



## Parent Consultation Week February 2010 - Part 1

### Parents are not the problem, they are the solution

Questionnaires were distributed during a Parent Consultation Week activity when the CYP Trust Engagement Service took 'Bertie Bus' out around Stoke-on-Trent to ask parents and carers how they felt about the Parenting Strategy and any changes that had resulted, or not as the case may be.

Parents and carers is the generic term used to describe anyone who has substantial responsibility for the day to day care of a child, including grandparents.

80 questionnaires were completed which resulted in some stark information as outlined below. The majority of parents and carers asked had children under the age of 5 although there were responses from parents and carers across the age range.

|               |                |                 |               |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>0-5</b> 80 | <b>6-11</b> 34 | <b>12-16</b> 12 | <b>16+</b> 11 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|

### LOOKING BACK

Parents and carers were asked to look back over the past three years and make a judgement about the support they had received. The majority felt it had either improved although a few felt it had deteriorated.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Got much better<br><b>13</b>                      | Got a bit worse<br><b>5</b>   |
| Got a bit better<br><b>27</b>                     | Got a lot worse<br><b>3</b>   |
| Got no worse or better / is the same<br><b>21</b> | Doesn't apply to me as I have only recently become a parent<br><b>8</b> |
| Not answered<br><b>2</b>                          |   |

When asked to say what had changed the responses varied from the fact that they had never accessed any parenting support to identifying real areas of satisfaction or need:

- ⊕ Health care – no baby clinics
- ⊕ Parent Direct accessible for information / There's more information readily available
- ⊕ Supportive health visitor / More info – health visitor
- ⊕ Local Children's Centre offers more / A lot more out there, Surestart / Get information from Children's Centres and access courses / Nursery funding, Surestart centre
- ⊕ Because I'm more aware of what is around and how to ask for help / Now I know where to go
- ⊕ More support, more groups to go to / Better support / More visible
- ⊕ Since coming to the group and talking to different people in different situations it is starting to give me more confidence in my own parenting / My confidence
- ⊕ Have seen some new activities and facilities – baby cafes and classes
- ⊕ Notice what is available new young people's services
- ⊕ Pregnant women miss out, no support
- ⊕ Schools better –teachers engagement
- ⊕ Kids drinking
- ⊕ Parks better places to go
- ⊕ Attending group has been beneficial to me for someone to talk to if I have problems. The crèche has brought my children out and broke them away from me also helping my 3 year old with his speech
- ⊕ Burslem park better
- ⊕ Receiving more support
- ⊕ Nothing / Nothing really – as a grandparent
- ⊕ I used to have information when I was on maternity but since I returned I don't receive anything

## LOOKING FORWARD

When asked what they would like to see happen if a new strategy was written parents and carers highlighted the following:

Many reported that they didn't know about any Parenting Strategy or where it could be found – this is obviously an issue for the City if developing new strategies.

The information parents and carers would like more of ranged from health information for babies, activities for all ages and general information about issues. What was highlighted was that parents and carers would like information accessible, clear and giving details about where to go to for help.

- ⊕ Nursery placements, safety / teachers / Gov nursery places
- ⊕ Advice on bottle feeding / Information regarding weaning and what's best for baby / On health
- ⊕ Info in general, activities / Stuff about where to take the grandchildren / After school activities – low cost / free / Activities in the evening for children to go to / Events, days out / car parking, children's activities
- ⊕ Revolving around parenting / Parent craft
- ⊕ I would like people to speak to me, access services direct (not referral)
- ⊕ How to get support / To know what is available and where to get it
- ⊕ Contact points / A clear list of where to look for information / Signposts of where we go for in depth info on topics – a directory of local, regional, national activities info
- ⊕ Access to information better advertised
- ⊕ Need community centres, better things for teenagers, hanging around / Parks for children
- ⊕ Myself, want to get into childcare

The parenting support parents and carers would like more of ranged from one to one advice to finances as well as activities and support out of normal 'office hours'

- ⊕ 1:1 advice
- ⊕ Financial help
- ⊕ Available support at weekends and after work hours
- ⊕ Holiday - more activities available / More in the holidays for children / Information what's on – one number / Activities, any concerns, somewhere to go
- ⊕ Around the house – saving parenting support
- ⊕ Welcome support ideas
- ⊕ Groups for young mums
- ⊕ Stop changing the names of things
- ⊕ Longer midwife
- ⊕ More self-referral available
- ⊕ Support in schools, help with behaviour
- ⊕ Telephone support
- ⊕ Childcare – low cost / free
- ⊕ Guidance on what quantity of milk to give baby i.e. a step by step guide / Bedtime routines / Information about nursery dinners

When it comes to services talking to / acting with each other parents and carers would like more

- ⊕ Information on places to go
- ⊕ Consideration for me as a grandparent
- ⊕ More communication between services / Visible and noticeable / Joint info / Working together more action less talk
- ⊕ Co-operation – them to tell me what's happening / School keep you in the loop
- ⊕ Free transport
- ⊕ Direct access – 1<sup>st</sup> point call should have understanding
- ⊕ Openness, more info sharing / less defensiveness or covering their own backs
- ⊕ Letting me know what is happening
- ⊕ Co-operation not their agenda – not 'jobsworths'
- ⊕ Input on things



- ⊕ Get information (Stoke website – difficult to get info from / out of date) / Information need more communication / Directory information / Information from hospitals when baby born

Around parents being involved and asked their views parents and carers would like more opportunities and events to contribute their views and have a say about the delivery of services. They are also looking for a variety of ways to contribute.

- ⊕ Things like the bus today / Today's activity / Good idea more / Bertie Bus is good, more info is good
- ⊕ Free events for parents in local areas/ Events to have a say, get asked after using a service if they are any good
- ⊕ Questionnaires / events like this / Questionnaires via health visitors / More of this type of questionnaire thanks for asking / Questionnaires at school / newspapers
- ⊕ Community consultation for parents who are not engaged
- ⊕ Special needs parents included / encouragement of people less able i.e. can't read / write
- ⊕ Email / post
- ⊕ Voice my views
- ⊕ Complain
- ⊕ Meetings in the community lack of info only just realised Children's Centre in the area
- ⊕ Feedback from past years improvements
- ⊕ Information about groups
- ⊕ Listened to more
- ⊕ Parent representation, get involved and make decision
- ⊕ To be able to go to more functions at school, only allowed 3 people
- ⊕ Don't get asked enough about our views

Parents and carers felt that the most important things for them and their children were around information, accessibility, activities, education and safety as well as being listened to – everyone wanted their children to be healthy, safe and happy.

- ⊕ More information on what is available / Knowing what to do with children – clubs, classes / Special need information / Knowing what's available, a range of activities in term / out of term for younger children / More evening activities for teens – safe / cheap places to go
- ⊕ Good education / Guidance on education and how to support my child at home / Better education in schools
- ⊕ The safety of my child / Safer roads / Ability to play in street that is safe / More safe places to play
- ⊕ Better understanding towards children, European children better thought of than British
- ⊕ Working together – Council, Schools, Children's Centres etc
- ⊕ More places that are cheap to take my grandchildren
- ⊕ Local free transport / Car parking
- ⊕ The justice system – youth offenders is good adults not so good
- ⊕ To acknowledge that I know my kids best and hence what's important / a priority for my family/ Young mum- spoken to not to my parents / To have my say and input on everything about me and my child / Feel valued
- ⊕ Health visitors and more baby groups –
- ⊕ Accessible services / fit in with working parents
- ⊕ Childcare that is not dependant on what I earn
- ⊕ Communication – leaflets via schools of services / support in the area. As a working parent get left out - through door posting / text messaging / email service
- ⊕ I would like more funding for parents' and children's services every time I speak to people they say no funding

## Recommendations:

For further information contact Lesley Boughey – [lesley@vast.org.uk](mailto:lesley@vast.org.uk) / 01782-683080

Whatever the City provides in terms of strategy or service should be well publicised, take into account the views of parents and provide clear feedback about the impact of sharing those views. Having a recognised 'figurehead' for parenting is important.

