

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Monday 8 October 2018
10.00 am Luttrell Room - County Hall,
Taunton



SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FOR PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Item 3	Public Question Time (Pages 3 - 24) The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.
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Published on 12 October 2018

Community Governance, County Hall, Taunton

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PQT's & Statements received for the Extraordinary meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Review of Cabinet Decision - CAF14a "Proposals for the alteration and/or reduction of early help services provided to children and their families - getset"

Anonymous submissions

Level 3 Family Intervention Worker - Why are Level 2 and Level 3 services being cut when it is getset and Early Help have made a direct contribution in the "Journey to Good"?

Level 3 Family Intervention Worker - Have the views of service users and partners been consulted as to a reported drop in referrals and the reasons for this and if not why not?

This staff member has requested anonymity

Level 2 Family Support Worker - Have the council followed Sure Start Statutory Guidelines in regard to the reduction of services in Children's Centres in Somerset?

This worker has requested anonymity

Level 3 Family Intervention Worker - If the newly Community Adolescent Team are passing to referrals to getset due to over capacity are those figures counted in getset referrals and are they taking capacity that should have gone to getset?

This worker has requested anonymity

Level 3 Family Intervention Worker - Why are they reducing the service for Level 3 but will increase caseload after the cuts?

This worker is anonymous

L2 Family Support Worker - I have been a family support worker for nearly 7 years working with vulnerable children and families on issues such as housing, debt, domestic abuse, securing 2 Year Old Funding to get a nursery place and helping people back to work. I have dealt with families in absolute crisis - with no food, no beds, no money, I have negotiated with housing departments and landlords, secured food bank vouchers and supported people to attend medical appointments when their mental health was so bad that they could not manage this alone. I have helped to get emergency contraception for young mums and have been an advocate for people who have no voice. Who on earth will help these families if the getset Level 2 service is removed? These families wouldn't meet the Level 3 or 4 criteria initially and the whole point of early help is to have a preventative role. I am scared that the future will see an increase in Serious Case Reviews where a child has been killed or subject to serious harm along with more referrals to Social Care because things will be left until the last minute and children will be damaged for life. I don't want this on my conscience, do you?

Anonymous

Level 2 Family Support Worker - Why is half of my caseload transferred directly from level 3 due to being triaged incorrectly at the Hub? this will not be included in Level 2 statistics.

Anonymous

Level 2 Family Support Worker - Has it been considered that the reported drop in referrals during July and August are due to Schools and Nursery's being term time only therefore there is no one there to make referrals. Further more getset staff are encouraged to take Annual Leave in this known quieter time and some staff are on term time only contracts as getset work force is mainly female. And have you seen the waiting list for case allocation during this time?

Anonymous

Family Support Worker - How can the data that was used to create the new version of getset in May 2018 when new posts were created now be used to reduce the very same service?

Anonymous

Get Set Worker Level 2 – (submitted and wished for anonymity)

I have worked as part of a Taunton One Team for 4 years and have seen various changes to getset services.

I have valued the service and appreciated working together with Family Intervention Workers.

Prior to April 2017 L2 and L3 FIWs regularly played a significant part in multi agency one team working.

In addition to sharing advice with agencies about issues relating to early intervention they were able to suggest when a referral was appropriate and promoted their service.

I was shocked and disappointed that following changes to management in April 2017 a decision was made that L3 FIWs would be represented at one team meetings but not L2.

I challenged this, not least because a great deal of the families causing concern discussed at meetings have children under school age and one teams are aimed at providing early intervention.

In my experience when agencies do not participate in one team meetings other professionals miss opportunities to make referrals. Over time I think this has most certainly happened and perhaps agencies have forgotten how valuable a service L2 is.

There are 10 one teams across Somerset and I would suggest the decision last year to restrict L2 attendance has had a significant impact on referrals.

I think the potential loss of a L2 service would be catastrophic in an area where there is a busy children's centre and so many families with young children.

Comments And Questions Relating To Somerset County Councils Decision To Reduce Early Help Services provided to Children. (Anonymous)

Somerset County Council's recent Cabinet decision to reduce and make cuts to the 'getset' Early Help Service with the proposed reduction of 70 to 80 jobs will undoubtedly have a negative impact on children and families in Somerset, resulting

in children and parents being unable to access the right support/services at the point of need.

I feel this would greatly reduce the local authority's ability to provide the statutory offer for children that is set out in the Children's Act 2014 and to deliver a Working Together to Safeguard Children agenda within Somerset.

I question, how Somerset County Council will continue to provide targeted early help services, which will address the assessed needs of children and families and will prioritise how to improve the outcomes for children and young people?

To be successful these services need to be integrated through communities, need to be given time to build and consolidate to become robust services for vulnerable children and young people. I understand this is what getset services was set up to achieve but continuous challenges, changing agenda's and goals due to budgets and restructures has not given the service time to fulfil its potential.

As I understand it, if actioned Somerset County Councils proposed plan would effect mainly staff working for getset at Level 2. This concerns me greatly because this is where early help is crucial for families with babies and young children up to the age of 5 years, often a time when families are most vulnerable.

The Level 2 work includes staff working to prevent a child's need for support escalating to a threshold that requires a higher level of support. This is through offering parenting support, advice, information, signposting to other services and most importantly giving young children a voice.

Although the work is complex and will often involve working closely with other professionals. The Level 2 service appears to have been judged on the recent drop in referrals, on caseloads for staff with a rational in place for the time spent to deliver children's centre groups and activities.

There may be many complex reasons why referrals have reduced at Level 2.

I question why Somerset County's Council feel this should result in the service being cut?

I think this should be a concern to Somerset County Council and should be explored and reviewed to ensure children are not lost in a referral process that has changed frequently since the development of getset.

Questions need to be asked before decisions are made to understand fully:

- Has it become more difficult for some agencies to refer?
- Has new processes rejected referrals and have families been left unsupported?
- Is this why there has been a large increase in level 3 referrals?
- Have threshold's changed?

Although referrals are monitored and caseloads for staff are recorded with set targets it is not clear how staff at Level 2 monitor all the extra responsibilities of the job role. For example, being in direct contact with parents and children within groups will often lead to staff:

- signposting and supporting families to other services
- sourcing information vital for families
- modelling and promoting positive relationships through play and positive interaction
- undertaking daily preventive work

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- early identification of children with additional needs
- offering guidance and support strategies
- And much more

All of which will need to be followed up and would be on top of a Family support workers planned workload. The impact and difference this type of getset level 2 work has for children and families is so valuable. It is truly what early help and prevention is all about, being in the right place at the right time. Unfortunately this impact is hard to measure and may only be appreciated years later.

I feel Level 2 staff have continued to retain the Children's centre approach in the service they provide, often needing to be all things to all people. This service has been within a shrinking Level 2 service, where staff have had to work over a larger geographical area and there has also been many management changes. In comparison recruitment for Level 3 getset service has increased and staff appear to have clearer roles that are easier to monitor and provide data to support the work undertaken.

Somerset County Council may need to make difficult financial decisions, but by making a decision to drastically reduce a much needed early help service can only result in additional pressure for statutory services which will be more costly in the long term.

Family Voices Somerset – survey results and anonymised statements received, separate document (10 pages).

Not Attending the meeting

Kelly Enfield

Referrals in level 2 have been reduced for the following reasons: health visitors are depleting and therefore unable to refer, getset no longer receive self referrals, the method of referral through EHA is too long and too complicated - it puts families off and takes significant time for professionals to complete and we run fewer groups therefore having fewer opportunities for early intervention. has this been looked at?

Jules Gill - Why are the proposed figures for reduction for Level 3 nearly 45% when we were told it would be 20% of the level 3 service?

Liam Canham - I have had the pleasure of working with you during your time at Acorns Children Centre in Halcon as the Early Help Officer there and in my capacity as the Area Housing Manager for the east of Taunton. During our time there, it is my belief, and as evidenced by the Bath Spa report in to the One Team working model, that we undertook some truly revolutionary and effective work to improve our communities lives.

Sadly, this started to go awry in 2016, when SCC decided to change the modelling of early help in Somerset. It would appear that not only have things gone awry since, but have been catastrophically harmed to the detriment of our communities with the latest round of cuts sanctioned in September 2018.

The proposals as I understand it that were sanctioned are: "Proposals for

the alteration and/or reduction of early help services provided to children and their families – getset”, which in the summary actually talks about “to no longer provide level 2 services” (subject to ‘consultation’ etc, I appreciate), I find completely and utterly perverse. After the many months and indeed years SCC have spent, not to mention the money (looking at VFM from tax payers etc), redeveloping their child protection strategy, the pain it has taken to bring in the step up/down process for local practitioners, the focus on Early Intervention and therefore Early years services, to be all of a sudden be considered for dismantling is in my professional view-counterproductive, dangerous and in my personal view, abhorrent. I am also intrigued by the utter tripe that these cuts will not detrimentally affect our community. I find this intriguing as either their assessment on how circa £2M worth of cuts to early help services will affect those most in need is wildly off the mark, or in effect they are saying they have been wasting circa £2M worth of funding on a service that is not required-they cannot have their cake and eat it and whichever way the truth lies, it is another example of gross mismanagement. In my view what we will see as a result of this proposal is a return to ‘how things used to be’, with referrals being put straight in at CSC level, these referrals being rejected as not meeting CSC threshold and vulnerable people, children and families falling between the gaps. It also begs the question, where does the One Team process fit into all of this? It seems that the whole partnership approach is dismantling all around us and the return to working in silo’s is upon us-after so much investment this surely cannot be allowed to happen?

I appreciate that all public sector organisations face difficult decisions in terms of balancing budgets and delivering services, however we cannot surely let our most vulnerable in society down by pulling the investment made in these areas. It would appear to me that SCC have fallen into the same old trap of cut, cut, cut, rather than looking at sustaining investment in certain areas-I am sure that if they carry out what they are proposing above, that costs in this sector (Child protection), will rise far greater than any savings made, as we see vulnerable families spiral out of control. Surely the ‘invest to save’ mantra serves far better in this area, to ensure that families are properly and appropriately supported?

As you know only too well, I have had frustrations and concerns (not on my own) regarding SCC’s lack of proper and meaningful engagement (in my personal view) in the One Team process historically, however that has always been justified (in some way shape or form), that SCC and CSC were developing their own strategy in tandem and to fit with the One Team way of working-and now for it to be on the verge of collapse, where does this leave us all?

The notion, rationale and justification for making cuts to Level 2 services, due to a lack or drop in referrals is quite frankly offensive. What we have repeatedly seen over many years is the further bureaucratisation of providing help to vulnerable people. The Early Help Assessment is just a complete and utter barrier to getting the much required early intervention to families, due to its over complicated nature which prevent individuals from either having the time to refer ‘correctly’ or indeed in some instances the ability to do so. I suggest to the leadership at SCC that the reason for falling referrals may in part be down to their over complicated, restricted referral

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process as opposed to a decline in need, which I think every practitioner on the ground would suggest is ever increasing.

I am so desperately upset, disheartened and angry about once again the short-termism shown by our 'leaders' that it truly makes me wonder if any of them are fit for office?! It is all too easy to blame Central Government cuts (which of course do have an impact), however this problem is not solely down to Central Government cuts and therefore our leadership must take a long hard look at themselves and reflect upon how this has been allowed to happen. I fear not only for our own County, but for the County as this sort of attitude is replicated across many Counties up and down the Country-we need radical change and a new approach to running public services, not to mention competent and professional individuals to lead the delivery of such important services to ensure social justice for all.

Diane Bennett - I moved to Shepton Mallet, Somerset, in March 2017 after living for 33 years in South Cambridgeshire where I raised three daughters (mostly as a single parent, and on a very low income). When my daughters were still very young I worked part-time in various charity-funded pre-school settings and attained a Certificate in Early Years Practice (NVQ 4 equivalent qualification) from the Open University. I also worked in a home education setting, supporting a child with severe additional needs for well over ten years, supporting her in her transition from home education to special school when she was aged 13 and in all of her participation in out-of-home activities (including children's clubs, youth groups and Girl Guiding - both mainstream and special needs-targeted).

Via Somerset You Can Do (which closes in November this year), I have been registered as a volunteer since mid 2017. I started a volunteer placement at Glastonbury's getset centre in December 2017, attending their weekly Stay, Play & Learn sessions at the Glastonbury Library venue. In this placement, primarily as "an extra pair of hands," I have been privy to the provision delivered by the competent and professional getset staff members running these sessions. I have also observed the benefits that these sessions have for the children and families who attend (either regularly or sporadically). I know full well, from my own experiences as a parent of young children and from my work with another child with additional needs, that a support infrastructure is paramount to a whole family's well being and that the earliest possible intervention is the preferable route for all (in terms of financial cost to individual families and society as well as, more importantly, a family's quality of life, both short- and long-term).

From my standpoint, the benefits to children and their families from this aspect of the getset services are immeasurable: the provision gives children opportunities for socialisation, play, learning and development that extend their home experiences; it gives adult family members/carers opportunities for support that are tailored to their own needs; it gives whole families access to early-intervention support in a non-judgemental environment. Withdrawal of the service seems to me a devastatingly retrograde step in our society's support of children and families, and very short-sighted.

Elvira Elliott - Why are referrals the only consideration for cutting the service when most of us who use the universal groups at the children's centre were never referred there? The children's centre and GETSET have been a constant source of support to

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myself and my children for 6 years. I am disabled and my children have special needs. We came for a playgroup and found support, advice, community, and so much more. Why are we not being counted as valid service users?

In 6 years I have seen parents with mental health problems, learning difficulties, abusive partners and even a mother who was physically abusing her child picked up and supported/helped through attending the universal groups I have attended. What mechanism is going to be put in place to identify and carry out these early interventions now?

Barely a year ago our children's centre was closed and moved at great expense into a purpose built space in the library. What is happening to all the toys and resources from the closed children's centres and what do the council propose happens to the lovely, new, purpose built GETSET centre in Glastonbury?

If this centre closes there will be no affordable indoor space to bring children to in Street or Glastonbury. This is bound to result in isolation for new mothers and an increase in PND and decrease in breastfeeding. What services will be put in place to prevent the burden of this falling onto the overwhelmed social services and NHS mental health services?

Last of all, if a skeleton staff is proposed, for a service that has already seen 3 rounds of devastating cuts, why would anyone want to take those jobs with a guaranteed overload of cases, no support, and no job security?

Louise Hill - The removal of Level 2 GetSet services seems to be totally incongruent to the priority which have been given over the past 12-18 months on Early Help Assessment. How are families going to access Early Help without Level 2 workers - and won't we just see an increase in the number of families who reach crisis point, then requiring higher level (and more expensive) future interventions?

Attending the meeting

Beks Saunders

How will Early Years children & their parents access appropriate support, stopping escalation before they become school age?

Sally Devlin

Part of the proposal is that much of getset work would be picked up by partner agencies if the proposed cuts are agreed. What consultation has taken place with partner agencies to ensure that they have capacity to undertake this much needed provision to support vulnerable children and families in the county?

Nigel Behan - Relates to Proposal CAF-14a Children's Services - "Reduce staffing levels in the Getset service in response to falling number of level 2 referrals and by increasing caseload targets across the service." 2 follow up questions relating to Cabinet on 12 September when I asked:

Will removing these preventative early intervention services result in further pressures (including financial-“consequential costs down the line”?) elsewhere in Children’s Social Care, increased Social Work activity and more reactive responses to more crisis situations (Similar to the response on BBC Radio Somerset by the Chief Officer of Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who said a cut to their budget by SCC will lead to extra pressure on other public services including the NHS and will cost more)? Has an Equality Impact Assessment been completed?”

Q1 the verbal reply given at the Cabinet meeting included a phrase “**there is no clear evidence**” referring to early intervention (prevention) that it is effective(?) Does this Committee think further clarification should be sought (did the reply refer to outcomes and/or cost savings). Can all the empirical evidence (including operational models and research papers) that have been analysed be published on the SCC website for inspection?

Q2 at a number of recent meetings relating to Getset, it has been claimed that the **proposed model of service** is based on particular **Northern (Local) Authority areas**. Are those Local Authorities/Areas comparable to Somerset (rurality, demography etc.)? Can further information be supplied for further critical assessment?

Jessica Parsons - Colleagues in Social Care are allocated cases on the number of children in each family the ratio being 1 worker to 17 children as a maximum. Getset broke from this accepted norm and count cases by family irrespective of the number of children within it. For example, one worker could be allocated 10 cases but be addressing the needs of 50 children. The figures presented therefore, could be hiding significant numbers of service users receiving support. Why did getset change the way of counting cases and has this been taken into account in determining safe case load ratios?

Karen Marsh - With the reduction in tier 2 intervention get set services, what strategies are being put into place to manage the increase in tier 3 and 4 cases which will occur as a consequence of Early Help becoming Late Help?

Kerry Wood - As an Early Years Professional I have experienced first hand the difficulties in convincing parents of the value of early intervention and in the EHA referral process. Given the proposed cuts to Getset services, how are Somerset County Council going to ensure that they fulfill their statutory responsibilities and that support will be provided enabling parents especially the vulnerable which will empower them to provide improved outcomes for both their children and themselves.

Sharon Collard - Is the proposed reduction in getset Early Help service being completed in line with the Sure Start statutory guidance?
For example through a public consultation and ensuring that where they decide to close a children’s centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children’s centres to meet local need.

Richard Hobbs on behalf of Somerset Parent Carer Forum

1. The OFSTED report published in Jan of this year stated, “Early help services in Somerset have improved, yet are not fully established across the partnership”. As Somerset County Council have yet to achieve a rating of good in their social care inspection, does the council feel that by reducing early help they will be able to provide good quality social care and improve outcomes for our children?

2. The OFSTED report published in Jan of this year also stated “Early help assessments ... are still too variable and not all are sufficiently focused on actions for improving children’s outcomes. Assessments do not always analyse children’s experiences sufficiently and not all risks are clearly articulated.” In light of this do you

- a) acknowledge there is a risk that the reduction in the number of get set cases open could be due to the poor quality EHA’s?
- b) b- feel that reducing a service based on referral numbers via early help assessments of variable quality is robust, has this risk been identified and a plan to mitigate it produced.

3. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of the report discuss the groups being run by ‘getset’. Feedback from a recent survey and conversations with families highlighted how vital these services are. Families relayed how the groups reduced their feelings of isolation. The Improving Lives Strategy acknowledges that “A lack of social contact and feelings of isolation and loneliness can have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing.” This is a key area of focus for the strategy over the next 10 years. Please can you

A. Clarify if all the families accessing the groups will have had an EHA and therefore be included in the data given

B. Explain how this cut in ‘getset’ service is compatible with the focus and vision of the Improving Lives Strategy?

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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.

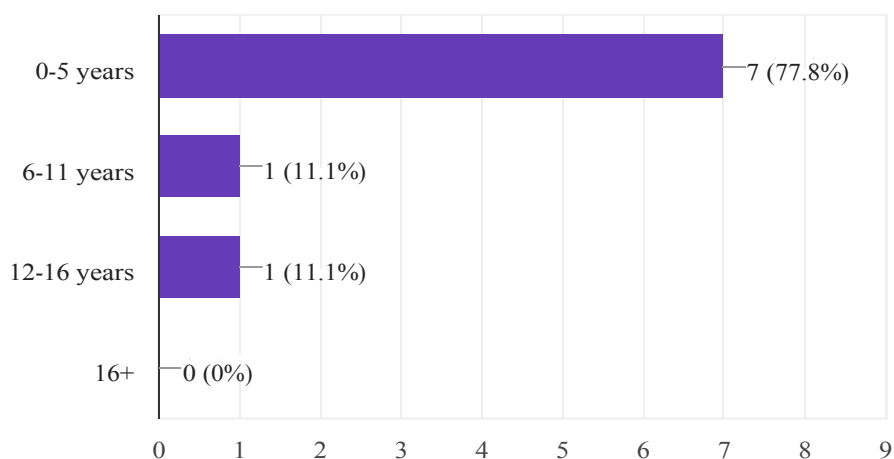
Following the announcements of Somerset County Council cuts, we quickly formed a project called Stop Somerset Cuts, to inform and enable Somerset residents to submit questions through the democracy pathway. We have realised that many voices may not be getting through, so we have provided an option for 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

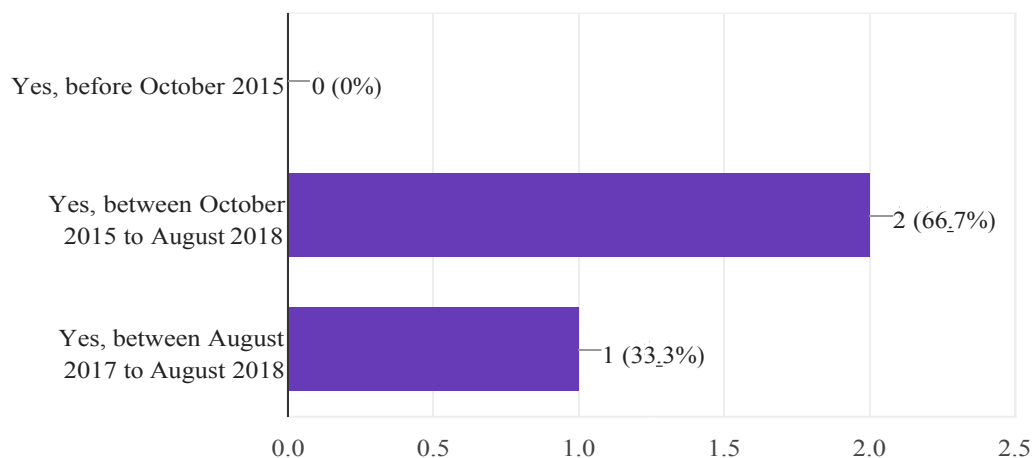


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Voices on Getset services, October 2018

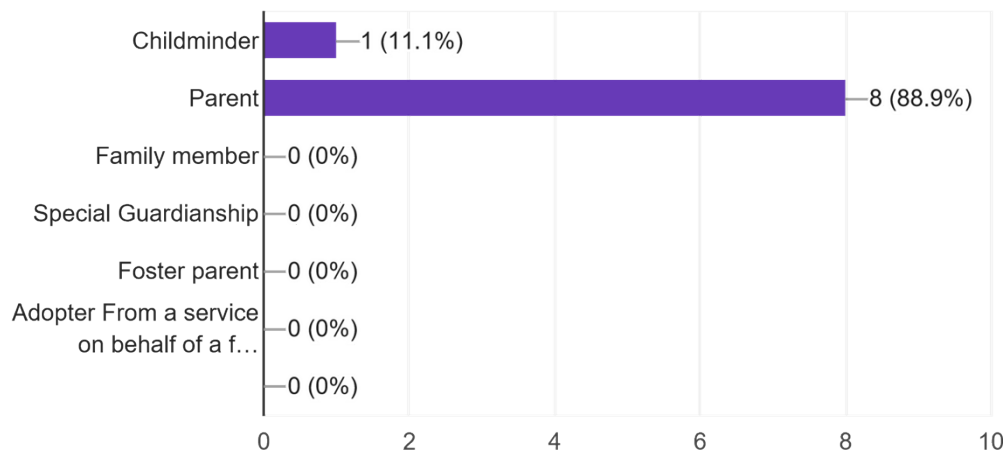
2) Have you been refused a referral or support from Getset?

3 responses



3) About you?

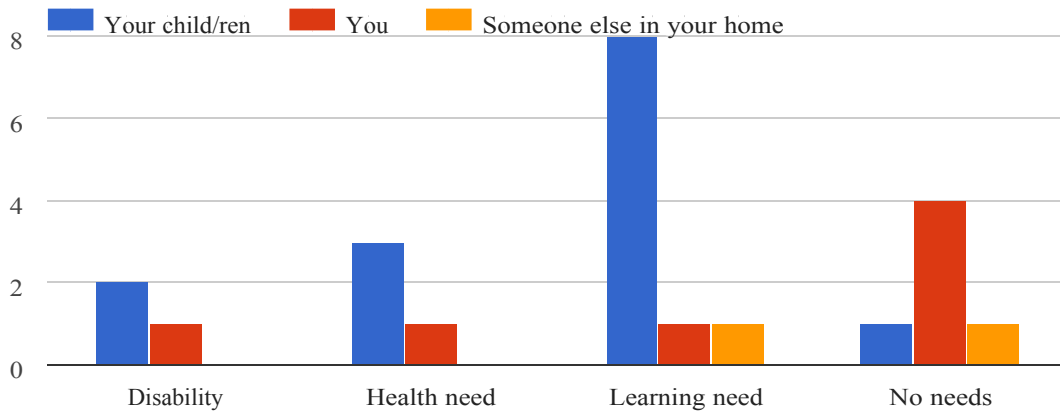
9 responses



Family Voice Somerset

Voices on Getset services, October 2018

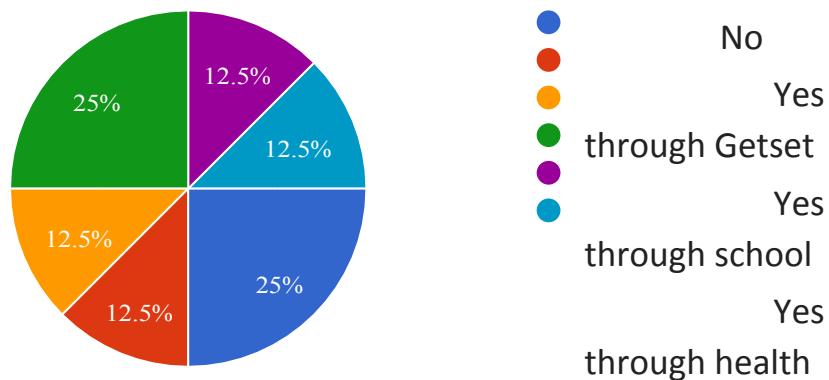
4) Please tick all that apply



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

8

responses



visitor

Family Voice Somerset

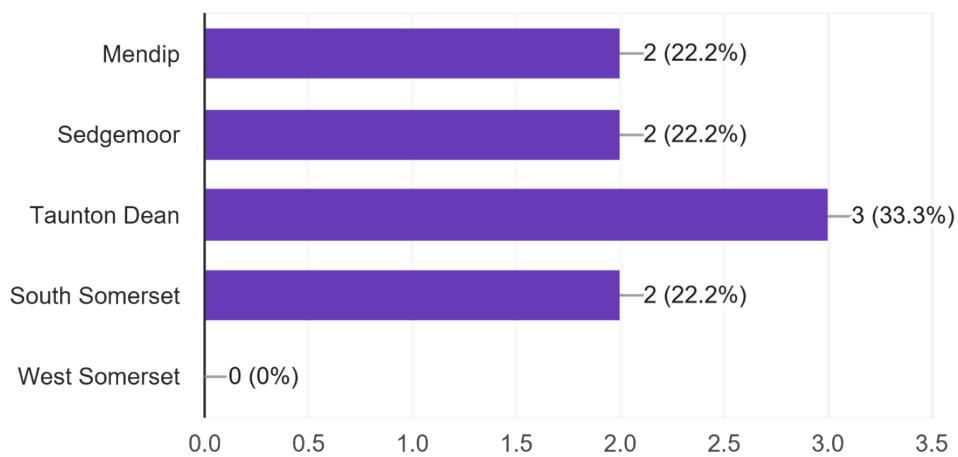
Voices on Getset services, October 2018

Nursery

Nursery

6) Which Getset centres do you access?

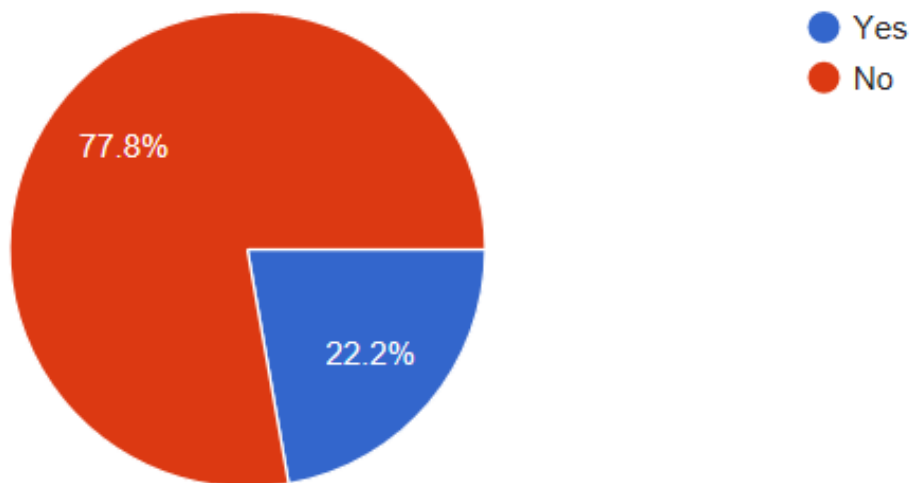
9 responses



7) Has your Children's centre closed?

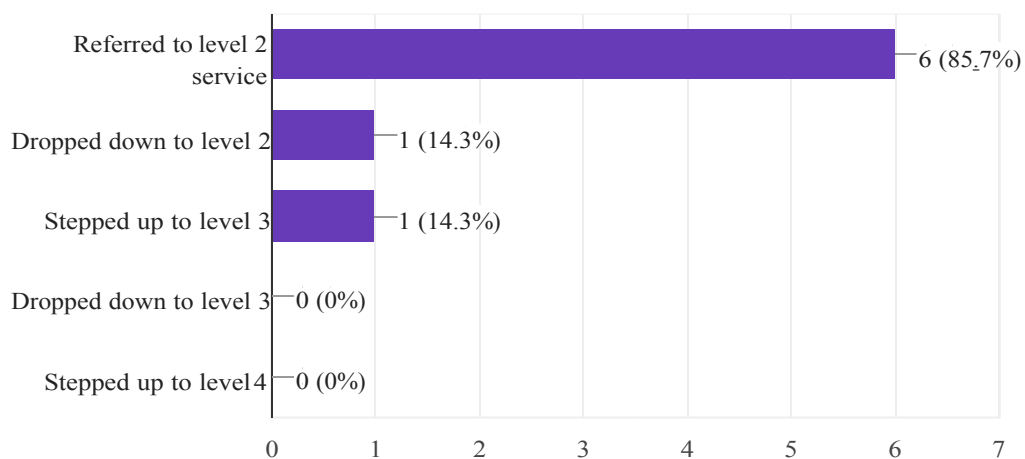
9 responses

Family Voice Somerset Voices on Getset services, October 2018



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

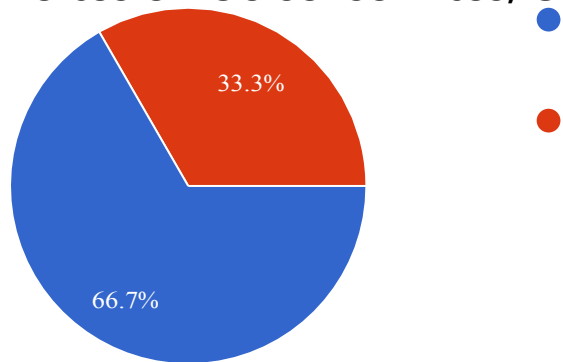
7 responses



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

6 responses

Family Voice Somerset Voices on Getset services, October 2018

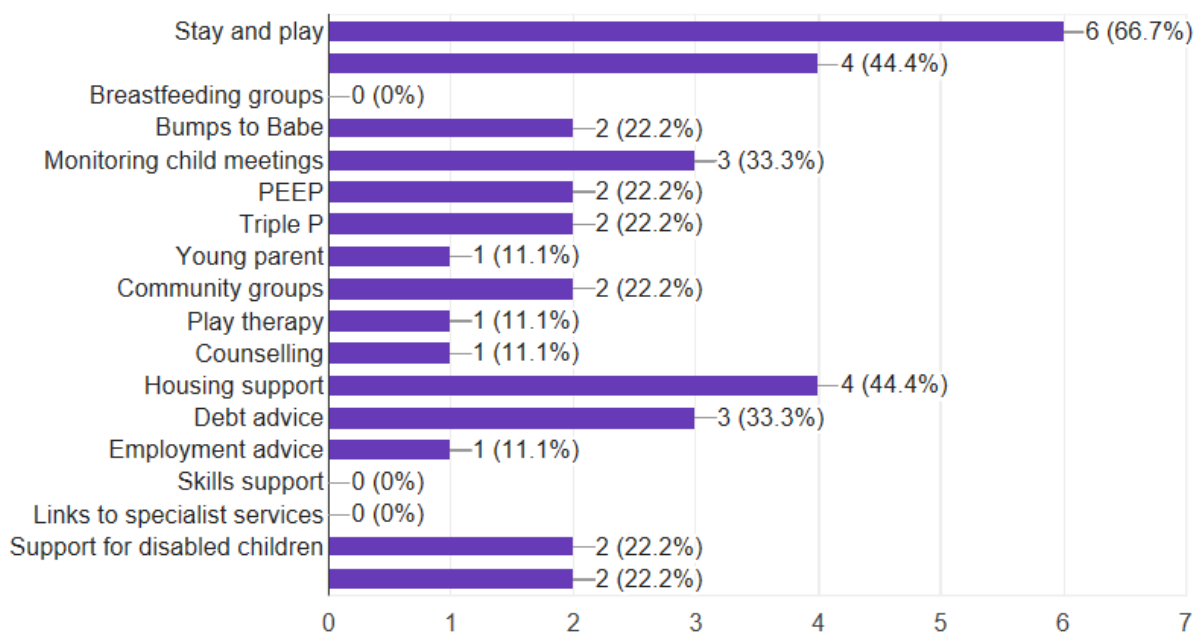


Discharged, happy that you have had all the support needed

Discharged, felt you are left without support

10) What support do you access?

9 responses



Family Voice Somerset
Voices on Getset services, October 2018

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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Voices on Getset services, October 2018

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

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

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

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

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.

Family Voice Somerset
Voices on Getset services, October 2018

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