

Appendix - Consultation Responses Summary Report

1. Research Method

1.1 The consultation asked for opinions and evidence against three options presented. Three methods were used to gather opinions and evidence: (1) an online survey, (2) focus groups conducted in-person or virtually, (3) feedback from emails received.

1.2 The three methods described in more detail:

1. The online survey was published on Citizen Space, a consultation tool provided through the council's website - [Slough Children's Centres Consultation - Slough Borough Council - Citizen Space](#).
2. Focus groups were offered to parents and carers, headteachers, health service representatives, private and voluntary sector childcare providers, and other voluntary sector services. These took place in-person or virtually, depending on the preference of the group. The groups were led by a Group Manager from the council.
3. Email feedback was received mainly through the central mailbox - Childrens.Centres@slough.gov.uk and the council's complaints mailbox - Complaints@slough.gov.uk.

1.3 The consultation questions were designed to understand respondents' preferences between different options proposed for change, the services they valued most and identify the impact of specific decisions. The analysis overall has shown the responses for all centre users, specific centre users and separated based on equality groups and other characteristic such as household income or composition. The consultation data on equality groups has been used to update the equality impact assessment.

1.4 A set of research questions was used to focus the data capture and analysis, including but not limited to:

- What would the difference in impact be between Option 1, Option 2, and Option 3 in the consultation?
- How many people would have to travel further to reach a setting, and what would the increase travel time be?
- What would the impact be on areas within Slough that had higher levels of family, child, and services deprivation?
- What services delivered are most in demand currently and what would be the impact on those services if centres closed?
- Are there sufficient childcare places across the borough and in localities within the borough (this is covered in more detail in the childcare sufficiency assessment published separately to this paper)?
- What are the effects on provision from partner organisations e.g., health services?

2. Overall summary of the responses from the consultation

2.1 The majority response to the three options presented in the consultation document was that Option 1 was the preferred option. Option 1 was deemed to provide the most effective coverage of services out of the three options presented.

2.2 Many respondents mentioned that retaining 1 or 2 more centres than included in Option 1 would mitigate many of the risks. This would bring the number of centres remaining open to 4 or 5. There were a range of views on which additional centres being kept open would make the biggest difference on improving outcomes for children and families. All centres were mentioned at least once by a respondent as a preferred option to keep open.

2.3 Overall, the centres are liked by families, staff, partner agency professionals, and other residents. This positive feeling came through in the responses, which expressed anxiety and sadness that some of the centres could close.

2.4 Many respondents said that more information on the future service offer might help to reduce their concerns.

2.5 There was a set of risks and opportunities related to Option 1 that were raised by respondents to the consultation. There were more risks than opportunities described. The main themes of the risks articulated by respondents included:

- Families accessing childcare provision in centres that are closing may not find suitable alternative childcare arrangements.
- Families who currently walk to their local children's centre might now need to use public transport, a taxi, or a car and this would increase barriers to access through extra travel time or cost of travel.
- Families where the adults and/or children have additional needs may not find suitable family services, early education services, or childcare that meet their specific needs.
- The needs of children and adults would be spotted later in their life, due to more limited services and social interactions when children are in their first years.
- There may be fewer opportunities to safeguard vulnerable children and adults as current or emerging issues in families could remain more 'hidden' without the service support and social interactions that take place through the centres.

2.7 Some opportunities were articulated by respondents, including:

- The remaining buildings could be kept open longer in the weekday evenings and on weekends to enable greater access.
- Some of the services currently delivered in centres could be redesigned to be delivered from alternative buildings through a pop-up or outreach model.

- Private and Voluntary Sector providers of family services, early education, and childcare might be able to expand and/or adapt provision.

3. Online survey responses in detail

Headline summary

- 410 people responded to the online consultation survey.
- 374 respondents (91%) live in Slough.
- 229 respondents (57%) have at least one child aged 0-4.
- 241 respondents (59%) currently use Slough Children's Centres - others are professionals or do not use centres currently.
- The most used centres were (in descending order): Penn Road (82 users, 34%), Romsey Close (70 users, 29%), Chalvey Grove (55 users, 23%), Monksfield Way (54 users, 22%), and Yew Tree Road (45 users, 19%).
- 125 respondents (56%) use centres daily.
- 114 users (47%) travel to centres by car and 111 (46%) walk.
- 100 users (42%) travel less than one mile to centres and 90 users (37%) travel 1-2 miles.
- 86% of respondents selected option 1 (3 Children's Centre model).
- However, many respondents stated risks and concerns relating to option 1, such as a reduction in services that meet needs and limited access to different centres (e.g., travel times, no access to a car, costs, access to childcare affecting work).
- Many proposed keeping more centres open – frequently suggesting 4-5 centres, adding Monksfield Way and Yew Tree Road to the three proposed in option 1.
- Most respondents supported the idea of expanding services to older children up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND).
- Demographic information:
 - 74% were female and 19% male. 7% did not say.
 - 48% were age 25-39 and 26% were age 40-49.
 - 42% were White and 33% were Asian.
 - 78% were in employment.
 - 29% were in receipt of benefits.
 - 11% have a disability and 17% have a child with a disability.
 - 37% were Christian and 24% were Muslim.
 - 1.1% were pregnant at the time of the survey and 10.5% had a baby in the last 12 months.
 - 19% were single parents.

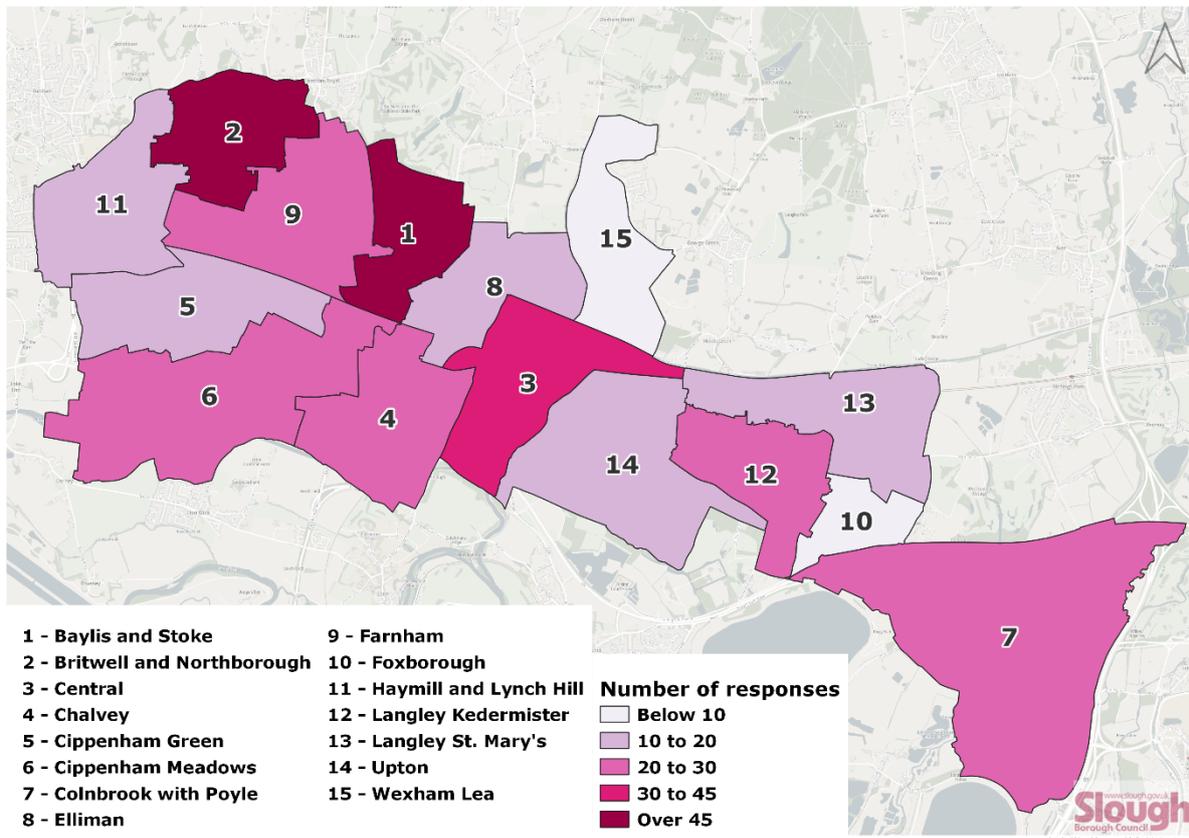
The respondents

There were 410 responses to the online consultation survey.

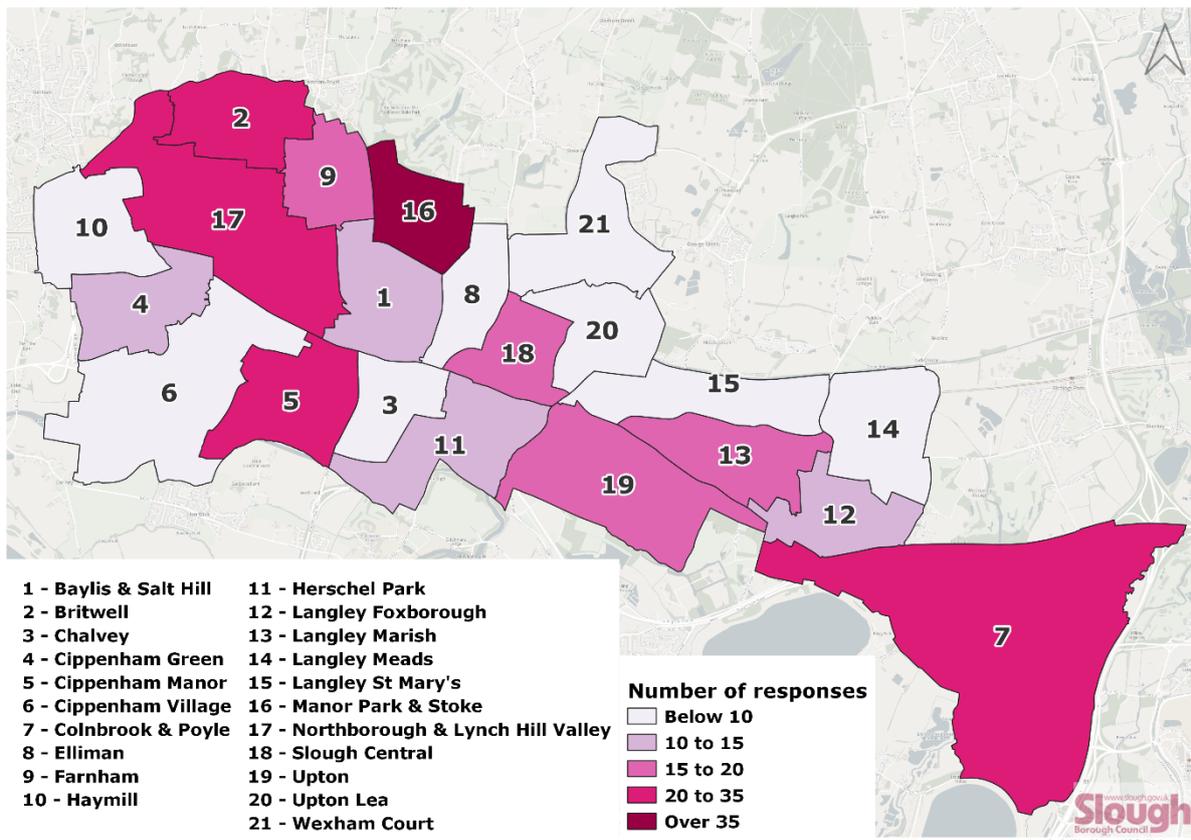
The online survey was set up so that respondents were shown relevant questions based on their previous answers (e.g., respondents who answered that they were partners or stakeholders were not shown questions intended for service users and residents).

Responses by Ward (previous ward boundaries and new ward boundaries):

Previous wards	Count of responses	Percent of responses
Baylis and Stoke	48	12%
Britwell and Northborough	50	12%
Central	33	8%
Chalvey	21	5%
Cippenham Green	16	4%
Cippenham Meadows	30	7%
Colnbrook with Poyle	22	5%
Elliman	11	3%
Farnham	28	7%
Foxborough	8	2%
Haymill and Lynch Hill	16	4%
Langley Kedermister	24	6%
Langley St. Mary's	13	3%
Not within SBC	64	16%
Upton	19	5%
Wexham Lea	7	2%
Grand Total	410	100%



New wards	Count of responses	Percent of responses
Baylis & Salt Hill	13	3%
Britwell	30	7%
Chalvey	9	2%
Cippenham Green	15	4%
Cippenham Manor	27	7%
Cippenham Village	9	2%
Colnbrook & Poyle	24	6%
Elliman	6	1%
Farnham	20	5%
Haymill	9	2%
Herschel Park	14	3%
Langley Foxborough	12	3%
Langley Marish	19	5%
Langley Meads	9	2%
Langley St Mary's	5	1%
Manor Park & Stoke	43	10%
Northborough & Lynch Hill Valley	32	8%
Not within SBC	64	16%
Slough Central	16	4%
Upton	17	4%
Upton Lea	10	2%
Wexham Court	7	2%
Grand Total	410	100%



All 410 respondents were shown the following questions (Q1-5).

Q1: Is English the language you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) are most comfortable using?

395 respondents (96.3%) answered “yes”. The survey presented all respondents with information on how to access a translated version of the survey if required.

Q2: Are you registered with Slough Children’s Centres?

261 respondents (63.7%) answered that they are registered with Slough Children’s Centres. 132 (32.2%) answered that they are not registered, and 17 (4.1%) answered that they did not know.

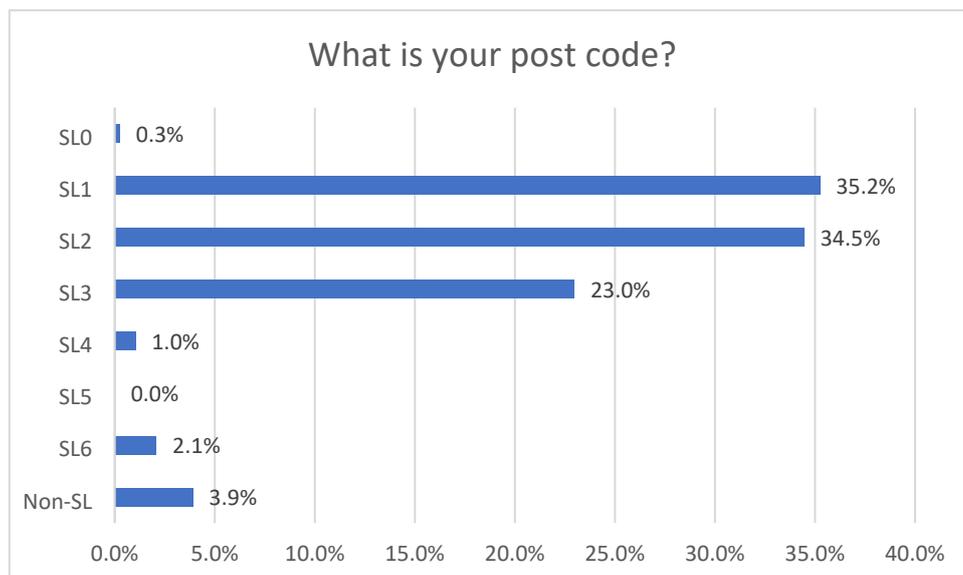
Q3: Do you live in Slough?

374 respondents (91.2%) answered that they live in Slough. 36 (8.8%) did not live in Slough.

Q4: What is your post code?

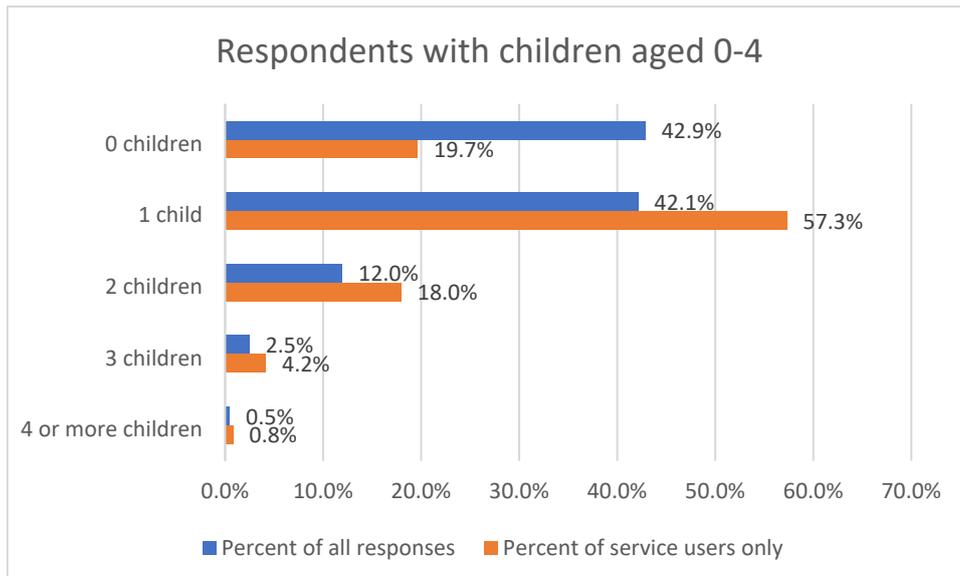
383 respondents provided their post code. The most frequent post codes were SL1 (135 responses, 35.2%) and SL2 (132 responses, 34.5%).

Post codes



Q5: What is the number of people in your household?

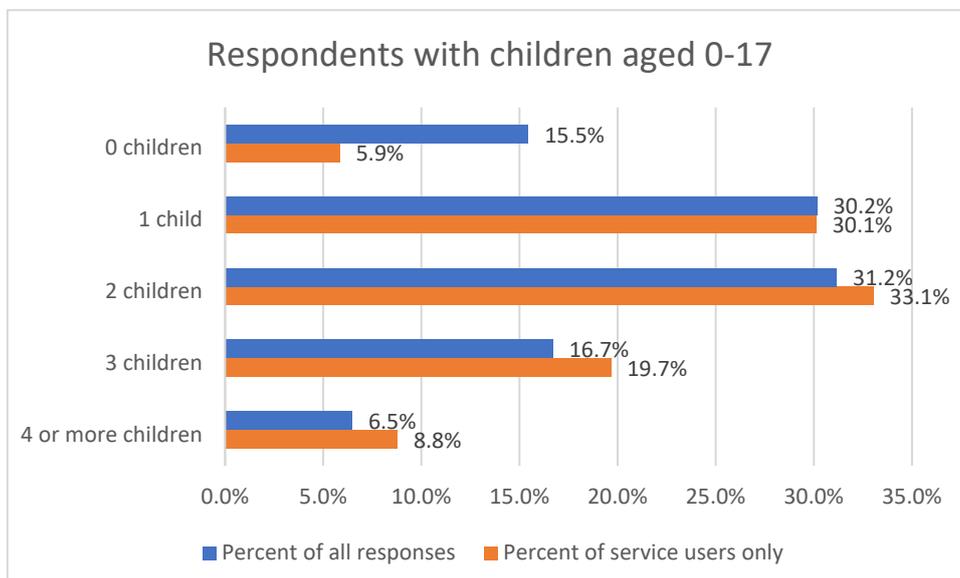
All 410 respondents answered question 5 regarding their household composition, however 9 of these responses contained invalid answers (e.g., 0 adults in a household or 0 for all age groups), resulting in 401 valid responses. 240 of these responses were from respondents who answered that they use Slough Children’s Centres in the next question (Q6).



The blue bars are responses from all 401 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 240 who said they use Slough Children’s Centres.

169 of the 401 respondents (42.1%) have one child aged 0-4, 48 (12.0%) have two children, 10 (2.5%) have three children, 2 (0.5%) have four or more children, and 172 (42.9%) have no children aged 0-4.

137 of the 240 service users (57.3%) have one child aged 0-4, 43 (18.0%) have two children, 10 (4.2%) have three children, 2 (0.8%) have four or more children, and 47 (19.7%) have no children aged 0-4.



The blue bars are responses from all 401 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 240 who said they use Slough Children’s Centres.

121 of the 401 respondents (30.2%) have one child aged 0-17, 125 (31.2%) have two children, 67 (16.7%) have three children, 26 (6.5%) have four or more children, and 62 (15.5%) have no children aged 0-17.

72 of the 240 service users (30.1%) have one child aged 0-17, 79 (33.1%) have two children, 47 (19.7%) have three children, 21 (8.8%) have four or more children, and 14 (5.9%) have no children aged 0-17.

Use of Children’s Centres and services

Q6: Do you use a Children’s Centre to access services?

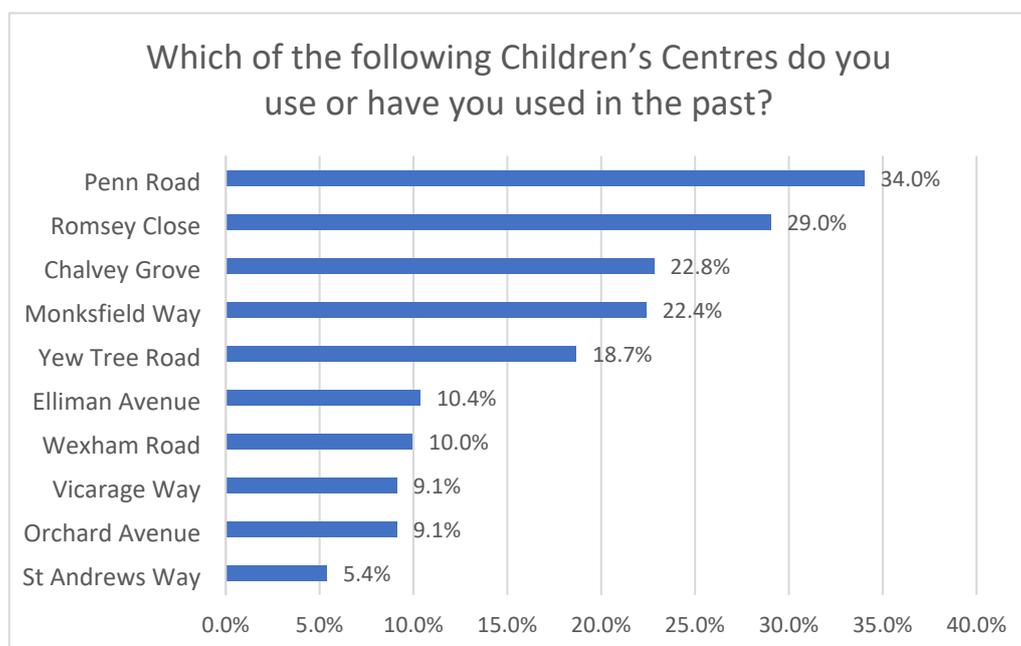
241 respondents (58.8%) answered that they use Children’s Centres to access services. 109 (26.6%) answered that they do not use Children’s Centres to access services and 60 (14.6%) answered “not applicable”. “Not applicable” was the recommended answer for partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Slough Children’s Centres.

Only the 241 respondents that answered that they use Children’s Centres in Slough (“yes” to Q6) were asked the following questions (Q7-10).

Q7: If yes, which of the following Children’s Centres do you use or have you used in the past?

The five Children’s Centres used most by respondents were:

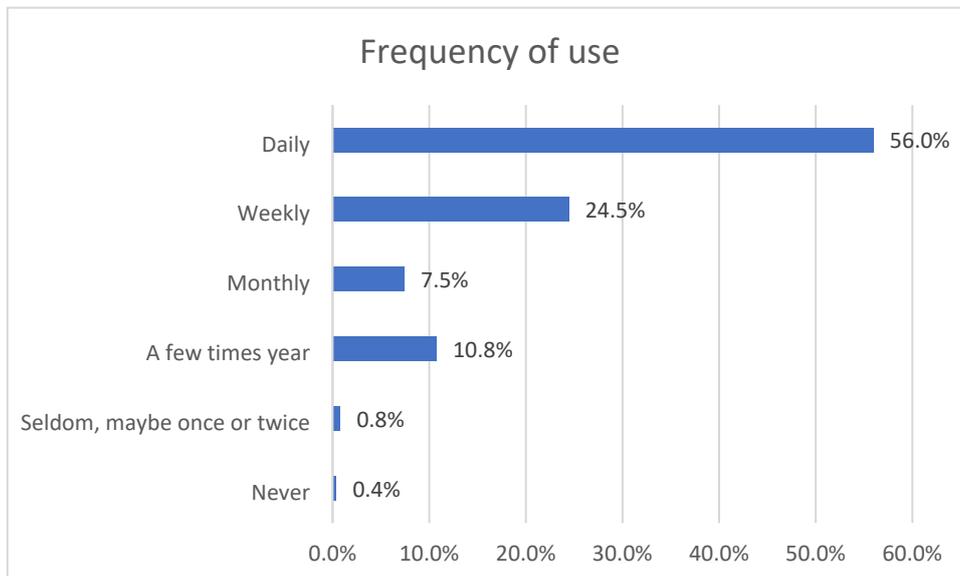
1. Penn Road - 82 users (34.0% of users)
2. Romsey Close - 70 users (29.0%)
3. Chalvey Grove - 55 users (22.8%)
4. Monksfield Way – 54 users (22.4%)
5. Yew Tree Road – 45 users (18.7%)



Respondents could select more than one Centre.

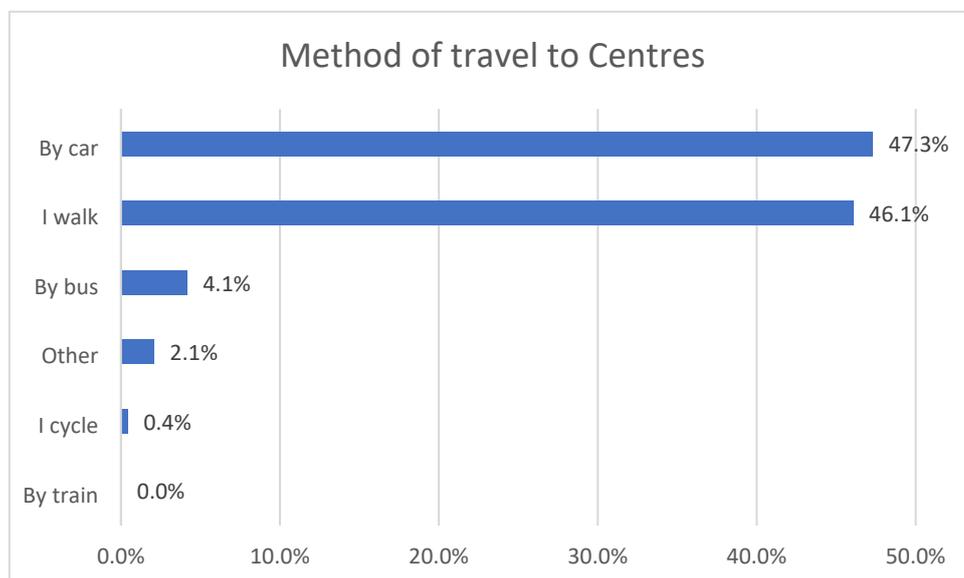
Q8: In a typical year, how often would you use a Children’s Centre?

135 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (56.0%) use them daily, 59 (24.5%) use them weekly, 18 (7.5%) use them monthly, and 29 (12.0%) use them a few times a year or less.



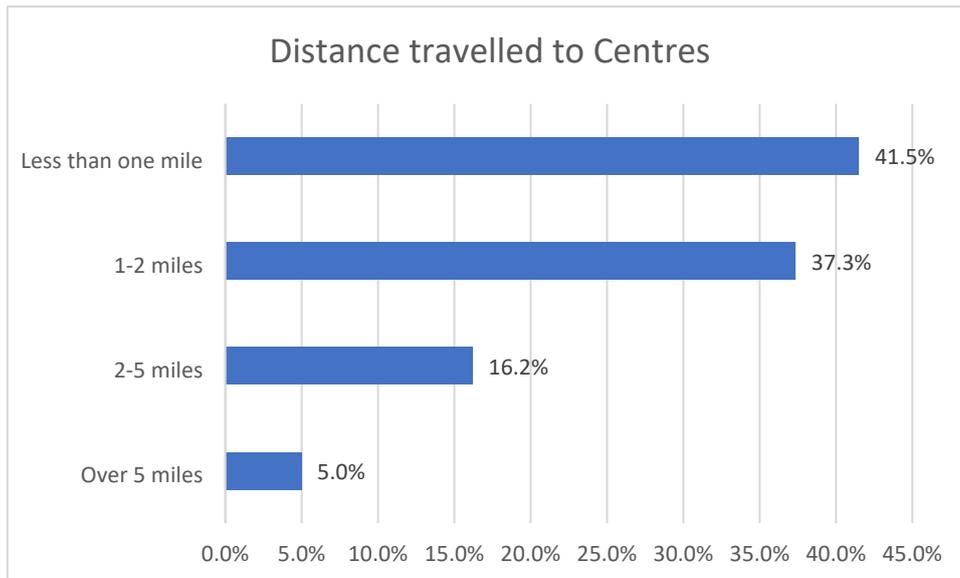
Q9: When you visit a Centre, how do you normally travel there?

114 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (47.3%) travel to Centres by car, 111 (46.1%) walk, 10 (4.1%) travel by bus, and 6 (2.5%) use other methods such as cycling, taxi, or a combination of car and walking.



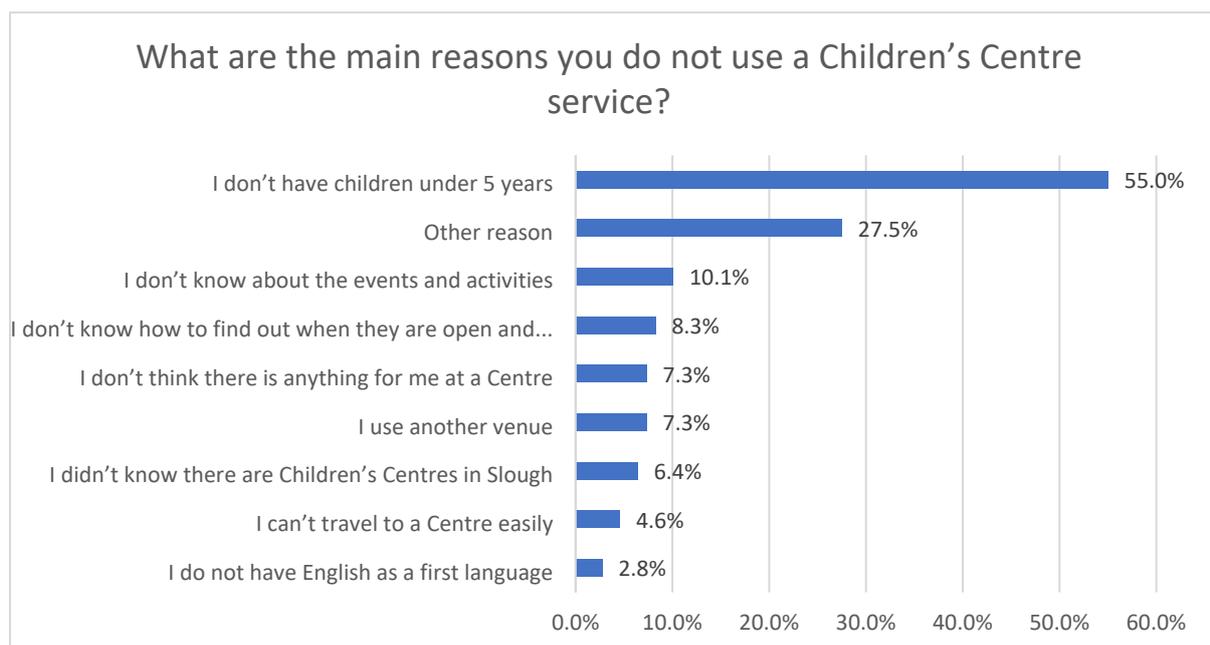
Q10: How far do you travel to get to the Centre?

100 of the 241 respondents who use Children’s Centres (41.5%) travel less than one mile, 90 (37.3%) travel 1-2 miles, 39 (16.2%) travel 2-5 miles, and 12 (5.0%) travel over 5 miles.



Q11: What are the main reasons you do not use a Children’s Centre service?

The 109 respondents who answered that they do not use Children’s Centres were asked for the main reasons they do not use them. The most frequent response was “I don’t have children under 5 years” (60 respondents, 55.0%).



Of those that selected “I don’t need to attend services in a Children’s Centre, I use another venue” and expanded in the text box:

- Three said they use another venue that is more culturally diverse or that the Children’s Centre services are not culturally diverse enough.
 - One respondent wrote: “I use more of a diverse surface that accommodates all cultures as there is not enough diversity in the children centres and so we opt for private services that will accommodate us”
- Three said they use private/paid for services

- Two use online support (e.g., Teams)

Of those that selected “other reason” and specified in the text box:

- 9 said they are not currently using them but have in the past (e.g., their children are now older)
- 3 said they plan to use them in the future (e.g., planning for a baby)
- 2 said they do not use them because the services are not culturally diverse enough or that they are “aimed towards certain groups”
 - One respondent wrote: “SBC has little to no services for the ethnic community especially for black families and children i use a service that covers this in the community thus is not reflected i your staff or services”.
- Other responses included: using other services instead, another family member uses them, wanting online support or one-to-one sessions instead, and being unable to get appointments

Q12: Out of the list of services below, please select all the services that you value as part of the Children’s Centre offer.

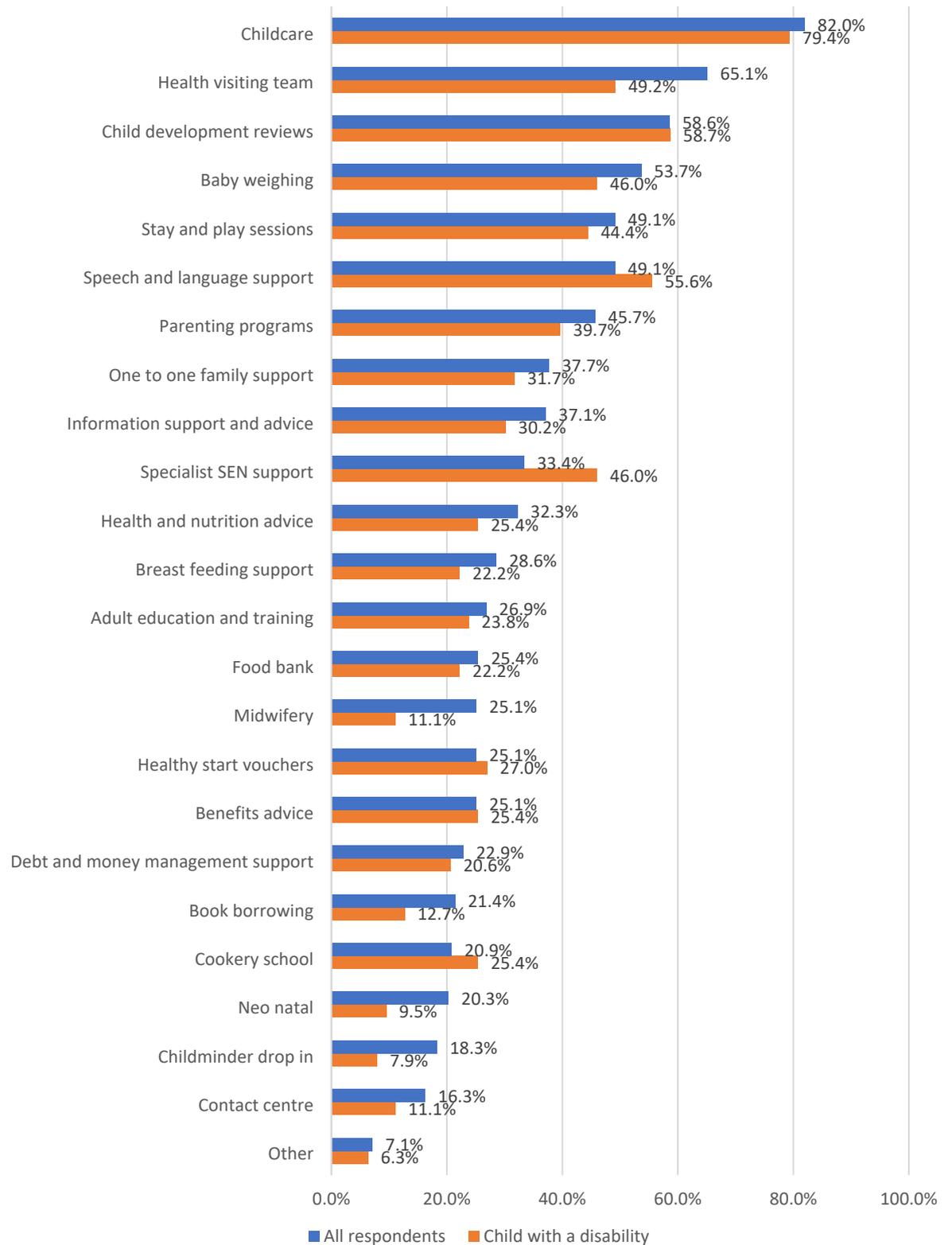
Residents and service users (350 respondents) were asked to select from a list which services they valued as part of a Children’s Centre offer. The top 10 options selected were:

- Childcare - 287 responses (82.0% of respondents)
- Health visiting team - 228 responses (65.1%)
- Child development reviews - 205 responses (58.6%)
- Baby weighing - 118 responses (53.7%)
- Speech and language support, and stay and play sessions – tied with 172 responses (49.1%)
- Parenting programs – 160 responses (45.7%)
- One to one family support – 132 responses (37.7%)
- Information support and advice – 130 responses (37.1%)
- Specialist SEN support – 117 responses (33.4%)

63 of these respondents have a child with a disability. The top 10 options selected by these respondents were:

- Childcare – 50 responses (79.4% of respondents with a child with a disability)
- Child development reviews – 37 responses (58.7%)
- Speech and language support – 35 responses (55.6%)
- Health visiting team – 31 responses (49.2%)
- Baby weighing and Specialist SEN support – tied with 29 responses (46.0%)
- Stay and play sessions – 28 responses (44.4%)
- Parenting programs – 25 responses (39.7%)
- One to one family support – 20 responses (31.7%)
- Information support and advice – 19 responses (30.2%)

Which services residents and service users value as essential

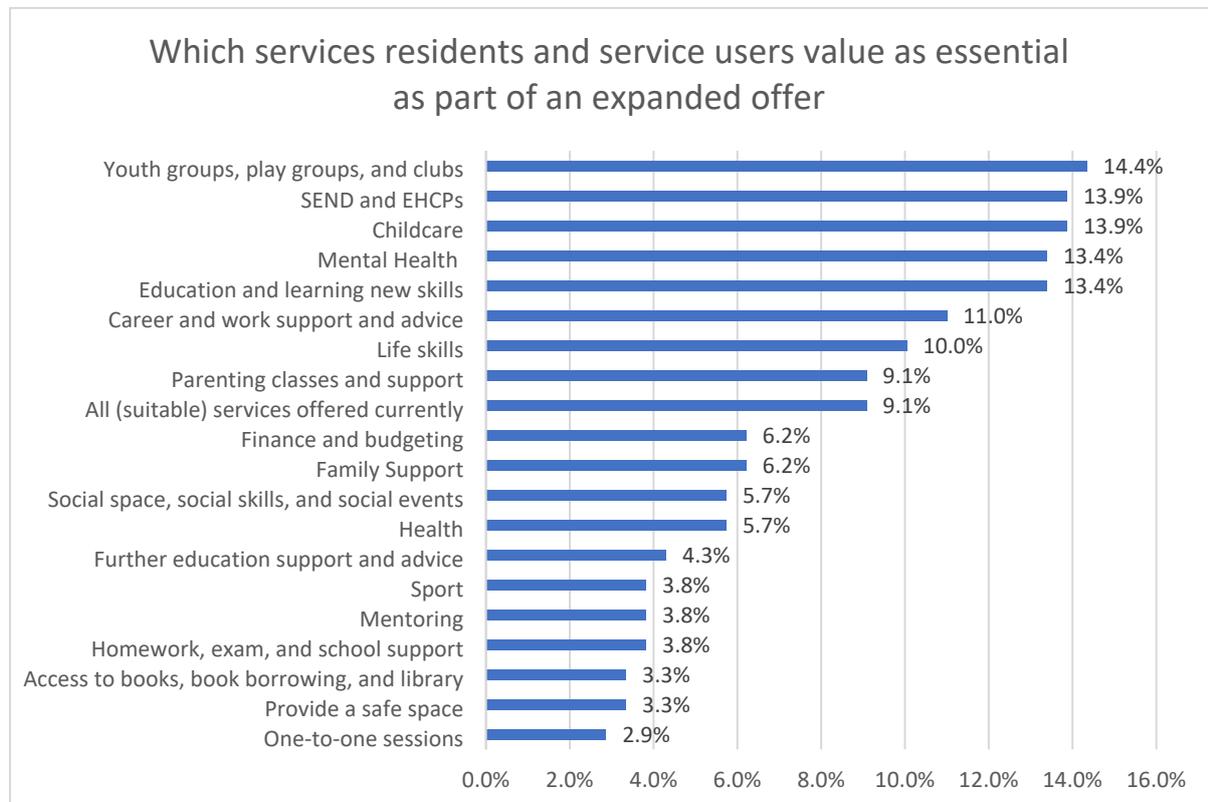


The blue bars are responses from all 350 respondents. The orange bars are responses from only the 63 respondents with a child with a disability.

Q13: If in future we were to expand services to families with older children and young people up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND), what services would you feel would be essential?

209 respondents wrote in answers. The most frequent responses were:

- Youth groups, play groups, and clubs – 30 responses (14.4% of respondents)
- Childcare (including wrap around, after school, breakfast clubs, and during school holidays), and SEND and EHCPs support – tied with 29 responses (13.9%)
- Education and learning new skills, and mental health support – tied with 28 responses (13.4%)
- Career and work support and advice – 23 responses (11.0%)
- Life skills – 21 responses (10.0%)



7 respondents (3.3%) did not agree with extending services to older children or wanted to focus on existing children’s services for now.

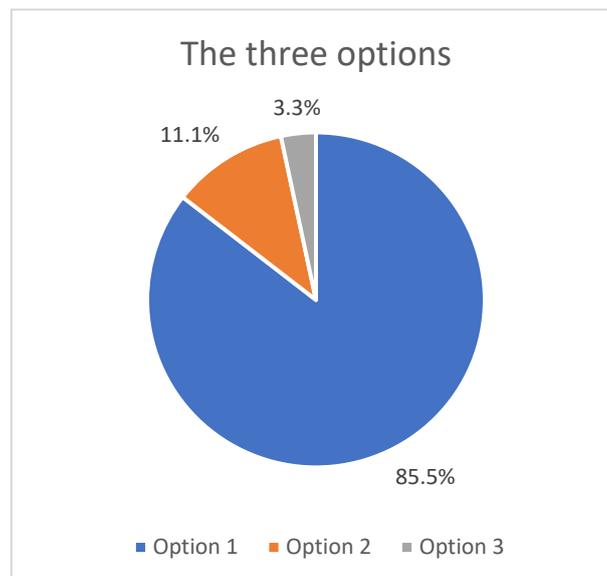
The options

All 410 respondents were asked the following questions regarding the proposed options (Q14-16). However, due to an error with the wording of Question 14 in the consultation document that was originally published, there was a need to validate the first 65 responses. An email was sent to respondents where an email address was provided. 39 of these respondents provided their email addresses and were contacted to validate their responses. 18 responded and 16 validated their

responses (2 responded to the email but did not choose an option). This resulted in 359 valid responses for Q14 and 15. All 410 responses were valid for Q16.

Q14: After reading the proposal for change to Slough Borough Council's Children's Centre provision, what are your thoughts about our proposal to make changes to Slough's Children's Centres? Listed below are three options to consider. Please choose the option that you believe is the best option for Slough Borough Council.

Option 1 (3 Children's Centre model) was the most frequently selected option, receiving 307 responses (85.5%). Option 2 (2 Centre model) received 40 responses (11.1%), and option 3 (1 Centre model) received 12 responses (3.3%).



Q15: Please tell us why you chose that option.

350 respondents wrote in a response to this question. The most frequent responses were:

- Wanting to keep more than 3 Children's Centres open - 98 respondents (28.0%)
- Not agreeing with any of the options and wanting to keep all 10 Centres open - 78 respondents (22.3%)
- Choosing option 1 because it kept the highest number of Centres open - 51 respondents (14.6%)
- Wanting the "four main" Centres to stay open (Penn Road, Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Monksfield Way) - 19 responses (5.4%)
- Praise for the current Centres - 59 respondents (16.9%)

Several respondents named specific Centres in their responses, praising them and/or saying they would like that Centre to stay open:

- Penn Road – 38 responses (10.9%)
- Romsey Close – 24 responses (6.9%)

- Monksfield Way – 17 responses (4.9%)
- Yew Tree Road – 17 responses (4.9%)
- Chalvey Grove – 9 responses (2.6%)
- Vicarage Way – 5 responses (1.4%)
- Orchard Avenue – 1 response (0.3%)

The most frequent concerns or risks raised in responses were around:

- Reducing services that meet needs (including where will children and parents go to access these services and will there be enough capacity for everyone to access the services at the remaining Centres) – 52 responses (14.9%)
- Limiting access, especially due to travel times, travel availability/access, and costs – 43 responses (12.3%)
- Affecting work (including not being able to work without childcare provision, having to reduce hours, or not being able to travel to a Centre and then get to work on time) – 22 responses (6.3%)
- Not being able to access alternative provision (including availability and costs) – 18 responses (5.1%)
- Reducing early prevention, signposting and referral to other services and information – 16 responses (1.7%)
- Loss of safe spaces and safeguarding for vulnerable children and adults – 6 responses (1.7%)

The following are some quotes from responses:

- “The delivery of accessible Early Childhood services is evident in national research to have a significant impact on positive outcomes for children. Since the pandemic, we have seen a reduction in children's centre services and a subsequent knock on effect of increasing needs for children requiring statutory services because needs have not been met early. There has been a decrease in face to face support for residents in Slough which impacts on accessibility with many of our residents lacking access to technology or technical ability to access the current service offer from sbc”
- “Children's Centres in Slough have historically been considered a safe place for victims of domestic abuse, with many seeking solace as they make disclosures about DA, due to the placement of Children's centres on school sites.”
- “There will be too many vulnerable families being missed, which will definitely impact children's child protection. Also to close that many nursery's, will directly Impact parents. They will be pushed to private day nursery's some at double the cost. There will also not be enough places to to cover all those children.”
- “Travelling for some parents would be difficult. with the amount of people in the area waiting lists will be long”
- “We are both parents working and to drop & pick up we need to be close to our house, we dont have a car, otherwise we can loose our job if need to walk to [another centre]”

- “A reduction in the children's centres could result in the most vulnerable children and families being missed for the support they may require. This will also have an impact on slough children's services.”

Q16: If you have any other options you think the council should consider, please state these.

254 respondents wrote in a response to this question.

133 respondents (52.4%) mentioned wanting to keep more centres open.

- 65 respondents (25.6%) mentioned wanting to keep all centres open.
- 19 respondents (7.5%) specifically mentioned keeping the “four main Centres to stay open (Penn Road, Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Monksfield Way).
 - 7 respondents (2.8%) specifically mentioned keeping the “main four” plus Yew Tree Road open.
- 15 (5.9%) specifically mentioned keeping a different arrangement of three centres open: Romsey Close, Chalvey Grove, and Yew Tree Road.

Several respondents named specific Childrens’ Centres they want to stay open:

- Penn Road – 30 respondents (11.8%)
- Monksfield Way – 26 respondents (10.2%)
- Yew Tree Road – 23 respondents (9.1%)
- Chalvey Grove – 21 respondents (8.3%)
- Romsey Close – 20 respondents (7.9%)
- Vicarage Way – 7 respondents (2.9%)
- Elliman Avenue – 1 respondent (0.4%)
- Wexham Road – 1 respondent (0.4%)

More detailed and specific suggestions included:

- Hiring out the buildings when not in use for children, e.g., for evening classes, community groups, and external organisations to use
- More working in partnership with schools and the private, voluntary, and independent sector
- Expanding outreach provision to engage with more families
- Expanding paid for services such as childcare for older children
- Offering online services and support

The following are some quotes from responses:

- “I say Monksfield Way needs to be added to this list, make it 4 Centres, one for each part of the town, and let the Britwell Community come together, supported by partners and the Council and make it financially viable.”
- “Keep 5 centre's the original 4 penn road, chalvey Grove, monksfield way and Romsey close and the central slough centre yew tree road as I believe this would be beneficial to the children and families of slough with all major areas covered. I live in [redacted] and if I had to travel to [a different centre] I simply

wouldn't use the centres as they would be too difficult to get to having to get 2 buses or walking 45 mins to 1 hour each way to the centres would be too much”

- “I suggest keeping Vicarage Way Children's Centre as it's on the outskirts of Slough and so many residents, especially children, need this centre to stay open so they can attend activities and use the only satellite library service available in the Colnbrook area”
- “Consider allowing the space to be rented by outside organisations in the evenings eg Antenatal Education, language classes etc”
- “Creating mini hubs in community centers with access to technology, to access web chat contact with leading professions who can provide support and advice about child health and learning/ development”
- “Staffing children centres seems to be an issue, so use staff differently. Have the experts in Early Years focus on the nursery/childcare provision. Then have a room for NHS, a room for DWP, a room for SBC housing etc.”
- “...you need to close the ones without education. You need to look at those education settings becoming centres of excellence and providing support to the PVI sector” ... “You could work in partnership with EY funding to upskill PVIs using the CC model and ensure that settings can only claim EY funding if they engage. You could further partner with linked Primary schools to enhance early years understanding amongst qualified teachers. You could develop a model similar to the Slough Nursery Schools network and look at charging for your experience. You could run seminars for all sorts of professionals, at a cost. You could offer an "advisory service" at a cost. You could use CCs as a venue for other speakers on education, health etc. matters.”
- “I believe the council should continue to provide options for nursery care for baby onwards as a private option and generate revenue for the council”
- “My option would be to let the Nurseries lead on the education side, as they have for many years, there is no reason why they couldn't work collaboratively with Children's Centre. They would then be free to concentrate and run excellent childcare provision (both paid & funded) at a smaller number of centres targeted where the need is and also run centres for excellent Early Years Family Support, such as health visitor weigh ins, Special Needs Units and referrals, play groups, courses & help for parents, advisory sessions CAB etc. to support families who need it the most.”
- “Provide some of these facilities in libraries, which would reduce costs, but maintain provision of facilities and help keep libraries open as well.”

Partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Slough Children's Centres

Q17: Are you a resident or service user, or a partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in a Slough Children's Centre?

340 respondents selected “resident or service user” (82.9%) and 70 respondents (17.1%) selected “partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in Children’s Centre in Slough”. Only partner organisations, stakeholders, service providers, and Children’s Centre staff answered the following questions (Q18-23).

Q18: What is your organisation?

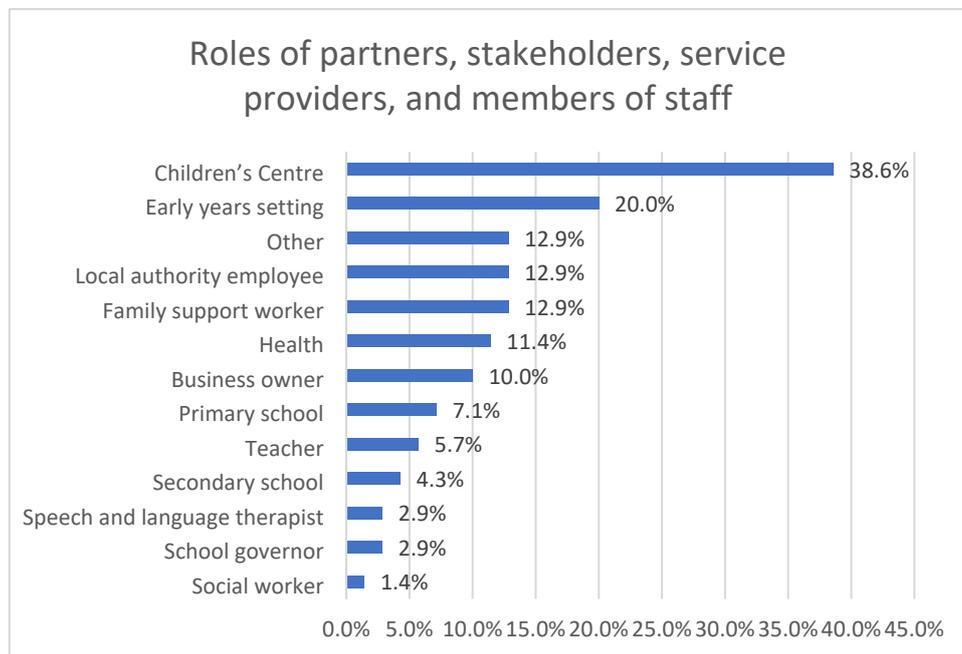
The most common organisations written in by the 70 partners were:

- Children’s Centres – 14 responses (20%)
- Slough Borough Council – 12 responses (17%)
- Schools – 11 responses (16%)
- Slough Children First – 6 responses (9%)
- Early Years Services – 5 responses (7%)

Q19: As a partner, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff, which of the following (if any) closely matches your role?

27 of the 70 respondents (38.6%) selected “Children’s Centre” as their role, 14 (20.0%) selected “Early years setting”, and 9 (12.9%) selected “Family support worker”, “Local authority employee” or “Other”.

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Slough Children First, Learning Advocate, Housekeeping, Pre-school, and therapeutic adviser.



Q20: From your perspective as a current or future service partner, stakeholder or early years provider please tell us how the proposals impact your aims and objectives?

70 respondents wrote in responses to this question.

12 responses (17.1%) suggested that they may be able to continue with their work (with some changes to adapt to the change in Centres).

Other responses raised the following concerns:

- Whether children and parents would still be able to access services (e.g., “where will the children go”, will there be enough capacity or longer waiting lists) - 16 respondents (22.9%)
- The impact on children’s outcomes and/or that children would miss out on support and opportunities - 12 respondents (17.1%)
- Decreased uptake in their services - 7 respondents (10.0%)
- The impact on support and identification of children with SEND - 6 respondents (8.6%)
- Other concerns included the loss of early years provision, access to child care, partnership opportunities, and opportunities to identify and support vulnerable families.

The following are some quotes from responses:

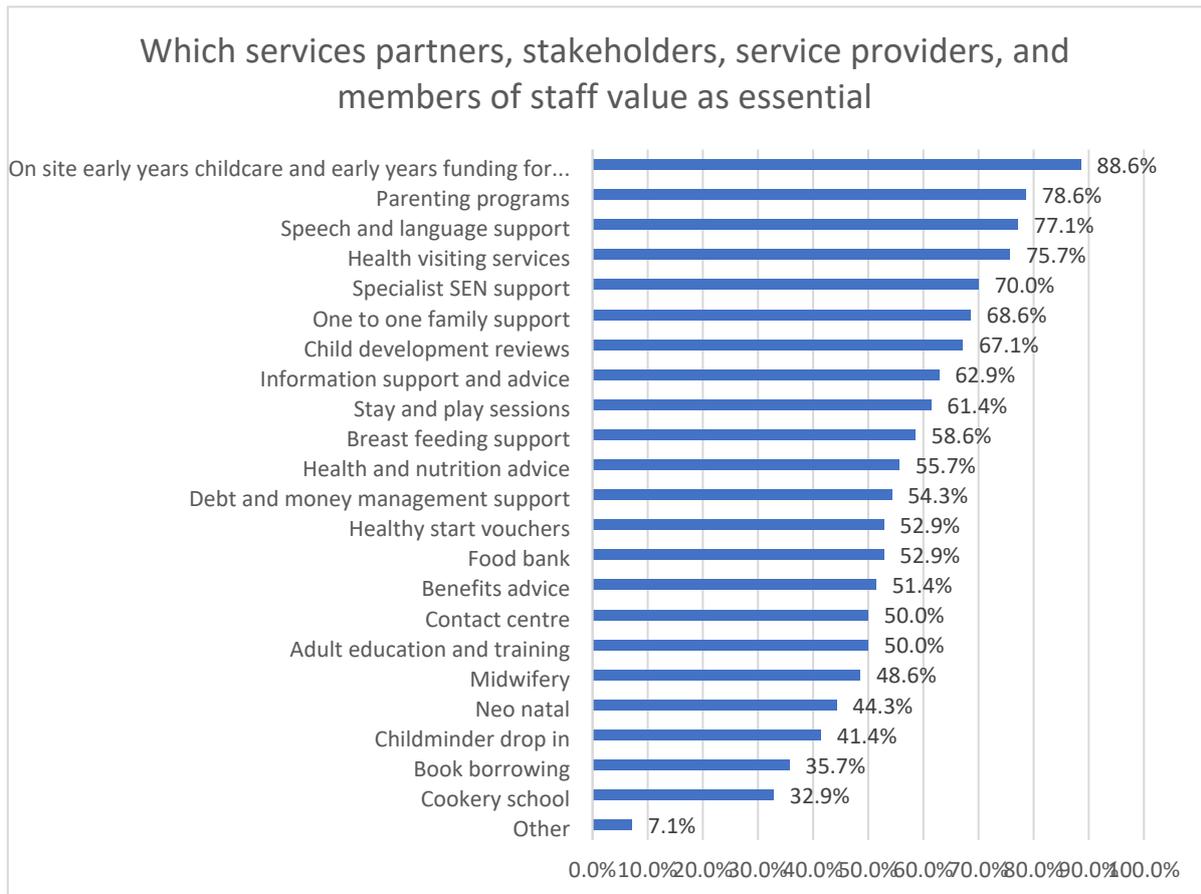
- “I feel closing the centres leave people out of work and children out of care. Some children rely on a session at the children’s centre for a cooked meal, routine and care. Their parents need support and respite with challenging children and children with SEN. It is important to make sure families are getting the right support and to have members of staff to take to for help. It’s also known a child who starts nursery at 2 has a better outcome in school.”
- “The availability of a centre in the 3 main areas in Slough means we will still be able to arrange and meet clients at the children centres. Our presence at the Family Centres also keeps our service at the forefront and staff can refer families to us when issues we support with arise within a family who are service users.”
- “Less opportunity to work in partnership with Children’s center and professional staff.”
- “We will have to look for other venues to deliver our services. We will have less places to refer our families to.”
- “Delivery of Early Help needs to be localised and accessible within communities. The delivery of parenting programmes, SEND outreach and localised direct work with young people will not be possible without access to the safe space of our children’s centres which will decrease accessibility to this much needed support from my team”

Q21: Which of the following services in Children’s Centres do you feel are essential in supporting improved outcomes for children and families?

The 70 partners, stakeholders, service providers, and staff in Children’s Centres were asked to select from a list which services they feel are essential in supporting improved outcomes for children and families. The top 10 options selected were:

- On site early years childcare and early years funding for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds - 62 responses (88.6% of respondents)

- Parenting programs - 55 responses (78.6%)
- Speech and language support - 54 respondents (77.1%)
- Health visiting services - 53 responses (75.7%)
- Specialist SEN support - 49 responses (70.0%)
- One to one family support – 48 responses (68.6%)
- Child development reviews – 47 responses (67.1%)
- Information support and advice – 44 responses (62.9%)
- Stay and play session – 43 responses (61.4%)
- Breast feeding support – 41 responses (58.6%)

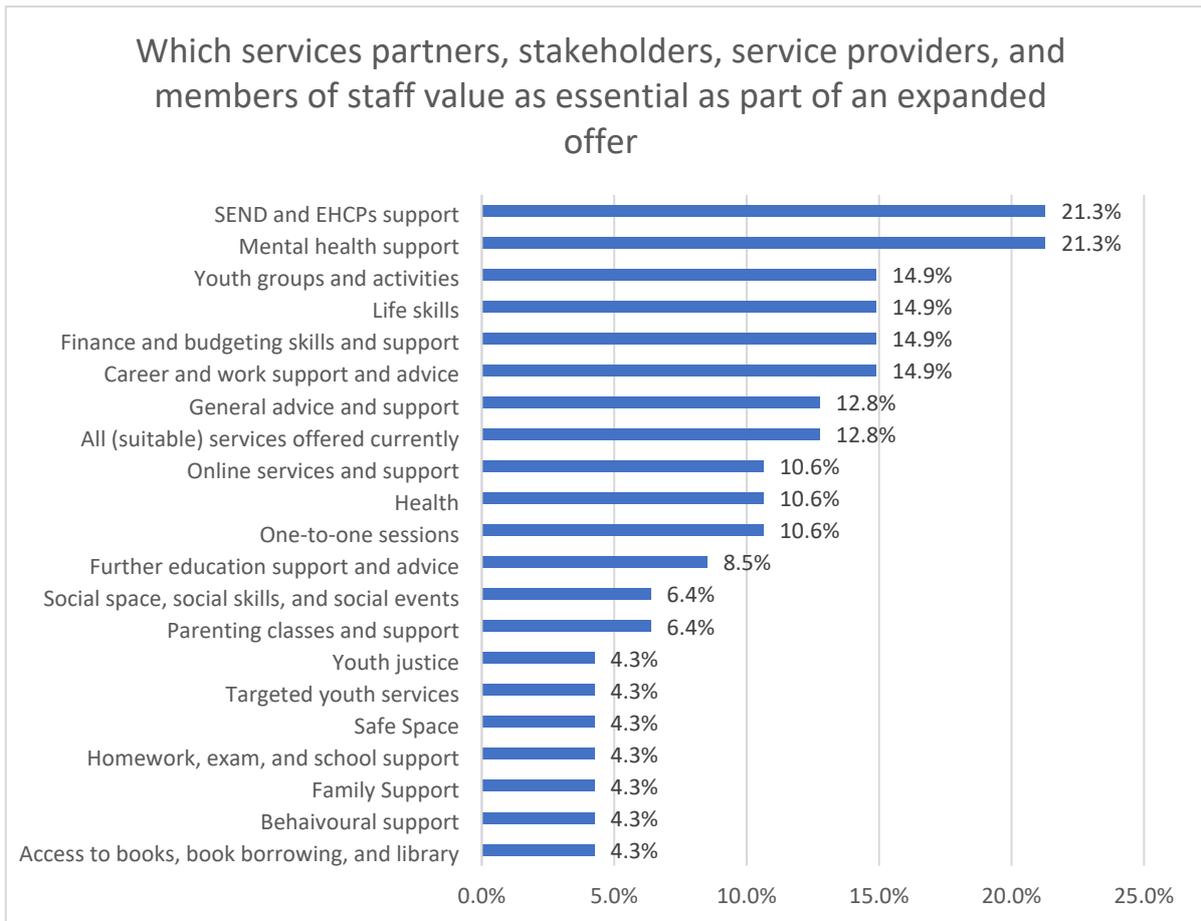


Respondents could select more than one option.

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included baby massage, story and rhyme, online support, support networks, and classes for parents.

Q22: If in future we were to expand services to families with older children and young people up to age 18 (or age 25 if they have SEND), what services would you feel would be essential?

47 respondents wrote-in a response to this question. The most frequent responses were mental health support and SEND and ECHPs support, being mentioned in 10 responses each (21.3% of respondents).



Q23: Are you a member of staff in one of the ten named Children’s Centres in Slough?

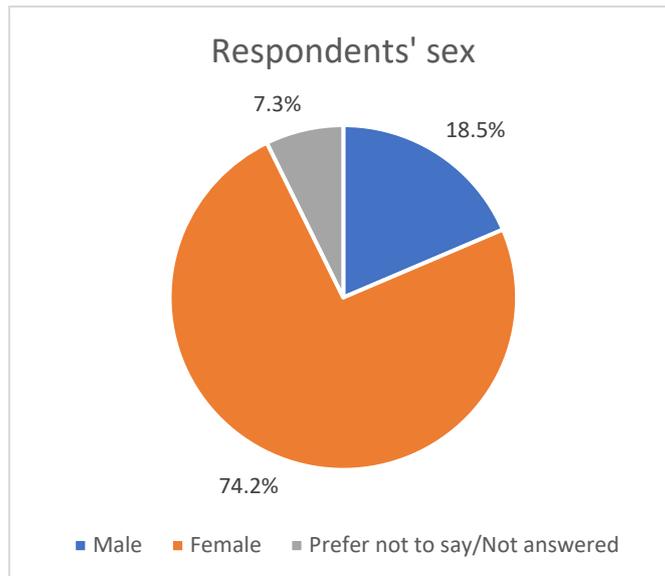
32 of the 70 respondents (45.7% of the 70 responses, 7.8% of the total 410 consultation respondents) answered that they are members of staff in one of the ten named Children’s Centres in Slough.

Demographic information

Only residents, service users, and members of staff in Slough Children’s Centres (372 respondents) answered the following questions (Q24-43). All these questions were optional and respondents that did not wish to answer could either skip the question (“not answered”) or select “prefer not to say” as an answer – these answers have been combined in the follow results and tables.

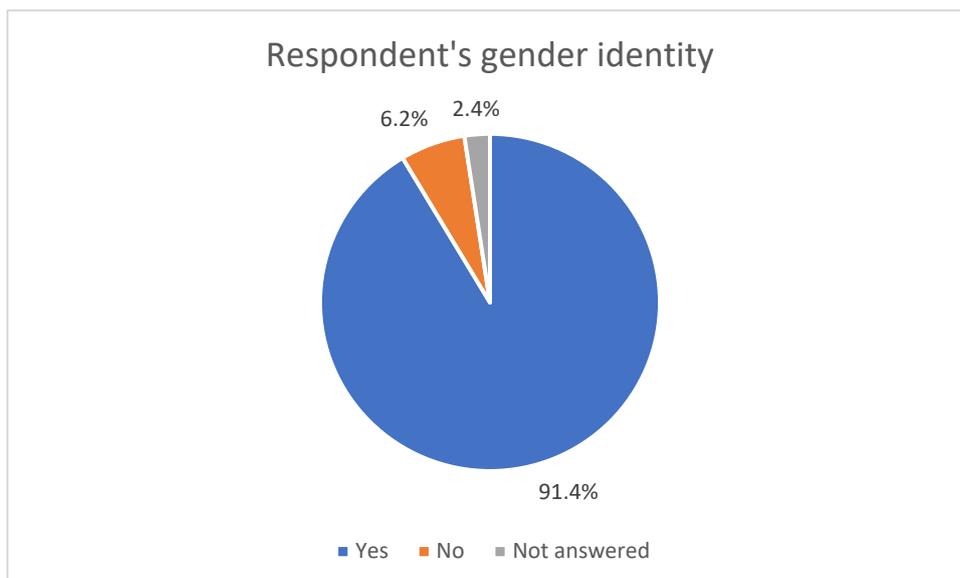
Q24: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) sex (as registered at birth)?

276 respondents (74.2%) were female and 69 (18.5%) were male.



Q25: Is the gender you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

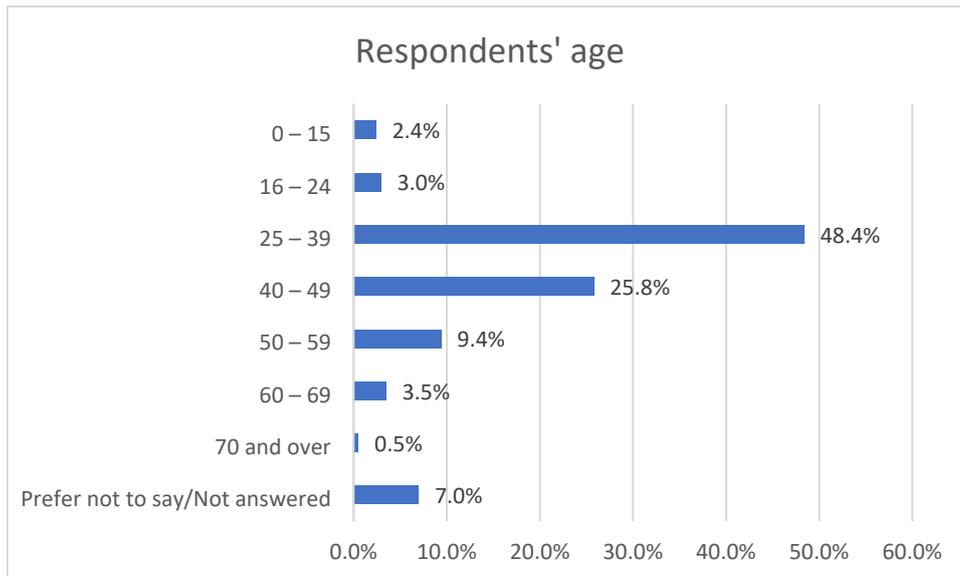
340 respondents (91.4%) answered yes (they identify as the same gender that they were assigned at birth). 23 respondents (6.2%) answered no.



Most respondents who answered no did not specify their gender identity. 3 respondents wrote in identities – 2 male and 1 female. This aligns with the 2021 census, where most people in Slough and nationally that selected “no” did not specify an identity.

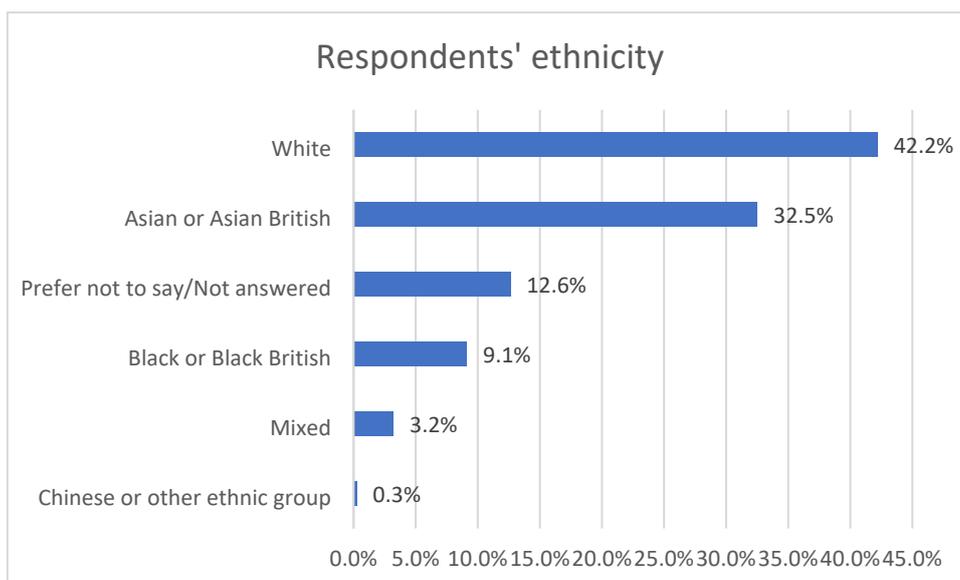
Q26: What is your age (or the age of the person you are responding on behalf of)?

180 respondents (48.4%) were aged 25-39 and 96 (25.8%) were aged 40-49.



Q27: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) ethnic group?

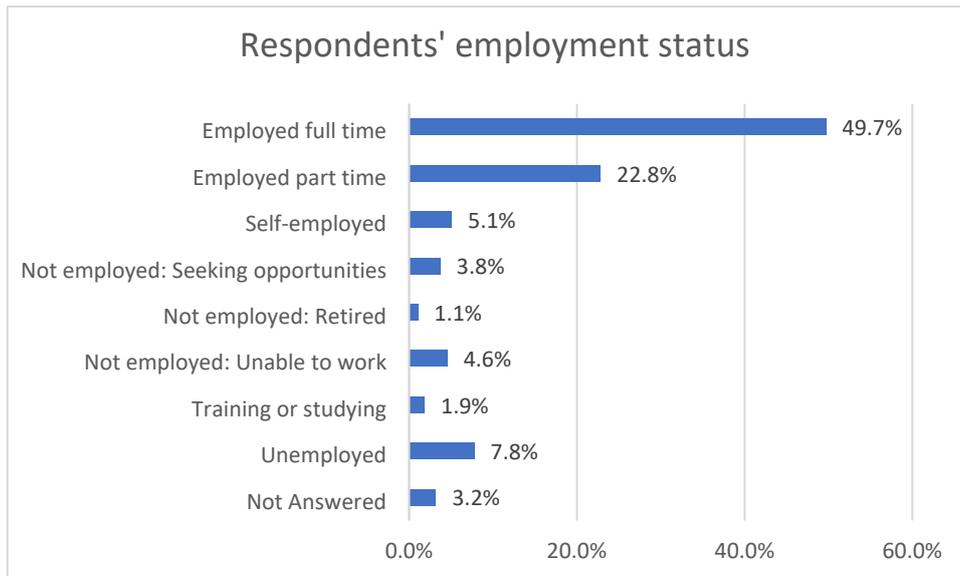
157 respondents (42%) were from White ethnic groups and 121 (33%) were from Asian ethnic groups.



Q28: What is your employment status?

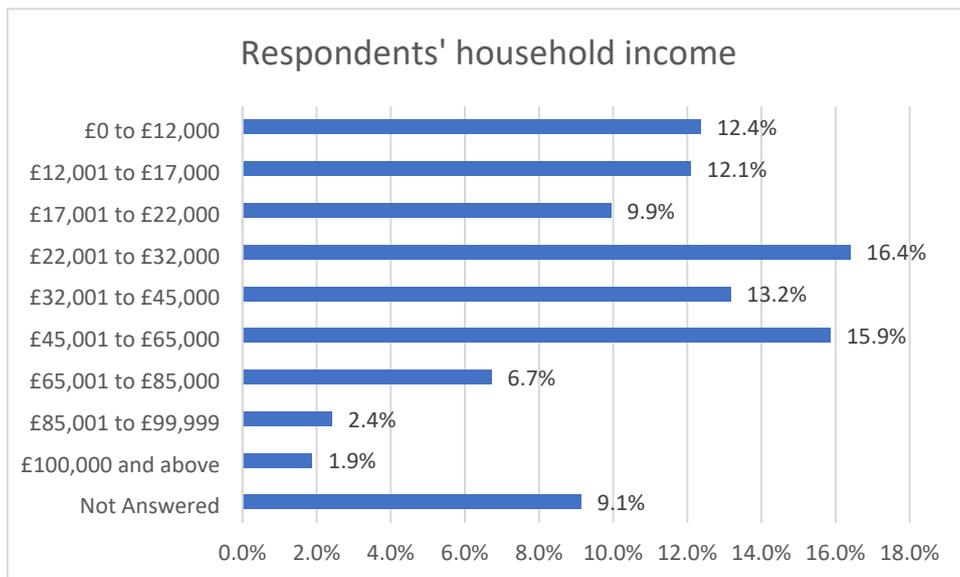
289 respondents were employed (77.7%), with 185 (49.7%) employed full time, 85 (22.9%) employed part time, and 19 (5.1%) self-employed.

71 respondents were not in employment (19.1%), with 29 unemployed (7.8%), 17 (4.6%) unable to work, and 14 seeking opportunities (3.8%).



Q29: What is your household income?

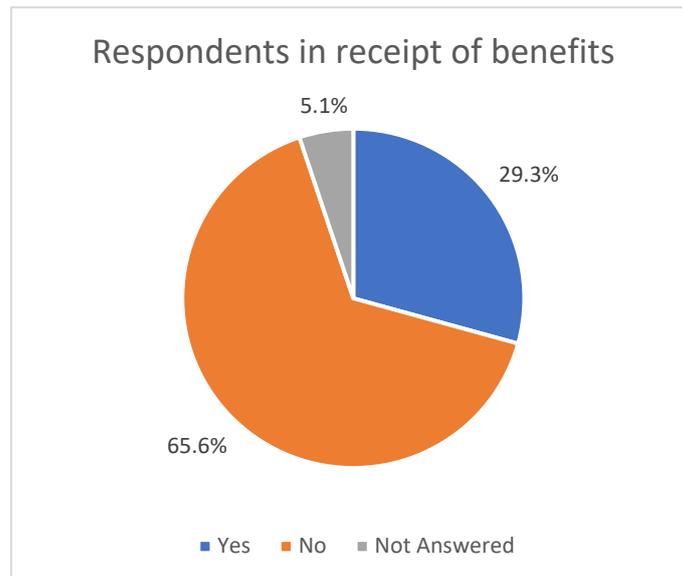
The most frequent responses were £22,001 to £32,000 (61 responses, 16.4%) and £45,001 to £65,000 (59 responses, 15.9%).



Household income	Total	Percent
£0 to £12,000	46	12.4%
£12,001 to £17,000	45	12.1%
£17,001 to £22,000	37	9.9%
£22,001 to £32,000	61	16.4%
£32,001 to £45,000	49	13.2%
£45,001 to £65,000	59	15.9%
£65,001 to £85,000	25	6.7%
£85,001 to £99,999	9	2.4%
£100,000 and above	7	1.9%
Not Answered	34	9.1%

Q30: Are you in receipt of any benefits?

109 respondents (29.3%) were in receipt of benefits and 244 (65.6%) were not.

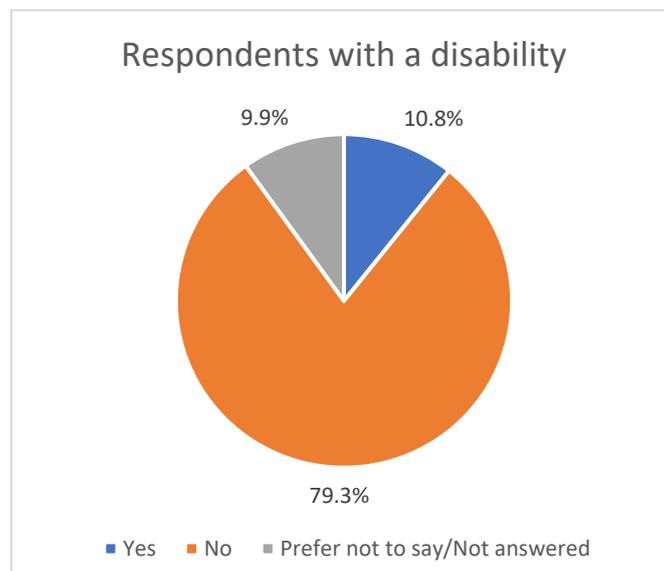


Respondents were also asked to write-in which benefits they receive. 82 respondents wrote-in responses. The most frequent responses were:

- Universal Credit – 40 responses
- Child Benefit – 20 responses
- Tax Credits – 10 responses
- Income Support – 4 responses
- Disability Living Allowance – 4 responses
- Carer’s Allowance – 3 responses
- Housing Benefit – 3 responses

Q31: Do you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) have a disability?

40 respondents (10.8%) have a disability and 295 (79.3%) do not.



Q32: If you have a disability, please tell us which of the following impairment groups apply to you.

Of the 40 respondents that selected “yes” they have a disability for Q31, the most frequent impairment selected was mental health/mental distress issues (11 respondents, 27.5% of respondents)

Respondents with a disability – impairment groups (1)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	1	2.5%
Physical impairment	2	5.0%
Deaf/BSL User	1	2.5%
Hearing impairment	0	0.0%
Mental health/mental distress issues	11	27.5%
Learning difficulties	8	20.0%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	6	15.0%
Neurodiverse	9	22.5%
Prefer not to say	3	7.5%
Other (please specify)	3	7.5%
No. Eligible Respondents	40	

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Autism and specific health conditions (e.g., heart disease).

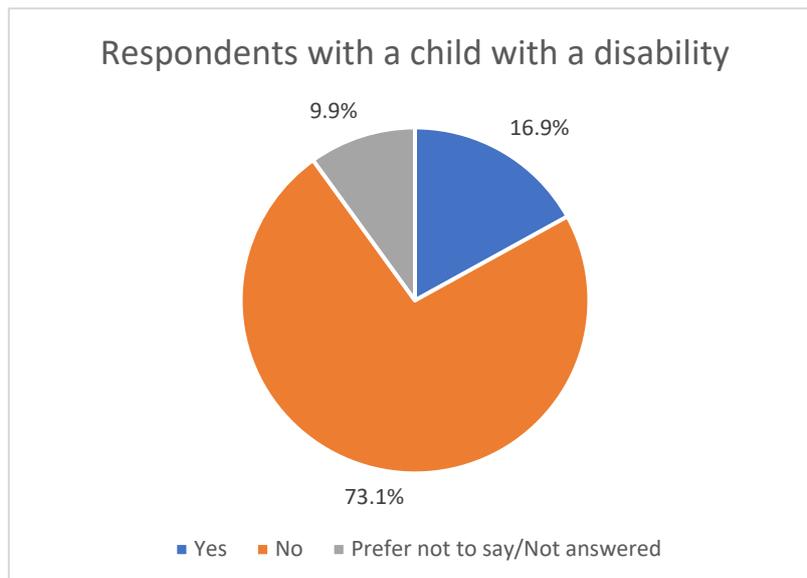
7 respondents selected “no”, “prefer not to say” or did not answer Q31 but then selected an answer for Q32: 5 responses for mental health/mental distress issues, 2 for long term health condition/hidden impairment, and 1 for visual impairment. These responses have been added to the table below in addition to the responses from the 40 respondents that selected “yes” for Q31.

Respondents with a disability – impairment groups (2)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	2	4.3%
Physical impairment	2	4.3%
Deaf/BSL User	1	2.1%
Hearing impairment	0	0.0%
Mental health/mental distress issues	16	34.0%
Learning difficulties	8	17.0%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	8	17.0%
Neurodiverse	9	19.1%
Prefer not to say	3	6.4%
Other (please specify)	3	6.4%
No. Respondents	47	

Q33: Do you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) have a child (someone under the age of 18) that has a disability?

63 respondents (16.9%) have a child with a disability and 272 (73.1%) do not.



Q34: If you have a child with a disability, please tell us which of the following impairment groups apply to your child

Of the 63 respondents that selected “yes” they have a child with a disability for Q33, the most frequent impairment selected was learning difficulties (21 respondents, 33.3% of respondents)

Respondents with a child with a disability – impairment groups (1)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	0	0.0%
Physical impairment	0	0.0%
Deaf/BSL User	0	0.0%
Hearing impairment	1	1.6%
Mental health/mental distress issues	2	3.2%
Learning difficulties	21	33.3%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	7	11.1%
Neurodiverse	13	20.6%
Prefer not to say	4	6.3%
Other (please specify)	11	17.5%
No. Eligible Respondents	63	

Of those that selected “other” and specified, responses included Autism (7 responses), ADHD, and specific health conditions (e.g., diabetes).

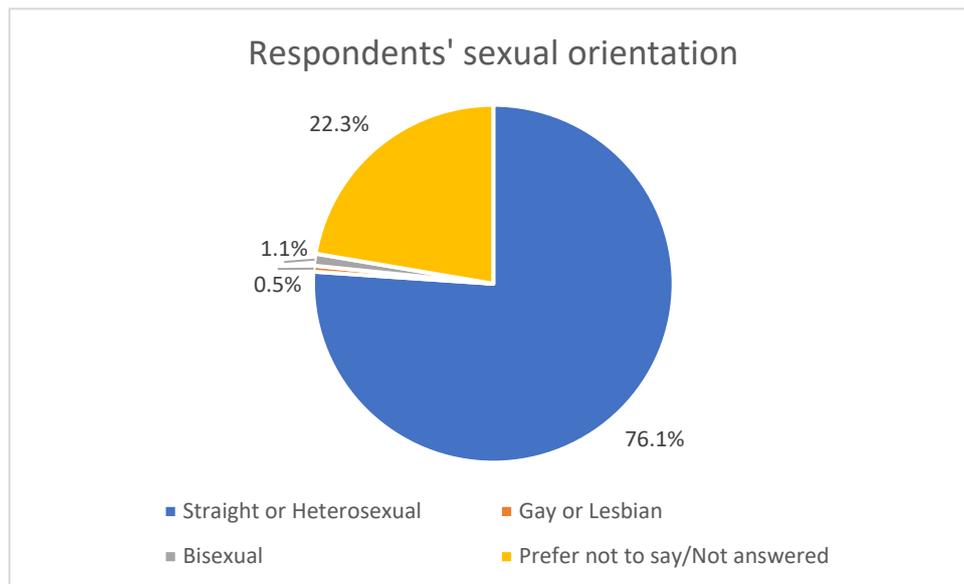
7 respondents selected “no”, “prefer not to say” or did not answer Q33 but then selected an answer for Q34: 4 responses for learning difficulties, 1 for physical impairment, 1 for mental health/mental distress issues, and 1 for neurodiverse. These responses have been added to the table below in addition to the responses from the 63 respondents that selected “yes” for Q31.

Respondents with a child with a disability – impairment groups (2)

Impairment Group	Total	Percent
Visual impairment	0	0.0%
Physical impairment	1	1.4%
Deaf/BSL User	0	0.0%
Hearing impairment	1	1.4%
Mental health/mental distress issues	3	4.3%
Learning difficulties	25	35.7%
Long term health condition/hidden impairment	7	10.0%
Neurodiverse	14	20.0%
Prefer not to say	4	5.7%
Other (please specify)	11	15.7%
No. Respondents	70	

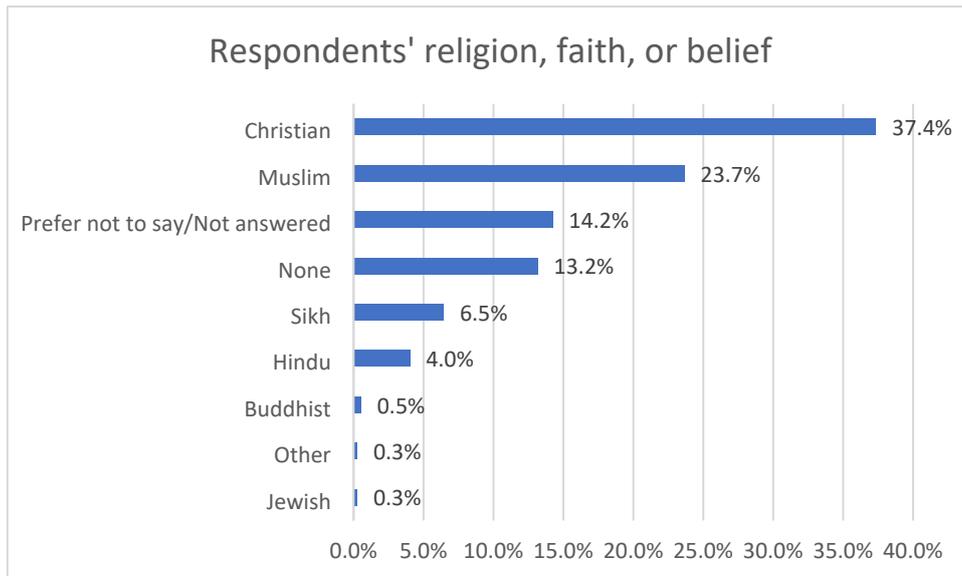
Q35: How would you (or the person you are responding on behalf of) describe your sexual orientation?

283 respondents (76.1%) identified as straight or heterosexual, 2 (0.5%) identified as gay or lesbian, and 4 (1.1%) identified as bisexual.



Q36: What is your (or the person you are responding on behalf of) religion, faith, or belief?

139 respondents (37.4%) were Christian and 88 (23.7%) were Muslim.



Q37: If you are female, are you pregnant?

4 respondents (1.1%) were pregnant.

Q38: If you are female, have you had a baby in the last 12 months?

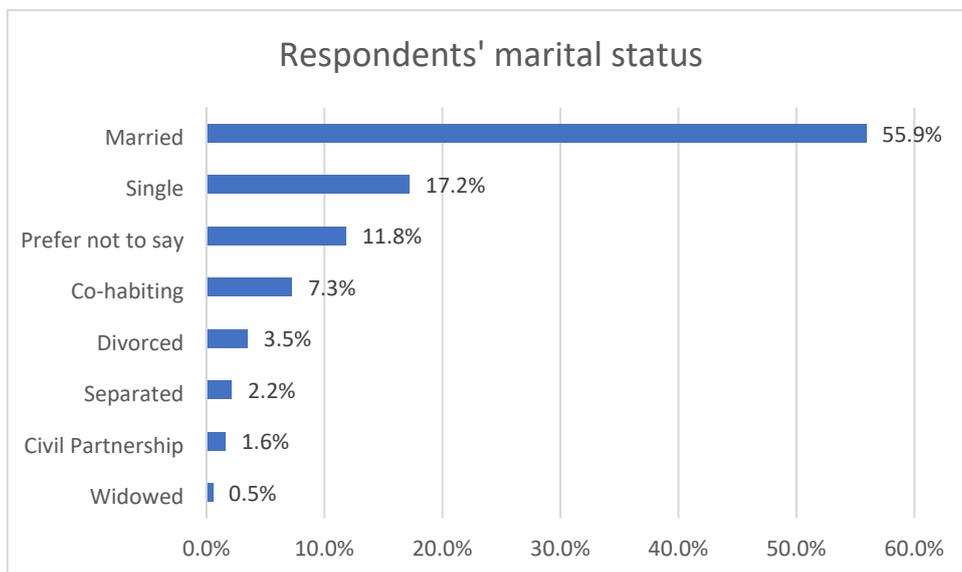
39 respondents (10.5%) had a baby in the last 12 months.

Q39: Are you a carer for a child or young person aged 0 - 25?

175 respondents (47.0%) answered that they were a carer for a child or young person aged 0-25. However, this proportion is higher than expected and it is possible that some respondents may not have understood what was meant by “carer”. 150 respondents (40.3%) answered that they were not a carer for a child or young person.

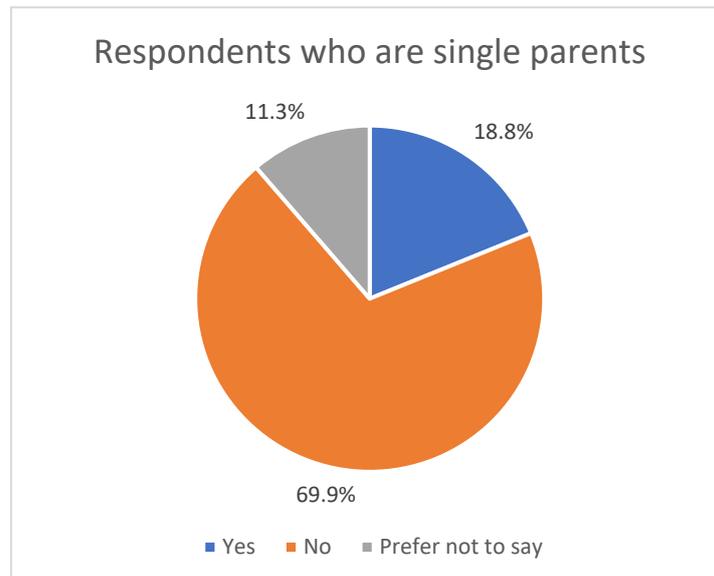
Q40: Are you married or in a civil partnership?

208 respondents (55.9%) were married and 64 (17.2%) were single.



Q41: Are you a single parent?

70 respondents (18.8%) were single parents and 260 (69.9%) were not.



Data Quality Considerations and Corrections

- Q14-16: All 410 respondents were asked Q14-16 regarding the proposed options. However, there was an issue with Q14 that resulted in the need to revalidate the answers from the 65 respondents who answered the survey before the issue was identified. 39 of these respondents provided their email addresses and were contacted to validate their responses. 18 responded and 16 validated their responses (2 responded to the email but did not choose an option). This resulted in 359 valid responses for Q14 and 15. All 410 responses were valid for Q16.
- Q6&17: In Q6, all respondents were asked if they use Children’s Centres to access services. Partners, stakeholders, service providers, and members of staff in Children’s Centres were advised to select “not applicable” instead of “yes” or “no”. 60 respondents selected “not applicable”. In Q17, all respondents were asked if they were a “resident or service user” or “partner organisation, stakeholder, service provider, or member of staff in a Slough Children’s Centre” and 70 people selected “partner organisation...”, which is 10 people more than in Q6. While we cannot confirm why some respondents answered Q6 and 17 differently, it is possible that some of these respondents may also be service users so selected “yes” for Q6.
- Q32&34: These questions asked those who have a disability or a child with a disability to tick which of the impairments listed applied. Some respondents who selected “no”, “prefer not to say”, or did not answer the previous questions asking if they had a disability (Q31&33) then answered Q32&34. Most of these responses were “prefer not to say” and were removed from the analysis for Q32&34, however those who selected specific impairments were

included in the analyses. All responses from those who selected “yes” for Q31&33 were included in the analyses.

4. Focus Group results in detail

4.1 While the feedback from the focus groups was very constructive and the members of public appreciated having their voice heard, many had concerns about the proposal and the three options that were presented.

4.2 Feedback headlines by stakeholder group

Residents' views -

- There was limited information presented on the future service offer.
- It felt as though a decision had already been made as the options were limited.
- It was not clear if the buildings themselves would still be used for another purpose.
- The scale of reduction seems severe.
- Is there an option to phase the closure of the centres.
- Travel times to reach centres will increase for many families.
- This felt like a short-term plan without a long-term vision.
- Removing childcare options could mean parents having to stop working or reduce their working hours.

Health professionals' views -

- Concerned about the scale of the closures and the pace.
- Many health services run from the centres that will be closing, and it is not clear where they could be delivered from in the future.
- Centres are a safe and accessible space, which enables clinics and drop-in sessions to run.
- Returning to home visits for a range of services would be inefficient and add risk to the service staff.
- Returning to home visits for all health visiting services would not be practical after the reduction in the numbers of Health Visitors covering Slough.
- Families may be unwilling or unable to travel.
- Challenges that families face could become ‘hidden’ again if access to the centres reduces.

Headteachers' views -

- Concern for the impact on parents as well as children.
- Centres are often able to spot, refer, and support where there is domestic violence or post-natal depression.

- Slough has had high scores for children in the early years at Good Level of Development before starting school. There is a risk that this level could fall back and during a period where development levels are reducing in most local areas due the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

4.3 One of the themes that emerged from the focus groups was that it seemed as though the decision had already been made to choose one of the three options presented, with an overall aim to significantly reduce the number of children's centres remaining open. Some members of the public felt that there was **no opportunity to influence the outcome** of the consultation, which was further supported by the survey needing either option one, two or three to be picked before it allowed the user to move on. While most chose Option 1 in the survey, it was fed back that they only chose this due to there not being an option for other suggestions, which they felt supported their claim that the decision had already been made.

4.4 A further common theme was the **additional travel time** required to attend the centres that were remaining open and linked to this the additional cost if mode of transport had to switch from walking to public transport, or public transport to private vehicle. Many expressed concerns that they were unable to drive and so would either have to walk further with young children, increasing the time taken to get to the centre and back or to use public transport, which would increase the time taken to arrive at a proposed centre due to extended periods of time on the bus by travelling further or having to travel into Slough central and taking another bus out. This also raised concerns about the **increase in costs** the parent would have to endure amid a time of high cost of living.

4.5 A third theme was concerns around **waiting times to access services, childcare and early years provision** either at a children centre or a private or voluntary sector provider (PVI sector) if one of the three options proposed was chosen. PVI providers already have a waiting list and this would only increase if there were fewer children centres open. It was also raised that the potential children centres proposed to remain open are currently full and would not be able to meet the demand of the increase in children and parents trying to access services.

4.6 Many members of the public raised the question as to why 7 of the 10 centres would close at the same time and provided a suggestion of undertaking a **phased closure** to allow for families to prepare to move and attend a new centre. This would also allow the council to evaluate the effects of the closures without there being significant disruption to the services and subsequently delivering a less detrimental effect overall on children.

4.7 Through the focus group with **health professionals**, concerns were raised about there not being enough active centre's if one of the proposed option was to go forward to be able to run health services especially in a time post COVID where the need for intervention is increasing. The number of health visitors has already reduced in number making home visits even more impractical as the health visitor

cannot fit in as many home visits a day due to travel times between each location and needs the drop-in centres to alleviate this problem.

4.8 As part of the focus groups, headteachers also raised concerns that they had with the proposed options. One concern raised was that the **Good Level of Development scores** in Slough are currently above the national average and that there is a risk of lowering this to below average if there is less early years provision in place. Another concern raised was the impact it would have on adults who not only use it for their children but also a lifeline if they may be suffering from personal problems such as **post-natal depression or experiencing domestic violence**. If the number of centres were to reduce, then there may not be a safe space for these parents to go and risk missing out on safeguarding opportunities for these parents.

5 Responses received through email

5.1 Email feedback was received through the central mailbox - Childrens.Centres@slough.gov.uk and the council's complaints mailbox - Complaints@slough.gov.uk. In one instance an email came directly to the Group Manager for Children's Centres.

5.2 The 13 individual emails were all stored and reviewed. There was also 1 additional drawing passed on by a resident to a children's centre staff member. The themes of the emails and the drawing were considered and are reported in this section.

5.3 Email feedback was received from the following sources:

- An enquiry from a Member of Parliament's office.
- Experiences of residents who use a centre or whose children use a centre.
- Reflections from Slough Borough Council staff.
- Reflections from Slough Children First staff.
- Reflections from residents who use a centre, or whose children use a centre, and where they also express a view from the perspective of their profession which is linked in some way to child or family services.

5.4 It should be noted that emails were used to clarify responses to the online survey questions after a change was made early in the consultation period. The responses received through those emails are captured in the section outlining responses to the online survey and are not duplicated in this section.

5.5 The feedback received by email raised concerns and highlighted risks in relation to all three options that were consulted on. The common themes from the feedback received by email were:

- Overall concern for where services will be provided in the future.
- Reducing support in the early years will result in needs presenting more often and more acutely later in childhood and into adulthood.
- The rationale for closing children's centres is purely financial, and the problem was caused by council mismanagement.

- Centres enable engagement with vulnerable adults and children, and are often a safe space to talk, learn, and be signposted to further support.
- Centres engage positively with the Slough Virtual School to enable children to receive appropriate support.
- The current service provision is working well from a parent's perspective, and children are happy there.
- The current centres have helped to identify social communication needs early, supporting the parents to work with the correct professionals to get a formal diagnosis and a treatment pathway.
- The concept of moving to a new centre that is further from home raises anxieties such as cost of travel and the ability to maintain paid work for parents and carers.
- Queries over the sufficiency of childcare provision in the borough.
- A greater volume of emails received in support of retaining provision at Monksfield Way.

5.6 The themes that came through the email feedback correlated with the themes fed back through the focus groups and through the free text comments of the online survey. Overall, the options provided in the consultation present risks from the perspectives of parents, staff, and child and family professionals. These risks will be considered fully, and an option recommend to Cabinet that aims to mitigate those risks where feasible.