

Family Voice Somerset **Voices on Getset services, October 2018**

Family Voice Somerset is an independent formed organisation, with no commissioning to meet targets or agreements. This allows our work to be truly independent.

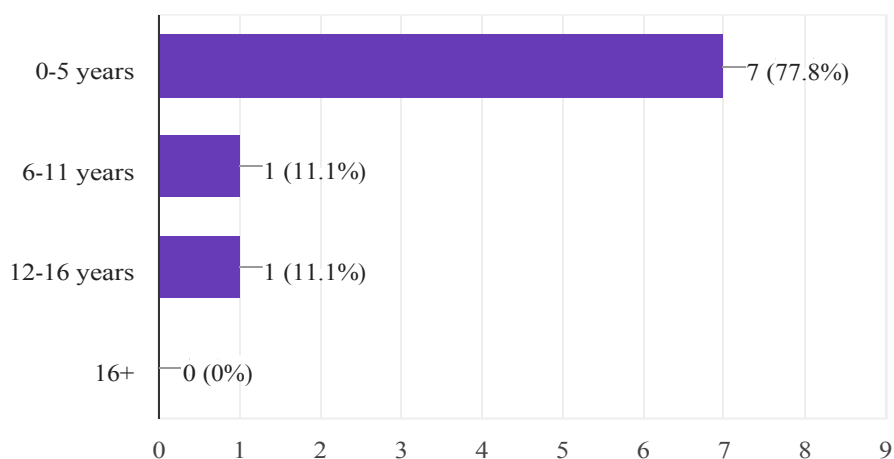
Following the announcements of Somerset County Council cuts, we quickly formed a project called Stop Somerset Cuts, to inform and enable Somerset residents to submit questions through the democracy pathway. We have realised that many voices may not be getting through, so we have provided an option for Somerset residents to provide a snap shot of their experiences accessing Getset services, with an option to give a more detailed story. We shared this form only via social media, open for 72 hours over the weekend. This does disadvantage families who are not able to access the internet, or social media, or are full time carers.

The voices collected are below.

The title of the voices form: Your experience accessing Getset
9 responses

1) What age is your child who needs support?

9 responses

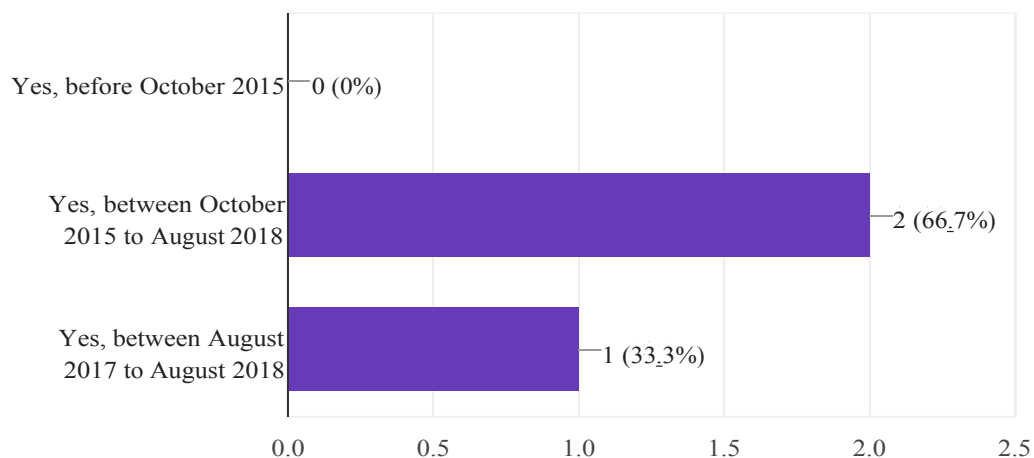


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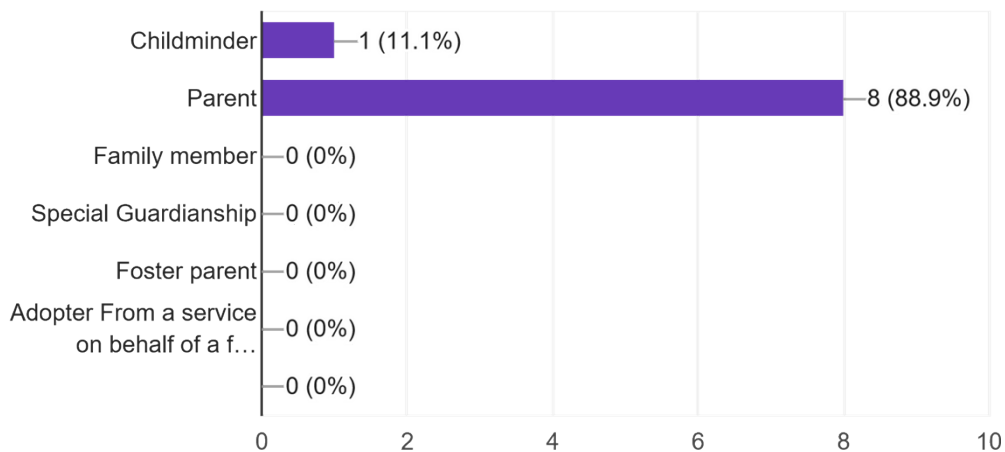
2) Have you been refused a referral or support from Getset?

3 responses



3) About you?

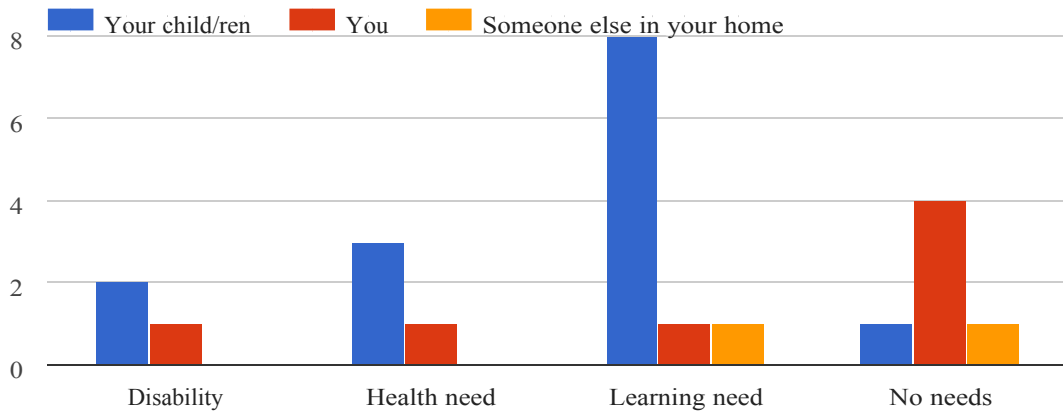
9 responses



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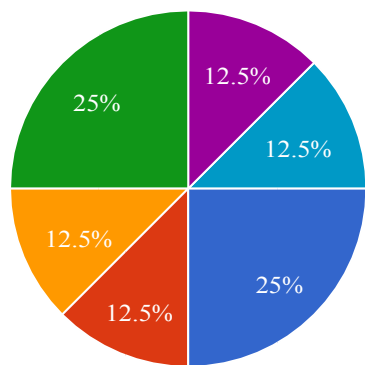
4) Please tick all that apply



5) Have you been referred for an Early Help Assessment?

8

responses



- No
- Yes
- through Getset
- Yes
- through school
- Yes
- through health

visitor

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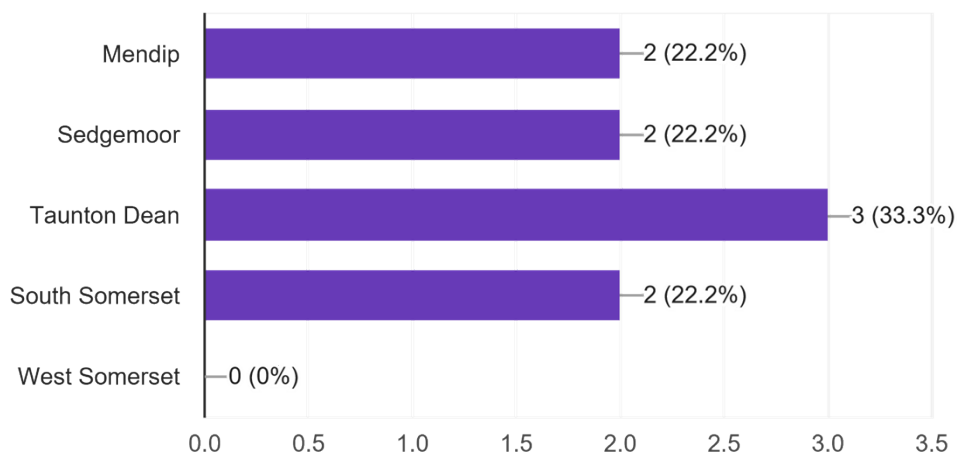
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Nursery

Nursery

6) Which Getset centres do you access?

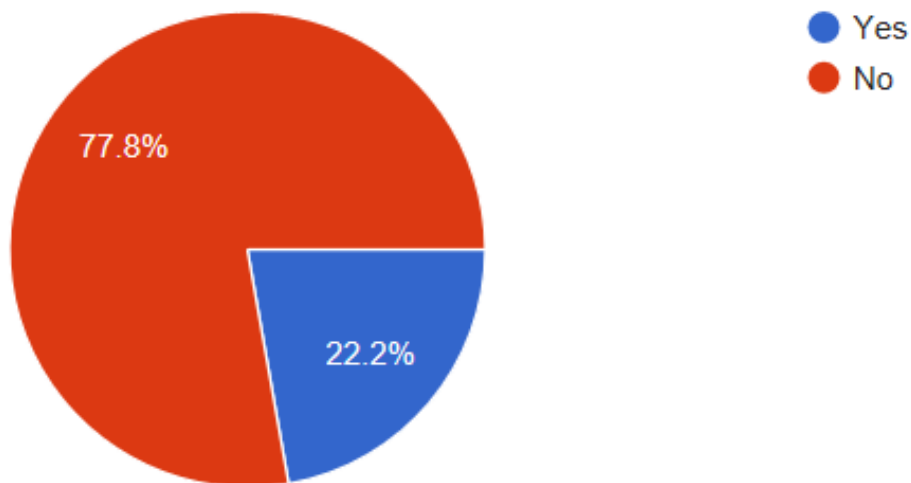
9 responses



7) Has your Children's centre closed?

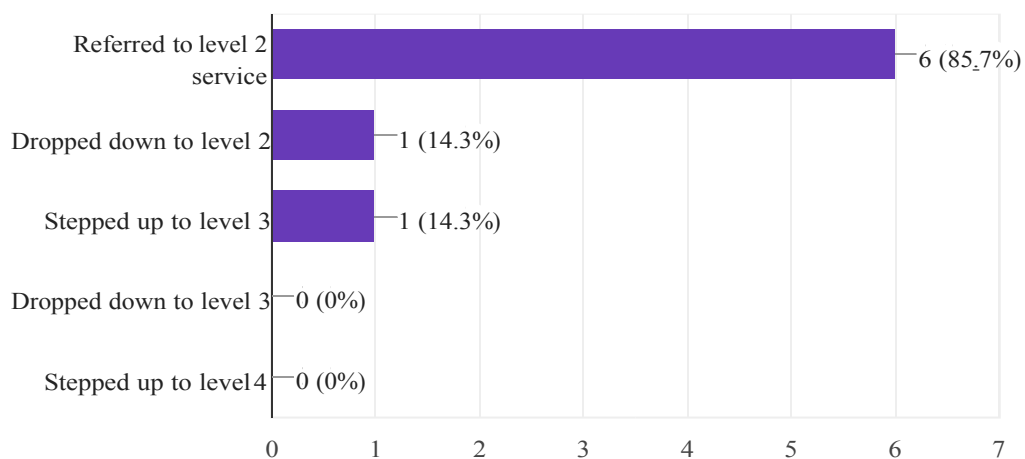
9 responses

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8) Between August 2017 to September, have you been?

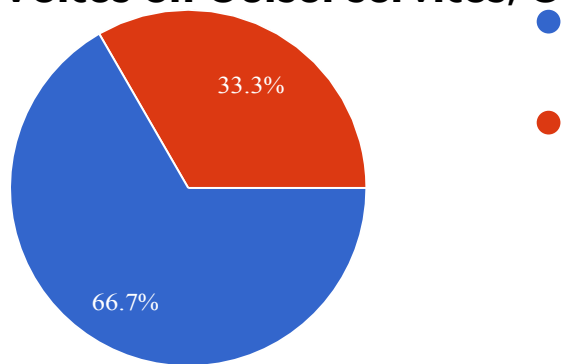
7 responses



9) Between August 2017 to August 2018, have you been?

6 responses

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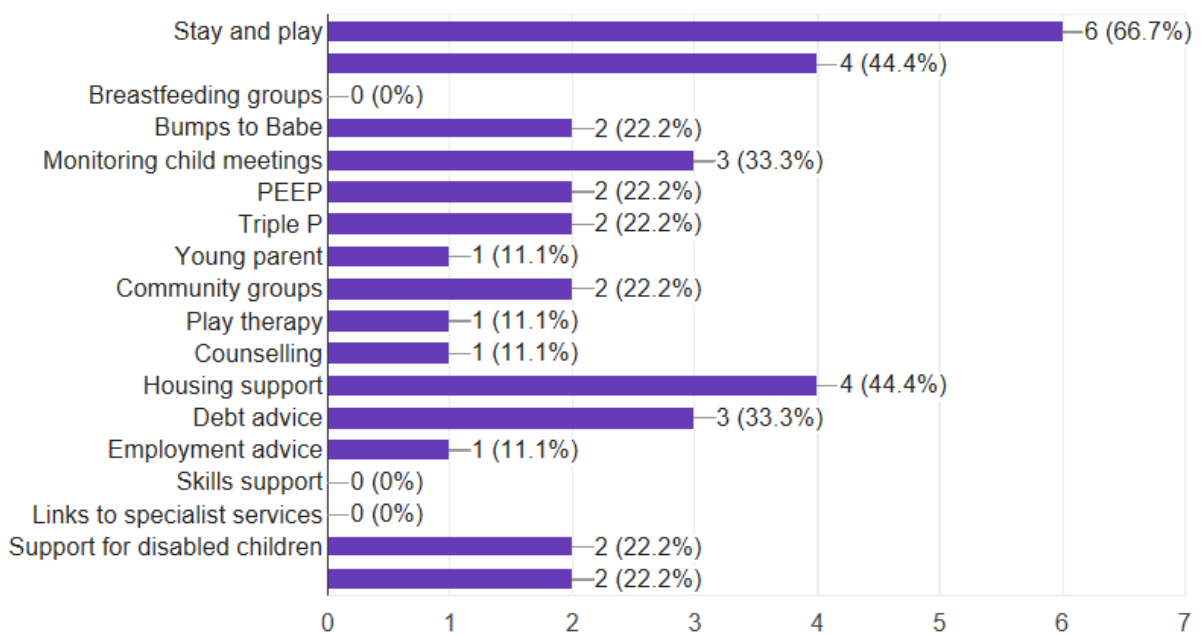


Discharged, happy that you have had all the support needed

Discharged, felt you are left without support

10) What support do you access?

9 responses



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11) What help do you need now?

5 responses

General support with my autistic child(ren)

Specialists involvement but support of get set to get it

Learning needs

Parenting tips through stay and playgroup

Support with child as he gets older

12) What helped the most?

5 responses

Socialization,
sensory play, somewhere to compare behaviour with other parents
and meet other parents of SEN kids.

Preparation and time and meetings to support

Nothing

One to one

Being able to go to groups and speak to family support workers

We offered the option for families to submit their story

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Your Story

1st response

I have used the universal playgroups since my oldest child (now 6) was born. I am a traveller and was living out on the road in a very isolating situation for the early years of his life. My child did not always have the opportunity to play outdoors safely or meet other children so in those days when there were groups every day this gave us much needed support and routine. As he got older it became apparent my son has ASD and through the groups I have met other parents of autistic children who can act as a support system. Now my daughter attends the one playgroup a week. I think I am beginning to see signs of ASD in her and the stay and play group is my best chance to observe her with other children and also for sensory play and messy play that you can't do at home. We were never referred but the children's centre and GETSET has been a constant in our lives and without it we will lose much of our community of parents as there will be no indoor space where we can meet with the children and no first point of contact when we have a problem.

2nd Response

Been a tough ride

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We also had people contact us to have their voices heard from other sources of communication.

Family 1

Somerset residents are expressing dismay and concern around proposed cuts to Getset Level 2 Services. One Getset Client from Somerset, who has asked to remain anonymous, says of the Service, "I'm sure I wouldn't be here today to talk to you now, if it wasn't for my Getset worker."

I had involvement from Level 2 Getset Services after the birth of my second child as I was feeling down and struggling to adapt to the pressures of having two children. She quickly built a rapport with me and I found she was somebody who I could trust. I was able to disclose to her that I was in an abusive relationship and she helped me find the courage and the confidence to leave.

I had been worn down from years of emotional abuse and she helped me to believe in myself. Things were really hard initially, having to separate our finances, and find somewhere else to live but she helped me every step of the way. She built me up myself and gave me the courage to try things I'd never done before, like building Ikea furniture or budgeting and paying bills.

The hardest thing about leaving my relationship was having nobody to talk to, but she was there to give emotional support every step of the way. She even brought food round at Christmas when we were struggling with our benefits. I worry that families like mine would fall through the cracks without a Level 2 service as we didn't meet any of the thresholds of a troubled family.

When they stepped me down from the Level 2 service, I ended up with a re-referral at Level 3. It's really not the same kind of service, they don't have time to give the same level of support, they provide you with handouts or signposting to other services. The things we set out at the beginning haven't really happened, I'm still

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waiting to go on courses I signed up for nearly a year ago, and when I asked for emotional support they told me to ring The Samaritans.

They have referred me on to Barnardos for more intensive support of the kind I used to get from my Level 2 worker. I don't know when I'll get it, there are only four Barnardos workers in the whole of Somerset and two of those are part - time. However disillusioned I am though with the current service, I wouldn't fault my original worker, I dread to think what would have happened without her, I used to tell her, "you saved three lives that day."

Family 2

"I moved to Glastonbury with a new baby six years ago. I started off by using The Children's Centre. I didn't really know anybody and I was isolated. I could go there, where there was always things to do and somebody to chat to. It was a good way to make friends and find out about other services.

When we began experiencing family difficulties, I was referred to a Level 2 support worker who would come round and work with me around behaviour with one of my children. He was given a mentor who would do cookery and support him. Then, when my relationship ended they were a really valuable source of support. While I was waiting for Universal Credit we had no money and the Getset worker brought round clothes donations for the children. The Children's Centre helped me get in touch with the right agencies to get things sorted out. They were also on hand to lend a shoulder to cry on when things were really tough.

I've been to mother and baby groups there, as well as stay and play and in the long summer holidays they are a lifeline as I don't drive and many of the things to do with children are financially out of my reach. My youngest is autistic and Getset has helped me with a whole range of things. As well as giving autism specific parenting advice, they have sourced larger child size nappies and now they are helping me apply for funding for a special needs pushchair.

My support worker attends Team around the Child meetings at school for my daughter who also has special needs, as well as nursery meetings for my youngest. They even get someone to come from Clarkes to do autism friendly shoe fittings. I wouldn't be able to access this otherwise. For single parents like myself, or families on low incomes, or who have children with special needs, this service is an absolute lifeline.

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