

AIMING HIGHER

A SURVEY OF SUPPORT AND SERVICES WANTED BY FAMILIES AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE



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With thanks to everyone who contributed to the survey including parents, children, schools, vol. orgs, colleagues, Frances Murton for help with analysis and Awards for All.

Inspected by CSCI, rated as excellent

Inspected by Ofsted, rated as good

WEST ANGLIA CROSSROADS

Caring for carers, sharing the load

West Anglia Crossroads has extensive experience in working with children with disabilities and secured funding from Awards for All to consult with parents, carers and children with disabilities about the activities and support they would like to have available in their area.

As a national charity, Crossroads is a leading organisation working with children and their families. Members are specialist in providing a wide variety of services to children, supported by our principles of high quality and safety and our CSCI approved policies and procedures. At the time of this survey, West Anglia Crossroads was supporting 34 children in City, South & East Cambridgeshire and 32 in Huntingdonshire in 1:1 home or community based support (as the survey pre-dated our extending our services into Fenland), and 26 children were attending the Sunshine Club. We anticipated using the survey to make applications to Trusts, BIG Lottery and to OCYPS and the findings are highly relevant to the vision of Aiming High, announced in May 2007 - for all families with disabled children to have the support they need to live ordinary family lives, as a matter of course. Funding was made available for more short breaks; better childcare; more support for young people as they become adults and more.

West Anglia Crossroads provides Children's Services

- ★ In Huntingdonshire, South & East Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, Fenland, and Peterborough
- ★ That focus on high quality delivery as well as policy
- ★ That contribute something positive to a child's childhood
- ★ In which risk is managed, not just assessed
- ★ Which are preventative as well as supportive
- ★ Which are timely, flexible and consistent
- ★ Which involve children and their families in service decisions and development
- ★ Which support children in both inclusive and specialist environments
- ★ Which offer consistent support for young people through to adults services
- ★ Which place the safeguarding of children at the heart of all we do

Our services to children and families include

- 1:1 support in the home, including personal care, emotional support, support with homework
- 1:1 (occasionally 1:2) support to access social clubs (e.g. Cubs), sports events and recreational activities, such as swimming, the cinema or the library
- 1:1 support to attend educational classes, e.g. independent living skills
- Support for families to go out together for a day or on short breaks
- Overnight support
- A Saturday club for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) in Cambridge and South & East Cambridgeshire
- The Young Carers Project in Huntingdonshire, including 1:1 support and advocacy, school groups, social/activity group, day and residential trips and a Youth Council
- Sibling support when supporting a child with disabilities
- Carer support, information and signposting

Our Question to Children and Families: What kind of support and services would children with disabilities and their families prefer to be available in Cambridgeshire?

What we did

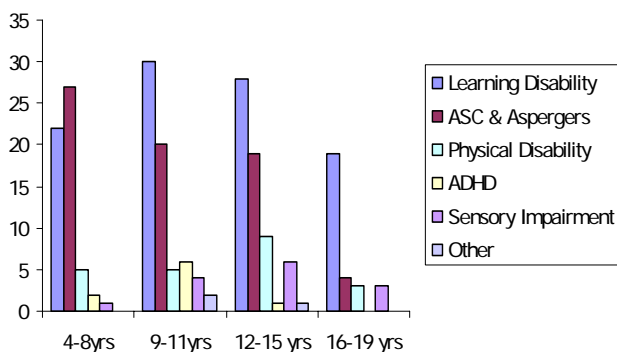


- Questionnaires were sent to parents/carers of school aged children with disabilities in South & East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in 2007.
- Parents/Carers were invited to support their child to give their views on the type of activities they would enjoy. Children were aged 4-19 years and had a range of learning, physical and sensory disabilities.
- 14 Schools and a range of organisations were approached throughout Cambridgeshire (except Fenland) to distribute questionnaires.

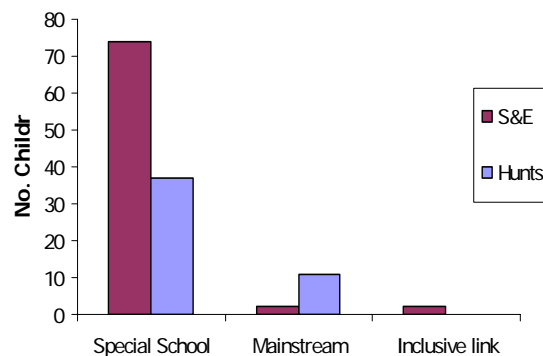
Who replied?

- 126 families replied.
- Some replies were incomplete, hence there is variation in the total responses to the questions. Respondents recorded the child's condition by circling from a list. Many reported more than one disability, which is illustrated in the disparity in numbers.
- 111 of the children attended special schools; 13 children attended mainstream schools. Another 2 children were partially integrated through the Granta/Fawcett inclusive link. All except one of the mainstream pupils were receiving either full time or half-time 1:1 support.
- **Approximately 400 children attend special schools and 780 children with disabilities are known to OCYPS. On this basis, the response rate was high, with over 25% of families/children attending special schools taking part.**

Type of Disability by Age



Type of School by Area

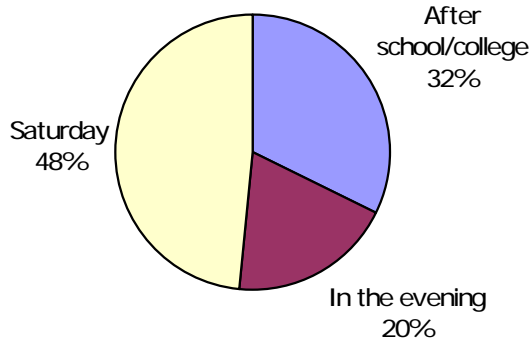


Key Results

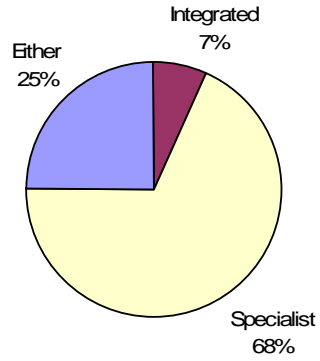
- 126 families replied and 116 (92%) expressed an interest in out of school activities.
- There was a clear need and preference for Saturday groups/clubs.
- Holiday provision was wanted, as weeks and as days throughout the holidays.
- 68% wanted specialist activities rather than integrated with mainstream.

Groups – this is what families and children with disabilities wanted

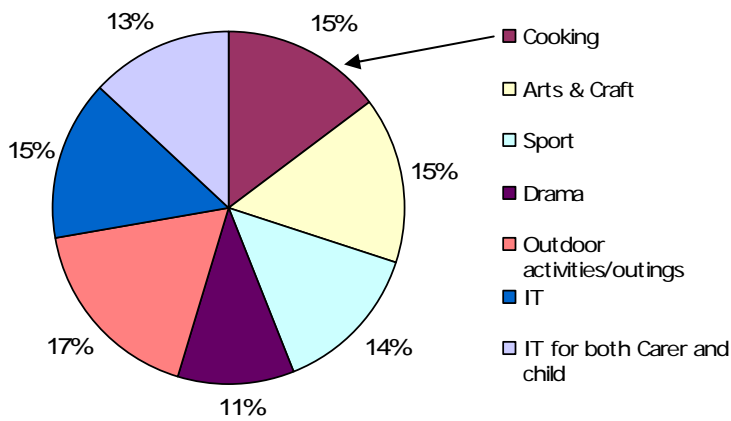
Preferred Time of Day for Groups



Preferred Type of Provision

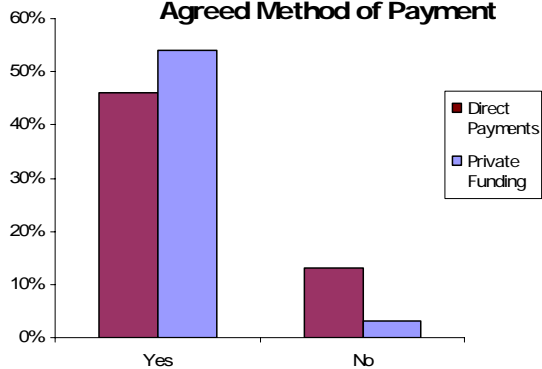


Preferred Type of Activity at a Group

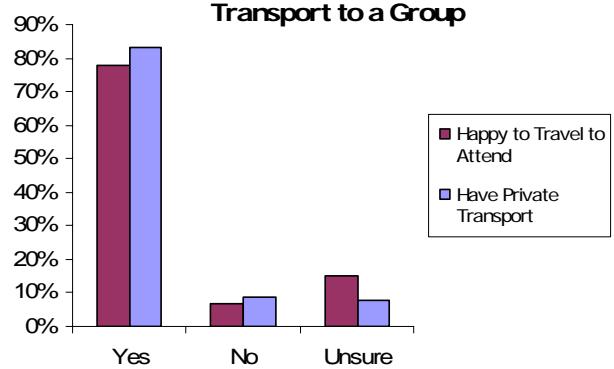


Families were willing to contribute

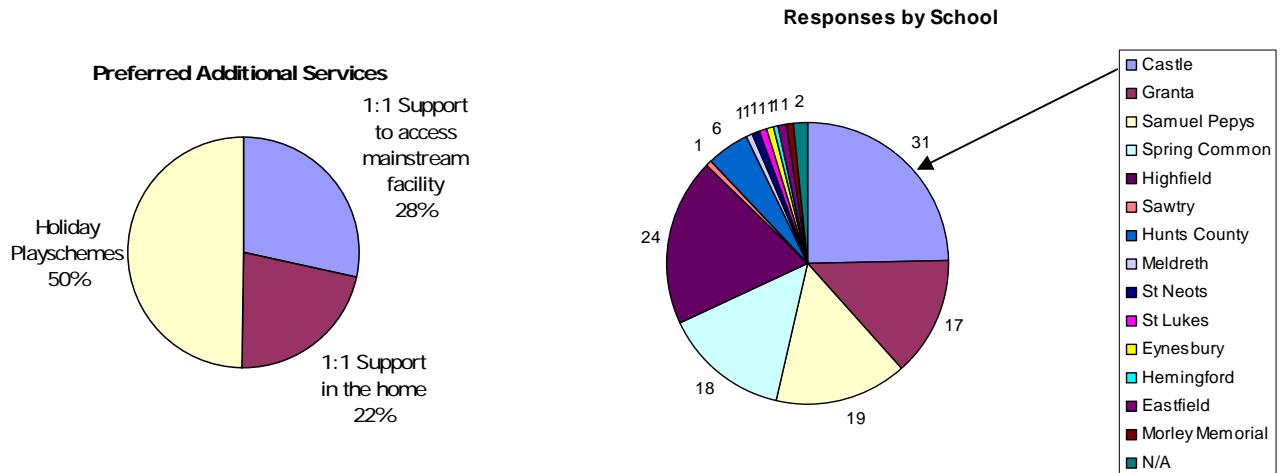
Agreed Method of Payment



Transport to a Group



Additional needs – this is what is wanted



Conclusions

There was a strong need for more services, with two thirds expressing a preference for specialist provision, so it is important that this isn't overlooked within Aiming High/inclusion.

Saturday clubs were clearly the most favoured, particularly in Huntingdon; evening groups the least preferred (see below). The exact timing would depend on whether the group was based at school or whether the child had to travel, although most preferred early evening, from 6pm. At a weekend, responses were fairly evenly balanced between morning and afternoon. 65% had no preference for the venue of a group as long as facilities were suitable.

Very few respondents were unwilling or unable to pay but it was difficult to commit without knowing how much would be involved or whether they would be eligible for direct payments. The majority were happy to consider paying for transport to and from a group, or driving their children themselves.

Activity Groups

- 116 expressed an interest in activity based groups. 52% wanted weekly groups; 43% fortnightly; 28% monthly.
- Suggestions for other activities included music-making and dance; swimming and bowling; days out e.g. to the zoo; 'messy' play and 'soft' play.
- There are a significant number of teenagers in both areas with ASCs and/or learning disabilities for whom there may not be any appropriate groups at present.

After school clubs

- The majority of children were in special schools, frequently some distance from home - so integration into mainstream after school clubs is difficult logistically for most, even if there were a demand.
- After school clubs based in special schools would enable parents to spend more time either at work or college or with their other children. However, transport would be a challenge. Not least because many children in special schools have a considerable journey time and extending the school day might be too tiring to be of benefit to them.

- A significant number of children were in mainstream education and it may be that some of these could benefit from mainstream after school clubs in their area, if additional specialist support was available, for example through Carer Support Workers.

Evening activities

- The least favoured option, although more popular for older children.
- As there was a preference for sports, art and crafts, it may be worth considering developing small, informal local groups of youngsters of similar ages and abilities to access such facilities in schools and sports halls, thereby keeping transport costs low.

Saturday clubs

- Our results show an overwhelming preference for Saturday clubs.
- West Anglia Crossroads already runs a very successful Saturday club, The Sunshine Club, in Cambridge for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions. This caters for 25-30 children aged between 5 and 11. This is available to younger children with ASCs in South & East Cambridgeshire and the City, although, as we know, the waiting list is long and moves very slowly as children tend to stay at the club once they have a place, until the age limit of 11 years old.
- There is clearly a demand for similar groups in the Huntingdon area for children with ASCs and we would therefore suggest that this could be replicated across the county.
- This survey also emphasises the need for similar specialist clubs for older children with ASCs and with other learning disabilities.
- It may be that smaller, activity based groups, for example swimming, bowling, cinema trips and other outings, would work very well particularly for older groups.

Holiday play schemes

- Existing provision never satisfies the demand for holiday activities but it may be that a programme of outings as above, can be arranged locally on a weekly basis and that support could be provided by specialist Carer Support Workers or Volunteers to enable some children to participate in mainstream schemes.

