

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Starting Well Service 0 - 19 years (25 with Special Educational Needs)



Engagement Findings Report March 2025 to May 2025

Visit: cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/startingwell



Cheshire West
and Chester

Findings of the Starting Well engagement

1. Background to the engagement

The Starting Well service delivers support to children, young people, their families and carers across Cheshire West and Chester. The service is based mainly in Children's Centres but also delivers support in families and carers' homes, and in schools. The Starting Well team includes Health Visitors, nursery workers, early years workers and School Nurses. Support is provided around parenting, health and wellbeing and education.

The contract for the Starting Well service is due to end in June 2027, and this is an opportunity to ensure that the new service is providing support that families and young people need and that it is delivered in an accessible way.

The Starting Well engagement exercise was the first stage of this process and asked for initial ideas from people who use a Starting Well 0-19 service (up to 25 years old for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)), and those who don't, to understand what works well and what could be done better.

How the engagement was carried out

The engagement was open for 10 weeks, opening on 3 March 2025 and closing on 9 May 2025.

Stakeholders were able to share their views in a number of ways including via an online survey, an online ideas board and by attending one of a series of drop-in events, both online and in person across the borough at the following locations:

- Northwich Memorial Court
- Ellesmere Port Sports Village
- Wharton Library
- Neston Library
- The Very Green Grocery, Winsford Hub
- Holy Trinity Church, Blacon
- Asda, Ellesmere Port
- Frodsham Library
- Tarporley Library.

These events were advertised on the Council website, via social media, on town centre digital signs throughout the borough, and on digital noticeboards in GP practice waiting rooms.

Engagement was also undertaken with adults and children at 19 pre-existing groups across the borough at their preferred locations, including temporary accommodation

settings, parent carer SEND sessions, Youth Clubs and Stay and Play sessions. Further details of the sessions can be found in Appendix 1.

Attempts were made to engage with people at a local Mosque, with people attending the CHAWREC centre, the Cheshire West Association of Secondary Headteachers and with the Gypsy Roma Traveller community but we were unable to arrange sessions.

Six in person engagement events were held for providers and professionals who work alongside the Starting Well service. These included:

- Cheshire West Association of Primary Headteachers meeting
- Special Schools Headteachers meeting
- Early Help Navigators and Interventions Team meeting
- Cheshire West Voluntary Action Children and Families Alliance meeting
- Provider event at Ellesmere Port Civic Hall
- Event for Starting Well staff.

People could also share their views via email, post and telephone. Paper copies and easy read versions of the survey were available on request for those who did not have access to the online version.

Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the engagement and given the opportunity to have their say included emails to key stakeholder groups, Member Briefing, a social media campaign, posters and digital displays, press releases and presence on the Council's website and Participate Now platform. The use of social media and digital displays were limited due to the pre-election publicity period for the local by-election that started on 28 March 2025 and ended on 1 May 2025. This also required an event that was planned to be held in the constituency area within this period to be moved to a later date.

The engagement was also promoted through school newsletters and with pastoral school support staff, and an online webinar held for Providers and professionals.

Response to the engagement

468 responses to the engagement.

- 111 online responses
- 122 people attended the drop-in sessions
- 118 people were engaged with at existing groups
- 111 attended the events for providers and professionals
- 2 professionals provided feedback by email
- 3 individuals shared their views in person and by telephone
- 1 email response from a facilitated group of 15 individuals.

2. Overall key messages

Below are the overarching key messages from the 'Starting Well' engagement exercise. Many of the same key messages were raised by people with lived experience and providers and staff.

- The highest number of comments received were from people with lived experience
- The most comments received were about Children's Centres and the least about Starting school.

What is working well

- **Good support** – Experienced good support from the services received
- **Helpful and friendly staff** – Value the advice given by staff, which enabled people to feel supported and listened to
- **Classes and activities** – Enjoy the different classes and activities at Children's Centres, in particular Stay and Play, playgroup, baby massage, child weighing sessions, weaning and first aid.

Areas for improvement

- **Communication and promotion** – Improve general communication and promotion of the Starting Well brand, being clear about the age range it covers, and the services included. Improve the promotion of School Readiness support, ChatHealth, Dad's support and services offered at Children's Centres
- **Support for dad's** – Increase the support offer to make dads feel included. Suggestions included having dad only groups and for support to be available in the evenings and at weekends
- **Developmental checks** – Ensure children are receiving all the mandatory developmental checks on offer
- **Children's Centre buildings** – Extend the opening times of centres to evenings and weekends. Consider the timings of activities and what's available for young people to improve the offer to families. Invest resources to make buildings fit for purpose
- **Provision of support** – Provide equal support across different areas of the borough
- **Better support within schools** – including school nurses being more visible and more support for families with primary school children.

3. Detailed engagement findings

This section of the report includes analysis of the survey results, face-to-face engagement with key stakeholders and provider events.

For more information on each of the services provided by Starting Well, please refer to Appendix 3.

Respondents were asked which Starting Well services they had used. The following chart shows the number of responses from the survey. People were able to select more than one response.

Chart 1: Starting Well services used

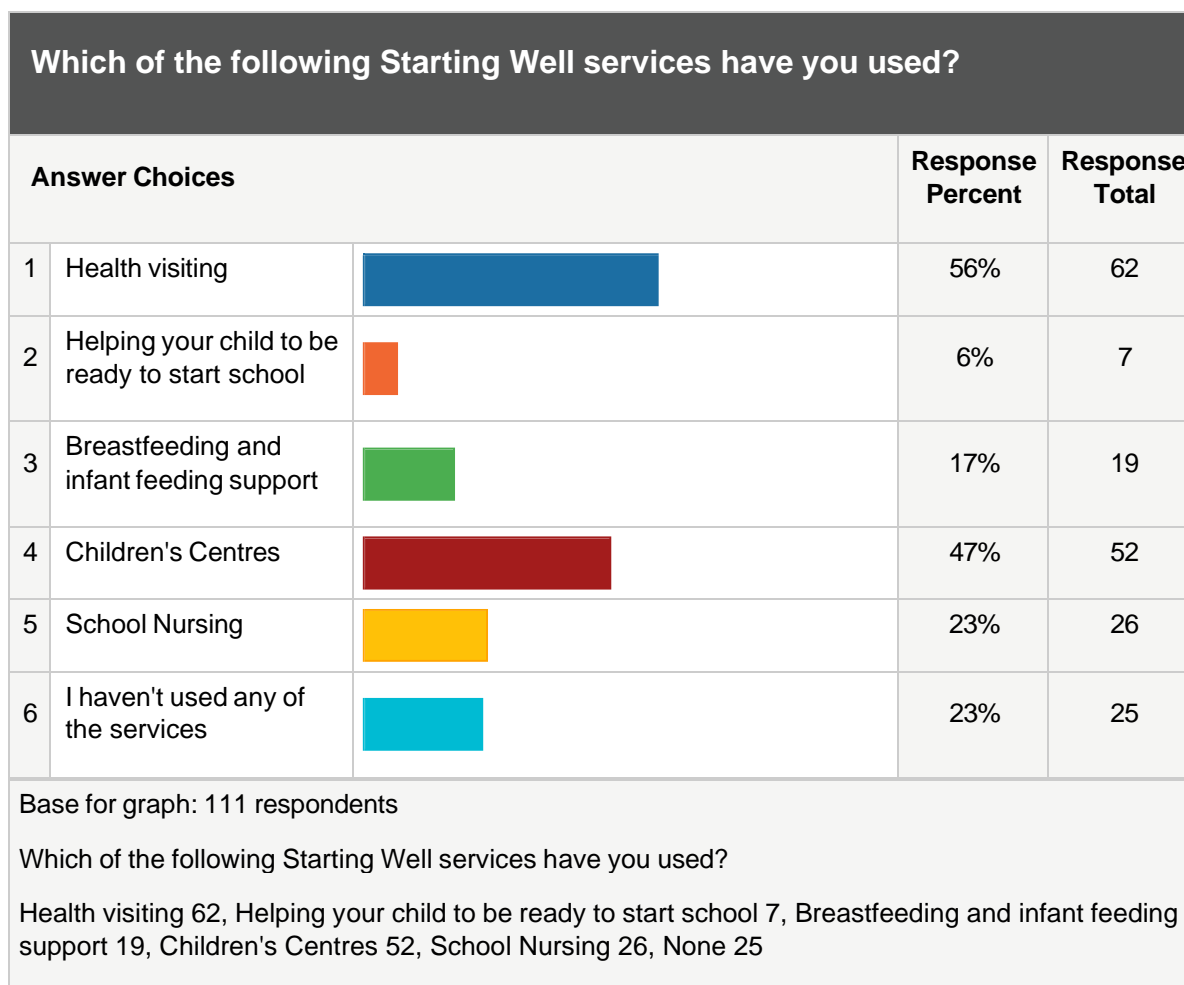


Chart 1 above shows that 62 out of the 111 respondents used the Health Visiting service, 52 used Children's Centres, whilst a smaller number of respondents (7) used the help to get their child ready for school.

For those respondents who stated they hadn't used any of the Starting Well services, they were asked the reason why. 22 people chose to comment giving the following reasons:

- Didn't know how to access the services
- Services were never offered to them
- Children were too old to access services
- Not aware that the service was available for older children.

Health visiting

The following questions asked people about their experiences of using the Health Visiting service.

Respondents were asked which health visiting support services they had received. The following chart shows the responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 2: Health Visiting Support Services Received

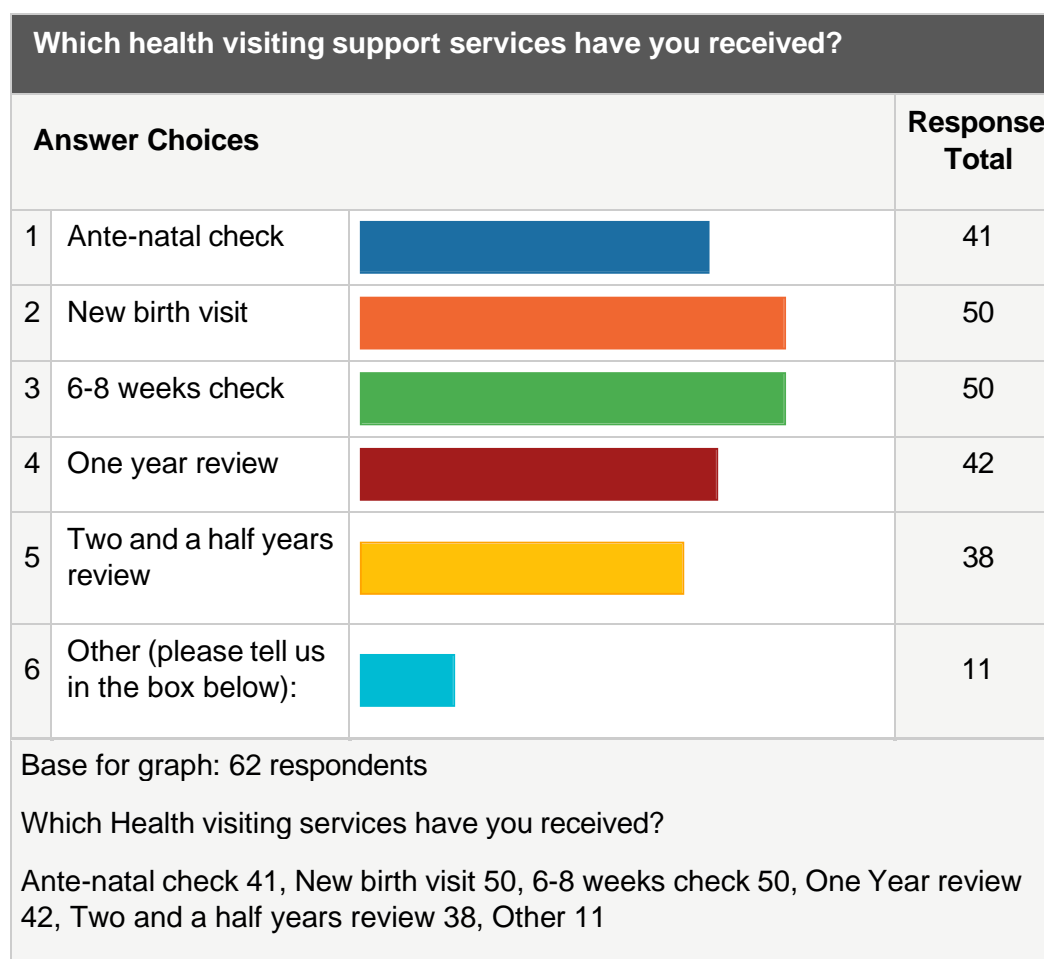


Chart 2 above shows that 50 out of the 62 respondents received a new birth visit and a 6-8 weeks check, whilst 42 received a one year check and 38 received a two and a half years check.

Other Health Visiting services received included:

- help with telephone advice
- support for breastfeeding and infant feeding
- sleep and bonding
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support
- Team Around the Family support and Family intervention.

Respondents were asked how helpful the support was from the health visiting service. The following chart shows the responses to the survey.

Chart 3: Support from the Health Visiting Service

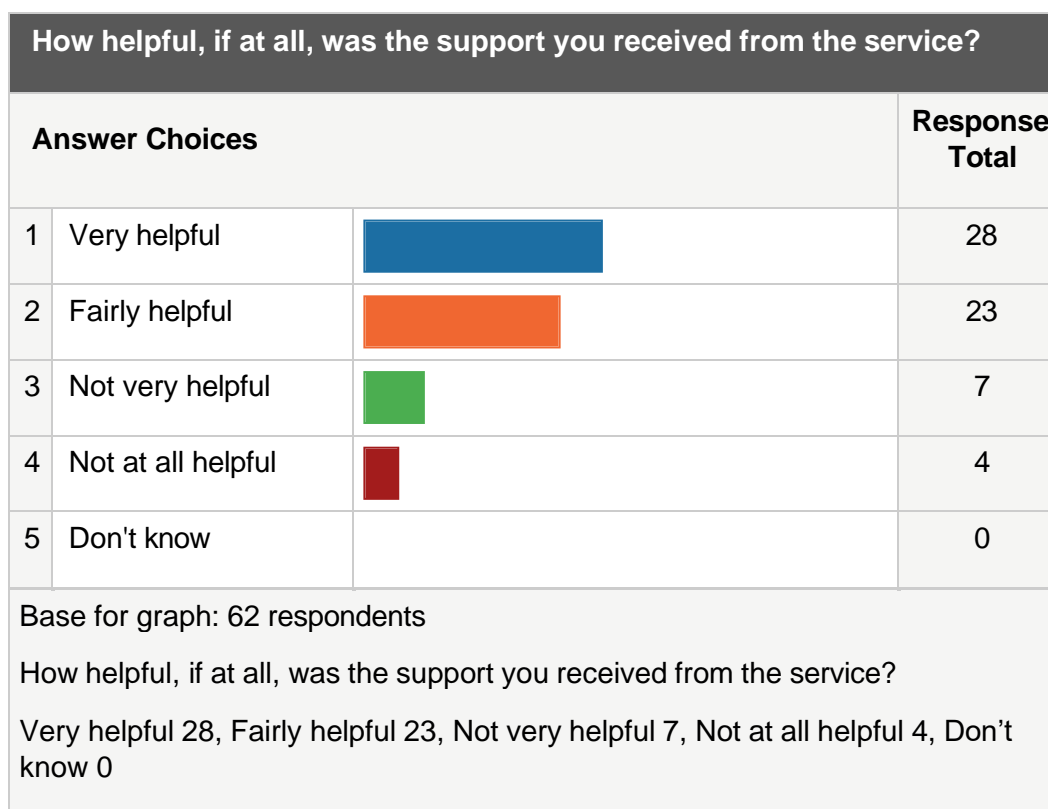


Chart 3 above shows that most respondents (51 out of 62) found the support they received from the Health Visiting service helpful, with 28 respondents finding it very helpful.

Respondents were asked to provide comments about what they found most helpful about the health visiting support they had received, any challenges they had faced and what, if anything could be improved. Feedback was collected through the survey, face-to-face sessions, drop-in sessions and emails. Over 120 comments were received, which have been summarised below under '**What is working well**' and '**Areas for improvement**'.

What is working well

- Many people commented that they had received good advice and support from the Health Visiting service
- Some respondents felt the developmental reviews, check-ups and follow ups were very useful
- Some respondents mentioned how helpful they had found the support they received in the early weeks, particularly those who were first time parents
- Being referred to other relevant support was helpful to some respondents
- Some people found meeting other parents at groups helpful
- Some respondents mentioned how they had received good sleep support and advice from the health visiting service
- Another helpful part of the service mentioned by some respondents was being listened to.

Areas for improvement

- Whilst many respondents felt they had received good advice and support from the Health Visiting service; others felt the support was insufficient
- Some respondents commented that they hadn't received the developmental checks for their child or only partially received them, and some mentioned they hadn't received their ante-natal checks
- Some respondents felt they hadn't been listened to or had their voices heard by the service
- Some people felt they had received poor communication from the service, including calls not being returned and a general lack of contact, with some commenting that communication between the service and parents of SEN and neurodivergent children could be improved
- Some respondents felt the service could be improved by ensuring people see the same Health Visitor each time so they can build up a relationship with them
- It was felt by some respondents that more training was needed for Health Visitors about mental health awareness
- Some people thought it was important for waiting times to be reduced as the current response times to access support were too long
- It was mentioned by some respondents that on occasions the needs of dad's had not been acknowledged
- Some people felt that the times of the clinic appointments were a challenge, especially for working parents.
- A few respondents felt the timing of birth visits could be improved
- A few respondents mentioned that they would like to see a better relationship between health visitors and GPs
- A small number of people felt they had limited contact from their health visitor, and some follow up appointments had been delayed, with a few people saying they have felt rushed at appointments due to the health visitor having too many people to see.

Starting school

The following questions asked people about the support they had received to help their child be ready to start school.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 4: Support Received to help your child be ready to start school

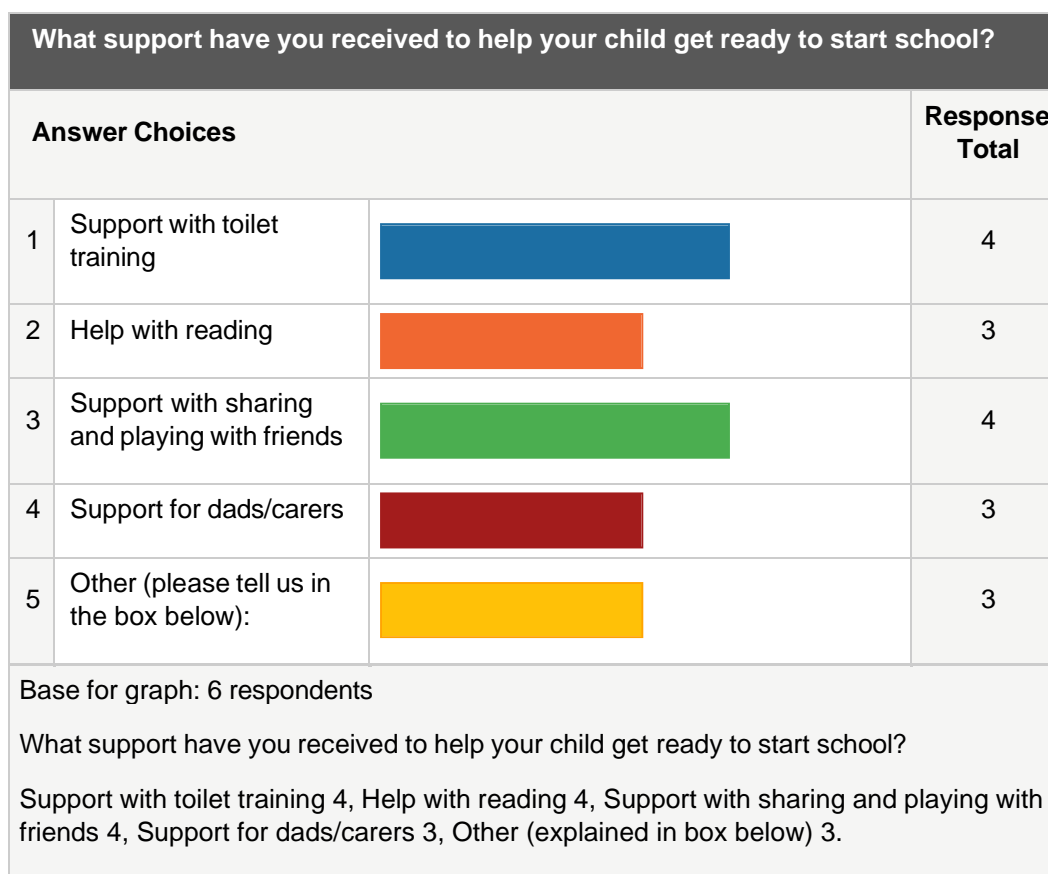


Chart 4 above shows that 4 of 6 respondents received support with toilet training, 4 received help with reading, 4 received support with sharing and playing with friends and 3 received support for dads/carers.

Other support received to help children get ready to start school included sleep support and books and toys the right age for child to help moving in.

Respondents were asked how helpful the support was to help their child be ready to start school.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 5: Support to help your child be ready to start school

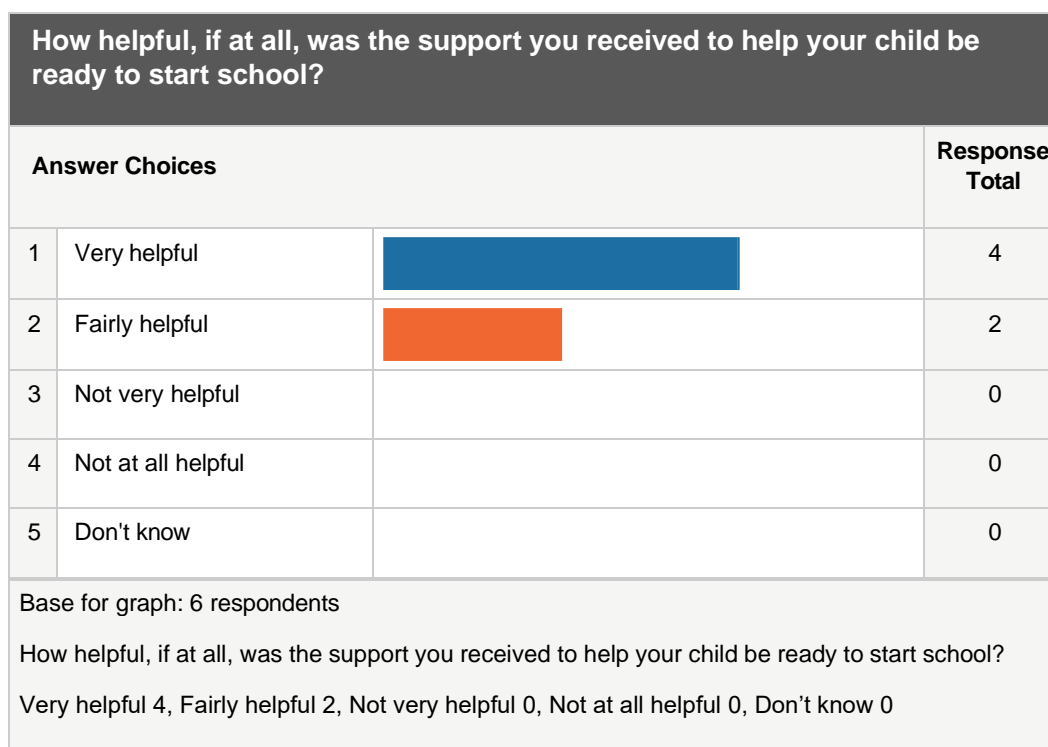


Chart 5 above shows that all those who had used the service had found it helpful.

Respondents had the option to provide comments about what they found most helpful about the support they had received to help their child be ready to start school, any challenges they had faced and what, if anything could be improved. Feedback was collected through the survey, face-to-face sessions, drop-in sessions and emails. Over 20 comments were received, which have been summarised below.

- There were mixed comments received about the awareness of the service, with some being aware, whilst others unaware
- Those who were aware and had received support from the service felt it had provided their child with a good social experience.

Breastfeeding and infant feeding

The following questions asked people about their experience of using the breastfeeding and infant feeding service.

Respondents were asked about which breastfeeding and infant feeding support services they had received.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 6: Breastfeeding and infant feeding support services received

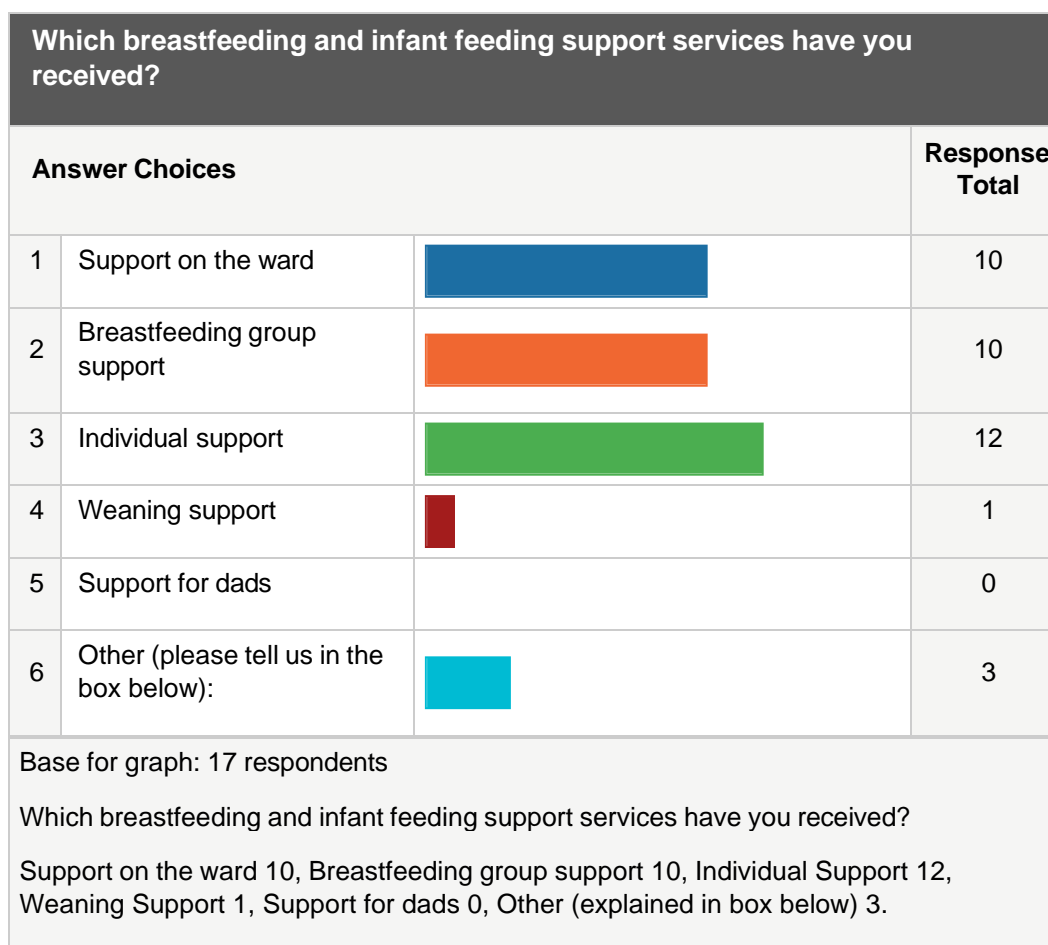


Chart 6 above shows that 12 out of 17 respondents received individual support and 10 respondents had received support on the ward and had accessed breastfeeding group support. Other breastfeeding and infant feeding support services received included support from the Infant Feeding Team.

Respondents were asked how helpful the breastfeeding and infant support was.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey.

Chart 7: Breastfeeding and infant feeding support services

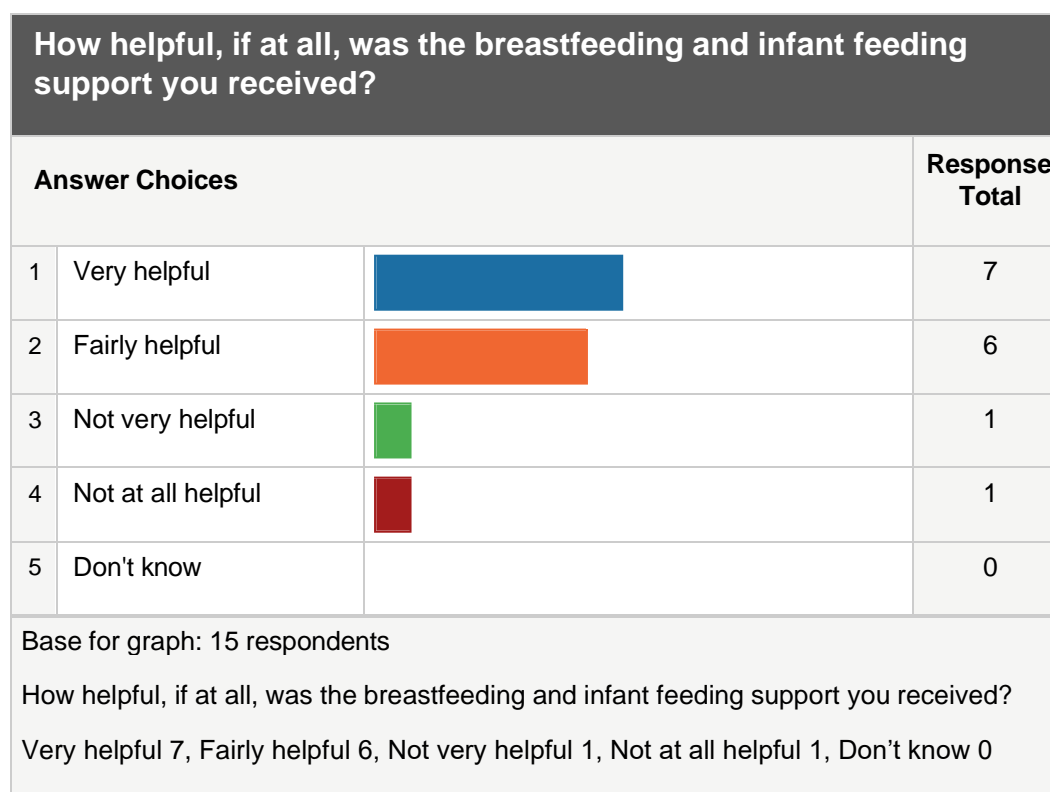


Chart 7 above shows that most respondents (13 out of 15) found the breastfeeding and infant feeding support helpful, with 7 out of 15 respondents finding it very helpful.

Respondents had the option to provide comments about what they found most helpful about the breastfeeding and infant support they had received, any challenges they had faced and what, if anything could be improved. Feedback was collected through the survey, face-to-face sessions, drop-in sessions and emails. Over 50 comments were received, which have been summarised below under **‘What is working well’** and **‘Areas for improvement’**.

What is working well

- Some people commented that the support they had received was helpful, they mentioned how they valued the advice which had provided them with reassurance, and they found the staff friendly and kind
- Some other things people found helpful was the one-to-one support they had received, including being helped to latch correctly and the support they had received from midwives at the hospital
- A few people said they had felt supported and listened to, which made them feel less alone
- A few respondents mentioned they had received good support with weaning.

Areas for improvement

- Some people felt there was a lack of communication about the service
- Some felt there were inconsistencies with one-to-one support across different areas across the borough
- A few respondents felt the support was limited due to lack of staff training.
- A few respondents felt it was important for the right language to be used by staff when supporting people to breastfeed
- It was mentioned by a few respondents that more appointments should be available and at more accessible times and more information about breastfeeding should be made available during pregnancy.

Children's Centres

The following questions asked people about their experience of using Children's Centres.

Respondents were asked which Children Centre(s) they currently visit.

The chart below shows the responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 8: Children's Centres visited

Which Children Centre(s) do you currently visit?			
Answer Choices			Response Total
1	I don't currently visit a Children's Centre		14
2	Chester Victoria		0
3	Frodsham		7
4	Neston		0
5	Kingsway		4
6	Elton		1
7	Barnton		1
8	Leftwich		5
9	Oakview (Winsford)		2
10	Lache		5







11	Victoria Road		8
12	Wharton		8
13	Parklands		0
14	Stanlaw Abbey		6
15	Over		3
16	Blacon		10
17	Portside		2
<p>Base for graph: 51 respondents</p> <p>Which Children Centre(s) do you currently visit?</p> <p>I don't currently use a Children's Centre 14, Chester Victoria 0, Frodsham 7, Neston 0, Kingsway 4, Elton 1, Barnton 1, Leftwich 5, Oakview (Winsford) 2, Lache 5, Victoria Road 8, Wharton 8, Parklands 0, Stanlaw Abbey 6, Over 3, Blacon 10, Portside 2.</p>			

Chart 8 above shows that over a quarter of respondents (14 out of 51) don't currently visit a Children's Centre. Of those who do visit a centre 10 respondents visit Blacon, 8 visit Victoria Road and Wharton. None of the respondents visit Parklands, Chester Victoria or Neston.

Respondents were asked how often they visited a Children Centre.

The chart below shows the number of responses from the survey.

Chart 9: Frequency of Visits to a Children's Centre

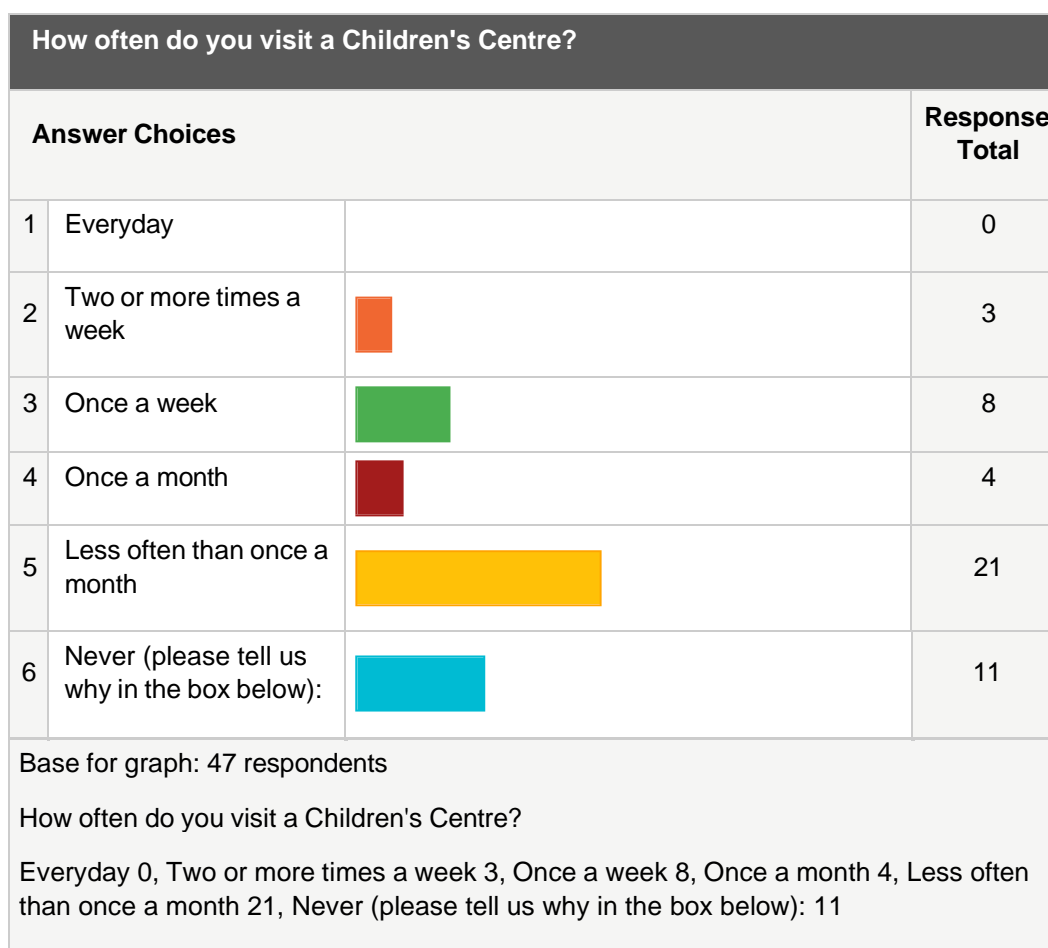


Chart 9 above shows that none of the 47 respondents visit a Children's Centre everyday, 3 respondents visit two or more times a week, 8 visit once a week, 4 visit once a month whilst 21 visit less often than once a month and 11 never visit a Children's Centre.















Reasons provided for never visiting a Children's Centre included:

- Children are older
- Children are now school age
- Not needed since baby weigh-in sessions
- Have no routine appointments
- Back at work.

Respondents were asked which services they received from the Children's Centres.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 10: Services received from Children's Centres

Which services have you received from the Children's Centres?			
Answer Choices			Response Total
1	Adult and family learning		1
2	Midwifery		15
3	Debt, finance and welfare support		2
4	Parenting and family support		11
5	Disability services and support		2
6	Early learning and play groups		20
7	Childcare		4
8	Employment support		0
9	Housing advice and support		3
10	Baby massage		7
11	Child health information, advice and support		23
12	Childminder support		1
13	Police surgery		1
14	Volunteering		0
15	Smoking cessation		1
16	Other (please tell us in the box below):		15

Base for graph: 49 respondents

Which services have you received from the Children's Centres? (Please select all that apply)

Adult and family learning 1, Midwifery 15, Debt, finance and welfare support 2, Parenting and family support 11, Disability services and support 2, Early learning and play groups 20, Childcare 4, Employment support 0, Housing advice and support 3, Baby massage 7, Child health information, advice and support 23, Childminder support 1, Police surgery 1, Volunteering 0, Smoking cessation 1, Other 15. please tell us in the box below)

Chart 10 above shows that 23 of 49 respondents received Child health information, advice and support from a Children's Centre, 20 received Early learning and play group services, and 15 received Midwifery services.

Other services received from the Children's Centres included:

- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
- Paediatric appointments
- Use of the Sensory room
- Visiting the Early Navigation team.

Respondents were asked how helpful the support received in Children's Centres was.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey.

Chart 11: Support in Children's Centres






How helpful, if at all, was the support you received from the Children's Centres?			
Answer Choices			Response Total
1	Very helpful		27
2	Fairly helpful		14
3	Not very helpful		7
4	Not at all helpful		1
5	Don't know		2
Base for graph: 51 respondents			
How helpful, if at all, was the support you received from the Children's Centres?			
Very helpful 27, Fairly helpful 14, Not very helpful 7, Not at all helpful 1, Don't know 2			

Chart 11 above shows that most respondents (41 out of 51) found the support they received from Children's Centres helpful, with 27 respondents finding it very helpful.

Respondents had the option to provide comments about what they found most helpful about the support they had received from Children's Centres, any challenges they had faced and what, if anything could be improved. Feedback was collected through the survey, face-to-face sessions, drop-in sessions and emails. Over 200 comments were received, which have been summarised below under '**What is working well**' and '**Areas for improvement**'.

What is working well

- Many respondents commented that they enjoyed attending groups and classes at the centres, including stay and play, playgroup, baby massage, child weighing sessions, weaning and first aid
- Many people mentioned the good support and advice they had received
- Many respondents mentioned the friendly and helpful staff
- Some people commented that going to the centres had allowed them to meet other parents and they have enjoyed the social aspect
- Some mentioned that they found the drop-in sessions at the centres particularly useful
- Some respondents commented that having a local centre, which is easy to access was helpful.

Areas for improvement

- Many respondents felt there needed to be more sessions and classes at the Children's Centres throughout the week for all ages. People also mentioned they would like to see a variety of other activities and services, some for parents as well as children
- Many respondents commented that they weren't aware of Children's Centres and what they offered, some people felt that better promotion of the centres would help. Suggestions included doing a leaflet drop or having an email people could subscribe to, to be kept up to date
- Many people also mentioned that trying to contact Children's Centres had been difficult
- Some respondents suggested extending the opening hours of the centres to the evenings and weekends to make it easier for working parents to attend
- Some people commented that they hadn't accessed a Children's Centre or attended stay and play sessions, whilst others felt there needed to be more stay and play sessions
- It was felt by some that the centres need to offer sessions for different age groups running at the same time
- Some commented that the sessions need to be more inclusive for everyone, including dads as some felt Children Centres didn't focus on their needs
- Some respondents suggested having more activities and better facilities available for older children
- Some people suggested refurbishing some of the outdoor spaces so they can be used for more sessions.

School Nursing

Respondents were asked what support they had received from the School Nursing service.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey. People were able to select more than one option.

Chart 12: Support received from the School Nursing service

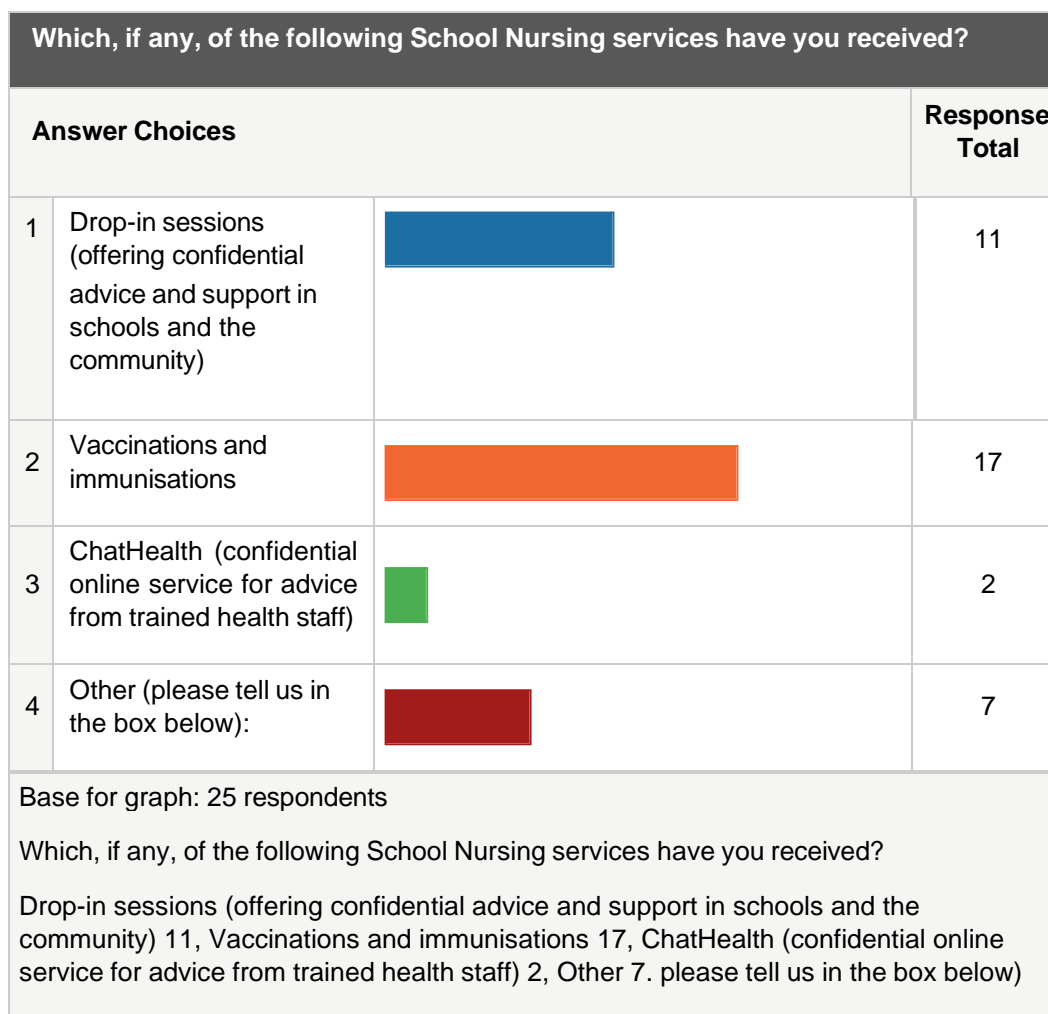


Chart 12 above shows that 17 of 25 respondents received a vaccinations and immunisations school nursing service, 11 attended drop-in sessions.

Other support received from the School Nursing service included:

- attendance at early help and social care meetings
- advice and weight and height measurements.

Respondents were asked how helpful the support was that they had received from the School Nursing service.

The chart below shows the number of responses to the survey.

Chart 13: Support from the School Nursing service

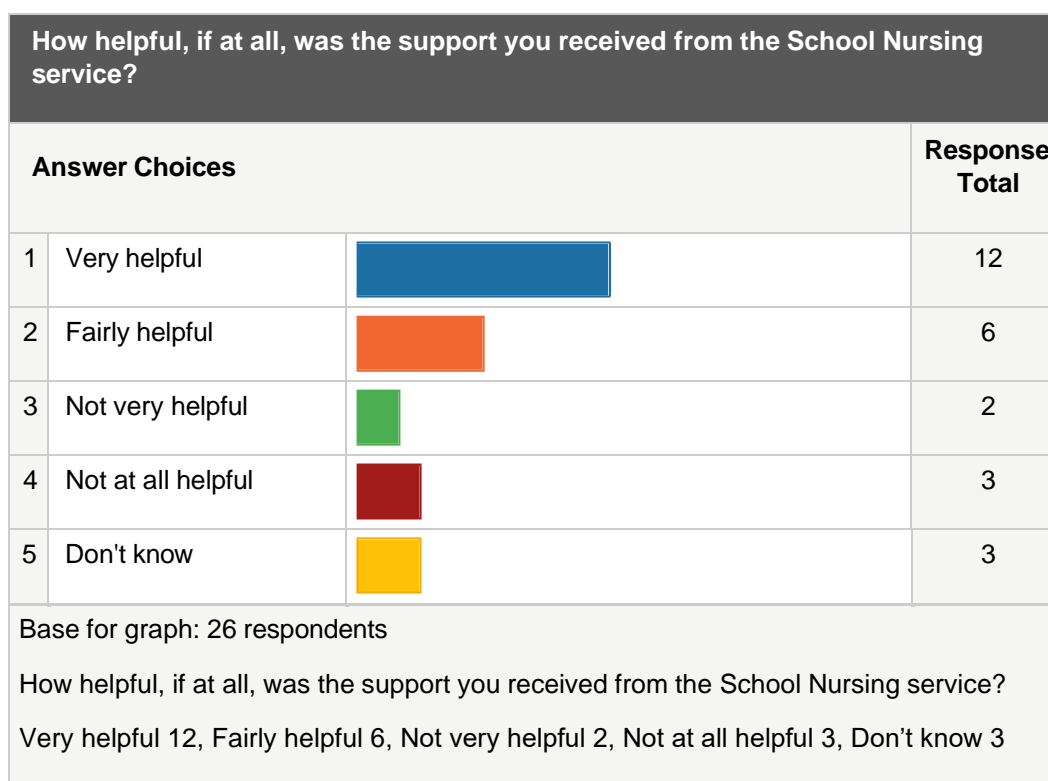


Chart 13 above shows that over two thirds of respondents (18 out of 26) found the support received from the School Nursing service helpful, with 12 respondents finding it very helpful.

Respondents had the option to provide comments about what they found most helpful about the support they had received from the School Nursing service, any challenges they had faced and what, if anything could be improved. Feedback was collected through the survey, face-to-face sessions, drop-in sessions and emails. Over 130 comments were received, which have been summarised below under **'What is working well'** and **'Areas for improvement'**.

What is working well

- Many respondents found the advice they received from their school nurse valuable and felt very supported
- Some people commented that being able to talk to someone with expertise was helpful, having someone who would listen and signpost to the right support
- A few people mentioned how much the school nurses had helped with their child's vaccinations and health screenings
- A few respondents felt the nurses had built up a good rapport with their child, with a few mentioning that they had helped their child to overcome anxieties.

Areas for improvement

- Many respondents commented that they hadn't seen a school nurse at their child's school, or they weren't aware of the role of the school nurse, with some suggesting school nurses should be more visible within schools, with each school having a named nurse who offer more support and sessions
- Many people commented that they were not aware about CHAT Health (a confidential text messaging service for young people to talk about health and wellbeing concerns)
- Some respondents felt the School Nursing service should be communicated and promoted more so people are aware of what the role of the school nurse is
- Some people commented that they wouldn't go to the school nurse for advice and would go to the school pastoral staff for health needs
- A few people thought there should be more drop-in sessions at schools and more tailored services offered.
- A few respondents felt better information should be available online.
- A few people commented that they had received poor support from their school nurse.

Other key messages raised are summarised below.

Support for dads

- There were mixed comments with regards to the support for dads. Some were aware of the support on offer and felt fully included, whilst others were not aware and didn't know how to access support, with some people commenting that support was mainly focused on mums
- Some people felt it was very important for there to be dad only groups available and for this support to be available in the evenings and weekends
- Some respondents also felt better communication and promotion of dad's support was needed.

Communication and awareness

- Whilst some respondents were aware of Starting Well and its offer, others were not aware and felt there was a lack of communication and promotion of the service
- Some respondents thought the name of the service needed to change to make it more relevant to the wider age range
- A few respondents felt that social media was a good resource to use to promote the service
- It was also suggested that a digital platform could be used for appointments and visits.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

- Some people felt there was lack of support available as children get older
- A few people commented that there was a lack of awareness of support available for SEND children and young people.

Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)

- Some respondents mentioned the good support they had received from SALT.

Mental Health

- Some commented that there was no support for mental health issues and more was needed.

Vaccinations and Immunisations

- It was suggested that extra vaccinations sessions should be available for pupils who are absent on the day
- Reasonable adjustments need to be made and communicated for needle phobic children.

System navigation

- Some respondents commented that they found the system and process confusing and difficult to understand where to start.

General comments

- A few respondents mentioned they had received oral health support.
- Some people had experienced issues around accessing various additional types of support.

Further comments about the Starting Well Service

Respondents were also invited to give further comments on the Starting Well service. 42 comments were received.

Below are the key messages from the survey responses.

Some people mentioned how pleased they were with the help given by the service, however there were many areas of improvement suggested by respondents.

- Many felt there needed to be better communication and promotion of services in general
- Some felt better continuity of care was needed
- Some respondents felt more support was needed and more training for staff
- A few people felt services should be open for longer
- A few commented that they had noticed cutbacks with services over recent years
- It was mentioned by a few respondents that appointments feel rushed, they need to be longer
- A small number of respondents felt that parents should be listened to more as they know their children best
- A small number of people also commented that the service should receive more funding and should be available to all parents regardless of their income
- It was also felt by a small number of people that there should be targeted help for parents of children with ADHD/ASD traits and better support also needed

for people with Mental Health issues.

Feedback from Providers and Professionals

5 in person engagement events were held for providers and professionals that work alongside the Starting Well Service. A separate in person engagement event for Cheshire and Wirral Partnership (CWP) Starting Well staff also took place. Professionals and Providers also fed back via email or in individual face to face sessions. A total of 116 gave feedback on the strengths, opportunities, and challenges of the Starting Well service. These have been summarised below under '**What's working well**' and '**Areas for improvement**'.

Health Visiting

What's working well

- Health visitors work to a high standard.

Areas for improvement

- Families have to chase up health visiting appointments.
- Not all mandated development checks happen.
- Unplanned Safeguarding meetings- impact on delivery
- Health visitors need to be more proactive in contacting families
- Need to have an improved ante-natal offer.

Starting School

Areas for improvement

- Too many children not ready for school.
- Need better links with schools.
- Not everyone is clear on how to access the service or what's on offer.
- Offer focused support throughout the year not just in summer term.

Breastfeeding and Infant feeding

What's working well

- Koala Service which offers a peer support for breastfeeding run by volunteers.

Areas for improvement

- Not enough support in hospital or after discharge from hospital
- More 1:1 breastfeeding support needed, particularly in rural areas.
- More group sessions needed for weaning, toileting and sleep.

Children's Centres

What's working well

- Centres are accessible.

- Free groups
- Good partnership working
- Good selection of support at the centres.

Areas for improvement

- Have more open access and drop-in groups
- Consistent welcoming front of house staff
- Invest in buildings and resources
- Offer more room availability and office space.
- Need more of an all-age approach.
- Important to make centres more accessible for young people, consider having youth workers at the centres
- Offer skills workshops.
- More befrienders and a volunteer approach
- Extend the opening hours of centres to evenings and weekends.

School Nursing

What's working well

- Being able to see the same nurses and build up a good relationship
- Having good communication with school
- Students enjoy the sessions and give good feedback.

Areas for improvement

- Have a consistent offer across all schools, as currently only some schools offer drop-ins (i.e. mainstream and Oaklands) others get just duty system
- Need to make it clear to people that appointments with school nurse has to be scheduled. Drop-in term isn't accurate and leads to confusion about offer.
- Lack of mandated offer for 5-19 yr olds
- School nursing service, not widely known about
- Offer more support in primary schools
- Starting Well service to continue its presence at parental events and offer more workshops for parents, particularly around sleep routines and transition from primary to secondary school.

Dads support

What's working well

- Engaging Fathers training

Areas for improvement

- Not clear on what offer is.
- Offer more dad's development groups

Communication

What's working well

- Being able to access support by phone, online and face to face.

Areas for improvement

- Tailor Chat Health to young people's needs and extend the opening hours.
- View is that service is only for 0-5's.
- Improve communication and promote open access groups and other services in places people go
- Have satellite base for rural communities (mobile bus)
- Offer services in more community venues.

System navigation

What's working well

- Having access to data to target support to families who may need it

Areas for improvement

- Need to look at how support is given to families waiting for a specialist service
- Service is not visible in all communities and doesn't reach out or know about other support available.
- The thresholds for being able to access services is too high
- Develop a roadmap to be clear on what help is available when for parents.

Service sustainability

Areas for improvement

- Ensure there are multi-disciplinary teams within Children's Centres
- Commissioning recommending that service must include third sector partners.

General Key Messages

What's working well

- Partnership working
- Having services which are open to everyone in the community
- Support from Family Nurse Partnership.

Areas for improvement

- Lack of health input and support in special schools
- Stigma around the potential link to social care limits people's awareness of what is on offer for families
- Training to support families waiting for specialist support.

4. Next steps

The engagement findings will be considered by the Starting Well Programme Board in July 2025 and will be shared with Public Health SMT and Children & Families DMT, in addition to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

We will share a summary of the engagement findings on the Starting Well Engagement website in July 2025.

Feedback from this engagement will be used to help inform different options for the service that will be co-produced with residents which will then be shared for public consultation later in 2025.








5. Appendix 1: Face to Face Engagement Events with Existing Groups

- Brio Track Side Rooms – SEND drop-in events for parents (Koala)
- Space – after school club for SEND children
- Space – marketplace drop-in session for parent/carers of children with SEND
- The Quarters B&B – families living in temporary accommodation
- Hallwood Court – inter-generational group
- Gorsehill Temporary Accommodation - families in supported temporary accommodation
- Unity House – Via Drug and Alcohol Support Group
- Queens Park High School – Holiday & Activity Fund SEND group
- Salvation Army – Oasis Open Access Youth Group
- Neston Community and Youth Centre – Koala Parent Breastfeeding Support Session
- Northgate Locks – LGBTQ+ Youth Club
- The Lock - residents (under 25) in temporary housing / supported living
- Down Syndrome Cheshire – parent coffee morning event]
- Lache Children's Centre – Stay & Play session with families
- Trinity Church Community Space – Mums & Tots Group
- Northgate Locks – Choices SEND Youth Group
- Northwich Youth Club – Youth Club
- Over Children's Centre - Stay & Play plus SALT session with families.

6. Appendix 2: Who took part in the Survey

The tables below show the answers provided by respondents completing the survey. This does not reflect the spectrum of different groups that were spoken to as part of the in-person engagement events.

Chart 14: Respondent type

Are you responding as...?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A parent/carers		86%	95
2	A childminder with caring responsibilities		0%	0
3	An expectant parent		2%	2
4	A resident of Cheshire West and Chester		25%	27
5	An employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council		10%	11
6	An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council		0%	0
7	A local Town or Parish Councillor		0%	0
8	A representative of a voluntary or community organisation		1%	1
9	Prefer not to say		2%	2
10	Other (please specify):		7%	8

Base for graph: 110 respondents

Are you responding as...?

Respondents were able to select more than one option.

A parent/carers 95, A childminder with caring responsibilities 0, An expectant parent 2, A resident of Cheshire West and Chester 27, An employee of Cheshire West and Chester Council 11, An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council 0, A local Town or Parish Councillor 0, A representative of a voluntary or community organisation 1, Prefer not to say 2, Other (please specify): 8.

Respondents were able to select more than one option.

Chart 14 above shows that 95 of the 110 respondents were parent/carers. 27 respondents were residents of Cheshire West and Chester and 11 respondents were employees of Cheshire West and Chester Council. Of the 8 'Other' responses, 3 of the respondents were from commissioned services and 2 were school staff.

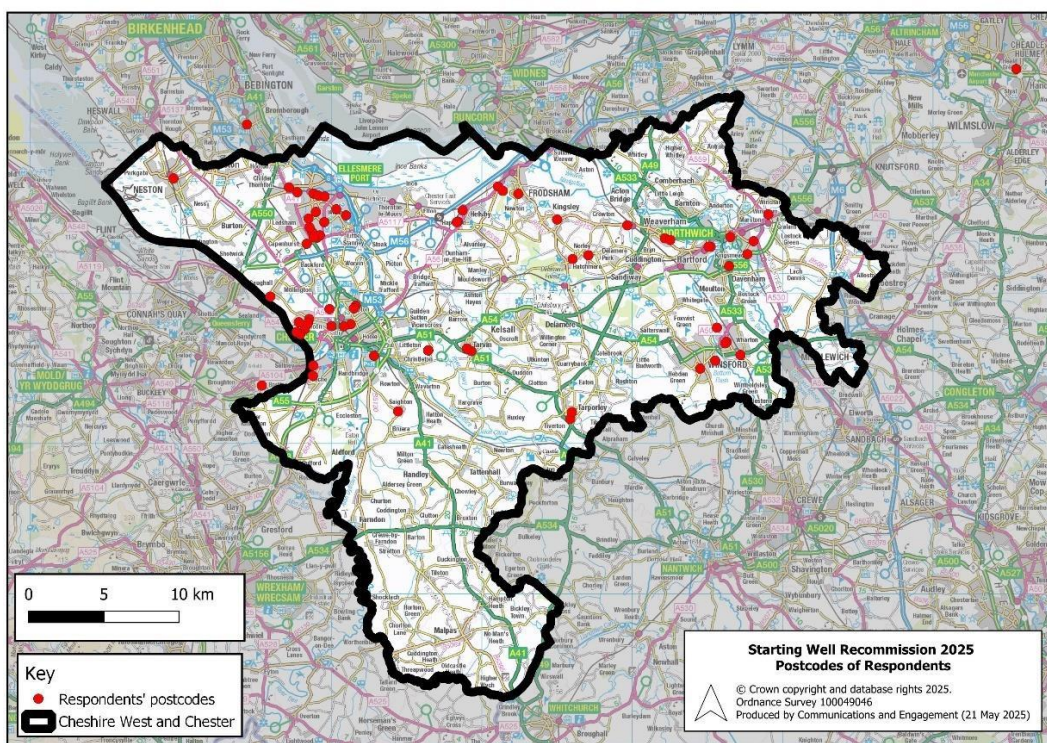
Respondents were asked if they were responding on behalf of a group or organisation.

Responses were received from:

- Polaris Children's Services
- Via Substance Misuse Service
- Blacon High School
- Kingsley St John's CE Aided Primary School
- Weaverham High School
- Darnhall Primary school
- The Bridge Short Stay School
- Whitby High School.

Postcodes of respondents

The map below shows all the postcodes given by respondents that could be mapped (78 postcodes). 75 postcodes lie within the Cheshire West and Chester boundary and three postcodes lie outside.



Age group

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Under 16	1	1%
16 – 24	10	9%
25 – 34	31	29%
35 - 44	48	45%
45 - 54	13	12%
55 - 64	2	2%
65+	1	1%
Prefer not to say	1	1%

Base: 107

Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Male	4	4%
Female	95	89%
Prefer not to say	6	6%
Prefer to use own term	1	1%

Base: 106

Long-term illness, Health Issue or Disability

Long-term illness, Health Issue or Disability	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	25	24%
No	73	69%
Prefer not to say	8	7%

Base: 106

Of those 25 respondents who stated they have a long-term illness, health issue or disability, 15 respondents indicated that they had a mental health issue, 11 indicated that they had a long-term illness or health condition, and 7 respondents indicated that they had a learning disability or difficulty.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Heterosexual/Straight	87	81%
Bisexual	4	4%
Gay/Lesbian	1	1%
Prefer not to say	10	9%
Prefer to use own term	5	5%

Base: 107

Ethnicity

The vast majority of respondents (97) were White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, with 2 Mixed - White and Black Caribbean, 1 Asian or Asian British, 1 Mixed - Any other Mixed background, 3 preferred not to say and 2 other.

Religious belief/faith

Religious belief/faith	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Buddhist	1	1%
Christian	29	27%
Hindu	0	0%
Jewish	1	1%
Muslim	2	2%
Sikh	0	0%
None	61	57%
Prefer not to say	11	10%
Other	2	2%

Base 107

7. Appendix 3: Starting Well Services

The Starting Well service delivers support to children, young people and their families/carers across the borough. The service is based mainly in Children's Centres but also delivers support in families/carers homes and in schools. The Starting Well team includes health visitors, nursery workers, early years workers and public health nurses.

Overall Aim: Children and young people are safe, happy, healthy, resilient and reaching their potential

Ambition: To deliver a high-quality service for 0 – 19 (25 with SEND) year olds to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young children and their families/carers in Cheshire West and Chester.

Types of service delivery

Children Centres
<p>Children's centres provide a wide range of services for parents, parents-to-be, and carers with children and their families. Children's Centres are the main place for the Starting Well team.</p> <p>Their aim is to deliver or provide access to high quality, accessible services and support for parents, carers, prospective parents, children from pre-birth to 5 years to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child development and school readiness• Child and family health and life chances• Parenting skills <p>Children's Centres offer a range of activities including advice clinics, play sessions, infant feeding support, sleep support, speech and language therapy, sensory experiences and antenatal clinics.</p>
Healthy Child Programme
<p>The Healthy Child Programme for the 0-5's focuses on a universal and targeted preventative service, providing all families with a programme of screening, immunisation, health and development reviews, in addition to advice around health, wellbeing and parenting.</p> <p>For Primary and Secondary School age children, advice around health and wellbeing continues to be delivered to both families/carers and directly to young people.</p> <p>Health Visitors are specialist public health practitioners who have expertise in child development and family health. All children until 5 years of age have a Health</p>

Visitor. They are qualified nurses who have a specialist qualification in community health and have knowledge about adult and child health promotion and education.

They provide tailored and specific support for children and families/carers to promote health and wellbeing.

Health Visitors must deliver 5 developmental reviews:

- Antenatal
- new baby
- 6-8 weeks
- 1 year
- integrated 2-2 ½ years

to all families/carers to ensure the right support /advice and guidance is offered to promote a child's health and development.

School Nurses have additional training that offers individual, family and community support to improve health and wellbeing.

Breastfeeding support

Breastfeeding support in Cheshire West and Chester is provided by Koala, who have a team of friendly volunteers (Bosom Buddies) who have breastfed their own children and have received additional training in breastfeeding. Breastfeeding support groups are run from Children's Centres and there is an offer on hospital wards.

Family Nurse Partnership

Family-Nurse Partnership (FNP) is a free and voluntary programme for young parents expecting their first baby. This service is usually only offered to first time mothers aged 19 and under at conception but here we also deliver FNP to any young person who have been looked after by the local authority. The programme offers home visiting, delivered by specially trained nurses, from early in pregnancy until the child is two years old.

Early Help / Team around the Family

Team Around the Family (TAF) is used to get everyone together who is or could be working with children, young people and their families/carers, where there is an identified need. The support is voluntary and children, families and carers choose if they would like to take part and which professionals should support them. The Starting Well service often begins, leads and supports the TAF process.

Healthy Start Scheme

Parents who are up to 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 in receipt of relevant benefits are eligible to join the Healthy Start scheme. This provides free of charge healthy foods like milk, fruit and vegetables, or vitamins. Starting Well provides support to apply for and access this service.

National Child Measurement Programme

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) measures the height and weight of children in Reception class (aged 4 to 5) and Year 6 (aged 10 to 11). The Starting Well team attend educational settings once a year to conduct the screening and then communicate the outcome to parents/carers.

Oral (Dental) health

Starting Well provide 'Happy Smiles' toothbrush packs to some 0 – 2 year olds within Cheshire West and Chester, in addition to delivering oral health promotion, advice and guidance to all.
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Digital

Starting Well offer digital support on health and wellbeing issues via Facebook and Chat Health to family/ carers and young people.
