

Putting the voice of
Young People into
Familyfocus and the
Future of Lincoln

Research Project

By Programme Action
SI Lincoln & District Soroptimists

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RESEARCH REPORT

Title – Putting the Voice of Young People into Familyfocus and the Future of Lincoln

Summary

1.1 Background/ Introduction

This research has been conducted by Lincoln Soroptimists, an organisation of professional and business woman, supported by Sheffield Hallam university, on behalf of Familyfocus, a not for profit Family and Community organisation (CIC) based in the Moorland area which is one of the most deprived in Lincoln and nationally. Familyfocus is a Third Sector initiative established following the closure of the Sure Start Children’s Centre within this community and the reduction of Social Care provision for families. These cuts occurred against a background of a governmental emphasis on the elimination of the budget deficit within the life of the current Parliament, which led to tough financial budgets for Local Government and their voluntary partners. The government’s wider policy ambition has also promoted the idea of localism and the “Big Society” and the belief underpinning much new policy development that that greater power needs to be devolved to local government and front line practitioners with less central government prescription. This has resulted in the need for service delivery with less procedural systems, new Third Sector, not for Profit organisations requiring flexible and innovatory ways of working. It is against this background therefore that Familyfocus was established but its vision is not just based on the view that it is needed due to cuts in provision but that it also sees it as an opportunity to establish a third sector organisation establishing new, transformed family services to make a difference to families finding it difficult to manage.

Prior to its establishment (2011) Familyfocus undertook some initial informal scoping work amongst residents of Moorland, other agencies within the community, and service users of a local School Academy family centre

Familyfocus has also sought and welcomed a stronger evidence base which reflects the views of the community with a specific emphasis on those of young people on the services it is setting up before they are fully established. The Soroptimists agreed to assist with this by undertaking a small scale enquiry in the community but focusing in particular on the views of young people on the services that Familyfocus is in process of setting up, but before they are fully established

The Soroptimists group undertaking this study are not professional researchers but one group in the community working with other groups to assist with community development. They are however from professional backgrounds of education and social work so they combined these two approaches to this study.

1.2 Research Question – What are we are doing

The Soroptimists have undertaken a small scale investigative enquiry to inform the services Familyfocus is developing. It has focused predominantly on the views of young people, so these are placed at the heart of this Community and Family Organisation. These groups are aged 14 – 21, and in mainstream education, excluded from school and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

1.3 What did we do?

An identification of relevant policy documents and literature and a review of some.

Appendix One.

A Discussion Group with a Year 10 group of students and a survey undertaken by Sixth formers in a Lincoln Senior school. **Appendix Two** for report and findings.

A Series of in Depth Interviews with twelve young people in groups that are “hard to reach” **Appendix Three** for report and findings.

A Small Scale Survey within the Community. **Appendix Four** for report and findings.

1.4 What did we find out

Summary of findings/recommendations for further action and development:

- the study identified young people’s views on their community as well as the Familyfocus initiative. These need broader dissemination to Lincoln City Police and Lincoln City Council and other agencies within the town, and Lincoln Soroptimists after consultation with Familyfocus will undertake to take them forward
- the school respondents in this study identified topics of interest and ideas for talks to enhance their studies so Lincoln Soroptimists will take this forward with the school
- overall the majority of respondents in the study supported the services Familyfocus is developing with the most popular being: SHARE; Individual Support; Debt Management and Out of School activities. The Drop in Centre proved more popular with the respondents to the small scale survey and the NEET Group although attention to marketing and friendly user ways of engagement will be needed
- responses indicated careful marketing of the Grub Club and awareness raising is needed or support for the idea in principle may not be translated into high take up
- involvement of Service Users in the operation of a Centre within the community also received high positive response and Familyfocus is recommended to undertake a further review than has been possible in this study on possible models of service user engagement and power sharing to support a successful Social Care Business Plan
- the involvement of volunteers in the work of Familyfocus also received a high positive response
- respondents gave useful ideas on the name of Familyfocus to which they were positive as well as ideas for fundraising and activities for the Drop in centre
- one area for further investigation by Familyfocus which this study has not been able to pursue in depth, is the views of NEETs on Social Care services, and ways of bringing their voice into Social Care provision so they and families from deprived areas can engage with initiatives such as Familyfocus
- there was general respondent satisfaction for Familyfocus’ individual therapeutic approach particularly in respect to the provision of Individual support. This needs further investigation particularly in respect to the literature, particularly with hard to reach young people and families. Additional evidence base for Familyfocus’ methods could assist with grant applications.

APPENDIX ONE

Identification of Relevant Literature

- Action for Children. (2011) Evaluation of Impact and Value of Volunteers in AFCCC
- Action for Children. (2012) Approaches to Working with Fathers and Male Carers in our Early Years Services
- All Party Parliamentary Sure Start Group: Best Practice for a Sure Start: The Way Forward for Childrens Centres
- Anning, A. and Ball, M. (2009) Improving Services for Young Children Sage
- Barlow,J., Persus,J. and Stewart-Brown,S. (2005) Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Group Based Programmes for Infants and Toddlers DFES
- Barlow,J., Kilpatrick,S., Ward.D., Bell,M. and Stewart-Brown, S,. (2007) Family and Parental Support in Sure Start Local Programmes
- Beresford,P (2000) Service Users' Knowledge and Social Work Theory. Conflict or Collaboration? British Journal of Social Work, pg 489-503.
- Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children's Services. (2011) Strategies to Engage Young People
- Children Act 2004
- Every Child Matters (2004): Changes for Children [www.everychild matters.gov.uk](http://www.everychild.matters.gov.uk)
- Kings College London Action for Children Report. (2010) Childrens Centres in London: Final Report
- Blewer, J. Cowley,S. Hussein,S,. Manthorpe,J and Tunstills, J. National: Evaluation of Sure Start (2005 – 20012) www.education.gov.uk/publications
- SCIE (2004) Has Service User Participation Made a Difference to Social Care Services?
- Smith, M.,Gallagher,M., Wasu, H.,Stewart, J.,Vivien, E., Hunter,S,.Evans, S., Montgomer,C., Holiday, S., and Wilkinson, H. (2007) Engaging with Involuntary Service Users in Social Work: Findings from a Knowledge Exchange Project. British Journal of Social Work
- Taylor,M.,Hoyes,L,Lart,R and Means,R. (1992) User Empowerment in Community Care: Unravelling the Issues. Bristol: Policy Press
- Solihull Approach - www.wow.com/Solihull Approach www.do-it.org.uk

APPENDIX 2

Report on and Analysis of Year 10 Discussion Sessions at The Priory City of Lincoln School April 2013

At the beginning of each class, LB and/or HS explained the work of Familyfocus, the role of Lincoln Soroptimists, the purpose of the sessions and how students would be asked to contribute. As with the semi- structured interviews, anonymity was guaranteed and students' consent obtained for the use of any material produced.

Each session lasted an hour, with initial sessions with each class, then follow-up sessions several weeks later. We canvassed the views of 120 students, the whole Year 10 intake, by means of a broad based questionnaire asking them to express areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood. From these we extracted the most frequently voiced views, then in the follow-up sessions, asked students to work in groups to discuss their reactions to initial points and to add greater detail to these points.

Issues identified by City students, with related comment and suggestions

No-go areas

Suggestions:

1. A police drop-in centre for members of the public to report problems.
2. Civilian patrol officers.
3. Activities to engender community pride and to occupy young people.

Limited Sports facilities

Suggestions:

1. More designated cycle and running paths.
2. Locations and activities to occupy children of all ages during the school holidays.
3. Cheap gyms especially for teenagers.

A need for counsellors and locations where teenagers and families can talk about problems

Suggestions:

1. These should be located in Boutham, Birchwood, Moorland and Hartsholme. They should not be in school.
2. Meetings should be appointment only, not drop-ins.
3. There should be the option of counsellors coming to people's homes.

A need for more job and volunteering opportunities for young people

Suggestions:

1. A conversation cafe so that local people and immigrants can learn from each other.
2. A column in the weekly local paper advertising opportunities.
3. Designated notice boards in schools and community centres.

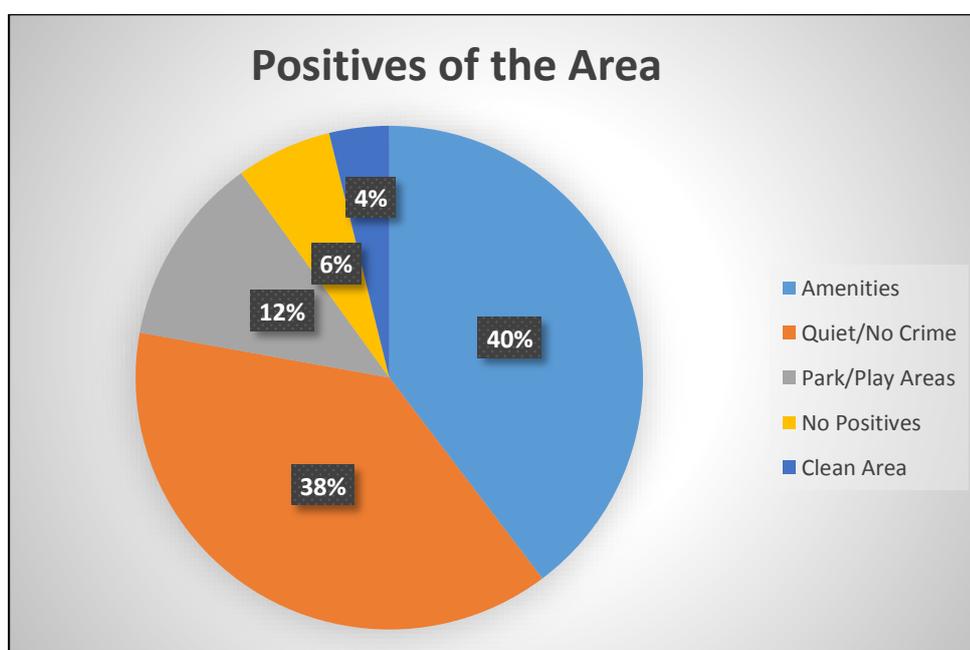
April 2013

Of the 22 students who told us which facilities they used, 19 use Facebook, 14 use smart phones, 10 use the Showroom, 9 use the Backies, 2 use the skatepark and 2 the library.

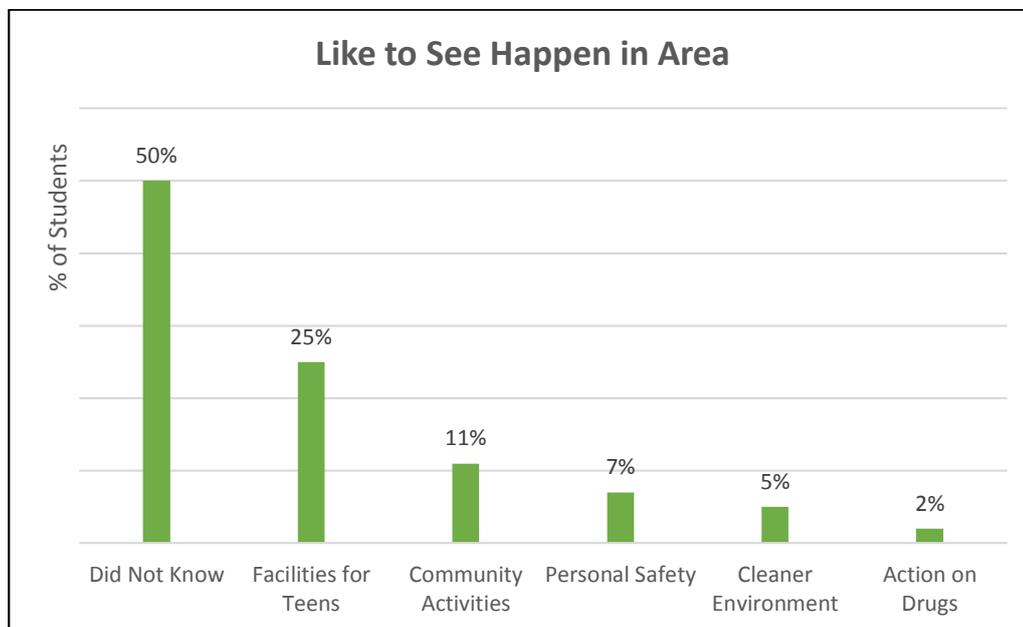
Report on and Analysis of Sixth Form questionnaires March 2013

Following an initial explanatory session, four sixth form Health and Social Care students volunteered to compile a questionnaire for us, seeking the opinions of their peers regarding their neighbourhood. This was distributed throughout the sixth form and yielded 61 completed questionnaires. On analysis, we noted the following:

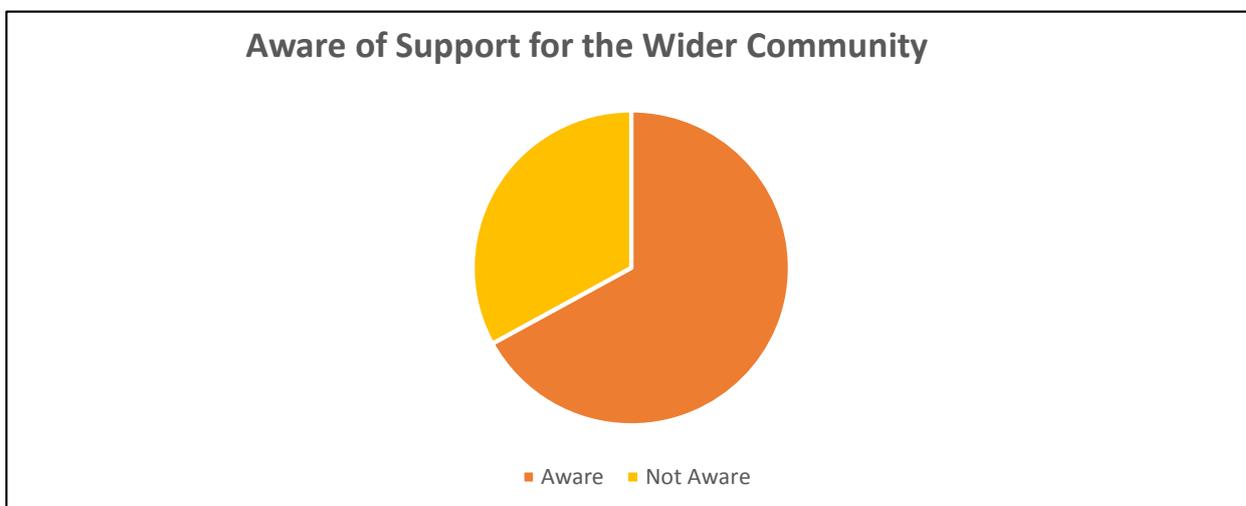
- 52% of students considered that positives were the amenities such as police stations, shops and leisure centres; 50% considered their neighbourhoods were quiet and friendly, with little or no crime; 16% considered that the neighbourhood had good or fair park and play areas; 8% were 'Don't Know' or thought there were no positives and 5% thought a positive was the cleanliness of the streets



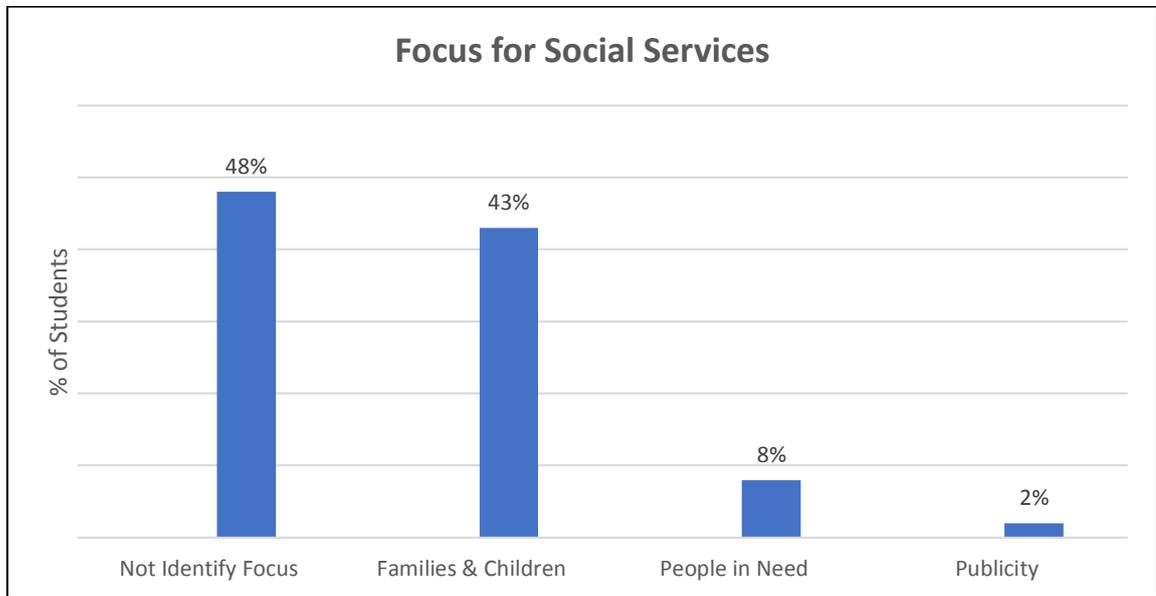
- 50% of students did not know what they would like to see changed or improved in the areas in which they live; 25% would like to see more facilities for all children! with emphasis on teenagers; 11% would like to see more community activities; 7% would like to see police address public safety and reduce crime; 5% think their environment could be cleaner with less litter and 2% think there should be more action against drug use



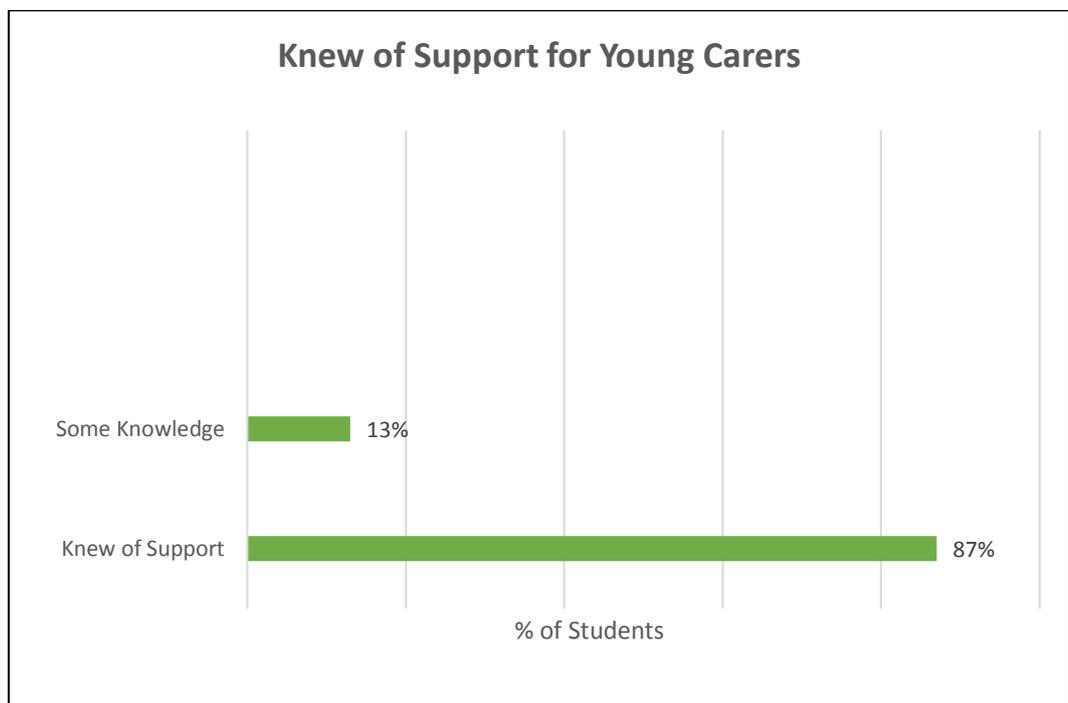
- 67% of students were vague about support available to the wider community; 33% were aware of available support



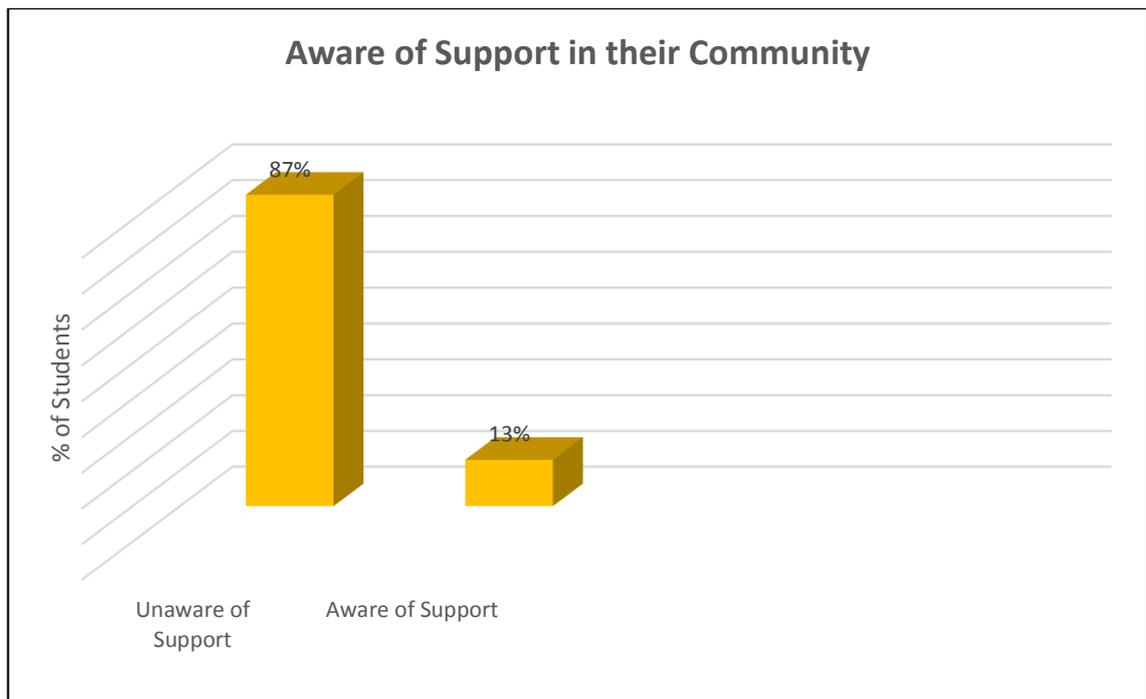
- 48% of students could not identify a focus for Social Services; 43% considered their focus should be families and children, including the issues of abuse! domestic problems and people with disabilities; 8% thought their focus should be people in need and 2% thought they should focus on publicity for current services



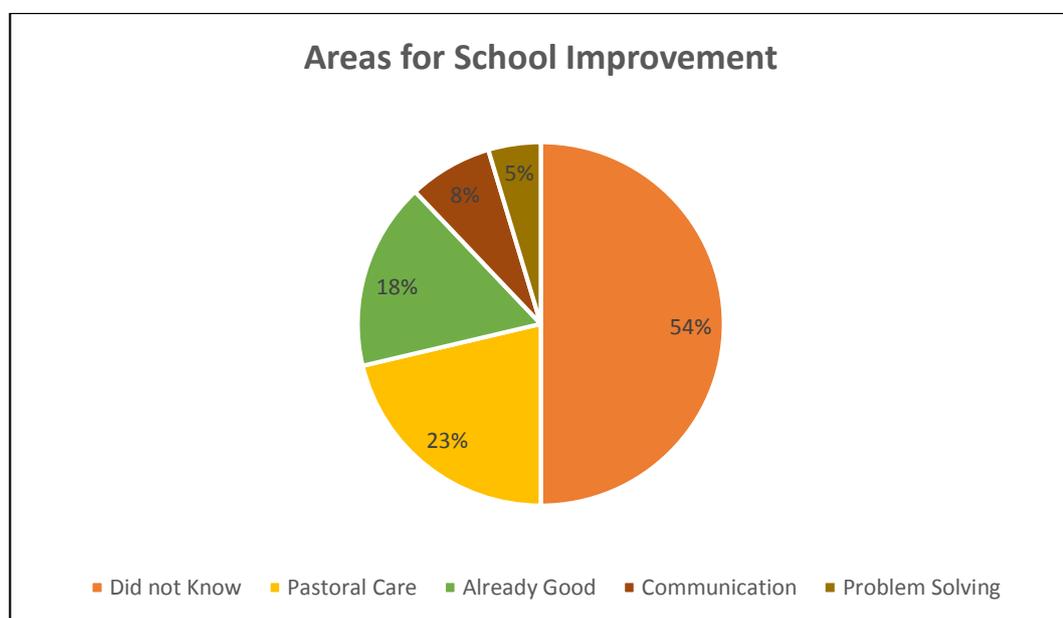
- 87% of students knew nothing about support for young carers in their community; 13% had some knowledge



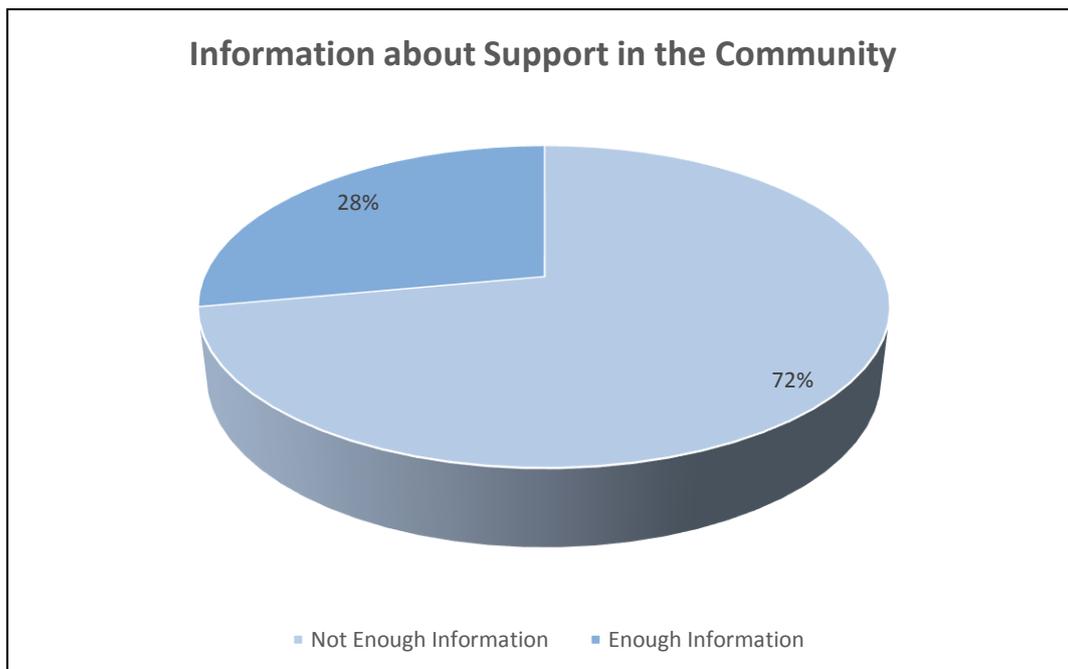
- 87% were unaware of support within the community for domestic problems; 13% were aware



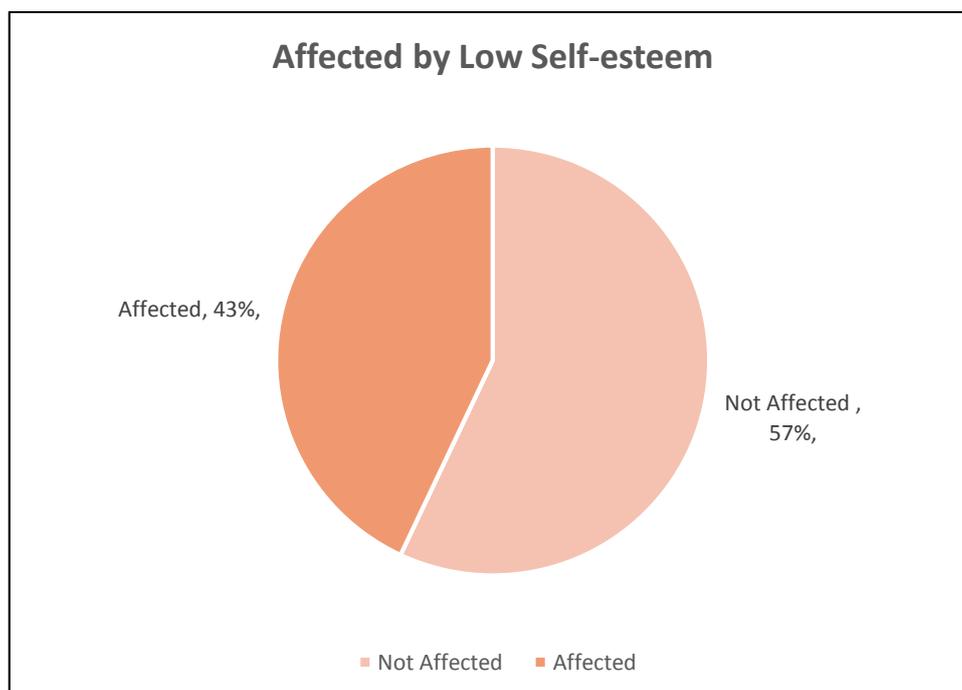
- 54% of students did not know how their school could be improved; 23% considered more counselling and pastoral care would improve their school; 18% thought the school was already good; 8% considered communication between staff and students could be better and 5% would like to see more problem solving for students



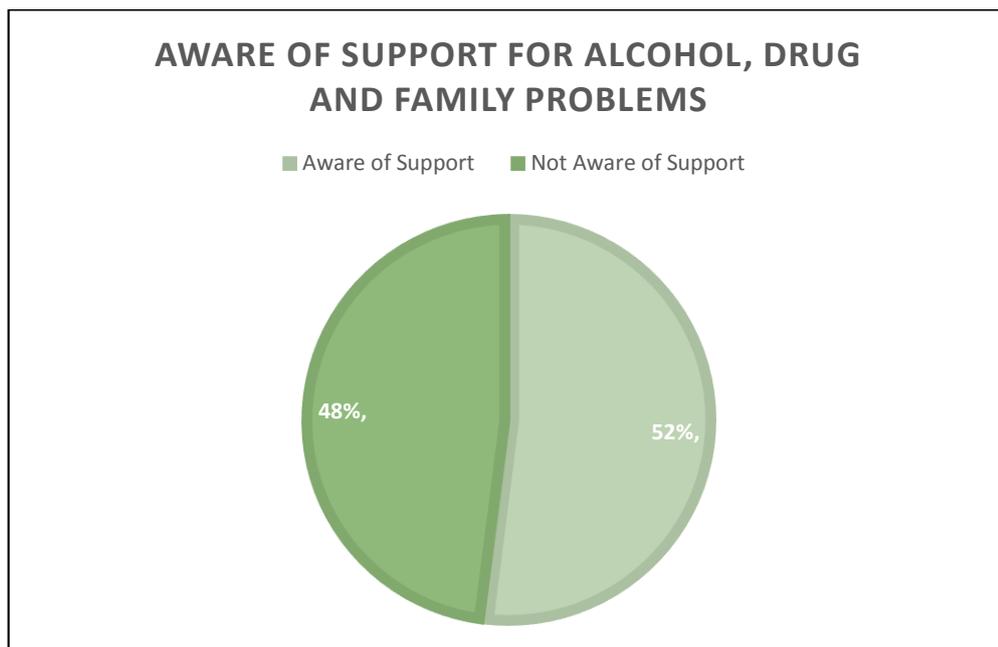
- 72% of students did not consider they had enough information about the support available in the community; 28% thought they had sufficient information



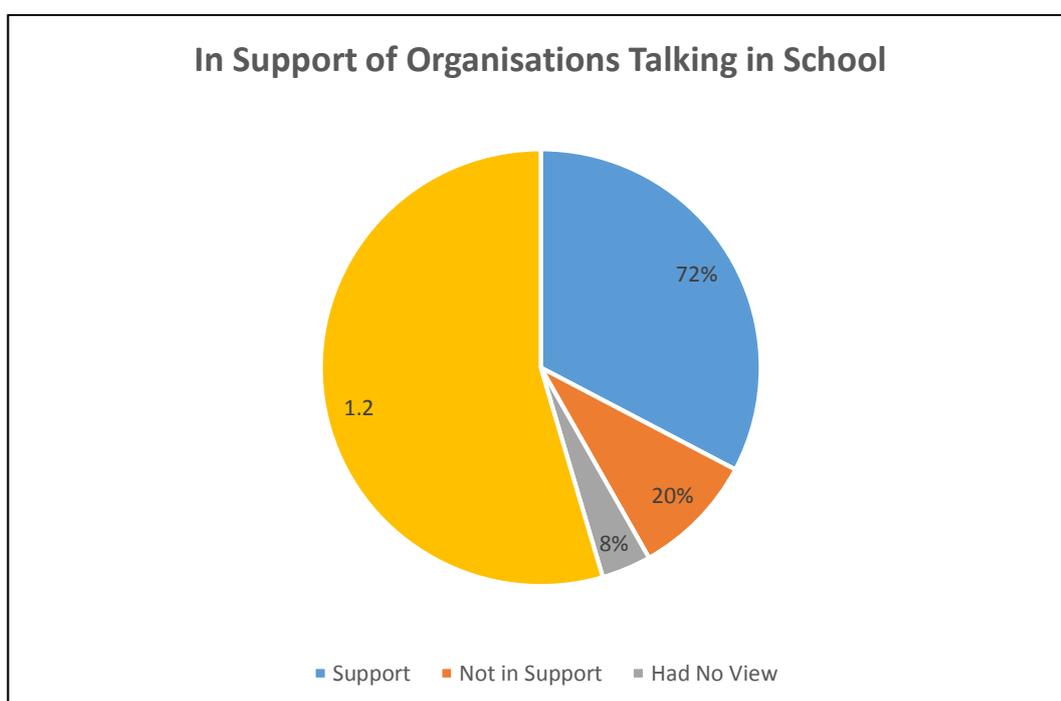
- 57% of students did not think they or their friends suffered from low self-esteem; 43% considered they or their friends were affected by it



- 52% of students considered that they were aware of support for alcohol! drug and family problems; 48% felt they needed more knowledge



- 72% of students liked the idea of organisations such as The Showroom or Energize talking to schools about the support they can offer to young people; 20% did not like the idea and 8% held no view



These findings were shared with the Health and Social Care class. This class was also asked to rate the services Familyfocus offers, as Useful, Fairly useful, Not useful.

Conclusions and suggested areas for development:

In three of the four areas canvassed, 75% of respondents expressed positive views.

50% of students had no views on what could be improved in their areas. Perhaps this may be attributed to the positive views they have of the areas in which they live; this is supported by 60% of students who considered their area to be quiet, friendly and with low crime.

Of the 52% of students who expressed a view on the focus for Social Services, 83% thought that support for families and children, including problems such as abuse, domestic difficulties and children with disabilities were the most important issues.

100% of students knew little or nothing about support for young carers in the community.

87% of students knew little or nothing about support for individuals who have problems at home.

72% of students knew little of support offered in their community and a further 67% of students were unaware of support offered in the wider community.

Of the students who offered suggestions for school improvement, the most frequently mentioned need was for counselling, either with outside professionals or trained school staff. The next most frequently mentioned point was the need for extra and more comprehensive pastoral care.

Suggested areas for Development

A total of 80% of students were either in favour of outside organisations giving talks in school or had no view on the matter, so suggested areas for issues identified by their responses could include:

- the role and responsibilities of Social Services
- support in the community on both local and national levels
- young carers
- problems at home and how to deal with them
- opportunities for students to develop their ideas for improving provision for young people
- opportunities to make presentations to local councillors, to foster discussion and possible implementation.

Pilot survey of proposed Familyfocus services

Using only the Health and Social Care sixth form group, we asked nine students to complete a tick-box survey on ten proposed services, ranking them either useful, fairly useful or not useful.

Grub Club: 2 students considered this useful, 5 fairly useful, 1 not useful.

SHARE (support group for parents of autistic children): 7 useful, 2 fairly useful.

Drop in centre: 3 useful, 6 fairly useful.

Family support: 4 useful, 3 fairly useful, 1 not useful.

Individual support: 7 useful, 3 fairly useful.

Information, advice and guidance: 3 useful, 5 fairly useful, 1 not useful.

Volunteers to provide hands-on help to families at home: 3 useful, 6 fairly useful.

Debt management and understanding finances: 5 useful, 4 fairly useful.

Out of school activities: 5 useful, 4 fairly useful.

Parenting skills sessions: 3 useful, 5 fairly useful, 1 not useful.

Results seem to indicate that this small group supports the majority of the Familyfocus projected services, with four of the ten suggestions, SHARE, Individual support, Debt management and Out of school activities, being the most popular.

Six students had further suggestions; these were: help for young people trying to find work, more activities for teenagers, both sporting and non-sporting, support for people with a wide range of disabilities. In conclusion, it would seem that current proposals could incorporate these ideas.

APPENDIX THREE

Report on Semi-structured interviews

How were they done?

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a group of twelve “hard to reach” young people aged 14-21. They were pupils from socially deprived back grounds, excluded from school and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

A sample group of interviewees was identified via consultation with City School Head of Pastoral Services, Tritton Road Showroom, and YMCA Training. These interviews were to supplement outcomes from the Year 10 Discussion group, and Sixth form survey, and to probe more fully some of the issues raised by this larger group. They aimed therefore to produce in depth qualitative data, where issues pertinent to the services needed from Familyfocus could be explored more fully, and in a safer environment for young people who might be excluded, or inhibited from, participation in the wider group.

The sample consisted of twelve young people and it aimed to include representatives covering: age; gender; physical disability; race (European ethnic background); socially deprived backgrounds; young people excluded from school; NEET young people.

Prior to the interviews a short briefing session was held with all interviewees –this clarified in lay terms the research project and the purpose of Familyfocus. Anonymity was assured, ground rules for the interviews established, consent and understanding of participation were obtained from the interviewees.

A topic guide for the semi-structured interviews was developed.

Length of interviews – negotiated as being 30 – 45 minutes.

Same interviewer conducted all. – To offset interviewer effect and aid rapport. Interviewer is a registered social worker, with some experience as a researcher.

The focus of the topic guide was on services young people thought relevant to them and their families with a minimal emphasis on their personal or family problems to offset any respondent inhibition at providing information.

The topic guide had an initial structured sequence, to obtain factual information, aid participation and overcome any initial tension.

Questions were very open to minimise pre-judgement or inappropriate leads from interviewer.

A sample size of twelve was selected as realistic for the purpose of this kind of enquiry, and to provide a broad enough range of views, which would back findings from a broader discussion group of young people in mainstream education, as well as a community survey. Its size reflected the need for negotiation and cooperation of other agencies and for time out from class for the young people. Also the interviews required the cooperation of young people excluded from education, NEET and from disadvantaged backgrounds who might therefore be harder to engage.

A topic guide was developed prior to the interviews and this included a structured section on Familyfocus proposed activities. The topic guide was piloted with the NEET young people and then amended to allow for more exploration and discussion around Familyfocus services. The structured section of the guide provided useful information, but proved too focused to allow for discussion of ideas that emerged which could be explored more fully in further interviews. The guide focused on attitudes to the respondents' communities, and the proposed Familyfocus services. It did not probe details about young peoples' family circumstances and backgrounds, so information provided on this was done voluntarily by respondents during the interview process.

Profile of Sample Group

The sample group of twelve was less representative than hoped, as the YMCA Training wished the NEET interviewees to self-select and this produced four white males. The school group was selected from young people who would be likely to cooperate, understand to what they were agreeing, which met ethical requirements, and also to have a "voice".

All interviewees were white, European; seven were male; five female. All were British and one respondent had a Russian mother.

The entire sample came from socially deprived backgrounds, and lived in the Birchwood, Monks Road, Moorland areas and one came from a village neighbouring Lincoln. They all lived within their immediate or extended family. The NEETS aged 17-18 had a history of behavioural problems, school exclusion, drug and alcohol problems and one had been in receipt of Social Care services. None had attained GCSEs. They had all volunteered to attend 2-3 days at YMCA Training to try to attain Maths, English, and Personal Development Grades

The remaining eight of the sample were all at school, aged 15 -17. Two presented no behaviour problems and were high achievers with expectations of College. Five out of the remainder presented behavioural difficulties in school and several were in receipt of the service commissioned by the school for excluded children:

- 1 was in school but had a history of exclusion largely for aggression to staff and experienced bullying at the Showroom
- 1 was autistic, statemented and attending the Showroom
- 1 had learning difficulties
- 1 was a poor school attender and involved with drugs in the neighbourhood
- 1 was slow academically but no behaviour problem and was in mainstream school.

Aspiration of the sample after education and training

Three of the NEETs all had aspirations of joining the Army and two were confident of success. The remaining one who was doubtful had a backup ambition to be an apprentice in the building trade as did the remaining NEET.

The school age young people had aspirations of teaching (2); apprenticeships (3); College for vocational training (2) and work in a radio station (1)

The young people in school all reported adequate careers advice and information from school as to how to try and attain their aspirations. The NEET young people indicated a very positive response to YMCA Training, but a need for more signposting to it following school. One had been given sufficient information from a Social Services agency but the remainder found out about the Service, by luck, from peers.

The sample size was small, although in practice it seemed adequate as after six interviews no new themes emerged and a consistency soon did, confirming a range of views which seemed therefore to validate the size of the sample.

Findings - Tables of the response and themes emerged

Theme One: Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with the name Familyfocus as the service proposed to support community and family development

Example of Responses	Good	Needs More	Poor
	Like it – says just what it is doing – focus on family Catchy – easy to remember	Not clear what Familyfocus is - needs an explanatory strapline Sounds as though it is just for families with young children – not geared to young people	Off putting - authoritarian
Number of Respondents	4	6	2

All the respondents thought that it is important to get the name right and one commented:

“It is important to get the name right as it is often the first contact you will get with people and they won’t bother reading about you on face book or such, if they don’t know what you are about!”

Theme Two: Satisfaction with facilities within the Areas where respondents lived

Examples	<p>Satisfied All right – respondent lived in a village</p> <p>Don't want go out much – happy with my mates and radio station</p> <p>Just go out with my girl friend</p>	<p>Dissatisfied Nothing to do</p> <p>No facilities for young people - youth club is Christian and only gets younger children</p> <p>Tritton Showroom – not safe – bullying and unruly gangs</p>	<p>Very dissatisfied Not safe to go out at night – bikes and cars drive around the neighbourhood</p> <p>Undesirable people around</p> <p>No leisure or affordable and sports facilities</p>
Number of respondents	3	4	5

The NEET groups were more satisfied with their neighbourhoods although this seemed because they went into Lincoln to find things to do with their friends. All were keen on sport and wanted more access to opportunities to play football, Skate Park, Swimming and cheap access to Gyms. **All four thought these facilities might be available but lacked the motivation to find out about them and thought this would be a useful resource for a community based service to do and distribute information about.**

All respondents indicated that Tritton Showroom and existing Community Youth clubs do not meet their leisure needs, and described them as boring, for younger “kids” or unruly .Apart from one who was happy to stay at home the remainder of the school age children reported not much to do in their spare time and stayed in or spent time with friends. None of the respondents indicated that they got into trouble in their free time or mixed with disaffected groups

All respondents apart from one wanted more access to leisure facilities with similar examples, such as skate parks, cheap gym membership, swimming, football teams for their age range. Desirable activities they do not do but would like to were clay pigeon shooting and paint balling:

“Familyfocus won't be big enough to provide these but we don't always know what is there, so if they gave us an information leaflet that would be good”.

How respondents rated the services that Familyfocus is proposing

GRUB CLUB - an excellent idea

Example of responses	The idea in principle	Would you use it?	Would you use it?
	<p>Great idea – would bring families together</p> <p>I know plenty of families that need that</p>	<p>Fine for families – I do not need this at my age</p> <p>Possibly not – I get fed of being preached at about healthy eating at my age. I keep fit</p>	<p>My family need this –Mum cooks too many chips - they would come if I persuaded them to</p>
Numbers	12	11	1

All respondents endorsed the Grub Club idea completely and all twelve knew plenty of families that needed it but were uncertain whether or not they would actually go, and considered it needed careful marketing and awareness rising. Idea about publicizing it included flyers in public places, local radio, Facebook, word of mouth.

None of the respondents were overweight although 10 came from families on low income with multiple siblings. However, they felt at their age there was no need for a Grub Club for them or their families. Interview bias i.e. shame in identifying their families may have been a factor and skewed the findings. None of them seemed uneasy when making this response and certainly none of them were overweight.

Their responses may indicate a difficulty for Familyfocus in making this service acceptable and indicate a need for careful engagement with families.

Recommendation - careful marketing of the Grub Club is needed and consultation with other similar projects.

Family support – a lot of broken families could benefit from this

Examples of Responses	Good Idea	Need good promotion	O.K
Numbers	10	12	3

Very similar responses were received for the idea of individual support and they thought this more relevant to their age range. Only 1 thought their family might need it and they would need to be persuaded to go for it. They all liked the lack of a time limit on the support and its holistic approach:

“ I dropped out from CAMHS, because they rushed me through, were only interested in dealing with parts of my problems for which a “ quick fix” was sought – all came down to money really”.

Drop in Centre - an excellent idea – theme emerged - needs to be open out of school hours and week-ends

Examples of Responses	Good idea	Needs careful promotion	Concerns	Suggested activities for Drop In
	I'd use it	Good if it offered pool I'd use it with my mates – difficult to drop in on own – would need a befriender	Good idea and could fill gap for youth club for our age but need careful management to keep it safe – the Showroom started off like this but it gets unruly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toy Library • Internet Café • Language café • Organise week- end events • Pool • Career advice • Talks • Information • leaflets about benefits etc.; resources in the area, particularly gym and swimming facilities and reduced rates
Numbers	10	10	2	12

One respondent (autistic) commented that he likes his own company and would not want any of Familyfocus' services himself but did comment about the Drop in Centre:

“I would come to that if it offered money management advice for when I leave school as this I not provided”.

Two young people were concerned with safety and were interested in Service User Engagement, expressing an interest in helping with a Drop in Centre in order to ensure it did not get rowdy.

All respondents expressed interest in this part of the project with an emphasis that it needed to be at week-end and out of school hours. Activities welcomed were opportunities to make friends, chat, and listen to music, games, fund activities and an internet café. Talks were welcomed but a one-off session could limit their usefulness and the majority welcomed helplines, information sheet and an opportunity to search information with guidance on the internet. They also had ideas for out of school, weekend trips such as visits to the coast and Clumber Park.

Fund Raising Ideas

Examples	Ideas identified	Like to be involved	No involvement
	Fun Runs Table Top sales Car Boot Sales Sports events Talent Shows Bungee jumping Yard Sales Fun days – Crack the coconut Motor Cross challenges Fishing tournaments	Been to some fundraising events with my family	No ideas – never done any – not interested
Numbers	10	10	2

Only 4 respondents had never been involved in fundraising events – the remainder had joined in events through family involvement.

Volunteers to help with Familyfocus activities – a good idea

Examples	Who should volunteer	Who should volunteer	Who should volunteer
	Involve young people All need training and support	Older people with life experience All need training and support	Members of the community
Numbers	10	4	10

Two of the respondents were keen to volunteer in this kind of project and recognised its value for their CVs. Eight thought young people should be involved in those recruited as volunteers with the remainder thinking it needed more experienced people. They all considered that time could be a barrier.

All thought training and support would be needed and 10 endorsed the view that local members of the community should be recruited as they would know what is needed and spread the word. No respondent indicated any aspect of Familyfocus management that volunteers should not be used for except individual and family work.

Service User Engagement

Examples	A good idea	Older people only should do this (4) Good to involve young people in Familyfocus management	SU engagement not welcomed best if services are provided
Numbers	12	6	2

The respondents who considered that service should be provided and not expect service user involvement were autistic and had learning needs.

One respondent who was really keen on engagement emphasise this should be genuine:

“As long as we’re really involved and our ideas are really listened to”.

Only 3 of the respondents thought that service users should be involved in the management group and considered support and preparation would be needed.

All expressed concerns over their having the time for involvement

Parenting skills Session; SHARE; Money and Debt Management Advice

Examples	Good idea	OK for other people Lots of people would find these helpful My family could not need this but I can think of families who need it	A useful service for me My brother is autistic – my Mum might find this useful I could do with money management advice when I leave school
Numbers	12	10	2

Parenting Skills sessions, SHARE, Debt Advice and Management all received unanimous approval from the respondents although a consistent theme was that they knew people who would benefit from it but did not acknowledge that it would be of use to them and their families.

Analysis of findings

The investigative method used, allowing an in depth exploration of the views of young people, produced findings rather than outcomes from a preceding hypothesis. Inevitably with this qualitative, in-depth unstructured interview method the data could only be indicative, and therefore we cannot generalize from the results of this limited study. Some of the outcomes identified areas for further investigation rather than definitive findings, but also identified common views and conclusions.

A grounded approach to analysis of the data in order to identify findings has been used. The interview schedules were written up to form the raw material of this section of the research, through which themes and patterns were identified, frequency noted with respondents recorded against them. Each interview sample was given a number with factual codes. Charts and table were devised to read the range of views across themes. The analysis of the data was also interwoven with the identification of some relevant literature and a review of some of it. This method for analysing qualitative data was validated by Strauss and Corbin (1990)

“Data collection and analysis are tightly interwoven processes that must occur alternatively... the structures used for analysis have first to be derived from the data” (P.54)

An identification of some of the relevant literature was undertaken. It focused on an overview of the Sure Start Programmes and Children’s’ Centres.

This also included a limited search regarding the availability of similar studies; none were found. The majority of studies, particularly in respect to NEETs, produced findings of relevance for Government Policy, Education and Youth Services but none that focused on Social Care organisations for NEETs and their needs were identified.

An overview of the Sure Start Programme and Children’s Centres provided a useful basis for their analysis, giving a broader application. Familyfocus is a different initiative from the Sure Start Centres as it is not restricted to Early Years and provides a one stop, holistic approach and a specific focus on service for families experiencing difficulties.

However, there is, enough similarity with the Sure Start evaluations to give some relevance and substance to the views of the young people in this study. Various themes emerged from the interviews which, when reviewed in line with the literature identified, gives them additional relevance and generalization.

Name of Familyfocus

A majority of the respondents regarded the name positively. The literature identified also gives some validation to the name’s avoidance of any welfare connotations. The importance of this was recognised by the Family Welfare Association (2008) when it changed its name to Family Action following service user feedback from a survey that they were put off by the word “welfare” in its name as it had unwelcome connotations.

“Drop In Centre“

A point identified by young people was that they would find it difficult to make contact and just drop in. This indicates that the Centre needs to offer a befriending service, if necessary, to help new users, and to advertise its services in user-friendly ways. The NEES evaluation outcomes (Anning and Ball, 2009) reinforced that these views are consistent with the Sure Start experience. The evaluations inform us that centres and practitioners need to avoid jargon and recognise that families can choose to participate but may need help to do so. They need to write leaflets, posters and newsletters and work creatively in a ways that is service user led, to get out on to the streets and advertise drop in centres in settings and ways that are family friendly and accessible.

Similarly the NES (2008) evaluation found that a “buddying “ or befriending system for new service users was effective and highly valued but needs to be backed up by a continued strategy of inclusiveness to offset cliques.

Debt advice and money management was strongly endorsed by the respondents as a potential service for the Drop in Centre, and money management was a service that some commented they would use themselves. This is strongly reinforced by the All Party Parliamentary Sure Start Group (APPG) (2010). This Group was founded to evaluate the benefits of Children Centres and promote their development and share best practice. Its members included representatives from local authority voluntary sector, senior civil servants, health professional, parent groups, and early year’s experts. Its report identified money management as one of Children Centre’s valuable services.

Grub Club

The Grub Club received a positive response from interviewees and in particular its approach of taking the service if necessary to people in their own homes, but it needs careful marketing and awareness rising.

NES (2010) evaluation reinforced the validity of dedicated outreach work delivering direct services at home using telephone, websites and leaflets. This helped to dispel perceptions of unfairness or services meant for one particular social group.

Family and Individual Support

The idea of family and individual support was well received by the interview group and in particular the therapeutic, holistic and non-time limited approach Familyfocus aims to adopt. A consistent theme on this, as well as many other Familyfocus planned services, was that they need to be offered on a flexible basis ie out of office and school hours so that families may attend.

Overall, the outcomes from the evaluations of NES reinforces the “therapeutic” approach as a valid form of intervention rather than a task-focused one which deals only with presenting problems.

This again validates Familyfocus' proposed approach to the delivery of its services. The 2008 NES evaluations concluded that programmes with effective methods of identifying and clear outcomes for intervention were most successful. Anning and Ball (2009) chart a growing body of evidence (Betsey 2006; Cooper et al 1992) that parenting is an effective mediator on the effects of social and economic deprivation and its implications for adult life. Improvement in the financial circumstances of parents does not, on its own, improve parenting or child development, which indicates the need for parenting and family support to be included in initiatives to reverse child poverty.

NES (2008) evaluation focused on which forms of parental support works. Anning and Ball (2009) identify research evidence that validates intensive home visiting programmes and long term active support which underpinned the more successful SSPL programmes, and a range of parenting interventions. Barlow et al (2007) identify early programmes for parenting support and outline how, irrespective of the age of the child, they can provide formalised ways to support parenting skills by promoting insight or understanding in terms of the parental relationship with their child and ways of parenting. Home visiting is one of these but others are suggested. Barlow (2007) outlines formalised ways to support parenting. Integral to their delivery is the quality and training of staff who deliver the intervention to support children and families. This again reinforces Familyfocus' approach and commitment to using qualified social workers in its family and individual support work.

Barlow (2007) also identified support for parenting groups where parenting issues could be discussed in safety with structure and clear guidelines. An approach particularly highlighted for consideration is the Solihull approach, an integrated model based on psychoanalytical, development and behavioural theories about changing relationships. Its central tenet is that through the development of a reciprocal relationship, an individual can experience emotional containment that supports the capacity to manage their own and their children's behaviour. All staff model the quality of relationships which can promote emotional containment so that parents attending the Centre begin to internalise this. Another successful SSLP programme was the provision of evidence-based, structured parenting programmes to deliver courses in confidence building, personal development training with a focus on their own experience of being parented and how it impacts on their own.

Familyfocus' therapeutic approach would seem to be validated by an initial overview of the literature and the views of the young people in this study, even though it is too small to be definitive. This links to the approach of the Family Service Units and Family Welfare Association which were operating before the radical intervention of the 60s when research tended to highlight the need for practical support and poverty resolution, task-focused intervention and political reform (Noel and Timms). This needs a more in depth study of the literature.

Recommendation:

Familyfocus undertakes a more thorough review of the literature than has been employed in this enquiry, regarding user satisfaction with its proposed holistic and therapeutic approach, and in particular, any consumer studies within service users who are young and also harder to reach and engage. Additional evidence base for its methods and approach could assist with financial grant applications.

Volunteers and Service Involvement of young people

The young people interviewed welcomed the involvement of volunteers in Familyfocus and the majority thought young people should be involved in the volunteer group. The use of volunteers is strongly endorsed by the evaluation of NES and also by the Office of Public Management's Report for Action for Children (ACC) which commissioned (2011) an independent evaluation of ACC's use of volunteers. The study aimed to explore and evaluate the impact which volunteers can have on Children and Family Services and to measure their value and the value of volunteers. It investigated the impact of volunteers, cost effectiveness, tasks undertaken, engagement with service users and volunteer links and motivation.

The data covered five of the Centres in England and volunteers supported the management of the Centres by covering the full range of their work. This included home visits and outreach, activity days and promotional events and helping with groups.

Findings indicated a real value from the use of volunteers with a positive impact for families. They brought extra capacity and a positive presence for service users, acted as role models to the community and strengthened the links of the Centres with the local community. Once Centres started to use volunteers they saw an increase in their value as they helped to encourage families to make use of the Centres and so participation was widened and Centres became a community resource.

Volunteers benefitted from increased self-confidence which enhanced their opportunities in employment and training. The volunteers provided a sound economic use of the centres but investment, support and management are essential. The volunteers were recruited from a range of ages, genders, economic background and ethnic origins but particularly from those who knew the local area and community. This study does not consider in any depth how to recruit volunteers with commitment and calibre; the only methods described were by word of mouth and through the Volunteer's Centre.

NES evaluation (2011) identified an increasing trend in Children's Centres to use volunteers. The activities for their engagement ranged from outreach work, organising events to the delivery of activity for young children. Findings indicated that Children's Centres build stronger community relations as volunteers take information about the Centre into the community and use this knowledge to shape services. Volunteers can be seen as "people like us" so they open the door to a wider group and offset suspicion that professionals can engender. They also free qualified staff time but this should not be viewed as cost cutting because their effective use requires an agreed volunteer programme which has an outline of expectations about accredited training, support and time to recruit and train.

Service User Engagement with Familyfocus

Overall the group of interviewees supported the idea of service user engagement with Familyfocus and NES evaluations identified several indicators on this which could be relevant to the engagement of young people with Familyfocus. Parent participation on SSP and CC Management Boards was often underestimated and expectations low. However partnerships that set up sub groups for their training proved useful but this took time and did lead to input at too late a stage. Ideally this engagement needs to be there at the beginning of service delivery and if possible, before they are set up so it is an integral part of the planning.

NEES evaluation documents strongly indicate the validity of fully including service users at an early stage with the work of SSLPs, otherwise their engagement seems tokenistic and this would seem transferable to other organisations seeking to engage them and therefore of relevance to Familyfocus. NEES evaluation (2012) found where service user participation was small, they felt isolated and inhibited. Service users can often act as drivers within the community so this needs addressing and managing. Ownership (and by implication service users which includes young people) is needed to establish services. Response to parents' views was evaluated as a positive indicator of an effective programme.

Family Action (2012) endorsed its strong commitment to Service User engagement and partnership and identified the valuable skills they can offer and develop if viewed as equal partners. The Association gave a useful outline of the range of opportunities for service user engagement:

- supporting peers; running activities; member of decision making panels; volunteering; staff recruitment; project work; campaign activities
- an identification of relevant literature indicates that since the 1990s service user engagement in the planning and delivery of statutory and voluntary Health and Social Care Services is high profile, but policy injunctions mask a lack of clarity or strategy which organisations need to address or their engagement is token.

Recommendation

An in depth review of the literature that focuses on models of successful engagement and power sharing with service users to be undertaken by Familyfocus, as real engagement involves power sharing and can lead to transformed services and new ways of working. However although essential to a successful social care business plan, it can slow progress so successful models need identification. This is beyond the scope of this study.

Open door and availability of Centre – Hard to Reach

The interviewees in this study all endorsed the need for it to be readily available at all hours of the day. There was also a marked trend for them to recognise the value of Familyfocus' proposed services, but a consensus emerged that neither they nor their families would make use of them although they all knew other families who needed them. All the respondents were from deprived areas and the majority had behavioural or other difficulties in managing at school. Their views could have reflected interviewee inhibition or the belief that the need for such services is socially unacceptable. It could also possibly reflect the difficulty in attracting hard to reach service users on a voluntary basis to the kinds of services Familyfocus is proposing. The sample size was too small for such conclusions to be drawn but the literature identified does give them a broader perspective and validity.

NES evaluation (2008) identifies that those who could have benefited most were least likely to be reached once children were no longer babies so the high reach needs to be for the first year. Core groups of users came from families that could attend during school hours. Dominant cliques were identified that put off potential new users, and the better off families in the area used the services most.

All Party Groups reported that Children's Centres (2011) need to prioritise those families most in need. It recommended a change in workers' approach and different methods to attract new, hard to reach users, in order to offset a perceived lack of confidence or apathy as the reason the programmes were not recruiting a wider section of the community. NES (2007) suggested outreach, use of community venues, spaces defined as "male", regular home visiting and out of hours working.

Also Action for Children research (2009) recognised more needs to be done to involve men in Family Centres. It recommended all male groups run by male service users or carers as a route into mainstream services. In addition it recommended a hub approach with services provided at work, in the evening, in male friendly environment and mobile family centres.

Current provision of services accessible and relevant to fathers and male carers still requires improvement and service providers should to respond to diverse needs. The study does not address gay carers and relevant issues in respect to accessing children's family centres. Triple P, Positive Parenting Programme, "the Invisible Year Programme and the Solihull Approach", although successful only recruited a relatively small number of participants (mainly mothers) over a year because they require a fixed number of sessions.

The Group outlined the Ofsted reports and identified services which had a positive effect in supporting the involvement of disadvantaged families in Children's Centres. These include:

- linking parents to employment information and support and provide training/volunteering opportunities
- provision of high quality child care or identification of the availability of local provision
- practical support – debt management, money saving tips, toy libraries, free activities for children
- debt advice
- support groups for parents
- target outreach, letters to all parents and follow up home visits
- inclusion of child-minders in the team
- parents to act as champions in order to reach "hard to reach" families.

APPENDIX FOUR

Analysis of Moorland Area Questionnaire April 2014

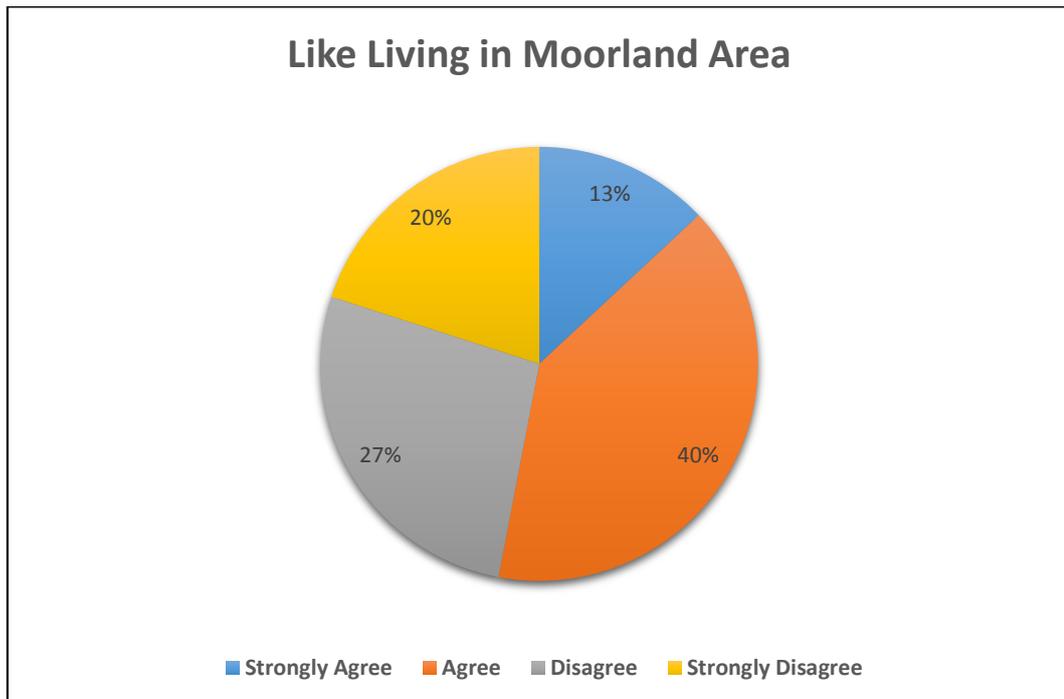
100 Questionnaires, page 41, were randomly distributed in the Moorland area with stamped, addressed envelopes for return and eight were completed and returned. A further fifty were given out to those using The Showroom venue adjacent to the Moorland Area. Of those eleven were completed and returned but only seven could be used for analysis as the other four lived outside the Moorland Area.

Those who did not return the questionnaires either had no views or were not engaged by the topic with possibly little or no vested interest. Although a small return the fifteen completed questionnaires have been analysed and still give a valuable insight to the views and needs of the Moorland area.

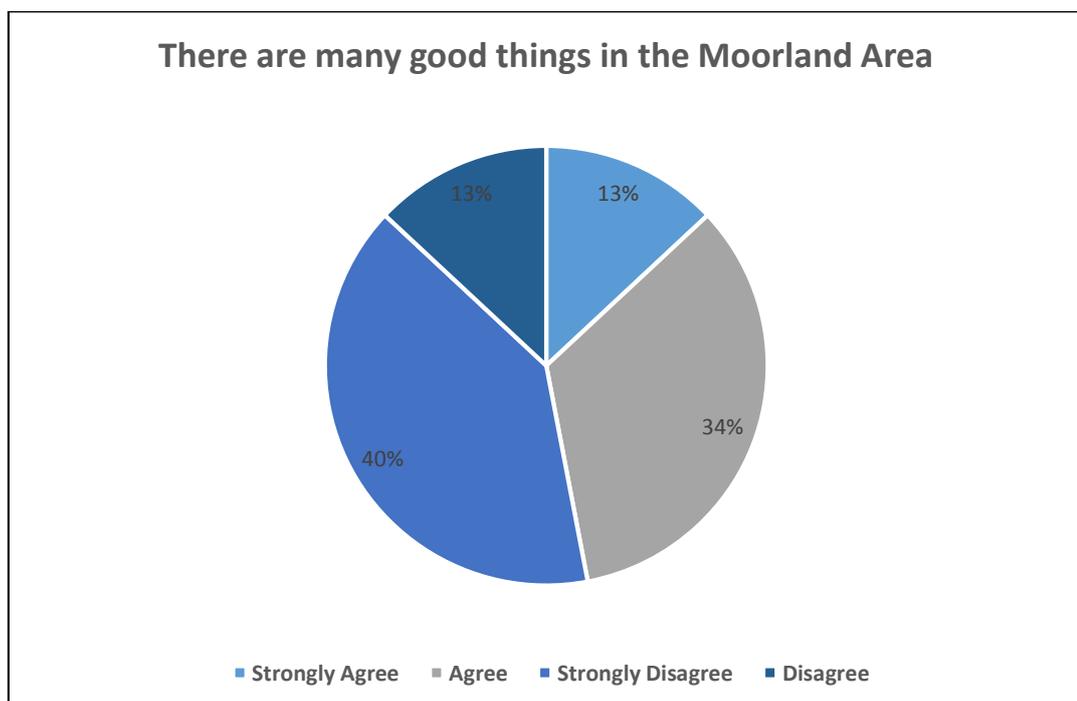
Answers in Percentages

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
I like living in this area.	13%	40%	27%	20%	
There are many good things in the Moorland area.	13%	34%	40%	13%	
The good things in this area could be made better.	40%	60%	0%	0%	
There are many leisure activities in this area.	13%	27%	40%	20%	
We know where to go to find a job in this area.	7%	33%	33%	27%	
We have no trouble finding a job.	7%	0%	33%	27%	
We can get the right training for available jobs.	7%	0%	33%	60%	N/A 13%
Social Services focus on the people with the greatest need.	7%	33%	53%	7%	
There is enough support in the home for families with difficulties.	7%	33%	33%	27%	
There is enough support locally for people with alcohol and/or drug problems.	7%	13%	40%	33%	Don't Know 7%
We know and have information about where to get the right help.	0%	60%	34%	7%	
We need a centre for information, help and support.	40%	60%	0%	0%	

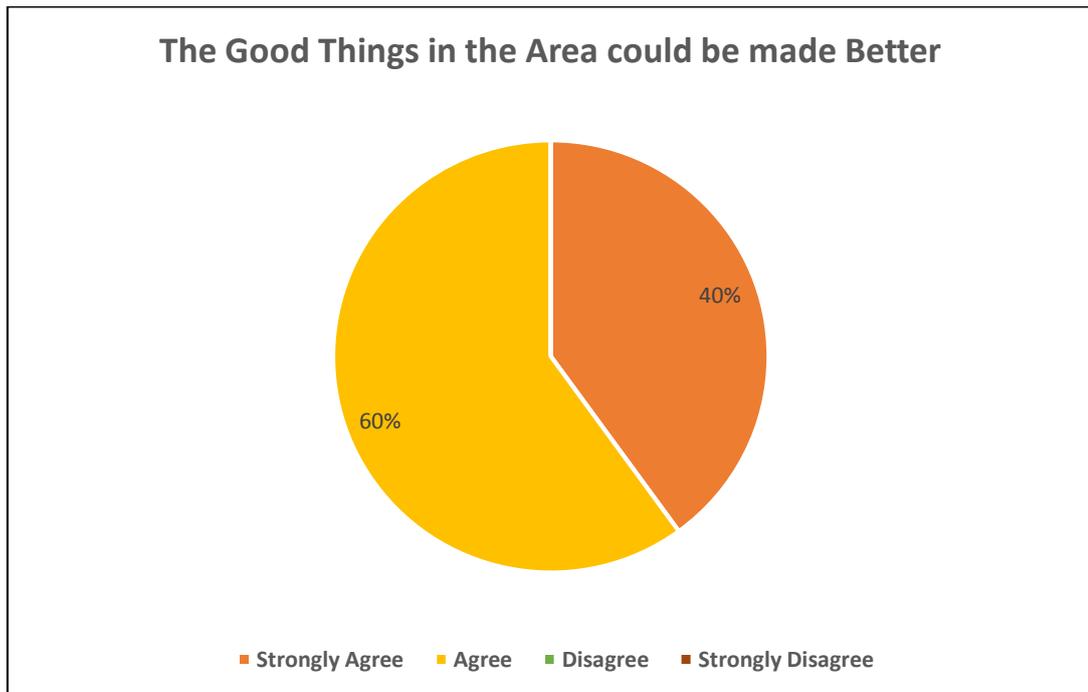
- 53% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 47% either disagree or strongly disagree that they like living in the Moorland area



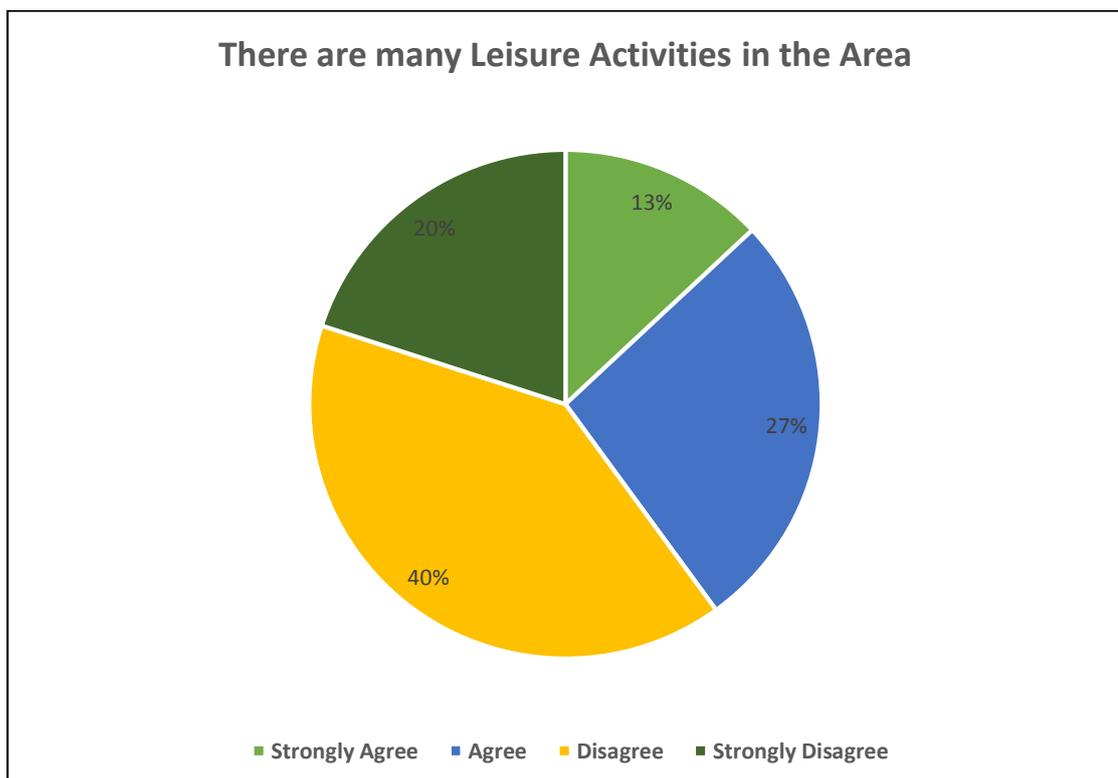
- 47% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 53% either disagree or strongly disagree that there are many good things in the Moorland area



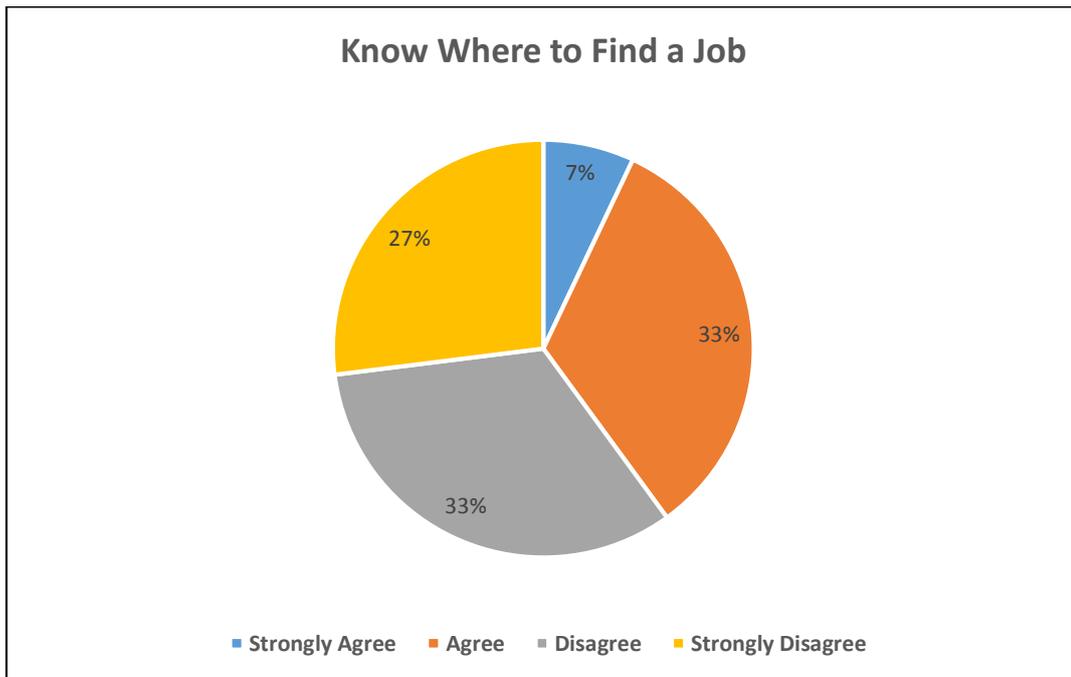
- 100% of adults either strongly agree or agree and none disagreed or strongly disagreed that the good things in this area could be made better



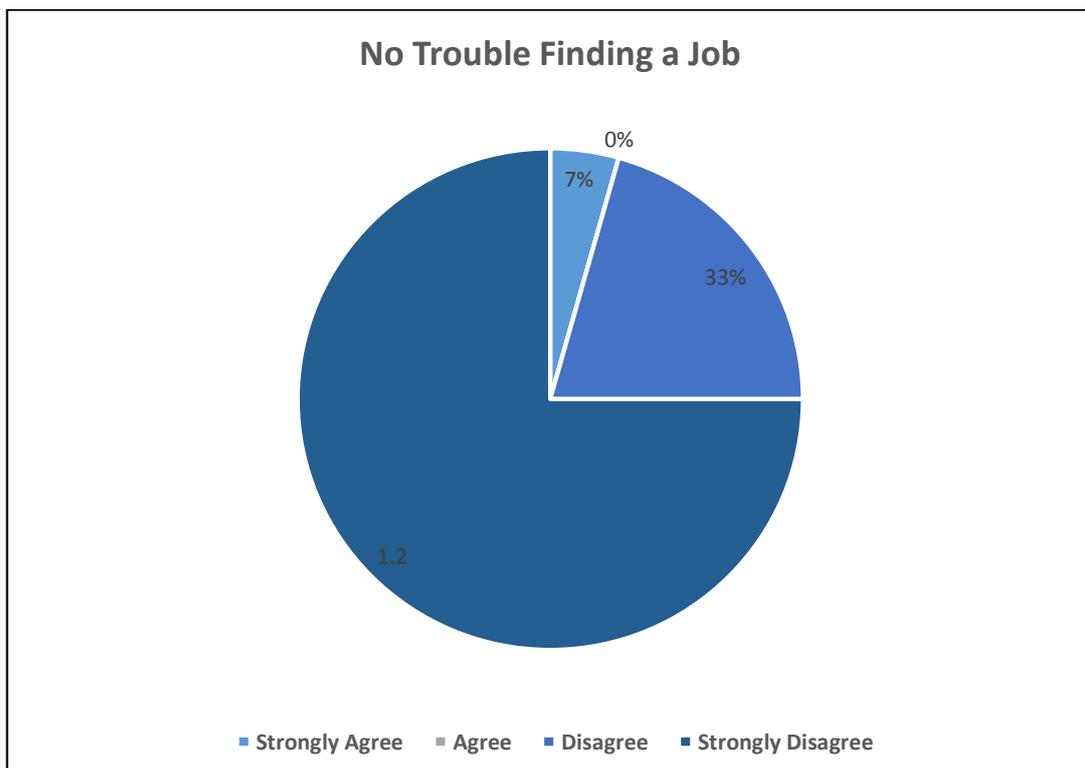
- 40% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 60% either disagree or strongly disagree that there are many leisure activities in the area



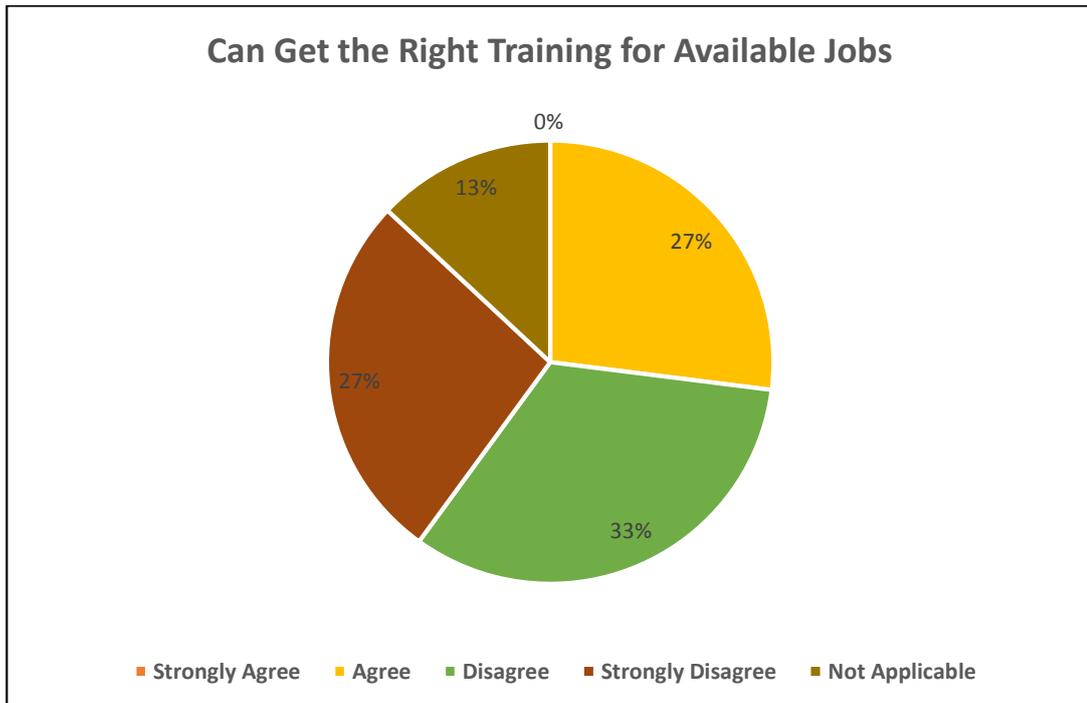
- 40% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 60% either disagree or strongly disagree that they know where to go to find a job in the area



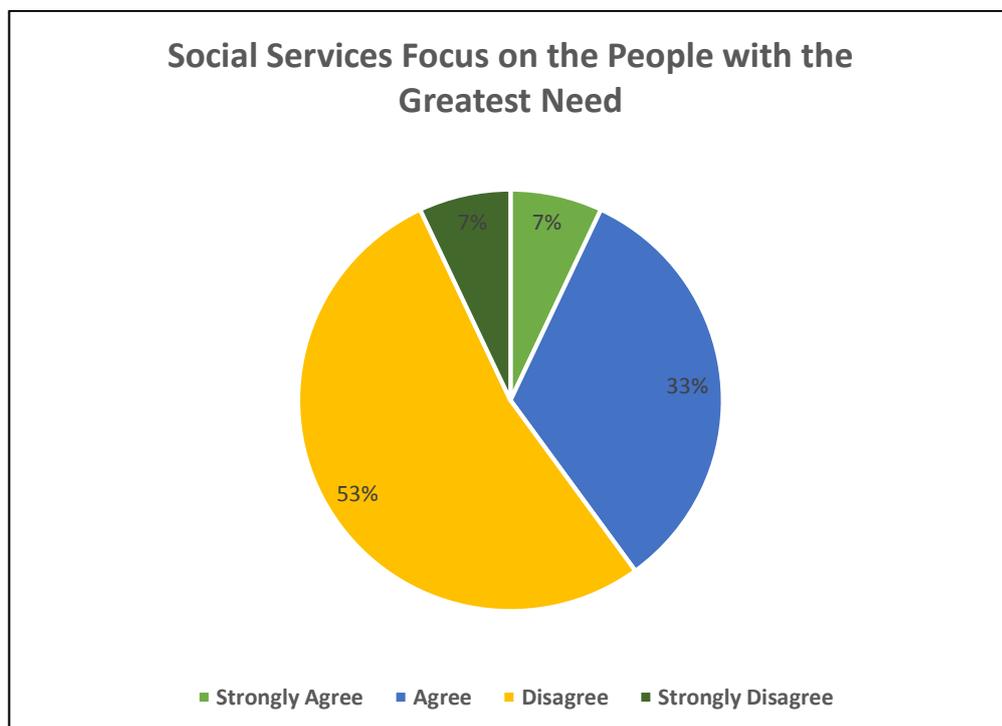
- 7% of adults strongly agree and 93% either disagree or strongly disagree that they have no trouble finding a job



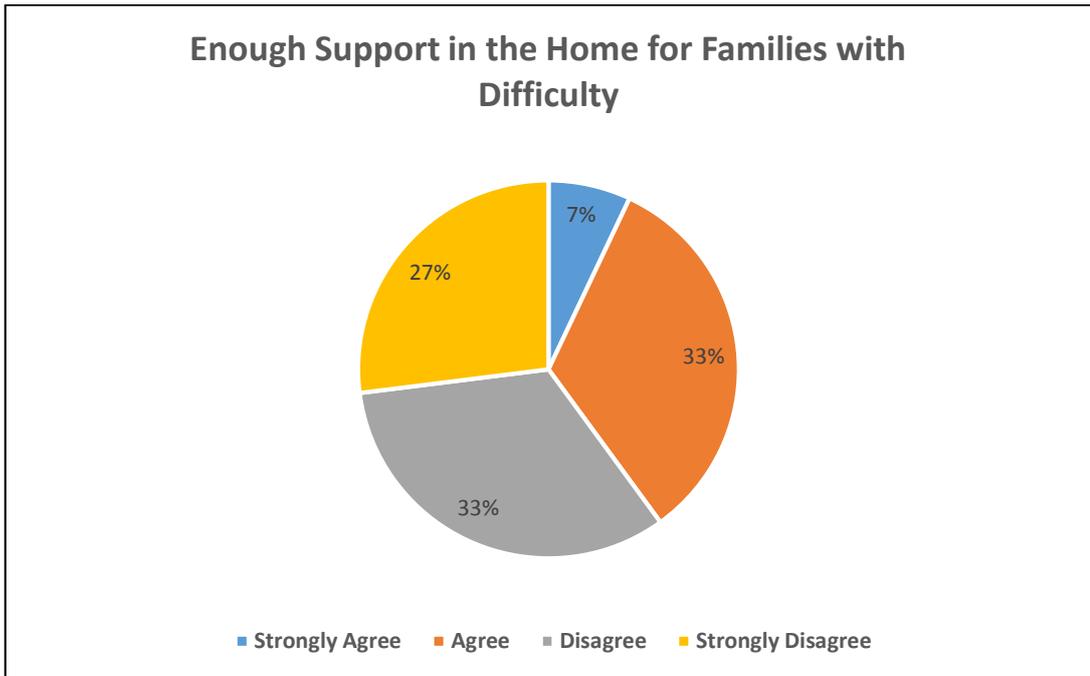
- 27% of adults agree and 60% either disagree or strongly disagree that they can get the right training for available jobs. 13% of adults considered that it was not applicable to them



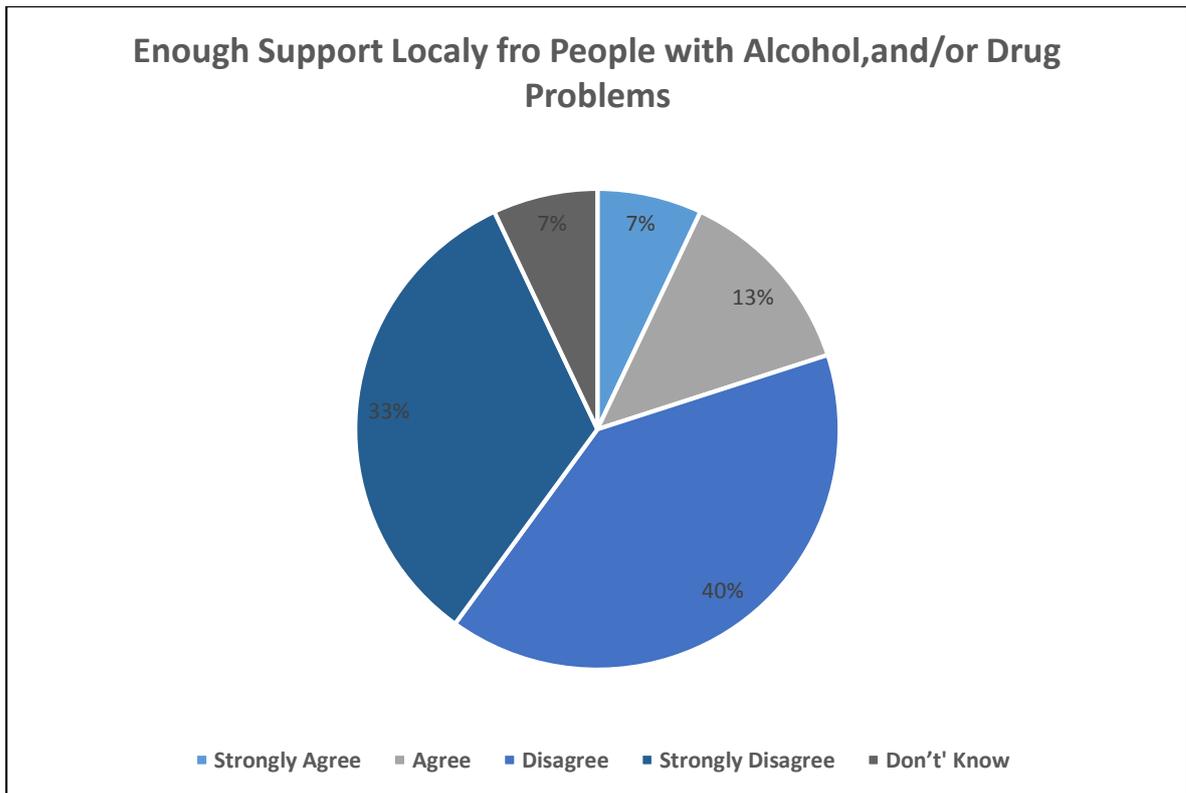
- 40% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 60% either disagree or strongly disagree that Social Services focus on the people with the greatest need



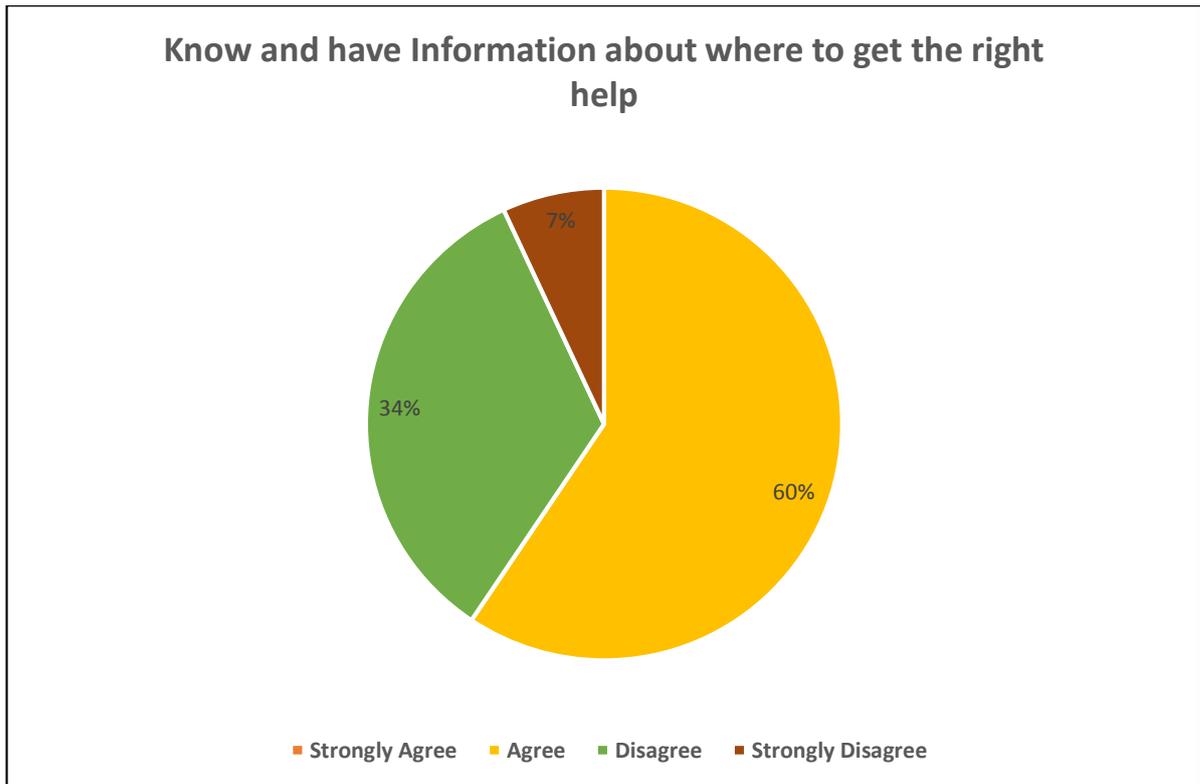
- 40% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 60% either disagree or strongly disagree that there is enough support in the home for families with difficulties



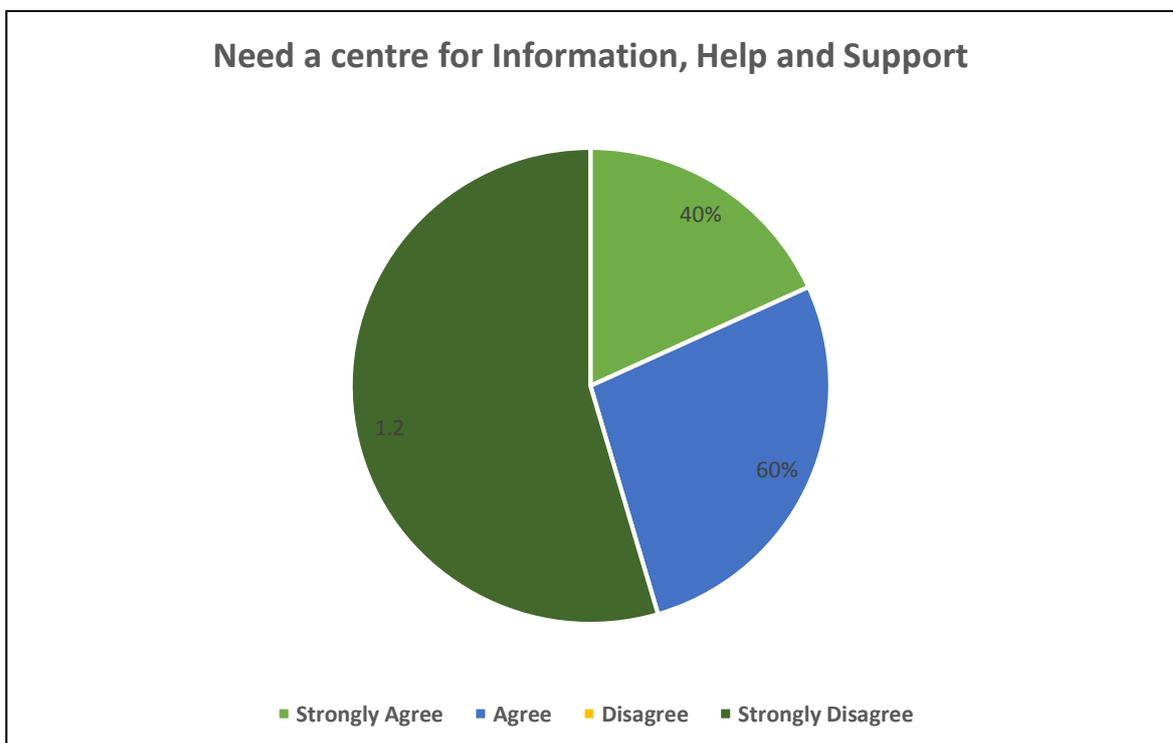
- 20% of adults either strongly agree or agree and 73% either disagree or strongly disagree that there is enough support locally for people with alcohol and/or drug problems. 7% of adults did not know



- 60% of adults agree and 40% either disagree or strongly disagree that they know and have information about where to get the right help



- 100% of adults either strongly agree or agree none disagreed or strongly disagreed that they need a centre for information, help and support



Conclusion

Of those adults who completed the questionnaire:

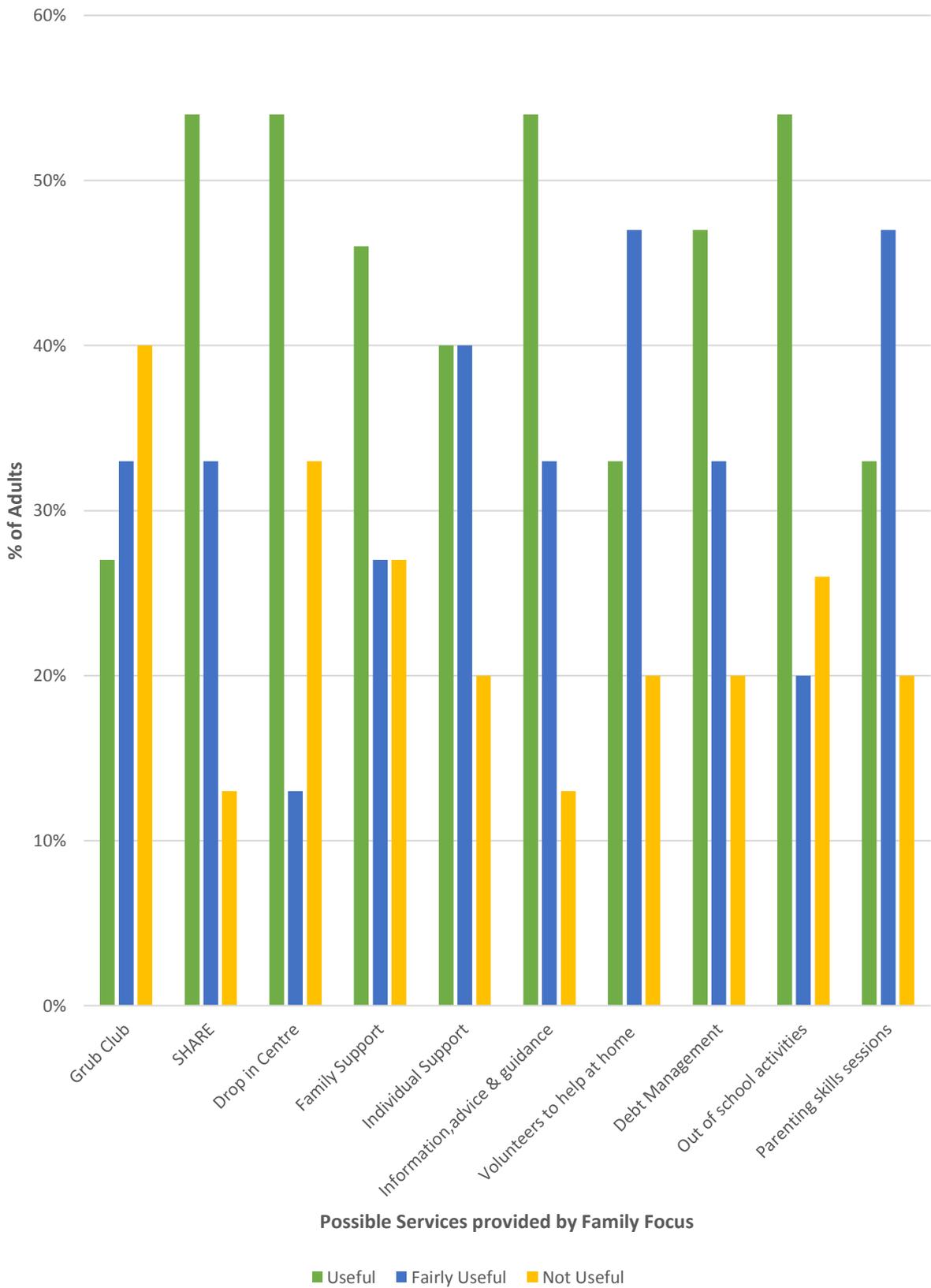
- the majority like living in the Moorland area although some commented on smallness of houses but they also considered that they have information about where to get the right help
- all agreed that the area could be made better and that they need a centre for information, help and support
- the majority disagreed that there are many good things in the Moorland area, that there are many leisure activities, that they knew where to go to get a job, that they can get the right training for available jobs, that Social Services focus on the people with the greatest need, that there is enough support in the home for families with difficulties and that there is enough support locally for people with alcohol and/or drug problems
- a high percentage, 93% of adults had trouble finding a job and comments included less jobs were available to native inhabitants.

The Usefulness of Services for Provision by Familyfocus in Percentages

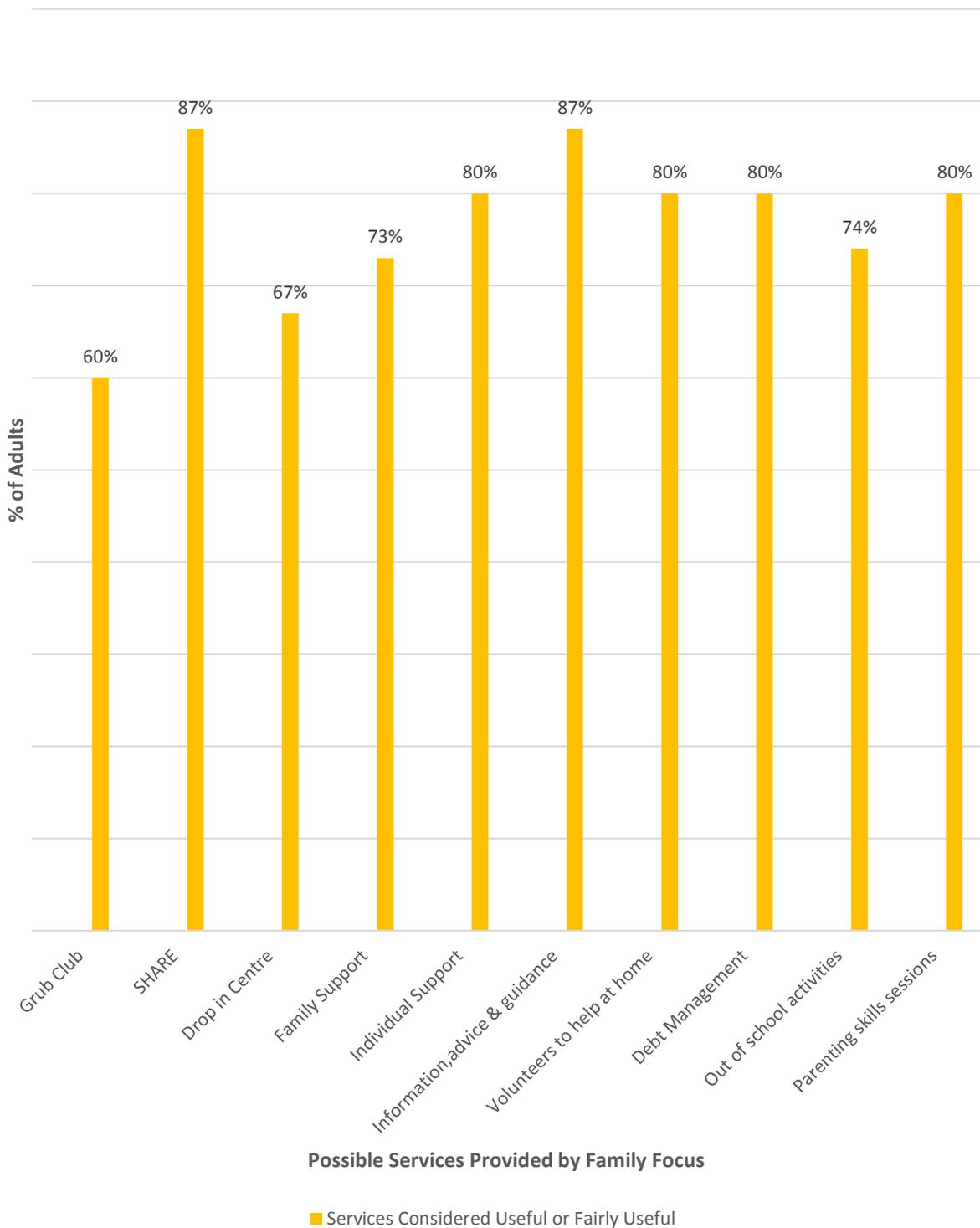
	Useful	Fairly Useful	Not Useful
Grub Club	27%	33%	40%
SHARE (support group run by parents for parents of autistic children)	54%	33%	13%
Drop in Centre	54%	13%	33%
Family support	46%	27%	27%
Individual support	40%	40%	20%
Information, advice and guidance	54%	33%	13%
Volunteers to provide hands on help for families at home	33%	47%	20%
Debt Management and understanding finances	47%	33%	20%
Out of school activities	54%	20%	26%
Parenting skills sessions	33%	47%	20%

Adults considered SHARE, Drop in Centre, information/advice/guidance and out of school activities to be the most useful services which Familyfocus could provide.

Usefulness of Services which Family Focus could Provide



The Combined Useful and Fairly Useful Views of Services which Family Focus could Provide



There were two suggestions from adults for services which Familyfocus could provide:

- a drop in centre for children to talk about things and find help
- more clubs for children and more clubs for parents with young children age 3-6yrs
- to check on disabled people.

Suggestions on further improvement to the Moorland area were:

- double yellow lines on street corners
- no commercial vehicles parking on narrow streets
- speed bumps in Westwick Gardens
- affordable places for children to go in school holidays
- size of houses to meet needs of family size
- additional bins for rubbish
- Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- less anti-social behaviour.

Evaluation

Common views, of those who answered the questionnaire, for services that Familyfocus could provide are firstly a Drop in Centre which was considered of paramount importance and would give those, living in the Moorland area opportunities for information especially about jobs, training and availability as well as advice and support. Secondly, a centre would have the possibility to provide out of school activities, clubs and a place for children to talk and find help. Using volunteers to help with this would be useful in providing support to families albeit outside of the home environment which 80% of adults viewed as useful or fairly useful. This would also address further suggestions for improvement to the Moorland area which also highlighted the need for places for children in school holidays.

Action

On behalf of Familyfocus and the residents of the Moorland Area SI Lincoln & District Soroptimists will forward suggestions involving road improvements, house sizes, additional rubbish bins, Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and less anti-social behaviour both to Lincoln City Council and Lincoln Police for their information and consideration and to sixth form students at The Priory City of Lincoln School, Skellingthorpe Road to further develop as a continuation to their contribution to this study. Possible organisations invited into school, which was felt to be useful by sixth formers, could be local residents, councillors and the Police.

Moorland Area Questionnaire April 2014

Please would you take a few minutes to answer the questions below and send it back to us in the envelope we have given you.

Please do not put your name on this as it is completely confidential.

The replies will help us to help Familyfocus know what is needed in your area. Familyfocus gives social care to a wide range of people to strengthen children, families and communities.

(www.familyfocuslincolnshire.org.uk)

Please help us and return this by Friday 4th April 2014.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Comments
I like living in this area.					
There are many good things in the Moorland area.					
The good things in this area could be made better.					
There are many leisure activities in this area.					
We know where to go to find a job in this area.					
We have no trouble finding a job.					
We can get the right training for available jobs.					
Social Services focus on the people with the greatest need.					
There is enough support in the home for families with difficulties.					
There is enough support locally for people with alcohol and/or drug problems.					
We know and have information about where to get the right help.					
We need a centre for information, help and support.					

Familyfocus is thinking of providing the following services.

Which ones would you find useful:

	Useful	Fairly Useful	Not Useful
Grub Club			
SHARE (support group run by parents for parents of autistic children)			
Drop in Centre			
Family support			
Individual support			
Information, advice and guidance			
Volunteers to provide hands on help for families at home			
Debt Management and understanding finances			
Out of school activities			
Parenting skills sessions			

Can you suggest any other services that you think Familyfocus could provide?

What further improvements to the Moorland area would you like to see take place?

Any other comments:

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions.

SI Lincoln Soroptimists on behalf of Familyfocus