

# **Childrens with Disabilities Short Breaks consultation and survey**

## **Key findings report**

March 2022

**Research & Citizen Insight  
Chief Executive's Office**



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# Introduction:

**Short Breaks Community Clubs and Activities is one of our offers and provides a range of informal learning activities for children and young people with SEND after school, at weekends and during school holidays. The 28 contracts for short breaks end in March 2023 and we would like views from families and stakeholders on what the Short Breaks Community Clubs and Activities offer could look like from that point onwards.**

The Children with Disabilities Short Breaks statutory consultation survey ran for 12 weeks from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2021 until 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and an additional supplementary easy read survey was designed, with both editions being hosted on Citizen Space and running concurrently. The survey was also available in paper copies and other formats on request.

The Short Breaks consultation follows on from the insights gathered following research with families which took place during from October 2020 and April 2021 and the subsequent launch of the Children with Disabilities Short Breaks Strategy in November 2021, which set out the our ambitions for short breaks as informed by this earlier research.

The consultation saw an extensive communications campaign and the consultation was promoted through parent support groups, Essex Family Forum events and family events, both online and in person.

This consultation was split into two parts. The first section consulted with children and young people with SEND, and their primary carers, on the proposals for improving the current Community Clubs and Activities offer. The second section contained questions that will help those who run the community clubs and activities know what families would like from clubs and activities. The consultation consisted of yes/no questions, multiple choice tick boxes and open-ended responses and this report shows the findings from this consultation.

# Interpreting the data within the consultation

This report contains several tables and charts that present the consultation and survey findings. In some instances, responses may not add up to 100%. This is due to either rounding of percentages, or where the question allowed respondents to give more than one answer.

- As the questionnaire was completed by respondents themselves (self-completion), not all respondents have answered all the questions. Therefore, the base size (the number of people answering a question) varies by question.
- To ensure inclusivity, the questionnaire was open for anyone to take part and was available online and in paper format, including easy read.
- For the analysis of free text comments, all have been read through and a coding frame was developed on a theme by theme basis and quantified thereafter.
- Please note easy read responses have not been incorporated into the main tables and charts but will be shown separately alongside main data.

# Key conclusions

While the current short breaks offer is working for some, a great many families have said that this is not working for them and the offer does not meet their children's individual needs and there is a distinct lack of choice or suitable provision, especially in the **local areas**.

Respondents are aware that the **offer needs to change** and become more equitable and while there is **strong agreement** in an **annual review process**, however there are some mixed response to what this future model of provision could be for families.

There is strong support respondents for ECC to commissioning Short Breaks providers to deliver activities in **mainstream settings** and increase opportunity and choice of clubs and activities for families.

Responses in relation to the **online offer** have been **mixed**, with some parents telling us that this would not be a suitable for their child and others willing to participate in the future.

There is an overwhelming response telling us that **we need to better plan** for transitions for when **young people turn 19+**.

We need to improve access to information and advice ensuring it is given to families at the right time in their journey and in the right format. The website needs to be clearer and booking process needs to be made easier to use.

# Executive Summary

- There were **205** responses to the consultation, **196** completing to the main survey and **9** the easy read survey. **187** respondents were parent carers, **4** were children and **12** were providers
- The consultation saw responses from all demographic districts within Essex
- In response to **Proposal 1** (no change to the current offer) **45% disagreed**, 30% agreed and 24% unsure
- In response to **Proposal 2** (increase in venues) **90% agree**, 4% disagreed and 6% unsure
- In response to **Proposal 3** (improve geographic location) **85% agreed**, 4% disagreed and 11% were unsure
- In response to **Proposal 4** (commit to a flexible activity allowance) **53% agreed**, 23% disagreed 24% unsure
- Responses to the 4 proposals from the easy read survey were similar
- There were a total of **108** free text comments, mostly relating to the consultation and these have been themed in the analysis below

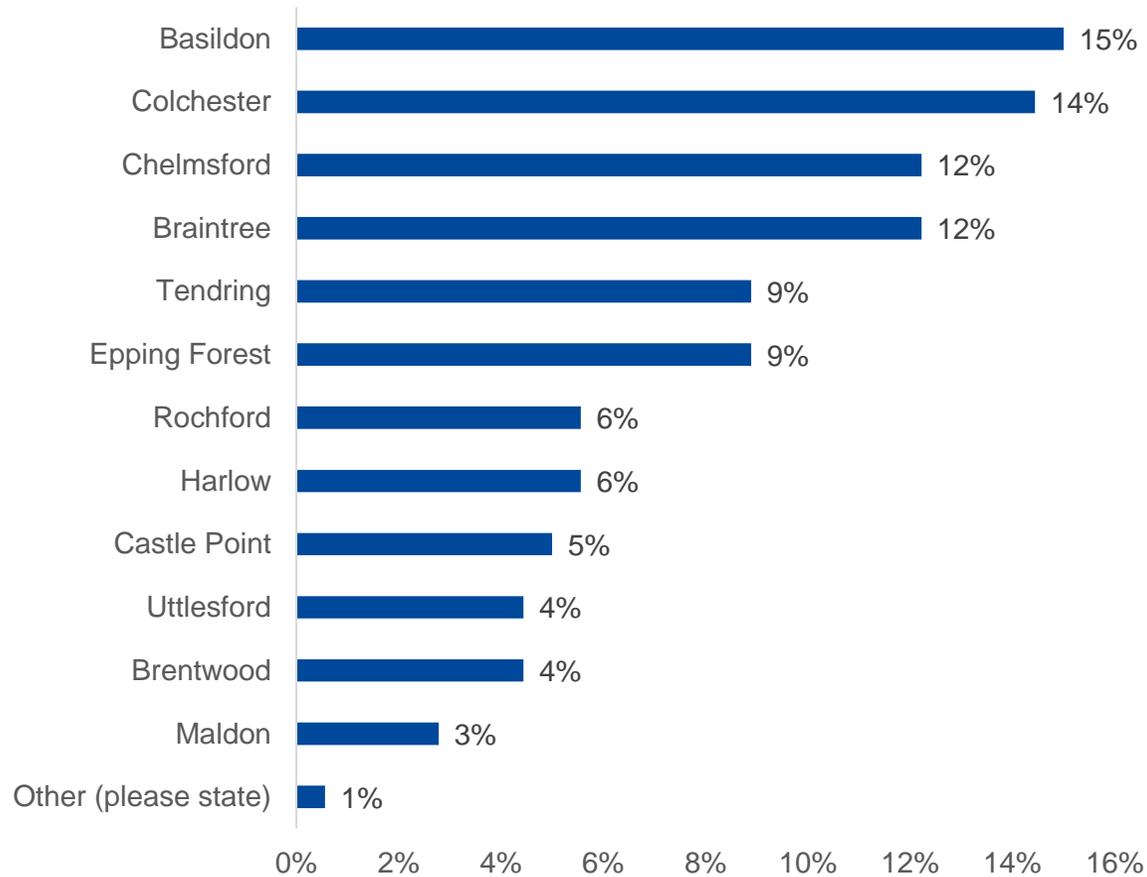
A more detailed overview of the findings can be found in the analysis below.

# Who gave their views



## Which district do respondents live in?

We received responses from all districts with most being from Basildon (15%) and Colchester (14%), and fewest responses were from Maldon (3%).



[Responses: 180]

Produced by Essex County Council Chief Exec's Office

## Who responded to the survey?

Total response was 205 and of the 196 responses to the main survey 182 (93%) were from parent carers and 12 (6%) were from providers. 2 did not answer the question. From the Easy Read survey, 4 responses were from children and 5 from parent carers.

### Easy Read responses

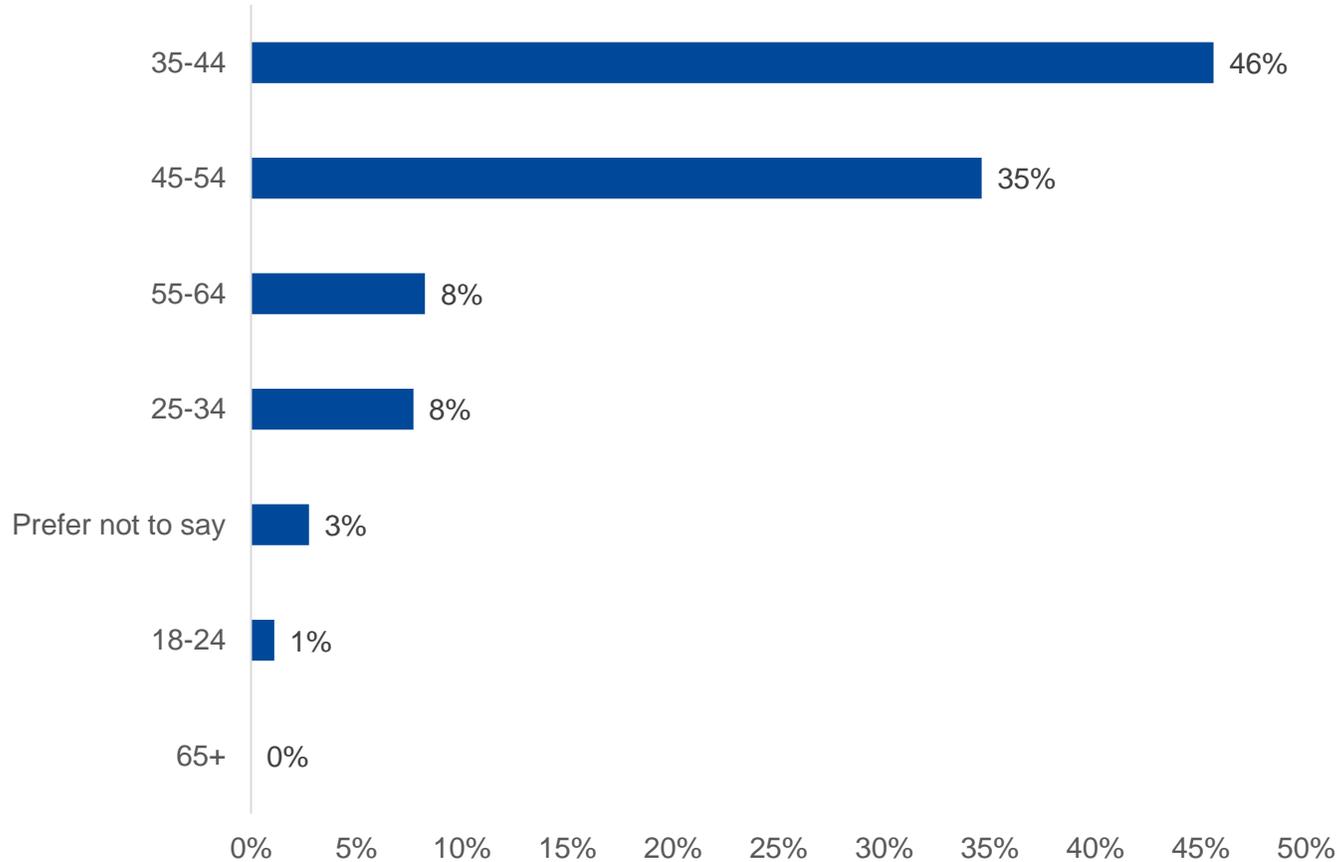
5 responses were from parent carers and 4 were from children, and they lived in the following districts:

- Brentwood - 1
- Castle Point - 1
- Chelmsford - 1
- Colchester - 2
- Epping - 1
- Harlow - 2
- Tendring - 1

[Responses: 9]

# What ages are our respondents?

Nearly half of respondents were aged 35-44 (46%), closely followed by those aged 45-54 (35%), with fewest respondents being aged 18-24. There were no respondents aged 65+.



[Responses: 182]

## Easy Read responses

The easy read survey was available for both children and adults to complete, hence differential in age range.

### Child responses

There were **3** responses from children aged **5-11** and **1** response from a child aged **12-15**.

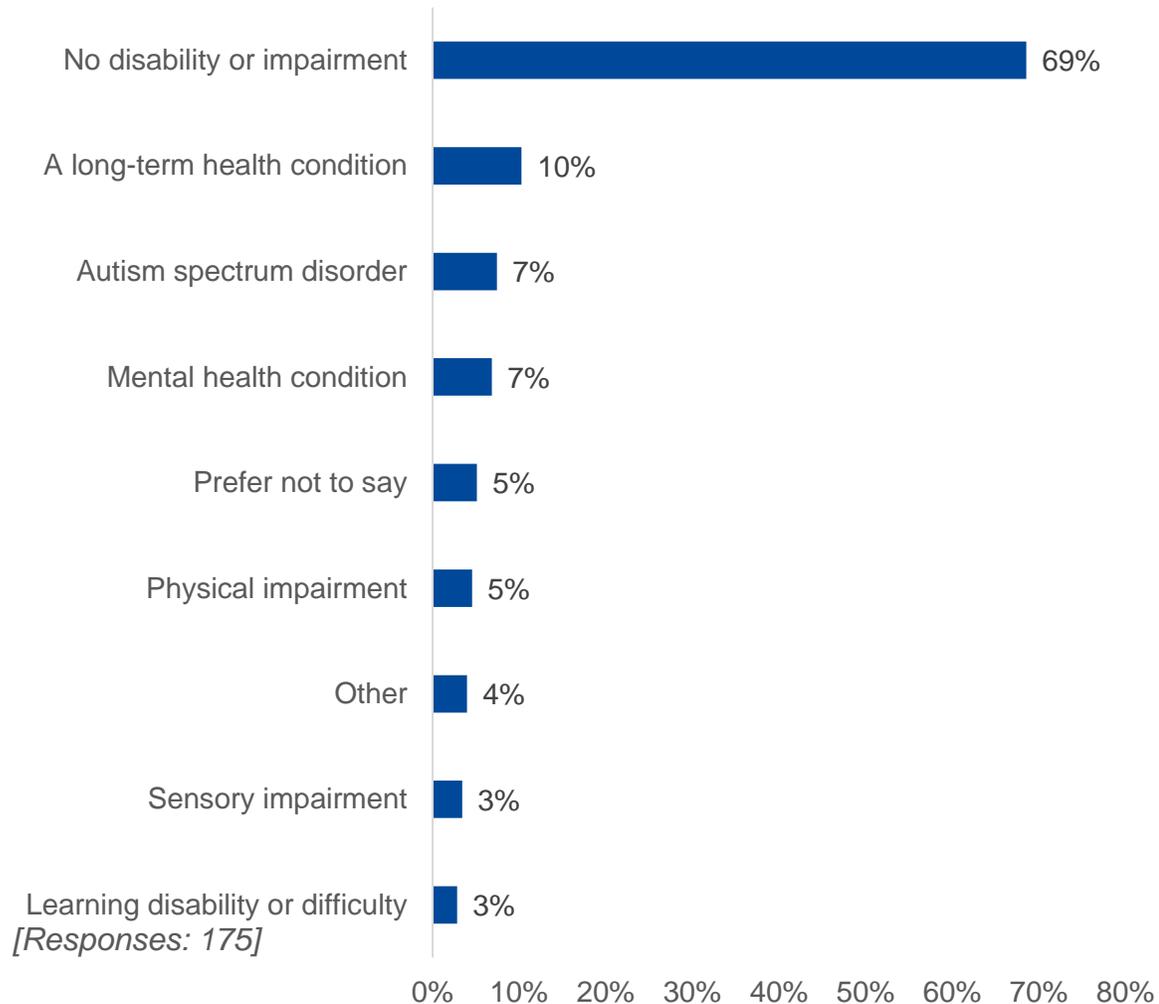
### Adult responses

There were **3** responses from those aged between **35-44** and **2** responses where the respondents were **25-34** and

[Responses: 9]

# Respondents with a special educational need or disability

The majority of respondents (69%) don't consider themselves to have a disability. 10% have a long term condition, 7% have autism and 7% have a mental health condition.



## Easy Read responses

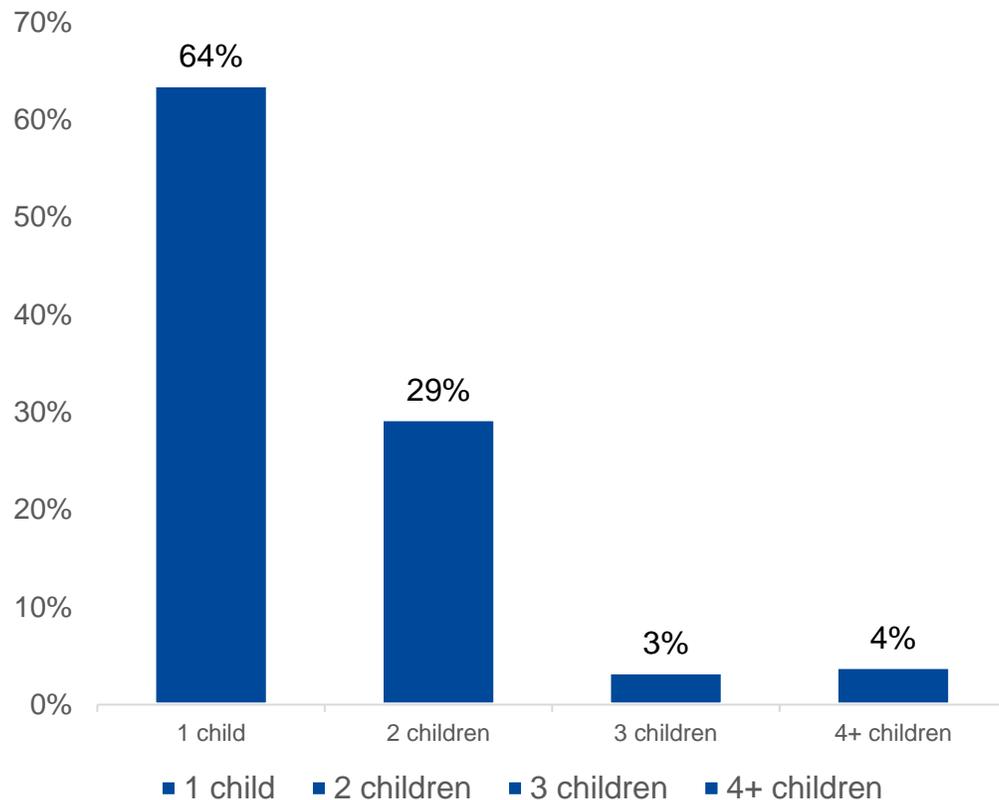
The easy read survey was available for both children and adults to complete, data below covers adults and children.

4 respondents have a disability, 4 do not and 1 person preferred not to say.

[Responses: 9]

## How many children in each family have a disability?

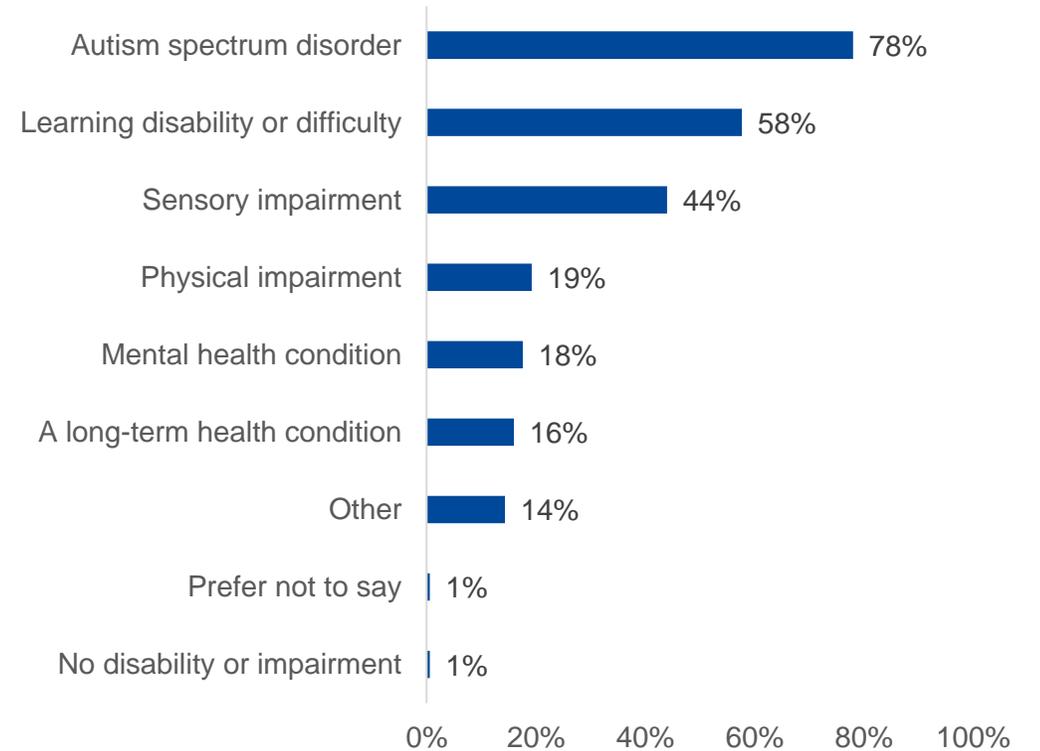
The majority of families have one child with a disability (64%), while 29% have 2 children with a disability.



[Responses: 181]

## Types of disability of child/children

Most prevalent conditions were autism (78%), followed by learning disability (58%) and sensory impairment (44%).



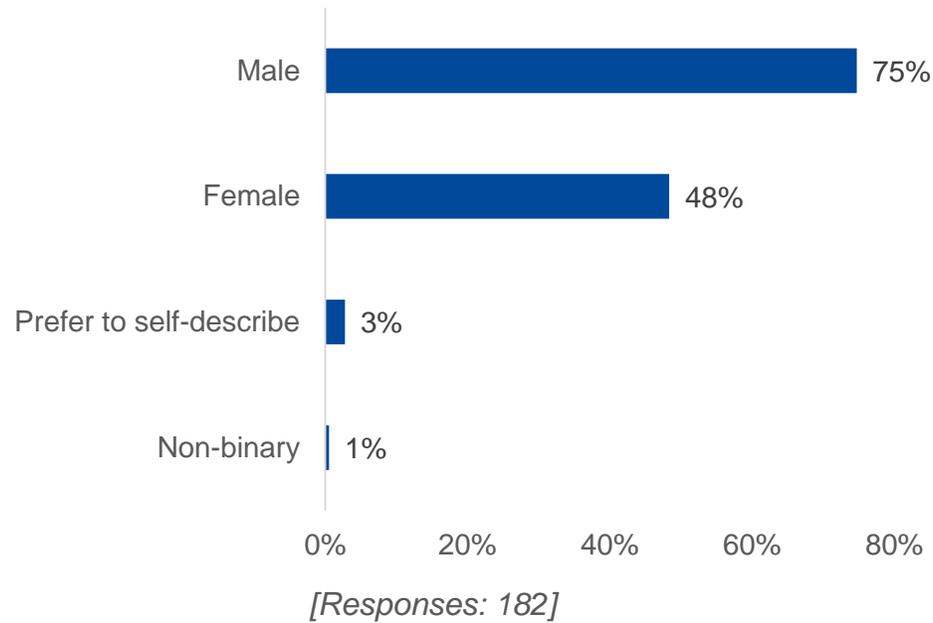
[Responses: 182]

NB: Respondents could give more than one response to this question.

## Gender of child/children

**75% of respondents had male children, and 48% had female children. 3% preferred to self-describe.**

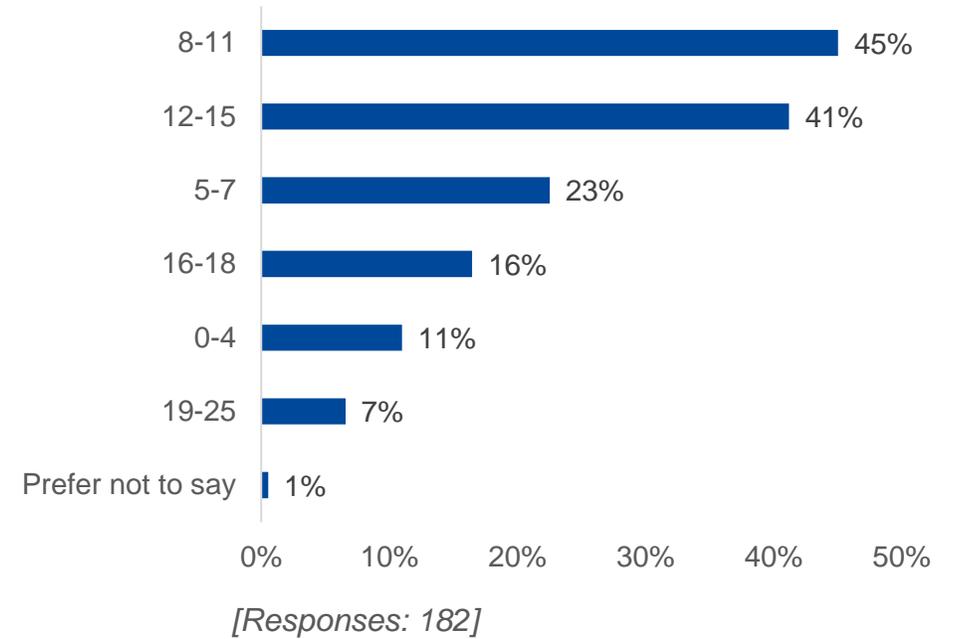
*NB: Respondents could give more than one response to this question.*



## Age of child/children

**45% of respondents had children aged 8-11, followed by 41% with children aged 12-15.**

*NB: Respondents could give more than one response to this question.*



## How many child/children are registered for short breaks?

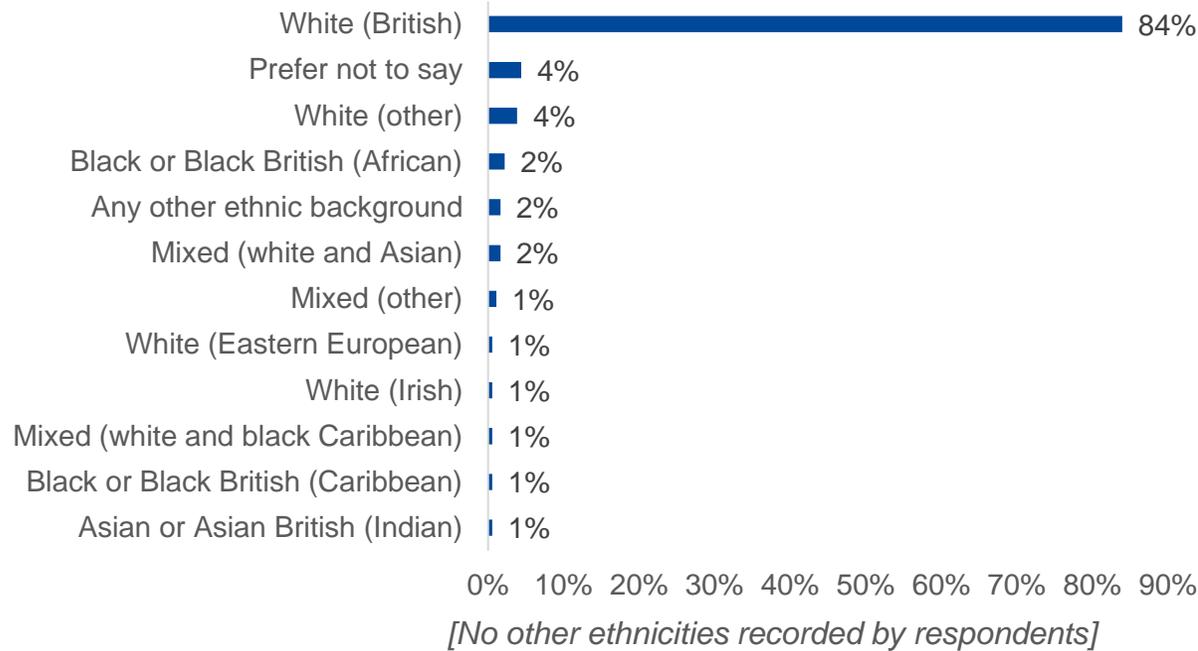
**95% of children in the survey are registered for Short Breaks.**

**4% are not, and 1% preferred not to say.**

# Ethnicity of child/children

**84% of children within the survey were White British.**

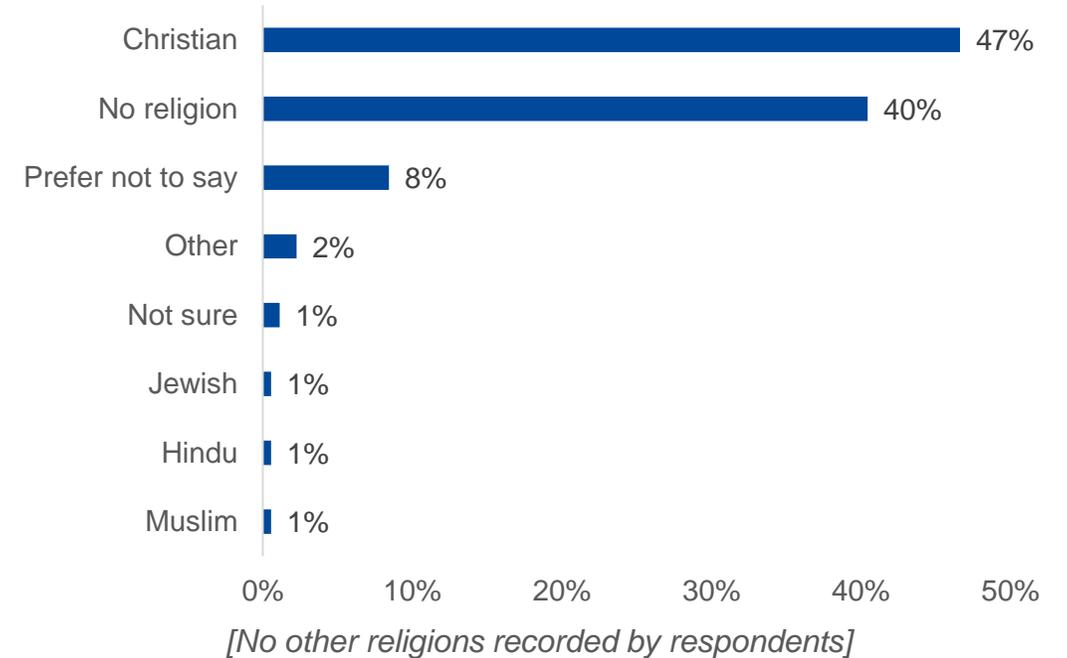
**4% preferred not to say.** [Responses: 181]



# Religion/faith of child/children

**47% of children identify as Christian, while 40% have no religion, and 8% preferred not to say.**

[Responses: 178]



**Easy Read responses: note these figures are a mix of parent carers and children**

**7 respondents within the survey were White British, 1 Asian Bangladeshi and 1 black African**

[Responses: 9]

**3 respondents identified as Christian, 1 Muslim, 3 no religion and 2 preferred not to say.**

[Responses: 7]



# Detailed findings Consultation

# Proposals being consulted on are:

**Proposal One: No change to the current short breaks offer**

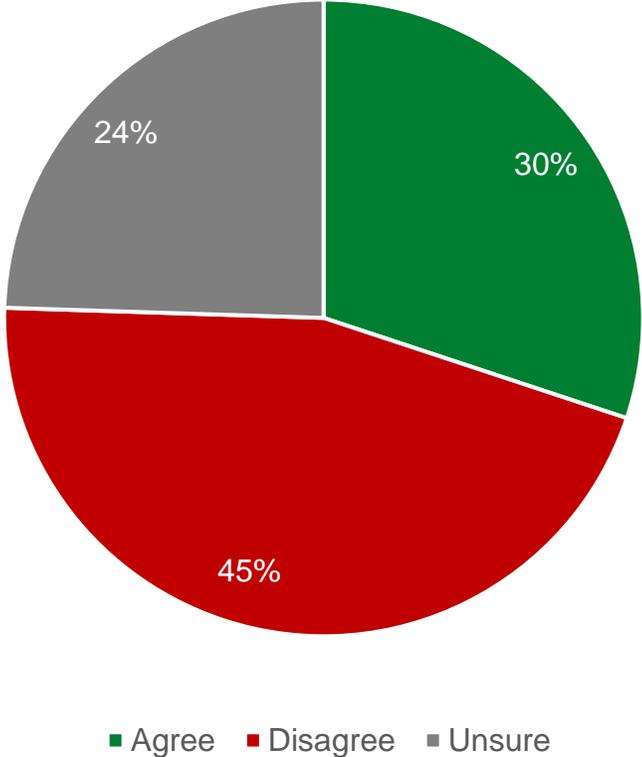
**Proposal Two: Increase the types of venues where clubs and activities are delivered**

**Proposal Three: Improve the geographic location where Clubs and Activities are delivered by commissioning based on quadrants**

**Proposal Four: Commit to working towards a flexible activity allowance over the next 5 years**

# Proposal One: No change to the current short breaks offer

45% disagreed with this proposal, while 30% agreed and 24% were unsure.



[Responses: 196]

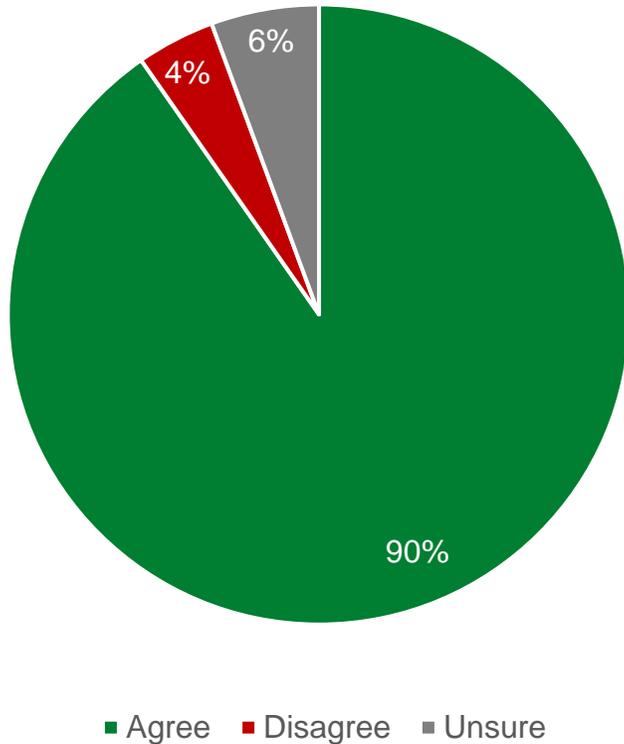
## Easy Read responses

All 9 respondents answered this question

- 1 respondent liked this proposal best
- 4 respondents liked this proposal
- 2 respondents did not like this proposal
- 2 respondents liked this proposal least

## Proposal Two: Increase the types of venues where clubs and activities are delivered

**90% agreed with this proposal, while 4% disagreed and 6% were unsure.**



[Responses: 196]

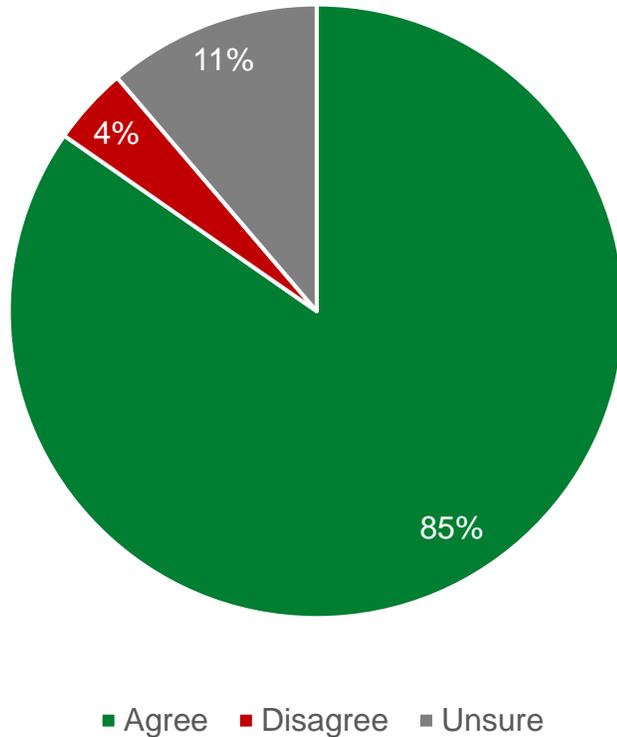
### Easy Read responses

**All 9 respondents answered this question**

- 3** respondents liked this proposal best
- 3** respondents liked this proposal
- 2** respondents did not like this proposal
- 1** respondent liked this proposal least

# Proposal Three: Improve the geographic location where Clubs and Activities are delivered by commissioning based on quadrants

**85% agreed with this proposal, while 4% disagreed and 11% were unsure.**



[Responses: 196]

## Easy Read responses

**All 9 respondents answered this question**

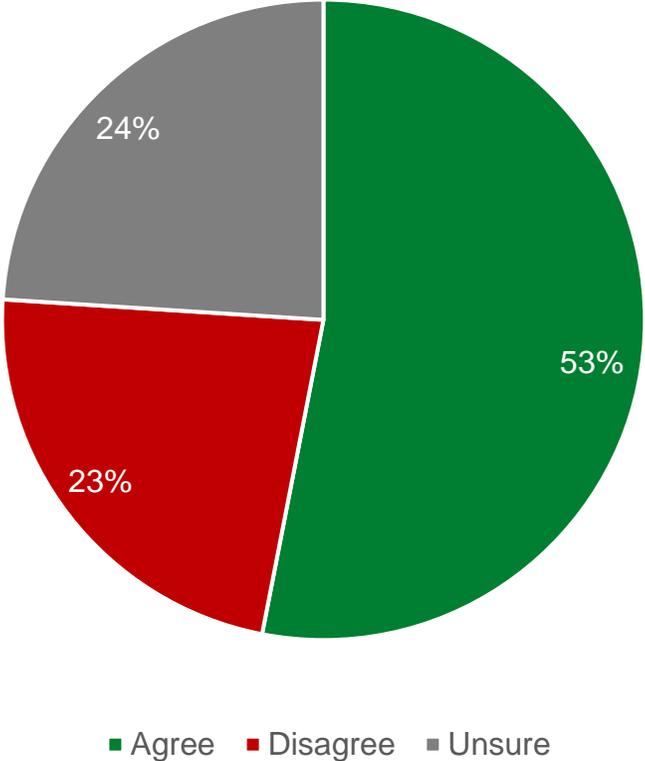
**2** respondents liked this proposal best

**6** respondents liked this proposal

**1** respondent did not like this proposal

# Proposal Four: Commit to working towards a flexible activity allowance over the next 5 years

53% agreed with this proposal, while 23% disagreed and 24% were unsure.



[Responses: 196]

## Easy Read responses

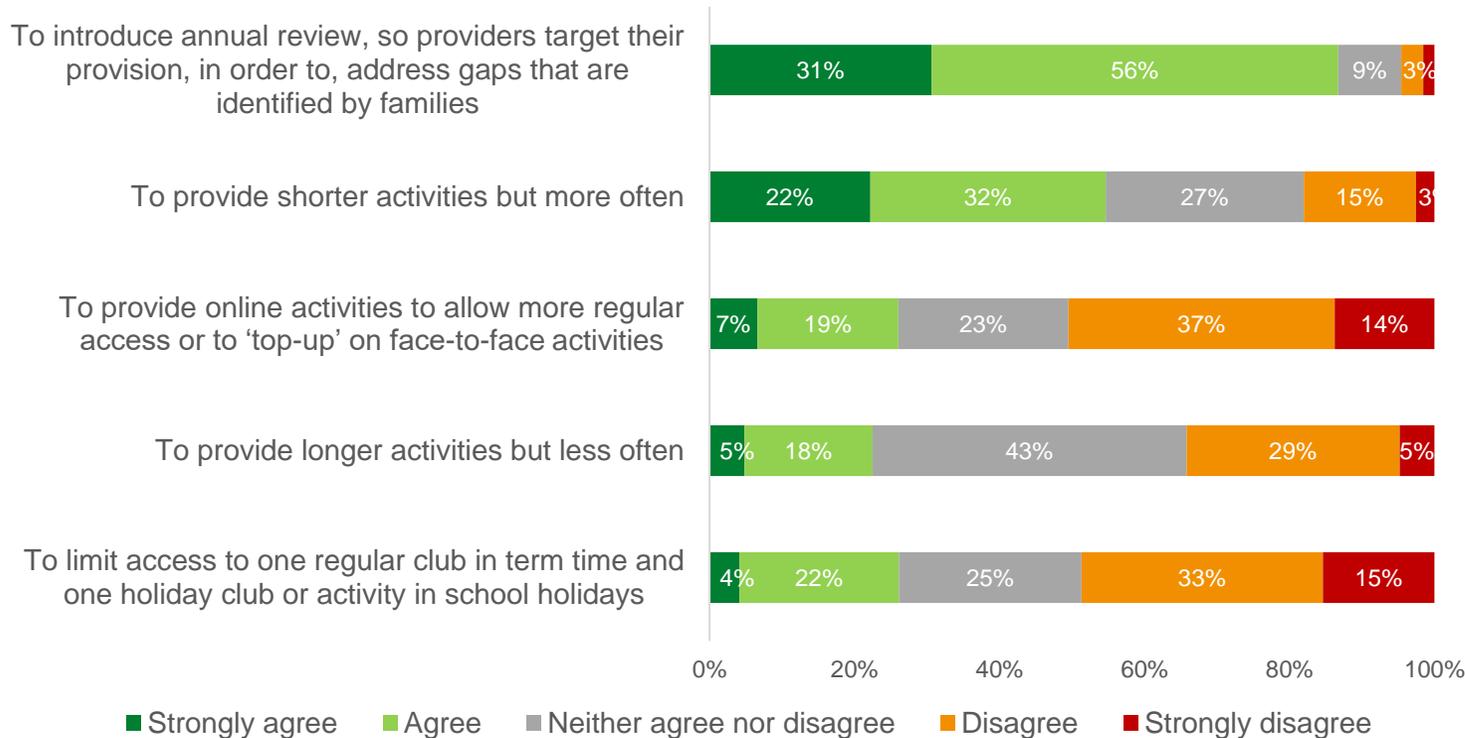
All 9 respondents answered this question

- 2 respondents liked this proposal best
- 1 respondent liked this proposal
- 6 respondents did not like this proposal

**There is increasing demand for Short Breaks Clubs and Activities, and the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy research has identified that some families access more provision than others. We need to strengthen the distribution of limited resources so that everyone who is eligible has a chance to access a Short Breaks Community Clubs and Activity offer.**

*Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following proposals:*

**Agreement with these proposals was mixed. Respondents most strongly supported introducing annual reviews (87% strongly agreed/agreed), followed by providing shorter activities but more often (54% strongly agreed/agreed).**



[Responses: 187-196]

## Easy Read responses

Responses from the easy read survey align with those from the main survey.

8 respondents agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed

3 respondents agreed, 4 neither agreed or disagreed, 1 disagreed, 1 did not answer the question

1 respondent agreed, 2 neither agreed or disagreed, 6 disagreed

1 respondent agreed, 4 neither agreed or disagreed, 4 disagreed

2 respondents neither agreed or disagreed, 7 disagreed

**A regular theme that has been identified through the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy is the need to improve inclusion through mainstream settings such as leisure centres or community clubs for example. Mainstream providers and current Short Breaks Clubs and Activity providers told us that there needed to be better training and awareness for all providers.**

*Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following proposals:*

**Agreement with these proposals was high. Respondents most strongly supported commissioning Short Breaks providers to deliver activities in mainstream settings (84% strongly agreed/agreed), followed by co-producing a SEND Trust Charter with families (82% strongly agreed/agreed).**

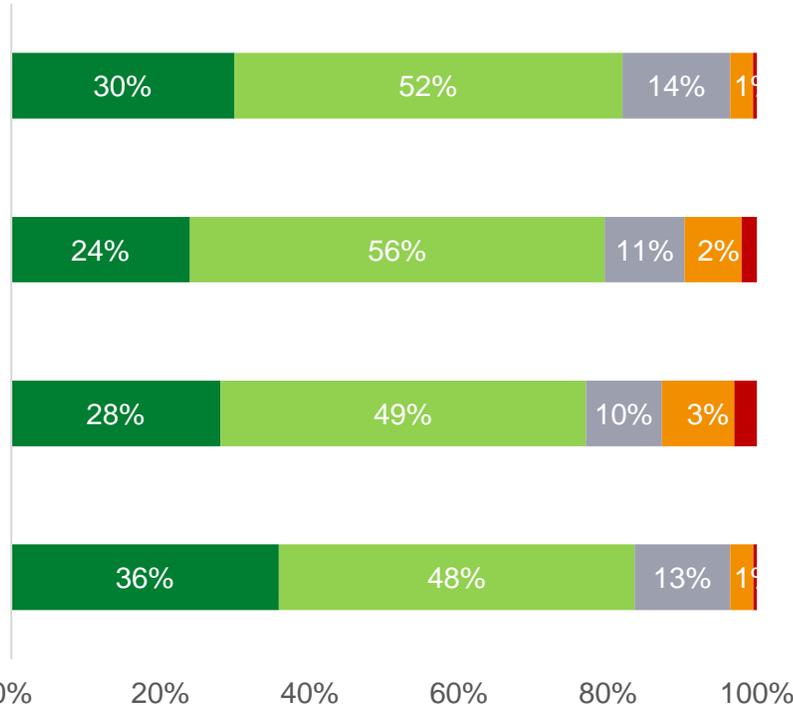
To co-produce with families a SEND Trust Charter for providers to demonstrate their commitment to inclusion and accessibility. This would be open to any provider delivering clubs and activities within the boundary of...

To use a small percentage of the annual Short Breaks Clubs and Activities budget for mainstream providers to improve their equipment and/or facilities to help them become more inclusive

To use a small percentage of the annual Short Breaks Clubs and Activities budget for mainstream providers to undertake training that will help them become more inclusive.

To commission Short Breaks Providers to deliver activities in mainstream settings where appropriate

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



## Easy Read responses

**Responses from the easy read survey align with those from the main survey.**

7 respondents agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed, 1 did not answer the question

5 respondents agreed, 3 neither agreed or disagreed, 1 disagreed

6 respondents agreed, 2 neither agreed or disagreed, 1 disagreed

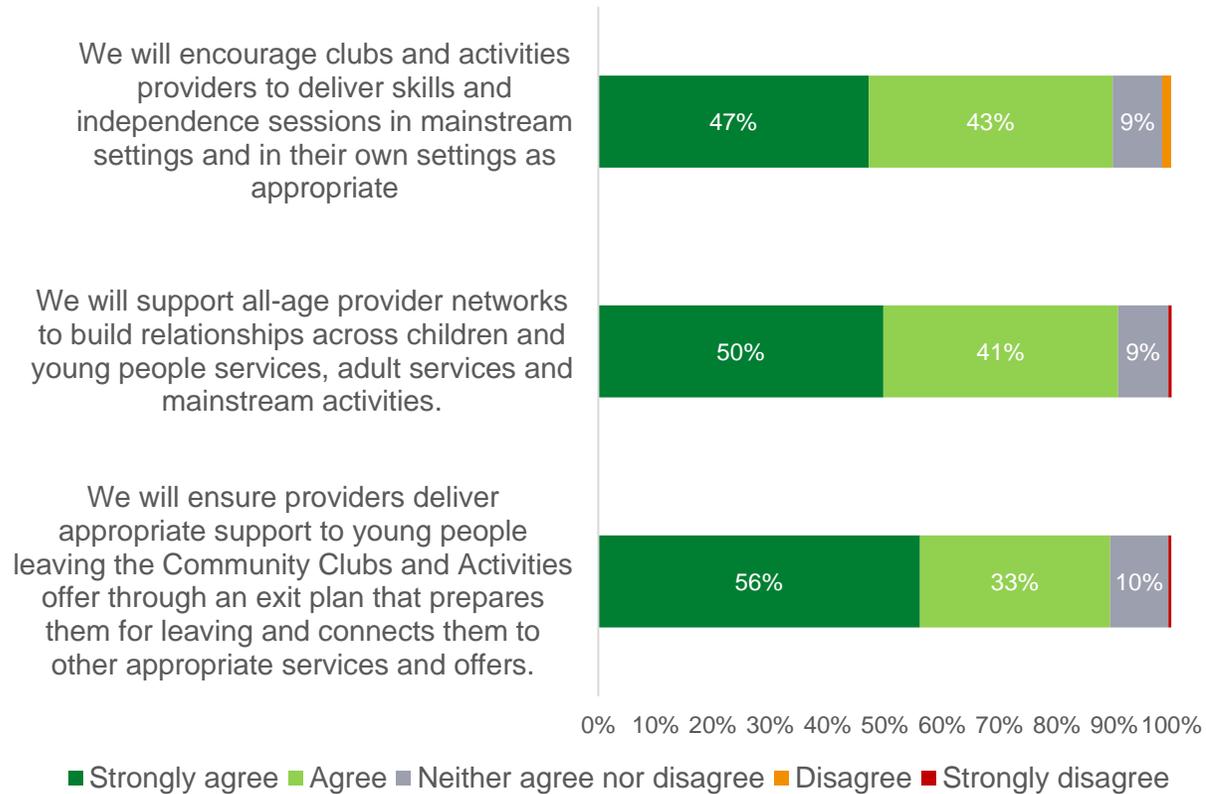
5 respondents agreed, 3 neither agreed or disagreed, 1 disagreed

[Responses: 194-196]

## Previous consultation showed that we need to better plan transitions when young people turn 19+.

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following proposals:

**Agreement with these proposals was high, ranging from 89% agreement for ensuring providers deliver appropriate support to young people leaving the offer, to 91% agreement with supporting all-age provider networks to build relationships across services.**



[Responses: 193-196]

## Easy Read responses

Responses from the easy read survey align with those from the main survey.

8 respondents agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed

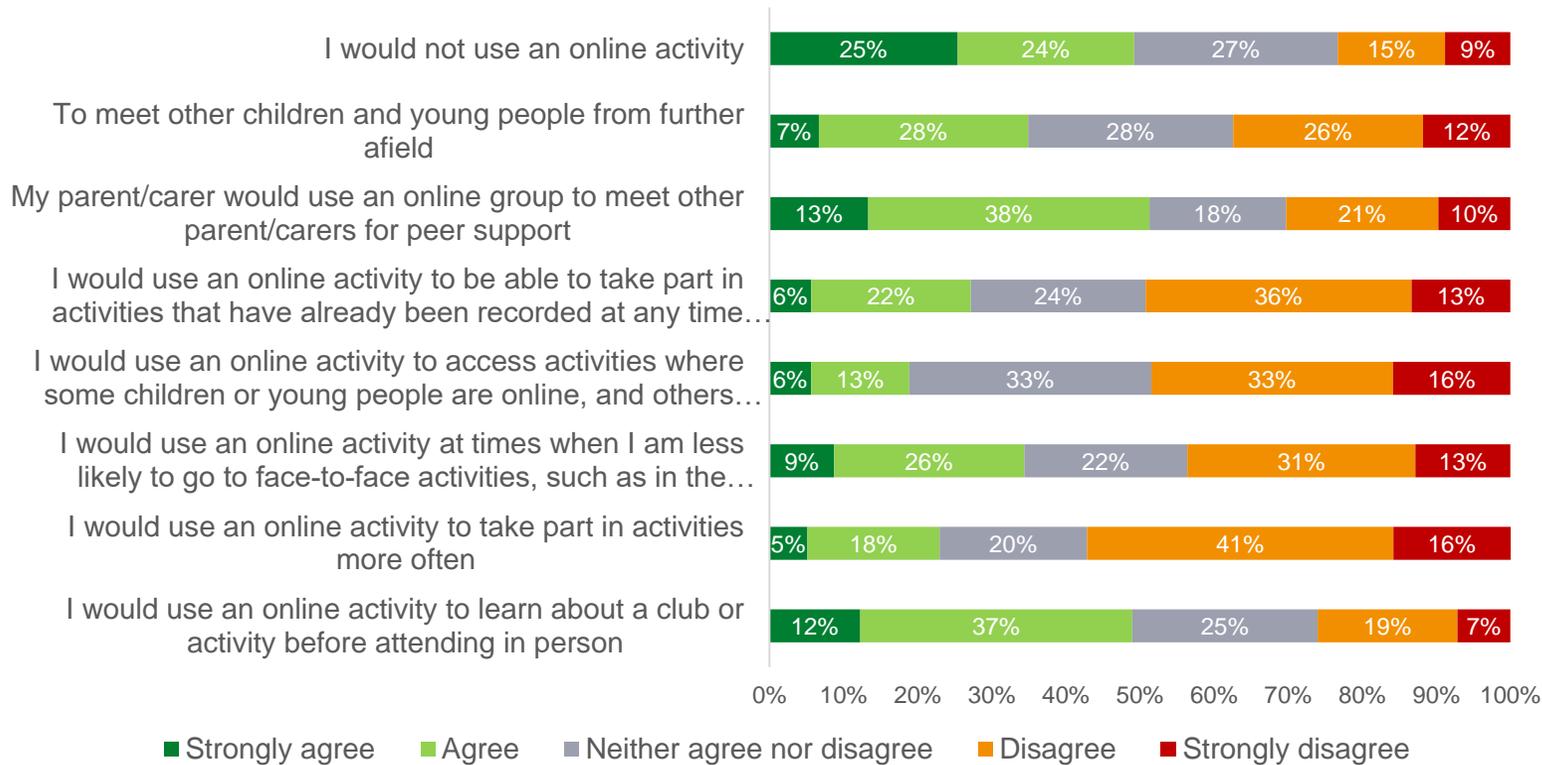
8 respondents agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed

8 respondents agreed, 1 neither agreed or disagreed

**We recognise how valuable the covid-19 online offer was and are fully committed to developing it.  
We do not intend to replace face to face activity but will develop online offers that enhance core provision.**

*Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following proposals:*

**Agreement with these proposals was mixed, with just under half saying that they would not use an online activity (49% strongly agreed/agreed). However, 51% strongly agreed/agreed that their parent/carers would use an online group to meet others for peer support.**



[Responses: 193-196]

### Easy Read responses

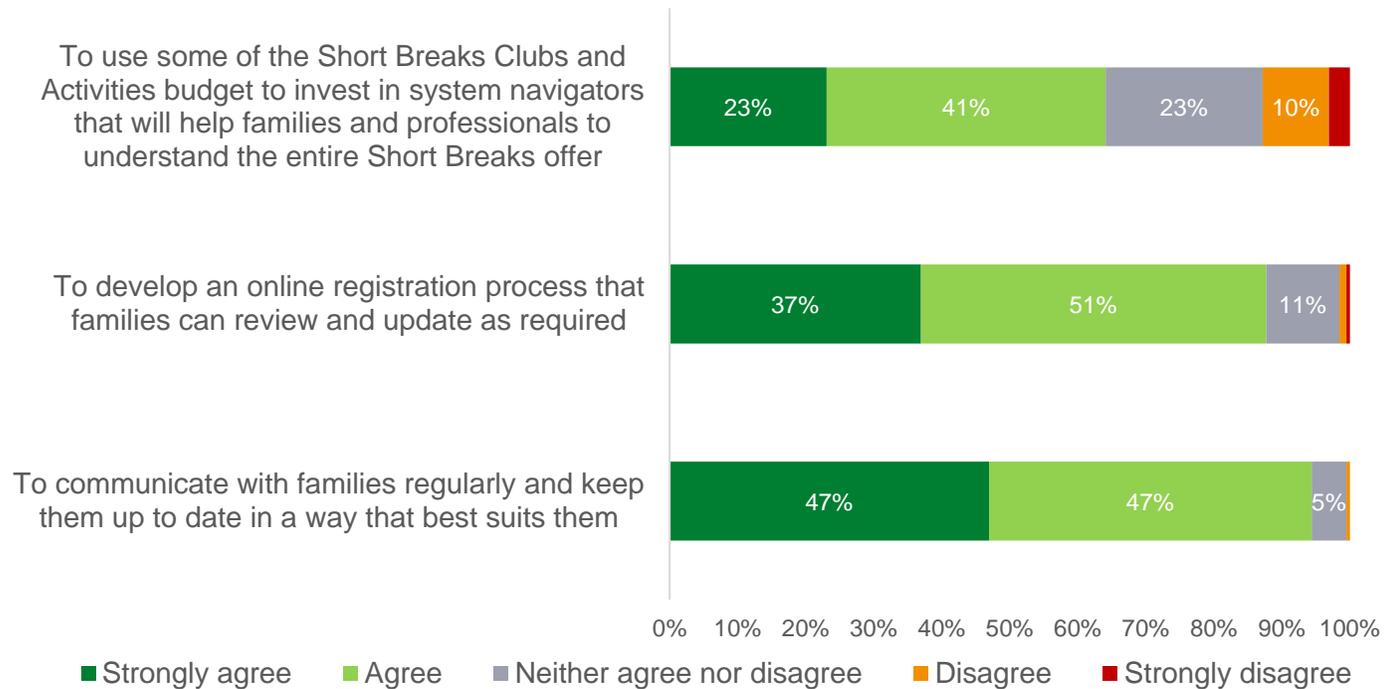
**While responses to these proposals were low, they were in line with the main survey**

- 4 respondents would not use online, 5 did not answer
- 1 respondent agreed, 8 did not answer
- 5 respondents agreed, 4 did not answer
- 2 respondents agreed, 7 did not answer
- No respondents answered this question
- 2 respondents agreed, 7 did not answer
- 3 respondents agreed, 6 did not answer
- 4 respondents agreed, 5 did not answer

**Families have told us that we need to provide the right advice and information at the time in the right format and enable better navigation of the system.**

*Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following proposals:*

**Respondents most strongly supported communicating with families regularly (94% strongly agreed/agreed), followed by develop an online registration process (88% strongly agreed/agreed). Support for using budget to invest in system navigators was more mixed, with 64% strongly agree/agreeing, 23% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 13% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.**



[Responses: 195-196]

## Easy Read responses

Responses from the easy read survey align with those from the main survey.

9 respondents agreed

6 respondents agreed, 3 neither agreed or disagreed

9 respondents agreed

# Any other comments?

Comments by theme	Number of comments	%
The current offer needs to change and does not work for some families and there needs to be a greater choice of clubs and activities which can offer a flexible approach and build independence for children and young people.	39	16.05%
Activities need to be suitable / able to cope with children and young peoples individual disability.	30	12.35%
Respondents want to be able to access clubs and activities in their local area.	30	12.35%
Integration post 19 is important, need more appropriate opportunities /activities for teenagers including building life time and independence skills	22	9.05%
The access to all provision within the offer including caravans/beach huts needs to be fairer	20	8.23%
The current offer is meeting the needs for some families and they value f2f clubs and activities	14	5.76%
There is a need for more holistic for support for the families	13	5.35%
Families need better access to information, with signposting posting to the offer, the website and booking process made simpler.	11	4.53%
More integration and opportunities with mainstream is needed.	11	4.53%
Some children and young people would not want/ be unable to access online activities/sessions.	8	3.29%
Families have responded to the consultation with concern that budgets will be reduced in the context of growing demand.	8	3.29%
Transport is an issue for those who don't drive and/ or trying to access clubs out of their local area.	7	2.88%
Families value the respite that face to face clubs and activities gives them and some have concerns that this may not happen using online activities.	6	2.47%
There is a need for more clubs and activities after school and in the school holidays.	6	2.47%
There needs to be greater disability training for providers, including mainstream providers.	6	2.47%
Mainstream clubs and activities are not suitable for some children and young people.	5	2.06%
There are concerns over the cost of clubs, activities and of mainstream provision.	4	1.65%
Good environment and quality accessible premises are important to families.	3	1.23%

We received a number of comments that have been themed, coded and quantified and are below <1% so have not been included in the table.

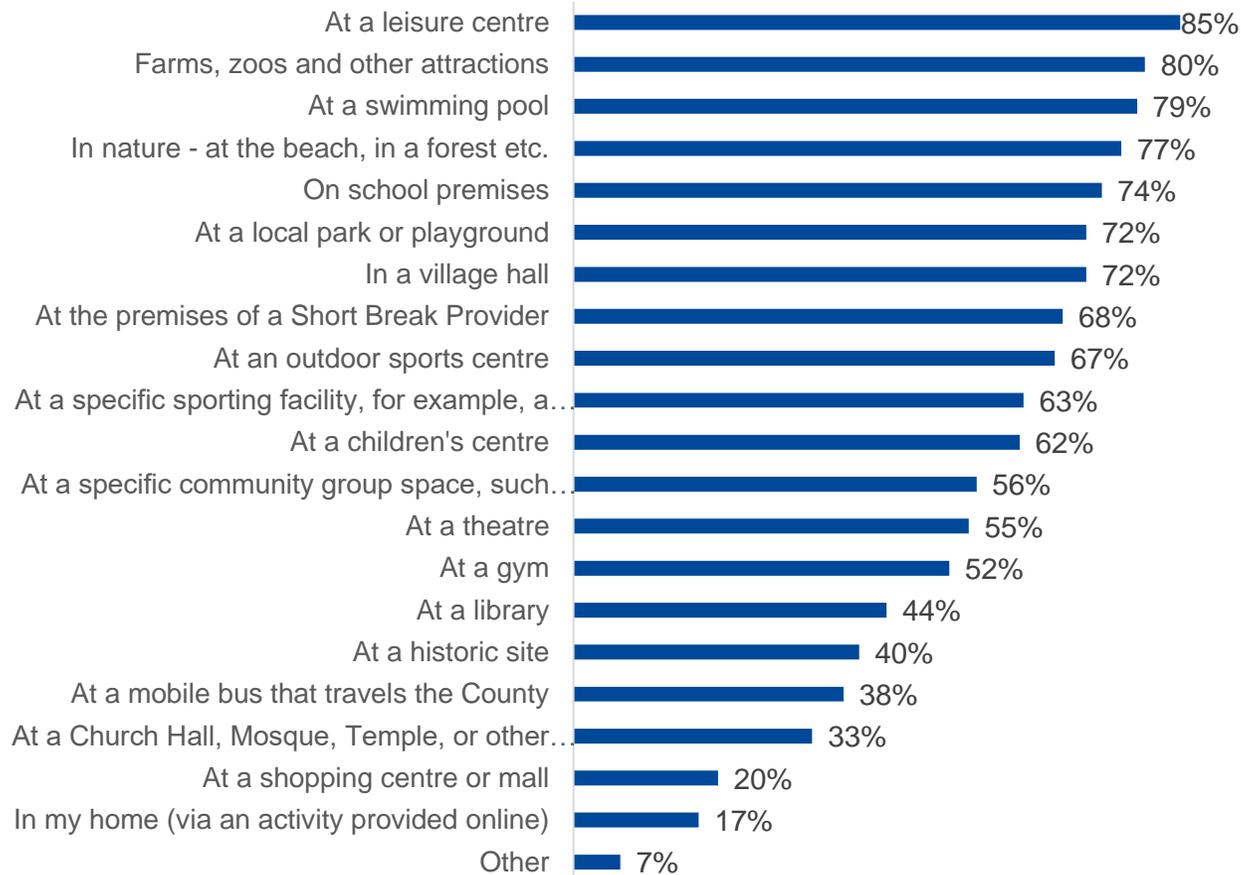
## Easy Read comments

We received a total of **8** comments from **2** respondents who completed the easy read survey. The responses all of which reflected the themes from the main consultation.

[Responses: 69]

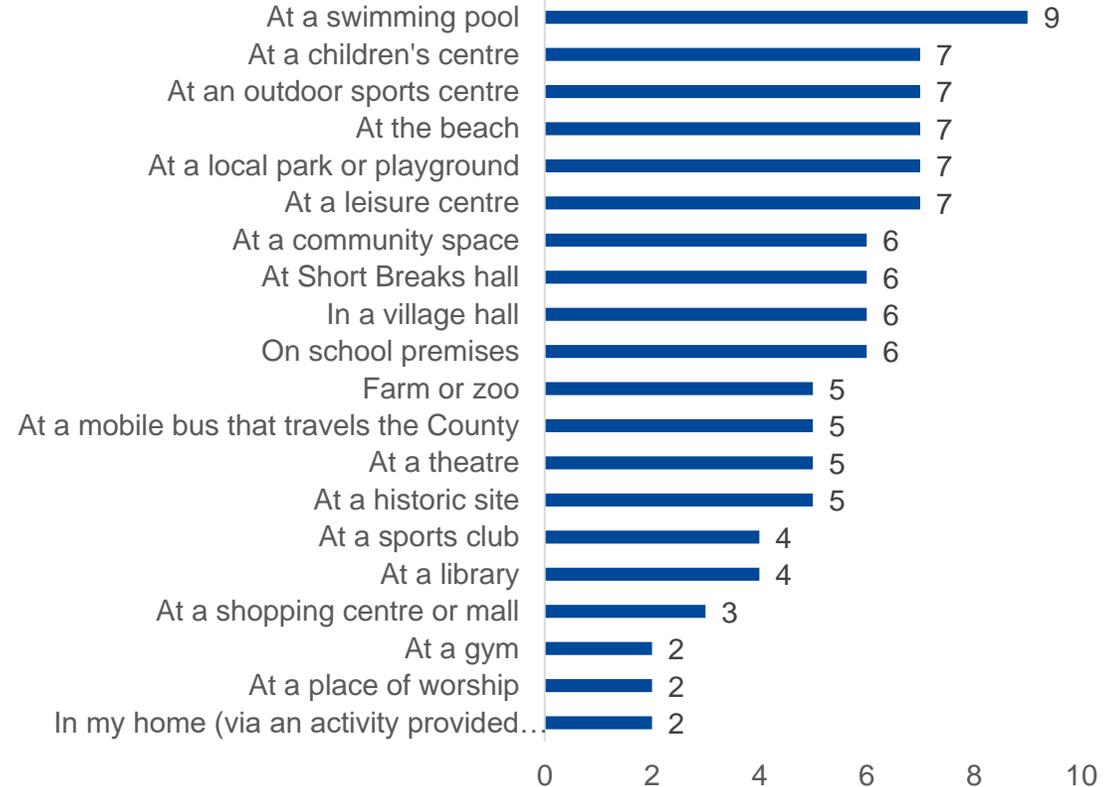
# Where would families like to take part in clubs and activities?

**Respondents would most like to take part in clubs and activities at leisure centres (85%) followed by farms, zoos and other attractions (80%). Swimming pools (79%), in nature (77%) and schools (74%) were also popular.**



[Responses: 183] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.

## Easy Read response (9 respondents)

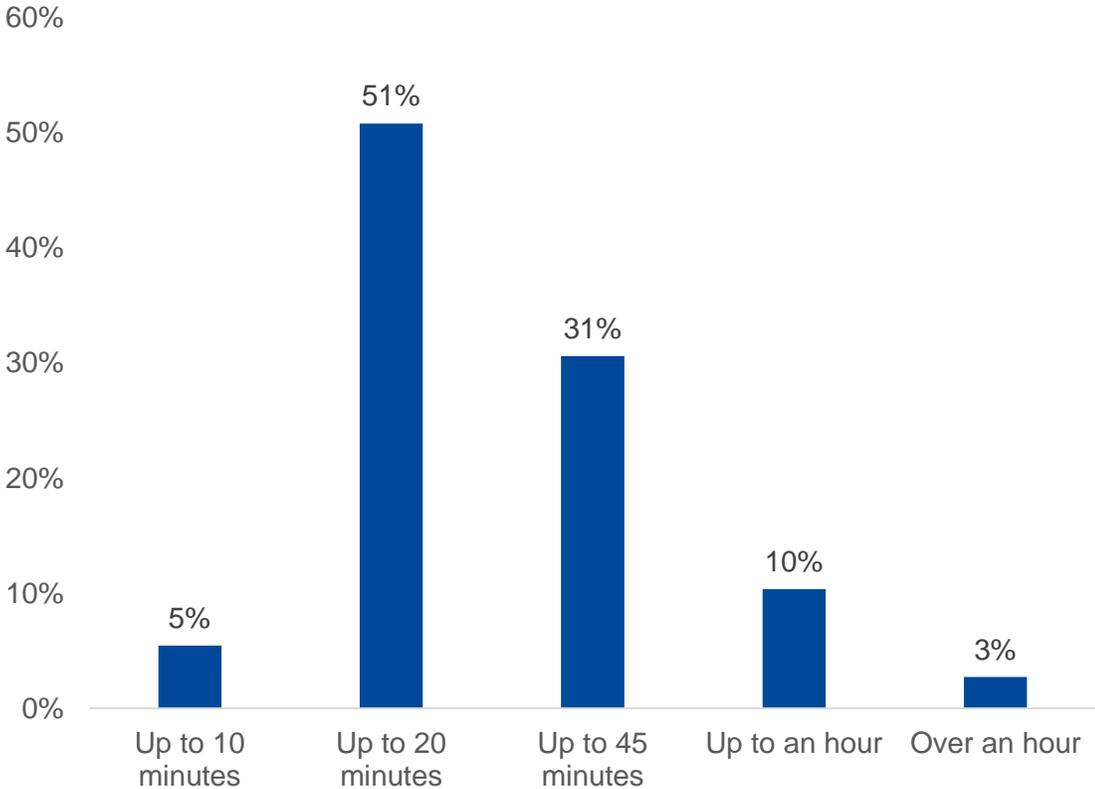


## Comments under 'other' related to the following:

- Appropriate environment is important, i.e. for sensory
- Make more use of outdoor adventure playgrounds
- Cinemas could be used

# How far are families prepared to travel to clubs and activities?

Up to 20 minutes was the most popular distance respondents are prepared to travel (51%), followed by up to 45 minutes (31%). Fewer than 3% are prepared to travel over an hour.



[Responses: 183]

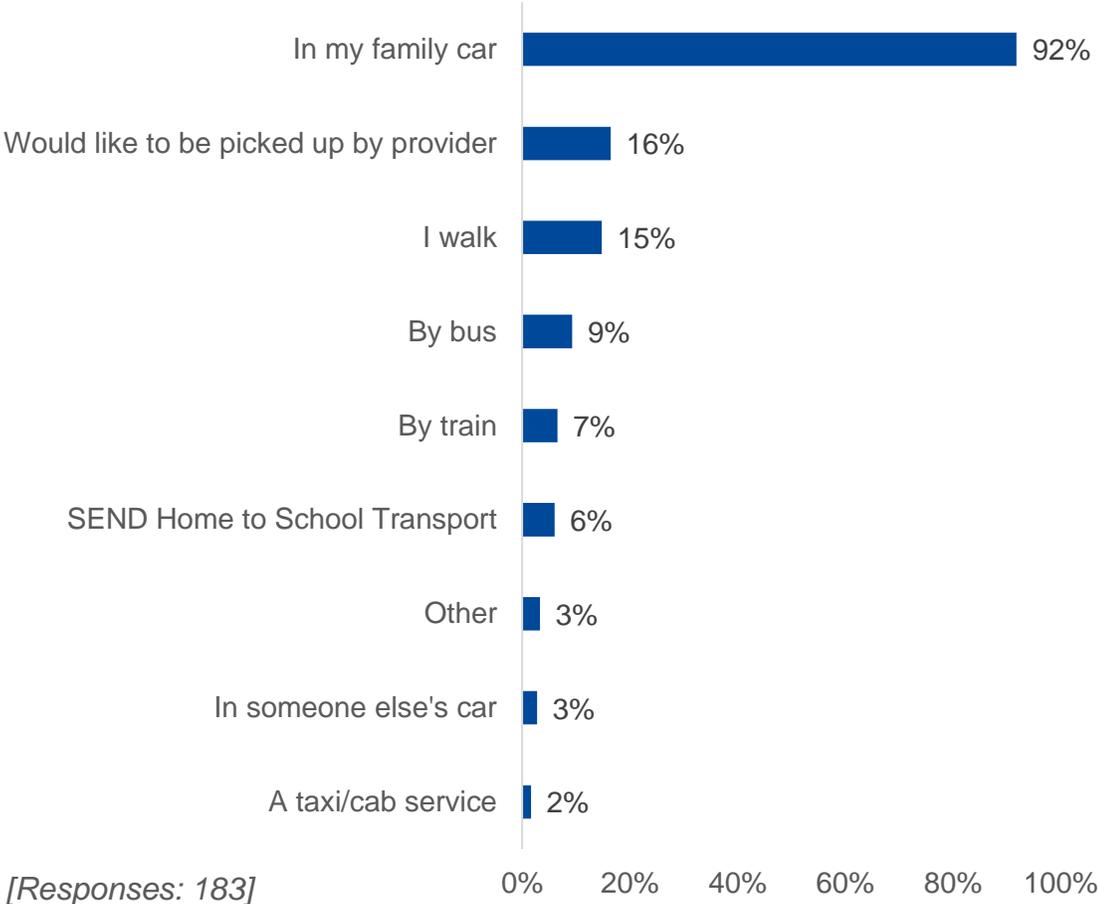
## Easy Read responses

- Up to 10 minutes - 1
- Up to 20 minutes - 6
- Up to 45 minutes - 1
- Up to an hour - 1

[Responses: 9]

# How would families travel to a short breaks club or activity?

**92% said they would travel by car. 16% would like to be picked up by the activity provider, and 15% would walk.**



*NB: respondents could select more than one answer.*

## Easy Read responses

- In my family car - **5**
- I walk - **5**
- By bus - **4**
- Would like to be picked up by the provider - **4**
- By train - **3**
- By taxi/cab service - **1**
- Send home to school transport - **1**

*[Responses: 9] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.*

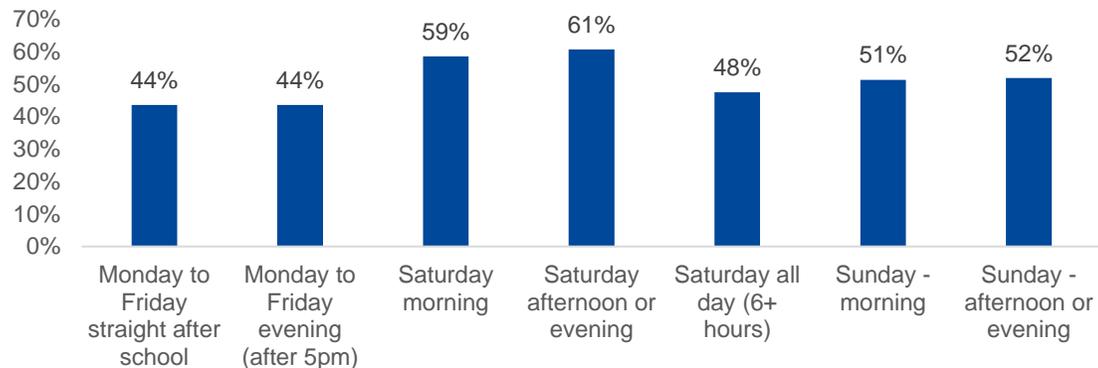
## Comments under 'other' related to the following:

- Some use bikes and scooters to travel to clubs

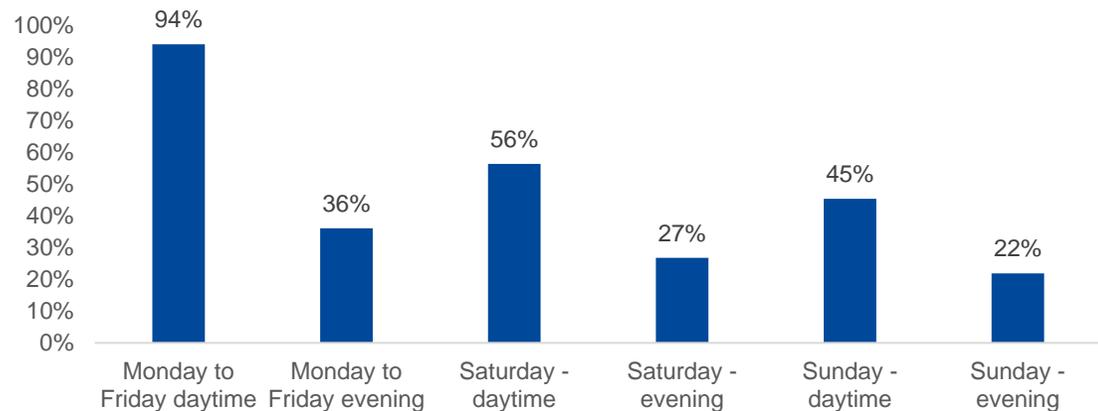
# What times would families prefer to take part in Clubs and Activities?

## IN-PERSON:

**Term-time:** During term-time, the most popular time families would prefer to take part in clubs/activities was Saturday afternoon/evening (61%), followed by Saturday mornings (59%).



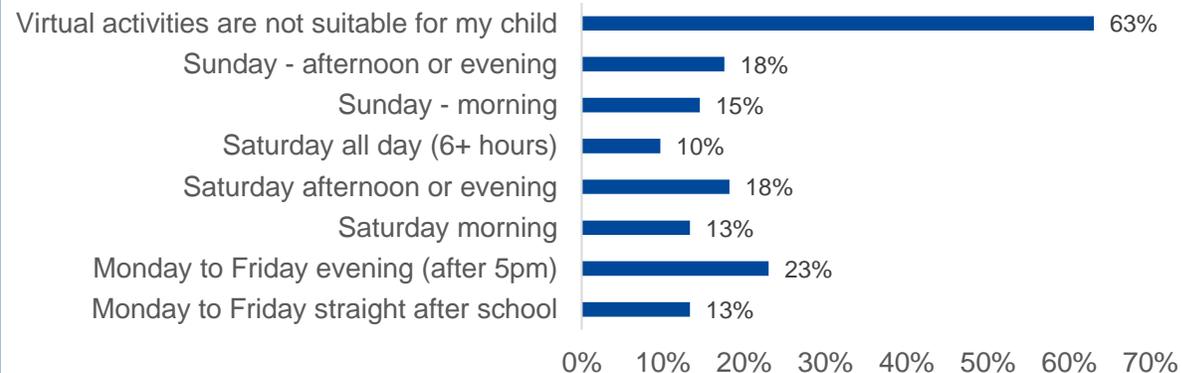
**Holidays:** During school holidays, the vast majority of families would prefer to take part in clubs/activities Monday-Friday daytimes (94%), followed by Saturday daytime (56%).



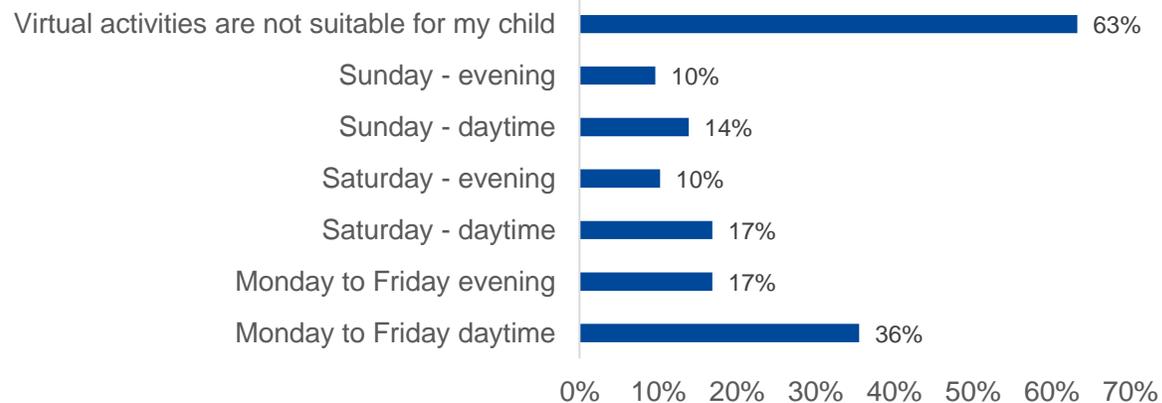
[Responses: 183] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.

## VIRTUALLY:

**Term-time:** 63% said virtual activities are not suitable for their child. For others, the most popular times were Monday-Friday evening (23%) and Saturday/Sunday afternoons/evenings (18%).



**Holidays:** 63% again said virtual activities are not suitable for their child. For others, the most popular times during holidays were Monday-Friday daytime (36%).



[Responses: 165] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.

# What times and how would you prefer to take part in clubs and activities?

## Easy Read data by numbers of respondents to each section of the question

### During term time

	Mon-Fri after school	Mon-Fri Evening	Sat AM	Sat PM & Evening	Sat all day	Sun AM	Sun PM & Eve
<b>In person</b>	3	2	6	5	6	6	6
<b>Online</b>	1	1	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Not answered</b>	5	6	3	3	3	3	2

Responses indicate that there is a very strong preference for **“in person”** clubs and activities both during term time and during the schools holidays. Both term time and school holidays families want in person clubs and activities.

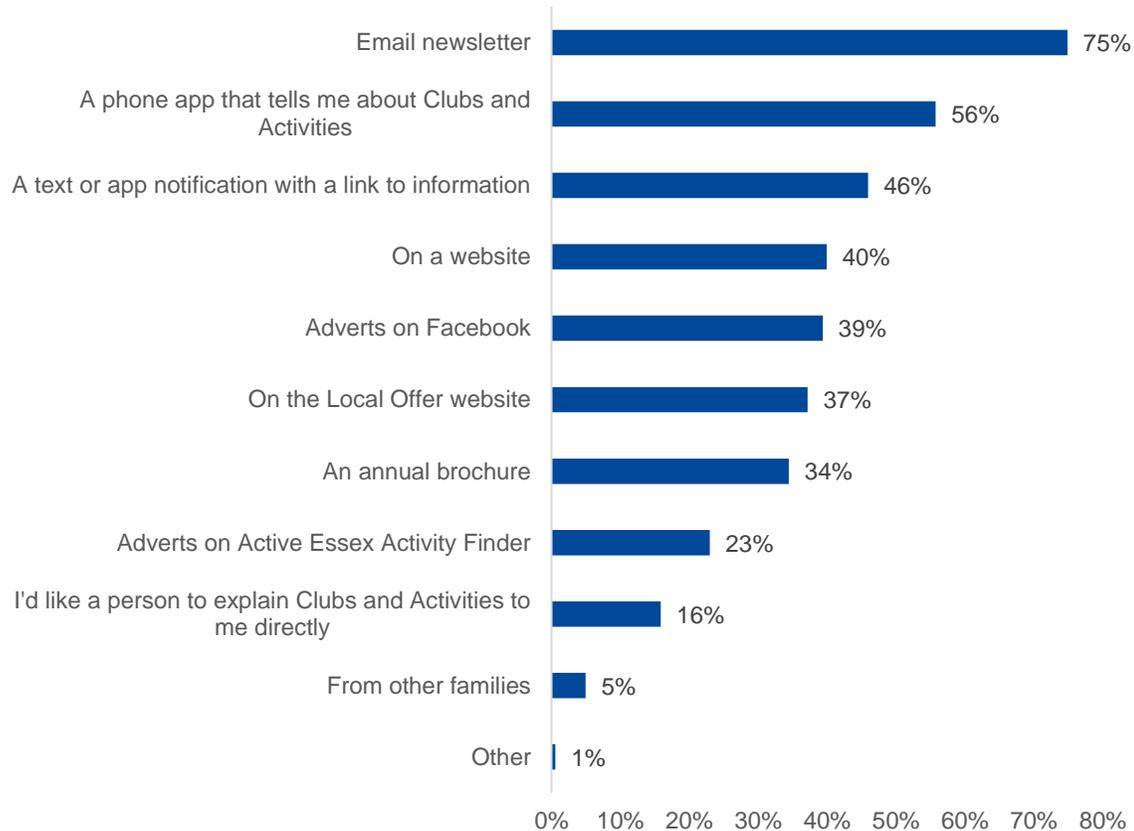
### During school holidays

	Mon-Fri Daytime	Mon-Fri Evening	Sat Daytime	Sat Evening	Sun all day	Sun evening
<b>In person</b>	9	4	6	5	6	4
<b>Online</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Not answered</b>	0	5	3	4	3	4

[Responses between 3 and 9]

# How would families like us to communicate with them about clubs and activities that are available?

Respondents would most like to receive communication via email newsletter (75%), followed by a phone app (56%) and text/app notification (46%).



[Responses: 183] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.

## Easy Read responses

Text message - 9

Facebook - 7

An app - 6

From clubs themselves - 5

On a website - 5

Annual brochure - 4

Newsletter - 4

Active Essex Activity Finder - 2

From other families - 2

[Responses: 9] NB: respondents could select more than one answer.

# Do you have any other views about the commissioning of short break and activities?

We received **35** responses from the main consultation survey and **2** responses from the easy read version and the findings from both reflect the insights and themes captured earlier (see slide 25).

Comments by theme	Number of comments
There needs to be a greater choice of clubs and activities which can offer a flexible approach and build independence for all CYP	11
Need better access to information, with signposting to the offer, website and booking process made simpler	10
Want to be able to access clubs and activities in local area	8
Concern that budgets will be reduced in the context of growing demand	3
Good environment and quality accessible premises are important	3
Mainstream clubs and activities not suitable for some CYP	3
The current offer is working and meeting families' needs	3
Integration post-19 is important, as is more appropriate opportunities for teenagers including building life and independence skills	2
Safety/safeguarding is important and influences choice of club and activity	2
Transport is an issue for those who don't drive and/or trying to access clubs out of their local area	2
Activities need to be /able to cope with CYP's individual disability/more disability training needed for providers, including mainstream	2
Would not access/unable to access online sessions	2
Need for peer and parental support/advocates and more holistic support for families	2
Lack of childcare	1
Concern over the cost of clubs, activities and of mainstream provision	1
There is a need for more clubs and activities after school and in the school holidays	1

***“I don’t think rationing short breaks is appropriate. Some children find short breaks activities more fun than others. I think improving the variety of opportunities and ensuring better training of providers in mainstream will help....ensure access and opportunities for all and have ongoing benefit ”***

***“There does not appear to be an equitable service across the county, and the current offer does not meet the needs of the families and CYP. For some there is nothing in their local area / and or some clubs/activities are just not suitable.”***

*[Quotes consultation respondents]*

# Appendices

## Easy Read survey



## Main survey



Link to the Short Breaks Strategy:

<https://shortbreaks.essex.gov.uk/media/49656/essex-short-breaks-commissioning-strategy-2021-to-2026.pdf>

Link to the research report:

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/findings-from-the-essex-short-breaks-research/>

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