



# Child and Parent Support Services (CAPPS)

Customer Experience Project summary report  
April 2013 – June 2013

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## Executive Summary

### Key Findings

- Users of the children centre are generally happy with the service that they have received.
- The staff are exemplary and their good work has shone through in the statistics and results from the users responses.
- Some of the toys and facilities within the rooms are outdated and broken. The majority of users felt that this issue needed to be addressed.
- Users found that on occasions some of the rooms and facilities could be dirty from previous users of the service.
- Not all of the users know exactly what facilities the centre has. Some users did not know that there were outdoor facilities available.

### Recommendations

- Activity rooms and toys are refreshed and sanitised between each session.
- Heating be used more appropriately throughout the centre.
- Provide anti bacterial cleaning products in the contact rooms and encourage service users to clean the room after their session.
- It is recommended that the small room next to the reception area be used during busy periods to avoid congestion.
- New users to the service should be shown a check list of the facilities and the expectations from them and the service. This would ensure nothing of importance was missed out and allow users to have a thorough understanding of what exactly was available to them.
- It is recommended that a wider selection of age appropriate toys is sourced. This would allow broken toys to be replaced.<sup>1</sup>
- Finally, it is recommended that art work and displays be placed at varying heights in the rooms to allow for better engagement with the children. This was a direct suggestion from a service user.

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<sup>1</sup> The toys could be sought from a social enterprise or local charity. The centre could hold charity days, where they could go out to the local community and seek donations, from sponsored walks etc. which would then be invested for new equipment for the children to play with and use.

## **Introduction**

The Children and Parenting Support Service (CAPSS) manages children in need cases under Section 17 of the Children Act. It contributes towards care plans for children and young people subject to child protection plans and who may be looked after or be subject to care proceedings. CAPSS aims to assist fieldwork teams in supporting children with complex needs who have been assessed as being in need or in need of protection. The aim of this intervention is to:

- Enable and empower children, young people and their families from Lancashire's diverse communities to meet their own needs in the longer term.
- Reducing the numbers of children becoming looked after or requiring further, more intensive services in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.
- Safeguard children and young people.
- Ensure children and young people's needs are met to reduce re-referrals.
- Reduce the number of children in need of safeguarding (Child Protection)

The main aim of the service is to reduce the number of children who become looked after.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this customer experience project is to:

- Gain the views of the current service from the adult users.
- Reveal any inconsistencies and areas for improvement within the children's centre.
- Improving the parent's experiences of supervised access sessions.
- Improving children's experiences, from the perspective of the parent.

Two children centres in central Preston were initially chosen to be the settings of the interviews, St. Luke's and Ripon Street. The manager Marc Percy commissioned a poster campaign throughout March 2013 to advertise the interviews; the potential participants were also spoken to individually regarding the interviews. However, before commencing the interviews Ripon Street was removed from the project as it is no longer used regularly for contact sessions.

For the project the parents undergoing supervised access with children, using the CAPSS have been defined as 'service users'. It should be noted that parents were going through a difficult period in their lives when the research was undertaken, which has been noted as a limitation to the process.

## **Methodology**

The scope of the project was initially discussed with the service lead Marc Percy at the Ripon street Children's Centre in January 2013.

The research project used face to face questionnaires to satisfy the objectives. The questionnaires used a range of questions that allowed for the effective collection of quantitative and qualitative information. They also allowed for probing and verification and give an opportunity for a deeper understanding from the users. Each interview lasted between 5-10 minutes and covered a range of 11 open and closed questions. Users were asked to rate different aspects of the service 'Good', 'Average' or 'Poor' and discuss the issues further, if applicable, leading to qualitative and quantitative results.

Two researchers Matthew Groom and Charlotte Bracher, independent of the service, conducted the interviews on two consecutive days. They were carried out at the Children's Social Care Preston CAPPs Centre St Luke's Family Resource Centre on 3rd and 4th April 2013. To ensure they spoke to all the service users Matthew and Charlotte were present at the centre for all day on both days.

### **Limitations**

Due to the sensitive nature of the service it was noted that there would be limitations to the project. Matthew and Charlotte were able to appreciate that service users may be emotional during the interviews due to the nature of the service. It was also important to make the interviewees aware that answers and personal situations were confidential. It was also noted that some parents fail to attend sessions or are not allowed access due to health and wellbeing factors.

However during the interviews new limitations were observed and recorded. Firstly, some users had not seen the poster campaign and had no prior knowledge about the interviews taking place. During the two days a large number of parents did not attend their booked session or were not allowed access. This led to a drastically reduced number of interviewees and hindered the validity of the results.

Another limitation to the project was the lack of information and detail in the answers people gave. Although everyone who took part rated the aspects of the service, some found it hard to elaborate, which made developing meaningful recommendations hard. Matthew and Charlotte were aware that they did not want to place bias on any of the questions and so didn't make suggestions when users had no additional information to contribute. Due to this, some of the percentages quoted may seem low, however all statistics should be deemed encouraging.

## Main Research Findings

### Question 1: Generally, how would you rate the welcome and reception area?

Service users were asked how they would rate the welcome they received and the reception area within the children's centre. The chart below shows the results.

Two in five of the users found the staff and the welcome they received to be very helpful and friendly.

Further results showed that the users had suggestions for areas that could be improved. A third of users wanted more seats and a larger floor area within the reception area. They noted that it can be particularly difficult and cramped when several people are entering and exiting. A participant also suggested magazines are made available, as on occasions there could be a long wait to see their children.

*Generally, how would you rate the welcome and reception area?*

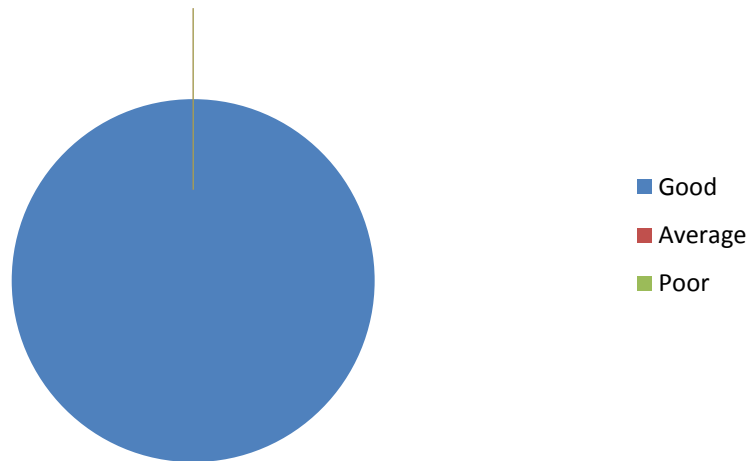


**Question 2: Generally, how would you rate the staff at the centre?**

The chart below shows that all of the service users believe the members of staff at the centre are good.

Half of the users feel that the staff are approachable. Service users had no suggestions as to how the staffing could be improved. Some of the words that the users used to describe the staff are 'good', 'brilliant', 'very approachable' and 'friendly'.

*Generally, how would you rate the staff at the centre?*



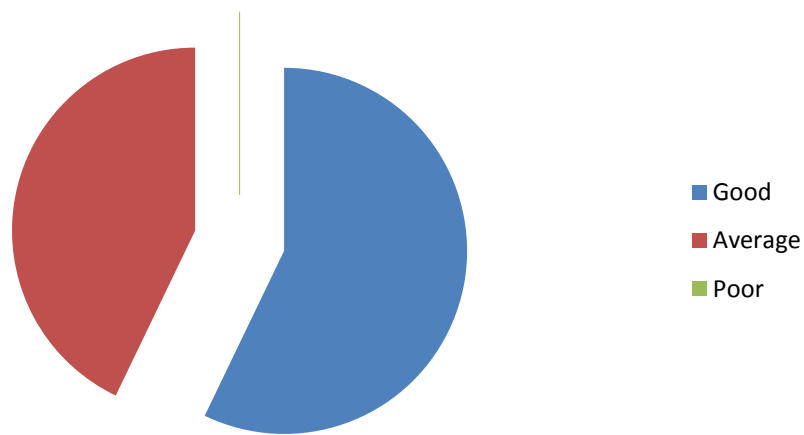


### Question 3: How convenient is the booking system?

There was a mixed response to how users found their experience of the booking system and arranging to see their child.

Three quarters of the users had pre booked and long standing appointments every week, however around half rated the service as 'good'. The discrepancy is due to users feeling it was a long way to travel to St. Luke's Children Centre, with some participants suggesting the centre based on Ripon Street would be more convenient. Some users also felt that they didn't have much control of the dates that they saw their child and meetings would often be arranged at short notice. However, the children's centre does not have control over this aspect as it is arranged with Social Services.

*How convenient is the booking system?*



**Question 4: How would you rate the room and equipment that you use for the contact sessions?**

The chart below shows that over half of the service users felt the rooms and equipment were average.

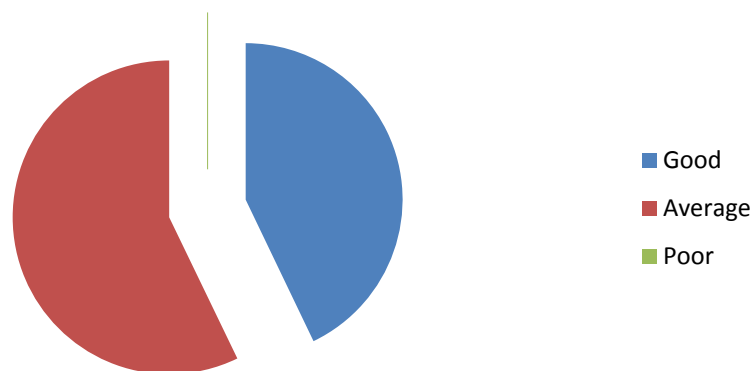
Three quarters of the users felt there were not enough age appropriate toys in the room, and that the toys that were not good quality. This is particularly significant as the children's ages range from small babies to young teens. Further details from service users include 'missing batteries' and 'broken toys'. The long term users stated that their children that had become 'bored' of the toys and felt they needed updating.

Two fifths of the users thought that the rooms and toys could sometimes appear dirty, with one service user having previously found an old sausage roll in the ball pit. This aspect of the service was even more of a concern for the users that had babies, as small children put toys in their mouth and it is unclear when the toys get sanitised. It was also observed by the interviewer that some of the facilities were broken, including a cupboard door that the children were able to access.

When questioned further, service users felt they could ask members of staff for new activities, or the opportunity to go out in the community. They were also pleased with the size of the rooms available.

One of the users suggested placing a radio or television in the room to generate some background noise.

*How would you rate the room and equipment that you use for the contact sessions?*



**Question 5: During the contact session how appropriate and useful are the planned activities for you and your family?**

This question was mainly intended for the service users that had pre-planned activities to carry out whilst at the centre, however this was only two fifths of the interviewees. Of these people interviewed they found the activities useful and the staff very helpful.

All parents felt they were able to arrange different activities such as baking and would feel confident to request anything beforehand. Parents were asked if any toys and activities were set out before they arrived, to which they said no.

Some parents were able to arrange activities with the foster parents before the meeting such as bathing and feeding.

*During the contact session how appropriate and useful are the planned activities for you and your family?*



Please note: The service user that scored the planned activities as 'average' had no suggestions on improvements and said they were appropriate for what she was doing and had nothing negative to say.

**Question 6: How would you rate the staff at the centre during your contact session?**

The chart below shows that all of the participants rated the staff as 'good'.

A summary of the key adjectives used to describe them is shown below.

'Okay and approachable'

'Brilliant, approachable'

'Very nice, and helpful in the office'

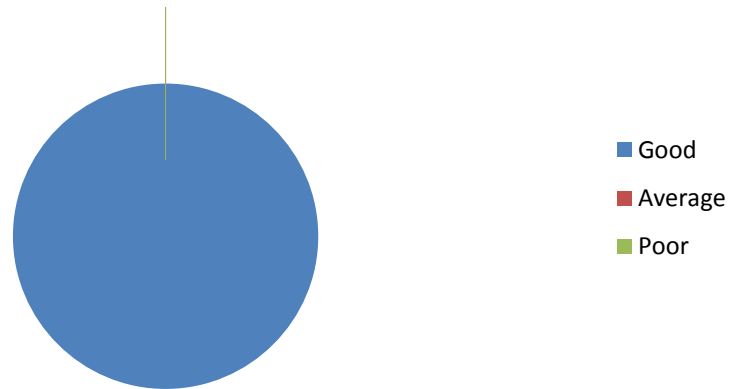
'Really nice and easy to speak to'

'Friendly and approachable and my social worker is very good'

'Efficient and helpful'

'Excellent and approachable'

*How would you rate the staff at the centre during your contact session?*



**Question 7: How would you rate the outdoor facilities at the contact centre?**

The results for this question and shown in the chart are from a lower number of users as not everyone that has visited the centre has used the outdoor area.

Two fifths of users felt the outdoor facilities provided enough toys and games for their children and during the summer months they enjoyed spending a lot of time outside.

In direct contradiction only one fifth of users felt that the equipment outside was poor. They felt that a lot of the toys were broken and the bikes weren't in very good condition. It was suggested that the tarmac should be changed, to be more child appropriate, in an effort to make the area safer.

Once fifth felt impartial to the outdoor area, they remarked that it was 'okay'.

The final one fifth of users didn't know there was an outdoor area, but said that now they did they would use it in the summer.

*How would you rate the outdoor facilities at the contact centre?*



Please note: The people that had not used the outside facilities said they felt comfortable in asking staff to use them.

**Question 8: What facilities and resources inside and out, would positively enhance the time you spend with your child?**

The service users did not have many suggestions as to how to improve the service, however the suggestions they did make reinforce previous statements made by them.

Two thirds of the service users felt having a larger range a toys available for the children this would improve their child's experience whilst at the centre. Some users chose to independently bring their own toys in for their children to play with. However, service users did this for different reasons such as 'toys from home' or as presents.

One fifth of the service users suggested that the children's needs should be taken into consideration when decorating as nothing is at the children's level.

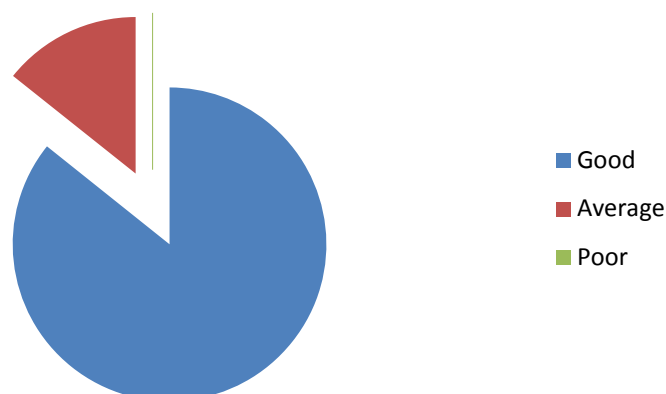
**Question 9: How would you rate the quality of the overall service at the centre?**

The chart below shows that the majority of the users interviewed rated the quality of the service as 'good'.

When asked for specific examples of the good areas half of service users felt the staff made the experience 'As good as it could be' and 'Did the best job they could'. Again the quality of the members of staff was mentioned.

When asked for areas to be improved it was hard for the service users to give any examples. However, two people made specific suggestions that would improve the of the service provided for the service users and the children. Firstly, a user requested more chairs available for babies. Secondly, it was often too hot in the centre, and suggested it only be turned on at appropriate times.

*How would you rate the quality of the overall service at the centre?*



**Question 10: How do you think your child would rate the service?**

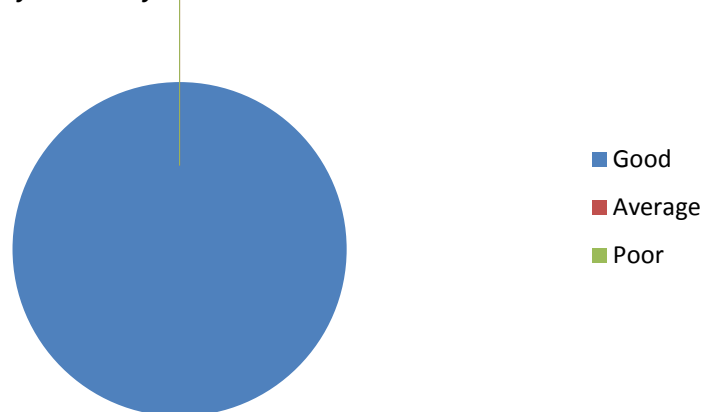
The answer to this question was consistently very positive. As we received more information from the users a trend began to emerge as the service was naturally broken down into three different areas; staff, toys and general happiness.

The chart below shows that all service users felt their children are happy to attend the children centres.

It was suggested that this is because they are made to feel at ease whilst at the centre. The staff made the children feel welcome and they were able to explore centre. Three quarters of users said the children like the staff at the centre. Service users mentioned that their children felt comfortable to explore the centre and that they are happy to interact with the staff in the offices.

Over half of users said the children like the toys available and enjoy playing with them. It was mentioned by several service users that the children are able to pick out their favourite toys from the various areas.

*How do you think your child would rate the service?*



**Question 11: How would you describe the Children Centre to others/ would you recommend it?**

The users of this particular service were quick to point out that visiting the children's centre was not something that they enjoyed doing. However, they also pointed out that it was 'as good as it could be' and one third of the users said it is 'not as bad as you would think'. The comments about the service at this point were positive with the majority of the people mentioning the children being happy to attend.

*How would you describe the children centre to others/would you recommend it?*



**Ripon Street**

The initial scope of the customer experience project was to receive feedback from St Luke's and Ripon Street Children's Centres. However, just before the interviews were due to be carried out Matthew and Charlotte were advised that Ripon Street was no longer used for contact sessions.

When interviewing the service users Matthew and Charlotte enquired as to whether they had ever visited Ripon Street. Only one person was able to give feedback, these are the specific comments on the centre. "The room was too big and my son would try to get in the kitchen" and "There was a TV but it didn't have a license so we couldn't watch it, it made my son upset and he tried to tip it over." As the centre is no longer used regularly for contact these comments will not be used to make recommendations.



## **Conclusions**

- Users of the Children's Centres are generally happy with the service that they have received. The staff are exemplary and their good practice has shone through when analysing the results from the responses.
- Some of the toys and facilities within the rooms are outdated and broken. The majority of users felt that this issue needed to be addressed.
- Users found that on occasions some of the rooms were found to be unclean and the toys had not been cleaned in between sessions.

## **Recommendations**

- Activity rooms and toys are refreshed and sanitised between each session.
- Heating be used more appropriately throughout the centre.
- Provide anti bacterial cleaning products in the contact rooms and encourage service users to clean the room after their session.
- It is recommended that the small room next to the reception area be used during busy periods to avoid congestion.
- New users to the service should be shown a check list of the facilities and the expectations from them and the service. This would ensure nothing of importance was missed out and allow users to have a thorough understanding of what exactly was available to them.
- It is recommended that a wider selection of age appropriate toys is sourced. This would allow broken toys to be replaced.<sup>2</sup>
- Finally, it is recommended that art work and displays be placed at varying heights in the rooms to allow for better engagement with the children. This was a direct suggestion from a service user.

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<sup>2</sup> The toys could be sought from a social enterprise or local charity. The centre could hold charity days, where they could go out to the local community and seek donations, from sponsored walks etc. which would then be invested for new equipment for the children to play with and use.