



PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

**ANNUAL REPORT
Academic Year 2009-10**

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PPS “SNAPSHOT” 2009-10

- **Contacts to the service - over 5,000**
- **New cases - 330**
- **Web site hits - over 7,000**
- **232 training sessions provided to parents**
- **Staffing**
 - Parent Partnership Service**
 - 1 x full time (Service Coordinator)**
 - 1x term time only (Case Coordinator)**
 - 1 x 0.4 term time only (Case Coordinator)**
 - 1 x 0.5 term time only (Case Coordinator)**
 - Choice Advice - Transitions Information Adviser**
 - 1 x full time (Transitions Information Adviser - non SEN)**
 - 1 x 0.16 term time (Transitions Information Adviser - SEN)**
- **14 hours per week administrative support (8 hours currently vacant)**

PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE (PPS) ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

What do Parent Partnership Services do?

Parent Partnership Services work with parents of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). We provide information, training, advice and support, foster networking and collaboration and inform and influence local SEN policy and practice. Parent Partnership Services are arms length from the local authority and provide impartial advice and support. We support parents of children from 2 to 18 years of age:

- on School Action / Early Years Action;
- on School Action Plus / Early Years Action Plus;
- undergoing statutory assessment; and
- with statements of special educational needs.

We also support parents if they or the school thinks the child or young person has special educational needs. There is no need for a diagnosis or for the child or young person to be on the graduated response.

Background

The Academic Year 2009 -10 has been a difficult year for the service as:

- the former manager left after a long period of illness;
- the Assistant Parent Partnership Officer was faced with redundancy;
- the Assistant Parent Partnership Officer carried on with their normal duties as well as taking on the management of the service;
- the Area Case Coordinator for Fenland took on the bulk of the case work of the absent manager;
- the service was restructured;
- a new part time, term time only, member of staff was recruited; and
- the service moved offices for the second time.

Whilst managing the above the service had a further increase in the number of cases i.e. parents contacting the service for advice and support. Even though the number of cases has increased each year, funding has decreased. This caused additional problems this year as the service was already under staffed. Despite the various issues the service has consistently received very high ratings from the parents and professionals it engages with.

The Lamb Enquiry

The Lamb Report into Parental Confidence in Special Educational Needs was published in December 2009. The report voiced and addressed concerns regarding special educational needs that parents had been advising Parent Partnership Services about for a number of years. He made 51

recommendations to try and overcome the problems he identified. He also identified areas of concern for Parent Partnership Services which though not an issue for Cambridgeshire Parent Partnership Service did mean we had to look at the way we worked to evidence this. The two recommendations that applied to Parent Partnership Services are below.

Recommendation 18

The Department for Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) re-launches parent partnership services to provide parents with expert, high-quality advice. They should be trained in the statutory framework and their role in advising parents of their rights should be reinforced.

Recommendation 18 was a result of Lamb finding some Parent Partnerships did not fully understand their requirement to be neutral. He advised “the SEN Code of Practice uses ‘neutrality’ in the sense of avoiding bias or undue influence in advising parents, and in the sense of standing fairly and squarely with the legislation and the Code of Practice”. He felt some services tried to reach agreement between parents and the local authority without having regard to what was legally required. As a consequence he wanted all services to be adequately trained in SEN Law to prevent this. The body that promotes and supports Parent Partnership Services, the National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN) is therefore setting up a bespoke training course. Cambridgeshire Parent Partnership Service has always used outside organisations to provide training to ensure staff were advised of the current legal requirements. It was decided to formalise this process and a training policy was written. The re-launch of Parent Partnership Services is being organised by the NPPN. It has been changed from a national to a regional event due to the current financial climate. No further news is currently available.

Recommendation 19

The DCSF (now the Department for Education) commissions the National Strategies to work with local authorities to ensure that parent partnership services are appropriately deployed.

Recommendation 19 was made as Lamb found some PPS were performing jobs for the local authority so that parents had a friendly face to liaise with. His concern was that this left the parent without an impartial source of advice and support and compromised the arms length nature of the PPS. As a result he wanted the National Strategies to work with local authorities to ensure the right people did the right job. The National Strategies were due to start work in September 2010 but in light of the change in Government and the spending review this may be delayed or shelved. Cambridgeshire PPS does not and never has performed any job or role that would have caused this problem and the service’s Impartiality Policy prohibits this in order to stop this situation arising.

Casework

This year the number of cases was 330. Last year 2008/09 it was 321, an increase of 40% on 2007/08. However in 2008/09 a new way of case work recording was implemented which during its implementation gave a figure that was too high. As a consequence I would estimate that the number of cases for the academic year 2009-10 increased somewhere between 10% and 15%. Looking back over previous years there has never been a year when the number of cases did not increase. In addition the complexity of cases has continued to increase, for example we are involved with increasing numbers of Child in Need meetings.

An analysis of casework can be found at Appendix 1. It shows that the majority of parents (57%) contact us when their child is in the primary phase, with 28% when their child is in secondary school.

The three main reasons for parents contacting the service are:

1. statutory assessment provision i.e. provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs
2. School Action/School Action Plus provision
3. statutory assessment queries

Lack of or poor communication between the school and parents plays a significant part in 1 and 2. Particularly relevant for SA/SA+ provision are parents feelings that there is no support for their child unless they have a statement. Many are unaware of the delegated additional educational needs (AEN) funding; some schools are reluctant to inform them. Many parents also feel that no one is checking on the schools and how they support pupils with SEN.

Analysis of cases indicates that the highest proportions of cases are related to Cognition & Learning and within this category Moderate Learning Difficulty and Dyslexia are uppermost. Communication & Interaction follows closely and within this category Autistic Spectrum Condition and Aspergers are the main SEN type.

Case involving bullying, unofficial exclusion and official exclusion

The table on page six shows the figures for the number of cases that involve bullying, unofficial exclusions and official exclusions.

Reason for contact	Number of cases where parents contacted us		
	specifically about bullying, unofficial exclusion or official exclusion	about a different concern but made reference to bullying, unofficial exclusion or official exclusion	Total
Bullying	10	15	25
Unofficial exclusion	5	14	19
Official exclusion	16	6	22

We started to record incidents where parents contacted us about a different problem but during casework made reference to bullying, unofficial exclusions or official exclusions as it was obvious that our statistics were not showing the real levels of these. Previously our figures had only included cases where this had been the main reason for contact.

Bullying

With regards to bullying even taking into account the additional cases now recorded only 8% of cases were about bullying or involved a parental belief that their child had been bullied. Our figures are almost certainly still much too low as:

- not all parents will be mentioning instances of bullying if that is not why they contacted the service;
- pupils do not always mention to their parents they are being bullied;
- PPS staff are not always recording the information when it is mentioned as it is referred to in passing, often as part of a very complicated history, and easily missed.

This is substantiated by the Tellus3 survey (2007/08) which found 61.4% of pupils with SEN had been bullied. In addition the Lamb Enquiry recognised the problem was too important and far too widespread, it quoted a MENCAP survey showing 90% of pupils with a learning disability had been bullied. One of his recommendations (number 9) was to find the most effective strategies to overcome this and implement them.

Exclusions

Unofficial exclusions are almost certainly higher than our figures show though by their very nature it is very difficult to give a figure, Lamb did not try. Official exclusions are formally recorded by the school and the local authority so it is only of interest in terms of the percentage of PPS cases where this has happened. Where parents give their permission the PPS is in regular liaison with the County Inclusion Manager to ensure that schools follow the national and local guidance on all exclusions.

Comparison against previous years

As no detailed analysis of case work was possible last year a comparison was done against cases in 2007/08 Academic Year. From this it was noted that there were significant increases in the number of cases in the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Areas. The increase coincides with the recruitment of case workers for these Areas. We have been aware for some time that personal recommendation from parents that the service has advised and supported is very effective publicity. The increases in these Areas would evidence this and also the increased networking that has taken place.

There was no significant change in the primary areas of need i.e. Cognition and Learning etc of the child, SEN code of practice stage at referral, type of school attended, age of the child etc. All remained fairly consistent with any changes between 2% and 10% which could be explained by normal fluctuations.

Change in areas of need subtypes

Looking at areas of need subtypes it was noticed that there had been a significant change in two subtypes in the Communication and Interaction category (see table below)

Year	Autism	Autistic Spectrum
2007/08	38%	19%
2009/10	13% (-25%)	40% (+21%)

Why 25% less parents were advising us their child had Autism and 21% more were advising their child was on the spectrum is unknown. One possibility is the trend for the health service to diagnose a child as being on the spectrum but not until later in a child's life to say where on the spectrum they are. However if this was the case the number of parents advising us their child has Aspergers Syndrome would be expected to have decreased but this changed by only 1%, well within the range of normal statistical deviation.

Pupils not in full time education

In 2008/09 it appeared that increasing numbers of parents were contacting the service as a child of theirs was not in full time education. At that time we had no formal category to identify these cases. We therefore decided to create a new category to enable accurate monitoring of this. Only six cases were received in 2009/10 and most of these in the first part of the year. The County Attendance Manager confirmed that the Local Authority no longer expected these cases to occur and work had been done to support schools to help achieve this

Reorganisation of the localities covered by staff

Once the former service manager resigned and subsequent reorganisation took place a new member of staff was recruited to cover the casework of the former manager. As a consequence there was a reorganisation of the localities covered by staff to ensure that cases were distributed evenly. The new arrangement is below.

Member of staff	Area	Localities covered
Bob Wilson	Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon St Neots
Peter Dawson	Cambridge City and South Cambs	All
Juliet Greer	Fenland and East Cambs	Wisbech March and Chatteris Bottisham, Burwell and Soham
Sara Ireland	East Cambs and Huntingdonshire	Ely, Littleport and Witchford Ramsey, Sawtry and Yaxley St Ives
Fleur Kerrecoe	Fenland	Whittlesey

Satisfaction Surveys

Casework - satisfaction survey of parents

All cases are evaluated and feed back is consistently positive. 100% of parents who completed the surveys rated the sensitivity and understanding of staff as either 'very good' or 'good' with no 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory gradings'. 97% of parents rated the quality of the information they received as either 'very good' or 'good'. As a result of the Lamb enquiry an additional question was included part way through the year asking parents to grade the impartiality of the advice and support they received. 100% of the forms returned with this question on graded impartiality as 'very good' or 'good' with no 'satisfactory' or 'unsatisfactory'. There were no forms returned where anything was rated as 'unsatisfactory'. The analysis of the casework satisfaction surveys can be found in Appendix 4.

Schools - Satisfaction Survey

34 schools replied to the satisfaction survey a return rate of 13.3%. All those that contacted the Parent Partnership Service for advice and or information

said that it had been useful and appropriate. 76% said they found the service's newsletter useful for staff which (as it is primarily targeted at parents) is an indicator that its readership is much larger. It may also indicate that for some school staff there is a lack of information about Special Educational Needs. 21 schools requested additional copies of the Parent Partnership Service newsletter to ensure all parents of children on School Action and School Action Plus in their schools received a copy. What was concerning was that 12 schools indicated that they selected parents to advise them about the service and one school only gave parents our information when there was a problem between the parent and the school. On one hand this shows confidence in the services ability to restore the relationship between the school and the parent but it also shows that this school and others are not advising all parents of children with SEN of our services existence as they are required to do. The analysis of the schools satisfaction surveys can be found in Appendix 5.

Parent Groups

In addition to working with existing groups in their areas the PPS Case Coordinators set up new groups in:

- Bar Hill;
- March; and
- Chatteris.

All three groups were set up in partnership with other organisations.

Existing groups are reporting that parents are not keen to take on active roles. Most new groups are professionally led as a result of parent's reluctance to take on management roles. Parents are still advising they want groups for support and advice but are unable to commit to help run them. This is a big resources drain on practitioners and organisations working in the field.

Most new groups are not keen to expand from parents coming along for a coffee and chat. This format has a limited life span as the main topic is the problems they are having with their child and their education. Once this subject is exhausted the groups fold. In order to be sustainable a more active focus is required e.g. speakers, trips etc.

Training of parents and practitioners

Training has again been limited by resources (budget and staff).

Road Shows

The Road Shows have continued with a total of 133 parents and 19 professionals attending. As usual Cambridge City and East Cambridgeshire had the highest turnout with Fenland and East Cambridgeshire having the lowest. The topics of the seminars are chosen by parents. All the trainers are provided by the local authority, health or the voluntary sector free of charge.

The most popular seminar was the 'Overview of the Autistic Spectrum'. The previous year we had run a seminar on the SEN Code of Practice. The most common comment from parents about both seminars was that this is how it was supposed to work but the reality in schools was different.

The second most popular seminar was the 'Inclusion Development Programme'. This Programme has been running for two years now and is designed to increase schools knowledge about how to support pupils with SEN. Parents were interested to find out about this programme and the information being provided to schools to help their child. Parents often report to the service concerns about schools' lack of knowledge about SEN and as a result the way school staff treat their child. They reported feeling that schools do not recognise their child's needs and treat behaviour related to their child's SEN as 'naughty' and punish it rather than recognising its cause and working with that. Brian Lamb in his report echoed parents concerns. One of his recommendations was to increase schools' knowledge of SEN (recommendation 6).

All seminars were almost universally well received with the most common comment being a request that it should be provided again but in more detail. Of the 212 evaluation forms completed 97% of parents said the training had *more than met* or *had met* their needs. The analysis of training evaluations can be found in Appendix 2.

Parent Partnership Service/Student Assessment Service (SAS) coffee mornings

The only other training we were able to provide was the usual PPS/SAS Coffee mornings which are provided in partnership with the student assessment service. These provide parents, in an informal way, with knowledge about the statutory assessment process their child is undergoing as well as a chance to ask questions relevant to them. The feedback has been consistently positive with parents welcoming the chance to discuss their concerns and have their questions answered.

Parental Involvement

The Parent Partnership Service has always promoted parental involvement in its own service and with the local authority.

Parents Liaison and Advisory Network (PLAN)

The Parents Liaison and Advisory Network (PLAN) was set up by the parent partnership service to consult parents about the work of the service. Its membership has just been broadened to include parents who have contacted the service and the local pinpoint representative. The first meeting of this broadened group will be in Autumn term 2010. In addition it will be held in a different Area of the county each term rather than in one central venue.

Parental Advice and Consultation (PaCT) database

The Parental Advice and Consultation (PaCT) database was set up in 2007. This database is a list of parents who would like to be consulted about all aspects of local authority SEN provision. Its latest use was to find two parents to take part in the interviews for the new Parent Support Manager. The Parent Support Manager is particularly important to the Parent Partnership Service as they will be carrying out strategic work for the service.

Parent Partnership Service Website

The website has continued to receive a respectable number of views. (see Appendix 3).

The most popular pages were the

- home page with its basic information about the service and links to various local authority and government documents
- pages on the services work with parents groups
- pages with details of national and local voluntary groups that offer support to parents

It is recognised the website needs significant development to enable it to become a more effective resource for parents and carers. The plan, subject to resources, is to include links to information on topics such as exclusions, bullying etc with links to national guidance, voluntary organisations and the councils own policies and web guidance. We recognise not all parents and carers are able to and feel confident in accessing the web and will continue to provide information in other ways as well.

Literature

In house leaflets

All in house leaflets were reviewed and updated in 2009/10 to take into account legislative changes and new guidance. A new leaflet 'How the Parent Partnership Service Supports Parent Groups' was written and added to the range. All leaflets have been reprinted and sent out to schools ready for the academic year 2010/11. Two leaflets that had been withdrawn, 'Governors and SEN' and 'Disability Discrimination'. These have been re-written taking into account changes in legislation and are currently being checked. They will be published, made available to parents and distributed to schools in the Academic Year 2010/11.

Newsletter

The termly newsletter continues to be well received with between 8,300 and 8,500 copies currently being distributed. Parents of every child with a statement of special educational needs receive a copy. All the local authority special schools requested copies to send directly to their parents. All schools receive copies of the newsletter and currently 72 primary and secondary schools request additional copies to send to parents of pupils on School Action Plus and / or School Action.

A popular feature is 'the day in the life of' article where a practitioner in the special educational needs field gives a brief run down of a day in their working life. Parents requested this feature as they were aware of the many practitioners that were involved with their child and wanted a better idea of what the different professionals' roles were and what they did.

Editors of the carers' newsletter requested permission to use several articles from one of the issues. This confirms the usefulness of the articles.

Choice Advice

Choice Advice is called Transitions Information Advice (TIA) in Cambridgeshire. Because the post must be 'independent' and provide 'impartial advice' it is managed by the Parent Partnership Service (sections 9 and 10, Appendix 5, Admissions Code 2010). The Transitions Information Advice Service has produced its own annual report.

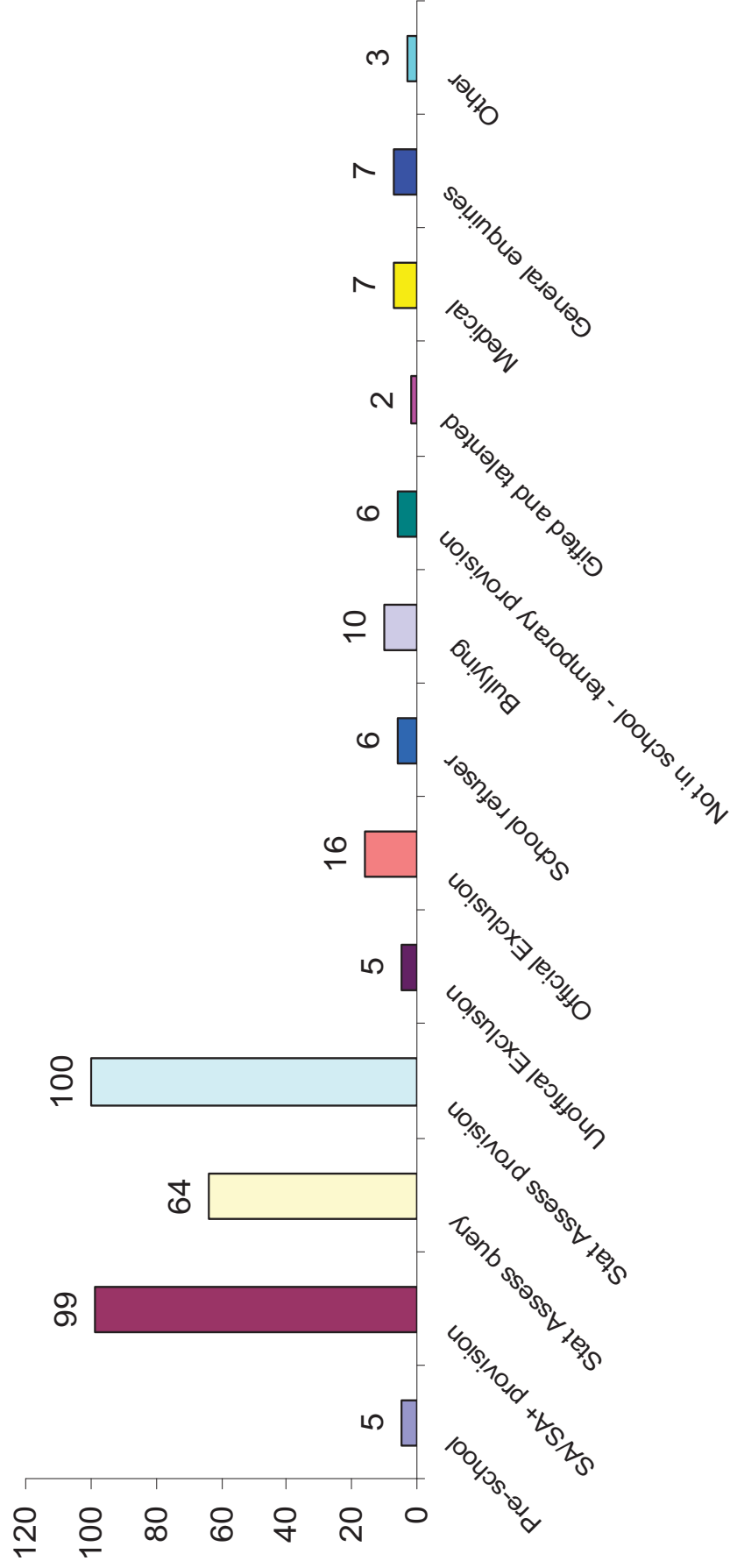
Conclusion

It has been a difficult year for the service but despite this the evaluations provided by the parents and practitioners that have contacted or been involved with us have remained positive. We have seen another increase in the numbers of parents that have contacted us for advice and support. The publication of the Lamb Report into Parental Confidence in SEN was a real high point for many parent partnership services recognising as it did the

concerns that parents had been reporting to us for years. The uncertainty over its recommendations is very worrying but if the ideas behind it are implemented by everyone working in the field it will go a long way to addressing parents concerns. The recommendations made in respect of parent partnership services showed that we have got the balance right in terms of providing impartial advice and support to parents whilst working in partnership with practitioners to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

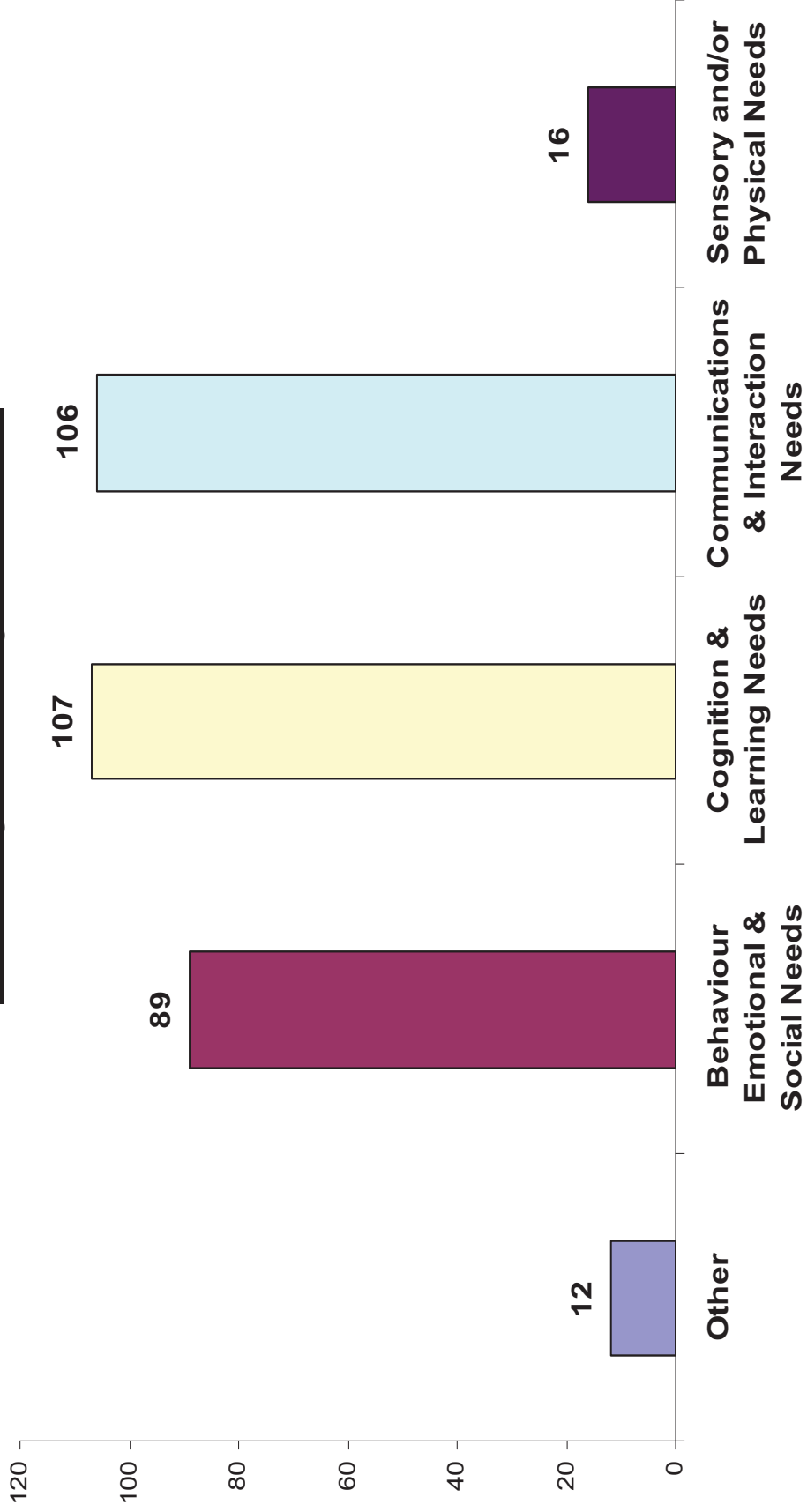
Casework

Parent Partnership Service Cases Academic Year 2009/10
Cases by Reason for Referral

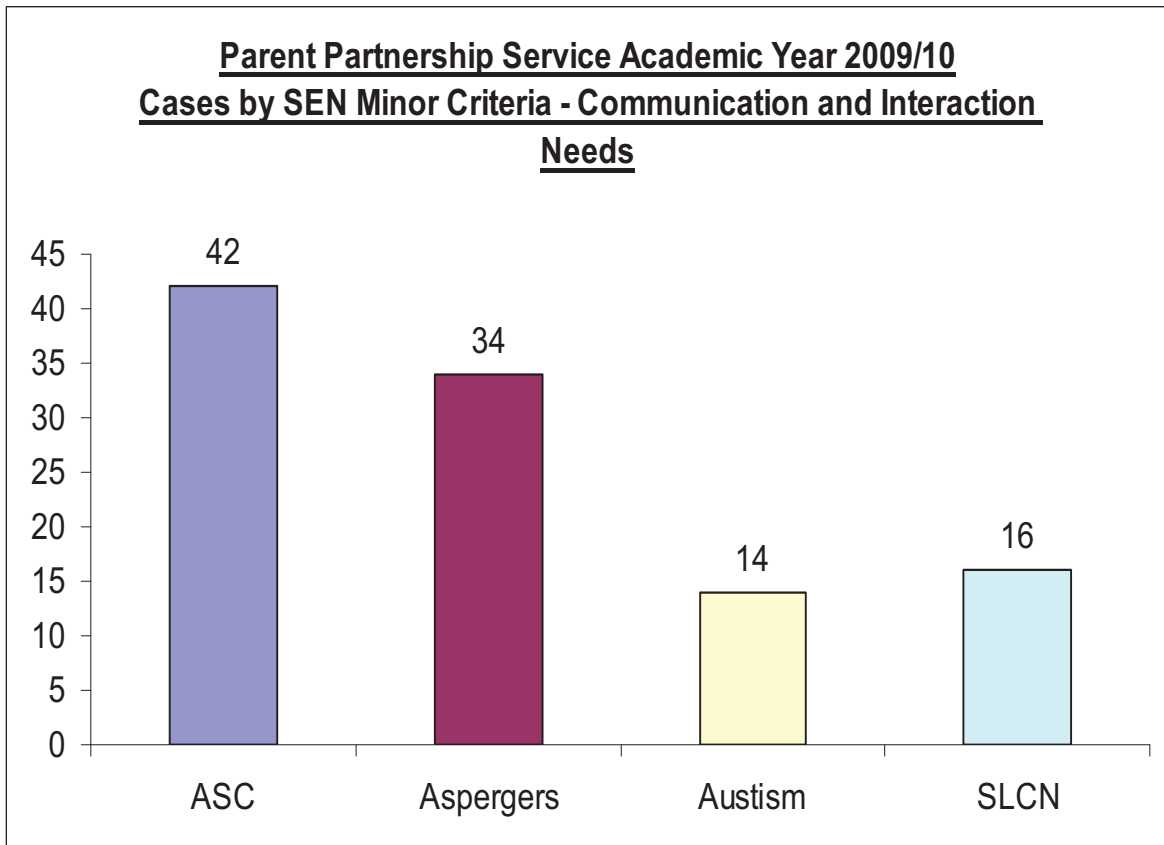
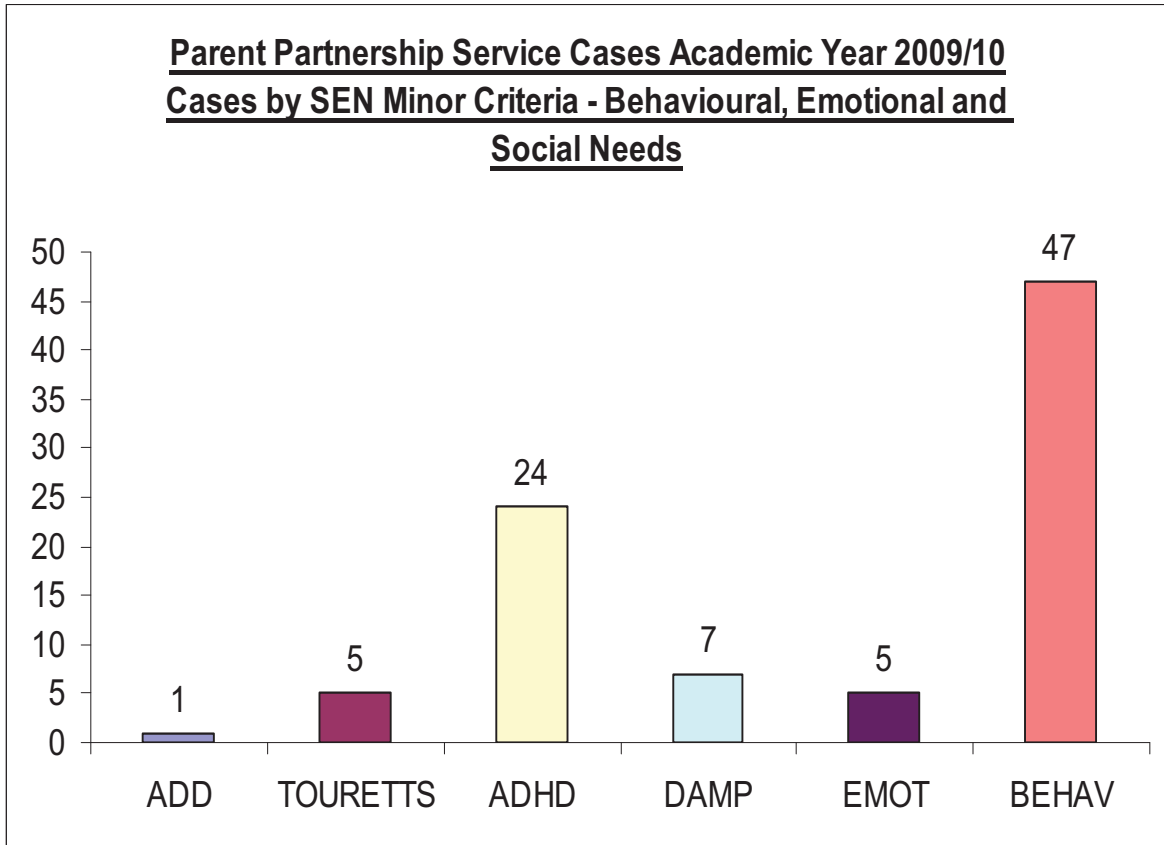


Casework

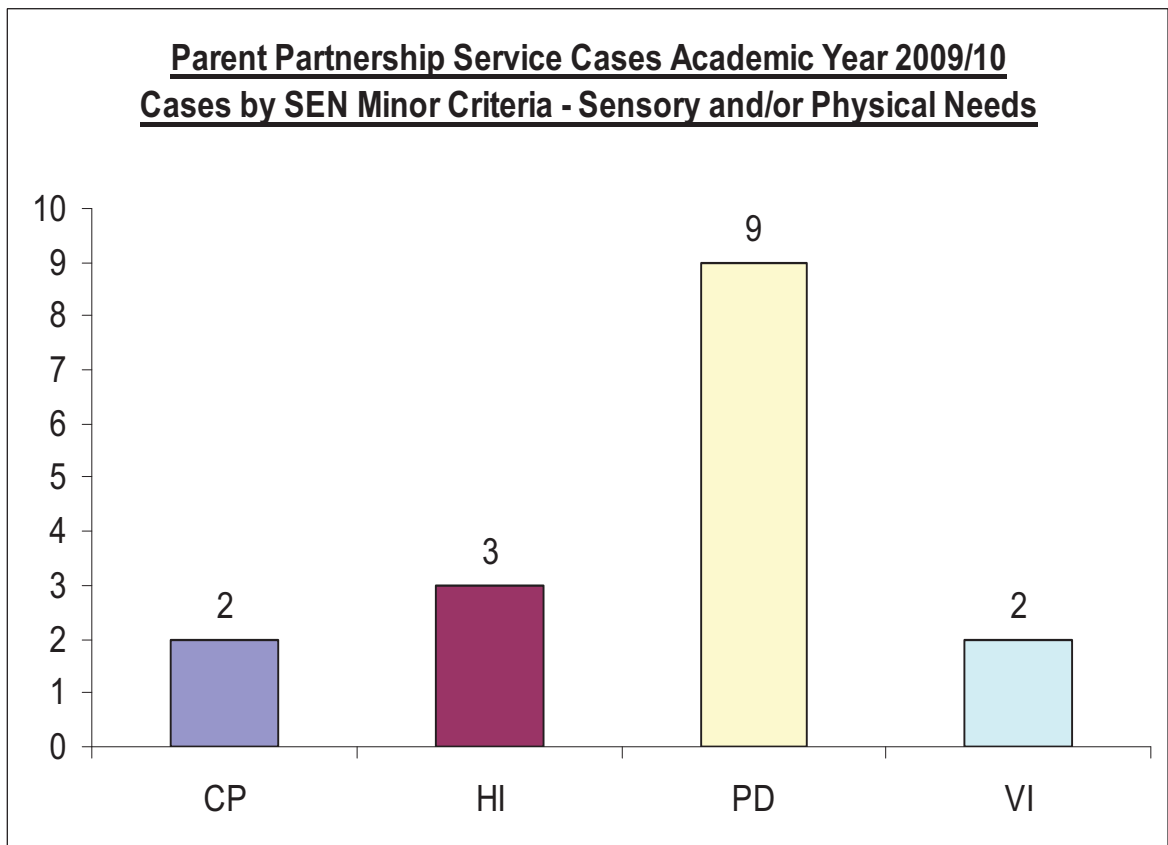
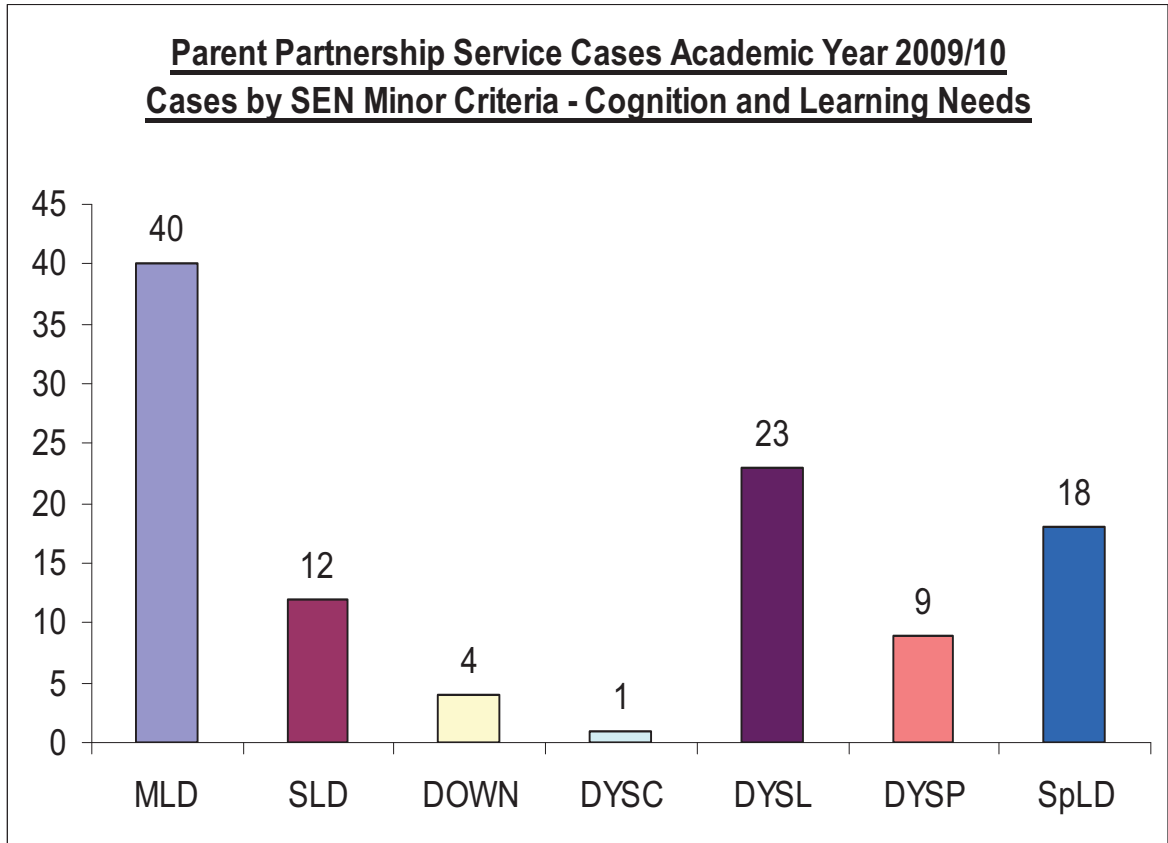
Parent Partnership Service Cases Academic Year 2009/10
Cases by SEN Major Criteria



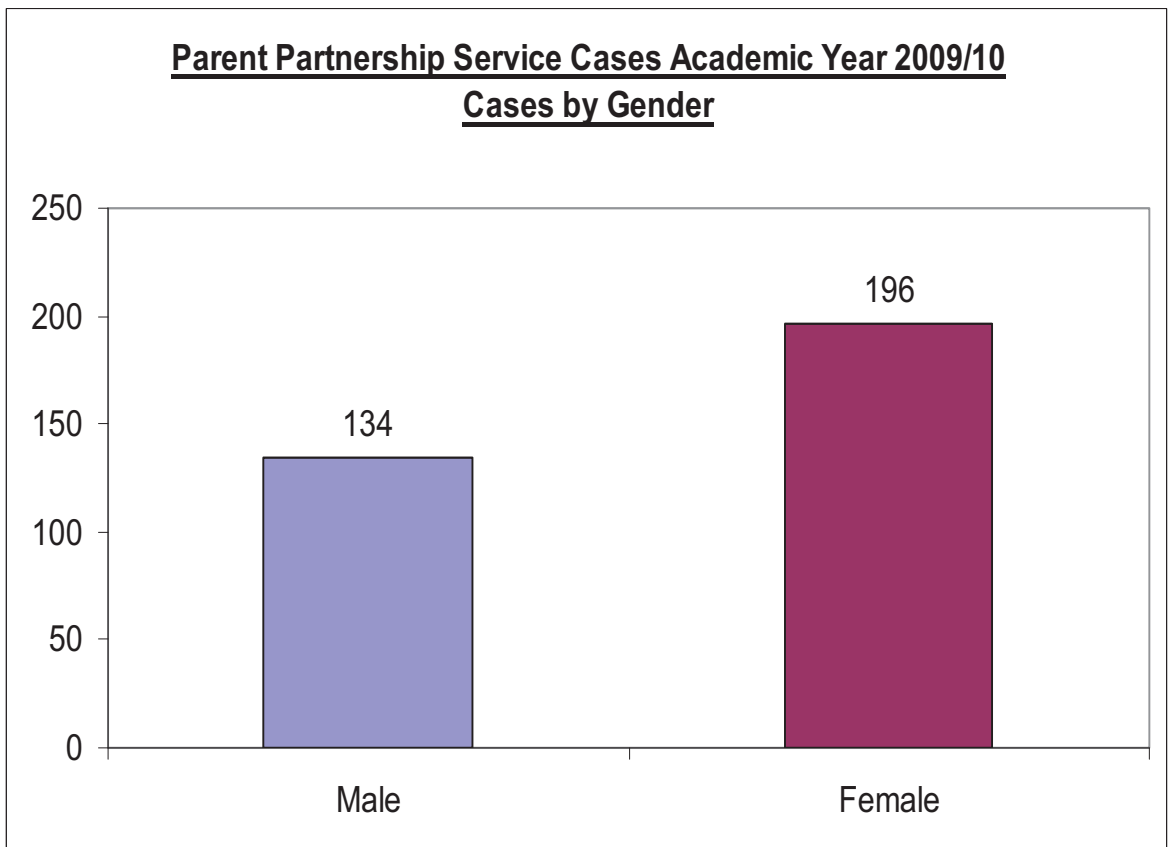
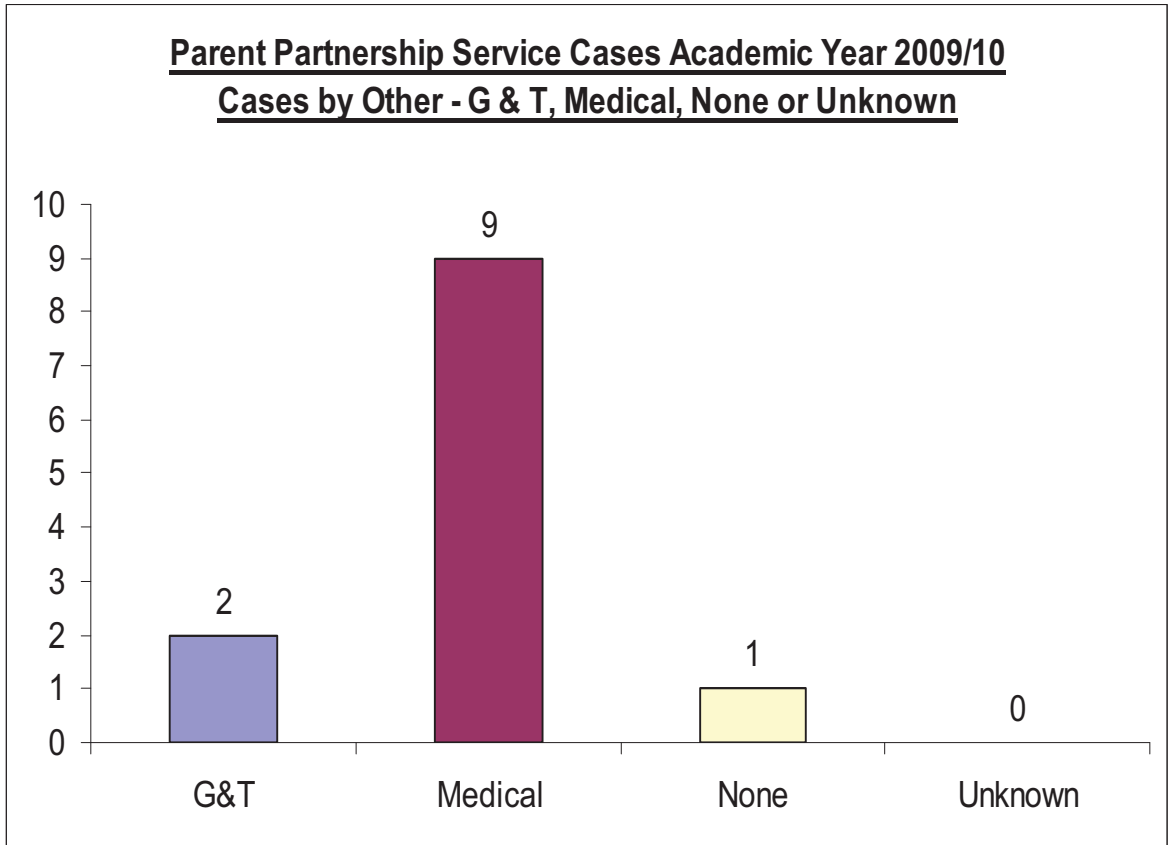
Casework



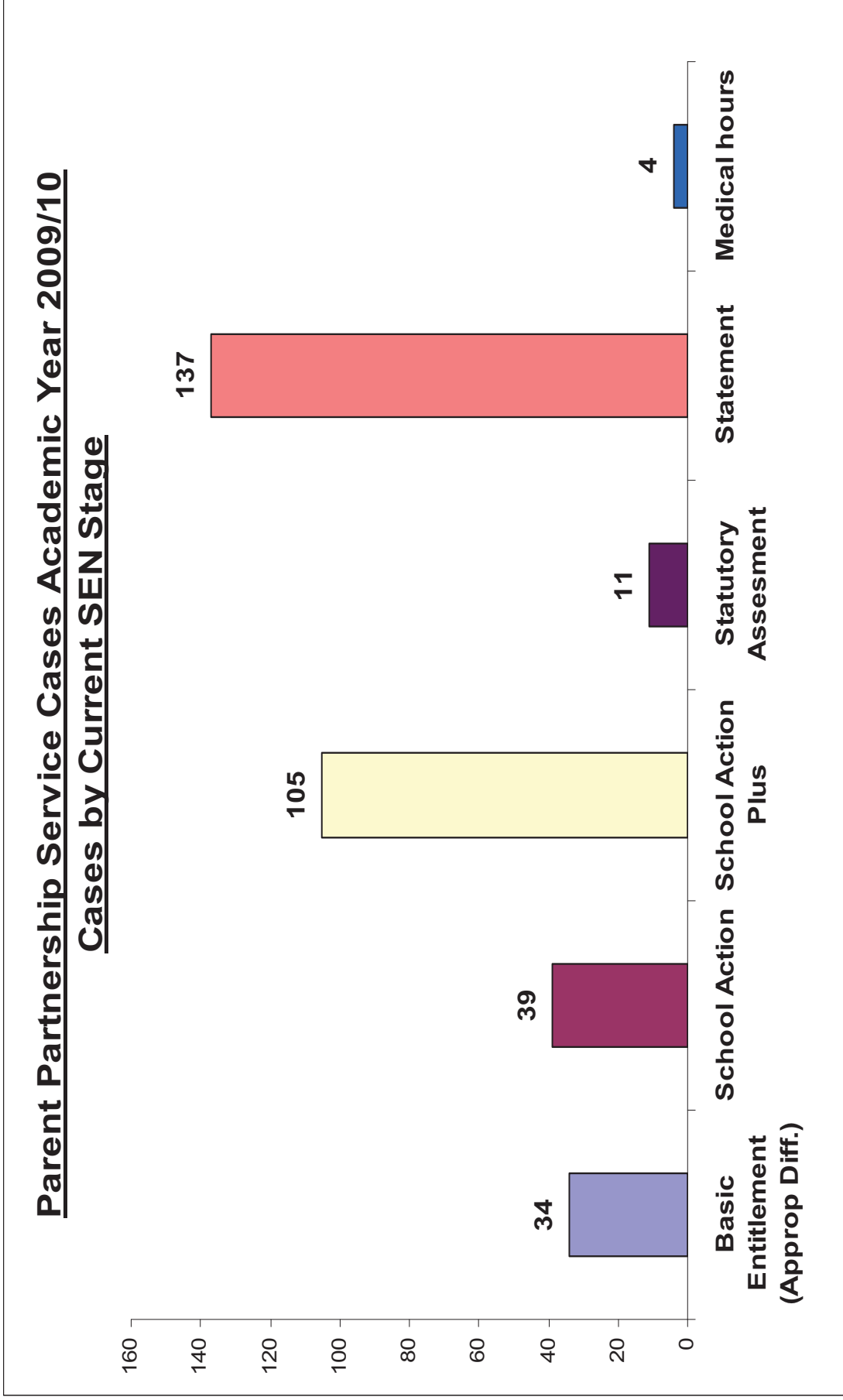
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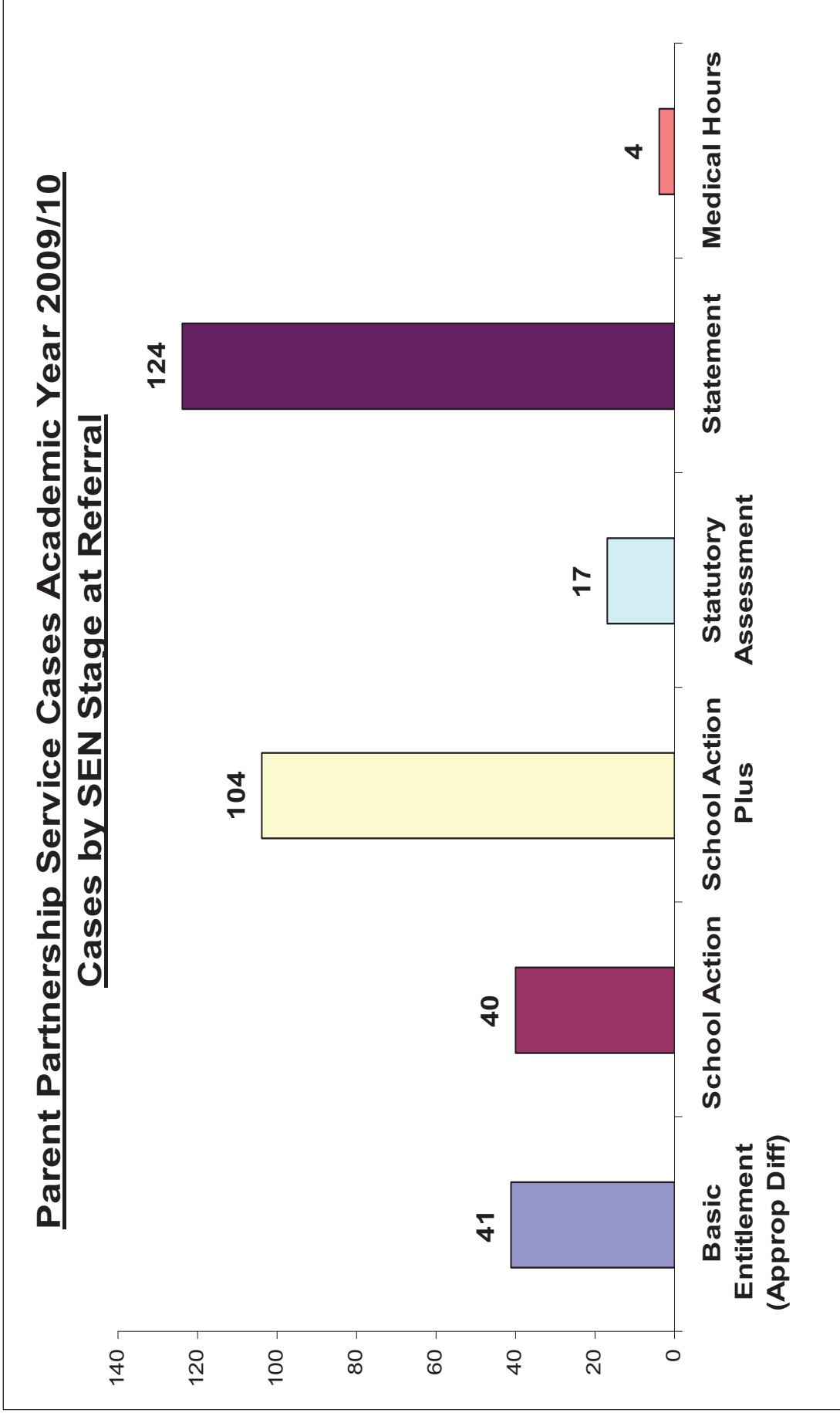
Casework



Casework

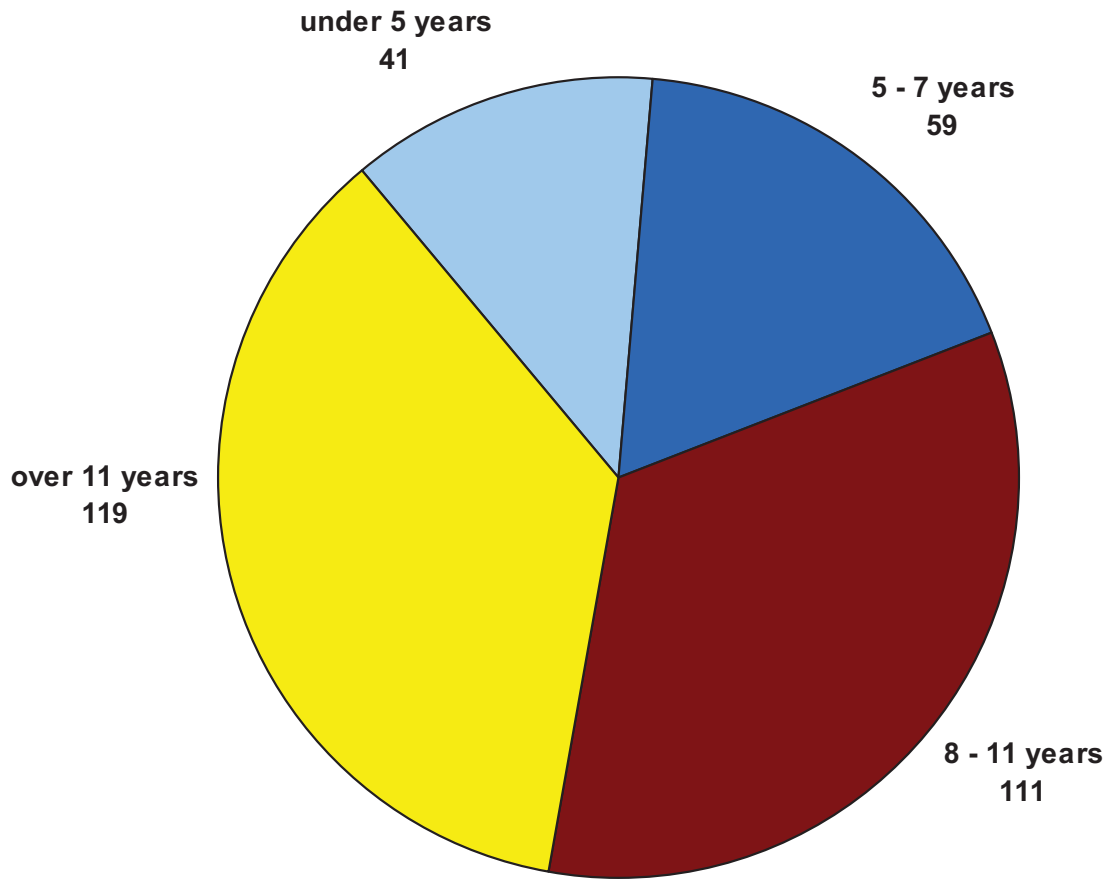


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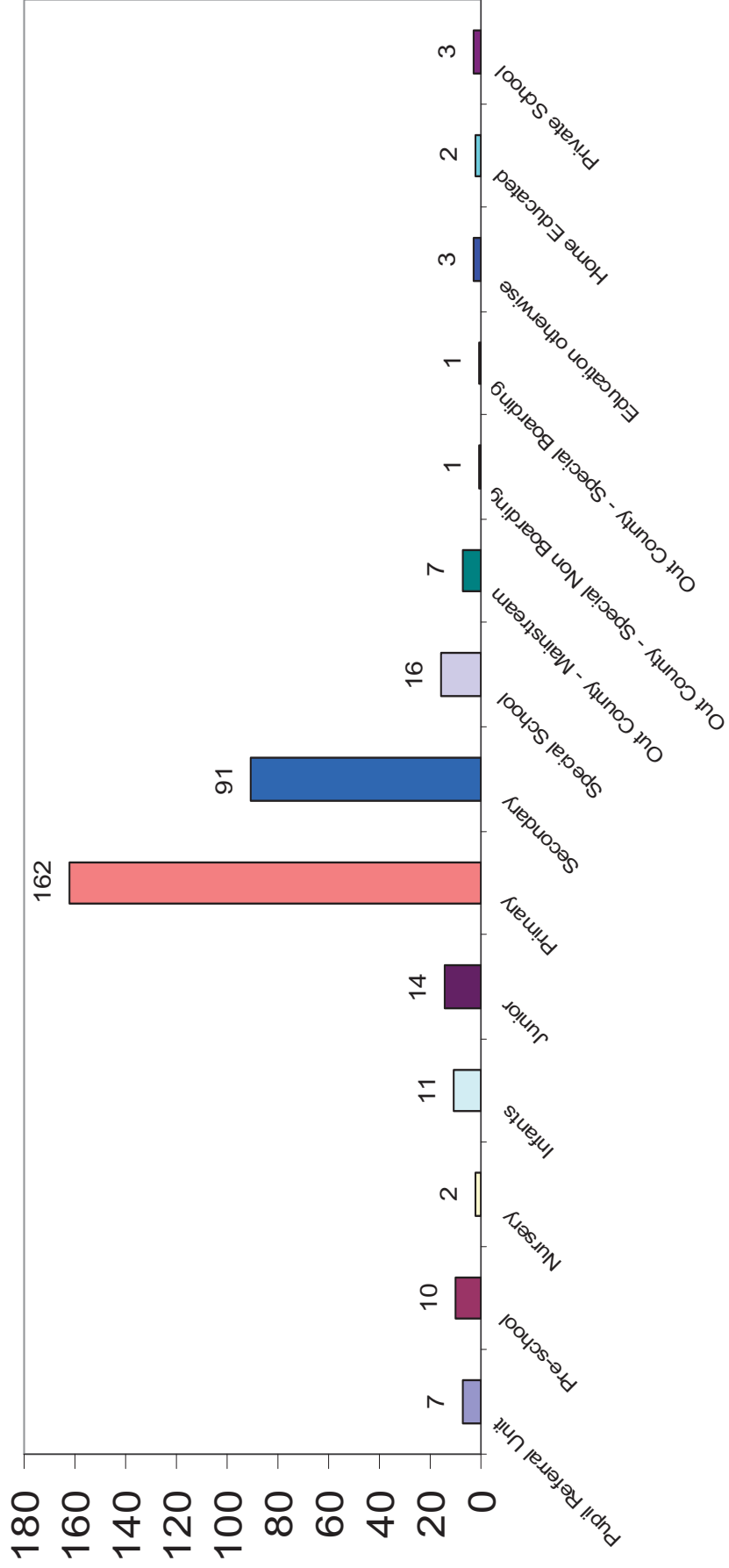
Casework

Parent Partnership Service Cases Academic Year 2009/10
Cases by Age

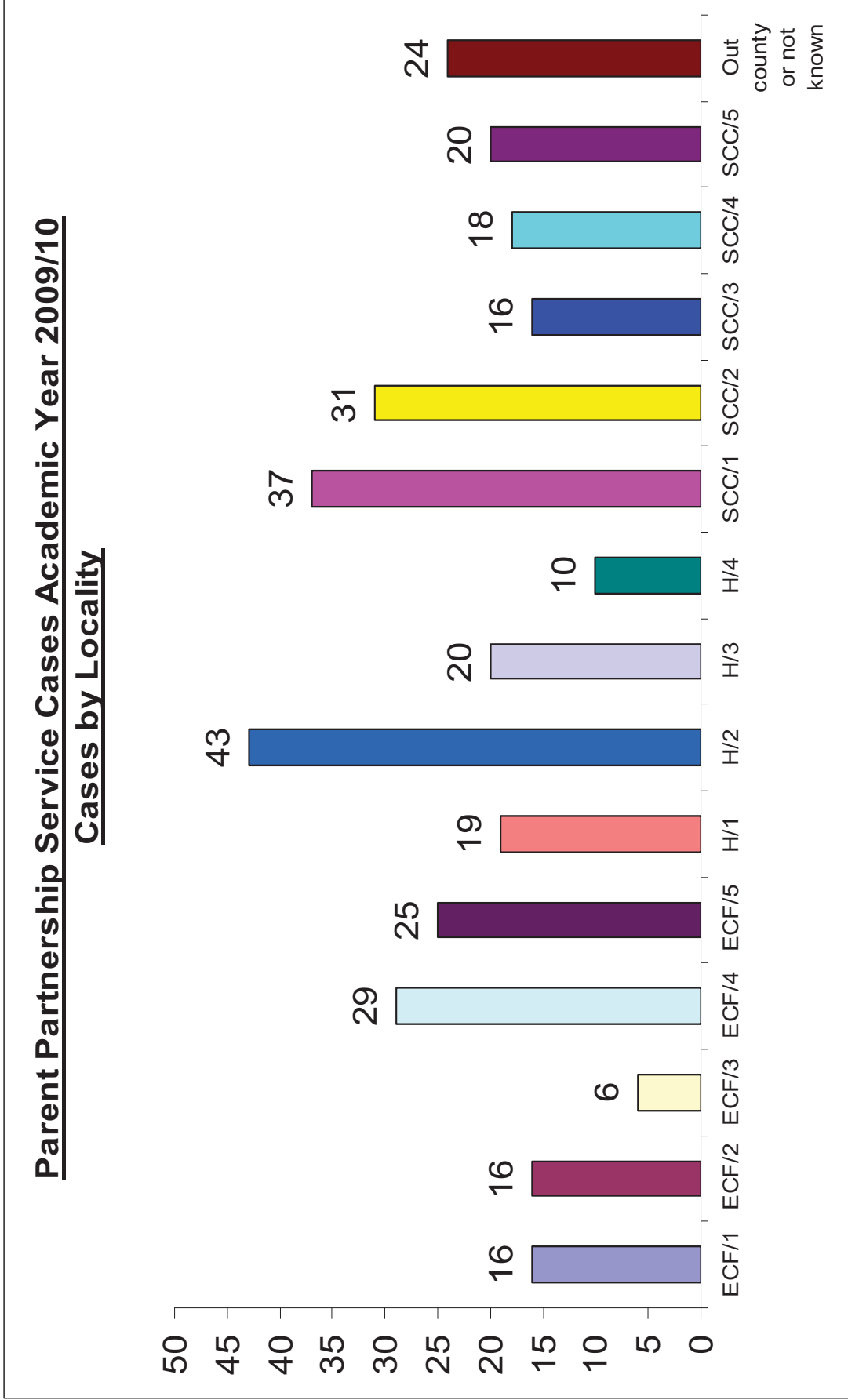


Casework

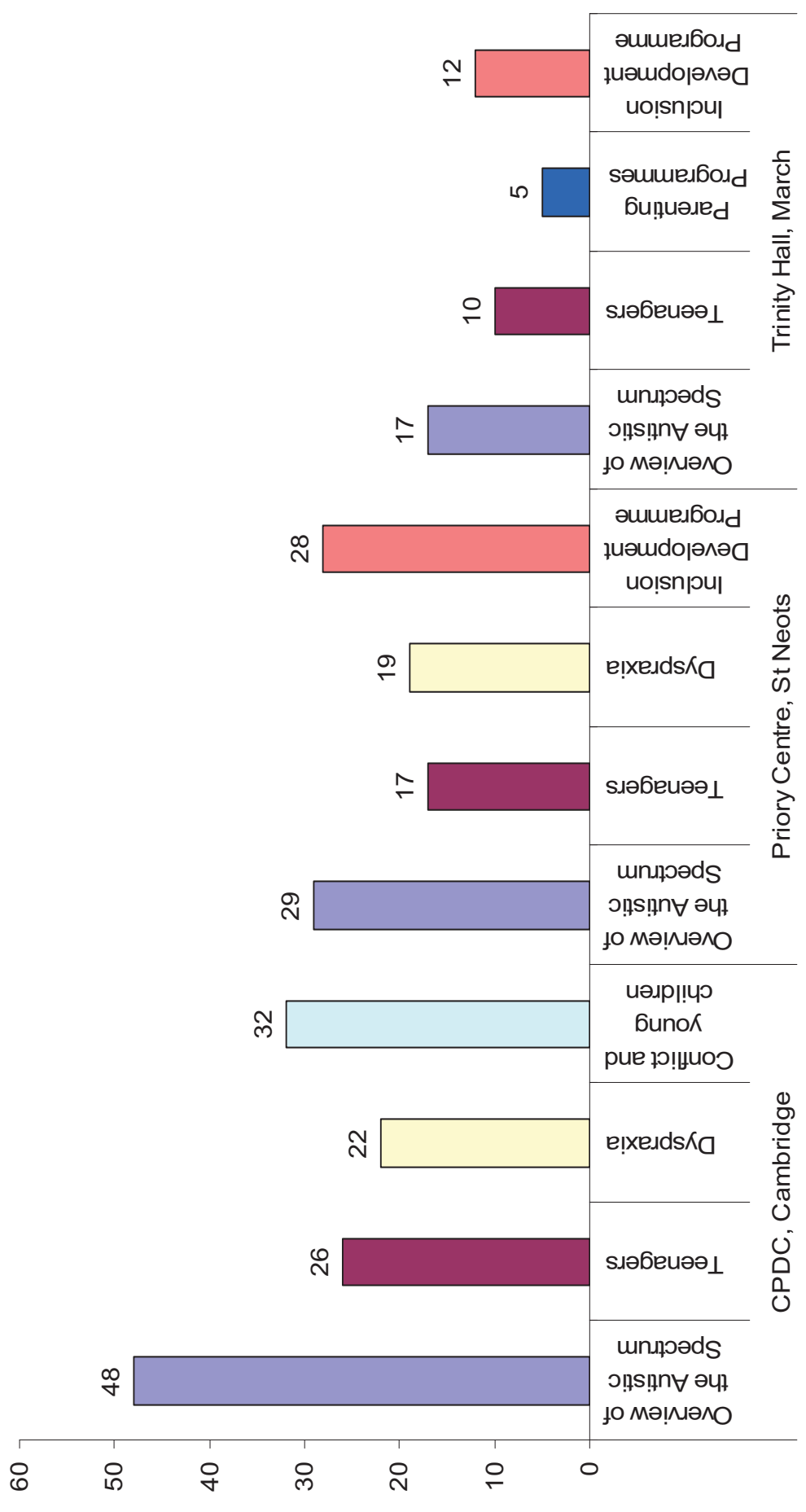
Parent Partnership Service Cases Academic Year 2009/10
Cases by School Type



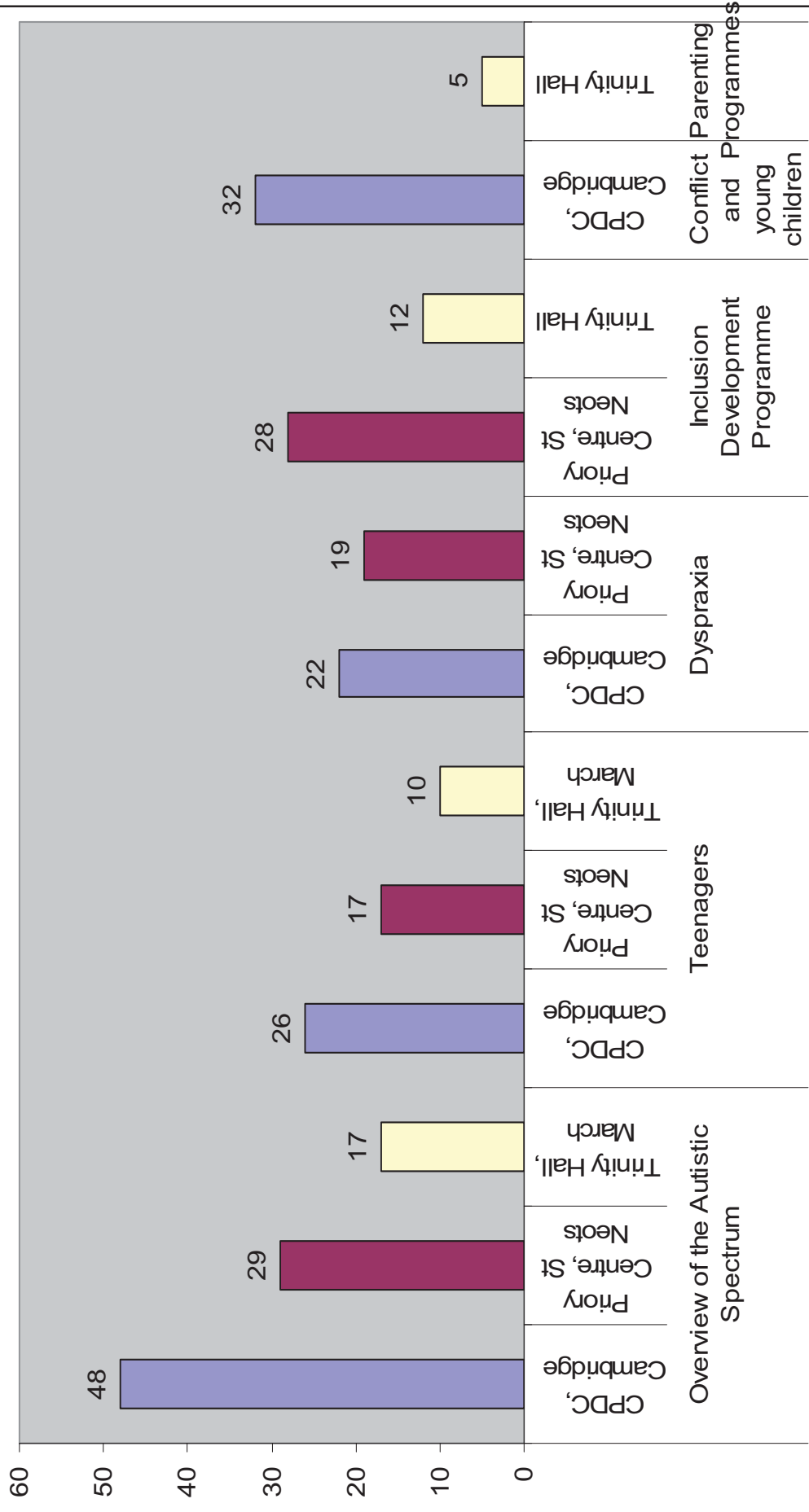
Casework

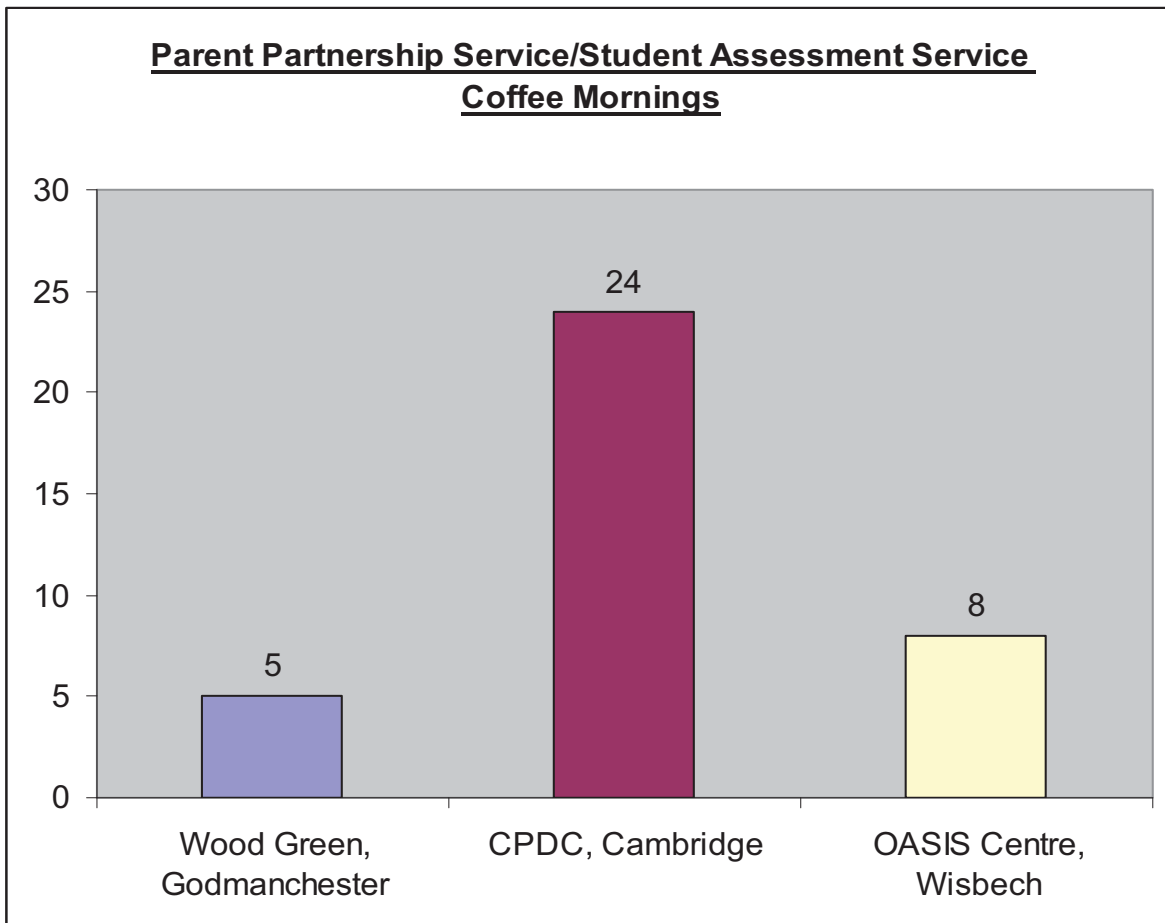
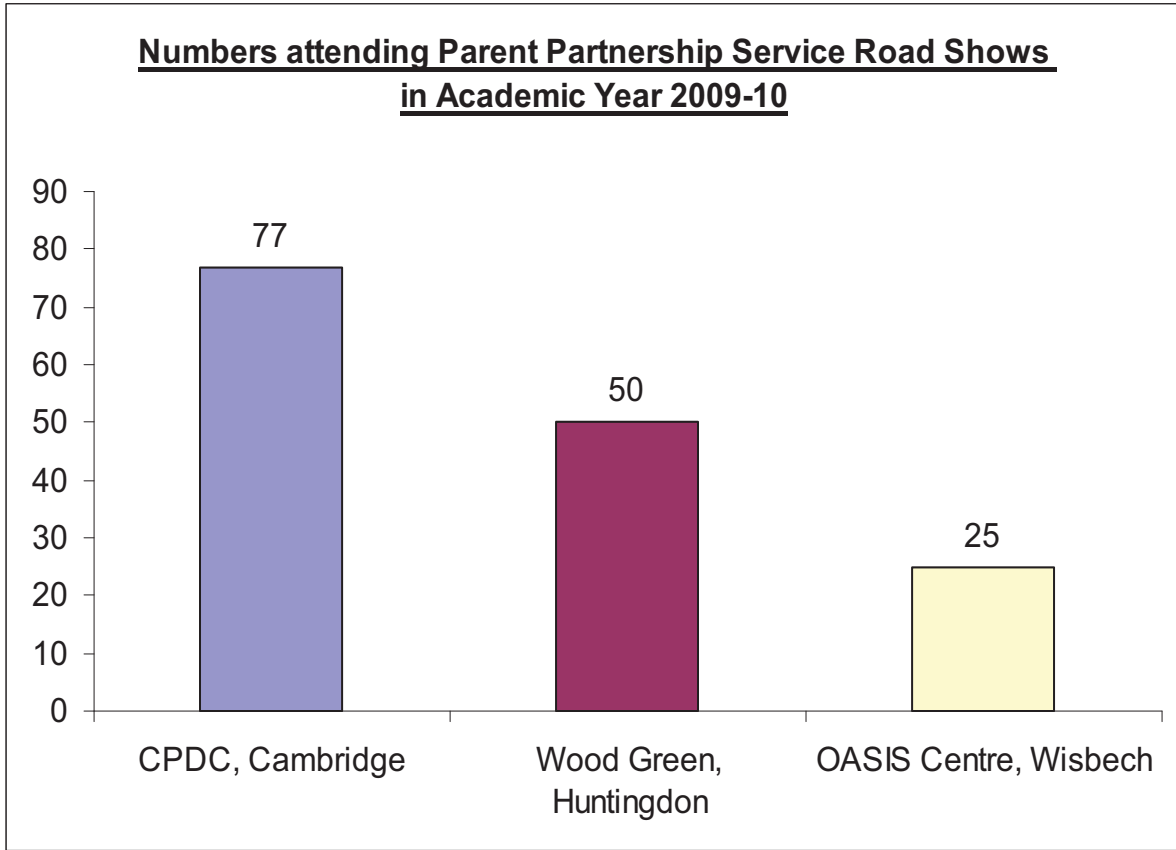


Numbers attending individual seminars at each Parent Partnership Service Road Show Academic Year 2009-10



Numbers attending PPS Road Shows by subject at each Parent Partnership Service Road Show Academic Year 2009/10





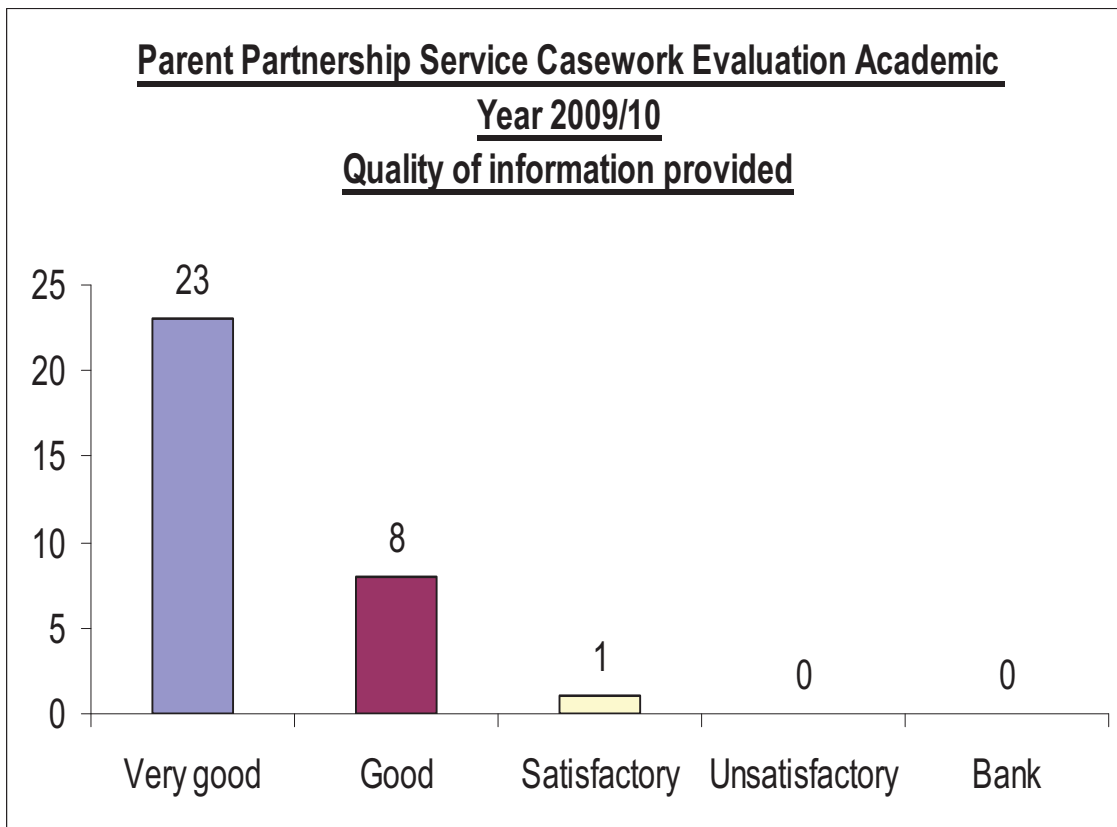
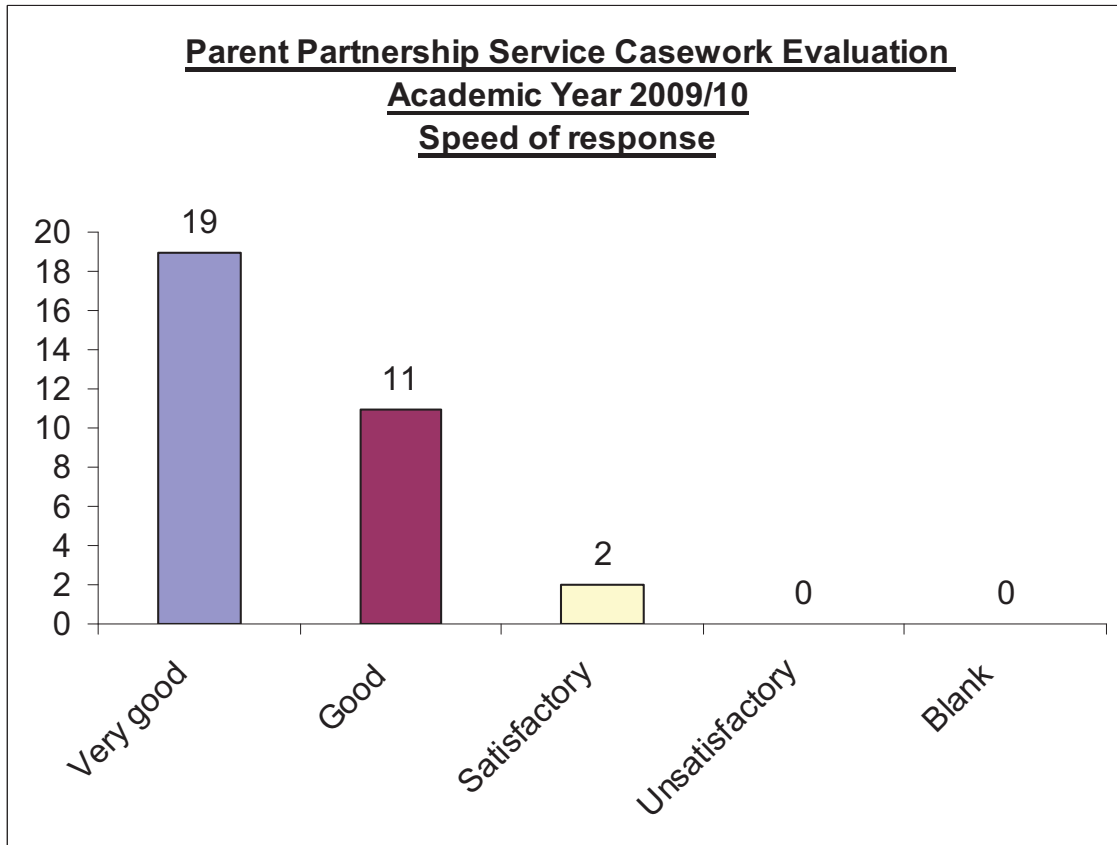
Pages viewed on Parent Partnership Service website academic year 2009/10

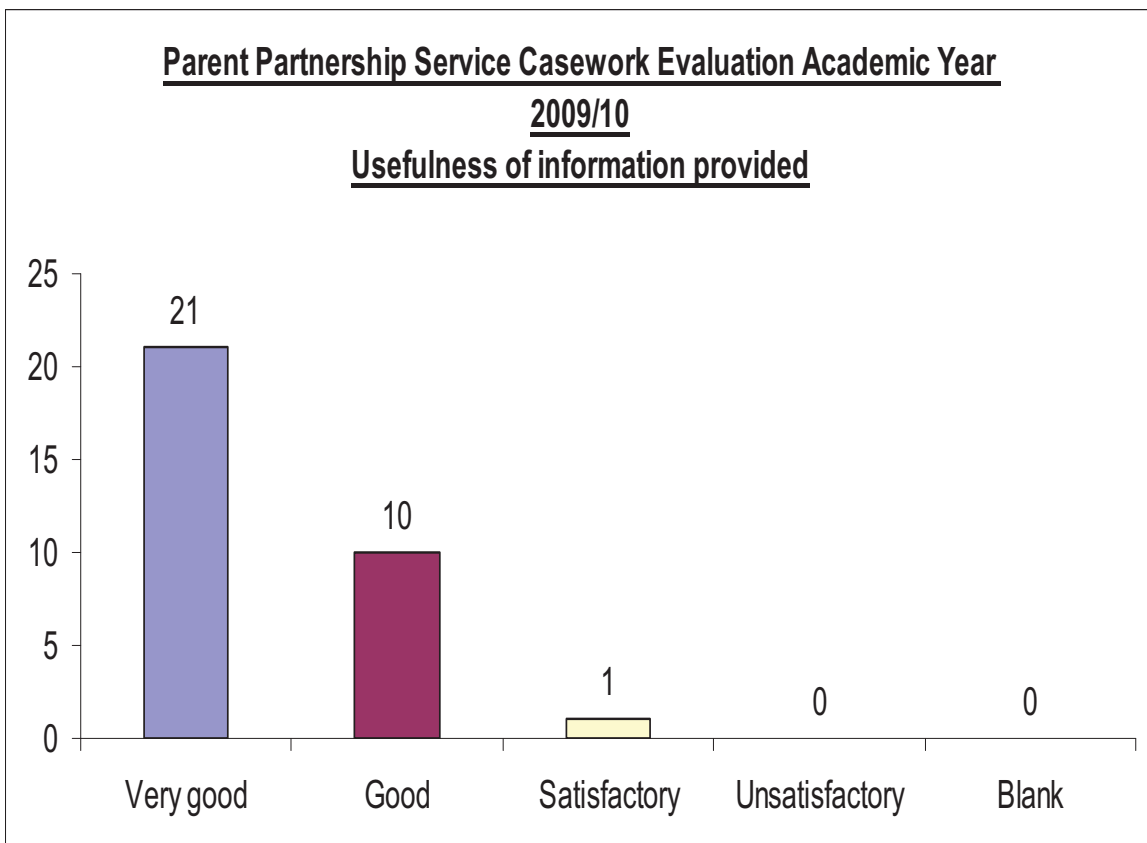
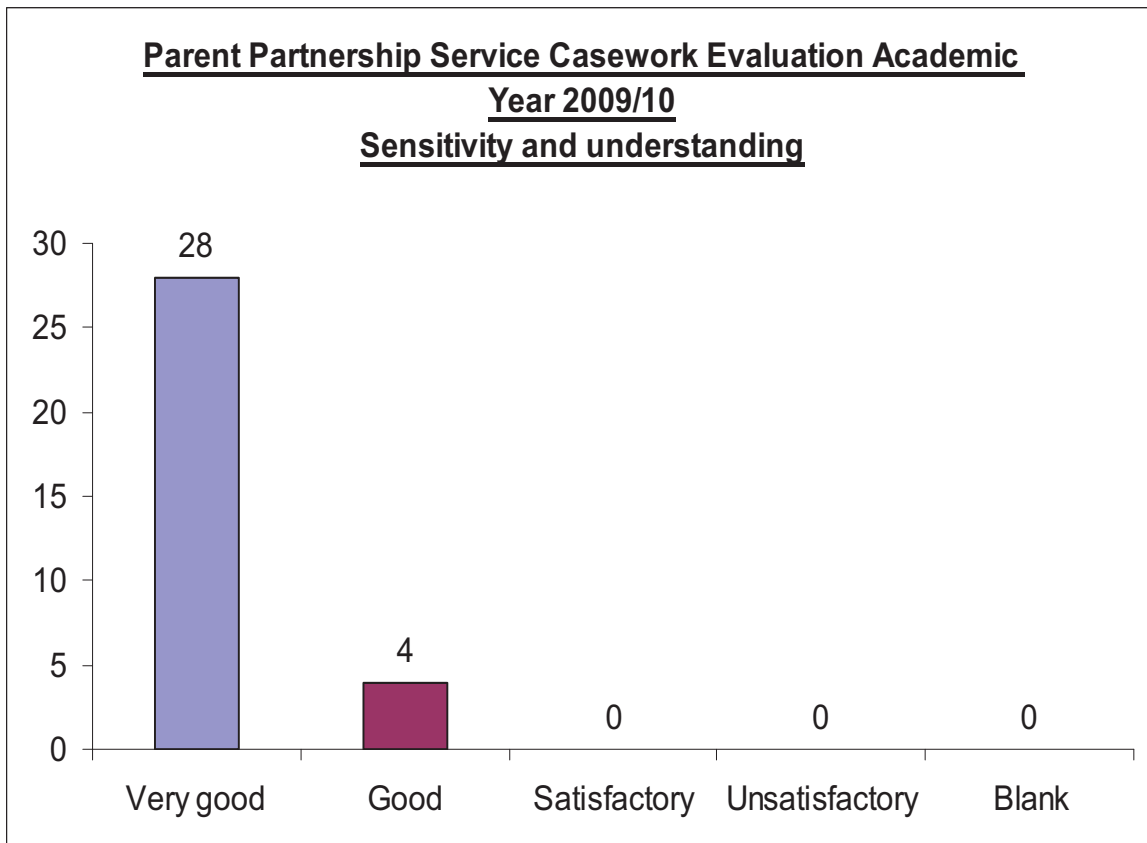
Month	Home page	About the PPS	Courses	Newsletters	PPS Leaflets	Other sources of help	Pages with details of groups offering advice/support				Parent Groups	Transition Information Advice (TIA)	Totals	
							General Advice	Autistic Spectrum	Dyslexia	Others				
September	179	64	55	18	11	2	11	9	24	42	0	30	178	623
October	209	50	29	9	14	9	21	17	23	46	5	65	107	604
November	195	78	67	24	24	4	6	3	20	42	3	38	31	535
December	183	82	29	39	6	3	4	10	10	32	3	48	21	470
January	187	95	36	18	9	5	8	34	28	55	0	48	60	583
February	173	48	41	23	4	2	19	28	15	52	0	62	35	502
March	213	101	25	33	11	4	16	31	36	71	0	38	72	651
April	136	47	25	8	12	1	14	19	17	38	0	43	51	411
May	202	78	20	7	10	0	10	20	21	37	1	35	65	506
June	273	68	20	7	13	9	9	14	30	42	3	45	59	592
July	220	60	21	10	5	2	7	21	38	59	2	26	48	519
August	Data not analysed												0	
Totals	2170	771	368	196	119	41	125	206	262	516	17	478	727	5996

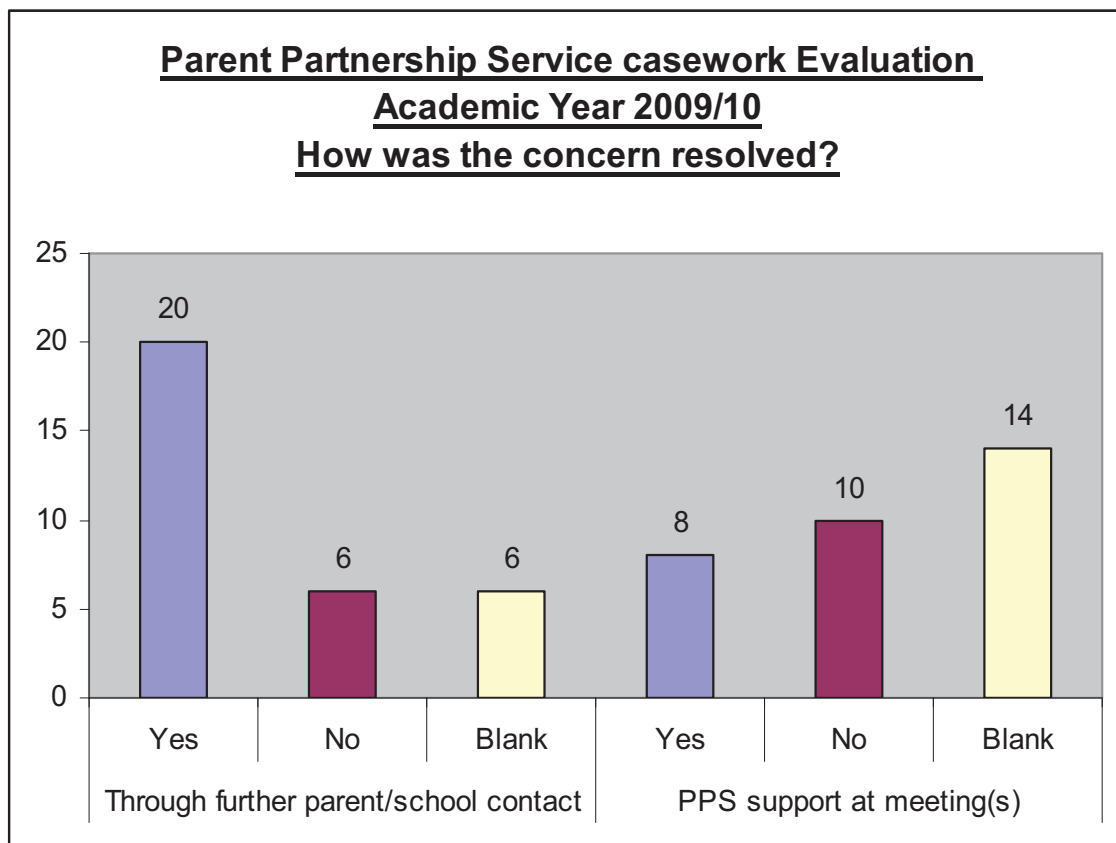
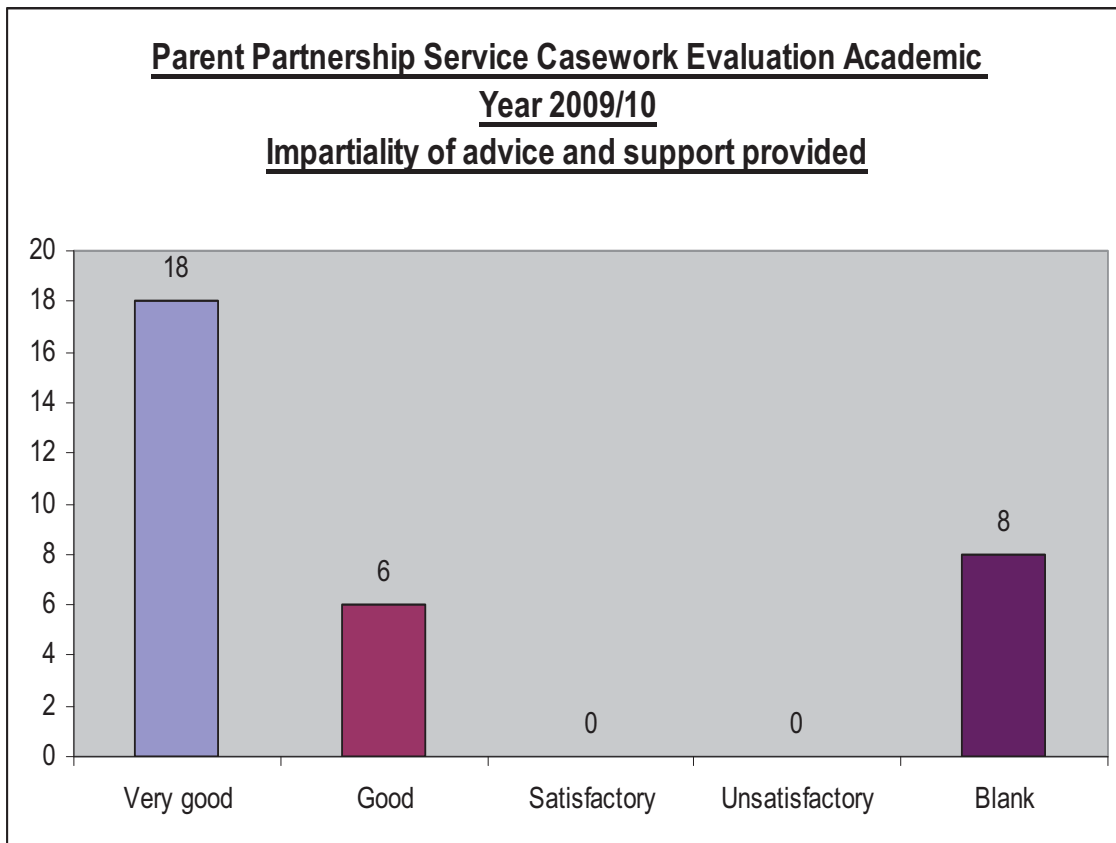
Pages on Parent Partnership Service website viewed via the Portal academic year 2009/10

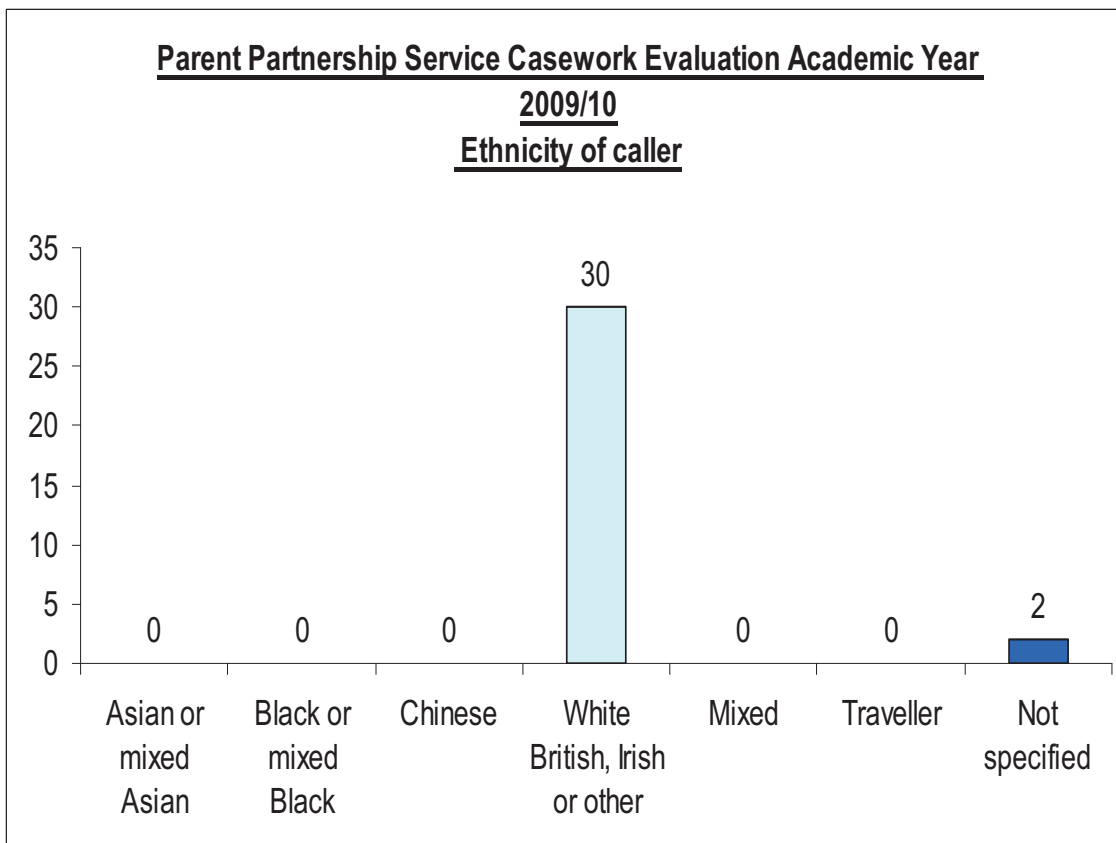
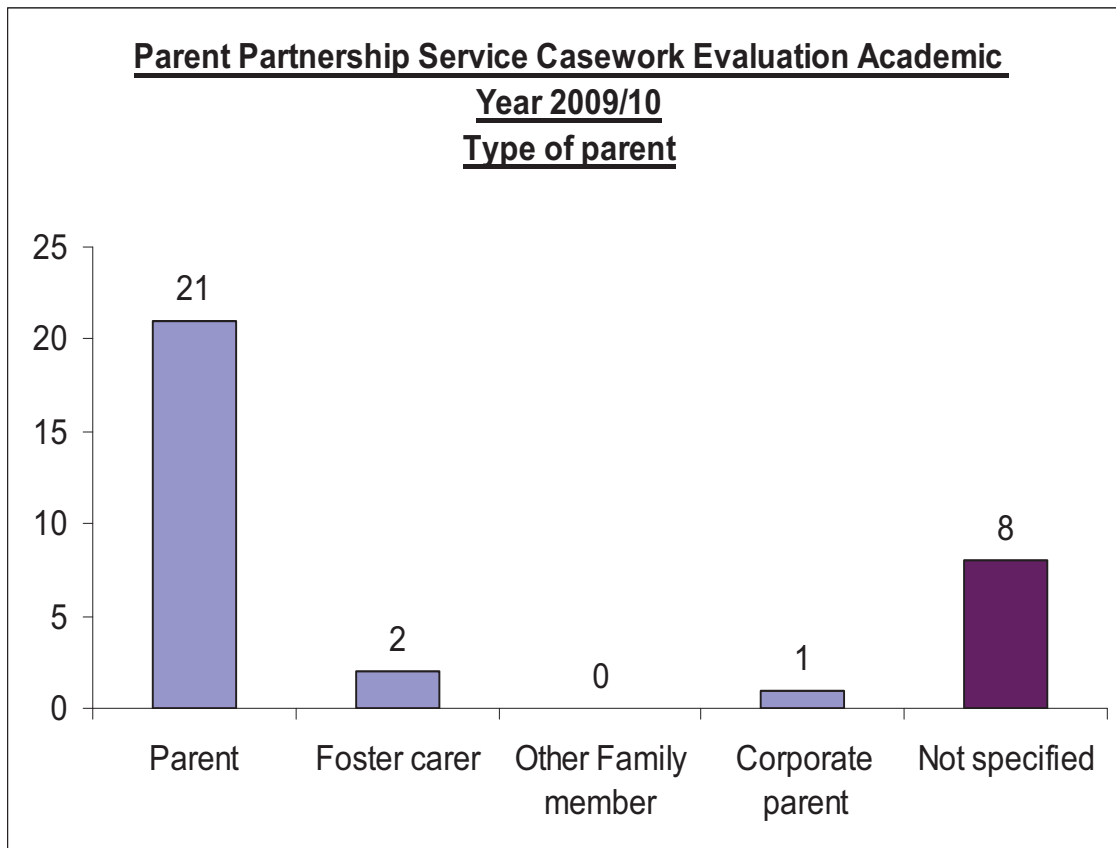
Month	Home	About	Courses	Help	Leaflets	Newsletters	P/Groups	Web sites	Short URL	A-Z Services#	Total
September	16	9	5	5	4	9	5	5	5	0	63
October	25	17	11	5	9	16	10	9	7	0	109
November	21	12	6	5	7	7	4	8	8	0	78
December	17	9	9	5	10	9	6	5	5	0	75
January	13	16	6	3	3	9	3	5	3	0	61
February	10	10	5	4	7	19	3	4	4	0	66
March	9	5	3	2	2	4	3	2	4	0	34
April	No data available										
May	No data available										
June	No data available										
July	14	10	6	4	3	3	4	5	3	0	52
August	7	5	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	0	27
Totals	132	93	53	35	46	78	41	46	41	0	565

Figures not available



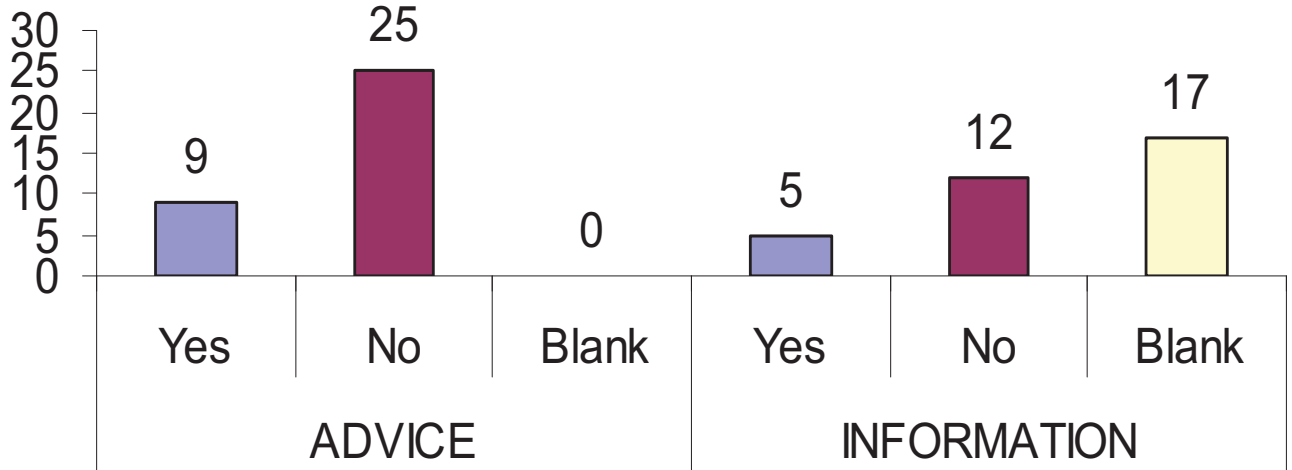




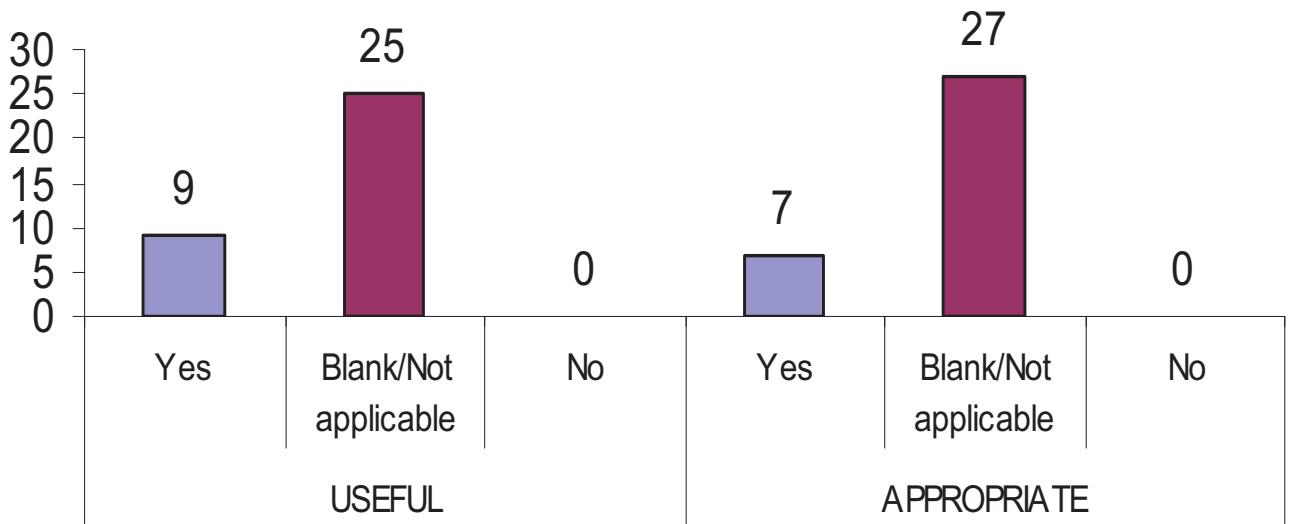


Satisfaction Survey - Schools

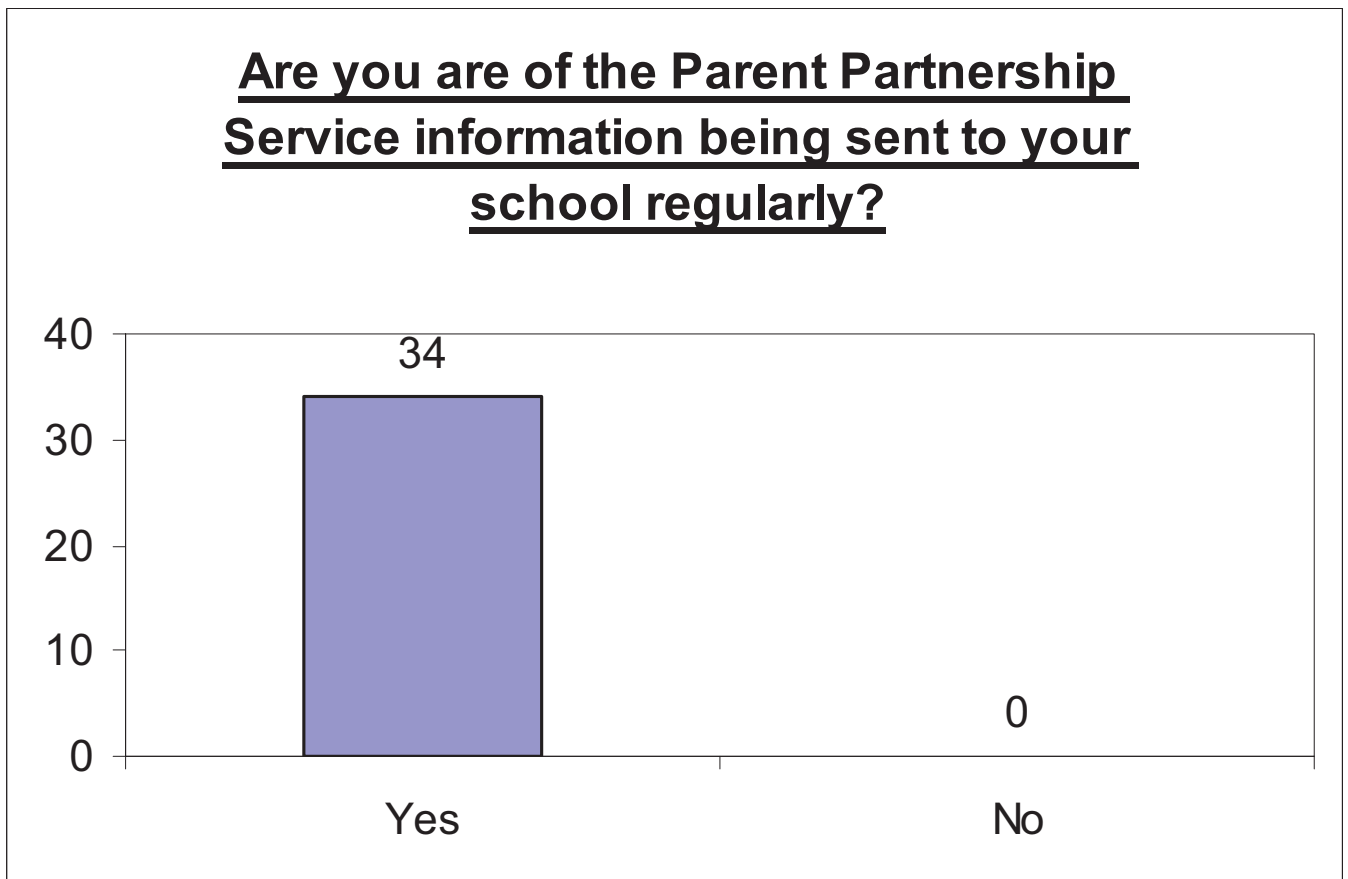
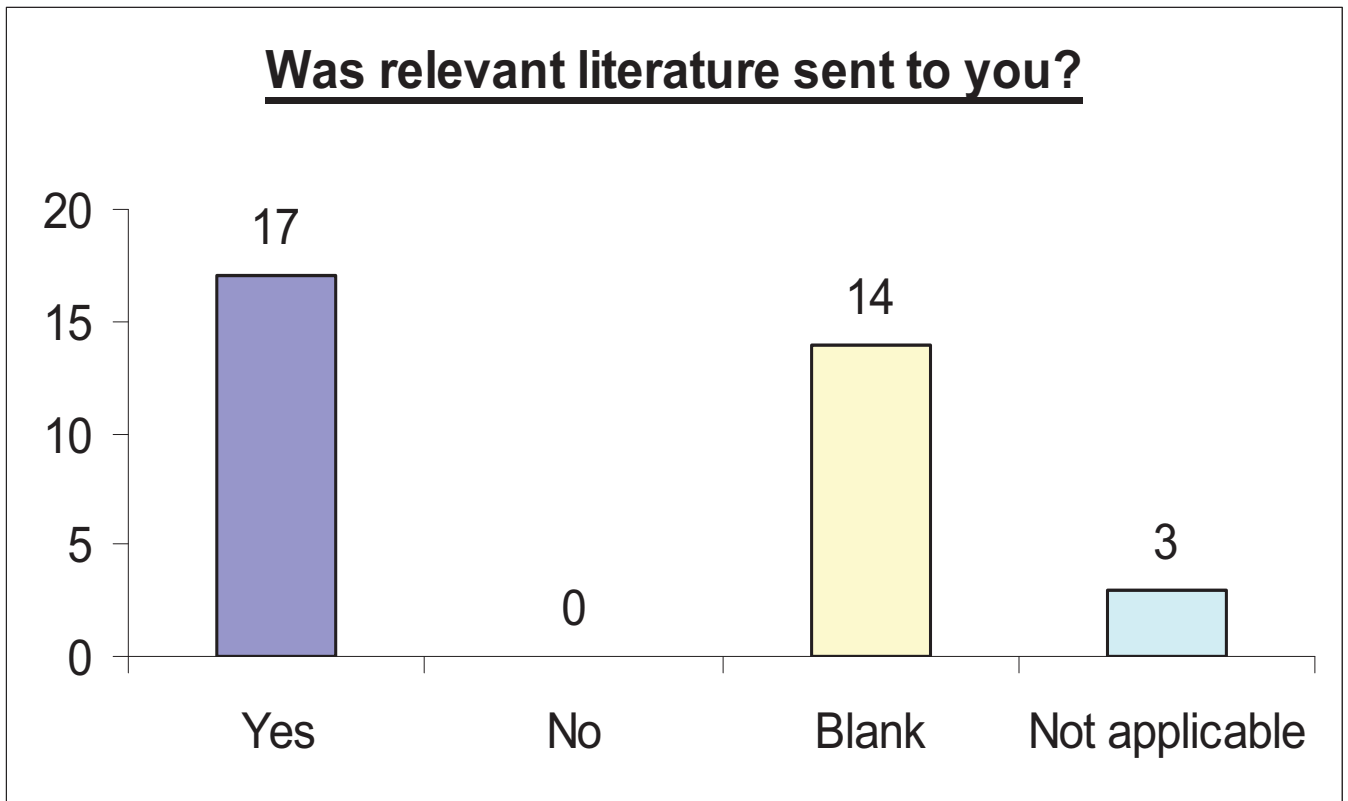
Have you contacted the Parent Partnership Service during this academic year for advice or information?



Was the advice/information given useful or appropriate?

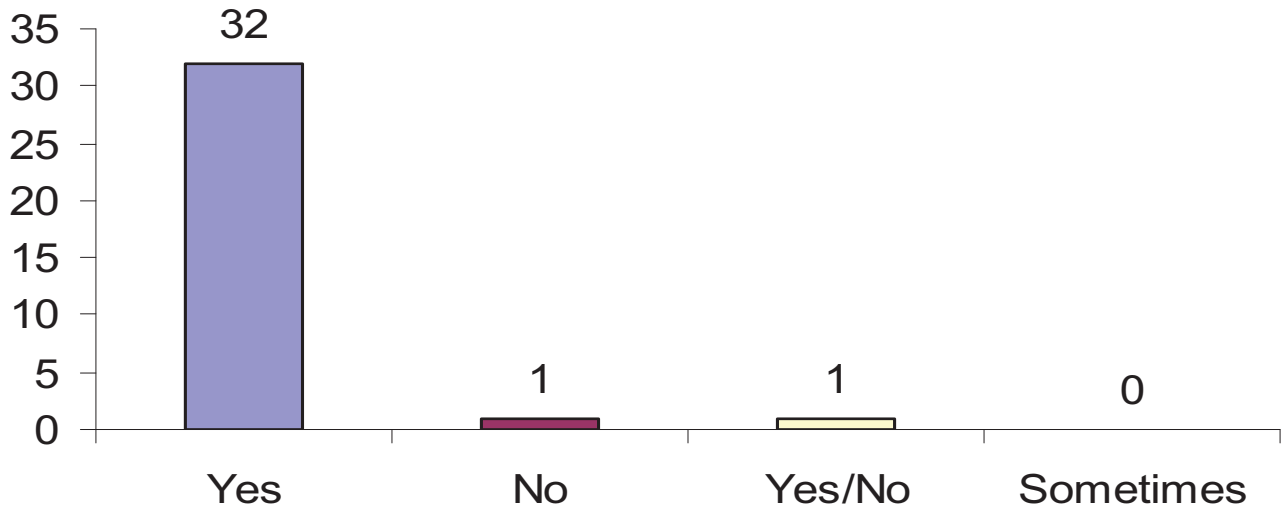


Satisfaction Survey - Schools

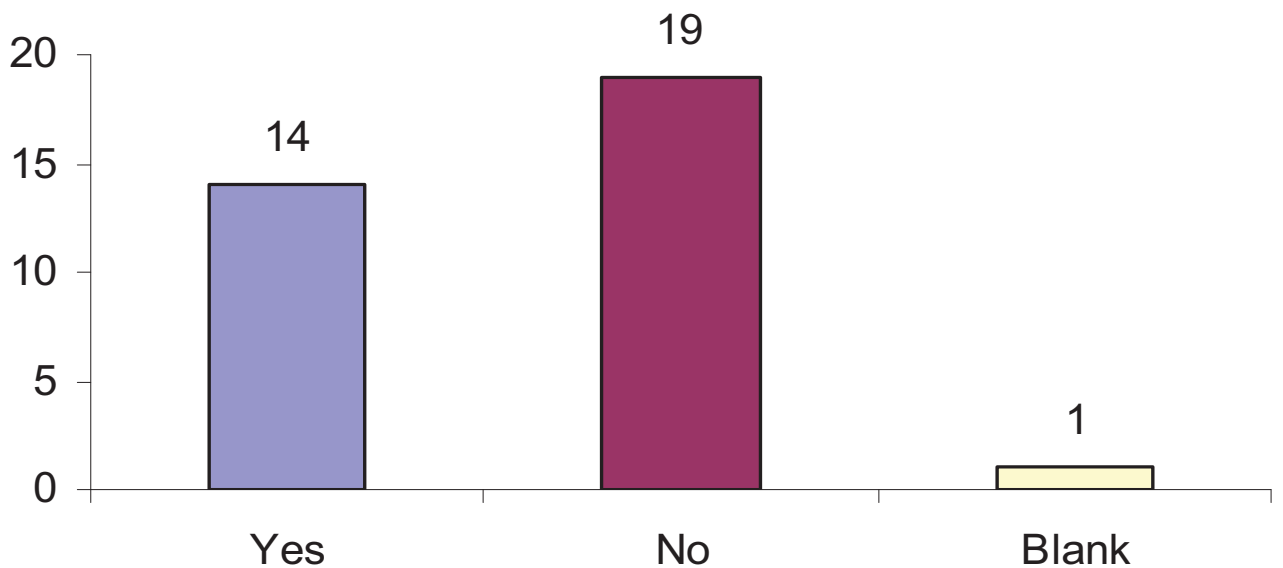


Satisfaction Survey - Schools

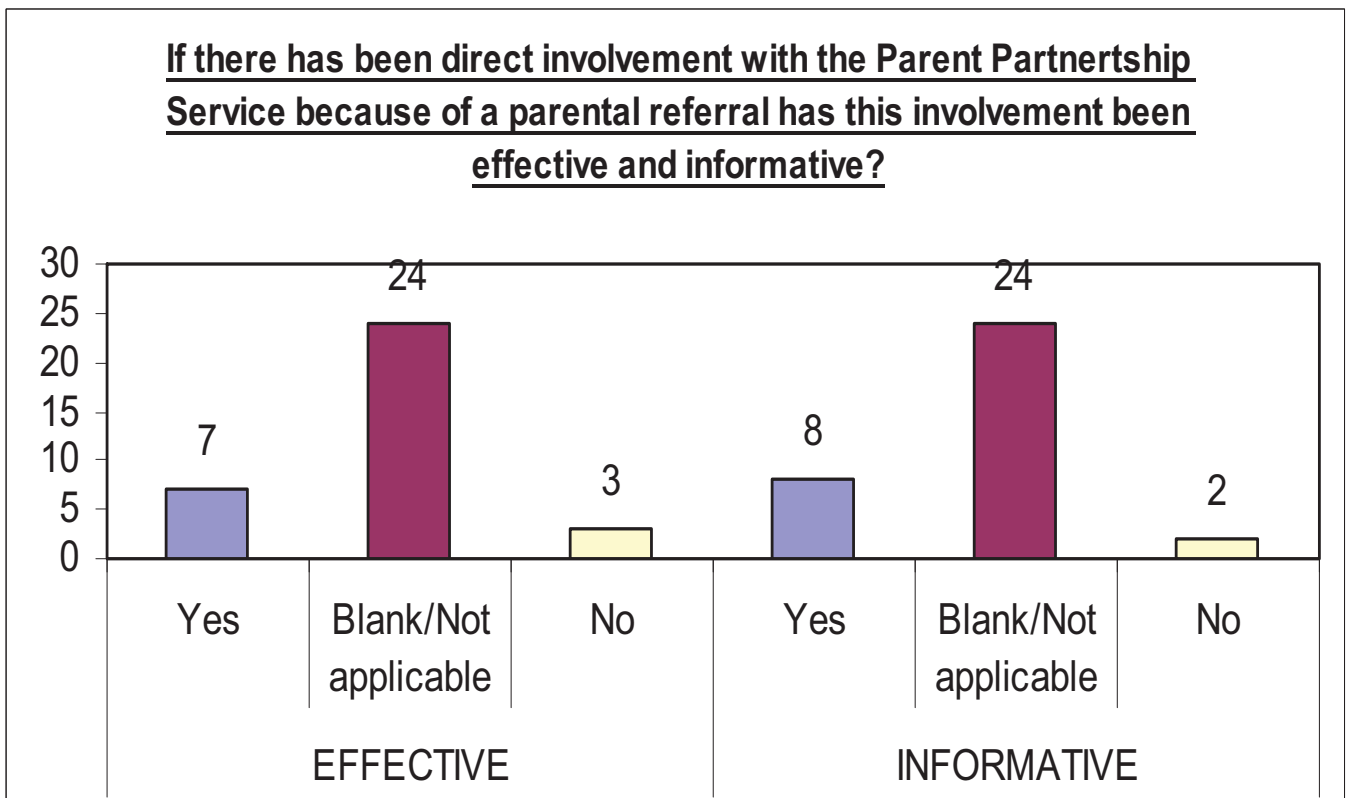
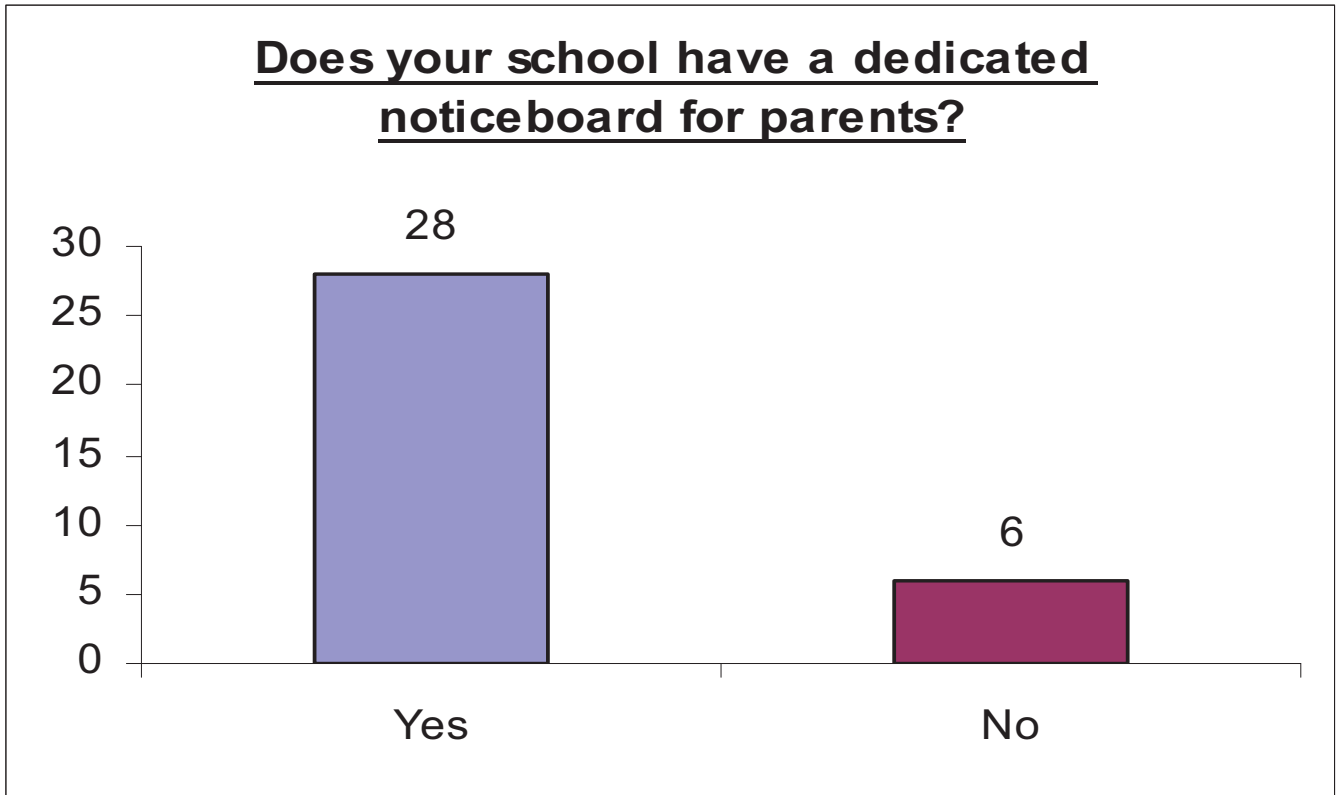
Is the regular information sent to you regarding courses/conferences of use to you?



Do you circulate course/event information to parents in a regular bulletin or newsletter?

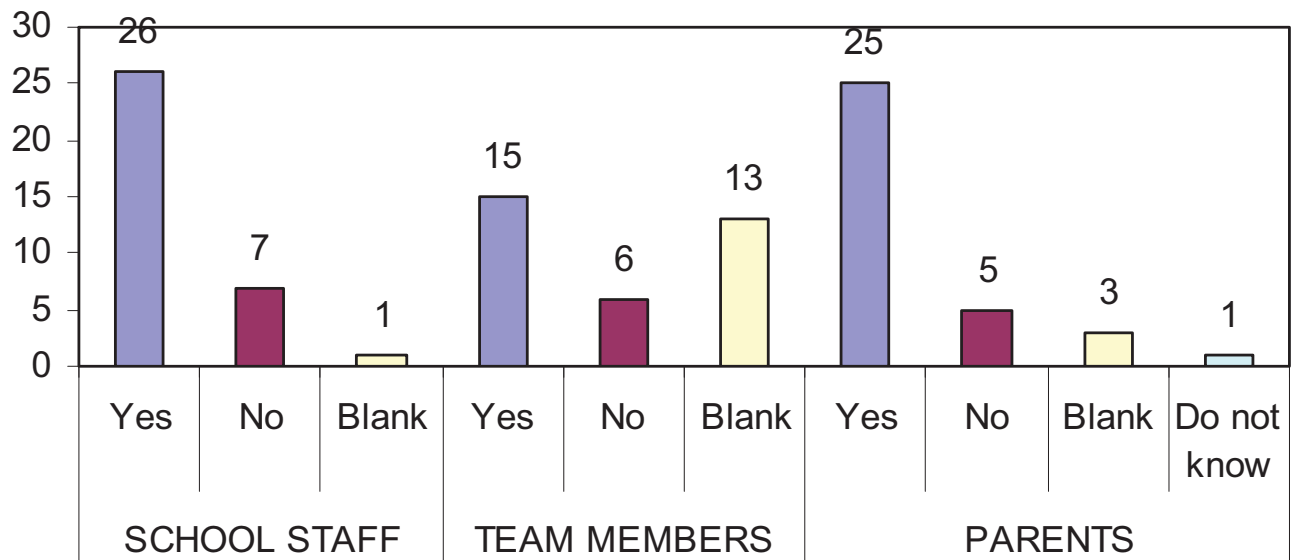


Satisfaction Survey - Schools

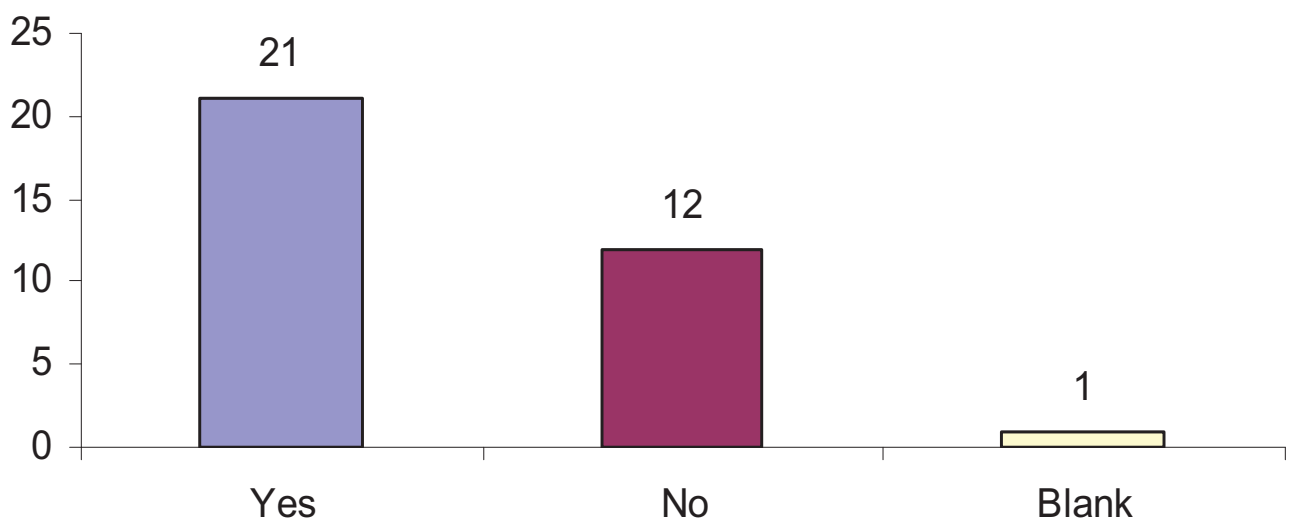


Satisfaction Survey - Schools

Do you find the Parent Partnership Service newsletter useful for school staff, team members and parents?



Would you like to receive a copy of the newsletter for all parent/carers of children with SEN?



Satisfaction Survey - Schools

How do you make parents aware of the contact details of the Parent Partnership Service?

