

# Parent & Carer Survey 2017



177 parents and carers in Tower Hamlets shared their thoughts and experiences with us. This report summarises the views of those who took part in the survey.



**Seven in ten** parents and carers (70%) feel confident monitoring their children's internet/social media use but one in five (21%) do not feel confident.



**Over half of parents and carers** (52%) say more help to support their children's learning would improve their family life.



**Around two thirds** (68%) of parents and carers say they are satisfied with the support they have received from a family support service or agency.



**Over a third of parents and carers** (36%) say they have not had enough information to support their children to manage money.



**Nearly six in ten** (58%) parents and carers say they worry about their children's health and well-being often.



**Two thirds** of parents and carers (66%) say that their children's learning environment is supporting their needs adequately.



**Around a quarter** of parents and carers (27%) say their children receive private tuition at least once a week.



**Four in ten** parents and carers (40%) say they have not had enough information to help them plan their children's future.



**Two thirds** of parents and carers (66%) say they prefer to receive information via e-mail.



**Around a quarter** of parents and carers (26%) report that their children have been bullied in the past year.

## Introduction

The Tower Hamlets Parent and Carer Survey (P&CS) was commissioned by the Parent and Family Support team to obtain the views of parents and carers, and to find out what types of support would be helpful for them. It was inspired by the success of the Tower Hamlets Pupil Attitude Survey (PAS), which has become an important source of data on the views of children and young people in the borough.

### **Methodology**

This is the second wave of the Parent and Carer Survey. The survey was open to all parents and carers of dependent children living in Tower Hamlets, or whose children attended school in Tower Hamlets. An incentive was offered to parents and carers to complete the survey in order to boost participation.

The P&CS was conducted online and ran from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The survey was publicised through schools, the Head Teacher's Bulletin, the council's website, IDEA stores, and social media.

202 people began the survey, but only 177 people gave valid responses, meaning that they completed at least one of the substantive questions in the survey (not just demographic information). This could indicate that the survey was too long for some respondents, who gave up after being asked too many demographic questions.

While the survey was live, the council also ran a number of other consultations. This may have led to 'consultation fatigue' and reduced the number of respondents to the survey.

Since this is a small sample, and those who took part are a self-selecting group, the survey is not intended to represent the views of all parents and carers in the borough.

### **Technical notes**

The questionnaire content of the second wave differs greatly from the first wave of the P&CS, and the second wave captured a wider range of parents, so the two waves of the survey are not directly comparable and should not be used to identify trends.

Not everyone who took part in the survey answered each question. Therefore, sample sizes between different questions vary. Where more than one survey question has been included within a single chart, the minimum sample size has been provided.

The results presented throughout this report have been rounded to the nearest percentage point. This means that percentages may not add up to 100.

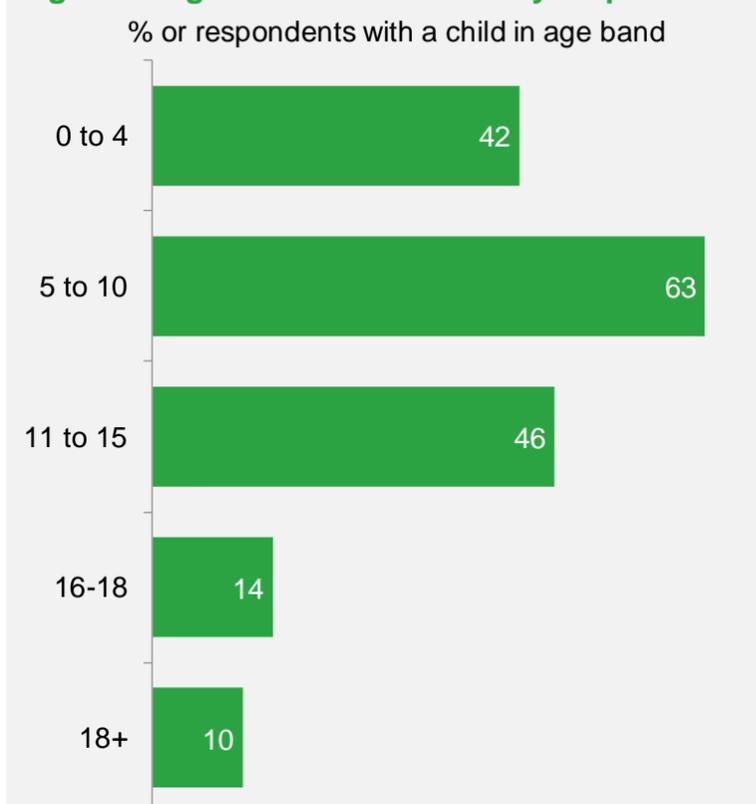
## The Survey Cohort

Since the Parent and Carer Survey is only intended to represent the views of those who took part in the survey, not all parents and carers in the borough, it is important to understand the cohort when interpreting the findings in this report:

- The large majority of survey respondents (95 per cent) described themselves as parents, 2 per cent described themselves as special guardians, and 1 per cent described themselves as grandparents.

- The majority of respondents (62 per cent) were aged 35 to 49. 2 per cent were under 25, 26 per cent were 25-34 and 10 per cent were 50 or over.
- The majority of respondents (86 per cent) were female, 12 per cent were male, and 2 per cent were either transgender or preferred not to say.<sup>1</sup>
- 36 per cent of respondents were Bangladeshi, 26 per cent were White British, 24 per cent were BME (excluding Bangladeshi), and 15 per cent were White Other.
- 6 per cent of survey respondents said that they had a disability, 90 per cent said they did not, and 4 per cent said they did not know or did not want to say.
- 70 per cent of survey respondents said they were in work (either part-time or full-time) while 30 per cent were not in work.
- 26 per cent of respondents had one child, 31 per cent had two children, 30 per cent had three children and 13 per cent had four or more children.
- Around a quarter of respondents (26 per cent) were lone parents/carers, while the majority (72 per cent) shared parenting/caring responsibilities with someone else.
- The vast majority of respondents (98 per cent) live with their dependent children sometimes or all of the time.
- The majority of respondents (63 per cent) had a child aged 5 to 10 and relatively few parents had a child over 18 (10 per cent). Figure 1 provides a full breakdown of respondents by the age of their children. Note that respondents with multiple children of different ages are counted more than once, so the total is greater than 100 per cent.
- 15 per cent of respondents have a child with Special Educational Needs or Disability.

**Figure 1: Age of children of survey respondents**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, sample size = 175  
 Note: Respondents can have more than one child, therefore the total is above 100 per cent.

## Parenting/caring experiences and confidence

Parents and carers responding to the survey were asked how easy or difficult they found managing their children's behaviour. The majority of parents (58 per cent) said that they found it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy', 12 per cent said 'very difficult' or 'fairly difficult', and nearly a third (30 per cent) said they found it neither easy nor difficult. There were no significant differences between responses from parents with children of different ages.

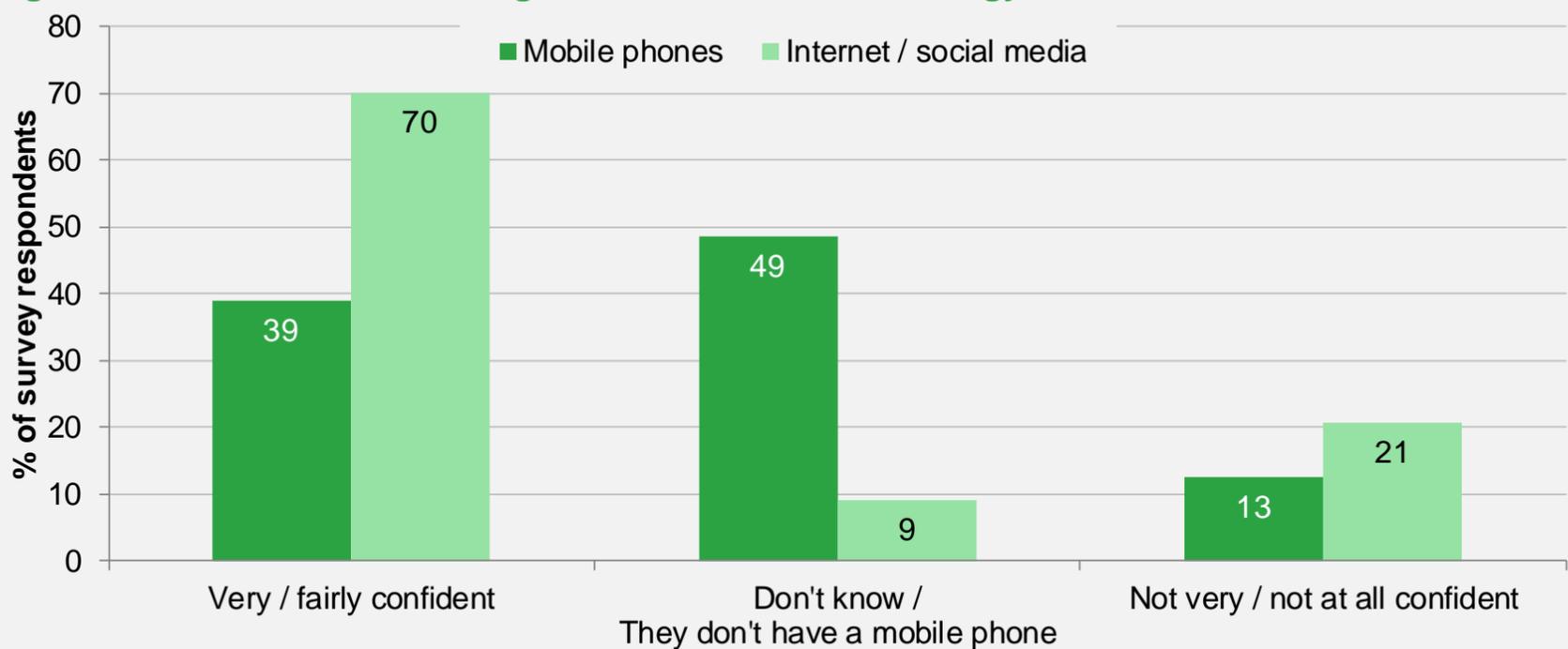
Respondents were asked how confident they felt monitoring their child's use of technology. Figure 2 provides a summary of the responses. It shows that nearly half of parents/carers

<sup>1</sup> Respondents who were transgender or preferred not to say have been grouped together because of low counts and disclosure control.

said that their child did not have a mobile phone, reflecting the fact that the majority of survey respondents have young children. 39 per cent felt 'very confident' or 'fairly confident' and 13 per cent said they felt 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' monitoring their child's mobile phone use.

When asked about the internet and social media, seven in ten parents said that they felt confident monitoring their children's use, while one in five (21 per cent) said they were 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident'.

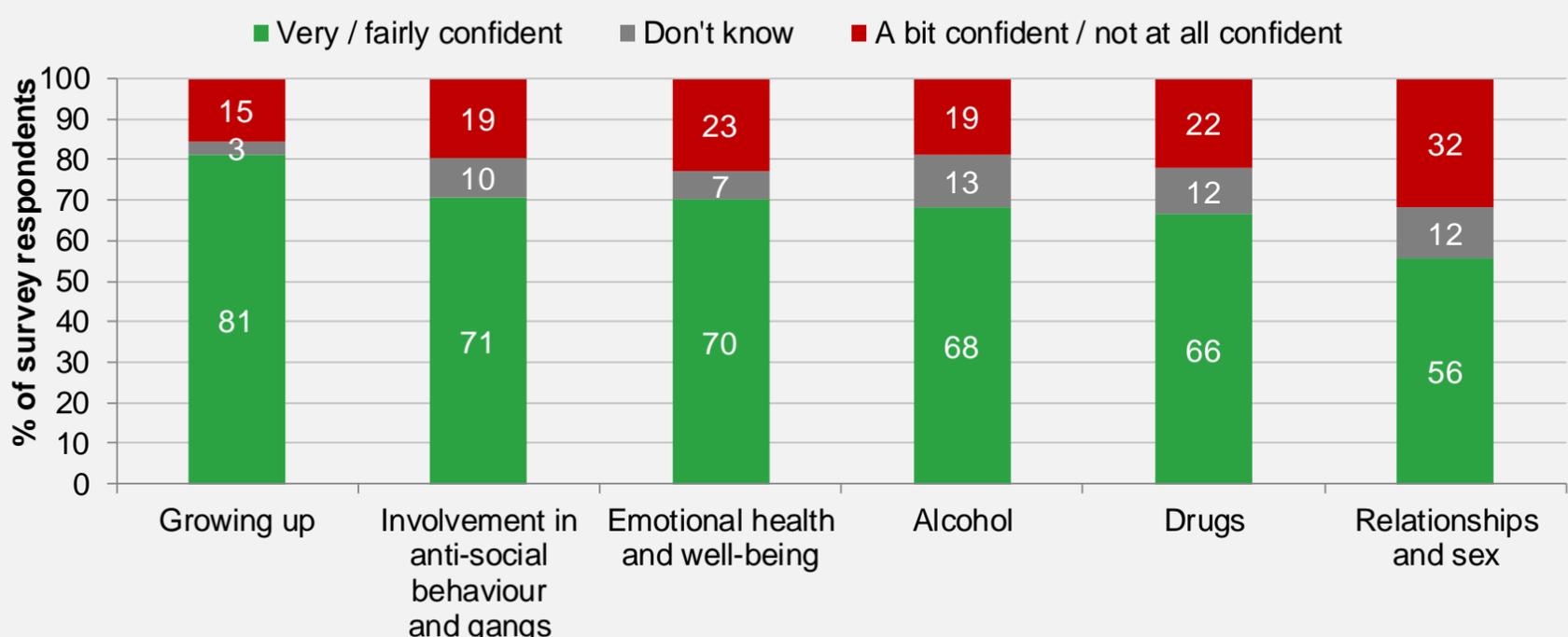
**Figure 2: Confidence monitoring children's use of technology**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, minimum sample size = 164

Parents and carers were also asked how confident they felt talking to their children about a range of different issues. Figure 3 shows that the majority of parents felt 'very' or 'fairly confident' about all of the issues, though they felt most confident speaking to children about growing up (81 per cent) and least confident speaking to children about relationships and sex (56 per cent). Nearly a third (32 per cent) of parents and carers said they felt 'a bit' or 'not at all confident' speaking to their children about relationships and sex.

**Figure 3: Confidence talking to children about issues**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, minimum sample size = 154

## Getting information

Survey respondents were asked how they prefer to receive information about parenting/caring. The majority of parents and carers (66 per cent) said that they preferred to receive information via e-mail, 46 per cent said online/internet, 43 per cent said text message, and 41 per cent said through leaflets/flyers. These responses are likely influenced by the fact that the survey was completed online.

Parents and carers were asked a similar question about *where* they go to for information about parenting/caring. Over half of respondents said they go to other parents/carers (55 per cent) and use online searches (51 per cent) for information, making these the two most common responses. Figure 4 provides a full breakdown of the responses to this question.

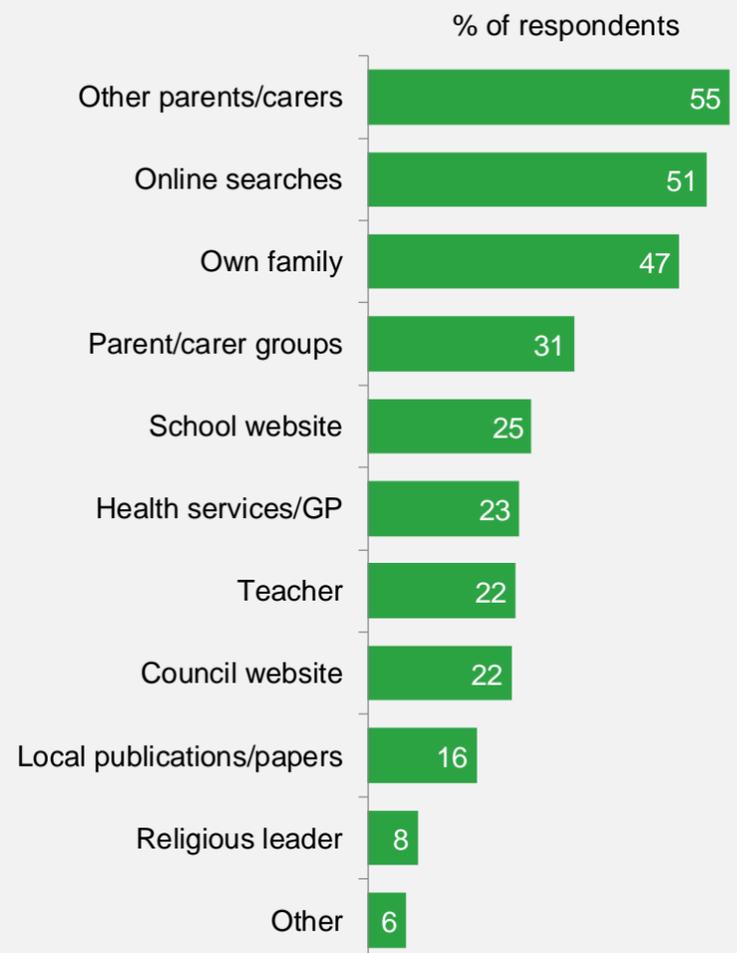
Survey respondents were also asked if they felt they had received enough information to support their children on a range of issues.<sup>2</sup> Figure 5 provides a summary of the responses.

Parents and carers were most positive about the information they received about healthy food and lifestyle. Three quarters (75 per cent) said they had either received ‘too much’ or ‘enough’ information, while only 8 per cent said that they received ‘not enough’ or ‘no information’ about this issue.

The majority of parents/carers also said they had received ‘too much’ or ‘enough’ information about alcohol (63 per cent), smoking (59 per cent), drugs (54 per cent), and relationships and sex (51 per cent).

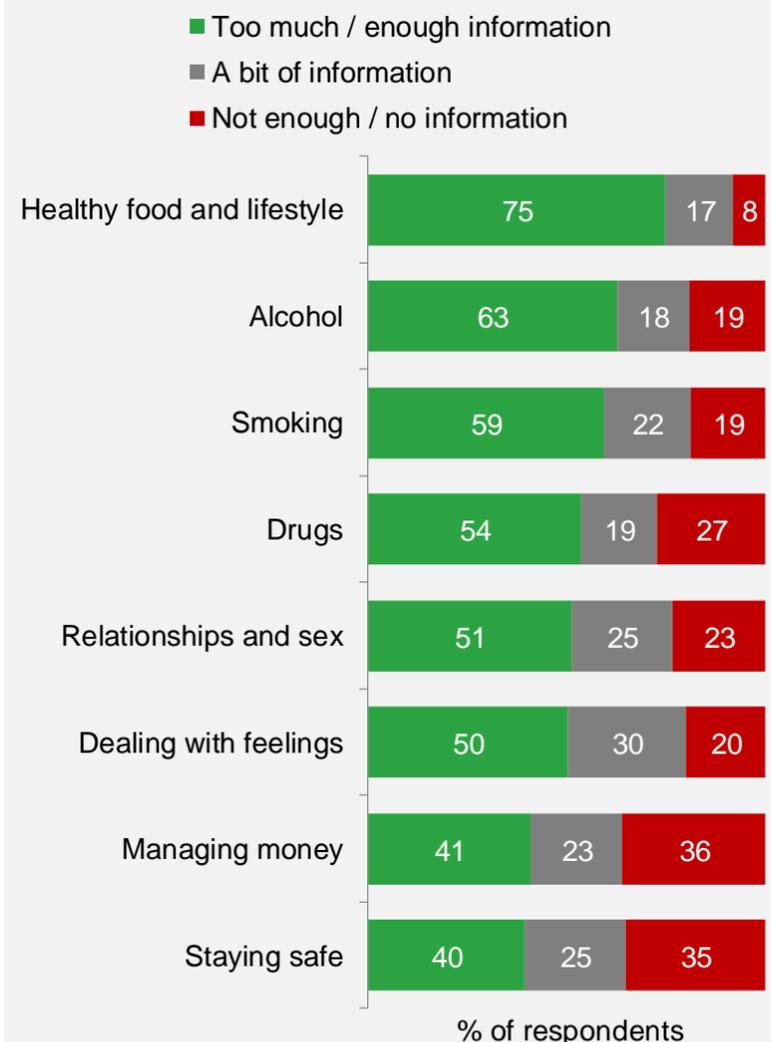
Responses were most negative, with parents/carers saying they had received ‘not enough’ or ‘no information’ to support their children on managing money (36 per cent), staying safe (35 per cent) and drugs (27 per cent).

**Figure 4: Where parents/carers go to for information about parenting/caring**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, sample size = 170  
Note: Respondents could select more than one answer, therefore the total is above 100 per cent.

**Figure 5: Amount of information parents/carers have received to support children with issues**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, minimum sample size = 99

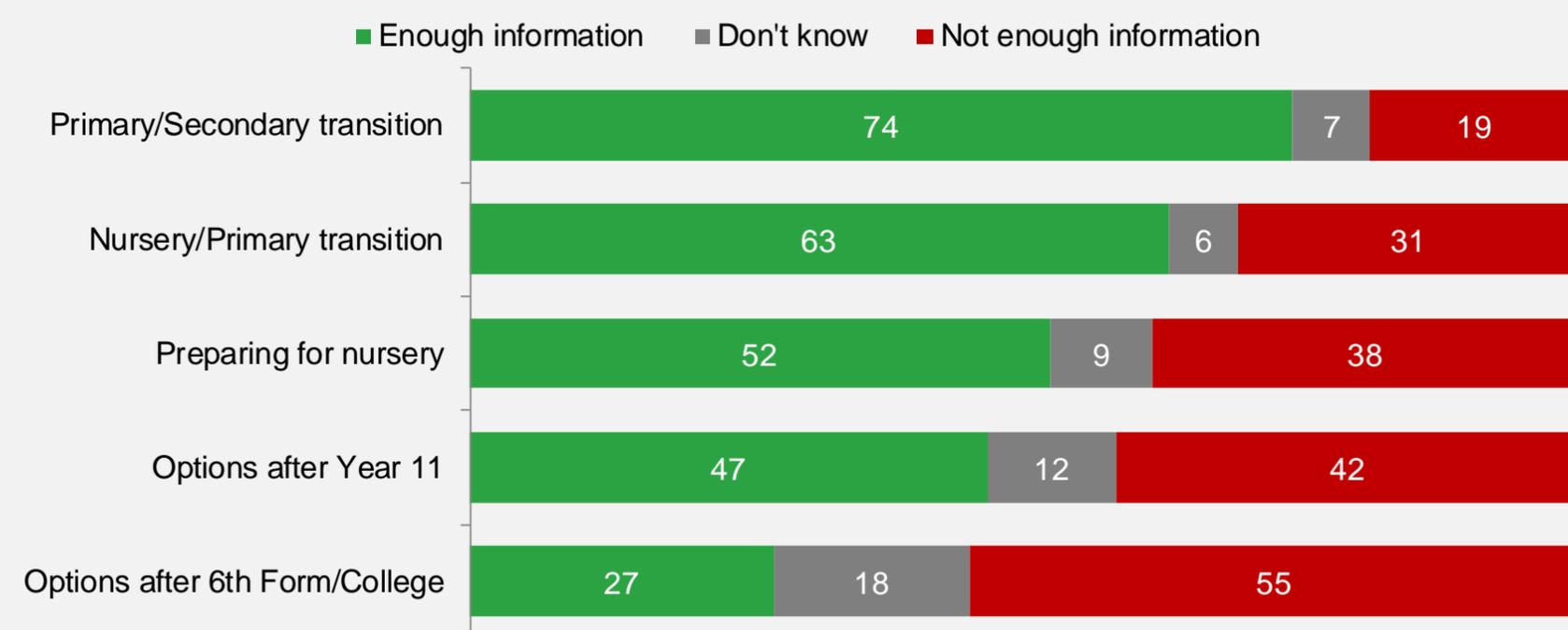
<sup>2</sup> These findings are unlikely to be biased by the ages of the children of respondents because parents/carers were able to select ‘not applicable’ if they felt the category did not apply to them. These responses have been excluded from the analysis.

Parents and carers were asked broadly whether they have had enough information to support them in helping their children to plan their future.<sup>3</sup> Only around a third (37 per cent) said that they had, while one in four respondents (40 per cent) said that they had not. The remaining 23 per cent said that they did not know.

More specifically, respondents were asked about the amount of information they received about different transitions in their children’s lives. Figure 6 provides a summary of the responses. Parents and carers were most positive about the transition between primary and secondary school, with nearly three quarters (74 per cent) saying that they had had enough information on this transition.

Parents and carers were most negative about information they received on options after sixth form/college. Over half of respondents (55 per cent) said that they had not had enough information.

**Figure 6: Amount of information received by parents/carers about transitions**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, minimum sample size = 51

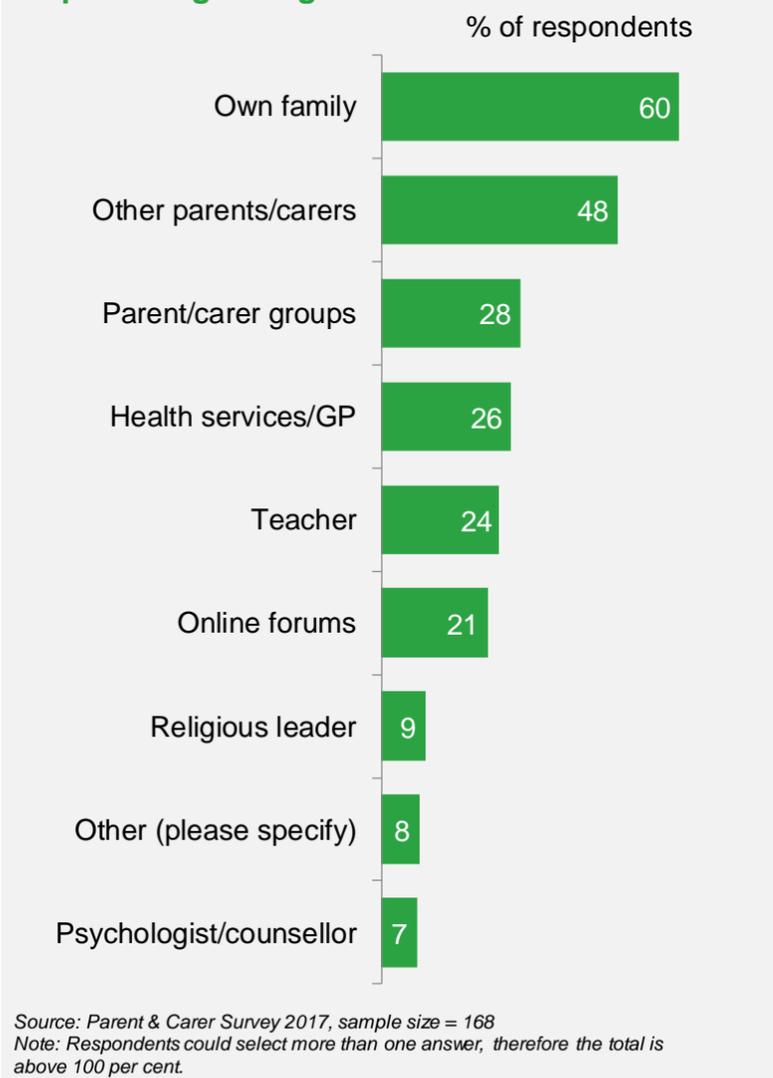
## Getting support

In addition to asking parents and carers about where they get information, respondents were also asked where they go to for support. Figure 7 provides a summary of the responses. Parents and carers most commonly said that they go to their own family (60 per cent) and other parents/carers (48 per cent) for support.

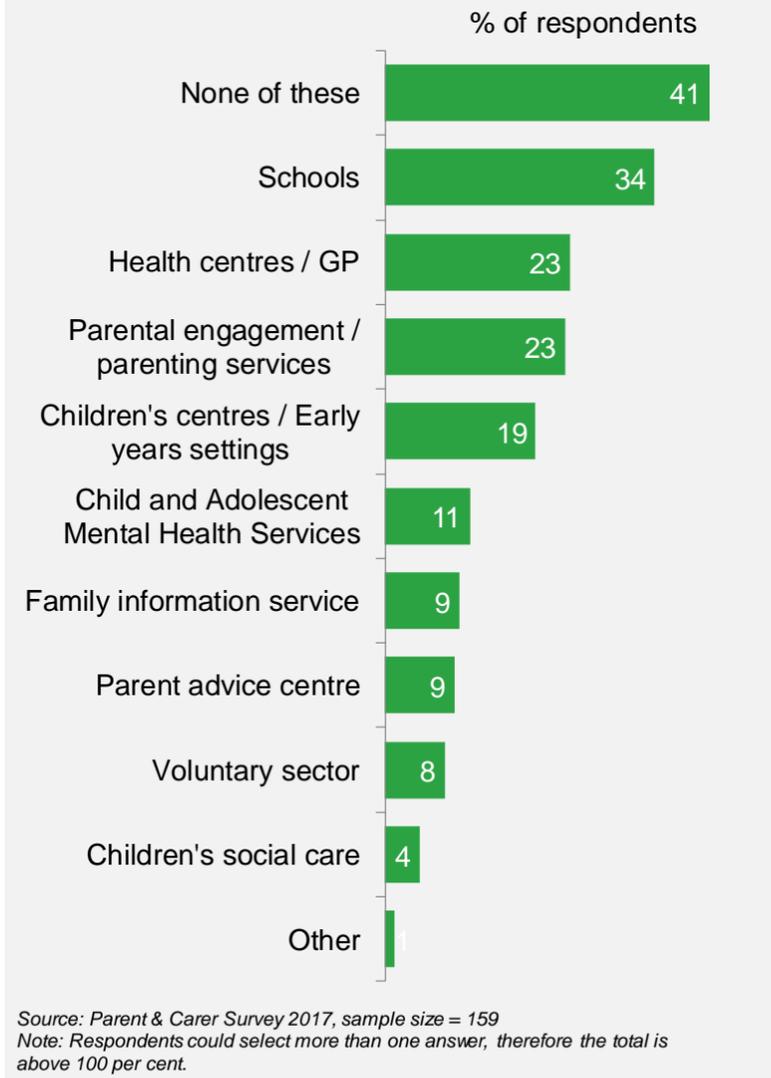
Survey respondents were also asked if they had accessed support from a range of family support services and agencies in the last year. Figure 8 provides a summary of the responses. Four in ten respondents (41 per cent) said they had not used any of the services or agencies listed, making it the most common response. Schools were the most commonly used service, with around a third of parents and carers (34 per cent) saying they have accessed support from them in the last year.

<sup>3</sup> These findings are unlikely to be biased by the ages of the children of respondents because parents/carers were able to select ‘not applicable’ if they felt the category did not apply to them. These responses have been excluded from the analysis.

**Figure 7: Where parents/carers go to for support on parenting/caring**



**Figure 8: Family support services used by parents/carers in the last year**



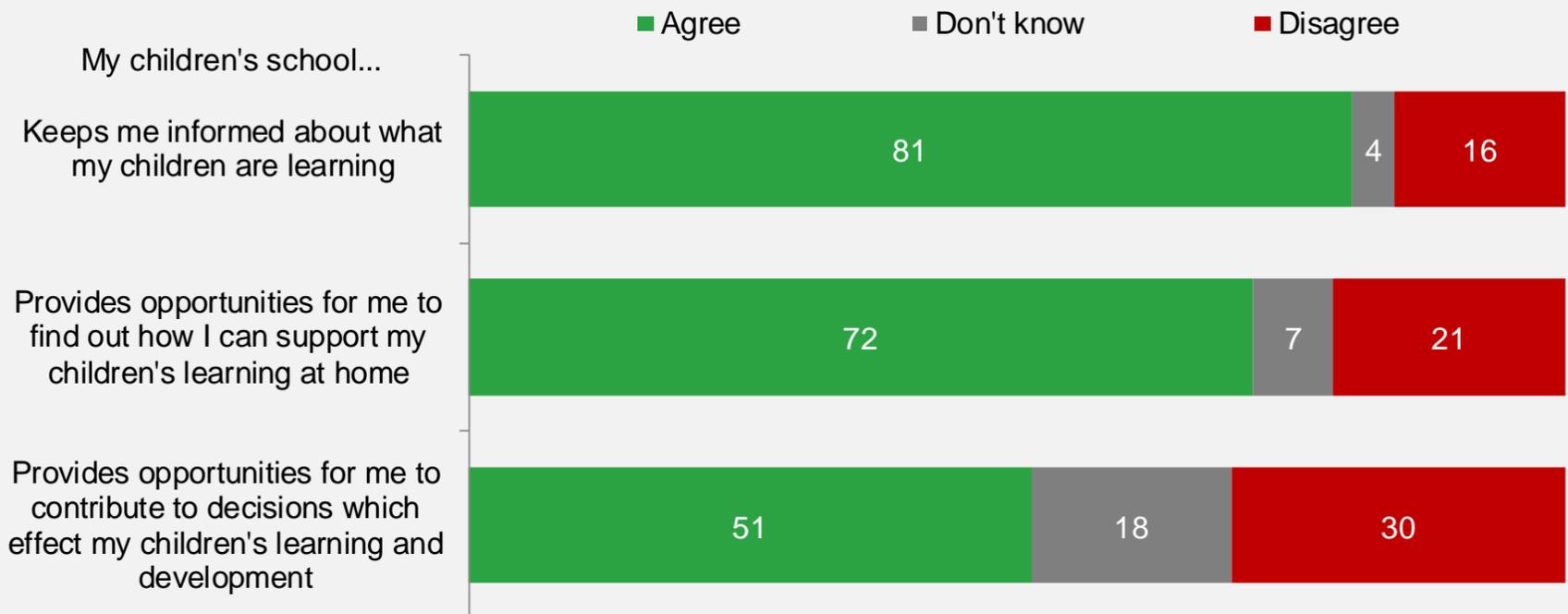
Parents and carers who had accessed a service or agency were asked to rate the support they received. The majority of respondents (68 per cent) said that they were either 'satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' with their support and only 5 per cent said that they were either 'dissatisfied' or 'extremely dissatisfied', with the remaining 27 per cent saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Due to the small number of respondents reporting use of support services/agencies, analysis of satisfaction by service/agency was not possible.

## School and learning

Survey respondents were asked if they thought their children's learning environment supported their needs adequately. Overall, 66 per cent of parents/carers said yes, 23 per cent said no, and 12 per cent did not know or selected 'other'. There were no significant differences despite the type of children's learning environment (i.e. community school versus alternative provision).

Parents and carers were also asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their children's school. Figure 9 provides a summary of responses. Eight in ten (81 per cent) agreed that their children's school keeps them informed about what their children are learning. Seven in ten (72 per cent) agreed that their children's school provides opportunities for them to find out how to support their children's learning at home. Respondents were least positive with the statement 'my children's school provides opportunities for me to contribute to decisions which effect my children's learning and development'. Only around half (51 per cent) agreed with this statement, while nearly a third (30 per cent) disagreed.

**Figure 9: Parent/carer views about their children's school**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, minimum sample size = 148

Around a quarter of survey respondents (27 per cent) said that their children received private tuition outside of school. The majority of these respondents said that this tuition was provided by a private tutor and nearly all said that their children received it at least once a week. Reasons parents had for providing their children with private tuition included:

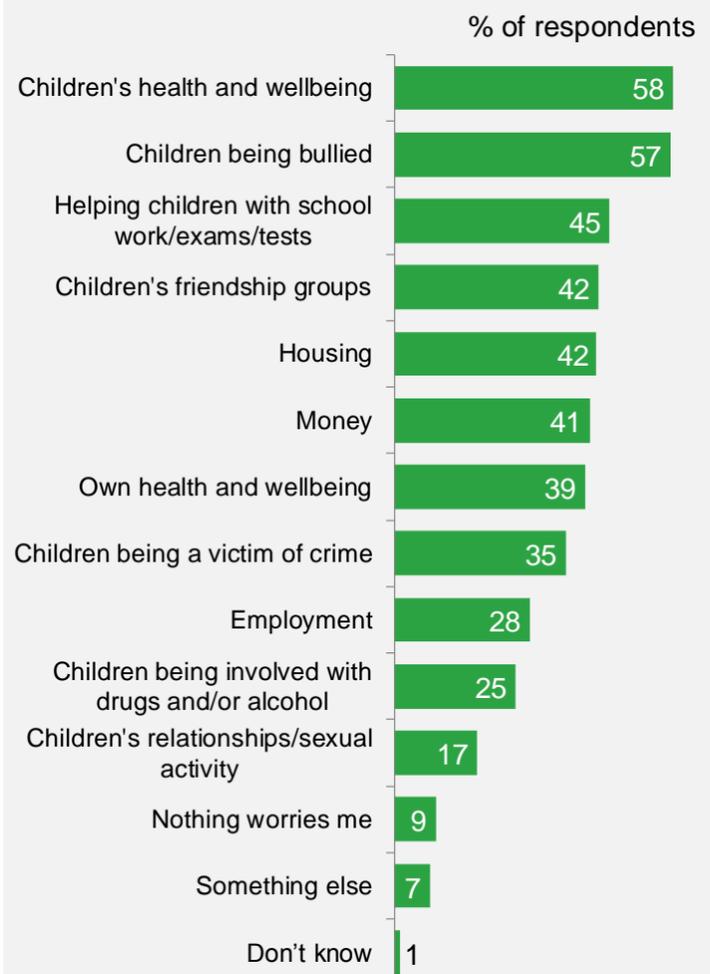
- Generally wanting children to do well in school
- Feeling that children were behind their peers and needed additional support
- Not having a quiet space for children to study at home
- Teaching children subjects and skills that are not taught in school
- Preparing pupils for exams
- Children are not challenged enough, or receiving enough support, in school

## Worrying

Parents and carers were asked what they often worry about. Figure 10 provides a summary of the responses. The two most common responses were 'children's health and wellbeing' (58 per cent) and 'children being bullied' (57 per cent).

Less than one in ten (9 per cent) survey respondents said that nothing worries them.

**Figure 10: What parents and carers often worry about**



Source: Parent & Carer Survey 2017, sample size = 175  
 Note: Respondents could select more than one answer, therefore the total is above 100 per cent.

## Bullying

Around a quarter of parents and carers (26 per cent) reported that their children had been bullied in the last year, 64 per cent said they had not been bullied, and 10 per cent did not know.

Additionally, all parents and carers were asked how their children's school deals with bullying, regardless of whether their children had experienced bullying. Overall, 39 per cent said 'very well' or 'quite well', 19 per cent said 'not very well' or 'badly' and 43 per cent said they did not know or that bullying was not a problem at their children's school. Among parents and carers whose children had been bullied, experiences were mixed. Around half felt that their children's school dealt with bullying well while around half felt that they dealt with it 'not very well' or 'badly'.

## Community cohesion

Similar to a question that appears on the council's Annual Residents Survey and the Pupil Attitude Survey, parents and carers were asked if they thought Tower Hamlets is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. The majority of respondents (71 per cent) agreed, 19 per cent were neutral or didn't know, and only 9 per cent disagreed.

## Improving life for parents and carers

Parents and carers were asked what would improve their family life and given a list of options to choose from. The most common response was 'more help to support my children with their learning', with around half (52 per cent) of respondents choosing this option. Parents and carers showed the least interest in getting advice and information on employment and managing their finances, with only 17 per cent of respondents choosing these options.

**Table 1: Improving family life for parents and carers**

	Count	%
More help to support my children with their learning	91	52
More information about places I can go with my children and the family	68	39
More opportunities to be involved in school life and my children's learning	64	37
More information and advice about helping my family live a healthy, active life	41	23
More parenting support /advice to help me manage my children's behaviour	38	22
Support around the parent/carer & child relationship	37	21
More parenting support and advice to help me manage difficult conversations	36	21
More information and advice to help me take steps towards employment	30	17
More information and advice to help me manage my finances	30	17
Other	21	12
None of these	19	11
Don't know	5	3
<i>sample size</i>	175	

Source: Parent and Carer Survey 2017

Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not sum to 100.

## Further information

This report was produced by the council's Corporate Research Unit (CRU). Our research provides timely and in-depth analysis about Tower Hamlets and can be found on the [Borough Statistics pages](#) of the council's website.

For more information about this report, please contact [Lisa Stidle](#), Research Officer, Corporate Research Unit.