young people:** We will continue to work to involve children and young people fully in their assessments and plans using tools such as the three houses and safety house, and for their meetings to be centred on what's important to them.
- **Plans that work for families:** We will work to make sure children, young people, parents, carers and their network create their own plans which they think will work for them.

Introduction

We want all our children and young people to be happy, healthy, and safe, and to be able to live a life that is full of fun and opportunities to learn and develop. Where possible, we want to support our children and young people to remain with their families within a loving, caring, safe and stable environment. When children are unable to remain in the care of their families, we want to ensure they receive a permanent, loving home as soon as possible.

Cheshire East Council is committed to providing families with the support they need as soon as they need it to help prevent problems from becoming more serious.

In Cheshire East, we have adopted [Signs of Safety](#) as our way of working with families, because this will support us to achieve the type of service that children, young people, parents and carers have told us they want; one which is open, honest and clear about what professionals think and about what could happen, one which listens to them, and creates plans **together with** them.

Families are the experts on what helps and supports them. We want to know how well we are supporting the families we work with so that we can improve how we work in the future.

About the Family Survey

We carried out the Cheshire East Family Survey over 5 weeks from 21st May to 22nd June 2018 to find out what families thought about our services and the support they receive.

We wanted to hear from anyone that Cheshire East Council's Prevention and Children's Social Care services works with, which includes children and young people, parents, carers, and other family members or friends that help and support the family as part of their support network.

All practitioners were asked to speak to all the children, young people, parents, carers and other family members or friends they spent time with during these weeks to explain why we were completing the survey and why it was important, and to ask them if they would fill in our survey. The survey could be completed online or on paper, so respondents could choose which they preferred. The guidance information practitioners could use to help them explain this to families is included in **Appendix 2**.

We asked eight questions where people were asked to say how they felt from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. These questions were based on what is important in Signs of Safety practice, so we could assess how well we are using Signs of Safety in our work with families. This survey was carried out six months after the first people in Cheshire East were trained to use Signs of Safety, so we were expecting it to show that there were a lot of areas that we could improve on.

We also asked three open questions so people had the opportunity to tell us what they thought about our services in their own words:

What is good about how we are working with you?



What should we do differently?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

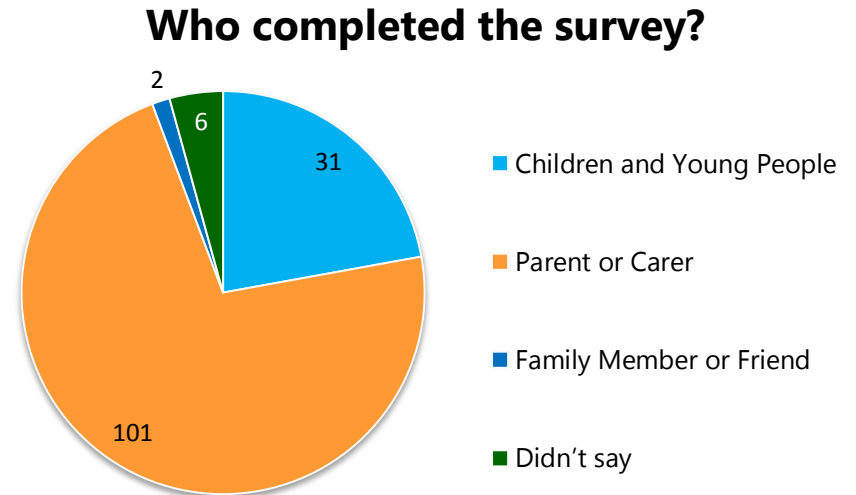
We have included direct quotes from the respondents throughout this report. The full list of questions in the survey is included in **Appendix 1**.

The same questions were used for each team, but we made sure we were able to track which responses related to which team so we could identify if there were different strengths and areas for development across teams. The raw data for each team was provided to the Team and Service Managers so they could know how well their team was performing and could share this with their team.

Who completed the survey?

A total of 140 people completed the survey; this included at least 31 children, young people, 101 parents and carers, and two extended family members or family friends.

Most responses were from parents/carers (72%), 22% were from children and young people.



Very few responses were from extended family members or family friends who were part of the support network. Developing a support network for the family is a really important part of using Signs of Safety, so children and young people can have help throughout their lives from people that know them well and who love and care for them, rather than from social care professionals. As using Signs of Safety was quite new to Cheshire

East when this survey was completed, it is not surprising that there were not many responses from people in families' networks. This is something we would hope to see change when we repeat the survey next year. Interestingly, both of these responses were from people working with the Crewe Child in Need and Child Protection Team, and they both strongly agreed with all of the statements and had had good experience of our support.

The following teams took part in the survey:

Team	Number of Responses				Total
	Children /young people	Parents/ carers	Family/ friends	Unknown	
Cheshire East Family Service (North)	8	35	0	2	45 (32%)
Cheshire East Family Service (South)	0	6	0	1	7 (5%)
Youth Engagement (Prevention) Service	8	12	0	1	21 (15%)
Child in Need and Child Protection Team (Macc.)	1	5	0	1	7 (5%)
Child in Need and Child Protection Team (Crewe)	5	26	2	1	34 (24%)
FACT 22	0	2	0	0	2 (1%)
Children with Disabilities Team	0	2	0	0	2 (1%)
Short Breaks Team for Children with Disabilities	0	3	0	0	3 (2%)
Cared for Team	3	8	0	0	11 (8%)
Care Leavers Team	6	0	0	0	6 (4%)
Unknown	0	2	0	0	2 (1%)
Total	31	101	2	6	140 (100%)

Some differences in the response rate between teams would be expected, as some teams are much bigger than others, for example the Short Breaks Team for Children with Disabilities Team is a much smaller team than Cheshire East Family Service Teams or the Child in Need and Child Protection Teams.

However, both Family Service Teams are the about the same size and do the same work, but there was a significantly higher response from people working with the Family Service in the North. This was also the case for the Child in Need and Child Protection Teams, with a much higher response from the Crewe Team.

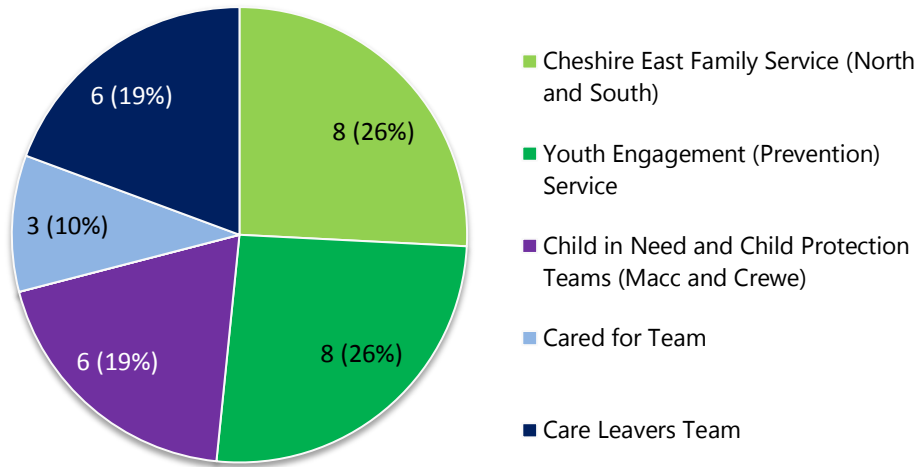
We need to understand why there was such a difference in responses between teams. Due to extent of the difference, we think it is more likely that these higher responses are due to more practitioners asking more families, rather than that more families chose not to respond, but this is an area we will explore further with teams.

We would like to increase the number of responses from all teams for next year, as we think the number of responses is quite low, particularly for some teams, and we would like to hear from as many families as possible.

Most responses were received from the Cheshire East Family Service (37%), Child in Need and Child Protection Teams (29%) and the Youth Engagement (Prevention) Team (15%).

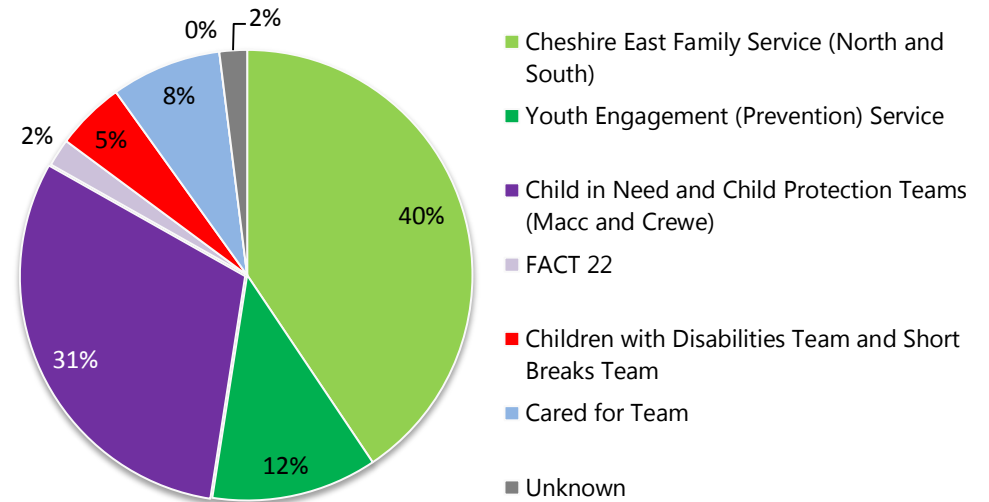
The responses from children and young people are quite evenly spread across services, but this survey did not capture the views of children and young people with disabilities.

Responses from children and young people



The majority of responses from parents and carers were from those working with the Family Service and Child in Need and Child Protection Teams.

Responses from parents or carers





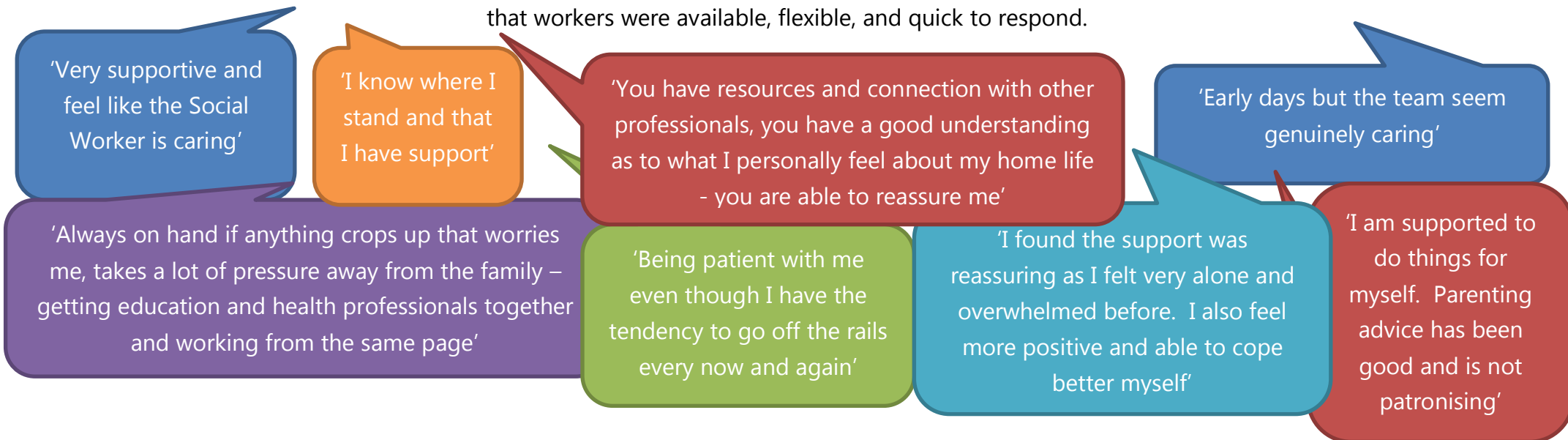
What families said is good about how we work:

We had **a lot of positive comments**; the themes that came out from the feedback were:

Help and support: People said that their workers had helped them and their families and had improved their lives. They thought the advice and support they received was good and that they were glad to have someone they could turn to for help and advice.

Relationships with workers: People found their workers caring, supportive, friendly, open and honest. They felt listened to, understood and supported.

Communication: People liked that workers did what they said they would do and were kept informed about what was happening. They liked that workers were available, flexible, and quick to respond.



'Nothing, I think that the work which has been done has been constructive and a good platform for the future'

'Make sure you come to your appointments on time and actually help us with things – not just sit there and make us look bad because we have issues. I'm sure you lot are not perfect.'

'More Visits'

What families said we should do differently:

38% people chose not to answer this question. Most of the responses were positive with people saying that nothing needs to change. The themes were:

Relationships: Some people felt that they were being judged by workers or said how important it is to not feel judged. People wanted workers to have an open mind and see things from different perspectives.

Improve communication: People wanted to be fully informed in a timely way, and for dads to be included as equals. Some people thought it seemed that workers were too busy and possibly services should have more staff.

'Look into things before escalating further'

'Be more open, take more information on board'

'I don't see how anything could be done any differently as our support was brilliant'

'Get to know people before you all judge. People make mistakes and want to learn from it. Some people, like myself, want to be a good mother, we need help, not people like yourselves judging'

'I would just like to say thank you so much for everything that has been done for my family'

'Social Workers need to give feedback – how are we meant to learn or improve if we don't know where we are going wrong – how can we improve instead of reading things in reports'

Other things families wanted to tell us:

Most of the responses were positive, and most people took this opportunity to thank their worker or to say what a difference the support had made to them and their family.

Communication: One person said it would be helpful to know from the outset how long workers could/ would stay involved, and another said that they wished for social workers to give more feedback and that they didn't just want to read things in reports.

Financial Support: Carers and cared for children asked for more financial support.

'Kate needs a rise'

'I have attended all of my DV Gateway meetings and the girls have loved working with Cheryl'

'Really happy and like the fact the worker is there to support, I feel comfortable to go to her and don't feel like she judges'

'I think that the birthday money and Christmas money situation is completely unfair and we should be given a better allowance as it's not our fault that we don't have the family financial support that most children have'

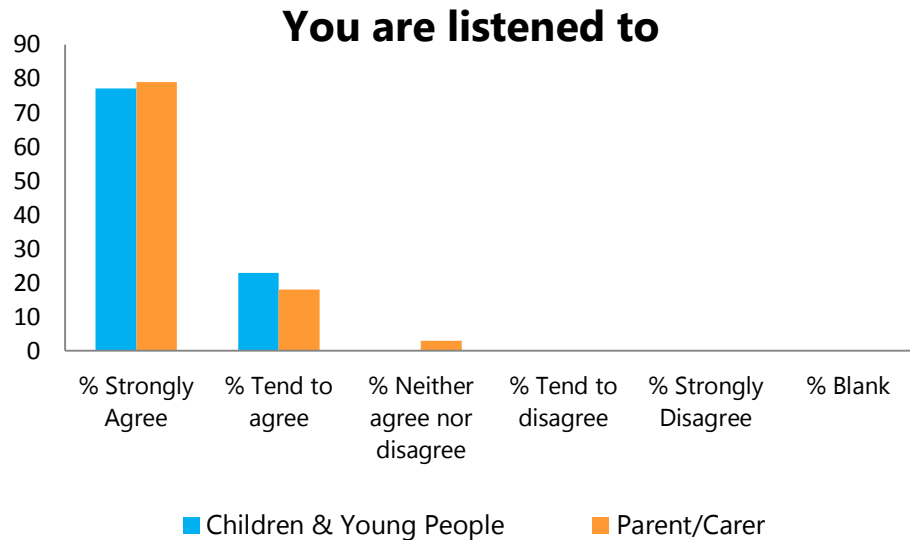
What families said:

We asked people to say how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

You are listened to by your worker

Out of the 31 Children and Young People that responded, they **all** stated that they agreed with this with 77% of them saying that they strongly agreed. Almost all (97%) parents/carers also agreed, 79% of these saying that 'strongly agreed'.

None of the respondents to the survey disagreed that they were; however 3% of parents/carers felt that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this.



This is a fantastic result for our services in Cheshire East. This shows that workers make children, young people and families feel that they value them and their opinions, which is really important in building a

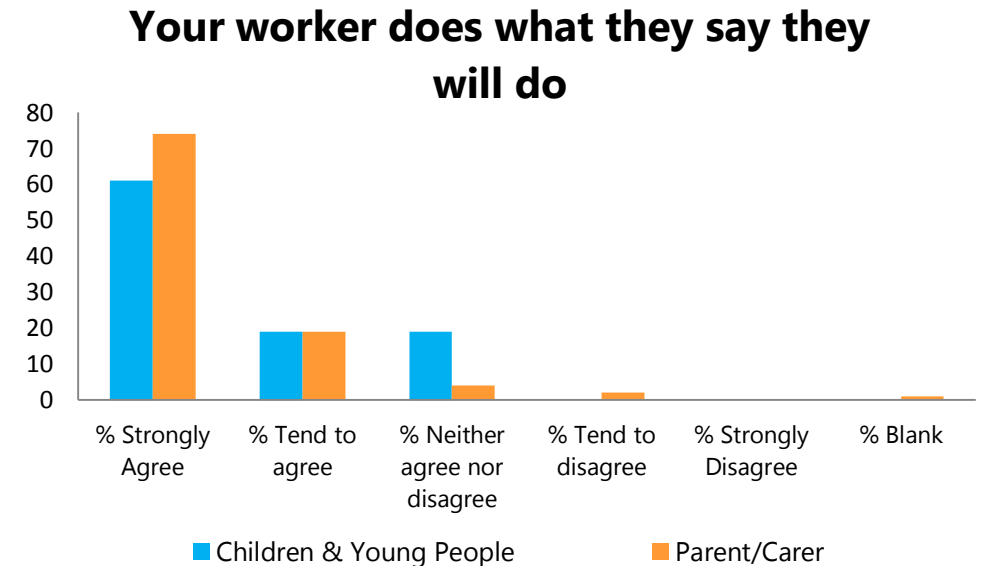
strong working relationship and working well together. Feeling listened to and having someone to talk to was a theme that came out strongly in what families said was good about working with us.

'Kate is a good listener and always comes up with ways to solve problems'

'I am listened to and supported'

Your worker does what they say they will do

80% of Children and Young People agreed with 61% saying that they strongly agreed.



93% of Parents/Carers also agreed that their worker does what they say they will do, 74% strongly agreed with this. Again this was a theme in what people said they liked about our service. Some people

thought this was an area we could improve and said this is something we should do differently. Only 2% of parents/carers said that they didn't agree.

Children and young people seemed less sure about this with 19% saying they neither agreed nor disagreed. This could be due to children and young people not being sure about what workers will do, so we need to make sure that we are explaining what will happen and what children and young people can expect from their workers.

'My worker follows through with everything she says. She is very supportive and understanding with me and my children'

'Everything my daughter needs has been seen and met by the help and understanding of the support worker and it's fantastic having someone who puts everything into place and listens to everything you need as a family too'

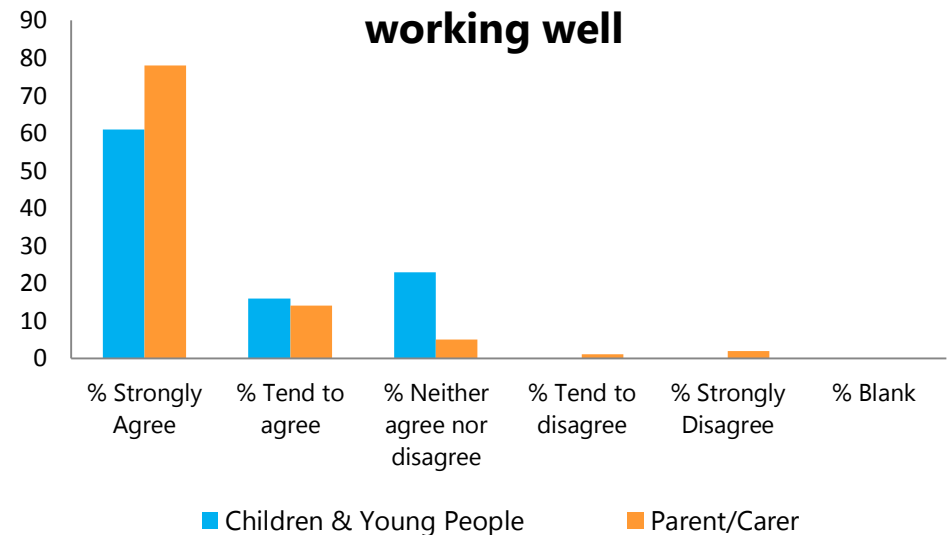
'It is helpful to have someone extra to help and listen'

'I enjoy sharing what goes on with my social worker in my life'

You talk about the things that are working well

Signs of Safety stresses that it's really important to explore what's working well within a family or for a child/ young person so we have a whole picture of the family and don't just focus on what isn't working as well. By exploring the times things work well, we can understand how to make this happen more often.

You talk about the things that are working well



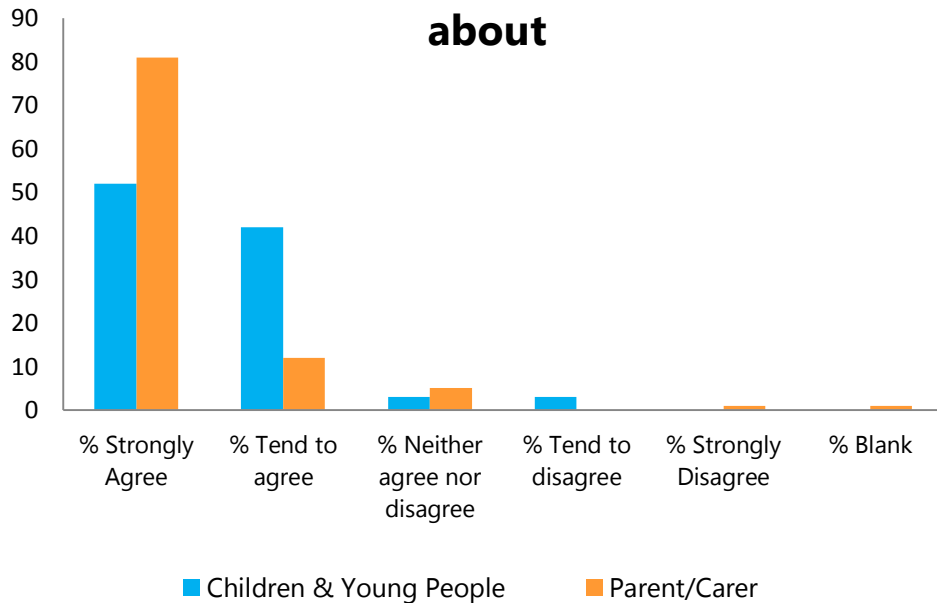
77% of Children and Young People agreed that they talk about things that are working well, with 61% strongly agreeing. However 23% were not sure and neither agreed or disagreed. We need to improve on this figure. More parents/ carers agreed with this 92% agreed with 78% strongly agreeing. 3% disagreed.

This shows that we need to do more to show children and young people that we want to know about and understand what is working well in their lives.

You talk about what you're worried about

It's also really important that the things families are worried about are discussed so that we can work together to make things better.

You talk about what you're worried about



94% of our Children and Young People felt that they talk about their worries, but only 52% strongly agreed. 3% felt that they did not talk about their worries. This is a good result, as it shows that they have the confidence to talk to workers about what they want to change, however we would like to increase the number of children and young people strongly agreeing with this.

93% of Parents/Carers felt that they were able to talk about their worries with 81% strongly agreeing. Again, this is a very good result.

'Always on hand if anything crops up that worries me, takes a lot of pressure away from the family re putting things in place for S. Getting health and educational professionals together and working from the same page. Ryan has been a huge support to our family'

'I get help and support and if I am struggling and don't know what to do I can ring for help'

'You have resources and connection with other professionals, you have a good understanding as to what I personally feel about my home life and how I feel around my son - you are able to reassure me when I am over thinking'

'You always listen and make sure you understand what I am worried about and why'

You are clear about what other people are worried about and why

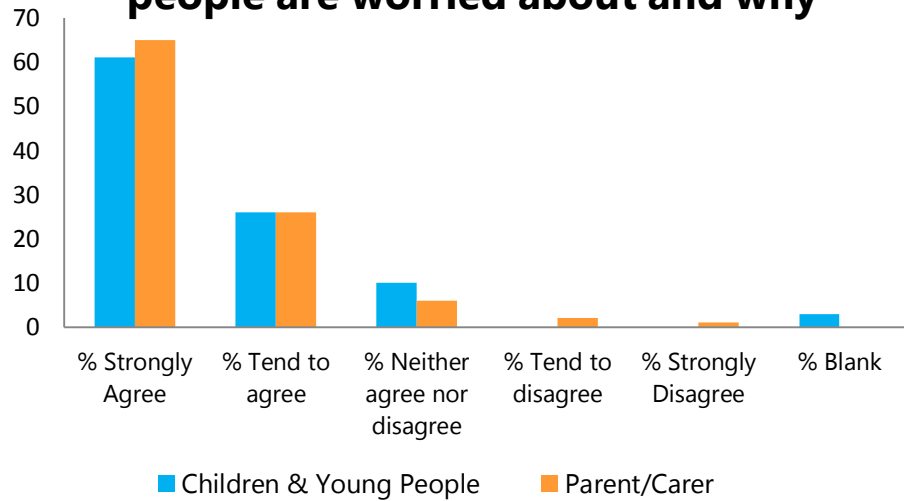
Professionals also need to make sure they communicate clearly about what their worries are so this can be addressed too.

87% children and young people agreed, with 61% strongly agreeing, and 10% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Parents and carers showed a similar picture; 91% agreed and 65% strongly agreed, 6% neither agreed nor disagreed. 3% of Parents and Carers disagreed.

In order for things to change, everybody involved should understand what the concerns are and why those concerns are being raised. Part of our Signs of Safety work means that we are changing the

language we use and how we explain what is happening. This should help us to ensure that families understand why professionals are worried.

You are clear about what other people are worried about and why



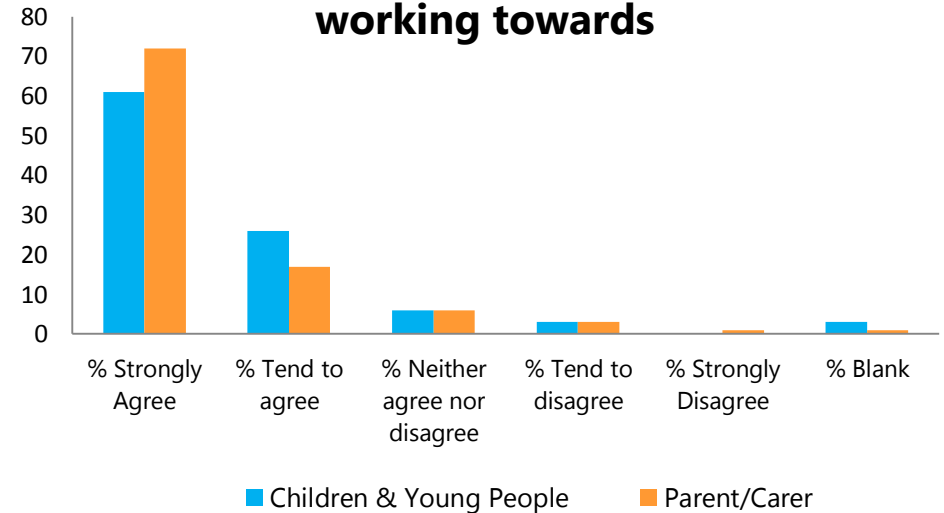
'It is very easy to understand and is straight forward'

'Although I have been very negative towards you and your advice I've now realised that you are not the enemy, now my mental health has improved. I know you are helping me and supporting my son. Allowing time to talk, practice and use the advice in ways I can understand.'

You are clear about what you are working towards

It is extremely important that everyone knows what we are aiming for, so that we can all work together to achieve this.

You are clear about what you are working towards

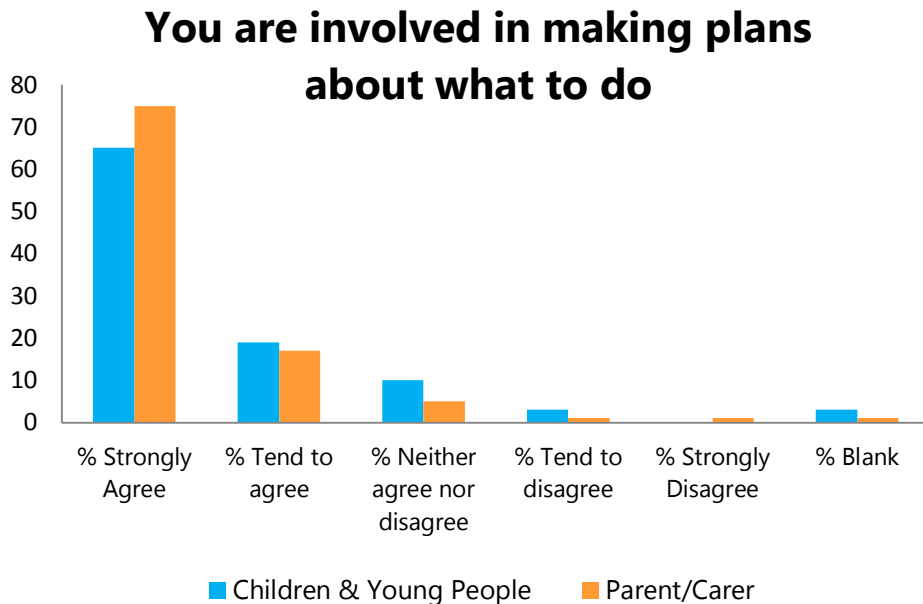


87% of children and young people agreed, with 61% strongly agreeing. 89% of parents and carers who agreed, with 72% strongly agreeing. 4% of parents/carers and 3% of children and young people said that they didn't agree. This is similar to the result for people being clear about what people are worried about and why.

'Good communication and good goals'

You are involved in making plans about what to do

84% of children and young people agreed, with 65% strongly agreeing, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 3% disagreed. This was higher for parents and carers, 92% agreed and 75% strongly agreed. 5% parents/ carers neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2% disagreed.

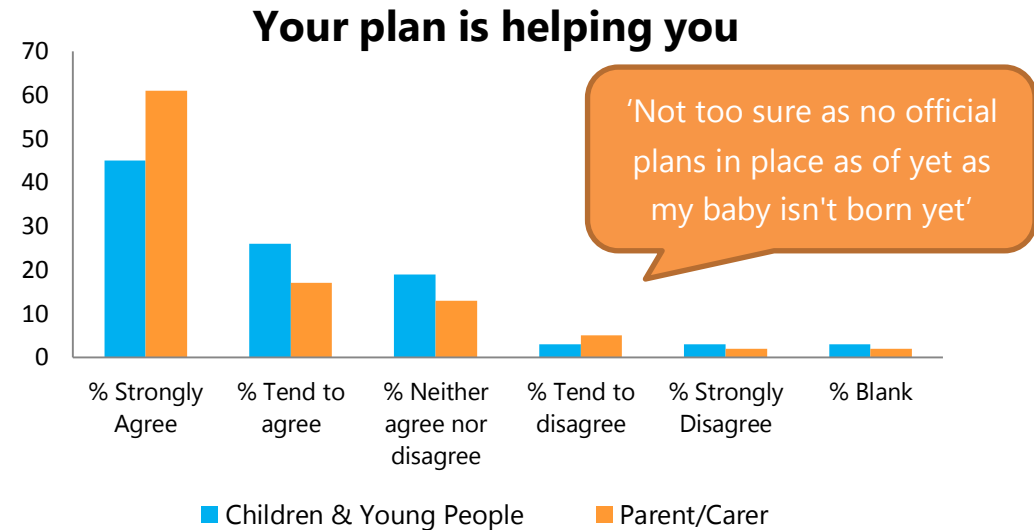


Everybody should be involved in making plans to change. This is a good result as the figures are high, however we need to ensure as services, that all those we support are involved in making plans.

'I am given the time to reflect and plan. This helps me support my son and the rest of my family more effectively. My worker has arranged joint visits to help my son's transition to adult services'

Your plan is helping you

71% of children and young people agreed that their plan was helping them with 45% strongly agreeing. 78% of parents and carers agreed, with 61% strongly agreeing.



This is a disappointing result. 19% of Children and Young People couldn't say whether or not it was helping them and almost equally 17% of Parents and Carers felt the same.

Of most concern is that 6% (3% strongly disagreed) of the children and young people disagreed as did 7% (2% strongly disagreed) of the adults.

This is something we will be working to improve through our adoption of Signs of Safety, with children, young people, parents, carers and their network creating their own plans which they think will work for them.

'I am happy with the support I am getting'

'It helps me understand what I'm doing right and wrong'

Summary of the findings:

Overall the results of the survey were very positive, and the vast majority of families felt listened to, understood why services were involved and what they were trying to achieve, and were pleased with the support and help they were receiving. Children and young people's experiences were generally very similar to that of parents and carers.

Parents and carers were generally more likely than children and young people to strongly agree, and children and young people were more likely than parents/ carers to say they neither agreed nor disagreed, which indicates that we may not be communicating with and including children and young people as well as we do with parents/ carers. Families were less sure about whether their plan was helping them; this was our weakest area.

The high level of positive responses may reflect that the survey was completed by families with the strongest relationships with their workers. This is something we will try to explore with teams when we try to understand the difference in response rates.

What we will do:

- **Responses:** Explore why different response rates were received from different teams, and look at what we could do to increase the response rate next time so we can hear from more families
- **Relationships:** We will continue to improve our relationships with families – we will be more curious, keep an open mind, ask more questions, and explore what is working well, as well

as what people are worried about, so families don't feel judged and are recognised as the experts on their own families.

- **Communication:** we will continue to improve our communication with families, keeping our language simple and avoiding jargon, keeping people informed about what's happening, communicating our worries and goals in clear statements and sharing these with everyone at each meeting.
- **Involving children and young people:** We will continue to work to involve children and young people fully in their assessments and plans using tools such as the three houses and safety house, and for their meetings to be centred on what's important to them.
- **Plans that work for families:** We will work to make sure children, young people, parents, carers and their network create their own plans which they think will work for them.

Appendix 1:

Cheshire East Family Survey



About this survey

We want to know how well we are supporting you and your family, so that so that we can improve how we work. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to fill in.

The information you give is confidential - what you say will not be linked back to you.

This survey is about the support you have received from _____(name of team)

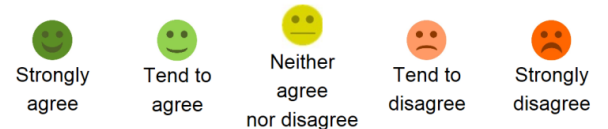
About you









Please tell us whether you are a:

- Child or young person
- Parent or carer
- Extended family member or a family friend

What it is like to work with us

How strongly do you agree or disagree that...



	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
 ...you are listened to by your worker?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...your worker does what they say they will do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...you talk about the things that are working well?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...you talk about what you're worried about?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...you are clear about what other people are worried about and why?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...you are clear about what you are working towards?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...you are involved in making plans about what to do?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 ...your plan is helping you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Working Together

What is good about how we are working with you?

What should we do differently?

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? (e.g. is there any information that would have been helpful?)

Thank you for telling us your views

We will use these to improve how we work with families

If you would like any information on our services please see our website:

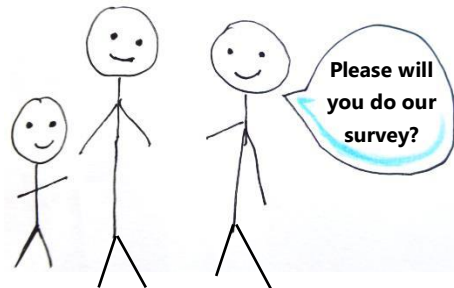
<http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/livewell.aspx>

Appendix 2:

Cheshire East Family Survey

We want to know how well we have supported you so that we can improve how we work with families in the future.

The Cheshire East Family Survey is a short survey so you can tell us about the support you have had from us so far.



We are asking every person we work with at the moment if they will fill in the survey.

You do not have to complete it if you don't want to, but it is really important that we know how well we are supporting families so we know what we should keep doing and what we need to change.

The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

To go to the survey please click this link: <https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/BWCZB/>

More information about the survey is included below.

Who can complete it?

We would like to hear from anyone we have worked with, which includes:

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Extended family members and family friends

Will my answers be private?



Your answers to the survey will be private, and will only be used to improve the way we work with families. You will not be asked for your name or any personal details about you or your family. Your answers will not be able to be linked back to you and your answers will not be read by your worker.

What will I be asked?

You will be asked how much you agree and disagree about different statements, and you will also have chance to tell us what you think about what was good about how we worked with you and what we should do differently.



How will my answers be used?

We will look at what everyone has told us and we will use this to improve how we work with families. We will publish a summary of the results on our website along with what we will do to improve the way we work.

We will repeat the survey again next year to find out what difference we have made.



Any other questions

If you have any questions about this survey please contact your worker.

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