



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



# Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation:

Appendices

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September 2016

## Research Report No 929

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## **Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices**

# Appendix A

## Quantitative data collection instruments

### A.1 Summary of quantitative data collected for each project

Project	Phase 1 MI data	Phase 1-3 PAM questions	Phase 1-3 Parenting collaboration questions	Phase 3 CATI survey	Phase 3 CAWI survey	Web analytics
Changing Futures NE	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	No	No	Yes – Phase 1 and 2	No	No	No
Family Lives	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Family Matters Mediate	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Howells	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Malachi	Yes	Yes – Phase 1 and 2	No	No	No	No
Mediation Now	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
NACCC	Yes	Yes – Phase 1 and 2	No	No	No	No
National Family Mediation	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
OnePlusOne	Yes	No	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	Yes
Pinnacle People	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Relate	Yes	No	Yes – Phase 1 and 3	No	Yes	Yes
Resolution	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Sills & Betteridge	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Spurgeons	Yes	Yes – Phase 1 and 2	No	No	No	No
Tavistock Centre	Yes	Yes – Phase 1, 2 and 3	No	Yes	No	No
Resolve Cymru	No	No	No	No	No	No

## A.2 Template Form for Management Information Collection (Phase 1)

		Further information
<b>PROJECTS</b>		
<b>PROJECTS – Client ID.....</b>		
<p><b><u>Project</u> please insert Unique client ID number as specified:</b>                      Each <b>NEW</b> client must be given a unique ID number as follows:</p> <p><b><u>Some projects will have PAIRED clients</u></b>                      Please record the Paired Client ID.....,                      if apparent.</p>		
<b>Round 1</b>		
Malachi:	Mal000001 to Mal999999	
Spurgeons:	Spu000001 to Spu999999	
Resolve Cymru:	Rsv000001 to Rsv999999	
Resolution:	Res000001 to Res999999	
Howells:	How000001 to How999999	
Relate:	Rel000001 to Rel999999	
OnePlusOne:	Opo000001 to Opo999999	

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<p><b>Round 2</b></p> <p>Family Lives:</p> <p>Pinnacle People Ltd:</p> <p>Sills &amp; Betteridge:</p> <p>Family Matters Mediate:</p> <p>Mediation Now:</p> <p>Tavistock Centre:</p> <p>NACCC:</p> <p>Children 1<sup>st</sup>:</p> <p>Headland Future:</p> <p>NFM:</p>	<p>Fml000001 to Fml999999</p> <p>Ppl000001 to Ppl999999</p> <p>Snb000001 to Snb999999</p> <p>Fmm000001 to Fmm999999</p> <p>Mnw000001 to Mnw999999</p> <p>Tcr000001 to Tcr999999</p> <p>Nac000001 to Nac999999</p> <p>Chf000001 to Chf999999</p> <p>Hfu000001 to Hfu999999</p> <p>Nfm000001 to Nfm999999</p> <p>For projects who have geographically separated offices you can divide the potential number of respondents, i.e. 1 million, into the number of specific geographical offices, e.g. using Howells who have offices in Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Hull. IDs could be:</p> <p>Sheffield – How000001 to How249999</p> <p>Rotherham – How250000 to 449999</p> <p>Barnsley – How500000 to How749999</p> <p>Hull – How750000 to How999999</p>
<b>RESEARCH CONTRACTOR</b>	
<b>Socio economic classification</b>	ONS OAC codes will be derived by the research contractor from a look-up on the full postcode
<b>Research contractor to fill in</b>	

<b><u>About You and Your Family.</u></b>	
<b>ABOUT YOU</b>	
Please use tick boxes to record your replies to questions	
<b>Can you tell me please your:</b>	
1. First name.....	
Surname.....	
<b>2. Address</b>	
House/flat number.....	
Block.....	
Street.....	
Area.....	
Town/City.....	
Postcode.....	
<b>3. Phone number</b>	
Home.....	
Work.....	
Mobile.....	
<b>4. Your age group</b>	
1. Under 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. 15 – 17	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 18 – 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 35 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. 45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. 55 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 65+	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Gender</b>	
1. Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>



<b>6. Ethnic background</b>	
<b>White</b>	
1. English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Any other white background, please describe	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups</b>	
5. White and black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. White and black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background, please describe	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	
9. Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Any other Asian background	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Black/African/Caribbean/black British</b>	
14. African	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Any other black/African/Caribbean background	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	
17. Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. European	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Any other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p><b>7. Any qualifications you have – tick all that apply</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Degree, degree equivalent, Higher Education qualification below degree level</li> <li>2. 'A' levels, level 3 NVQs, or equivalent</li> <li>3. Trade apprenticeship</li> <li>4. GCSE/O level grade A*-C, CSE grade 1, level 2 NVQ or equivalent</li> <li>5. GCSE/O level grade D-G, CSE grade 2-5, level 1 NVQ or equivalent</li> <li>6. Any other qualification</li> <li>7. No qualification</li> <li>8. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>8. Do you have any long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability?</b></p> <p>By long-standing I mean anything that has affected you for over 12 months or is likely to affect you for at least 12 months.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> <li>3. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>9. Are you currently:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employed full time (30 hours per week or more)</li> <li>2. Employed part time (less than 30 hours per week)</li> <li>3. Self employed full time (30 hours per week or more)</li> <li>4. Self-employed part time (less than 30 hours per week)</li> <li>5. Looking after the children full time</li> <li>6. Retired</li> <li>7. Student</li> <li>8. Unemployed and looking for work</li> <li>9. Other</li> <li>10. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b><u>About your household</u></b>			
<b>Can you tell me please:</b>			
<b>10. What is your total household income.</b>			
<i>By income we mean e.g. your salary and/or a partner's salary (after tax) and/or any benefits.</i>			
Please give <u>either</u> a weekly or monthly or annual figure – whichever is easiest – <b>you don't need to give all of them.</b>			
<b>1. Weekly</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Monthly</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Annually</b>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Income per week</b>	<b>Income per month</b>	<b>Income per year</b>	
1. £0 – £49	1. £0 – £199	1. £0 – £4999	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. £50 – £99	2. £200 – £299	2. £5,000 – £9,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. £100 – £299	3. £300 – £499	3. £10,000 – £19,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. £300 – £499	4. £500 – £999	4. £20,000 – £29,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. £500 – £999	5. £1,000 – £2,999	5. £30,000 – £39,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. £1,000 – £2,999	6. £3,000 – £4,999	6. £40,000 – £49,999	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. £3,000+	7. £5,000+	7. £50,000+	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Don't know	8. Don't know	8. Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Refusal	9. Refusal	9. Refusal	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b><u>Your family and relationships</u></b>	
<p><b>(Name of project)</b> has been set up to help separated parents to work better together. Please could you tell us about your separation so that we can plan similar projects in the future.</p>	
<p><b>11. Have you used any of these forms of help and support while you were separating, or after you separated? Tick all that apply. If option 6 please provide textual information as well</b></p> <p>1. Legal help</p> <p>2. Family Courts</p> <p>3. Counselling</p> <p>4. Mediation</p> <p>5. Any parenting apart classes</p> <p>6. Other please say what (.....)</p> <p>7. None – apart from this project</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>12. Who have you contacted to help you during or after separation? Tick all that apply. If options 14 or 15 please provide textual information as well</b></p> <p>1. Child Support Agency (CSA) or Child Maintenance Service (CMS)</p> <p>2. Child Maintenance Options</p> <p>3. Family Courts</p> <p>4. Cafcass</p> <p>5. Relate</p> <p>6. Gingerbread</p> <p>7. Citizen’s Advice</p> <p>8. Doctor/Health Visitor</p> <p>9. Family Lives</p> <p>10. Agony aunts</p> <p>11. Solicitors</p> <p>12. A religious organisation (e.g. church, mosque etc)</p> <p>13. Family and friends</p> <p>14. Online advice or support site (which one?.....)</p> <p>15. Other please say who (.....)</p> <p>16. No one – apart from this project</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

<b><u>Relationship with your ex-partner</u></b>	
<p>These questions are about the <b><u>relationship you have come to this project about.</u></b>                      If you are now in a new relationship, <b><u>please remember</u></b> these questions are about your ex-partner, NOT your new partner.</p>	
<p><b>13. Please tick the number which you think best describes your current situation with your ex-partner:</b></p> <p>1. Married and still living together</p> <p>2. In a same-sex civil partnership and still living together,</p> <p>3. Still living together (not married)</p> <p>4. In a relationship but not married or living together</p> <p>5. Separated, but still legally married</p> <p>6. Divorced, or same-sex civil partnership is now dissolved</p> <p>7. Separated</p> <p>8. We were never in a relationship</p> <p>9. Refusal</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>14. How long have you been/were you together?</b></p> <p>1. Never a couple</p> <p>2. Less than 6 months</p> <p>3. More than 6 months but less than 1 year</p> <p>4. More than 1 year but less than 2 years</p> <p>5. More than 2 years but less than 5 years</p> <p>6. More than 5 years</p> <p>7. Refusal</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>15. How many children do you have from this relationship?</b></p> <p>By children we mean someone 18 or under years old.</p> <p>Please list the ages of each child <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>IF YOU ARE STILL TOGETHER WITH YOUR PARTNER PLEASE FINISH HERE .</p>	
<p><b>Thank you for your help</b></p>	

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<p>IF YOU ARE NO LONGER TOGETHER PLEASE COMPLETE THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS</p> <p><b>16. How long have you been apart from your ex-partner?</b></p> <p>1. Less than 6 months</p> <p>2. More than 6 months but less than 1 year</p> <p>3. More than 1 year but less than 5 years</p> <p>4. More than 5 years</p> <p>5. Refusal</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>17. Thinking about your children with your ex-partner – please tick one of the following which you think best describes your current situation.</b></p> <p>1. I am the main day-to-day carer</p> <p>2. I am not the main day-to-day carer</p> <p>3. We share care between us</p> <p>4. The children live with someone else (e.g. grandparents)</p> <p>5. Refusal</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>18. Do you have an arrangement for your children that you and your ex-partner have agreed together?</b></p> <p>By arrangement we mean one which might be formally written down or just informally agreed between the two of you. It might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact</li> <li>• Payments for the support of children – regular or not always regular such as school fees, holidays, pocket money</li> <li>• Non-financial contributions e.g. clothes or contributing to child care arrangements</li> <li>• Shared care</li> <li>• Or any combination of the above</li> </ul> <p><b>Please tick one below</b></p> <p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

<p><b>19. If you said YES – How happy are you with this arrangement?</b></p> <p>Please tick one answer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Very happy</li> <li>2. Mostly happy</li> <li>3. Not happy nor unhappy</li> <li>4. Mostly unhappy</li> <li>5. Very unhappy</li> <li>6. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>20. Do you currently have a child maintenance arrangement with the CSA or CMS? (Include any arrangements even if they are not working.)</b></p> <p>Please tick one below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> <li>3. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b><u>Thinking about relationships now:</u></b></p>	
<p><b>21. Please tick one of the following which you think best describes your current situation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Single no partner</li> <li>2. Have a new partner – but not living together</li> <li>3. Living with a new partner but not married</li> <li>4. Married with a new partner</li> <li>5. In a same sex civil partnership with a new partner</li> <li>6. Separated from a new partner, but still legally married/in a civil partnership</li> <li>7. Divorced from a new partner/civil partnership with a same-sex partner is now dissolved</li> <li>8. Widowed from a new partner/civil partner</li> <li>9. Was in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved or separated</li> <li>10. Refusal</li> </ol>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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<b>ONLY ANSWER THIS IF IN THE LAST QUESTION YOU SAID YOU ARE IN A NEW RELATIONSHIP <u>AND LIVING</u> WITH YOUR PARTNER</b>	
<p><b>22. Please tick one of the following which best describes YOUR PARTNER'S current employment situation.</b></p> <p>1. Employed full time (30 hours per week or more)</p> <p>2. Employed part time (less than 30 hours per week)</p> <p>3. Self employed full time (30 hours per week or more)</p> <p>4. Self-employed part time (less than 30 hours per week)</p> <p>5. Looking after the children full time</p> <p>6. Retired</p> <p>7. Student</p> <p>8. Unemployed and looking for work</p> <p>9. Other</p> <p>10. Refusal</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ONLY ANSWER THIS IF YOU ARE IN A NEW RELATIONSHIP AND LIVING WITH YOUR PARTNER</b>	
<p><b>23. Do you have any other children living with you that are from your new relationship and/or from your new partner's former relationship?</b></p> <p>Please tick one below</p> <p>A1. Yes</p> <p>A2. No</p> <p>A3. Refusal</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Remember to thank them**

**Thank you for your help!**



### A.3i MI data sharing permission form – where projects did not use the PAM form

Dear [full client name],

We would like to ask for your help in giving feedback about how well this project is doing. This project is funded by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To make sure it is working well, DWP have commissioned a research company to gather some information about [insert project name] and to ask for your views about how well it is meeting your needs.

**Your name and contact details will not be supplied to DWP.** Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study both by our project and by the research company following DWP security guidelines. **This information will be used for research and analysis purposes only by the contractor.**

Do you agree that the information you have just provided on the form called About You and Your Family can be sent to the research company?

Yes

No

Do you agree that the research company can contact you to talk to you about your experiences on this project?

Yes

No

If you have any questions about the research ask your project representative.

Client :

Print name

Signature

Date

.....

## A.3ii MI data sharing permission form – where projects used the PAM form

Dear [full client name],

We would like to ask for your help in giving feedback about how well this project is doing. This project is funded by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). To make sure it is working well, DWP have commissioned a research company to gather some information about **[insert project name]**. To do this the research company will need to collect information about you and to talk to you to see how well this projects meets your needs.

**Your name and contact details will not be supplied to DWP.** Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study both by our project and by the research company following DWP security guidelines. **This information will be used for research and analysis purposes only by the research company.**

Do you agree that the information you have provided on the form called About You and Your Family can be sent to the research company?

Yes

No

Do you agree that the information you have provided, and will provide at project end, on the PAM form can be sent to the research company?

Yes

No

Do you agree that the research company can match the information on your PAM forms to the information on the About You and Your Family form?

Yes

No

Do you agree that the research company can contact you to talk to you after the project ends about your experiences on this project and to collect further PAM information?

Yes

No

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If you have any questions about the research ask your project representative.

Client :

Print name

Signature

Date

.....

## A.4 Telephone (CATI) questionnaire for parents (Phase 3)

### Section A: Introduction and eligibility checks

ASK TO SPEAK TO NAMED CONTACT.

WHEN THROUGH TO NAMED CONTACT:

My name is...and I am calling you from TNS BMRB, an independent research organisation, on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions.

We are contacting you because we are currently conducting a survey on their behalf to find out about what you thought of the services that you received from [Project name], and how things have been going for you since then. You were selected from a list of people held by [Project name] and we are contacting you for research purposes only, your answers will not affect any future dealings with [Project name] or the Department in any way.

This research is designed to help the government understand what people think about the services provided by [Project name].

IF NECESSARY: The feedback you give us will help to shape the services that [Project name] and other similar projects provide in the future. The results will be published in the summer of 2016. The research consists of confidential, telephone interviews with a range of individuals across the UK.

QA1

Are you able to talk freely at the moment, and are you available to discuss this briefly now?

IF RESPONDENT QUERIES AMOUNT OF TIME: It usually takes around 15 minutes to cover everything.

1. Yes
2. No – try to make appointment for another time
3. Does not want to take part

IF YES, GO TO QA2. OTHERWISE GO TO APPOINTMENT SCREEN OR TERMINATE AS APPROPRIATE

QA2

Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study. The research findings will not identify you and no personal information will be shared with any third parties. At any point during the interview, you can choose not to answer a particular question, or to stop the interview before the end.

IF NECESSARY: We will report back in general terms about what families tell us – and we don't use anyone's name or details that could identify you to others. [Project name] and the Department for Work and Pensions will not know whether or not you chose to take part in the research.

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QA3. So I can confirm the details that I hold, do you mind if I ask some brief questions now about you and your interaction with [Project]? Can I just check that you spoke to someone at [Project name] and took part in some of the services that they offer [around Date<sup>2</sup>]?

IF QUERY, READ OUT

'The session(s) that you..[Description of service]'.

EVEN IF ONLY HAD VERY LITTLE CONTACT WITH THE PROJECT (E.G. CONTACTING THEM ONCE) OR DID NOT COMPLETE THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME CODE YES.

1. Yes
2. No (AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

ASK ALL

QA3

During the interview, we will be talking about your ex-partner who you came to [Project name] about. Just so I have a way of referring to your ex-partner during the interview, could you tell me his/her first name?

INTERVIEWER: IF MORE THAN ONE EX-PARTNER, CLARIFY IT IS THE PERSON THEY WERE IN CONTACT WITH [Project name] ABOUT. IF UNHAPPY WITH THIS, RECORD AN INITIAL IF POSSIBLE.

INTERVIEWER: ALL RESPONDENTS WILL HAVE ATTENDED THE SESSIONS ABOUT THEIR PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER. **HOWEVER, NOT ALL RESPONDENTS WILL HAVE ACTUALLY ATTENDED SESSIONS WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER.**

1. WRITE IN
2. (Refused)

ASK ALL

QA4

And how many children do you have from your relationship with [Exname]? By children we mean someone 18 years or under.

1. Numeric 1-20
2. (Refusal)

---

<sup>2</sup> Date to be text filled from the sample. Where Date is blank on the sample file, the textfill will be blank.

**Section B: PAM questions**

ASK ALL EXCEPT RESPONDENTS FROM CHILDREN'S 1ST<sup>3</sup>

QB1

The first set of questions is similar to a set of questions you will have been asked previously by [Project name] but I would like you to answer about how you feel about these things now. They concern what happens between you and [Exname]. I'm going to read you out a series of statements and please tell me how much you currently agree or disagree with each. [Please focus on the child you are most concerned about]<sup>4</sup>. Although you may not find an answer that exactly describes what you think, please pick the answer that comes closest to what you currently think. Your first reaction to each statement should be your answer.

So first of all...

[STATEMENT 1, 2, 3...]

Would you say you strongly agree, agree, not sure how you feel about the statement, disagree or strongly disagree with this?

STATEMENTS:

1. [Exname] enjoys being alone with our child
2. During pregnancy, [Exname] expressed confidence in my ability to be a good parent
3. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together
4. [Exname] and I communicate well about our child
5. [Exname] is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of our child
6. Talking to [Exname] about our child is something I look forward to
7. [Exname] pays a great deal of attention to our child
8. [Exname] and I agree on what our child should and should not be permitted to do
9. I feel close to [Exname] when I see him or her play with our child
10. [Exname] knows how to handle children well
11. [Exname] and I are a good team
12. [Exname] believes I am a good parent
13. I believe [Exname] is a good parent
14. [Exname] makes my job of being a parent easier
15. [Exname] sees our child in the same way I do
16. [Exname] and I would basically describe our child in the same way

---

<sup>3</sup> As identified on the sample.

<sup>4</sup> Text fill will only appear where QA4 <>1.

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17. If our child needs to be punished, [Exname] and I usually agree on the type of punishment
18. I feel good about [Exname]'s judgement about what is right for our child
19. [Exname] tells me I am a good parent
20. [Exname] and I have the same goals for our child

### ANSWER CATEGORIES:

1. Strongly agree with the statement
  2. Agree with the statement
  3. Not sure how you feel about the statement
  4. Disagree with the statement
  5. Strongly disagree with the statement
- (Don't know)
- (Refusal)

### IF RESPONDENT FROM CHILDREN'S 1ST<sup>5</sup>

QB2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very difficult and 5 is very easy, how easy do you find it to:

#### REPEAT FOR EACH STATEMENT

1. Communicate (for example talk, text, email, etc.) with [Exname]
2. Reach agreement with [Exname] over child contact arrangements
3. Reach agreement with [Exname] over child maintenance/financial arrangements
4. Get support from [Exname] when child-related matters arise.

Answer Scale: 1-5

Don't know

Don't want to answer

---

<sup>5</sup> As identified on the sample.

**Section D: Current family relations and perceived impact of the project**

ASK ALL

QC1. When you first contacted [Project name] did you live with [Exname]?

INTERVIEWER: THIS QUESTION IS JUST COLLECTING WHETHER THE RESPONDENT LIVED WITH [EXNAME] AND NOT WHETHER THEY WERE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Refusal)

ASK ALL

QC3. May I just check, do you live with [Exname] now?

INTERVIEWER: THIS QUESTION IS JUST COLLECTING WHETHER THE RESPONDENT LIVES WITH [EXNAME] AND NOT WHETHER THEY ARE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Refusal)

IF DID NOT LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT TIME OF CONTACTING THE PROJECT AT QC1  
(IF QC1 = 2 OR REF)

QD39. Thinking back to [date] before you contacted the project, who did your [child/children] with [Exname] live with?

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. [Your child/The children] lived with you all or most of the time
2. [Your child/The children] lived with [Exname] all or most of the time
3. [Your child/The children] lived with each of you for about the same amount of time
4. [Your child lived/The children lived] with someone else such as grandparents
5. Different arrangements for each of the children
6. (Refusal)

IF DID NOT LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT TIME OF CONTACTING THE PROJECT AND EITHER: CHILDREN LIVED WITH RESPONDENT AT QD39 OR CHILDREN LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QD39 OR CHILDREN LIVE ELSEWHERE (IF QD39 = 1 OR 2 OR 4)



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QD39B. And did [[Exname]/you]<sup>6</sup> have any contact with your [child/children]?

INTERVIEWER: IF YES, PROMPT FOR FREQUENCY

1. Yes – several times a week
2. Yes – about once a week
3. Yes – several times a month
4. Yes – about once a month
5. Yes – less often
6. No
7. (Refusal)

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD40. And who [does your child/do your children] with [Exname] live with now?

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. [Your child/The children] live with you all or most of the time
2. [Your child/The children] live with [Exname] all or most of the time
3. [Your child/The children] live with each of you for about the same amount of time
4. [Your child lives/The children live] with someone else such as grandparents
5. Different arrangements for each of the children
6. (Refusal)

IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AND EITHER:  
CHILDREN LIVE WITH RESPONDENT AT QD40 OR CHILDREN LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER  
AT QD40 OR CHILDREN LIVE ELSEWHERE AT QD40 (IF QD40 = 1 OR 2 OR 4)

QD19. And [does [Exname]/do you]<sup>7</sup> have any contact with your [child/children]?

[TEXTFILL: INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS THERE IS DIFFERENT  
ARRANGEMENT FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER, PLEASE  
ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE CHILD THEY ANSWERED THE PAM ABOUT ]<sup>8</sup>

1. Yes – several times a week
2. Yes – about once a week
3. Yes – several times a month
4. Yes – about once a month

---

<sup>6</sup> If main care giving parent (QD39 = 1) text fill will read '[Exname]'. If not main care giving parent (QD39 = 2) or children live elsewhere (QD39=4) text fill will read 'you'.

<sup>7</sup> If main care giving parent (QD40 = 1) text fill will read 'does [Exname]'. If not main care giving parent (QD40 = 2) or children live elsewhere (QD40=4) text fill will read 'do you'.

<sup>8</sup> Text to only appear if have two or more children at QA4 or refuse at QA4.

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5. Yes – less often
6. No
7. (Refusal)

IF NRP DOES HAVE CONTACT WITH CHILD/CHILDREN AT QD19 (QD19 = 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5)

QD20. And how happy are you with the contact arrangements you have with [[Exname] about your [child/children]?

[TEXTFILL: INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS THERE IS DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER, PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE CHILD THEY ANSWERED THE PAM ABOUT. ]<sup>9</sup>

READ OUT

1. Very happy
2. Happy
3. Unhappy
4. Very unhappy
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refusal)

ASK ALL

QD21. And thinking back to the contact arrangements you had with [Exname] [in date], before you contacted [Project name], would you say your contact arrangements are...

[TEXTFILL: INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS THERE IS DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER, PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE CHILD THEY ANSWERED THE PAM ABOUT. ]<sup>10</sup>

READ OUT

1. Better than before
2. Worse than before
3. The same as before
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

IF CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS BETTER OR WORSE THAN BEFORE AT QD21 (QD21 = 1 OR 2)

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<sup>9</sup> Text to only appear if have two or more children at QA4 or refuse at QA4.

<sup>10</sup> Text to only appear if have two or more children at QA4 or refuse at QA4.

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QD22. And did [Project name] play a role in this? Did they play...

READOUT

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD41. Do you have a child maintenance arrangement in place for your [child/children] with [Exname]? This could include both formal and informal arrangements.

[TEXTFILL: INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS THERE IS DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER, PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE CHILD THEY ANSWERED THE PAM ABOUT.]<sup>11</sup>

1. Yes, has an arrangement
2. Is in the process of setting up an arrangement
3. No, no arrangement
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

IF HAVE AN ARRANGEMENT AT QD41 (QD41 = 1)

QD42. And which of the following would you say describes your maintenance arrangement?

IF QUERY WHAT A FAMILY-BASED ARRANGEMENT IS: A family-based arrangement is where parents agree between themselves how to continue providing for a child after they separate. It could be written down, or verbal. Parents can choose what to include, for example you might include regular or occasional payments, paying for other things such as after school clubs, buying things for the child such as food or clothes, or sharing looking after a child. INTERVIEWER: PLEASE REFER TO YOUR CRIB SHEET FOR FURTHER DETAILS IF NECESSARY

READ OUT

1. A family-based arrangement –with money payments
2. A family-based arrangement – no money payments
3. A court or consent order (including Minute of Agreement in Scotland)
4. A Child Support Agency or Child Maintenance Service agreement (including application)
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refusal)

---

<sup>11</sup> Text to only appear if have two or more children at QA4 or refuse at QA4.

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IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD25. In the last three months [has [Exname] paid you any child maintenance/have you paid [Exname] any child maintenance/have either you or [Exname] paid any child maintenance to each other]<sup>12</sup>?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refused)

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD24. And thinking back to the arrangements you had for child maintenance with [Exname] [in date], before you contacted [Project name], would you say your child maintenance arrangements are...

[TEXTFILL: INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT MENTIONS THERE IS DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN WITH THEIR EX-PARTNER, PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT THE CHILD THEY ANSWERED THE PAM ABOUT.]<sup>13</sup>

READ OUT

1. Better than before
2. Worse than before
3. The same as before
4. (DO NOT READ OUT: No previous arrangement)
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refused)

IF CHILD MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS BETTER OR WORSE THAN BEFORE AT QD24 (QD24 = 1 OR 2)

QD28. And did [Project name] play a role in this? Did they play...

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY REMIND RESPONDENT THIS QUESTION IS REFERRING TO WHETHER THE PROJECT PLAYED A ROLE IN THE CHANGE TO CHILD MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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<sup>12</sup> If main care giving parent (QD40 = 1), the text fill will read 'has [Exname] paid you any child maintenance' If not main care giving parent (QD40 = 2) the text fill will read 'have you paid [Exname] any child maintenance', for everyone else text fill will read 'have either you or [Exname] paid any child maintenance to each other'.

<sup>13</sup> Text to only appear if have two or more children at QA4.

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### READOUT

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

### ASK ALL

QD35. Thinking back to before you approached [Project name], had you or [Exname] had any contact with the Family Courts about any arrangements or issues regarding your separation with [Exname]? This can include arrangements directly related to your separation such as divorce or related to contact arrangements for your [child/children]

1. Yes, I had
2. Yes, [Exname] had
3. Yes, we both had
4. No
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refusal)

IF CONTACT WITH FAMILY COURTS ATQD35 (QD35 = 1 OR 2 OR 3)

QD35B. And at that time...

### READ OUT

1. Had there been a formal court case
2. Were you or [Exname] planning a formal court case
3. Or were there no plans for a formal court case?
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refusal)

## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

ASK ALL

QD36. And since your contact with [Project name], have you or [Exname] had any [further]<sup>14</sup> contact with the Family Courts about any arrangements or issues regarding your separation with [Exname]? This can include arrangements directly related to your separation such as divorce or related to contact arrangements for your [child/children]

1. Yes, I have
2. Yes, [exname] has
3. Yes, we both have
4. No
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refusal)

IF CONTACT WITH FAMILY COURTS SINCE PROJECT AT QD36 (QD36 = 1 OR 2 OR 3)

QD36B. Since your contact with [Project name]...

READ OUT

1. Has there been a formal court case
2. Are you or [Exname] (still) planning a formal court case
3. Or are there (now) no plans for a formal court case?
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refusal)

ALL THOSE NOT PLANNING A FORMAL COURT CASE AT QD36B (If QD36B<> 2)

QD37. Do you currently have any plans to go [back]<sup>15</sup> to the Family Courts about any arrangements or issues related to your separation with [Ex-name]?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know)
4. (Refusal)

IF NOT BEEN TO THE FAMILY COURTS SINCE THE PROJECT AT QD36 AND NOT PLANNING TO GO BACK TO THE FAMILY COURTS AT QD37 (IF QD36 = 4 AND QD37 = 2) OR

IF HAVE BEEN BACK TO THE FAMILY COURTS SINCE THE PROJECT BUT NO PLANS FOR A FORMAL COURT CASE (IF QD36 = 1 and QD37 = 2) OR (IF QD36 = 2 and QD37 = 2) (IF QD36=3 and QD37 = 2)

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<sup>14</sup> Text fill will appear if QD35 = 1 or 2 or 3.

<sup>15</sup> Text fill will appear if QD36 = 1 or 2 or 3.

QD38. And did [Project name] play a role in your decision to not go [back]<sup>16</sup> to the Family Courts [for a court case]<sup>17</sup>? Did they play...

READOUT

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refused)

### **Section E: Support provided**

ASK ALL

I just want to ask you a few questions about the involvement you had with [Project name]

QE3. And thinking about all the involvement you had with [Project name], could you say how many hours of involvement you had with them in total?

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: Please provide your best estimate.

ENTER NUMBER OF HOURS

(Don't know)

(Refused)

QE4. And could you tell me the date of your last contact with [Project name]?

ENTER MONTH

1. January
2. February
3. March
4. April
5. May
6. June
7. July
8. August
9. September
10. October
11. November

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<sup>16</sup> Text fill will appear if QD36 = 1 or 2 or 3.

<sup>17</sup> Text fill will only appear if QD36B = 3. For everyone else it will be blank.

## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

12. December
- (Don't know)
- (Refusal)

### ENTER YEAR

1. 2013
2. 2014
3. 2015
- (Don't know)
- (Refusal)

QD33. And since your contact with [Project name] could you tell me whether you have talked to any of the following about your [child/children] and your relationship with [Exname].

### READ OUT

(RANDOMISE LIST BUT KEEP OTHER AT THE BOTTOM)

1. Child Support Agency (CSA) or Child Maintenance Service (CMS)
2. Child Maintenance Options
3. Family Courts
4. Cafcass
5. Solicitors
6. Mediation
7. Other
8. None of the above
9. (Don't know)
10. (Refusal)

IF SOUGHT SUPPORT FROM ADDITIONAL SERVICES AT QD33 (IF QD33 = 1-7)

QD34. And would you say you say you sought this support as a result of [Project name], or would you say you would have done this anyway?

1. Yes – Sought support as a direct result from attending sessions with [Project name]
2. No – Would have contacted these anyway
3. (It varies)
4. (Don't know)
5. (Refusal)



## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

QE5. And now thinking more generally, thinking about all your contact with [Project name], overall, did you think it was...

1. A very helpful thing to do?
2. Quite helpful?
3. Not very helpful?
4. Or not at all helpful?
5. (Don't know)
6. (Refused)

### Section F – Final demographics

And finally, we would now like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

IF NECESSARY: A cross-section of different people will be completing this survey so it is important for us to understand a little about you and your circumstances to see how this may affect your answers

ASK ALL

QC4. And which of the following best describes your situation now with [Exname]. Are you...

INTERVIEWER: IF ESTABLISHED WHEN COLLECTING EX-PARTNERS' NAME THEY ARE THE OPPOSITE SEX THEN YOU DID NOT NEED TO READ THE OPTIONS IN BRACKETS REFERRING TO SAME-SEX CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS.

READOUT

1. Married, (or in a same sex civil partnership)?
2. In a relationship together, but not married (or in a same-sex civil partnership)?
3. Separated, but still legally married (or in a same sex-civil partnership)?
4. Divorced (or formerly in a same sex civil partnership which is now dissolved)?
5. Separated, previously in a relationship but not married (or in a same sex-civil partnership)?
6. (DO NOT READ OUT: Never been in a relationship)
7. (Refusal)

IF NOT CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH EXPARTNER AT QC4 (QC4 = 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7)

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QC5. And which of the following best describes your current situation?

READ OUT

1. Single no partner
2. Have a new partner – but not living together
3. Living with a new partner but not married
4. Married with a new partner
5. In a same sex civil partnership with a new partner
6. Separated from a new partner, but still legally married or in a civil partnership
7. Divorced from a new partner or civil partnership with a same-sex partner is now dissolved
8. Widowed from a new partner or civil partner
9. Was in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved or separate
10. (Refusal)

QF2. We would like to ask you what your total household income is. By income we mean your salary and/or a partner's salary after tax, and/or any money received from benefits. Would you like to answer this weekly, monthly or annually?

CODE WHAT TIME PERIOD RESPONDENT IS TO ANSWER BY.

1. Weekly
2. Monthly
3. Annually
4. Refusal

IF ANSWERING WEEKLY (QF2 = 1)

QF3. What is your total weekly household income?

IF NECESSARY: By income we mean your salary and/or a partner's salary after tax, and/or any money received from benefits.

IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW ASK THEM TO GIVE THEIR BEST ESTIMATE

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. £0 – £49
2. £50 – £99
3. £100 – £299
4. £300 – £499
5. £500 – £999

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6. £1,000 – £2,999
7. £3,000+
8. (Don't know)
9. (Refusal)

IF ANSWERING MONTHLY (QF2 = 2)

QF4. What is your total monthly household income?

IF NECESSARY: By income we mean your salary and/or a partner's salary after tax, and/or any money received from benefits.

IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW ASK THEM TO GIVE THEIR BEST ESTIMATE

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. £0 – £199
2. £200 – £299
3. £300 – £499
4. £500 – £999
5. £1,000 – £2,999
6. £3,000 – £4,999
7. £5,000+
8. (Don't know)
9. (Refusal)

IF ANSWERING ANNUALLY (QF2 = 3)

QF5. What is your total annual household income?

IF NECESSARY: By income we mean your salary and/or a partner's salary after tax, and/or any money received from benefits.

IF THE RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW ASK THEM TO GIVE THEIR BEST ESTIMATE

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. £0 – £4,999
2. £5,000 – £9,999
3. £10,000 – £19,999
4. £20,000 – £29,999
5. £30,000 – £39,999
6. £40,000 – £49,999
7. £50,000+

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8. (Don't know)

9. (Refusal)

QF6. And could you tell me the first part of your postcode, I just need the first part, so the first three to four letters.

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE ENTER THE FIRST THREE/FOUR LETTERS OF THE POSTCODE

OPEN-ENDED<sup>18</sup>

(Refused)

Thank you very much for answering all those questions, that's now the end of the survey.

ASK ALL

QF7. It is possible that we may want to contact you again to follow up on particular issues arising from this survey, for example to ask you about your experiences in more detail. Would you be willing to be contacted again by TNS BMRB in relation to this survey?

A1. Yes

A2. No

THANK AND CLOSE

---

<sup>18</sup> Allow only 4 digits to be entered.

## A.5 Online (CAWI) questionnaire for parents (Phase 3)

ASK ALL

QIntro1. Thank you for choosing to complete this important survey. The feedback you give will help the Department for Work and Pensions shape the services that the [Project Name] website and other similar websites provide in the future.

Any information you provide will be held in the strictest of confidence and will be handled securely throughout the study. The research findings will not identify you and no personal information will be shared with any third parties. At any point during the survey, you can choose not to answer a particular question.

We will report back in general terms about what families tell us – and we don't use anyone's details that could identify you to others. The [Project name] website and the Department for Work and Pensions will not know whether or not you chose to take part in the research.

ASK ALL

QIntro2. The first set of questions is similar to a set of questions you will have been asked previously by [Project name] but please answer about how you feel about these things now.

ASK ALL

QW1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very difficult and 5 is very easy, how easy do you find it to:

REPEAT FOR EACH STATEMENT

1. Communicate (talk, text, email, etc.) with your child/children's other parent
2. Reach agreement with the other parent over child contact arrangements
3. Reach agreement with the other parent over child maintenance/financial arrangements
4. Get support from your child/children's other parent when child-related matters arise.

Answer Scale: 1-5

Don't know

Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QIntro2. The next few questions are about your relationship with your child/children's other parent who you came to [Project name] about and your child/children.

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ASK ALL

QA4

How many children do you have together? By children we mean someone 18 years or under, and please do not include any children that either of you might have from other relationships

Numeric 1-20

Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QC1. When you first contacted [Project name] did you live with your [child's/children's]<sup>19</sup> other parent?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QC3. May I just check, do you live with your [child/children's]<sup>20</sup> other parent now?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't want to answer

IF DID NOT LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT TIME OF CONTACTING THE PROJECT AT QC1  
(IF QC1 = 2 OR REF)

QD39. Thinking back to before you contacted [Project name], who did your children live with most of the time?

1. With me
2. With the other parent
3. With each of us for about the same amount of time
4. With someone else such as grandparents
5. [We had different arrangements for each of the children]<sup>21</sup>
6. Don't know
7. Don't want to answer

---

<sup>19</sup> Text fill based on number of children at QA4. Remaining text fills set in the same way.

<sup>20</sup> Text fill based on number of children at QA4. Remaining text fills set in the same way.

<sup>21</sup> Answer code to only appear when more than one child at QA4.

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IF DID NOT LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT TIME OF CONTACTING THE PROJECT AND EITHER: CHILDREN LIVED WITH RESPONDENT AT QD39 OR CHILDREN LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QD39 OR CHILDREN LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QD39 OR CHILDREN LIVE ELSEWHERE (IF QD39 = 1 OR 2 or 4)

QD39B. And did [your [child/children's] other parent/you]<sup>22</sup> have any contact with your [child/children] at that time?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD40. And who [does your child/do your children] live with now?

PROMPT TO PRECODE

1. With me
2. With the other parent
3. with each of us for about the same amount of time
4. with someone else such as grandparents
5. [We have different arrangements for each of the children]<sup>23</sup>
6. Don't know
7. Don't want to answer

IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AND EITHER: CHILDREN LIVE WITH RESPONDENT AT QD40 OR CHILDREN LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QD40 OR CHILDREN LIVE ELSEWHERE AT QD40 (IF QD40 = 1 OR 2 OR 4)

QD19. And [does your [child/children's] other parent/do you]<sup>24</sup> have any contact with your [child/children]?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

---

<sup>22</sup> If main care giving parent (QD39 = 1) text fill will read '[your child/children's other parent]'. If not main care giving parent (QD39 = 2) or children elsewhere (QD39 = 4) text fill will read 'you'.

<sup>23</sup> Answer code to only appear when more than one child at QA4.

<sup>24</sup> If main care giving parent (QD40 = 1) text fill will read '[your child/children's other parent]'. If not main care giving parent (QD40 = 2) or children live elsewhere (QD40 = 2) text fill will read 'you'.

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ASK ALL

QD20. And how happy are you with the contact arrangements you have with [your [child/children's] other parent?

1. Very happy
2. Happy
3. Unhappy
4. Very unhappy
5. Don't know
6. Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QD21. And thinking back to the contact arrangements you had before you contacted [Project name], would you say your contact arrangements are...

1. Better than before
2. Worse than before
3. The same as before
4. Don't know
5. Don't want to answer

IF CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS BETTER OR WORSE THAN BEFORE AT QD21 (QD21 = 1 OR 2)

QD22. And did [Project name] play a role in this? Did they play...

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. Don't know
5. Don't want to answer

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD41. Do you have a child maintenance arrangement in place for your [child/children]? This could include both formal and informal arrangements – they need not be through the Child Support Agency or Child Maintenance Service.

1. Yes, have an arrangement
2. We are in the process of setting up an arrangement
3. No, no arrangement



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4. Don't know
5. Don't want to answer

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD25. In the last three months [has your [child/children's] other parent paid you any child maintenance/have you paid your [child/children's] other parent any child maintenance/have either you, or your [child/children's] other parent paid any child maintenance to each other]<sup>25</sup>?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

IF DO NOT CURRENTLY LIVE WITH EX-PARTNER AT QC3 (IF QC3 = 2 OR REF)

QD24. And thinking back to the arrangements you had for child maintenance before you contacted [Project name], would you say your child maintenance arrangements are...

1. Better than before
2. Worse than before
3. The same as before
4. No previous arrangement
5. Don't know
6. Don't want to answer

IF CHILD MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS BETTER OR WORSE THAN BEFORE AT QD24 (QD24 = 1 OR 2)

QD28. And did [Project name] play a role in this? Did they play...

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. Don't know
5. Don't want to answer

---

<sup>25</sup> If main care giving parent (QD40 = 1), the text fill will read 'has your [child/children]'s paid you any child maintenance' If not main care giving parent (QD40 = 2) the text fill will read 'have you paid your [child/children]'s other parent any child maintenance', for everyone else text fill will read 'have either you, or your [child/children]'s other parent paid any child maintenance to each other'.

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### ASK ALL

QD36. Since your contact with [Project name], have you or your [child/children's] other parent had any contact with the Family Courts about any arrangements or issues regarding your separation? This can include arrangements directly related to your separation such as divorce or related to contact arrangements for your [child/children].

1. Yes, I have
2. Yes, your [child/children's] other parent has
3. Yes, we both have
4. No
5. Don't know
6. Don't want to answer

### ASK ALL

QD37. Do you currently have any plans to go [back]<sup>26</sup> to the Family Courts about any arrangements or issues related to your separation?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Don't want to answer

IF NOT BEEN TO THE FAMILY COURTS SINCE THE PROJECT AT QD36 AND NOT PLANNING TO GO BACK TO THE FAMILY COURTS AT QD37 (IF QD36 = 4 AND QD37 = 2) OR

IF HAVE BEEN BACK TO THE FAMILY COURTS SINCE THE PROJECT BUT NO PLANS FOR A FORMAL COURT CASE (IF QD36 = 1 and QD37 = 2) OR (IF QD36 = 2 and QD37 = 2) (IF QD36=3 and QD37 = 2)

QD38. And did [Project name] play a role in your decision to not go [back]<sup>27</sup> to the Family Courts? Did they play...

1. A big role
2. Some role
3. Or no role at all
4. Don't know
5. Don't want to answer

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<sup>26</sup> Text fill will appear if QD36 = 1 or 2 or 3.

<sup>27</sup> Text fill will appear if QD36 = 1 or 2 or 3.

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ASK ALL

QE5. And now thinking more generally, thinking about all your contact with [Project name], overall, did you think it was...

7. A very helpful thing to do
8. Quite helpful
9. Not very helpful
10. Or not at all helpful?
11. Don't know
12. Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QIntro3. And finally a couple of question about yourself.

ASK ALL

QW5. Are you male or female?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Don't want to answer

ASK ALL

QW6. And what was your age when you first contacted [Project name]?

Numeric: 16-65

Don't know

Don't want to answer

QF7. It is possible that we may want to contact you again to follow up on particular issues arising from this survey, for example to ask you about your experiences in more detail. Would you be willing to be contacted again by TNS BMRB in relation to this survey?

1. Yes
2. No

Thank you very much for answering all those questions, that's now the end of the survey.

The telephone interview took an average of 14.5 minutes to complete.

# Appendix B

## Survey response rates and sample sizes

### B.1 Overall response rate to Phase 3 CATI survey

<b>Sample dialled</b>	3,352
<b>Invalid sample data</b>	
Invalid telephone number	450
Deceased	2
Moved – no trace	10
Unknown at number	115
No recollection of using the project	114
Duplicate record	3
Called 20+ times and never made contact	350
<b>Opt-out/refusal</b>	
Refusal	324
Abandoned interview	102
Incapable of interview	49
Unresolved at end of fieldwork	724
<b>Full interviews</b>	1,109
Invalid sample data (N)	1,044
<i>Opt-out/refusal (N)</i>	1,199
<i>Productive – full interviews (N)</i>	1,109
Valid sample data (N)	2,308
Invalid sample data (%)	31
Opt-out/refusal (%)	36
Productive – conversion from issued sample (%)	33
Productive – conversion from valid sample (%)	48
Refusal/unproductive – from valid sample (%)	52

## B.2 Project level response rate to Phase 3 CATI survey

Project	Parents participating in project	Sample Issued	Interviews achieved	Conversion rate from issued sample
Howells	1,980	373	134	36%
Sills & Betteridge	2,633	1,552	426	27%
Family Lives	148	95	41	43%
Pinnacle People	98	65	19	29%
Mediation Now	406	98	48	49%
Family Matters Mediate	340	167	76	46%
Changing Futures	348	216	69	32%
National Family Mediation	544	320	140	44%
Resolution	1,589	407	124	30%
Tavistock Centre	108	59	32	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,194</b>	<b>3352</b>	<b>1109</b>	<b>33%</b>

## B.3 Project level response rate to Phase 3 CAWI survey

Project	Parents participating in project	Sample issued	Interviews achieved	Conversion rate from issued sample
Relate	2,482	1,146	14	1%
OnePlusOne	13,500	7,874	550	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,982</b>	<b>9,020</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>6%</b>

## B.4 Stage 2 qualitative sample size per project

Project Name	Number of project staff interviewed	Number of parents interviewed
Changing Futures	7	7
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	8	1
Family Lives	5	6
Family Matters Mediate	4	4
Howells	6	6
Malachi	4	6
Mediation Now	5	6
National Family Mediation	3	8
NACCC	1	4
OnePlusOne	8	0
Pinnacle People	4	7
Relate	1	0
Resolution	8	6
Resolve Cymru	1	0
Sills & Betteridge	5	7
Spurgeons	5	2
Tavistock Centre	6	4

## B.5 Stage 3 qualitative sample size per project

Project Name	Number of project staff interviewed	Number of parents interviewed
Changing Futures	2	8
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	1	8
Family Lives	1	8
Family Matters Mediate	1	8
Howells	1	6
Malachi	2	4
Mediation Now	1	8
National Family Mediation	1	9
NACCC	1	8
OnePlusOne	3	0
Pinnacle People	2	7
Relate	1	1
Resolution	1	7
Resolve Cymru	1	0
Sills & Betteridge	1	8
Spurgeons	2	0
Tavistock Centre	2	7

# Appendix C

## PAM data

### C.1 Calculation of total PAM score per parent and statistical testing of the change scores

Parenting alliance measure (PAM) data consists of a 20-item self-completion scale, where respondents are asked to say how strongly they agree or disagree (on a five-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree) to each statement.

Adding up their scores across the 20 statements, parents are assigned a score of between 20 and 100, where a higher score denotes more effective co-parenting. Using normative data from a representative sample of US parents<sup>28</sup>, parents can be categorised into one of four groups: 'dysfunctional' (within the bottom five percentiles, score 20-42); 'problematic' (between 6th and 14th percentile, score 43-56); 'marginal' (between 15th and 19th percentile, score 57-63); within 'normal limits' (20th percentile or above, score 64-100).

A PAM score is only calculated if at least 18 of the 20 questions have been answered. For those answering 18 or 19 questions, the score is calculated across the completed questions and then 'scaled up' (by a factor of 20/18 for those answering 18, and by 20/19 for those answering 19). This is equivalent to imputing the mean of the completed questions to the missing ones.

Change scores per parent are calculated as the simple difference between two PAM scores, either post-support PAM minus the baseline PAM score, or the survey PAM score minus the baseline PAM score. Standard t-tests have been used to test whether the mean change score is significantly different to zero per project.

### C.2 Challenges and limitations in the analysis of the PAM data

There are a number of reasons why the analysis of change in the PAM scores for parents may not give a definitive answer as to whether the projects were successful. The key ones are:

- 1 The lack of a comparison group.** We do not have data on the change in PAM scores that would have been recorded for parents if they had not taken part in the projects (the counterfactual). Such data would need to come from a comparison group of parents starting from similar positions to the project participants but who did not take up the support. Identifying, and collecting data from, a suitable comparison group did not prove feasible within this evaluation.

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<sup>28</sup> Similar data from parents in the UK are not available.

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Without a comparison group we cannot be sure that change over time in PAM scores is wholly or partly attributable to the projects, or whether similar levels of change would occur irrespective of the support. It is possible that parents might have experienced negative change scores without the support, in which case a small positive change for those taking up the support would be a positive result.

**2 Non-response and missing data problems.** Although it was hoped that a high percentage of the parents from those projects administering the PAM would complete the PAM both at baseline and post-support, in practice many parents did not. The Management Information (MI) system for these projects recorded 5,175 parents having taken up support, yet baseline PAM was only collected for 4,048 parents (of which just 3,954 answered enough of the PAM questions for scoring). At the post-support stage, just 1,490 parents fully answered the PAM questions. The numbers fell further at the survey stage to just 789 with both a baseline and a survey PAM – in part because not all projects were involved at this stage (only the nine with larger numbers being included), but also because not all parents gave consent to be approached. Other parents inevitably refused an interview. Overall, we have PAM data at all three points in time (baseline, post-support and survey) for just 344 parents.

Much of the missing data stemmed from the early stages of the projects and, once the issue was identified, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) worked closely with the projects to improve completion rates.

Inevitably the reduction in numbers at each stage raises the possibility that bias has been introduced, with the change in PAM scores presented perhaps not being representative of all parents taking up the support. In practice there is little evidence of bias in terms of parent characteristics – those completing each stage of the PAM are similar to those that do not complete all stages in terms of their baseline PAM scores as well as their characteristics and baseline circumstances (gender, qualifications level, whether a parent with care or a non-resident parent, length of time since separation, etc.). However, it is possible that the parents completing the PAM at the post-support and survey stages had a different experience of the support than the parents who did not complete the PAM after baseline. If, for instance, those completing the immediate post-support PAM tended to be those parents who were most positive about the support received, then the change in PAM scores recorded between the start and end of the support may be overstated. The survey does overcome this potential for bias to some degree, because parents were asked to complete the survey irrespective of whether they had completed the post-support PAM. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of parents did not complete the survey still leaves room for some doubt.

**3 Small sample numbers for some projects.** A related problem to that of non-response is that the number of parents completing the PAM at each stage was small for some projects (fewer than 50 parents completed the baseline and post-support PAM in six of the 13 PAM projects.). Due to the scale and nature of some of the projects, it was recognised at the design stage that robust quantitative measures would not be available in all cases. Our commentary in Chapter 8 therefore reflects the fact that the average change score for these projects is inevitably measured with fairly low precision.



### C.3 Number of PAM records per project

Table C.1 details the number of completed PAM records per project at each of the three stages of data collection: baseline (that is, at the start of the support); immediately post-support; and at the time of the follow-up survey. Records that were incomplete, because fewer than 18 of the 20 questions had been answered, are excluded.

**Table C.1 Number of completed PAM forms completed per project**

Project	Baseline PAMs completed	Post-support PAMs completed	Survey PAMs completed	Baseline and post-support PAMs	Baseline and survey PAMs	Baseline, post-support and survey PAMs
Malachi	201	198	0	196	0	0
Spurgeons	47	13	0	13	0	0
Resolution	196	70	111	70	27	12
Howells	444	40	124	39	113	10
Family Lives	105	81	38	81	32	27
Pinnacle People	64	20	13	19	4	2
Sills & Betteridge	1,752	535	385	524	342	131
Family Matters Mediate	139	44	62	44	46	14
Mediation Now	165	131	46	130	45	38
Tavistock Centre	67	32	27	32	27	17
NACCC	90	29	0	29	0	0
Changing Futures	296	162	67	159	53	37
National Family Mediation	388	154	121	154	104	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,954</b>	<b>1,509</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>346</b>

### C.4 Time intervals between the PAM collection stages

The time intervals between the three PAM measurements (baseline, post-support, and survey) was not equal across projects, or across individuals within projects. The interval between baseline and post-support would, of course, depend upon the duration of that support, so would inevitably vary. The survey timing would, however, ideally have been standardised at a fixed number of months after baseline, but the window during which fieldwork could take place was too narrow to allow for this. Survey interviews typically did not take place for at least four months after the baseline and in some instances the interval was over a year (the 95th percentile was 439 days).

The time interval between the baseline and post-support PAM varied from 7 days (5th percentile) to 224 days (95th percentile), with a median interval of 78 days. (The 5th and 95th percentiles are given as the minimum and maximum so as to exclude a few implausible outliers that are almost certainly data entry errors.)

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The time interval between the baseline and the survey PAM varied from 146 days to 439 days, with a median of 214 days. And the time interval between the post-support PAM and the survey PAM varied from 69 days to 390 days, with a median of 148 days<sup>29</sup>.

The table below shows the median time interval between the three PAM scores per project.

**Table C.2 Time intervals between baseline PAM and post-support and survey PAM**

Project	Median number of days between baseline and post-support	Median number of days between baseline and survey	Median number of days between post-support and survey
Malachi	66	-	-
Spurgeons	71	-	-
Resolution	-	-	-
Howells	148	155	114
Family Lives	-	-	-
Pinnacle People	99	255	213
Sills & Betteridge	57	215	141
Family Matters Mediate	4	309	264
Mediation Now	63	261	185
Tavistock Centre	-	-	-
NACCC	118	-	-
Changing Futures	111	279	168
National Family Mediation	82	244	163

There is no evidence that the degree of change between baseline and post-support was associated with the duration of the support (Table C.3). However, there is some evidence that those interviewed in the survey early had a greater level of change in their scores than those interviewed after a longer interval (Table C.4). This finding is consistent with the conclusion that early benefits of the support reduce with time.

**Table C.3 Mean PAM change scores between baseline and post-support by length of the interval in days**

Number of days between baseline and post-support	PAM mean change score: baseline to post-support	N
14-31	3.4*	115
32-61	6.1*	225
62-93	7.0*	217
94-129	4.2*	215
130-180	8.7*	111

<sup>29</sup> The 'minimum' and 'maximum' values quoted are the 5th and 95th percentiles.

**Table C.4 Mean PAM change scores between baseline and survey by length of the interval in days.**

Number of days between baseline and survey	PAM mean change score: baseline to survey	N
144-153	5.4*	91
154-185	3.8*	152
186-251	2.2	156
252-342	3.1*	156
343-400	0.4	78

## C.5 Non-response analysis

There is a very considerable drop in the numbers of parents completing the PAM at subsequent stages which inevitably raises concerns about the representativeness of the data at each stage. MI was, for instance, completed for 5,175 parents, yet only 3,526 of these completed the baseline PAM. Then, of these 3,526 just 1,247 completed the post-support PAM and 346 completed the survey PAM.

However, based on the characteristics collected in the MI (such as gender, parent status, number of children, length of time since split, etc.) the sample profile at each stage seems to be fairly similar (Table C.5). There are a few noteworthy exceptions however. Comparing the MI and the survey samples:

- 46 per cent of the parents completing the MI were male, but just 40 per cent of parents completing the survey were;
- 34 per cent of the parents completing the MI were non-resident parents, but just 24 per cent of the survey respondents were;
- 32 per cent of the parents completing the MI had a degree, A-levels, or an apprenticeship, whereas this percentage was 48 per cent in the survey sample;
- 34 per cent of the parents completing the MI had split within the last year, compared to just 21 per cent of the survey respondents.

These differences could, in principle, have been adjusted for by applying non-response weights. However, an analysis of the mean change scores across the characteristics did not identify any strong evidence that the change scores were systematically different across these groups. The implication is that non-response weights would not significantly alter the level of the change in PAM scores reported. Given that non-response weights add complexity, and increase standard errors and confidence intervals, a decision was taken not to apply them.

**Table C.5 Profile of MI and PAM respondents for the main PAM analysis groups**

	All in MI	With baseline PAM	Baseline PAM plus post-support PAM	Baseline PAM plus survey-based PAM
	%	%	%	%
<b>Gender:</b>				
Male	46	46	46	40
Female	54	54	54	60
<b>Parent status:</b>				
Parent with care	53	53	50	57
Non-resident parent	34	33	32	24
Shared care	14	14	17	19
<b>Number of children:</b>				
One	53	53	52	53
Two or more	47	48	48	48
<b>Age of youngest child:</b>				
Under 4	39	37	33	33
4 to 10	49	50	53	50
11 to 18	12	13	13	17
<b>Highest qualification held:</b>				
Degree, A-level, Apprenticeship	32	32	38	48
GCSEs	25	27	30	27
No qualifications	8	8	8	4
Missing	35	33	25	21
<b>Time together with ex-partner:</b>				
Less than 5 years	39	39	36	34
5 years or more	61	61	64	66
<b>Number of years since separation:</b>				
Less than 1 year	34	31	25	21
1 to 5 years	45	46	51	56
5 years or more	22	23	25	24
<b>PAM category at baseline:</b>				
Dysfunctional	-	29	27	30
Problem	-	32	34	36
Marginal	-	13	14	12
Normal	-	26	25	23
<b>Base:</b>	<b>5,175</b>	<b>3,526</b>	<b>1,247</b>	<b>346</b>

# Appendix D

## Collaboration data

### D.1 Number of collaboration measures per project

Table D.1 details the number of completed collaboration measures per project at each of the three stages of data collection: baseline (that is, at the start of the support); post-support; and follow-up survey.

**Table D.1** Number of collaboration measures completed per project

Project	Baseline collaboration questions completed	Post-support collaboration questions completed	Survey collaboration questions completed	Baseline and post-support collaboration questions	Baseline and survey collaboration questions	Baseline, post-support and survey collaboration questions
OnePlusOne	9,906	1,258	521	1,258	521	231
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	109	43	-	43	-	-
Relate	1,380	-	13	-	13	-

### D.2 Calculation of total collaboration score per parent, the ‘normal’ range, and statistical testing of the change

The collaboration measure consists of four questions, all of which use a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is ‘very difficult’ and 5 is ‘very easy’. Respondents are asked how easy they find it to:

- 1 Communicate (talk, text, email, etc.) with your child/children’s other parent.
- 2 Reach agreement with the other parent over child contact arrangements.
- 3 Reach agreement with the other parent over child maintenance/financial arrangements.
- 4 Get support from your child/children’s other parent when child-related matters arise.

At the analysis stage the rating scale per question was altered so as to run from 0 to 4 by subtracting one. This is in keeping with how the projects themselves analyse the data. The ‘total score’ is simply the sum of the scores across the four questions, and ranges between 0 and 16 (with 0 being the poorest collaboration score).

Change scores per parent are calculated as the simple difference between two collaboration scores, either the post-support collaboration score minus the baseline collaboration score, or the survey collaboration score minus the baseline collaboration score. Standard t-tests have been used to test whether the mean change score is significantly different to zero per project.

### D.3 Calculation of total collaboration score per parent, the ‘normal’ range, and statistical testing of the change

The time interval between the baseline and post-support collaboration measurement varied from 43 days (5th percentile) to 76 days (95th percentile) for OnePlusOne, with a median of 47 days<sup>30</sup>. The range was somewhat wider for Children 1<sup>st</sup>, from 22 days (5th percentile) to 97 days (95th percentile), but with a very similar median at 48 days.

For OnePlusOne the median time interval from the baseline to the web survey completion date was 291 days, with the 5th percentile being 73 days and the 95th being 551 days. (The median for Relate was 148 days, but based on the very small sample of 13 parents.)

### D.4 Non-response analysis

The MI for the projects that used the collaboration measures does not include data on the characteristics of parents so it is not possible to check that a similar profile of parents completed the measures at each stage (baseline, post-support, and survey). However, OnePlusOne did record the gender of the parent, and it is possible to monitor how the profile of parents changes at each stage of data collection against the baseline distribution of the collaboration score. Table D.2 sets out the profile of the parents at each stage of data collection against these two profiling variables.

There are **some** differences in the profile across the stages, but they are small (for instance, for OnePlusOne, 57 per cent of parents completing the baseline had a collaboration score of 0-4, yet 60 per cent of parents completing the survey began their support in this category). Based on the limited data available, there is no strong evidence that the data at each stage is not representative. Non-response weights to adjust for the small observed profile differences have not been applied.

---

<sup>30</sup> The range is given from the 5th and 95th percentiles so as to avoid outliers.

**Table D.2 Profile of collaboration measures respondents at the three stages of data collection (OnePlusOne and Children 1<sup>st</sup>)**

	Baseline stage %	Post-support stage %	Survey stage %
<b>OnePlusOne</b>			
<b>Gender:</b>			
Male	47	44	46
Female	51	55	52
Not stated	1	1	2
Collaboration score at baseline:			
0-4	57	61	60
5-8	30	27	29
9-12	11	10	8
13-16	3	2	3
<b>Children 1<sup>st</sup></b>			
<b>Collaboration score at baseline:</b>			
0-4	64	65	-
5-8	23	26	-
9-12	12	9	-
13-16	1	0	-

# Appendix E

## Project details

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Sills & Betteridge.....	349
Spurgeons.....	373
Tavistock Centre.....	386



## E.1 Changing Futures

### **Project aim:**

To work with separated parents where conflict remains unresolved and is having a detrimental effect on them and their children, with a view to reducing conflict and improving relationships.

### **Project delivery:**

- Once a referral is presented to Changing Futures, the office manager contacts both parents and a support worker visits parents individually.
- Initial assessment/paperwork is then completed and a practitioner is allocated.
- Parents take part in individual, followed by joint (if appropriate), mediation-based sessions face to face.
- The child then takes part in consultation or a children's group (if applicable).
- Parents may develop a parenting plan, if appropriate.
- Throughout parents have access to telephone and face-to-face support to assist with practical issues.

### **Target audience:**

- Parents who have been separated for two years or longer with ongoing issues over parenting and/or between themselves.
- Parents are supported through tailored plans and actions to help them act independently in the future, and gain a better understanding of children's needs.
- The project covered five local authorities in the north east.

Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes short term	Outcomes mid term	Impacts
Mediators, social workers, couples counsellors, family therapists	Assessment by support worker	234 parents (117 families) to take part in sessions	Less heightened emotion – 70% show change	Children notice a difference in parents' collaboration and communication	Better relationships within families
Parents separated at least two years, some contact, poor relations	Four to six one-to-one tailored sessions with each parent. Professional uses tools/exercises flexibly	Family-centred plans to address parenting	Improved ability to mentalise – 70% show change	Parents are more positive about the future	Reduced conflict leads to positive impact on child
Families with conflict (parent/child)	Four joint sessions: therapist, two parents, one hour each.	Broad commitment from parents	Improved understanding of children's needs – 90% show change	Parental-child contact, if agreed, is maintained	
Volunteer engagers	Parallel four weeks' work with child (different practitioner) creative, expressive, artistic.	Support worker continued involvement	Reduce conflict	All agreements are adhered to, or discussed before changing	
Children under 16		Individual and joint forms completed: Parent signed statements of where they say they are at.	Better quality of relationship: collaboration and communication		
Referrals: self-referral, social care, schools, CAMs. Five local authorities	Principles: Trust it's confidential Fresh pair of eyes (freed from social care shared narrative of family) Parents take work in direction they want Encouraged to take child's perspective Be future-focused				
Three to four support workers					

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			Qualitative interviews completed
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	
234 parents (117 couples) to take part in sessions	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 348 couples started, 188 'completed'	333 parents	296 pre-PAMS 159 pre- and post-PAMS 53 pre- and survey PAMS 37 pre-, post- and survey PAMS	69 parents	Stage 1 – Total 13 interviews: 1 Project manager 6 staff 7 clients  Stage 2 – Total 10 interviews: 1 Project manager 1 staff 8 clients

- Changing Futures was targeting parents separated two years or more where conflict remains unresolved and is having a detrimental effect on them and their children. Its geographical coverage was the Tees Valley in North East England local authority areas of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Darlington, Stockton and Billingham, Redcar.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- Where comparisons can be made, the MI data suggests the parents who took part are in line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents who recorded their relationship status in the MI data (n=306), all but two had been separated for more than a year.
  - Amongst parents for whom Government Office Region (GOR) could be determined for in the MI data (n=332), 99 per cent lived in the North East.

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## **Once clients entered mediation, they typically went to all the sessions**

### **Reach**

Social services were the main referral pathway, although referrals from health visitors, schools, courts and self-referrals were also encountered.

Strong relationships with social workers were key to the project's reach.

Promotion and marketing activities included radio/billboard advertising; leaflet drops in schools, solicitors' offices, GPs, community centres and pubs; and liaising with social care teams.

*'Often families that come to us want the same thing, but they don't know how to get there.'*

(Project Manager)

### **Engagement**

Once referred and engaged with the project, engagement was relatively high.

Support workers were key to sustaining engagement as they liaised both with clients and practitioners.

*'I would much rather talk to people than go to the courts. I feel the courts just try to discredit the one who is not living with the child.'*

(Client)

### **Drop out**

Clients were most likely to drop out between referral and initial assessment.

57 per cent of referrals completed the project.

The main reason for drop-out was a lack of willingness to engage from both parties, although transport expenses, resistance from family members and court orders acted as a barrier to engagement.

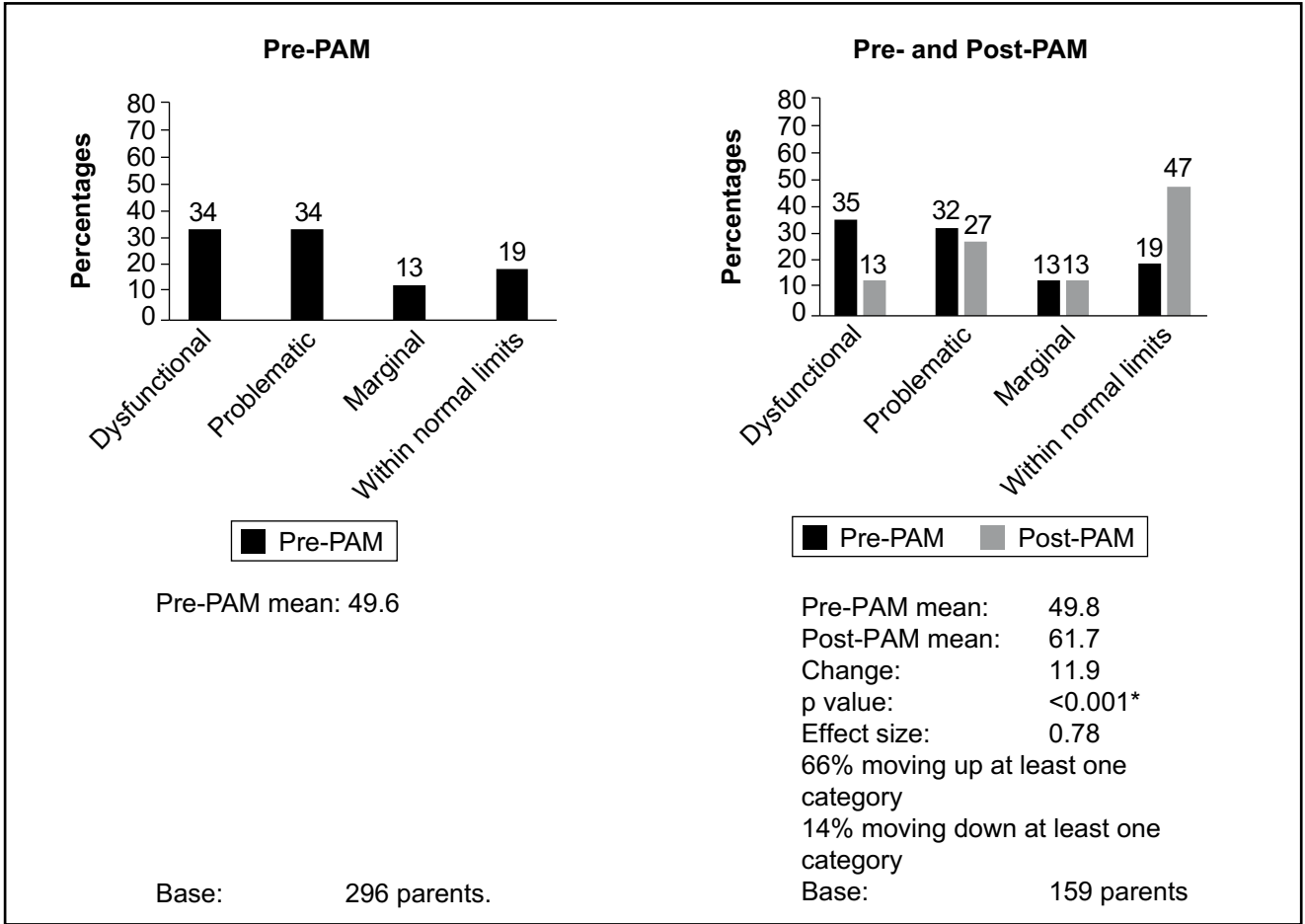
## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- As the project progressed, it became apparent that the wider family was often crucial to the relationship between parents. As a result, the project began to include late teens, new partners or grandparents where they were having a big impact on parents' relationships.
- Initially, five local authorities were involved in the project. However, the project found that referrals were lower than anticipated and widened the project's reach to include other local authorities. Initially, the project underestimated the level of promotion required to yield desired uptake.
- Support workers' roles were greater than anticipated as initially practitioners would come in contact with clients upon referral – they became crucial to keeping clients involved. They brokered contact at early stages and ensured wider contextual circumstances (e.g. substance abuse, health issues etc.) were acknowledged.
- Although the project would, broadly speaking, not change its target audience, the project did reflect that clients' mental health negatively impacted the programme's ability to deliver and its overall effectiveness. The project excluded those in relationships where there was currently domestic violence, coercion and manipulation dynamics.
- The mediation sessions used/needed by clients were often either longer or shorter than anticipated. It was felt that some clients needed more support than others and resources could be used more flexibly.

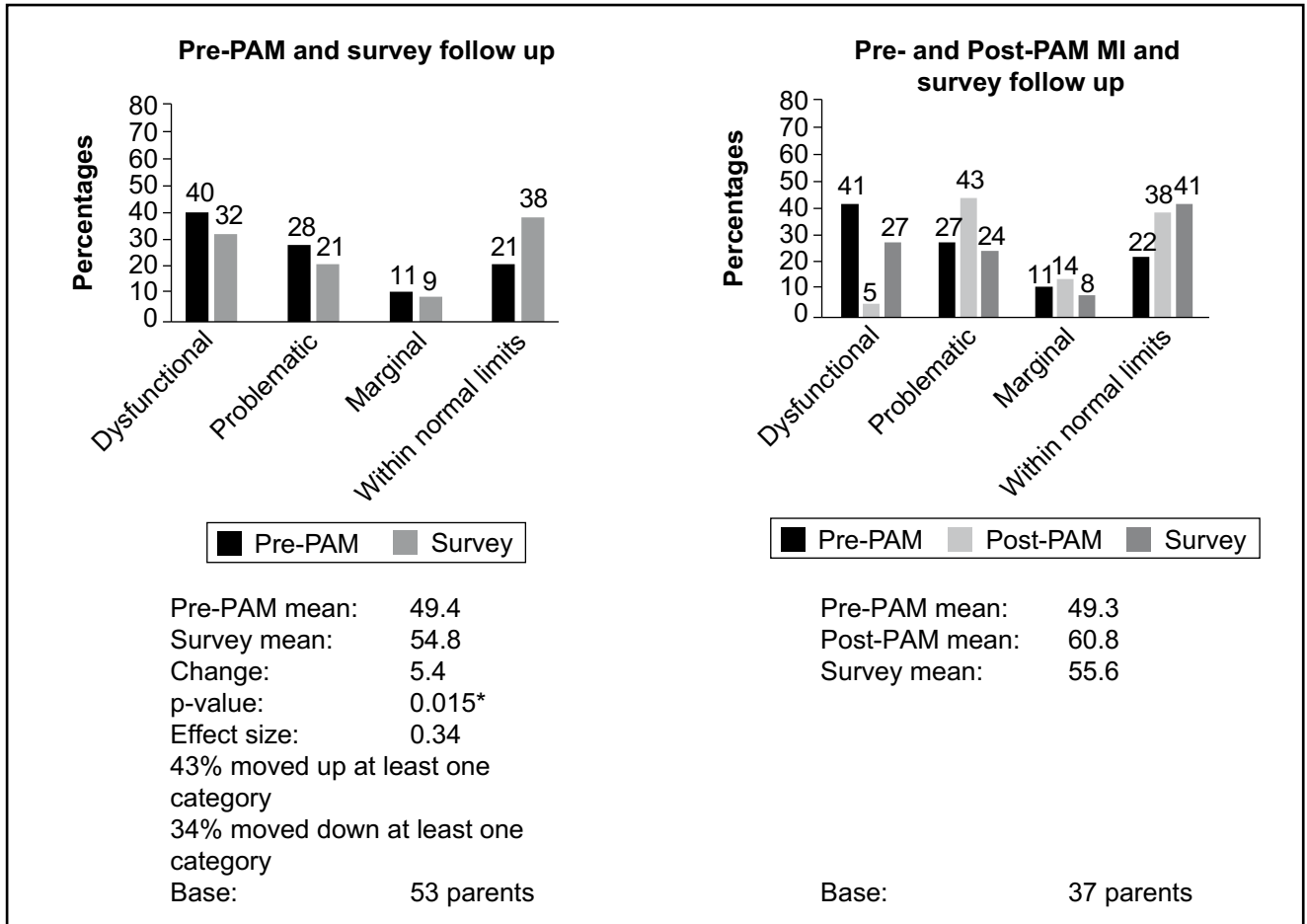
### **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (34 per cent) or dysfunctional (34 per cent) at baseline – 19 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 11.9):
  - 47 per cent within normal limits post-support and 13 per cent dysfunctional.
- Significant improvements continue to be evident by the time of the survey – but drop compared to immediately post-support:
  - mean change score of 5.4 between baseline and survey PAM.

MI data



**MI + survey data (small numbers have all three data points)**





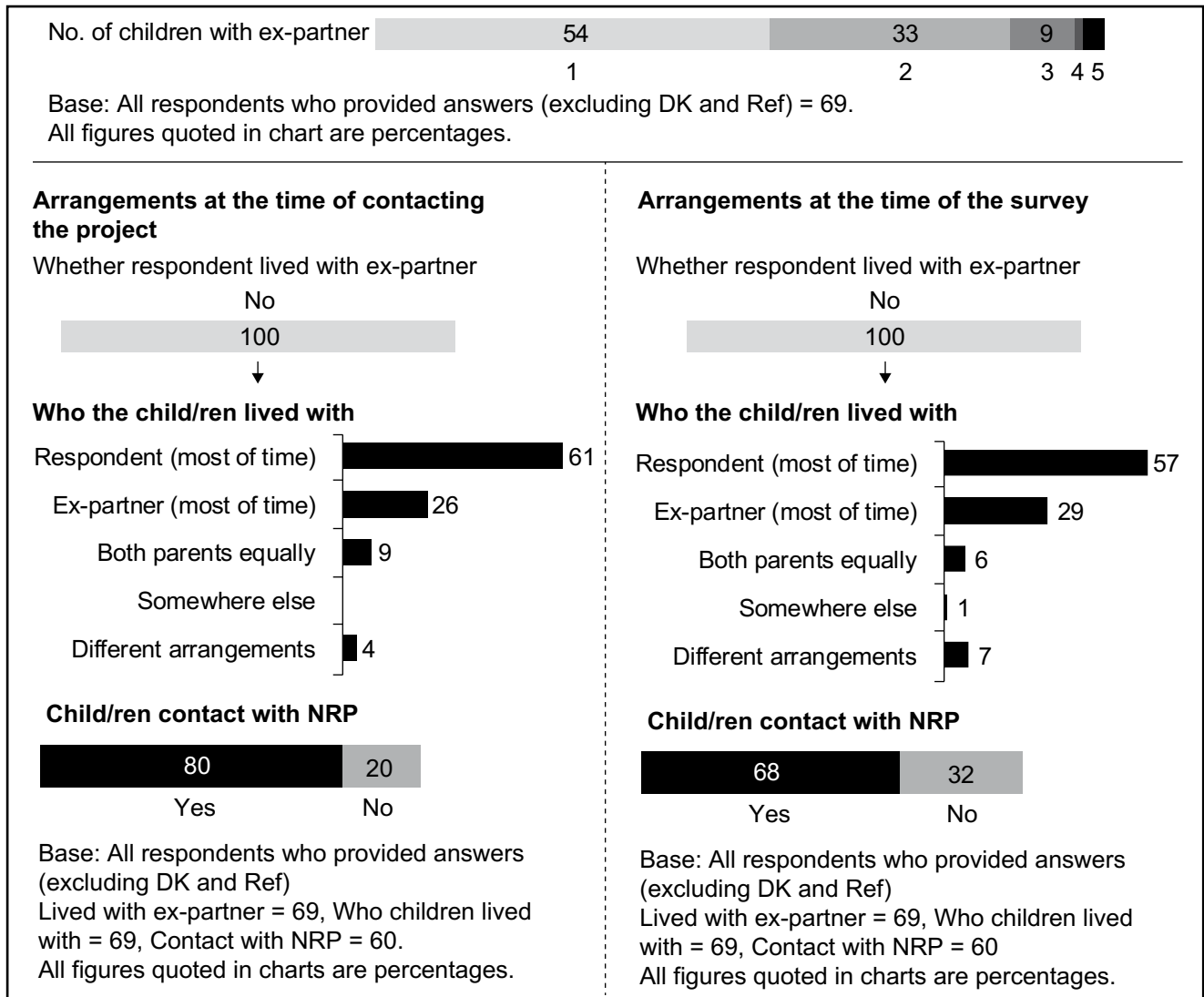
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	36
Female	53	64
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	5	7
25–34	42	37
35–44	37	35
45+	17	21
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	95	97
Black	1	-
Mixed	2	-
Asian	1	1
Other	1	2
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	21	17
Lower than A-level	79	83
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	20	16
No	80	84
<b>Base*</b>	333	69

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

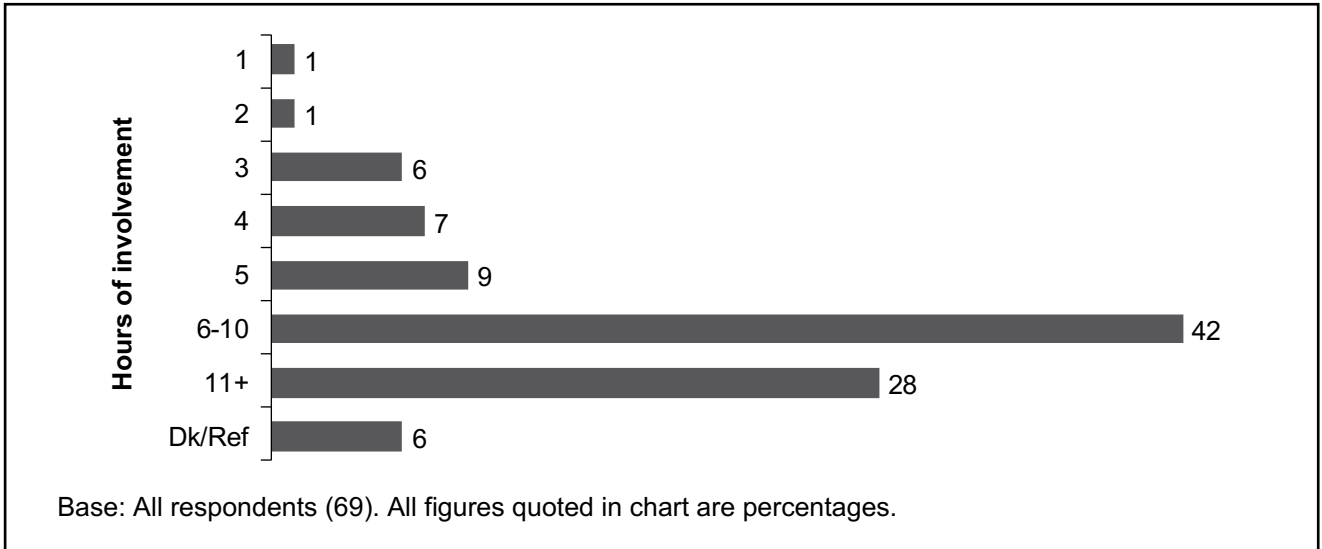
As illustrated, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is similar to profile of parents in the MI data. The most noteworthy difference is the higher proportion of women in the survey than in the MI data.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

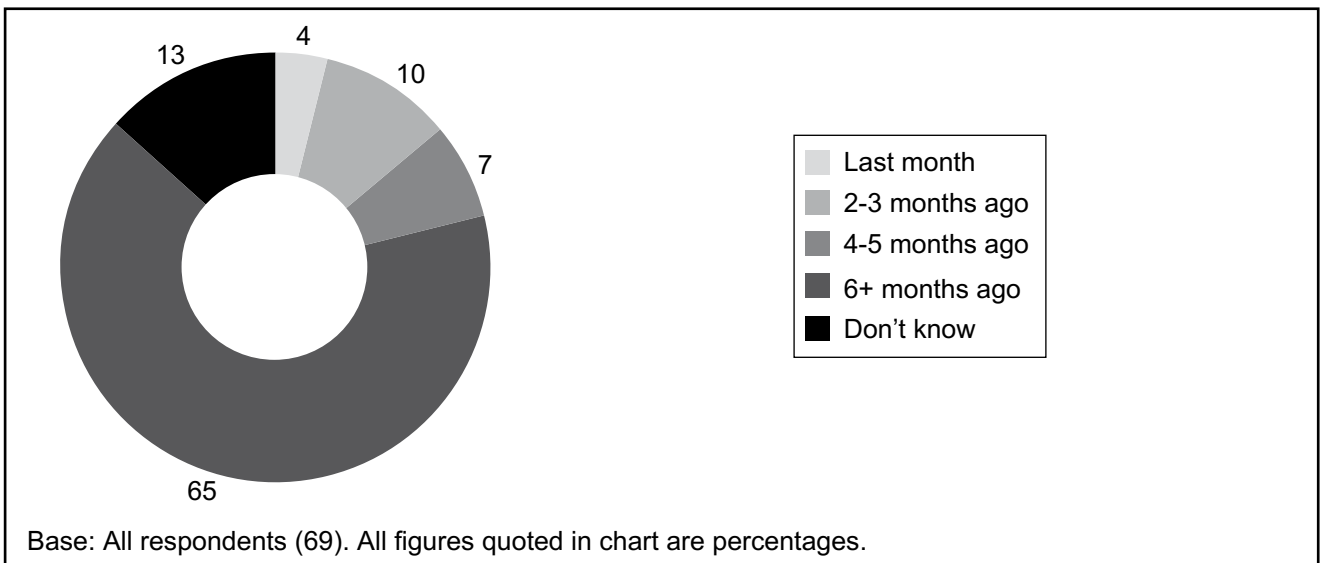


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of contact with the project varied, but seven in ten (70 per cent) of respondents had six or more hours of contact.



- At the time of the survey, around two-thirds (65%) had not had contact with the project for at least six months.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=45), **six in ten (60 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=69):
  - **28 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
  - 26 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 45 per cent reported they were same (with 1 per cent unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=69), **over half (54 per cent) had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 46 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=37), the most common were Child Support Agency (CSA)/Child Maintenance Service (CMS) agreements (70 per cent) and family-based arrangements with money payments (24 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=69), **48 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 89 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

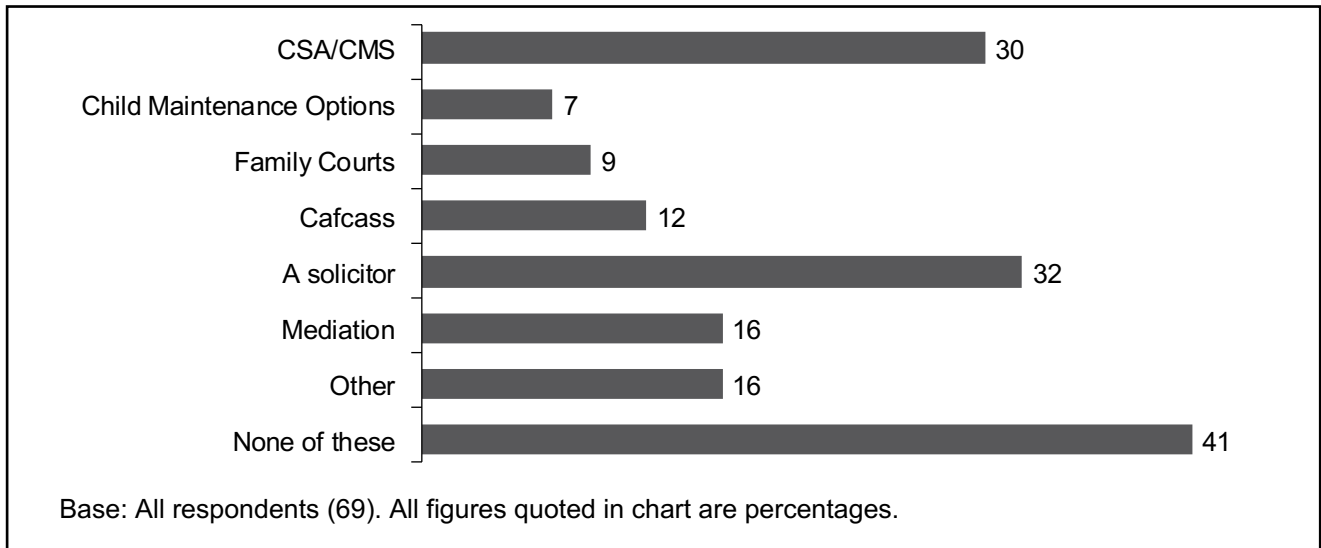
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and whose child/ren living with arrangements were the same before and after they contacted the project (n=69):
  - **9 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 20 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 51 per cent reported they were same;
  - 20 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement.

## Use of the family courts

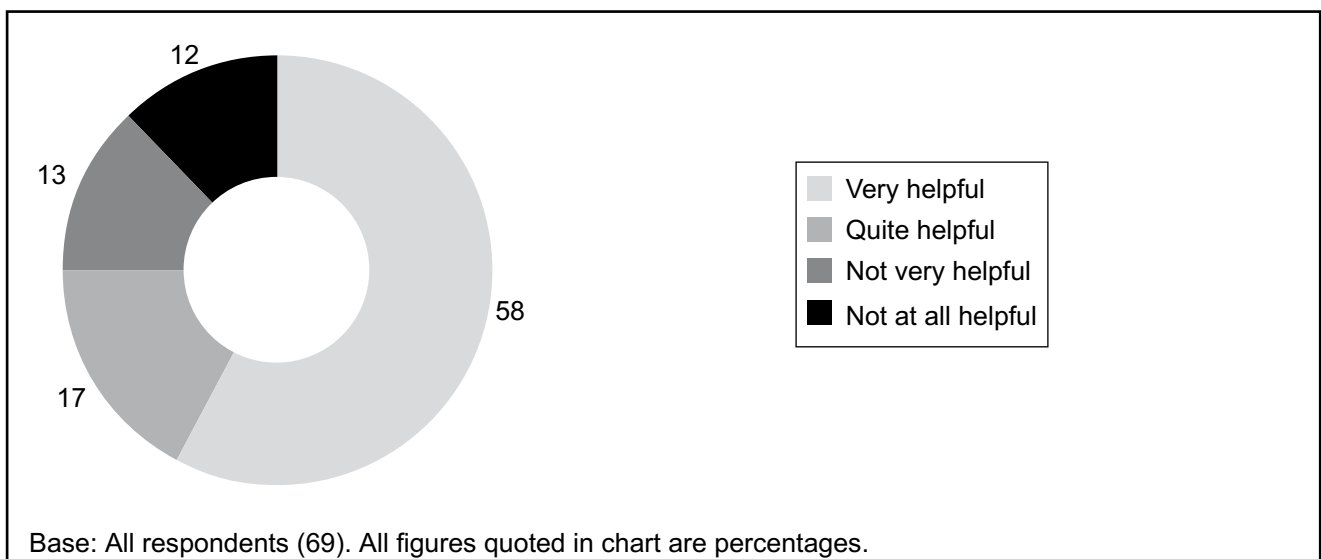
- 39 per cent of parents (n=27) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
- 16 per cent of parents (n=11) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=64), a further 17 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=15), around three in ten (29 per cent) felt the project played a role in this decision.**

## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned was a solicitor (32 per cent).



- Around eight in ten (83 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, **15 per cent (n=6) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project** (with 2 per cent saying it varies).
- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of respondents felt overall that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients typically felt that engaging in the programme was emotionally and practically beneficial – this was often despite either not completing the sessions, or their partner not engaging fully.

Many clients felt their **interpersonal and soft skills had improved as a result of the project.**

- For some, this helped clients improve their relationship with their ex-partner.
- Where relationships were not improved, clients felt they were equipped with skills and strategies that helped them reduce conflict and minimise confrontation.

It **reduced stress and emotional burden** by allowing clients to reflect and talk to someone they knew was professional and impartial.

*‘If I had to sum it up, I would say it was communication between everyone...respecting other people’s opinions and decisions because you sit down and listen to how the other person feels throughout.’*

(Client)

*‘It helped us get past why we broke up. It helps you get closure on the end of a relationship.’*

(Client)

*‘Now he can say whatever he wants and I don’t get angry. I am able to speak more appropriately when the girls are there.’*

(Client)

## **Outcomes: impact on the individual and society**

**The involvement of the child in the project was felt to be important**, and to support parental awareness of their children's needs and views. Through the project clients felt they became more aware of their children's needs:

- Parenting plans helped clients become better parents and respect their child's voice.
- Implementing these was felt to have an impact on their children's emotional wellbeing and behaviour.
- Some parents were unhappy about changes in their child, what their child was told in sessions and the level of information they received about discussions that had taken place.

Some clients were able to avoid court action after reaching mutually acceptable parental arrangements.

The programme enabled improved financial arrangements between parents as they learnt to prioritise their child's wellbeing.

*'My son is going to senior school. I've asked that he contributes to the school uniform and he has. I don't think he would have done that before Changing Futures.'*

(Client)



## **(1) Pen portrait: A parenting plan improved family dynamics**

John\* separated from his wife six years ago and is the resident parent. He heard about Changing Futures on the radio and initiated the service after having arguments about raising their 12-year-old daughter and the mother refusing to have any rapport with him.

His aim was to improve relationships with his ex-wife and re-shape the relationship between his daughter and her mother. He had considered mediation but the costs attached were off-putting.

After his ex-wife agreed to engage with the service, they had joint sessions and one session with their daughter, who also attended a workshop-style session with other children under similar circumstances.

They came up with a parenting plan. John felt Changing Futures had a positive impact on their family as he was able to communicate with his daughter more and the relationship between the mother and daughter gradually improved.

John reflected that their relationship would not have improved had they not accessed the service. The parenting plan also allowed him to avoid going to court, which he felt would be a more intense experience for their daughter.

*'I felt I had accomplished what I set out to do at the start.'*

(Client)

*'There was a lot of animosity going on...if you had to pay for mediation I think there would be more animosity between couples.'*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Alice benefited emotionally from the project, but did not achieve her desired outcome**

- Alice\* split with her ex-partner three years ago. Since then, she has been accused of being an abusive mother and has been taken to court by her ex-partner.
- She was in the process of returning to the courts when she was referred to the service by a social worker. Her aim was to come up with a parenting plan to improve the relationship with her ex-partner and between their two children and their father.
- The father agreed to engage with the service. However, Alice felt that he was not genuinely invested in the programme and would not act on the arrangements agreed within the sessions.
- Alice found that the programme has not had an impact on her ex-partner, nor his relationship with the children.
- However, she felt that with the practitioner's help, she was able to neutralise her relationship with him and utilise coping strategies to manage communication with her ex and his new partner.

*'Whatever he said in the room, he doesn't agree to it...in the room he says what I want to hear but outside of the room he doesn't do it.'*

(Client)

*'If I hadn't had access to this mediation, I wouldn't be able to communicate with my ex and his new partner at all.'*

(Client)

## **Staff skill and experience were cited as facilitators to the programme's effectiveness**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- There were skilled, experienced, non-judgmental and impartial practitioners delivering the service, which brought about a trusting relationship between the support worker and the clients involved.
- Thorough assessment and 'pre-work' with the individual allowed practitioners to gain a contextual picture of clients' circumstances so as to tailor and adapt the support provided.
- Children's groups, facilitated by experienced practitioners, allowed young people to articulate their feelings and concerns in a safe environment – groups helped children experiencing separation to distance themselves from conflict, develop coping strategies and personal resilience. The use of projective exercises such as the 'my universe' activity enabled children to reflect on their relationship with their parents now and how they would like these to evolve in the future.
- A genuine willingness to engage in the service from all parties involved underpinned the programme's success.
- Attendance levels were higher where venues were close to clients' residence, as this minimised the cost and time travelled.
- Feedback from children suggested that they appreciated knowing there are others in similar situations. This increased their ability to share their feelings and communication skills.
- Flexible service delivery facilitated engagement and participation, i.e. sessions over Skype for clients that live abroad.
- Success stories/positive word-of-mouth recommendations increased the service's credibility and effectiveness among clients.

## **Parental engagement was the key barrier to the programme's effectiveness**

### **Barriers to project effectiveness**

- The greatest barrier identified is both parents not being engaged and/or committed to the programme's objectives, or having different expectations of what they would like to achieve by engaging. Some clients became frustrated due to their ex-partner being uncooperative.
- The lack of legal backing to the parenting plan, or the lack of evidence when clients diverged from it to be used in court, limited its effectiveness for some clients.
- Some clients cited that they received no follow-up support upon completing the sessions, which could undermine progress made during the intervention.
- Occasionally, the distance that needed to be travelled was off-putting, leading some to disengage.
- Payment by results can constrain timescales of delivery.
- The programme was rendered less effective when one of the parties missed sessions and lacked engagement.
- Some clients expected that engaging with the programme would have a bearing if they then decided to go to court. As a result, some were disappointed the sessions were confidential, and no evidence of accusations made during the project was kept to use in court if needed.

## **While most would recommend the service, willingness to pay was mixed**

### **Recommending the service**

- Clients would recommend the service to people who are committed to collaborating and coming to a mutually acceptable solution.
- Clients typically thought the service would be suitable for all separated/separating couples. However, some felt that taking the legal route might be more appropriate for cases involving high animosity or mental/physical abuse.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Clients were generally open to the possibility of paying for the service as they recognised their circumstances had improved, although evidence of successful outcomes would be required to facilitate take-up.
- Some clients expressed concerns that should the service introduce payments, they would not be able to afford it.

*'Anything you are going to pay for you need to know more about.'*

(Client)

## **E.2 Children 1<sup>st</sup>**

### **Project aim:**

To provide separated/separating parents with a range of information, advice (including legal and financial), guidance and practical/emotional support, according to individual needs and via a variety of channels to achieve better and long-lasting outcomes for children, using the legal system only where necessary.

### **Project delivery:**

- One-stop-shop, tailor-made, integrated service, called the 'Family Decision Making Service' (FDMS) provided by three partnership organisations led by 'Children 1<sup>st</sup>' along with 'One Parent Families Scotland' and 'Scottish Child Law Centre.'
- Telephone helplines ('Parentline' plus other existing helplines within partnership), call back option, ongoing support, quick signposting/referral to most suitable source of help and text service.
- Website with downloadable fact sheets and webchat.
- Family Group Conference (FGC) for those wanting to mediate – involves series of meetings with a mediation facilitator and, when appropriate, an advocate for the child/ren; plus wider family members involvement; ongoing support/reviews three/six months later.

### **Target audience:**

- The project targeted all separated or separating parents that are struggling with issues related to their separation and feel this may impact their relationships with their child, partner or ex-partner.
- The project also offered support for those who feel their child is being impacted or suffering due to the separation.
- The service was available across Scotland.

## Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes short term	Outcomes mid term	Impacts
Separated and separating parents and their family members	Website containing downloadable information	Intended 3,962, achieved 1,657 (plus website information factsheet downloads of 5,735)	Parents have improved decision making skills	Intended 769; actual 1,313 Parents are better able to cope with difficult events/situations	Intended 144; actual 37 Children/young people living in a more stable and supportive environment
Referrals: Existing referrals to the three partner agencies, self-referral, GPs and other health professionals	Individual parent assessment  Signposting to other services	families receiving support	Parents are calmer and less anxious	Intended 630; actual 272 Improved family relationships	
Website with downloadable information	Information, advice, guidance and mentoring by phone, email, webchat or face-to-face about legal issues, housing, financial capability, benefits, contact and maintenance	100% of clients to achieve a positive measurable outcome	Intended 2,541, achieved 5,255 (1,314 interactions plus 3,941 downloads) parents have improved emotional health	Parents are better able to seek and accept support from others	
Co-ordinated telephone helpline service across three existing helplines				Parents have improved problem solving skills	
Mediation, mentoring and legal expertise	Family group conference meetings and preparation for the meetings			Parents have an improved sense of self-efficacy/ belief in ability to perform tasks	
Marketing				Reduction in family conflict	
Innovation Fund Funding				Family members are better able to solve problems together	
				Family members are better able to cooperate and communicate with each other	

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data, recorded in the cost effectiveness template)	Data collected			
		MI data received	4 collaboration question data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
Intended 3,962 families receiving support	As recorded in the qualitative (in August 2015): 1,657 (plus website information factsheet downloads of 5,735) families receiving support  As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 8,870 individual parents started, all of which 'completed'.	Not collected	109 pre-questions 43 pre- and post-questions	Not included	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients  Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients

- MI data was not collected by Children 1<sup>st</sup> so it is not possible to compare the profile of the 'achieved' clients in comparison to those the service was aimed at.

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



## A much wider range of types of people accessed the services compared to usual helpline users

### Reach

- Primarily clients self-referred or were recommended to the service by family and friends.
- Other referrals were made from professionals via statutory/government agencies, other third sector organisations, existing national/local services, etc.
- There were limited referrals from judges/family solicitors, which project staff felt may have been due to a perception that the service was competing for their clients.
- Used a range of marketing approaches to raise awareness, including Scotland-wide relationship portal. Marketing activity prompted spikes in website use rather than calls.

### Engagement

- Measuring engagement and drop-out was challenging due to the nature of the project – clients engaged on a self-serve basis with the website often their first and only point of contact.
- Helpline users involved with one or more calls, call back and/or signposting/referral to appropriate services.
- Although it took multiple contacts and time to build relationships and move on to take part in a Family Group Conference (FGC), all those completed were successful.

*'A quick, easy to access, non-intrusive, non-invasive support, both practical and emotional as well as specialist or niche advice, like legal processes, which parents can access on a continuum.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Many who used the helpline said they'd used the website first and downloaded the fact sheets. They'd worked through some of the problems themselves and then would call for additional or detailed advice.'*

(Project Manager)

*'At the end of the day I feel a lot of frustration. My ex-partner won't take part and because of that £1,000 won't be saved.'*

(Client)

### Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Three partner organisations forming FDMS necessitated innovative joined up approach from outset and ability to address difficulties as they arose, e.g. collecting and sharing information on users to ensure cross referenced, double checked and no overlap – this helped refer clients on to the best service for needs, avoided need to repeat their story multiple times and ensured outcome evidence was collected at end of contact.
- The project learnt that providing a range of engagement challenges allowed a wide range of people with different needs to access their services. The website was more successful than expected and resulted in less direct contact via the contact centre. The website was particularly suitable for those who preferred the anonymity, and wanted to work at their own pace and time. Those who went on to make a call were better prepared than callers who had not accessed the website.
- More clients accessed only short-term support than expected. This was typically delivered via website downloads and/or one-off helpline calls. Although initially there was no follow-up facility, the project introduced a call-back option to discuss with clients how they are getting on and to enable the collection of project outcomes.
- Measuring project outcomes was a challenge, due to clients' online engagement. The project learnt that they struggled to measure outcomes where clients only accessed the service online.
- Difficulties recognising and evidencing medium and longer term outcomes. A series of audits and additional volunteer caller training workshops enabled more outcomes to be captured by providing different ways of identifying outcomes more sensitively/indirectly.

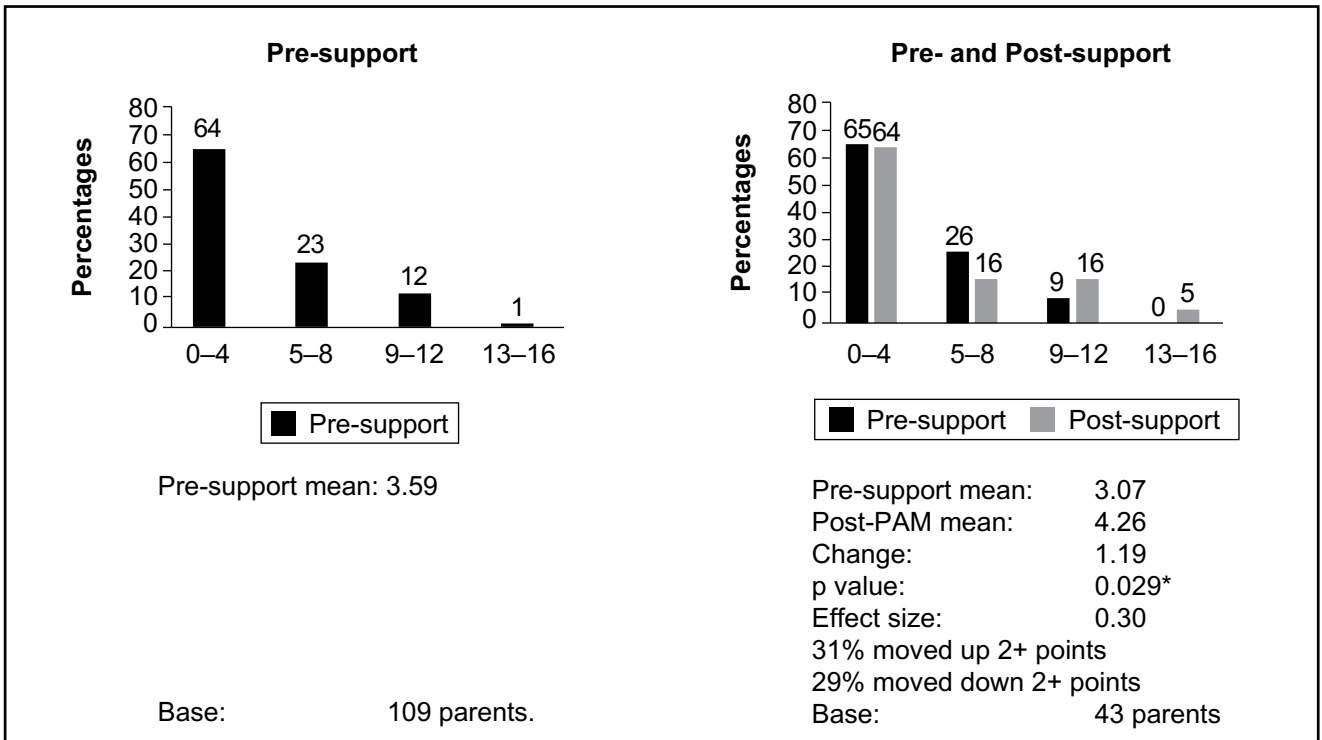
## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Many parents were reluctant to reveal their personal details/financial information for PAM over the phone at the end of support, finding the questions intrusive/inappropriate. Various approaches to encourage disclosure were tried, e.g. calling back, text reminders, prize draw. As a result, the project was unable to collate complete evaluation data (for phone as well as website) and decided not to pursue plans to gather additional feedback from service users.
- The service found that they need more time than anticipated to get parents to point of Family Group Conference (FGC) stage. The anticipated numbers progressing to this stage were too ambitious and, hence, achieving more long-term outcomes were limited. However, work conducted prior to the FGC helped some families make progress or resolve their issues themselves. This sometimes meant there was no need for FGC to happen in the end.
- The project felt they needed a better marketing plan and more investment. Although marketing activity raised awareness, it had little direct impact on professional referrals or helpline contact, as people tend to access the service at time of need/crisis or when they feel ready (often after use of website and downloadable fact sheets).
- There were limited referrals from legal sources. The project, as a result, felt a need to explore promoting 'preventative spend' for lawyers to understand benefits of referring clients, e.g. initially save £750 to avoid court fees.
- Social media and instant messenger options were not pursued as the range of other available channels seemed to meet needs.

### Results overview

- Vast majority of clients scoring lower than nine at baseline: 64 per cent scoring 0 to 4 and 23 per cent scoring 5 to 8.
- Small but significant change immediately post-support (mean change score 1.9).

MI data



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients using FDMS reported **improved emotional health**, i.e. less stressed/anxious and more calm/confident, as a consequence of talking through their problems and receiving appropriate support.

Helpful information, advice and guidance had resulted in clients feeling **better able to cope with difficult events/situations**, due to better awareness, understanding, knowledge and ability to resolve their points of conflict in an appropriate way.

- Some clients were already/became involved with the legal system, but felt more confident/supported/empowered in the process.
- Others managed to avoid legal involvement as a consequence of using the service.

*'Children 1<sup>st</sup> were able to give me some useful advice on the situation...and my rights.'*

(Client)

*'It made a difference at a time I was struggling.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

**Improved family relationships** were evident in cases where improved communication and successful negotiations with/without legal involvement, regarding contact, maintenance, etc., had been achieved, resulting in less conflict/tension and more shared responsibilities/ decision-making.

For some all this resulted in **more stable and supportive family dynamics**, reporting that their children were now happier, more relaxed and/or better behaved.

- One client sought direct phone support for their child which helped a lot.

*‘They have given me confidence to try to do better for my daughter. Using the service did not make me feel like I was being selfish. I was trying to show I was doing the best for my children.’*

(Client)

*‘I don’t know how I would have got through last few years without these services.’*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Many clients, particularly those who avoided involvement in the legal system, simply by following advice or through FGCs, recognised and appreciated the resulting **saving of time, effort, hassle and money**.

Clients wanting mediation, but whose partners were unwilling to engage in an FGC felt frustrated and saddened, but valued all the other benefits of engaging with the service.

- With more time, the service providers would expect more clients to progress to FGC.

*'At the end of the day I feel a lot of frustration. My ex-partner won't take part and because of that £1,000 won't be saved.'*

(Client)

*'People feel calmer, more resilient, having a plan or strategy, feeling more assured that there is someone they can come to by just picking up the phone and nobody will judge them.'*

(Project Manager)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

The service was accessed by **a wider range of people within society** compared to conventional/not integrated helpline services. It was not restricted to only the most vulnerable.

Service providers reported the greatest benefits as feeling better and more able to cope. The longer-term benefits were harder to achieve and assess due to the relatively limited time most clients were involved with the service. However, they believe the service helps **achieve better outcomes** for service users.

*'It's for everyone, not just the usual people we get, so it's for all families in Scotland, so that's one of the really great things about this service – it's for all children.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Getting them through the angry and upset stage and moving them on to making decisions helps achieve the aims of the service in reaching better outcomes and preventing further escalation and spend.'*

(Project Manager)

## Pen portrait: Seeking a service which would listen and do what was best for the children

- Daniel\* has two daughters aged 13 and 14 years and separated from his ex-partner five years ago whilst living abroad.
- They initially agreed to share the children. However, his ex-partner became increasingly difficult and would call the police when he arrived to collect them. Whilst living abroad she was charged with child abduction which he feels has not been taken into account since moving to Scotland. He also feels the Scottish legal system prioritises the interests of the mother over everyone, the children included.
- Daniel was given the phone number for Children 1<sup>st</sup>/FDMS for him and his children to talk to.
- Daniel contacted the service by phone several times and one of his daughters spoke to them too. He was unsure how many times she spoke, but once was for about an hour.
- Daniel felt the service always listened and provided helpful advice and new avenues to consider.
  - He used them as a sounding board to explore how to help his daughters.
  - He was referred on to the ‘Scottish Child Law Centre’ which he also found very helpful.
  - He was keen to mediate, but his ex-partner was unwilling to participate. So they continue to go through the courts.
- Daniel felt his daughter benefited from the service more than he did himself as it didn’t change their situation. However, she seems happier, less stressed and more relaxed now.

*‘On one occasion they played devil’s advocate and said look at it from this point of view and that point of view...I thought that was a fair comment.’*

(Client)

*‘For my daughter it was nice to have someone she could talk to that wasn’t involved in the whole situation...after she had done it the first time she told my partner and she seemed quite happy about talking to them.’*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.

## Pen portrait: Feeling more confident and able to cope with young son and attending court

- Aileen\* has been separated from her ex-partner since shortly after the birth of her son, now aged three. She only lived with him for a short time; during the relationships he was abusive and violent, and involved in drug dealing.
- She was referred by the 'Scottish Child Law Centre', who advise her about ongoing court issues regarding contact, as she was becoming concerned about her son's behaviour: he was becoming increasingly clingy and upset when separated from her and at night-time.
- Aileen has received a lot of advice, support and signposting from the helpline to several other sources of help, i.e. social services, health visitor, NHS Breathing Space, Samaritans.
- She makes contact with the helpline whenever she feels the need to talk as she appreciates their more understanding, helpful, unrushed and non-judgemental approach.
- Aileen continues to go through the courts to try to resolve things with her ex-partner, but court now feels less scary than it used to be.
- She feels both more capable and well supported through her dealings with the service.
- She would highly recommend the service to anyone in her position.

*'I find it difficult to tell people about my ex due to the violence, but they are very understanding, I didn't feel judged or labelled...I feel very grateful and more able to cope'*

(Client)

*'I would recommend them 100 per cent to people like myself who feel they've not got a friend in the world and no one understands, but there is! It's for anyone with problems with their child, partner or need parenting advice and support.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **A one-stop-shop service overcomes the problems of clients not knowing what help they need**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- There were strong and effective working relationships between those engaged in the three-way partnership. The project was able to draw on each organisation's strengths and specialisms, use existing infrastructure effectively, coordinate project activities and resolve issues where they arose, e.g. capturing outcomes better through a review and more training/guidance, providing optional call back to enable longer-term outcomes to be identified and gathered.
- Offering an easy to use, single access point and one-stop-shop approach to a range of services supported service engagement and the service's offer of a client-led, child-focused, graded engagement. This was further supported by:
  - Offering a mix of direct and indirect approaches.
  - Employing empathic, sensitive, non-judgemental staff.
  - Ensuring engagements were quick, efficient, flexible, tailored and free.
- The expertise of experienced and supervised call centre volunteers helped parents focus more on their children even when they were typically engaging to request help for themselves. Achieving this required patience, time and sensitivity to encourage clients to refocus their energy on their child/ren without feeling judged or blamed.
- Providing appropriate training for staff/volunteers, particularly in the delivery of FGCs.
- Effective marketing supported engagement with the project.

*'You need time to understand the real issues and needs, and identify the most pressing. It needs to be at the client's right time and pace. It can't be rushed.'*

(Project Manager)

## It takes time to get clients ready to progress to a Family Group Conference

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The time it took to get clients ready for FGC meant fewer clients were able to complete the service in the time available. Lack of engagement by one party – i.e. one ex-partner was unwilling to engage in the FGC process – prevented engagement and completion. The service often struggled to overcome this engagement.
- Difficulties in assessing outcomes when contact was not face-to-face and only short term meant project effectiveness was difficult to assess and evidence fully. Similarly, some users of the website did not progress to the helpline, so it was not possible to gather outcome or personal data.
- Clients were reluctant to divulge personal information over the phone, so evaluation data was incomplete despite creative attempts to encourage clients to complete PAM questionnaires, e.g. call back, text reminder, prize draw.
- Speed of responses/referrals were sometimes delayed by limited size of service, opening hours of 'Scottish Child Law Centre', also by occasional staff illness.

*'Many people don't want to admit it and go the full hog and make a call...because when they do they are in the system then.'*

(Project Manager)

## Most clients would highly recommend the service, but had mixed feelings about paying

### Recommending the service

- Almost all clients would recommend the service to anyone in a similar position – separated or separating parent/s struggling to cope with their children and/or ex-partners.
- Even those who had been unable to resolve the presenting problems or proceed to a FGC felt they had benefited from the service.
- Only one man was reticent to recommend the service as he believes the whole system favours mothers and continues to let fathers down.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Clients had very mixed feelings about paying, particularly for online or brief phone contact, but were more open to the idea when more in depth support had been received.
- One felt charging was acceptable and expected it to be good value for money, particularly in comparison to solicitors fees.
- For most concern was evident about affordability, particularly in addition to legal costs.
- Providers expected most clients would struggle with the concept of paying, especially as they do not know what help they might need/receive when first accessing the service.
- Suggestions varied from £5 to £20 per call, one suggested between 10-50 per cent of the actual cost and others suggested a donation. (FGCs cost was not discussed as no users were interviewed).
- A few anticipated they might seek free of charge alternative services instead.

*'It's important to invest in children – society needs to help. Being free is part of the appeal and why it's so highly valued.'*

(Project Manager)

## E.3 Family Lives

### **Project aim:**

Family Lives provides a volunteer-led befriending service to separated and separating couples in three areas: Gloucestershire, Waltham Forest and Leicester. They have an established presence in each of these locations and have run successful befriending projects supporting wellbeing, troubled families and mental health.

### **Project delivery:**

- Initial contact with the Family Lives office (Gloucestershire) or with the Barefoot Institute (Waltham Forest and Leicester).
- Telephone assessment to check their needs and identify risks with the family.
- Individual meetings with family support co-ordinator (FSC) to gather key information and to match participant to suitable (shared) volunteer befriender.
- Weekly befriending meetings with the couple over 9 to 12 weeks. The trained befriender meets with both parents, either together or separately.
- If separately, they work towards joint befriending meetings.

### **Target audience:**

- The project targets groups who are typically reluctant to seek support.
- In particular, in Waltham Forest and Leicester, Family Lives work with an Islamic relationship support organisation (Barefoot Institute) targeting the Muslim community.

## Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes short term	Outcomes mid term	Impacts
Separating and separated parents who are typically reluctant to seek support (including Muslim community)	Assessment to identify needs	Intended 180; actual 150 couples to begin befriending programme	Increase in knowledge of other support/ services available	Intended 85%; actual 75% of couples increased in confidence to deal with family situation effectively	A culture shift which normalises help-seeking at the time of separation within the Muslim community
Mentoring and parenting expertise	Individual mentoring for two to six months by a volunteer befriender	Intended 150; actual 115 couples to complete befriending programme			
Referrals: Existing referrals to Barefoot Institute, self-referral, children's centres, schools, GPs, family lawyers and the Gloucestershire counselling service	Support to create a parenting plan	Intended 50%; actual 25% of couples develop a parenting plan. 50% of participants developed a parenting plan	Intended 66%; actual 73% improved collaboration between parents		
	Support to agree private maintenance arrangements	Intended 10%; actual 20-25% of couples have private maintenance agreements in place	Intended 66%; actual 77% improved communication between parents		
Volunteer training	Supported signposting				
Marketing					
Innovation Fund Funding					

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			Qualitative interviews completed
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	
180 parents to begin befriending programme	As recorded in the qualitative (in March/April 2015): 150 parents began befriending programme	120 parents	105 pre-PAMS 81 pre- and post-PAMS 32 pre- and survey PAMS	41 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
150 couples to complete befriending programme	115 couples completed befriending programme		27 pre-, post- and survey PAMS		Stage 2 – Total 11 interviews: 3 staff 6 clients 2 'other'
50% of couples to develop a parenting plan	25% of couples developed a parenting plan (50% of parents developed a parenting plan).				Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 8 clients 1 'other'
10% of couple to have a child maintenance agreements in place	20-25% of couple have a child maintenance agreements in place				
	As recorded in cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 148 couples/ individuals started, of which 120 'completed'				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Flexible and user-led befriending ensured a high level of engagement

### Reach

- Referral was via a wide range of sources: GPs; social services; schools and solicitors. Self-referral was the most common.
- Awareness came about through members of the community, as well as Facebook and online searches.
- The project was promoted online and by word of mouth, in particular by the Barefoot Institute's volunteers and outreach workers.

### Engagement

- Engagement was good, as users drove the process. Befrienders were well-matched and able to meet users' requirements around meeting times and places.

### Drop out

- The drop-out rate was about 8 per cent, as expected for befriending.
- The process typically reached a natural end point.

*'We were working within the community to make the unacceptable become acceptable.'*

(Partner)

*'At each meeting we would tackle each goal and how to work towards it.'*

(Client)

*'It's still easier for a man to gain access and be listened to [as an outreach worker in the Muslim community].'*

(Project Manager)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Family Lives found it very easy to recruit volunteers to be trained as befrienders to separated and separating parents. Volunteers were predominantly Muslim in the two areas targeting parents in the Muslim community, although the religious background of the befrienders did not seem to be of importance to the parents. Volunteers typically worked with one family at a time, although some worked with two, depending on availability.
- Fewer referrals were received than was anticipated, particularly in the early stages of the project. The target number of participants was based on Family Lives' previous befriending work and the enthusiasm of stakeholders that the service was much needed. Family Lives learnt that setting up and marketing a service takes a long time and that the number of referrals builds over time.
- In Leicester, they recruited a male outreach worker to help build awareness more quickly.
- It was initially assumed that a participant's journey would take up to three months. However, they found that the time from initial contact with the couple to the first befriending meeting could take three to six weeks rather than one to two weeks as expected. This was partly due to having to contact and assess both parents, rather than just one participant as for their other programmes. Some participants were unable to meet their befriender weekly, so the meetings often took place over a longer time frame.
- There were some times in 2014 when it was difficult to maintain engagement, specifically the six weeks of Ramadan. This has not been the case in 2015, possibly because couples needed to continue in order to fall within the scope of the project's funding.
- The proportion of couples working together and signing a parenting plan was lower than expected (25 per cent rather than 50 per cent). However, in Leicester, many participants were non-resident fathers whose ex-partner was not receiving the service and they worked through a parenting plan with their befriender. This often led to parents being able to work through their issues, even though the plan was not agreed within the programme.

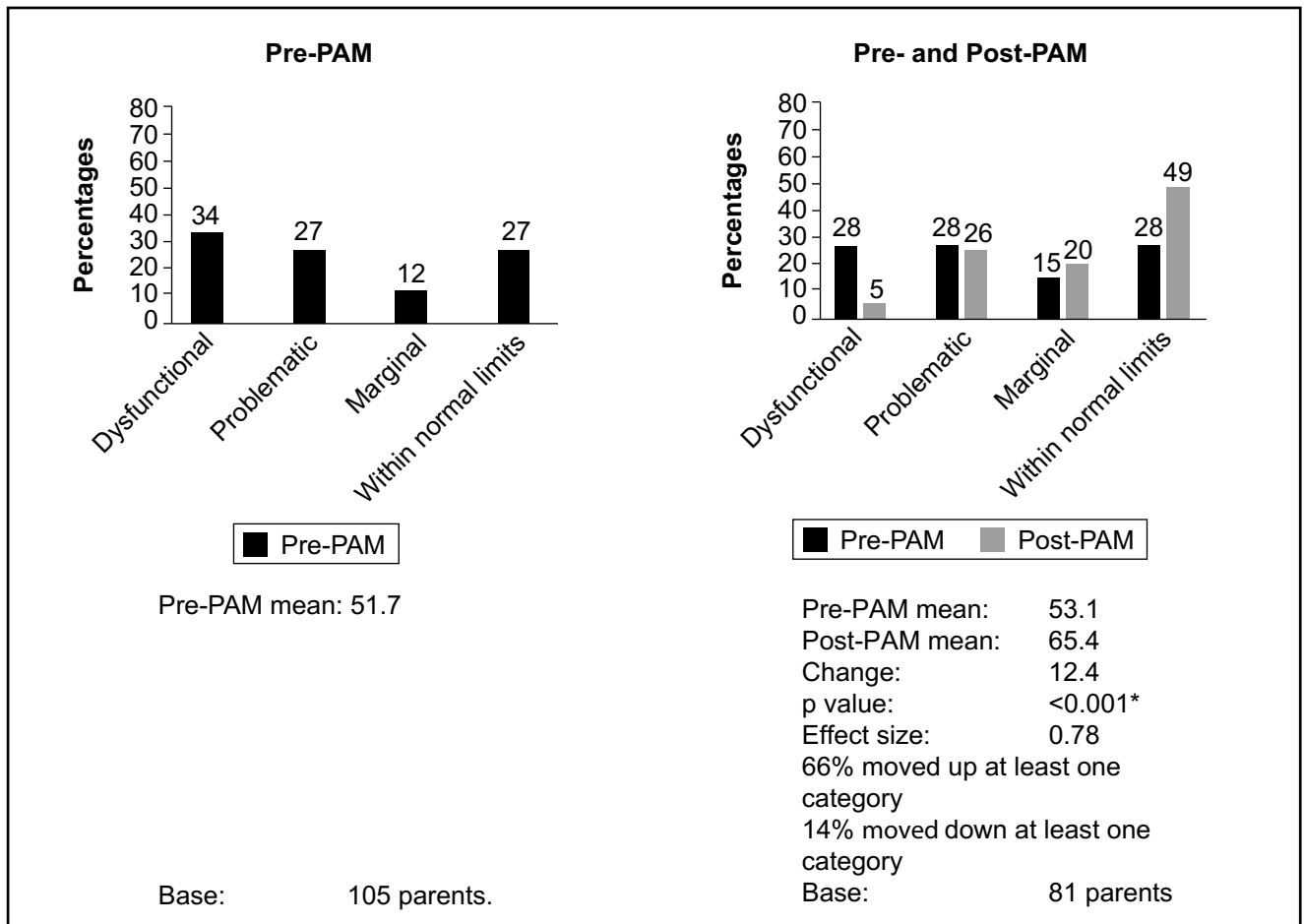
## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- A higher proportion of participants agreed child maintenance arrangements during the programme than was anticipated. Family Lives were cautious in their estimates, as their experience showed that people tend to be hesitant to discuss money issues. However, they found that when focusing on their child's needs, parents were keen to clear up financial issues.
- Based on previous experience of befriending, Family Lives expected 85 per cent of couples to report increased confidence in dealing effectively with their family situation. The actual figure was slightly lower (75 per cent), which may reflect the high levels of conflict between the parents and the difficulty in breaking down those barriers.
- At the end of the befriending programme in Leicester, many non-resident fathers requested access to a peer support group, which was set up. There is a similar arrangement in Waltham Forest but this is open to both men and women. Family Lives trains the participants involved in facilitation skills and they support each other. These peer support groups could also provide a mechanism for getting people into the service.
- In some cases, parents did not attend the final session with the family support co-ordinator (FSC), making it difficult to obtain the post-PAM data. Therefore, where possible, the FSC took over from the befriender at the end of their last session to ensure the post-PAM forms were completed.

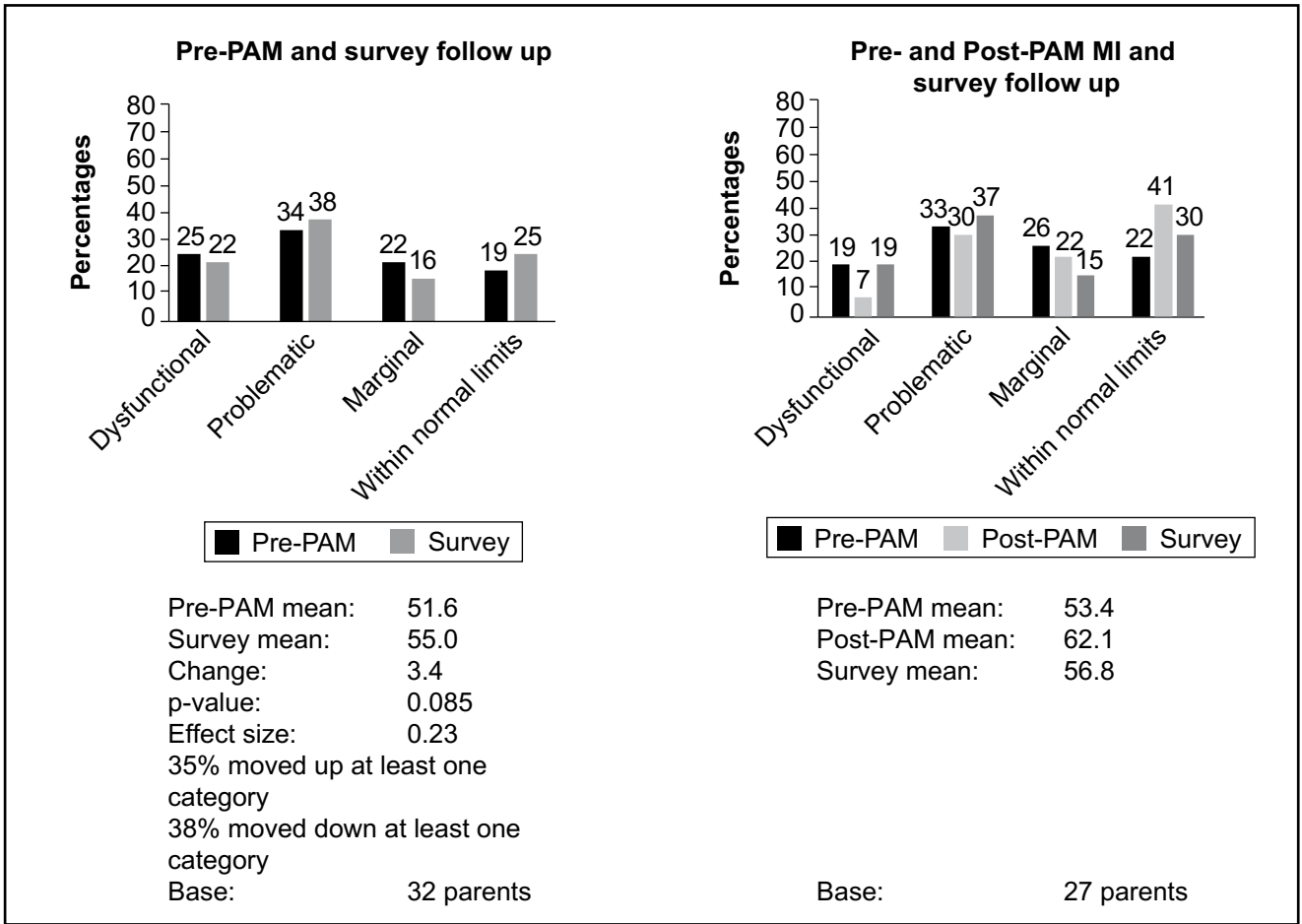
## **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (27 per cent) or dysfunctional (34 per cent) at baseline – 27 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 12.4):
  - 49 per cent within normal limits post-support and 5 per cent dysfunctional.
- Mean PAM score change between baseline and survey lower – and not significant (small numbers):
  - mean change score of 3.4.

MI data



MI and survey data (small numbers)



## Who took part in the telephone survey

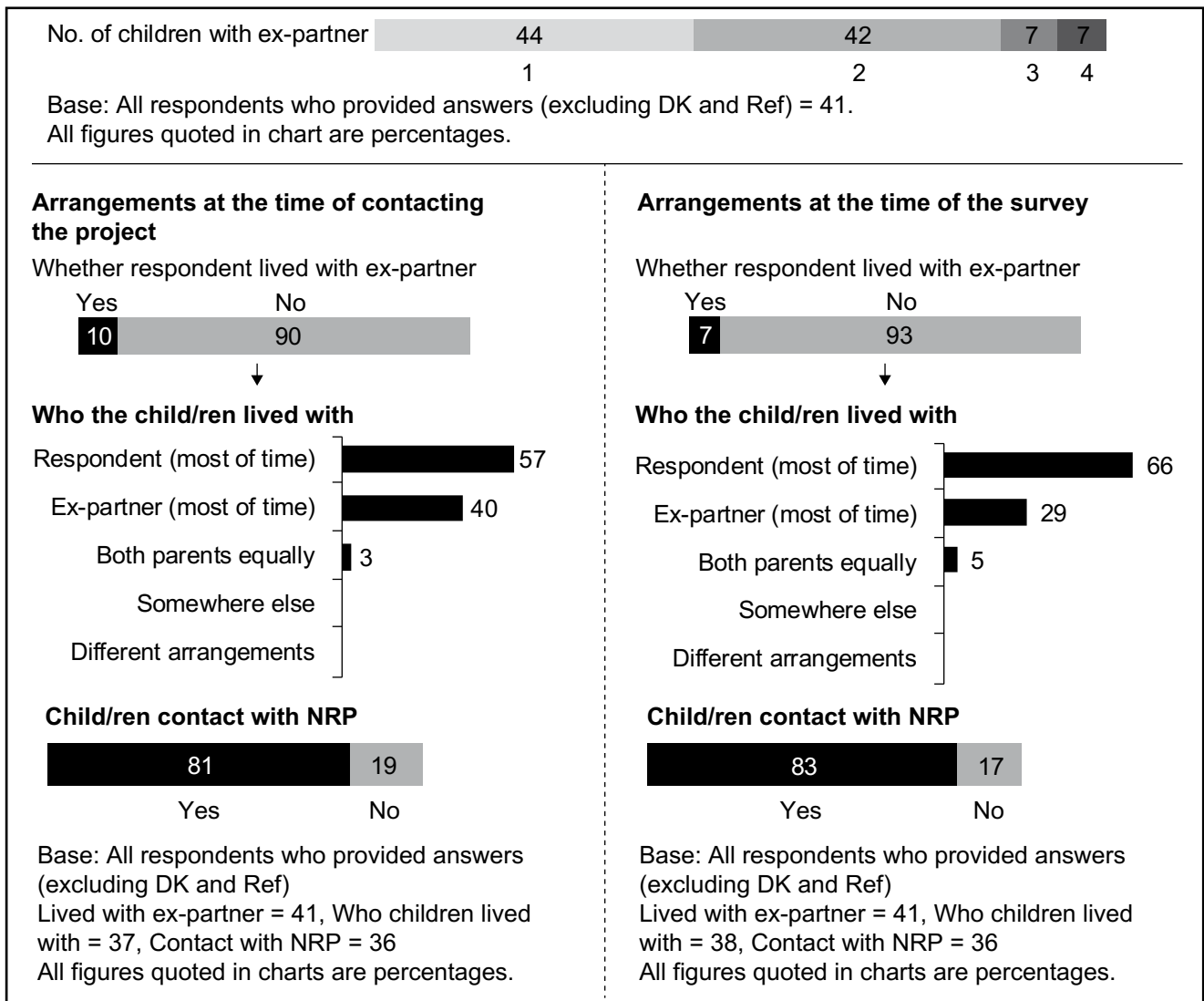
	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	39	34
Female	61	66
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	5	-
25–34	27	25
35–44	45	57
45+	23	18
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	45	51
Black	9	10
Mixed	3	-
Asian	36	29
Other	7	10
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	57	60
Lower than A-level	43	40
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	15	13
No	85	87
<b>Base*</b>	120	41

\* Note: The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note: clients who did not provide a response, or gave a 'don't know' or 'refused' answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

As illustrated in the table, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is very similar to profile of parents in the MI data. The most noteworthy difference is within age, with a higher proportion of parents aged 35-44 within the survey (in comparison to the MI data).

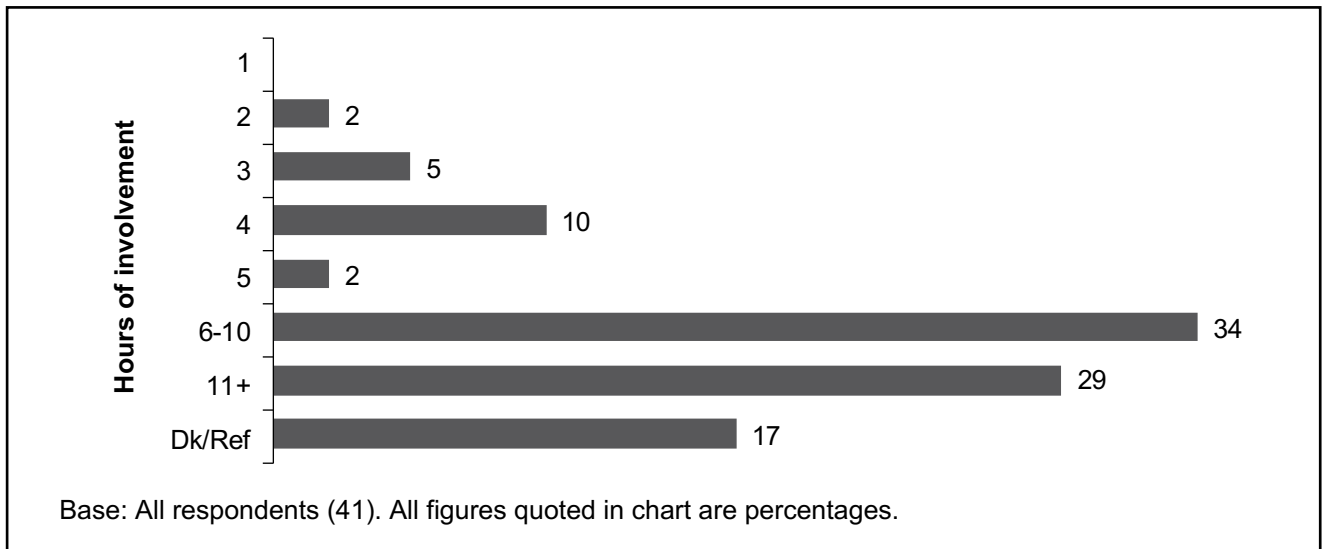


## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

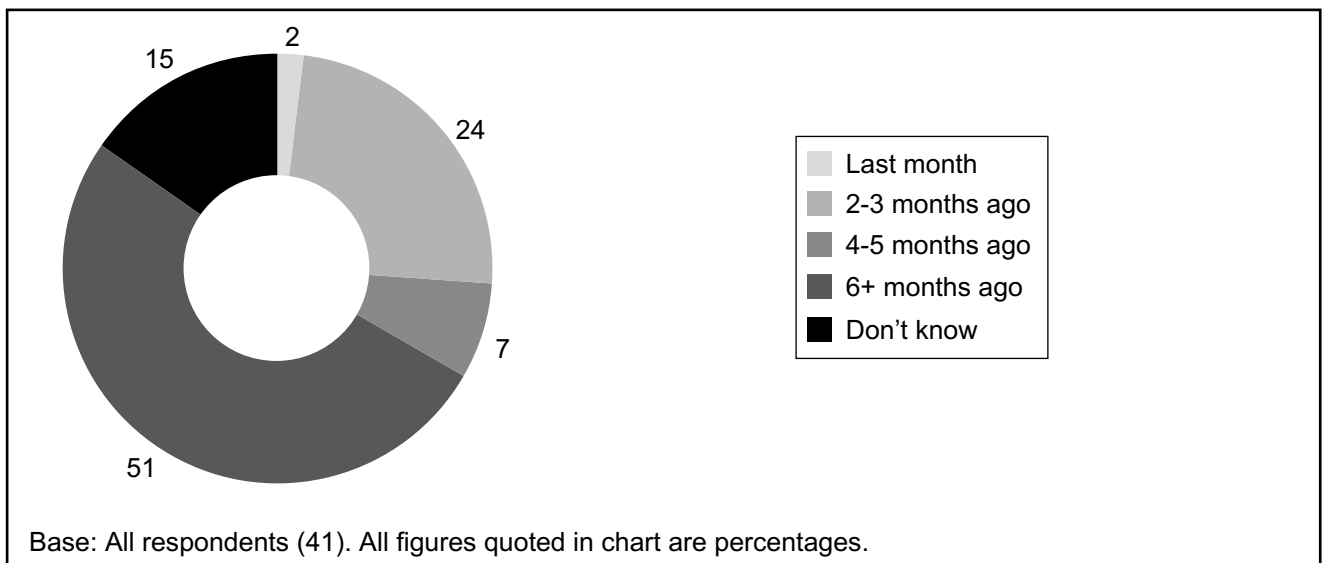


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of involvement with the project was relatively high, with over three-fifths (63 per cent, n=26) reporting six or more hours of contact.



- The time since parents had contact with the project varied. For 51 per cent of parents (n=21) it was six months or more.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=30), **four in ten respondents (40 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=41):
  - **32 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
  - 22 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 44 per cent reported they were same.

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=38), **around six in ten (61 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 39 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=22), the most common were family-based arrangements with money payments (50 per cent), and CSA/CMS agreements (46 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=38), **55 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 95 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

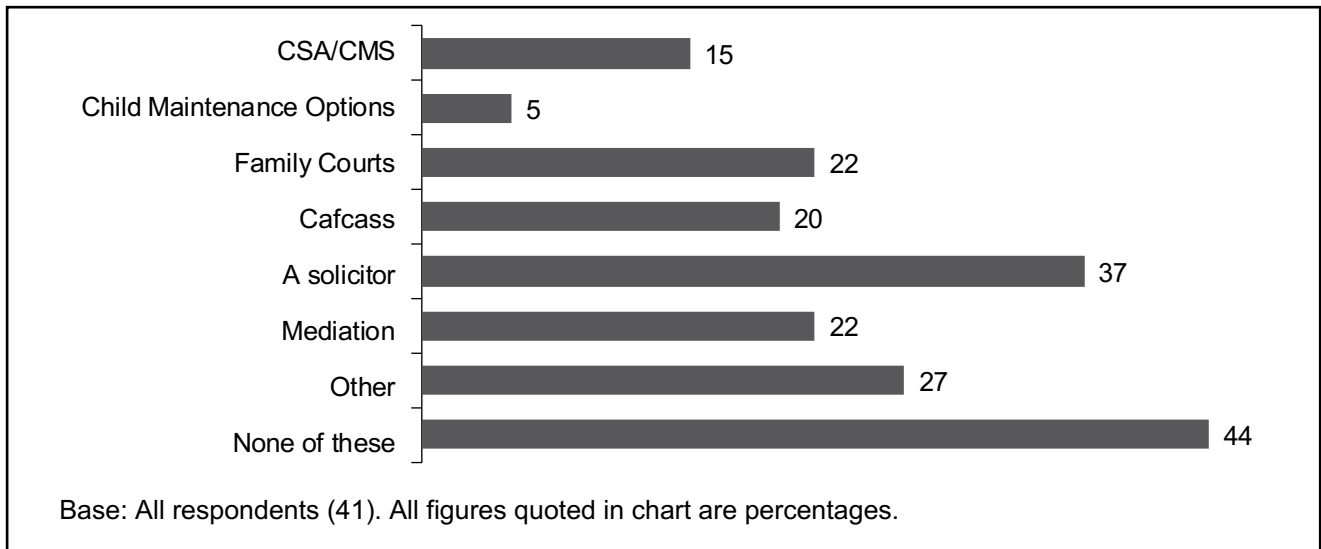
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=38):
  - **24 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 11 per cent that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 47 per cent that they were same;
  - 18 per cent that there was no previous arrangement.

## Use of the family courts

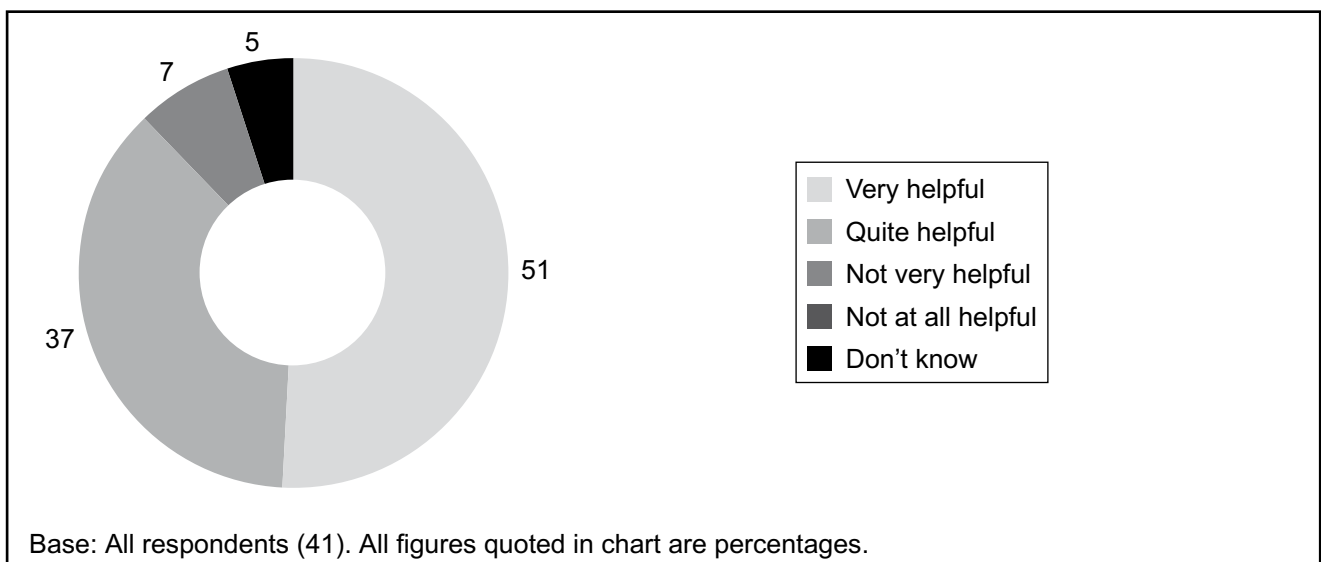
- Almost four in ten of all respondent respondents (39 per cent, n=16) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
- Around three in ten (29 per cent, n=12) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=37), a further 32 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=22), 36 per cent felt the project played a role in this decision.**

### Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned were a solicitor (37 per cent) and the family courts (22 per cent).



- Over half (57 per cent) of those seeking support said they would have sought this advice anyway, with 35 per cent saying it varied as to whether or not they would have sought the advice.
- Almost nine in ten (88 per cent) of respondents felt overall that their contact was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Parents felt the befriending had helped them in terms of their **emotional wellbeing and ability to handle conflict**. This was true even where only one parent participated. In these cases parenting arrangements and communication were the main focus.

- They had **space to reflect** and to understand their own feelings better, and to prioritise what they wanted to happen from their own and their children's point of view.
- Talking to the befriender enabled them to **see things from the other parent's perspective** and in a calmer and more dispassionate way.
- It gave them **confidence** about what they were entitled to expect, and how this could benefit their children, which enabled them to be firm, for instance, about parenting arrangements.

*'I am seeing things in a different perspective...[before] I would get annoyed...now I know it's not worth it – leave him alone.'*

(Client)

*'[Without befriending] I would have been caught up in arguing with him not informing him.'*

(Client)

*'Their dad used to bring the kids back to the house...[the befriender] suggested I picked them up, that is normal...it sounds simple but it's a concrete thing that makes me feel safer.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Being able to see things from a new perspective had **helped with communicating** with their ex-partner.

- Befrienders helped them to develop techniques such as planning times for communicating rather than having to field unexpected calls, and their children noticed the resulting improvement.
- Users learnt how to word agreements in a way which was more likely to succeed.
- The **wider impacts** included parenting plans (produced by about 20 per cent of users) and private finance agreements, which could reduce the time spent in court.
- Parents felt the befriending process made them **more realistic** and this would help to speed up the court process.
- Improved emotional wellbeing in the Muslim community was expected to reduce the burden on the NHS and social services.

*'I became very clear with my ex about wanting him to contact me by text message to avoid conflict over the phone...I became aware of my blind spot.'*

(Client)

*'I have learnt a valuable lesson...not to bite every time he does something to try and wind me up...don't show that anger, [the befriender] has said to me – count to 10.'*

(Client)

*'The situation with my daughter is better overall – there's less conflict between everyone.'*

(Client)

*'It helped with the court process because I changed my stance from 'I want', knowing it was unlikely to happen.'*

(Client)

## **(1) Pen portrait: The Barefoot Institute connection generated trust but could not guarantee success**

- Sarah\* found Family Lives on Facebook – on the same page as the Barefoot Institute, of whom she had heard good things – and self-referred through the website.
- She had separated from her ex-husband four years ago and felt that now her children, 9 and 10, were growing up and had different needs, it was a good time to try and reach a parenting agreement.
- She was attracted by the fact that the service was free; otherwise, she could not have afforded it.
- Sarah had a phone conversation and one face-to-face meeting with the family support co-ordinator, then three Skype sessions with the befriender. Her ex had some individual sessions, then all three had a joint Skype session with another planned.
- She worked through what she wanted around parenting and found this process useful; at the joint meeting they went through half the parenting plan, which was to cover everything except finance.
- She believed that her ex might have participated because he mistook mediation for reconciliation. She stopped the process so the plan was not finalised, but did not see this as the fault of the service.
- Communication with Sarah's ex was still limited. CMS were sorting out the financial settlement and she did not intend to go to court.

*'Talking to the befriender actually made me realise things from a different perspective... and they really helped in the actual wording...making it less confrontational, more welcoming and understanding of his perspective.'*

(Client)

*'The children are more aware of both of us making an attempt to align our thoughts on their upbringing.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.



## (2) Pen portrait: Befriending provided a space to learn about communicating calmly

- Linda\* self-referred after her social worker suggested Family Lives as a means of sorting out contact and communication between her ex-husband and their four children aged 9, 11, 15 and 19.
- She had been separated and in conflict with her husband for six years and previous court-ordered mediation had failed.
- After assessment and a meeting with the family support co-ordinator, she had 16 weeks of individual befriending sessions.
- Linda's ex-husband met the FSC but then refused to continue.
- She had hoped that she and her ex would work together and hear the children's voices, so was reluctant to carry on without her ex participating, but decided she would use the service to help understand herself and her behaviour.
- The befriender was patient and non-judgemental; she could phone her if necessary. Linda learnt to communicate with her ex calmly via text message not phone and felt this helped her children.
- The case had to go back to court in the end. Linda felt the service equipped her to deal better with the conflict but did not help to sort out contact between her children and her ex-husband.
- CMS were dealing with the financial aspect.

*'My kids have noticed and commented to me – having a conversation with him is extremely difficult...now I just put the phone down and email or text him.'*

(Client)

*'[Otherwise] I would be a walking anger machine basically...the arguments going on in the house would be horrendous like it was before we went to Family Lives.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Training and support of volunteer befrienders was crucial**

### **Facilitators of project effectiveness**

- The Project Manager felt that the training of volunteers was a crucial aspect of the service. The training had to equip them with all the skills needed to deal with clients, including couples and individuals.
- It was important that they should be able to operate within the relevant communities. The Barefoot Institute partner felt that reassuring people that it was right to seek support was important, as was trust in the befriender's understanding of their situation. The personal support of a respected imam had facilitated this aspect, as had using a male outreach worker.
- The volunteers also need to be given support on an ongoing basis by the family support co-ordinators. One-to-one support for each case worked best.
- A good match between volunteer and user was important and this took longer when a couple were involved.
- Counselling had strengthened the project's effectiveness for some users, and there was a view that access to counselling before the befriending might have been useful.
- It was good that befrienders were flexible in being able to meet users at a mutually convenient time and place, including a park (for a user based in a refuge), a friend's house, the local social services office or by Skype.

## High levels of conflict and stigma around support acted as barriers

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The level of conflict in some relationships was a major barrier, which meant that sometimes small improvements were all that could be achieved.
- One aspect of this was the failure of both parents to engage, with one parent perhaps only attending the first session.
- This meant that although the other parent might achieve a great deal in terms of emotional wellbeing or ability to communicate more calmly, there would be no jointly signed parenting agreement and in many cases this meant a return to the courts.
- Cultural attitudes to seeking help from outside the family could also be a barrier, and it took time to overcome these.

*'Lots of people did not know that seeking advice and help from your neighbours and friends...especially those who are trained, is an Islamic thing to do...and that they could sort it out without paying a lot of money to solicitors.'*

(Partner)

## They would recommend the service but would struggle to pay for it

### Recommending the service

- They would recommend the service to any parents in conflict who want to get back to a workable situation for their children.
- In particular, they would recommend it for people who are closer to the time of separation, or even young couples who are still together, to help them cope with the stresses of bringing up children.
- It might be helpful if the court could compel **both** parents to attend.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Clients thought in theory that the service was worth paying for.
- However, the women in particular would struggle to pay anything at all.
- £40 or £50 would be too much. The suggested rate of £25 an hour was more affordable for some.
- There was a desire to show commitment and appreciation of the volunteers' time, for instance, through a small deposit or a donation.
- They would need information on what they would receive and the relative (higher) costs of solicitor-led mediation or counselling.

*[If it had cost money,] I wouldn't have been in a position to afford it.'*

(Client)

## E.4 Family Matters Mediate

### **Project aim:**

To help families with high levels of conflict and to provide an independent voice for their children.

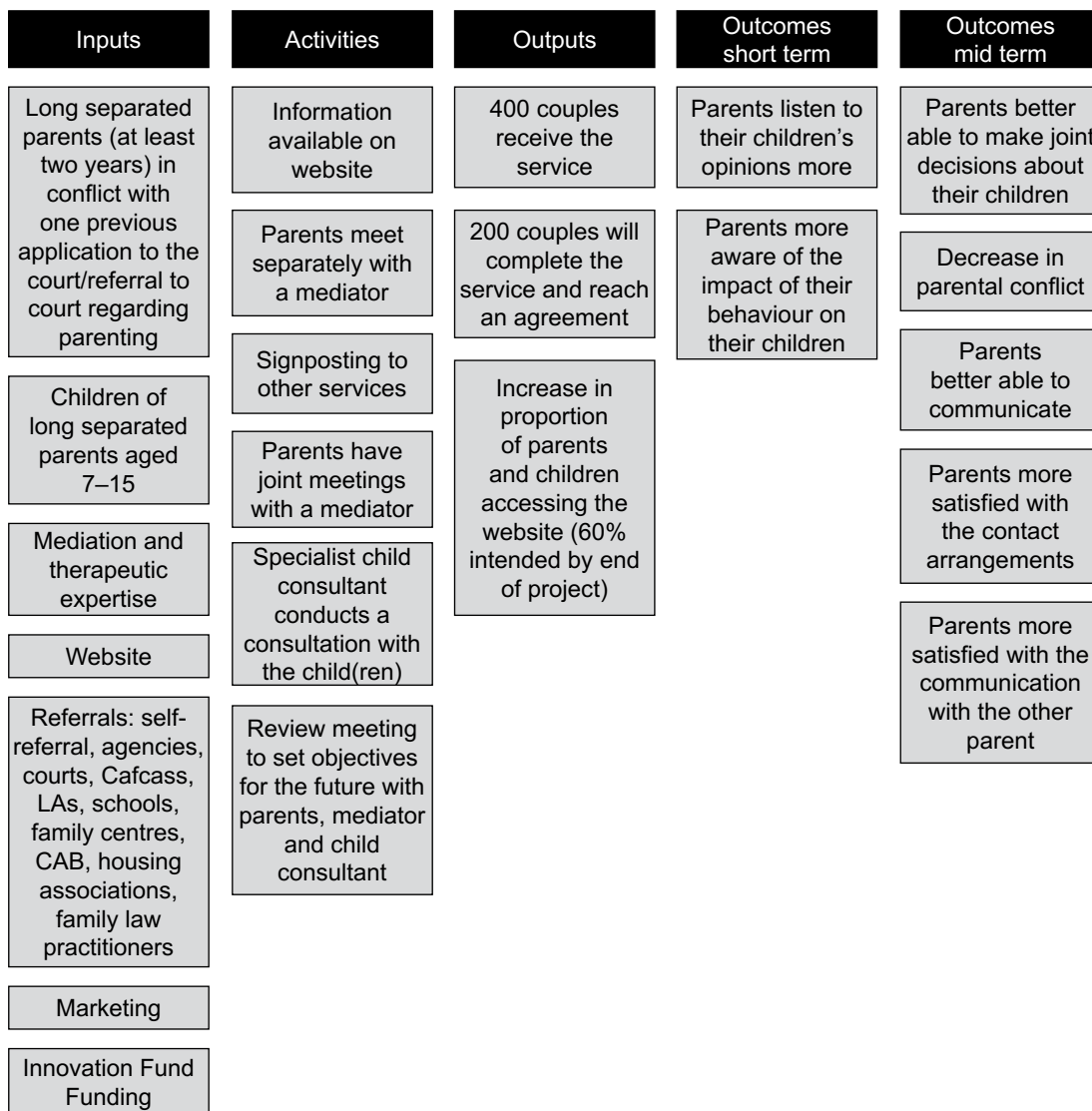
### **Project delivery:**

- Seven-week process.
- Phone call to both parents explaining the project and arranging face-to-face appointments.
- Individual meetings between mediator and each parent at a community venue to discuss needs.
- Joint meeting with both parents to agree objectives of mediation and parameters of child consultation (i.e. what can and cannot be discussed).
- Meeting between the child(ren) and child consultant to identify the impact of parental conflict and the areas that children want improved.
- Feedback meeting between parents, mediator and child consultant to feed back the child's view to the parents.
- Review meeting between parents, mediator and child consultant where plans for the future are agreed.

### **Target audience:**

- Parents in conflict who have been separated for two years, who have had one previous application to court regarding parenting, or have had concerns raised by the local authority or school regarding the impact of conflict on their children.
- Children of long-separated parents aged 7 to 15.
- Delivered in the Doncaster area.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			Qualitative interviews completed
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	
400 couples to receive the service	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 340 couples started, 104 'completed'	138 parents	139 pre-PAMS	76 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
200 couples to complete the service			44 pre- and post-PAMS		
			14 pre-, post- and survey PAMS		Stage 2 – Total 8 interviews: 2 Project manager 2 staff 4 clients
					Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients

- Family Matters Mediate was targeting separated or separating families living in Doncaster, Wakefield, Scunthorpe, Grimsby, Retford and Worksop.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- In the MI data, only comparisons can be made to the geographical area that parents were from:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be derived in the MI data (n=130), 81 per cent lived in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 15 per cent lived in the East Midlands.

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Once clients reach the child consultation they tended to carry on with the process

### Reach

- The courts were the main source of referrals, with judges, Cafcass and legal representatives making repeat referrals.
- Local authorities have not made many referrals.
- The project was promoted mainly through local referral organisations such as schools, Cafcass, judges and solicitors, as well as social media.

### Engagement

- Almost all who reached the child consultation stage carried on.
- 30 per cent of clients completed the project.

### Drop out

- Clients who did not complete tended to drop out early on.
- Some just attended one meeting in order to be able to return to court, with no real expectation of resolution in the desired form.
- Conflict entrenched over a long time contributed to this:

*'My ex wanted to start court proceedings as children wanted to live with me...judges and Cafcass were involved and they recommended this before court.'*

(Client)

*'Usually when we explain the bit about the child consultants people want to do it...as most want to hear what their children have to say.'*

(Staff)

*'It's as if he didn't want to go to mediation to improve upon the situation but to change what the court had ordered.'*

(Client)



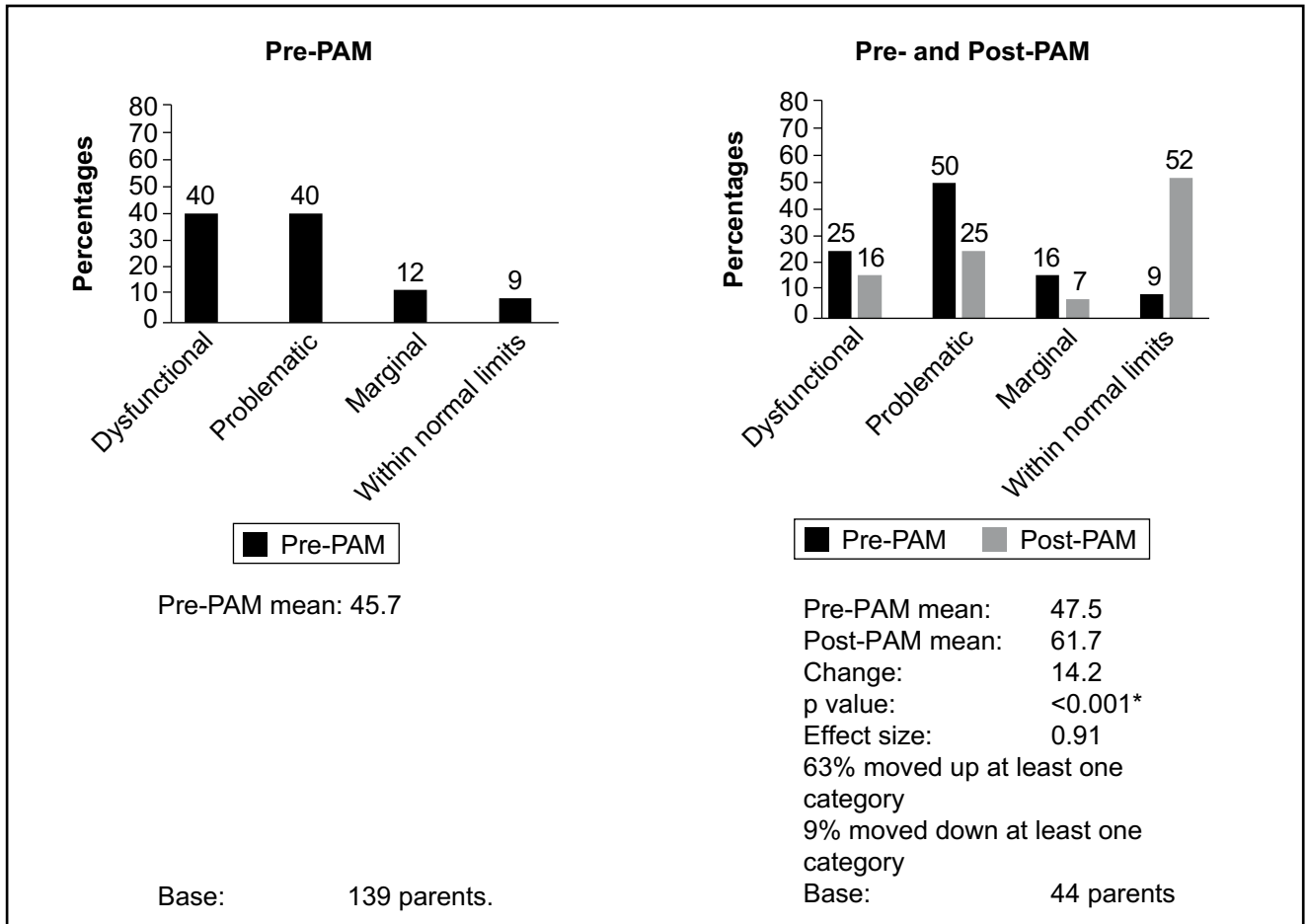
## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Family Matters Mediate received around half the referrals expected, but this figure was increasing towards the end of the project.
- They acknowledge that they were overambitious in their original targets considering the geographical area covered and have questioned the accuracy of the data used to estimate the number of referrals they could expect.
- They learnt that initial enthusiasm on the part of referral agencies was not enough and it was difficult to maintain the profile of the project.
- However, repeat referrals increased over time, suggesting that repeated contact has helped to embed the service.
- A 'badge of approval' from a minister was suggested as one way of maintaining a higher profile.
- Broadening the criteria to include parents who had separated more recently might also have led to more referrals.
- It was hard to see how they could reach more ethnic minority families, who remained underrepresented.
- The target of 50 per cent of clients completing the process is seen as over-optimistic given the degree of entrenched conflict between these parents.

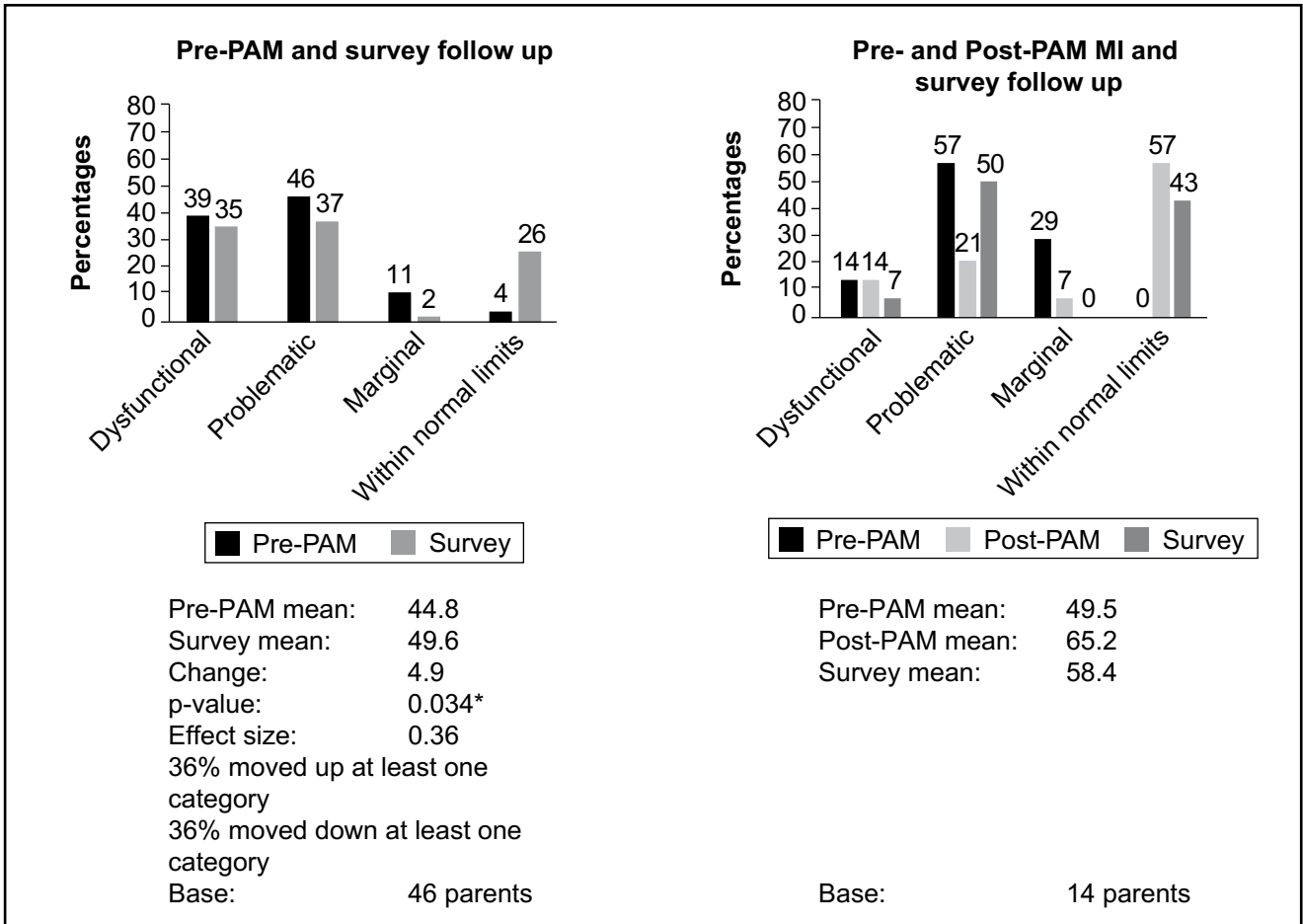
### **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post-, and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (40 per cent) or dysfunctional (40 per cent) at baseline – only 9 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 14.2):
  - 52 per cent within normal limits post-support and 16 per cent dysfunctional.
- Significant improvements continue to be evident by the time of the survey – but drop compared to immediately post-support:
  - mean change score of 4.9 between baseline and survey PAM.

MI data



**MI and survey data (very small numbers with all three data points)**



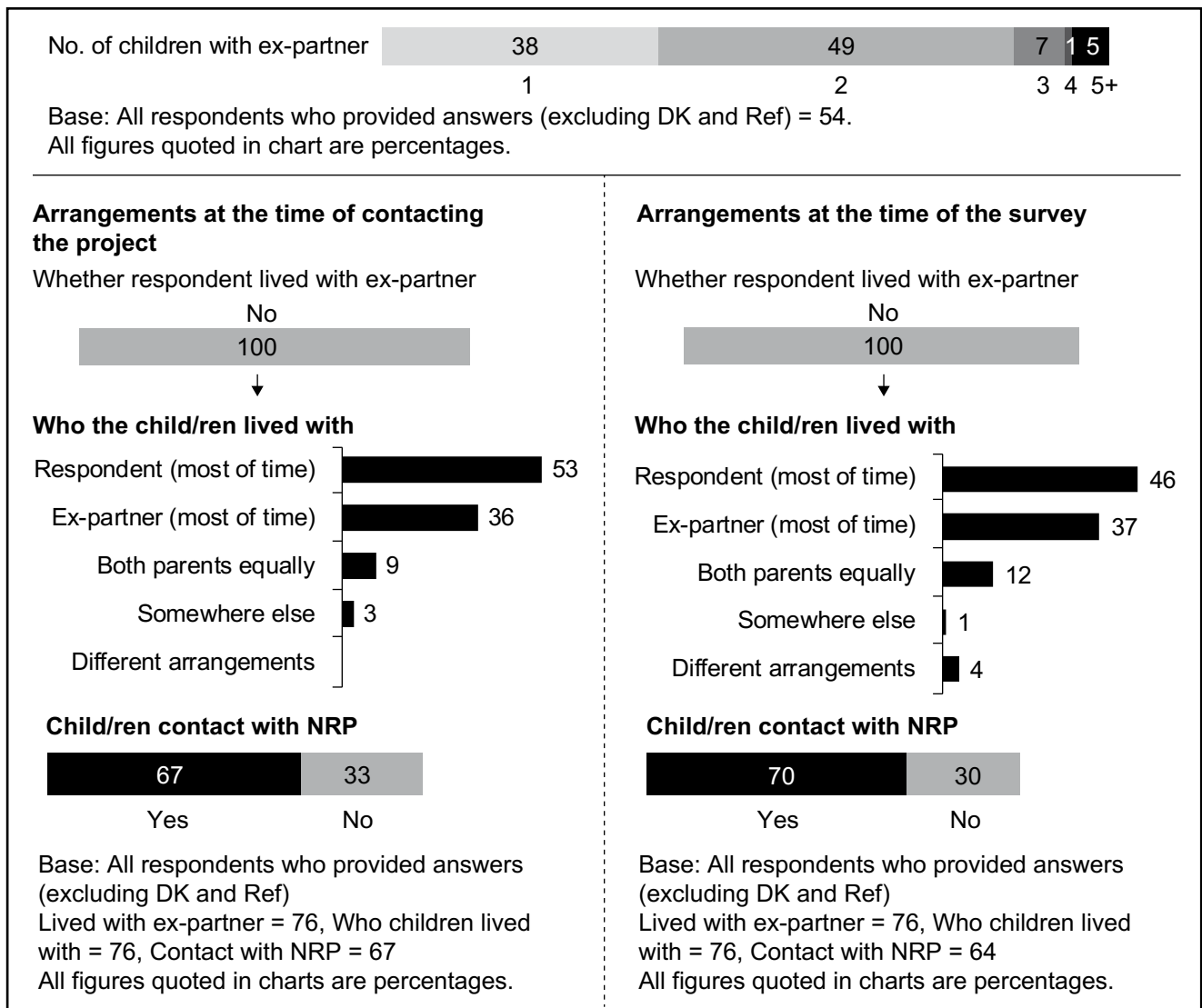
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48	54
Female	52	46
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	-	-
25–34	40	33
35–44	41	44
45+	18	23
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	96	100
Black	1	-
Mixed	-	-
Asian	3	-
Other	-	-
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	22	22
Lower than A-level	78	78
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	12	12
No	88	88
<b>Base*</b>	138	76

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

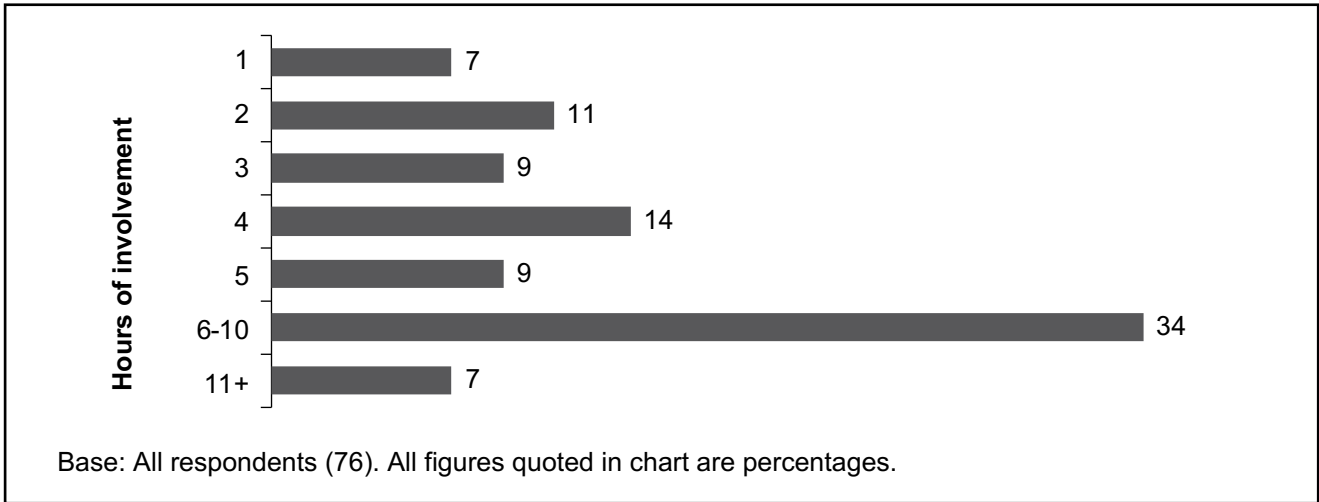
As illustrated in the table, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is very similar to profile of parents in the MI data, though the survey data skewed slightly towards male and older parents than were in the MI data.

## Relationship/family characteristics

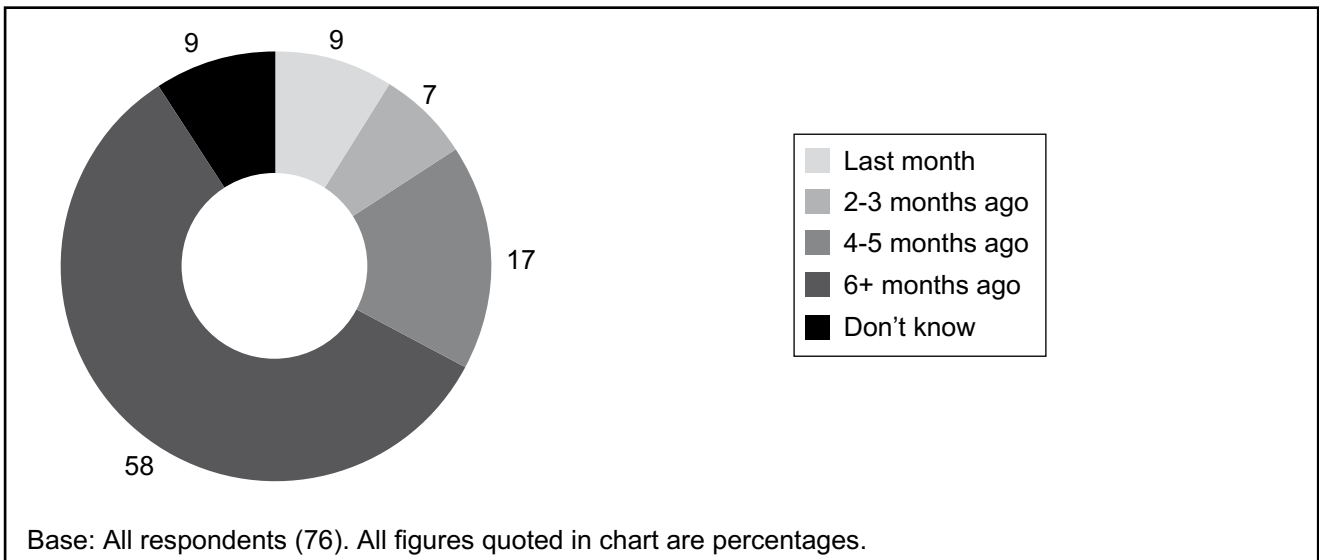


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of contact with the project varied, but 41 per cent of respondents had six or more hours of contact.



- At the time of the survey, around six in ten (58 per cent) had not had contact with the project for at least six months.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=45), **56 per cent were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=76):
  - **45 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
  - 38 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 26 per cent reported they were same.

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=76), **70 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 30 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=51), the most common were CSA/CMS agreements (65 per cent) family-based arrangements with money payments (29 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=76), 58 per cent **reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 90 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

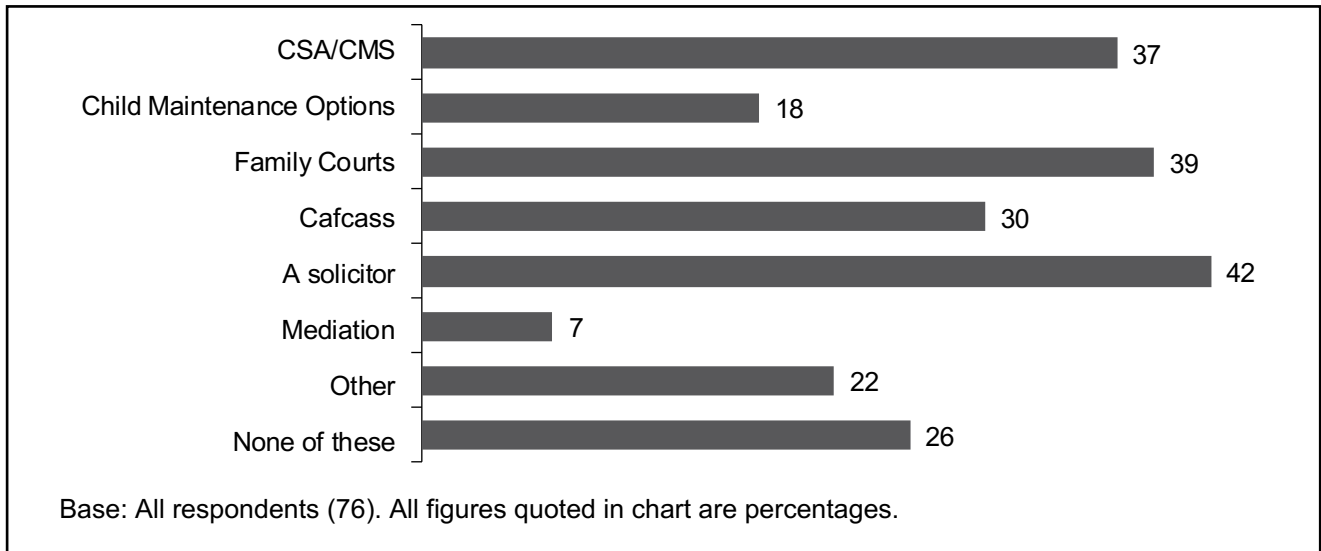
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=76):
  - **17 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 12 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 57 per cent reported they were same;
  - 13 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement.

## Use of the family courts

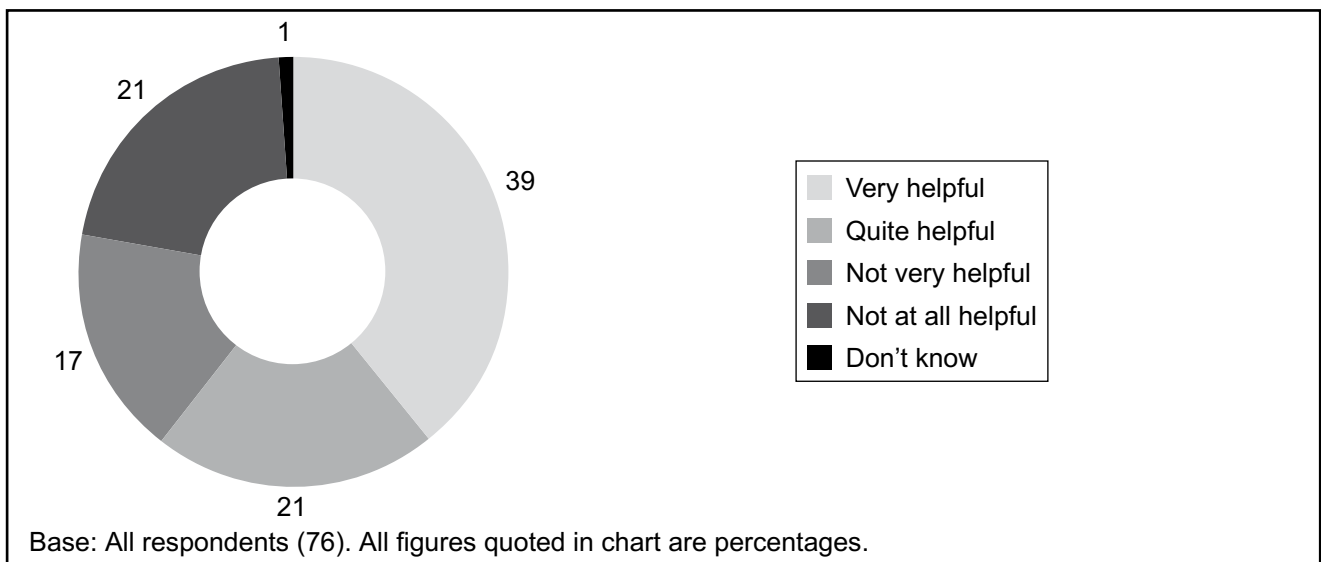
- Almost three-quarters (72 per cent, n=55) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
  - Of these (n=53), 96 per cent reported that there had been a formal court case or that there would be.
- 47 per cent (n=36) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project, and all of these reported that there had been a formal court case, or that there would be.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=66), a further 21 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=50), four in ten (40 per cent) felt the project played a role in this decision.**

### Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned was a solicitor (42 per cent) and the family courts (39 per cent).



- Over two-thirds (70 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, **16 per cent (n=9) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project** (with 9 per cent saying it varies, and 5 per cent being unsure).
- 61 per cent of respondents felt overall that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

- Parents who had used the whole service were often able to **develop a parenting plan**, addressing many of the issues causing conflict, such as contact arrangements. However, this was not always signed off by both partners as the degree of conflict was such that compromise was difficult and one parent was likely to walk out of the process.
- Even in these cases parents felt that the **process was valuable**. They had often had very little recent contact and could be reminded of areas where there was common ground.
- At the very least, they were able to return to court to get an order knowing that all points of view had been expressed.
- This process was **shorter and less emotionally draining** than a full-blown court case would have been.
- One particular benefit of the process was that parents arrived at a level of **certainty and formality** around their arrangements, which had often been lacking.

*'At the time it was valuable, it got me and my ex sitting in the same room.'*

(Client)

*'It was inevitable that we'd have to go back to court – it was highly unlikely he'd accept [the agreement].'*

(Client)

*'The most useful was hammering out an agreement – seeing both sides, the perspective of each, getting an insight.'*

(Client)

*'[The agreement] puts me on a footing where I'm confident to have time with my daughter.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Parents gained in **emotional wellbeing** as they retained control over the process, which has also been shown to result in arrangements being more likely to be adhered to than if they are imposed by the courts.

- Parents themselves felt they had a much **clearer understanding** of what they are entitled to, not just legally, but in the sense of having confidence to hold out for something they should be able to have, such as the other parent sticking to agreed arrangements around contact.
- Parents acquired new **skills around communicating** with their ex-partners, which helped to defuse conflict.
  - For instance, they learnt to use text messages or email to keep communication calm and detached, rather than having heated arguments on the phone, which could affect the children.
- In some cases, little had been achieved due to the **level of conflict**, and some felt mediation had hardened views.
- The view was that mediation would have been more effective before relations got to this stage and the courts were involved.

*'Now it's settled down...we are on the same sheet...there is now that contact...so I would be quite confident to [discuss parenting matters around son] by email. I don't think that would have happened before.'*

(Client)

*'It would have been better if we'd done it earlier, if we'd been aware of it before we went to court.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Children want to be involved and felt empowered by the process of consultation.

- This could sometimes be seen in **increased confidence** in dealing with the adults.
- Most parents were keen for their children's views to be heard and saw this as bringing a new perspective to the adults' discussions.
- Having the child's voice represented allowed the court to take their wishes into account and the **resulting arrangement could have more impact** on the parents.
- However, some parents needed **reassurance about the impact on their children** of consultation, especially if they had already had extensive involvement with other services such as CAMHS.
- Wider impacts were most likely to be in the form of less time spent in court, as arrangements could be 'rubber- stamped' there more quickly, and in private financial arrangements being arrived at.

*'Family Matters Mediate put the kids under pressure, they had to say 'I want'...he can say to dad, 'can I come another night?' He is more confident about that.'*

(Client)

*'Having got the child's point of view was essential in the court case because then the court could take into account the child's wishes.'*

(Client)

*'The most useful aspect was the fact that they tried to get at the roots of [the child's] feelings, to discuss with her what she wanted.'*

(Client)

*'It made no difference to my son. He'd already been through a long process with CAMHS'*

(Client)

## (1) Pen portrait: Court was still necessary but relationships and communication improved

- Jean\* was referred to Family Matters Mediate by the courts. She had been separated from her ex for six years and had a new partner. Her ex went to court to get greater contact with their children, aged 13 and 18, which she was challenging.
- They had phone contact, individual meetings and then two joint mediation sessions and one joint feedback session, and their children had the child consultation.
- The mediation process allowed them to explore common ground around parenting. They did not draw up a full parenting plan but the mediator was able to explore patterns of contact which informed the eventual court order.
- The 18-year-old found consultation therapeutic and has rebuilt her relationship with her dad. The 13 year old child gained confidence from being able to express his feelings and can negotiate more effectively about contact with him. He is more settled at school.
- Jean understood more about what she is entitled to, so she was able to deal with her ex more confidently and calmly, using techniques acquired in mediation.
- She will have to return to the courts to sort out financial arrangements but felt the process had been worthwhile.

*'Whether we agree or don't agree, we have got something [recorded] down there. We're both really aware of how the children feel about the situation.'*

(Client)

*'[My daughter] had no relationship with [the client's ex] at that point; now he has told her when he has seen her that he has taken on board how distressing she has found the whole thing. There is some repair of relationships there.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: concern over the effect of the child consultation turned out to be unfounded**

- Mark\* was referred to Family Matters Mediate by the court and had several individual and joint mediation sessions. His son had the child consultation.
- He and his ex-partner had split up soon after his son, 12, was born. His son had lived with him for some years following a history of physical abuse from her.
- Mark wanted to move his son to another school and social services agreed it was in his son's best interests, but his ex-partner disagreed.
- He wanted a court order relating to this very specific issue but the mediation covered his ex-partner's wider agenda, including contact, which held up the resolution of the school move.
- He also had concerns about the possible impact of the child consultation on his son and needed reassurance from CAMHS, as well as agreement with Family Matters Mediate about what could be discussed.
- In the end, his son was fine talking to the child consultant but Mark felt this had not added anything, and in the absence of a signed agreement he still had to go back to court and pay barrister's fees.

*'I said "It's all been sorted – you're changing the goalposts from what the court ordered".'*

(Client)

*'What's the qualifications of the people speaking to him, because you can do more damage than good...you could put [the son] back again by asking the wrong things... I didn't think they were qualified enough, he's been under child psychologists.'*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.

## The child consultation made a difference

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The Project Manager felt that the service would be easily replicable by any size of organisation. Staff rather than premises would be key to success.
- Parents felt that the enthusiasm of the courts (who account for a high proportion of referrals) made it easier for them to decide to use the service.
- The child consultation aspect was felt to distinguish the service from other types of mediation. It meant that parents had to listen to their children and believe what they said.
- Once parents reached this stage, they were likely to continue to completion, even if they then had to go back to court without a parenting plan or finance agreement in place.

*'It was the court which made the final decision, but it wouldn't have done without Family Matters talking to my daughter.'*

(Client)

*'Usually when we explain the bit about the child consultants people want to do it...as most want to hear what their children have to say.'*

(Staff)



## **A long history of conflict made compromise difficult, even with the child's voice being heard**

### **Barriers to project effectiveness**

- It was hard to maintain referrals. Better communication was suggested between DWP, other government departments and local authorities.
- Long-separated parents who were in conflict and had reached the stage of court proceedings found it hard to engage with the process.
- Parents had to feel able to believe and act on their child's wishes, in order to reach the child. Consultation-case workers developed robust screening processes to determine this and these impacted on completion rates.
- Even if they completed the mediation sessions, the degree of conflict meant that it was unlikely both parents would commit themselves to a parenting plan.
- There was some concern about the impact of the child consultation on vulnerable children. Parents needed explanation and reassurance.

*'She walked out...it was unsolvable because neither party was willing to be amiable.'*

(Client)

*'There was no impact. It's not made anything better...there were things said in the meeting that hardened views.'*

(Client)

## Some would pay for the service – but they would recommend it for those in less conflict

### Recommending the service

- Clients felt the service had a lot to offer.
- However, it would be more effective with parents who had not reached their stage of conflict – for instance, those who were early on in the separation process and had not yet reached court proceedings.
- It would work well for parents who were prepared to hear and act on their children's wishes.
- Some parents would never be able to co-operate because of the degree of conflict, but this is not seen as a problem with the service.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Some were willing to pay as the cost compared favourably with barristers' fees (£800 a day).
- However, others thought it was important that the service was free, to encourage both partners to participate.
- About half said they could have afforded to pay the suggested £900, but they would need to know exactly what they were getting, including the child consultation, to overcome their scepticism.
- The remainder felt there were too many demands on finances at this time and the service was desirable rather than essential.
- £200 for the full service might have been affordable for some.

*'That's a hell of a lot of money for separated families, who is going to pay that?'*

(Client)

## E.5 Howells

### Project aim:

To offer legal advice and support to separated or separating parents on low or middle incomes who would benefit from this but would struggle to obtain it.

### Project delivery:

- Triage of lead parent by customer adviser.
- One-hour first assessment by caseworker, providing information and legal advice; offered face-to-face or via Skype or telephone.
- Additional support as necessary, consisting of:
  - Ongoing legal advice for lead parent only, including up to two hours of social welfare advice.
  - Up to two sessions of mediation (provided this is not covered by Legal Aid) offered face-to-face, with the non-lead parent also invited to take part **or** three sessions of solution-focused individual or joint counselling.
- Collaborative law sessions not offered (as originally planned); these were deemed to be unfair as only one parent would be funded.

### Target audience:

- Parents with low incomes of up to £32,000 (currently eligible for limited legal aid).
- Parents with middle incomes of £32,000 to £45,000 (currently ineligible for legal aid).
- In Sheffield, Barnsley and Rotherham.

## Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes short term	Impacts
Legal expertise	Triage by customer advisor	Intended (2,000); actual (1,540) separating or separated parents completing initial assessment	Increase in agreement and trust between separating parents	Decrease in the number of cases reaching court
Mediation expertise (External)	Assessment/initial legal advice from solicitor (one hour)			Decrease in the number of cases using the statutory child maintenance system
Counselling expertise (External)	Up to two sessions of mediation over two to three months (for lead and other parent) face-to-face	Intended 666 parents referred to mediation; actual 317	Reduction in conflict between parents during the separation period (estimate 1,333 parents)	
Separating parents on incomes below £45,000 (each)		Intended 150 parents referred to counselling; actual 43	Lead parents better informed of their rights	Greater collaboration between parents during and after separation
Marketing/advertising	Up to three sessions of solution focused counselling over four to six weeks (individual or couples) face-to-face, Skype, phone (sub-contract)	Intended 666 parents advised on social welfare issues; actual 64	Increase number of parents reaching private arrangements for parenting and child maintenance arrangements	
HSSF Innovation Fund funding	Up to three hours ongoing legal advice for lead parent-social, welfare, family and collaborative law	Intended 1,333 parenting plans agreed; actual 219	Change in parent attitude to focus on interests of child	

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
2,000 separating or separated parents completing initial assessment	As collected in the qualitative (in March/April 2015): 1,540 separating or separated parents completing initial assessment	481 parents	355 pre-PAMS 26 pre- and post-PAMS 43 pre- and survey PAMS	51 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
66 parents referred for mediation	317 parents referred for mediation 43 referred to counselling				Stage 2 – Total 12 interviews: 1 Project manager 5 staff 6 clients
150 referred to counselling	64 parents advised on social welfare issues				Stage 3 – Total 7 interviews: 1 Project manager 6 clients
666 parents advised on social welfare issues	219 parenting plans achieved As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period):				
1,333 parenting plans achieved	1,980 individual parents started, 1,319 'completed'.				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

- Howells was targeting separated or separating families with an income below £45,000 living in South Yorkshire, (specifically Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley).
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report. It is particularly important here to bear in mind the difference between the number of parents with MI data recorded for them, compared to the completion figures recorded by the project (and as shown on the previous slide.)
- The MI data suggests the parents who took part are in line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents who reported a household income figure in the MI data (n=378), 97 per cent reported a total income of less than £52,000 a year.
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=475), 98 per cent lived in Yorkshire and the Humber.

## Clients valued the service but the model weakened some referral routes

### Reach

- Word of mouth/recommendations and self-referral worked well; CAB also made a lot of referrals.
- Existing clients were alerted and some self-referrals had come about because the firm was well-known in the area.
- However the courts were reluctant to refer or to display promotional material as they saw the service as unfair towards the non-lead parent.
- Other solicitors were wary of referring for the same reason.

### Engagement

- In general, clients became less engaged once their immediate problem had been solved.
- Counselling was taken-up less often alongside mediation and legal advice.

### Drop out

- Users tended to drop-out once they had received legal advice, as this often addressed the issues that they faced.

*'I contacted them [for mediation] – they're the only one in Rotherham, there is no-one else.'*

(Client)

*'One of the problems with our scheme is that we are only offering help to one parent... for example the courts and Cafcass would refer more if we were offering help to both parents, so it's a real limitation of our scheme.'*

(Staff)

*'It has not helped that the parent who gets to us first is funded – the other has to make their way in the marketplace.'*

(Project Manager)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

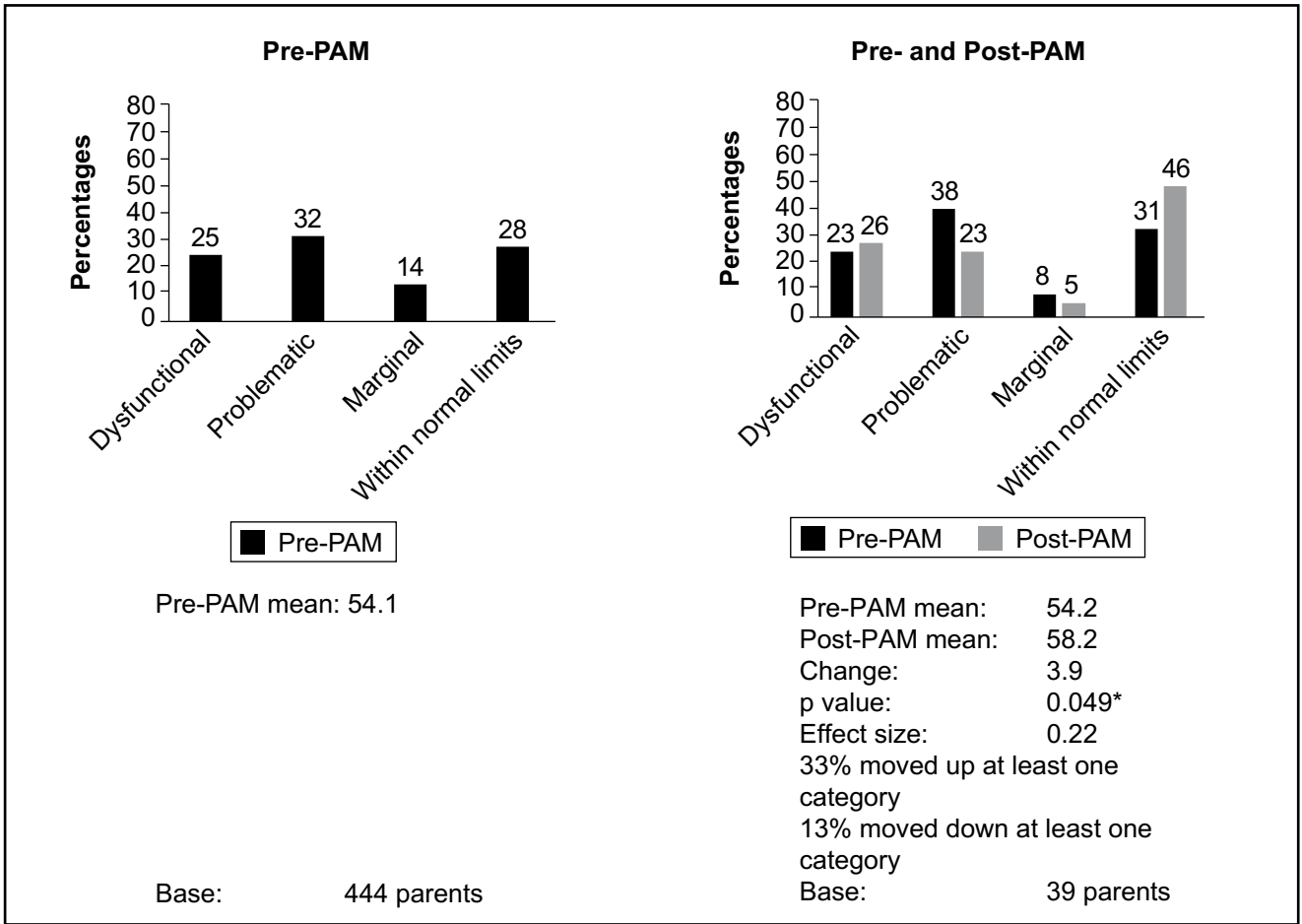
- Overall the number of parents reached was lower than expected, due to a delay in being able to advertise the service until mid-April 2013. It took time for potential clients to be made aware of the service after the legal aid changes came into force in April 2013 and many had not approached them for help because they assumed they would not be entitled to assistance.
- The number of parents being referred to mediation or counselling, being advised on social welfare issues or agreeing parenting plans was also lower than expected. When the legal aid changes came into effect initially, many parents had rushed to beat the deadline to access mediation, which meant that there was a slow start to encourage parents in for mediation after that deadline. In many cases clients would attend an assessment or an initial appointment for legal advice but would then not return for further help.
- Take-up of counselling increased as time went on because staff were more successful in promoting the benefits to clients.
- On 1 November 2014 there were changes in the legal aid mediation rules. Clients could no longer approach the court without first being assessed by a mediator. Once they are made aware of mediation services, it is thought that many would consider using mediation instead of approaching the court.
- Changes to the rules around Legal Aid for mediation have meant that partners of clients eligible for Legal Aid can now access mediation, whether or not they qualify for Legal Aid. Howells were previously only referring non-Legal Aid parents to mediation as those eligible for Legal Aid were already funded; whereas now a non-Legal Aid partner can access an extra session, so some people on the scheme can now be offered three rather than two sessions. This has not affected clients who are above the Legal Aid threshold, who have accounted for a large part of the mediation take-up.
- The counsellor who was providing all counselling services was on sabbatical for March and April 2015, so clients were either referred to an alternative counsellor or they might have had a gap between their sessions waiting for his return.

### **PAM overview**

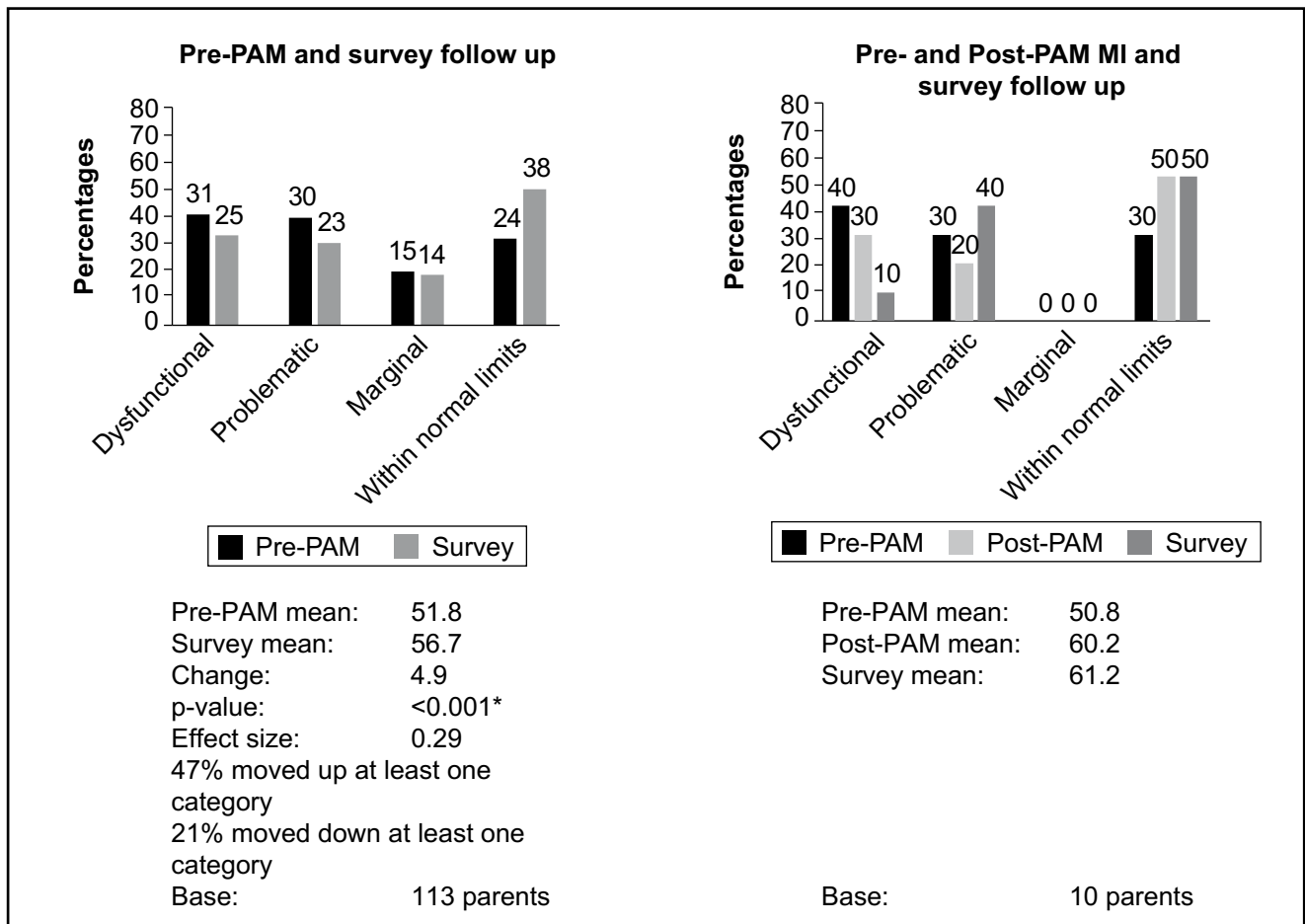
- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (32 per cent) or dysfunctional (25 per cent) at baseline – 28 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 3.9) (NB small numbers):
  - 46 per cent within normal limits post-support and 26 per cent dysfunctional.
- Level of change sustained over time:
  - Overall, significant mean change score of 4.9 between baseline and survey PAM.



MI data (small pre-post numbers)



**MI and survey data (very small numbers with all three data points)**



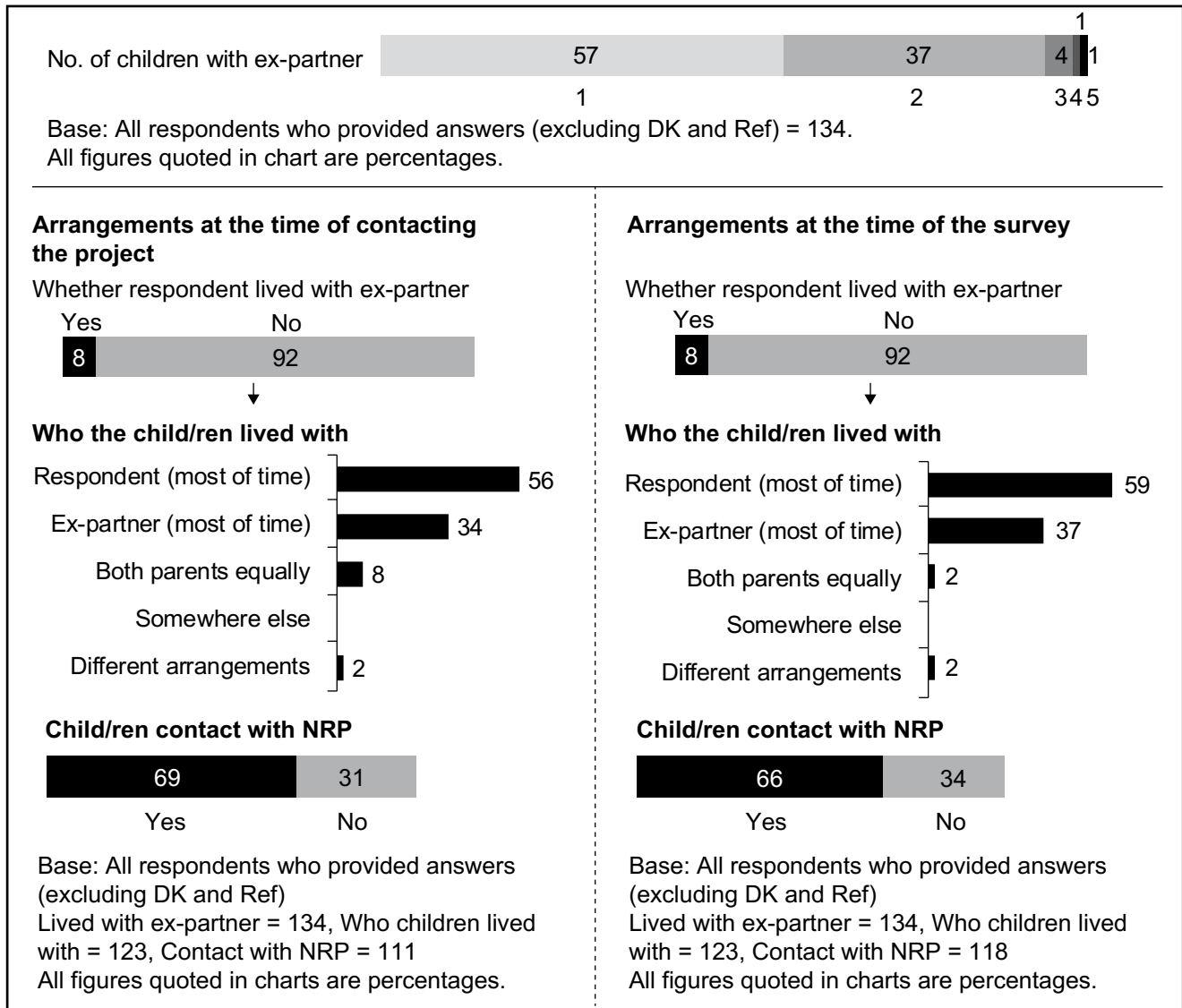
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	49	45
Female	51	55
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	18	16
25–34	41	38
35–44	28	29
45+	13	17
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	89	88
Black	4	6
Mixed	3	3
Asian	4	2
Other	1	1
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	17	22
Lower than A-level	83	78
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	13	16
No	87	84
<b>Base*</b>	481	134

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

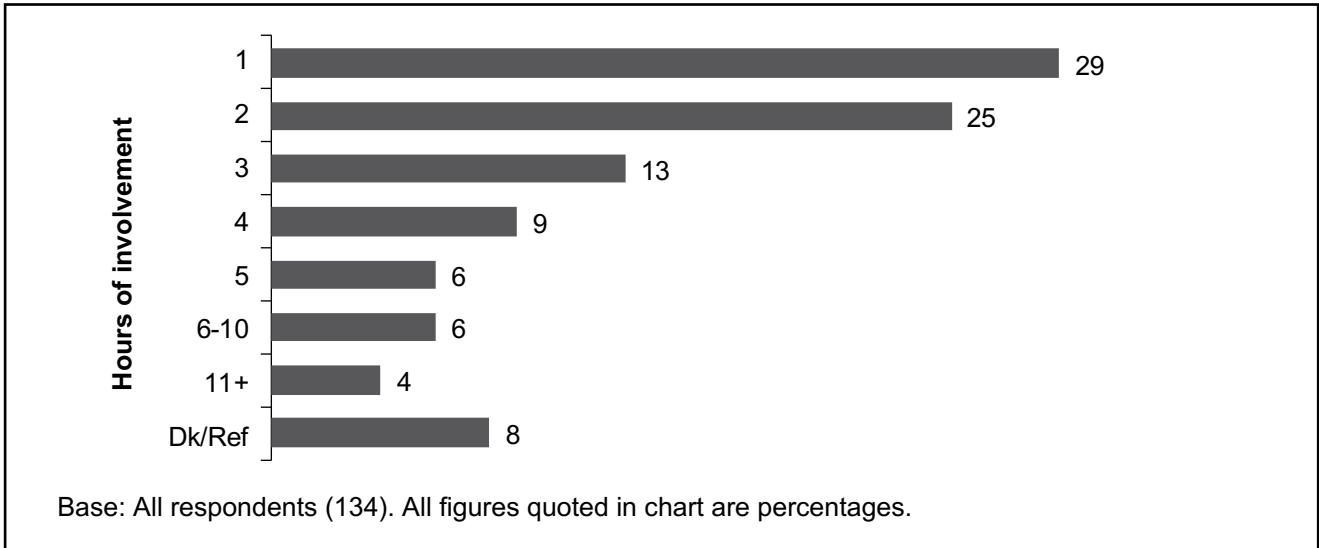
As illustrated, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is very similar to profile of parents in the MI data. There are some small variations, with the most noteworthy being a slightly higher education level amongst survey respondents.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

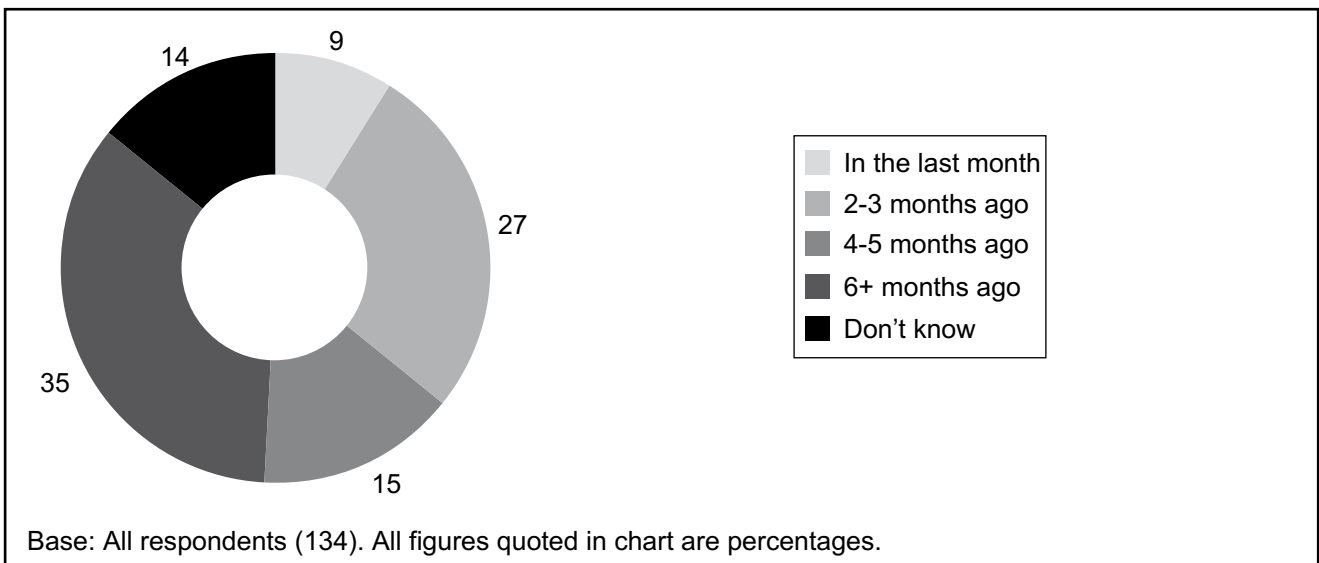


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of contact with the project varied, but just over half (54 per cent) of respondents had just one to two hours contact.



- The time since parents had contact with the project was wide ranging, although there was very few (9 per cent) where it was within the last month.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren, **nearly six in ten (58 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=134):
  - **40 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
    - ~ Of these (n=54), **78 per cent felt the project played a role in these improvements;**
  - 28 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 30 per cent reported they were same (with 2 per cent unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=123), **70 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 30 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=83), the most common were family-based arrangements with money payments (47 per cent) and CSA/CMS agreements (46 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=123), **55 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months.**

## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

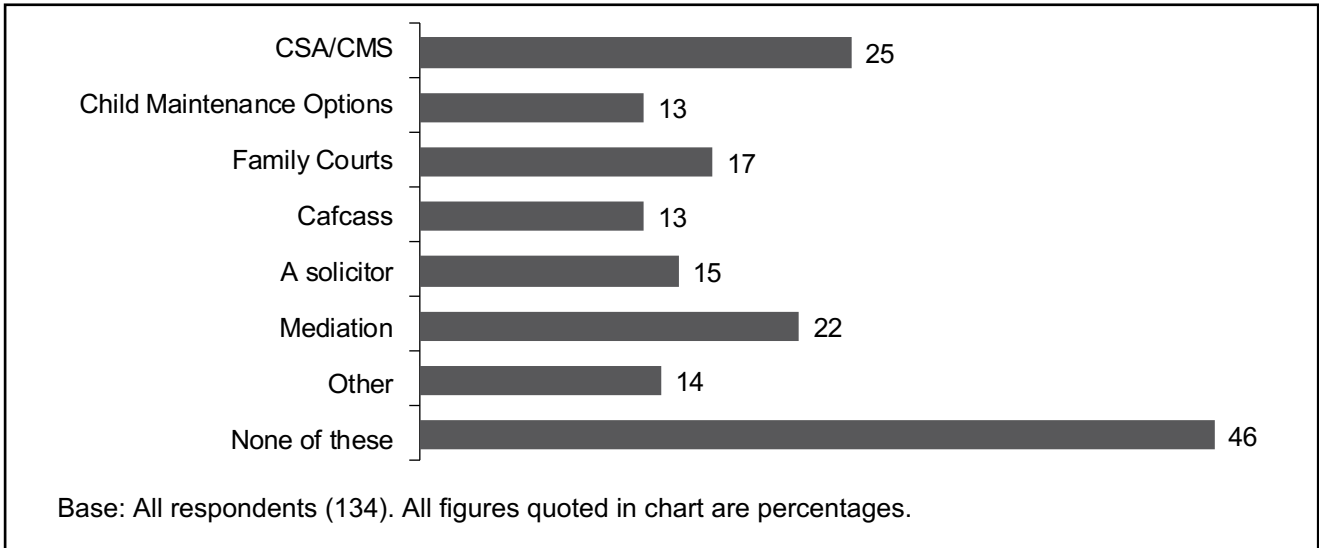
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=123):
  - **19 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 15 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 46 per cent reported they were same;
  - 17 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement.

## Use of the family courts

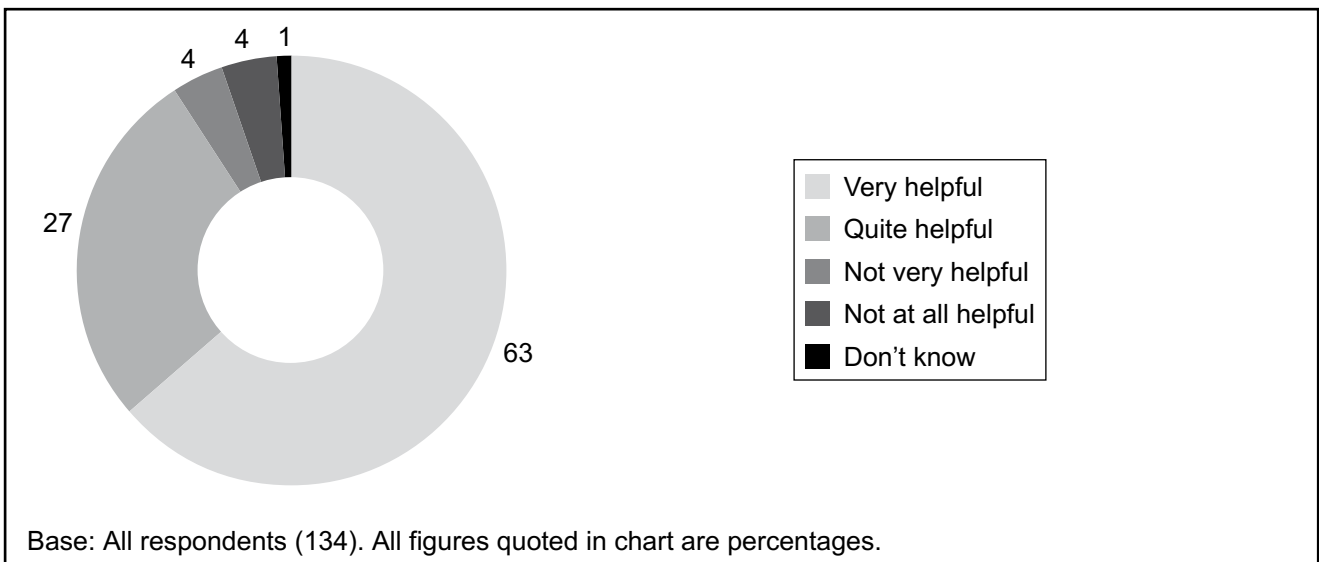
- Around one in ten (12 per cent, n=16) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
- One in five (19 per cent, n=26) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=127), a further 31 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=39), half (50 per cent) felt the project played a role in this decision.**

### Sources of support following the project

- Almost half (46 per cent) of respondents reported that they hadn't sought additional support from the listed sources following their contact with the project.



- Just over half (55 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, a quarter (26 per cent) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project (with 14 per cent saying it varies, and 5 per cent being unsure).
- Nine in ten (90 per cent) of respondents overall, felt that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.





## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Users were not necessarily able to avoid going to court but access to mediation and counselling, as well as legal advice, had made them **better informed and better prepared** (emotionally as well as in terms of understanding) to deal with this. They did not always distinguish clearly between the various aspects of the service, in particular, legal advice (which was often accompanied by writing solicitors' letters) and mediation.

There was good take up of the first session and ongoing **legal advice**:

- Users tend to be aware of this aspect of Howells as they are a well-known local law firm. Legal advice over the phone or face-to-face gave them a much **better understanding of their legal situation** and for some this, along with drafting letters, was all that was required.
- There was less demand for social welfare advice.

*'We think it's been a life changer for parents who wouldn't have access to Legal Aid – it's free, so people can't put it off [going to a solicitor].'*

(Project Manager)

*'I have more clarity about parental rights and responsibilities.'*

(Client)

*'It was most useful for clarifying what evidence to take to court, submitting it correctly so it didn't backfire.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

**Mediation** was taken up more by older parents and those on a middle income, who were likely to be more confident, had shared equity and understood mediation.

- They were more also likely to make use of it if the relationship was **reasonably stable**.
- Some were able to use mediation to draw up parenting agreements.
- In other cases, however, **ex-partners were not happy to take up the offer of mediation**; or communication broke down at the stage of solicitors sending letters, so the service stopped at this point.
- Where there was little trust and a high degree of conflict, or where previous attempts at mediation had failed, parents were **unlikely to try mediation**; and even if they did, were unlikely to succeed in avoiding a costly court process.

*'She wanted something in black and white...It's nice to have things in writing.'*

(Client)

*'The mediation people – there's nothing they can do.'*

(Client)

*'Where one party's not willing to participate it doesn't help in the slightest.'*

(Client)

*'We were too soon, it was still too raw, I would look into it [mediation] again, leave it a while.'*

(Client)

## Howells outcomes: impact on the individual and society

**Counselling** was suitable for those with more complex issues; it helped clients to gain confidence and to identify and get help with depression.

However some clients who had not achieved the desired result from the service as a whole felt the **overall impact had been negative**.

- Their hopes of gaining concessions from their ex-partner had been disappointed.
- The process of trying to work things through had reopened wounds.

Wider impacts were most likely to result from some parents being able to avoid a contested court case, having gained a better understanding of what was possible in the first session.

- The focus of the service meant that solicitors were able to step outside their normal procedures, for instance to phone a client's partner during a legal session, which could expedite drawing up a parenting arrangement.

Finance agreements were discussed and it sometimes sufficed to refer clients to the CMS website and calculator.

*'I could see notable differences in me [after counselling]. My confidence was flooding back...If I am happy, my family is happy. If it wasn't for Howells and the DWP scheme I have absolutely no idea where I would be now.'*

(Client)

*'[My ex-partner] doesn't accept anything, I have to abide by her rules or lump it...it's left me really sceptical.'*

(Client)

*'Mediation was no good for me, we should have split up and been amicable.'*

(Client)

*'It's a mistake to think that people will be able to completely agree [with each other] with this scheme.'*

(Project Manager)

## **(1) Pen portrait: Mediation early on in separation led to an amicable arrangement without court**

- Peter\* self-referred having found Howells on the internet. He had split up with his partner a few months earlier and their six-year-old son was living with her.
- His ex-partner wanted a document which would make her feel secure about custody; she was threatening to pursue legal action through a solicitor and he had only limited contact with their son.
- He had an initial phone consultation with Howells followed by two one-hour joint mediation sessions with his ex-partner.
- They were able to agree parenting and private financial arrangements; he was advised that if the case went to court he would be unlikely to have unsupervised access to his son so was pleased to have reached a written settlement amicably, outside of court.
- Howells offered them counselling or marriage guidance with a view to getting back together – the first session would have been free – but found mediation sufficient.
- He is now able to have unsupervised contact with his son while his ex-partner had custody, but will not be able to move from the area until he is 16.
- He was not initially aware that the mediation would be free and would have paid for it if need be, to keep his ex-partner happy.

*‘At that time, when I split up with my ex, it wasn’t amicable...she wanted it put in black and white, which I know is not court-proof, that our son would reside with her.’*

(Client)

*‘We were going to go a step further at that stage [after mediation], to counselling, but we decided we were getting on amicable for our son and it wasn’t the way to go.’*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Solicitors' letters helped but a court agreement was still seen as the answer**

- Linda\* self-referred to Howells after the police suggested she should get legal advice. She found Howells' number in the phone book.
- The problems related to her ex-partner's behaviour and his contact with their children, now aged three and seven.
- She had an initial half hour assessment and was told that she qualified for the service. She then had a further meeting where they discussed her options.
- Howells wrote letters to her ex-partner's solicitor; she was offered one free session of shuttle mediation, but because of the level of distrust did not pursue this.
- Howells corresponded at length with her ex-partner's solicitor; Linda had ongoing legal advice and was expecting to meet with her solicitor again, but this was hard to arrange due to lack of availability.
- Linda felt the service had helped her as she now knew more about her rights; the solicitors' letters formed the basis of an agreement and helped to defuse the conflict by removing the need for direct communication with her ex-partner.
- Nevertheless, she wanted the case to go to court and expected it would, to give her a legally binding document. Howells referred her to the CMS to sort out financial arrangements.

*'Mediation doesn't guarantee stability about when they go to their Dad's house... the court doesn't guarantee it but at least there's something in writing and if it doesn't happen.'*

(Client)

*'My children have a consistent lifestyle and I know that I'm not just doing something wrong, I've had some advice.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Correspondence could work well where mediation was not possible**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- The high profile of Howells in the local area, as a solicitors' firm offering mediation and legal advice around separation, meant that the service was more accessible. Clients found them by searching online or in the phone book, or by word of mouth.
- The Project Manager observed that clients in the upper income range often chose to enhance the free service offered, by paying for additional mediation sessions.
- Solicitors who were able to explain the legal situation clearly and set out options made clients feel more in control.
- The training of mediators was crucial, according to the Project Manager; they needed to be adaptable and willing to "have a go".
- However, where neither party was insisting on mediation, correspondence through solicitors could prove an effective way of reaching agreement; this allowed users to communicate their priorities to their ex-partner calmly.

## **The barriers to project effectiveness concerned the time taken and the unevenness of representation**

### **Barriers to project effectiveness**

- The fact that the two parties could not be supported equally limited the effectiveness of the model.
- It limited referrals from courts and other firms of solicitors, who felt it lacked fairness, and there was less incentive to participate for the partner who was offered only limited mediation.
- The Project Manager felt that the model would work much better if offered by two firms of solicitors in any area, so that each partner could receive the full service.
- Communication between solicitors could be a lengthy process, as the other partner could take time to reply.
- A longer lead in time would facilitate set-up and marketing.
- Travel in rural areas could be an issue; co-location of services locally was suggested.

*'We've suffered from being the only provider...that's been the real gap, drawback.'*

(Project Manager)

## **They valued solicitors' time and expected to pay but some would struggle to find the money**

### **Recommending the service**

- Some would recommend the service, provided that both partners want to try to reach agreement, as it was helpful to get an authoritative third party involved.
- Those with less co-operative partners and who had not achieved the outcome they wanted (even with mediation) were more sceptical.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Clients had been expecting to pay something when they got in touch with Howells – some knew the going rate for solicitors was about £150 an hour.
- A few would have been prepared to pay for the parts of the service which seemed most essential – for instance, solicitors' letters which their ex-partner might take seriously.
- They also looked at the issue of costs in the light of (much higher) barristers' fees, although these would have the advantage of producing a legally binding agreement.
- £100 an hour was too much for the clients on lower incomes; a much lower amount, say £20, might have been feasible.

*'I'd need to weigh it up, it's half my weekly wages.'*

(Client)



## E.6 Malachi

### **Project aim:**

To improve parental relationships and provide a better environment for children by providing clients with bespoke support services.

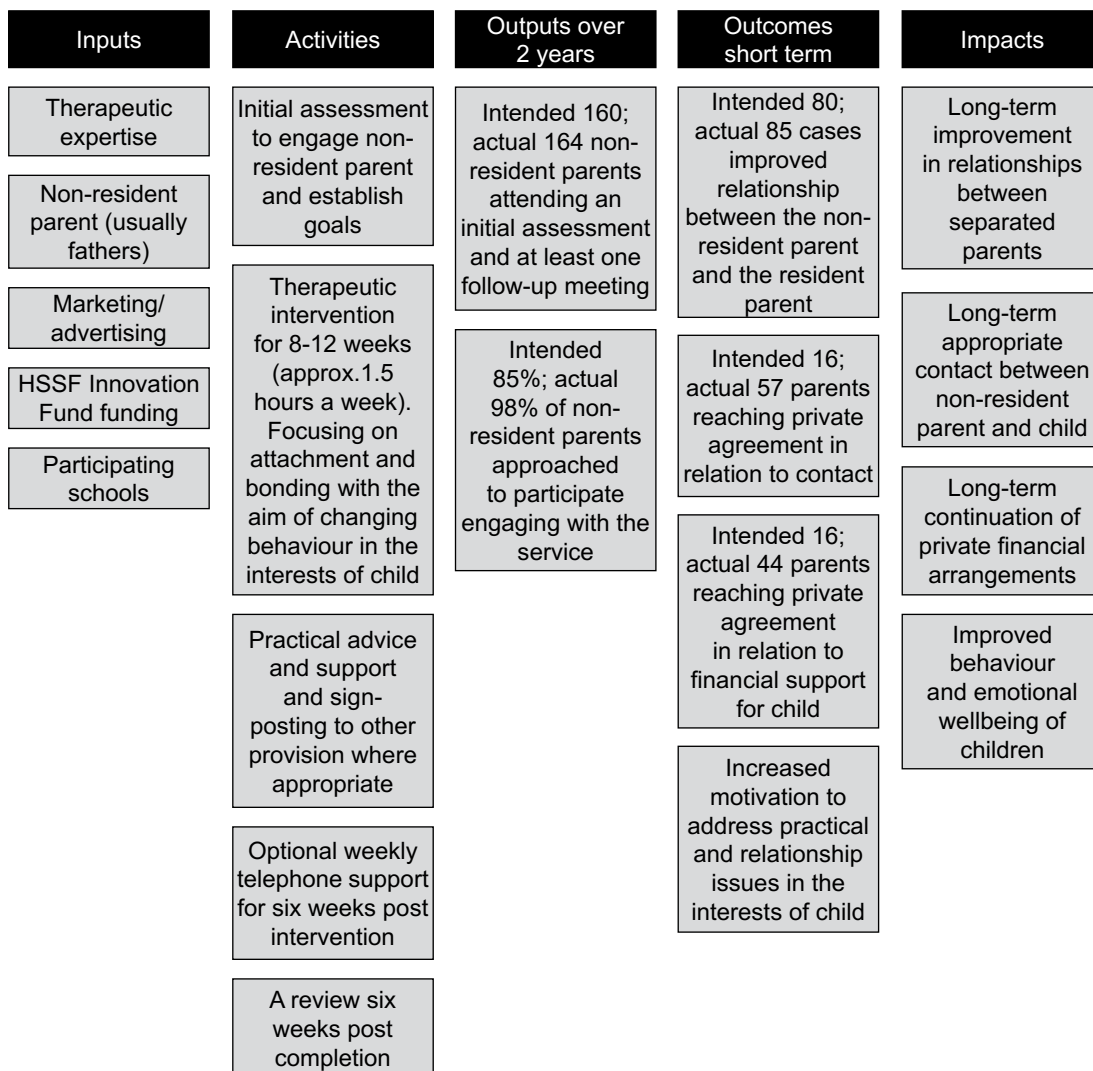
### **Project delivery:**

- Initial assessment to engage non-resident parent and establish goals.
- Therapeutic intervention for 8 to 12 weeks comprising weekly 1.5 hour sessions. Sessions focus on attachment and bonding, with the aim of changing behaviour in the interests of the child. Final sessions are potentially joint between both partners and may facilitate agreement on parenting plans.
- Practical advice and support and sign-posting to other provision where appropriate.
- Optional weekly telephone support for six weeks post-intervention.
- A review six weeks post-completion.

### **Target audience:**

- The project is aimed at non-resident parents (usually fathers).
- Although involved in the referral process and, in some instances, in the final therapeutic session, resident parents are offered support outside this project, i.e. through other services offered by Malachi.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
160 non-resident parents attending an initial assessment and at least one follow-up meeting	As recorded in the qualitative (in March/April 2015): 164 non-resident parents attended an initial assessment and at least one follow-up meeting	42 parents	201 pre-PAMS 196 pre- and post-PAMS	Not included	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
85% of non-residents parents approached to participate engaging with the service.	98% of non-residents parents approached to participate engaging with the service.				Stage 2 – Total 10 interviews: 1 Project manager 3 staff 6 clients
	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 249 individual parents started, of which 209 'completed'				Stage 3 – Total 6 interviews: 2 Project manager 4 clients

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- Malachi was targeting non-resident parents living in Birmingham.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- The MI data suggests the parents who took part are largely line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=39), 95 per cent lived in the West Midlands.
  - Amongst parents who recorded their caring status for the children reported (n=39), around six in ten (64 per cent) were the non-resident parent. However, 18 per cent reported that they shared the care with their ex-partner, 15 per cent reported they were the main care giving parent, and 3 per cent reported that the child/ren lived elsewhere.

## The strength of Malachi's relationships with schools supported project engagement

### Reach

- Malachi exceeded its targets and attributed this to their relationships with schools, their main referrers.
- Existing connections with schools supported project outcomes. Often Malachi was familiar with clients, their families and wider circumstances. Similarly, non-resident parents were often aware of Malachi through their child/child's school.
- Some initial concerns among clients over Malachi's role/status acted as a slight barrier to engagement.

### Engagement

- Most of those who engaged with the service completed the project.
- The project felt this was, in part, due to the lack of other services for this target group, but also the project's effectiveness.

### Drop out

- Only a minority of clients dropped out of the service.
- Common reasons for drop-out included:
  - Entrenched parental conflict.
  - New partners becoming involved.
  - Practical issues (e.g. moving home, new job etc.).

*'I wasn't sure at first...I was not fully aware of [Malachi] and what the service does. I was thinking they were like social services, [and wondered] have I been identified as a bad parent...they must be thinking I am a bad parent.'*

(Client)

*'If they have had a bad experience with others groups like social services or CSA, then you do need to breakdown those barriers and show it as different to others...'*

(Staff)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Overall, there were no significant changes to the project's aims or delivery. However, there were a number of elements that turned out slightly differently than expected.
- In most cases 8-10 weeks of therapeutic support was sufficient for non-resident parents to reach their desired outcomes, although all clients were able to continue for up to 12 weeks.
- Staff and clients believed those with complex or multiple needs required a greater number of sessions – 12 weeks was felt to be too short.
- Project staff felt in the future they would change the timelines of client engagements to provide greater flexibility. Currently they run engagements on a quarterly basis. This means that, it can be hard to engage clients if they approach someone in the middle of the quarter. In the future they would look to offer the project on a rolling basis.
- Non-resident parents were offered up to six weeks of ongoing support by phone after completion of the intervention but the majority of parents did not need this support. However, all parents received a telephone call six weeks after the completion of the intervention to evaluate their progress.

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

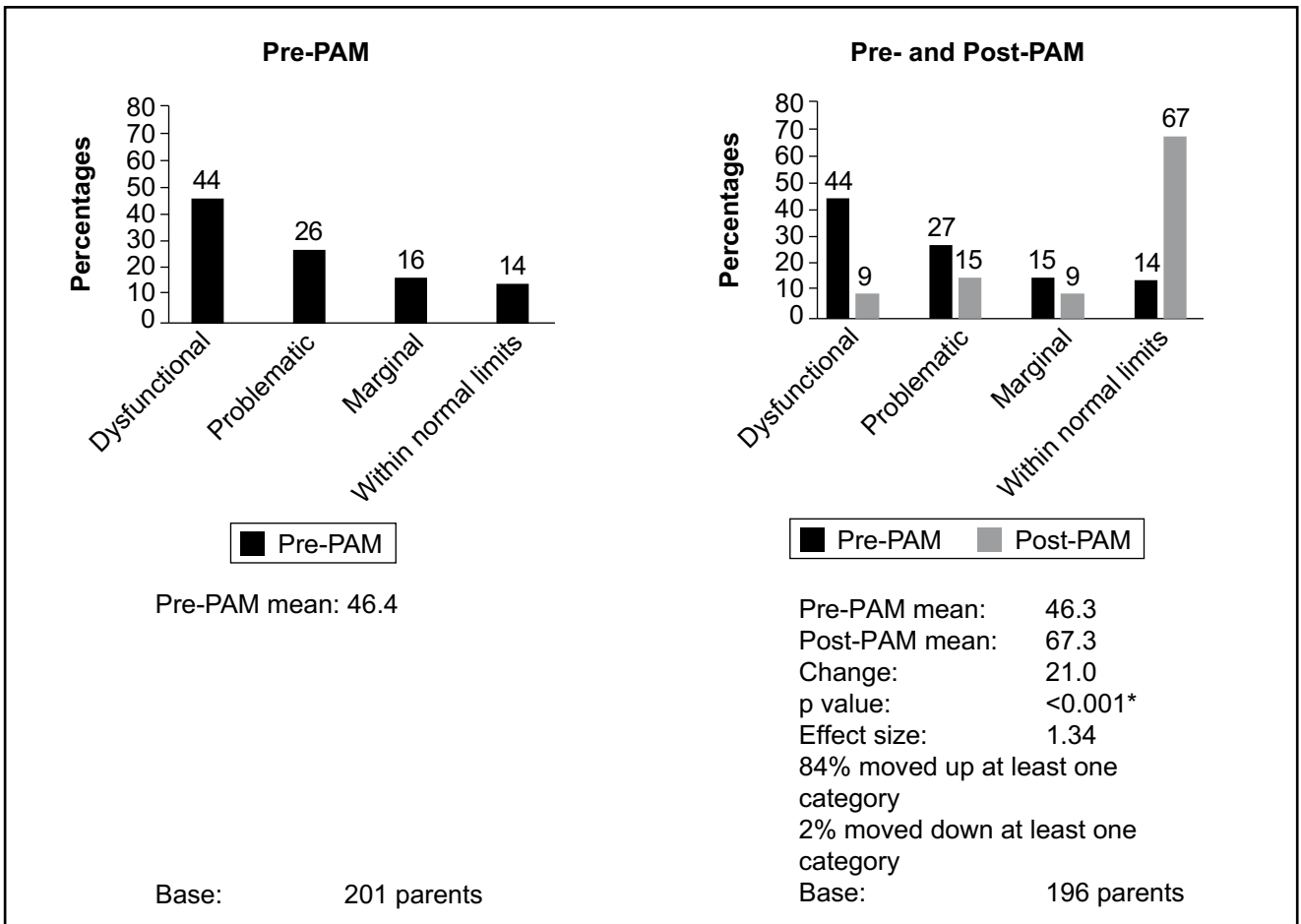
- While there was a high completion rate of pre- and post-PAM questionnaires for both resident and non-resident parents, there was a lower response rate to the MI questionnaire, require by DWP. Malachi reported that many non-resident parents found the questions intrusive and refused to complete it when asked to do so during their sessions.
- Although broadly positive about the PAM, staff felt that the PAM was overly clinical and could be reworded so that it is easier for clients to understand and complete. Staff also would have preferred to deliver the PAM electronically. This was perceived to be more secure and would reduce the use of paper (and associated costs).
- The project aimed to match staff and clients' experience and demographics wherever possible, feeling this supported achieving positive outcomes. Initially the project did not have any male mediators and later employed a male staff member as some clients refused to speak to female staff.
- In the future, the project would look to involve the child in the therapeutic sessions so that their 'voice' could be heard.
- The project would also seek to shorten the time between the initial referral and the first face-to-face appointment, particularly if access to children was being denied by the resident parent.

### **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- data, no survey.
- Large proportion of clients dysfunctional (44 per cent) at baseline, with a further 26 per cent problematic – only 14 per cent within normal limits.
- Large and significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 21.0):
  - 67 per cent within normal limits post-support and 9 per cent dysfunctional.



MI data



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

One of the project's greatest impacts has been on the **relationships between parents and their children**, both in terms of the amount of **access** parents have and the **nature and quality of interactions**.

- A number of fathers had **increased their access** to their children through engaging in Malachi. While in some cases this was due to reduced parental conflict making access easier, in other instances increase parenting skills (developed through advice given on the project) make managing children's behaviour easier which in turn lead to fathers requesting more contact with their child.
- A number of clients felt their own and **their ex-partners' behaviour towards their child has changed** as a result of using Malachi's services. This was felt to support their relationship with their ex-partner and their child and reduced conflict, particularly where one parent's treatment of the child had been a point of disagreement.

*'I don't think [my daughter] would be here [in Birmingham]. I think [my ex-partner] would have gone to live with her mum. I don't think I'd see [my daughter] at all. [My ex-partner's] mum was willing to help her move [down to London from Birmingham].'*

(Client)

*'If Malachi didn't get involved, I probably still wouldn't be seeing my daughter. It probably would have gotten worse.'*

(Client)

*'My son is five and his mother was still giving him the dummy which he did not need at his age...through this [project] his mother no longer gives him the dummy.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

As a result of improved access and changes to parental behaviour, a number of parents have reported an **improvement in their children's behaviour** both at home and at school. This was also been reported to Malachi staff through school staff and social workers.

Clients commonly said that the **quality of their communication with their ex-partner had improved** and that, as a result, there was less conflict overall and in the presence of their children. In some instances this was facilitated by less verbal communication (e.g. via a contact book or text) or through the creation of the parenting contract.

*'She [daughter] is less angry because she's seeing her dad.'*

(Client)

*'My son is a lot happier now when he comes over. It used to only be temper. When I told him 'no' he would run round the house hitting things and hiding. Now when I tell him 'no' he'll apologise and he'll give me a hug. He'll then go off and play and be really happy!'*

(Client)

*'We've almost stopped all direct contact...it's all text now, but there are less arguments.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Several clients reported an **improved emotional state**, as a result of using the services. Having an opportunity to speak with someone about their feelings was believed to be cathartic and beneficial to their general wellbeing.

- A few said they were **more able to manage their anger** or were **less depressed** as a result of the therapeutic sessions and that this had empowered them to make changes in their lives, e.g. gain employment etc.
- In turn, this had placed them in a better position to gain contact with their children in the future.

A few clients had come to **financial arrangements** as a result of using the service – e.g. non-resident parent providing petrol money for the resident parent to drop off their child/pick them up.

*‘Just having someone to speak to about the situation was pretty useful. Me and [my ex-partner] we were pretty close and didn’t have that many people around us...I didn’t know what to do. Things are a lot easier now.’*

(Client)

*‘I was very low when I started, depressed not working, after a little chat with them, it gave me the kick up the backside to get things sorted for my children...Now I have a better outlook, better attitude. I even got some qualifications. I done forklift training in a month and it has opened doors and have just got a job.’*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Malachi staff believed that the project had positively impacted other services and society more broadly, and **that they had reduced the amount of time clients engaged with other services**, including social services, the police, and the courts. They believed that they had a particularly profound impact on the schools they worked with through this project. Staff believed they would have saved those institutions time and money.

Although a few clients mentioned they were making less use of other services, and most interviewed said they had not gone on to access other services, the project itself **struggled to quantify its impact**. Their impressions were largely anecdotal.

*'Schools can focus on teaching a child, rather than managing pastoral issues. Now mum and dad are more amicable and the child is more settled, the school can focus on teaching the child rather than managing issues at home... That saves time for the school, it also allows the child to achieve better, contribute better in later life and there is an economic well-being factor.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We get on better now, we are not at each other's throats all the time and getting the police involved.'*

(Client)

*'[Without Malachi] I probably would have been broke now through solicitors and that wasn't a guarantee anyway that I could see her [daughter] through solicitors.'*

(Client)

## (1) Pen portrait: Mark's\* relationship with his son improved as a result of Malachi's intervention

- Mark's\* ex-partner initiated contact with Malachi. Mark was eager to become involved. His five-year-old son has some physical and mental disabilities. Mark was hoping that Malachi would improve communications with his ex-partner to enable him to be kept up-to-date with his son's treatment.
- Following the initial assessment, Mark had sessions with Malachi every fortnight and feels this has had a positive impact on his relationship with his ex-partner, his parenting skills and his knowledge of his son's conditions:
  - Mark now communicates directly with his ex-partner, rather than through his new partner.
  - He feels more competent and able to manage his son's behaviour due to the advice and support he has received from the service. As a result, his son is happier and his behaviour has improved.
  - Prior to the service Mark did not understand why his son needed to attend therapy and did not regard it as necessary. Through engaging with Malachi he now has a better understanding of these conditions and the impact his son's therapy has.

Mark believes that, were it not for Malachi, he would not be seeing his son as often due to the challenges he faced with his son's behaviour. Now he asks if he can see his son more often or "keep him for longer".

*[My ex-partner and I] talk more due to Malachi. I used to just let my new missus speak with my ex and ask her to sort things out. Now I do it.'*

(Client)

*'It's helped me know how to control my son more...They've given me some good [advice, such as] not to speak too loudly and get on your knees so you're the same height as you might scare him. They've taught me a lot [about parenting].'*

(Client)

*'My son is a lot happier now when he comes over. It used to only be temper. When I told him 'no' he would run round the house hitting things and hiding. Now when I tell him 'no' he'll apologise and he'll give me a hug. He'll then go off and play and be really happy!'*

*Client*

\* Not his real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Kerry and Kyle agreed school pick-up times, substantially reducing conflict**

- Malachi engaged with Kerry and Kyle\* at the request of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) worker.
- At the time, Kerry and Kyle were experiencing a high level of conflict over the children and communications had broken down between them.
- On a regular basis the parents would enter arguments with the school over who collected the children each day. The children would often not know who was meant to pick them up and, as a result, would become upset.
- Malachi case workers engaged with both parents. Over the course of the 12-week programme, Kerry and Kyle were able to come to an agreement over access and drew up a contract detailing which parent would collect the children on each day. This was then shared with the school.
- As a result of creating the contract and sharing it with everyone involved, levels of conflict between parents have been reduced and the emotional wellbeing of all parties increased.
- The impact of Malachi's work with this couple has been noted in the CAF worker's safeguarding report.
- The school involved has also engaged with Malachi on a permanent basis as a result of the project's impact with this family. This has enabled Malachi to extend its core service offer to other children and families.

*'Mum was going to school ranting. Dad was going to school ranting. The children would be very upset not knowing who would be picking them up. We had a structure put in place with the contract so everyone knew who would be picking the child up.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Mum and dad were happy as they had agreed to the contract, so there was no conflict. They have it in writing. They could sit together, say what was annoying them and compromise.'*

(Project Manager)

\* Not their real names.

## The quality and training of staff was key to project success

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The project managers felt that the **quality of project staff** – their experience, training, personalities and backgrounds – were the key to the project's success. They recruited people who possessed engagement skills and who had similar experiences and backgrounds to their clients. They also empowered staff to disclose these experiences, which supported client engagement and project effectiveness.
- The initial assessment allowed **targeted, tailored support to be offered to clients**. This, along with the creation of an action plan in the first few therapeutic sessions, helped the service and the client focus on what they hoped to achieve and what was required to move forward. It also made each engagement highly tailored to clients individual circumstances.
- Clients valued the **independence and impartiality of staff**. The sessions gave them an opportunity to speak about their situation and give voice to their emotions, which the neutrality and 'authority' of project staff helped clients feel supported.
- Staff were very **flexible** and able to support clients outside office hours, in the evening and weekend.

*'It's not just qualifications, it's personality...they have to have engagement skills. We don't like to walk around with a badge on, which we do. It's our face, it's our smile, it's our personalities which matter and how we really live our core values.'*

(Project Manager)

*'I'm not the kind of person that likes to ask for help...in the meeting where we were arguing [the staff] were really good and offered good advice.'*

(Client)

*'We go in to relationship build. We tell people we are not here to tell you what to do, we are here to listen...We are not dictatorial. We listen to what they want. We see here you are now, here are where you want to be lead by the parents and solutions focused.'*

(Project Manager)

*'I could say what I wanted...I was given the opportunity to speak and someone took interest. [I've] never had that before.'*

(Client)



## Collaboration and compromise supported long-term impact

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The **joint agreement between parents**, created and signed in the final few sessions of the project, were believed to be a useful tool for long-term parental cooperation. The document was felt by staff to be a visual symbol of parental collaboration and to codify targets and standards of behaviour. It could also act as a useful future aid if parents fell back on past behaviour.
- Malachi's **existing relationships with organisations** in the community, established them as a responsible, reputable and trusted organisation and also meant (when clients were referred through this organisation) they had a rounded understanding of their clients' whole family and wider circumstances.

*'The contract is not legally binding but it is an agreement between mum and dad that they both sign...The impact is that it is a visual [sign] that you have got to an agreement...it sets targets and rules.'*

(Staff)

## Lack of legal accountability and tight timeframes created a barrier to impact

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Although the production of an agreement document at the end of the therapeutic sessions was felt to be useful by both clients and project staff, the fact that it was **not a legally enforceable** document was felt to be a hindrance among clients.
- Although the project's delivery length – 12 weeks – was ample for most, some staff and clients felt **additional time was need for clients with more complex needs**. Similarly, if CAF or social services became involved with the child that would often extend the amount of time required for the programme.
- Some **operational issues** (particularly the quarterly engagement structure) delayed clients start with the project.
- **Influence of client's wider/new families** (e.g. new partners) created additional complexity to engagement and, in some instances, led to client drop-out.

*'At the moment, they [ex-partner] can stop the contact again...but it doesn't necessarily put them in any trouble.'*

(Client)

*'I would pay if a legal advice component was added to it, as compared to 12 sessions with a solicitor it would be cheaper. However, without the legal pull, there are no guarantees.'*

(Client)

*'[Without Malachi] I probably would have been broke now through solicitors and that wasn't a guarantee anyway that I could see her [daughter] through solicitors.'*

(Client)

## Although most would recommend the service, clients' willingness to pay was mixed

### Recommending the service

- Clients taking part in interviews said they would recommend the service and, in several cases, had already done so.
- The service was believed to be suitable for clients in most circumstances.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Staff felt that clients would be willing to pay for the service but that, due to their employment status, many would be unable to do so.
- They reflected that charging for the service may also be quite complex and have unintended consequences (e.g. paying for the service may reduce the amount clients were able to financially support their children). Consequently, staff were unsure how much they would charge.
- Clients' willingness to pay was mixed. Most said it would depend on the cost of the project, particularly in relation to solicitors' fees, and that they would want some form of guarantee they would achieve their desired outcome.

*'I think some of them would pay, though a few of our dads don't work...If they are having to pay for the service and we are trying to set up a financial arrangement for the children, if you charge them they will give less to support their children as their budgets are so tight.'*

(Project Manager)

*'If it was solicitor's prices then, to be fair with you, no [I wouldn't be willing to pay].'*

(Client)

*'I'd want a guarantee that I was going to see my kid at the end of it. I wouldn't want to be paying all that money and then not see my child.'*

(Client)

## **E.7 Mediation Now**

**Project aim:**

To teach parents strategies to manage all issues relating to their children without recourse to the court or the Child Support Agency.

**Project delivery:**

- Following a preliminary assessment, parents attend four 1.5 hour joint sessions, held fortnightly. Work is conducted on a face-to-face basis with a mediator and covers:
  - Session 1: Planning in time to communicate: identification of triggers and when to communicate.
  - Session 2: How to communicate: clarity of communication and how to listen.
  - Session 3: Healthy management of conflict: awareness of destructive patterns of behaviour and STOP signs. In this session parents were also given Child Maintenance Options Family-based Arrangement Form relating to child maintenance to work on together.
  - Session 4: Consideration of Family-based Arrangement Form and how or whether this has been completed.

**Target audience:**

- The project was designed to be suitable for all separating/separated parents, although the core Mediation Now target group were standard legal aid clients.
- Clients reflect a broad range of characteristics.
- In the South Hampshire area.

## Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Intended outcomes short term	Intended outcomes mid term
Separated parents	Each parent attends an individual assessment appointment	Intended 286; actual 198 referrals	Resident parents more aware of importance of communication with non-resident parent about child	Resident parent places greater importance on need for non-resident parent's involvement in decisions about their child
Separating parents		Intended 120; actual 100 couples attend the joint sessions		
Mediation expertise	Signposting to other services	Intended 60; actual 44 Family-based Arrangement Forms (child maintenance) completed	Parents have increased awareness of benefits of collaborative parenting for their children	Parent has greater confidence that the other parent sees their child in the way they do
Referrals: Existing referrals to Mediation Now, self-referral, judges, mediators, family lawyers, GPs and other health professionals	Four x 1.5 hour joint sessions with both parents and mediator			Increased confidence in their ability to make decisions together about their children
Staff training in prepare/enrich approach				Increased confidence in their ability to deal with conflict when it arises without use of external resources such as the court or CSA
Marketing				
Innovation Fund Funding				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
286 referrals 120 couples to attend joint sessions	As Identified in the qualitative (in March/April 2015): 198 referrals	191 parents	165 pre-PAMS 130 pre- and post-PAMS 45 pre- and survey PAMS	48 parent interviews	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
60 Family-based Arrangement Forms to be completed	100 couples attended joint sessions 40 Family-based Arrangement Forms completed		38 pre-, post- and survey PAMS		Stage 2 – Total 11 interviews: 1 Project manager 4 staff 6 clients
	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 406 couples started, 185 'completed'				Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## **Target versus achieved clients**

- Mediation Now was targeting separated or separating families living in Hampshire County Council and Portsmouth City Council areas.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- In the MI data, only comparisons can be made to the geographical area that parents were from:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=183), all parents lived in the South East.

## Engagement not dissimilar to levels seen in other mediation services

### Reach

- Mediation Now achieved its targets and, at some points, had to turn clients away.
- The courts were the project's main referrer and more attended via this channel than anticipated. Referrals also came from Cafcass, solicitors and other project services.
- The project was promoted amongst GPs, schools, relevant solicitor practices, individual solicitors via the courts and with family courts.

### Engagement

- Court involvement meant initial attendance was often compulsory. Once in the service, engagement was felt to be good and comparable to other mediation services.
- Engagement varied between types of clients and their willingness and capacity to engage with the service.

### Drop out

- Though drop-outs rates were high at the project's outset, these declined from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. The project manager attributed this to the 'threat'\* of charging clients if they did not complete.
- Non-completers were either ejected by the service itself, experienced practical barriers to engagement (lack of time, location of centre, language issues), disliked the mediation process, or feared their ex-partner.

*'Once the district judges and Cafcass are referring in, the solicitors will start referring in, as they think you'll get sent there anyway so you may as well do it now. That was helpful.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We have not been able to keep up with the demand.'*

(Staff)

*'It's almost easier to have the council house people who say it as it is, than the middle class people who are more manipulative...there is always a hidden agenda.'*

(Staff)

\* This threat was never acted upon.



## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Although broadly speaking the project would not make changes to its target audience, Mediation Now learnt that the programme is not suitable for those:
  - who are recently separated or in the process of separating, where one party hopes they can reconcile with their former partner;
  - who have unresolved financial issues between them;
  - with learning difficulties (the concepts can be too challenging for them);
  - with a personality disorder or schizophrenia (as they lack empathy).
- Parents who hope to discuss and make sense of the issues that contributed to the end of their relationship are unlikely to find the programme, which focuses on co-parenting communication strategies, helpful.
- A higher proportion of referrals came from the courts than was expected. Project staff built a good relationship with judges, magistrates and legal advisors in court via training and they were also keen to refer to Mediation Now when they heard how successful the programme had been for the first few participating parents.
- The high number of referrals from court reduced the number of parents being referred to the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) workshop run by Cafcass and provided in the early stages of separation. Project staff identified that the programmes are very different and this project provides more in depth one-to-one support, while the SPIP workshop is a useful basic introduction in a group setting.

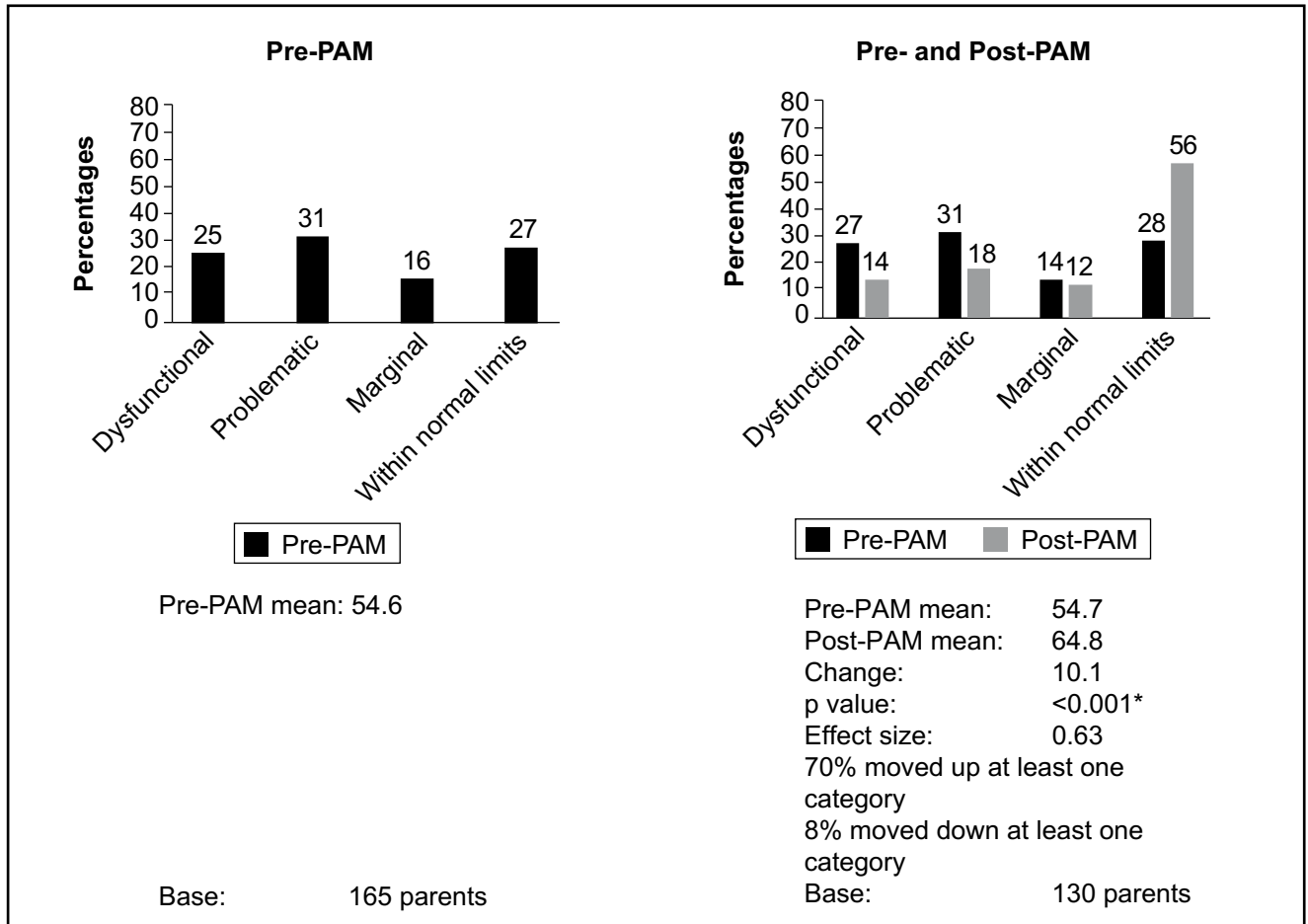
## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Some parents (particularly those who are self-employed or live out of the area) found the number of sessions too burdensome. If parents were reluctant to attend four separate sessions, sessions 3 and 4 would be combined. Instead of two 1.5 hour sessions, they would receive one two-hour session.
- In reality, parents needed more support than was anticipated to complete the Family-based Arrangement Forms (FBAF). Consequently, they were completed with the mediator during the sessions rather than outside of the sessions.
- The number of FBAFs completed was lower than expected. When the project started, many parents expressed reluctance to discuss the financial arrangements with their ex-partner for fear of an argument. Therefore, many of the parents in the first few months of the project did not attempt to complete a FBAF. Mediators soon realised that it was important for parents to be able to deal with issues that arise with their financial arrangements in the future, so they were strongly encouraged to work on an FBAF from the outset.
- Project staff noted that Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) scores may need to be interpreted alongside some background information about the family situation. In some cases, one parent might be hoping to reconcile the relationship so has very positive PAM scores to begin with. Then in later sessions when it is clear that this is not going to happen, their PAM scores were lower, which is more reflective of their separation journey than the success of the programme.

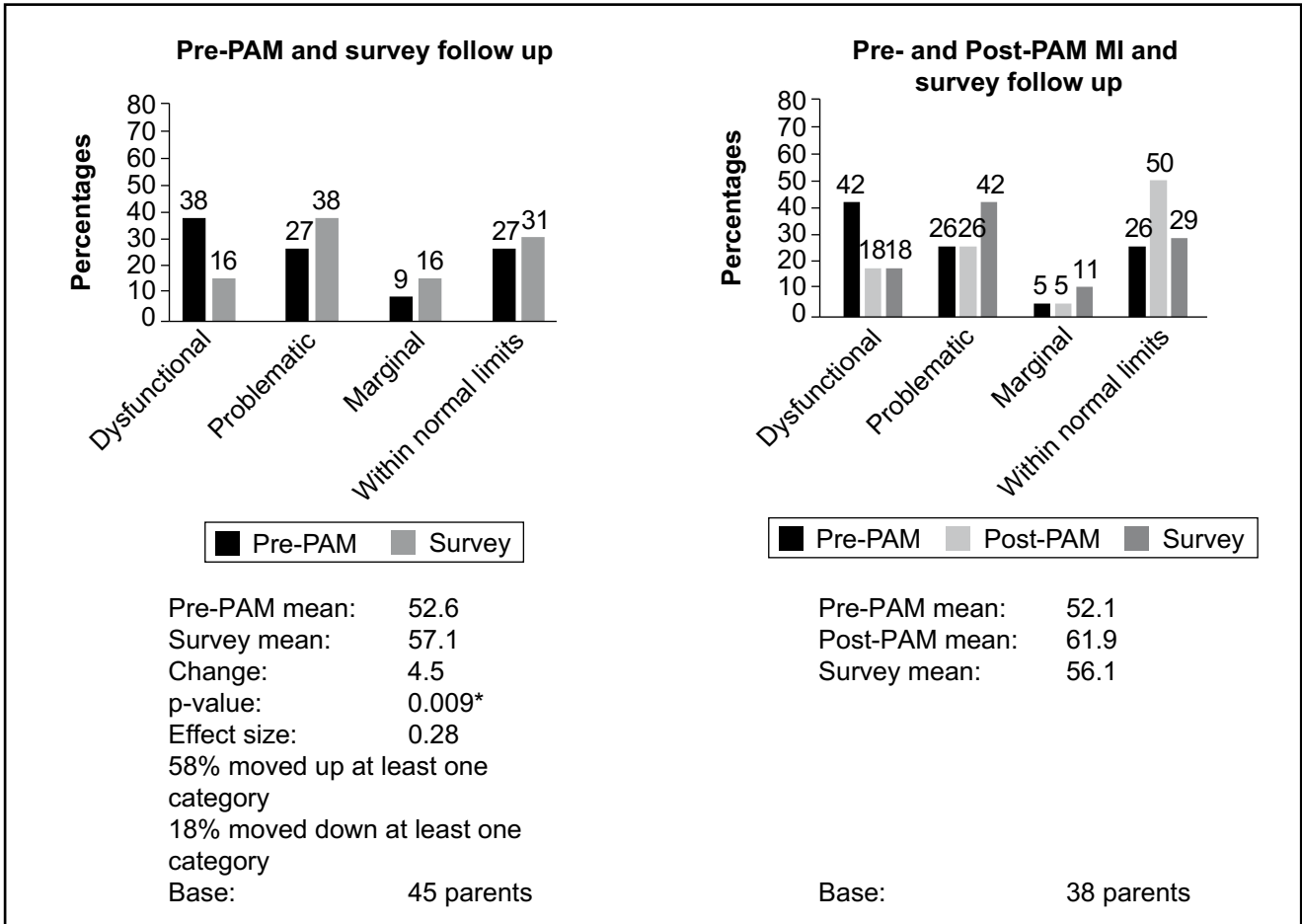
## **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (31 per cent) or dysfunctional (25 per cent) at baseline – 27 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 10.1):
  - 56 per cent within normal limits post-support and 14 per cent dysfunctional.
- Significant improvements continue to be evident by the time of the survey – but drop compared to immediately post-support (small numbers):
  - mean change score of 4.5 between baseline and survey PAM.

MI data



**MI and survey data (small numbers with three data points)**



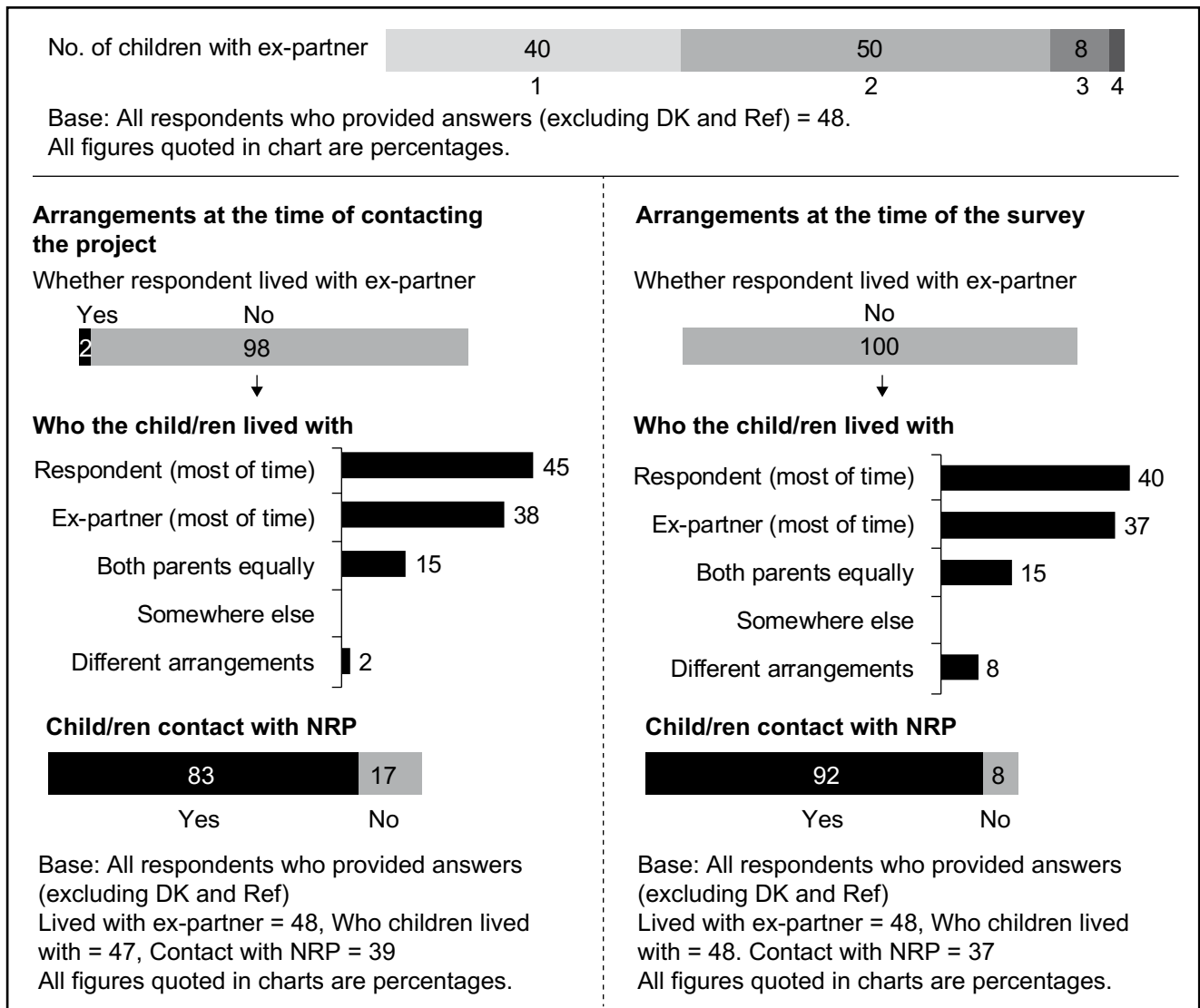
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	49	52
Female	51	48
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	12	2
25–34	38	38
35–44	33	35
45+	17	25
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	97	96
Black	-	-
Mixed	2	-
Asian	1	2
Other	1	2
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	19	26
Lower than A-level	81	74
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	12	15
No	88	85
<b>Base*</b>	191	48

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

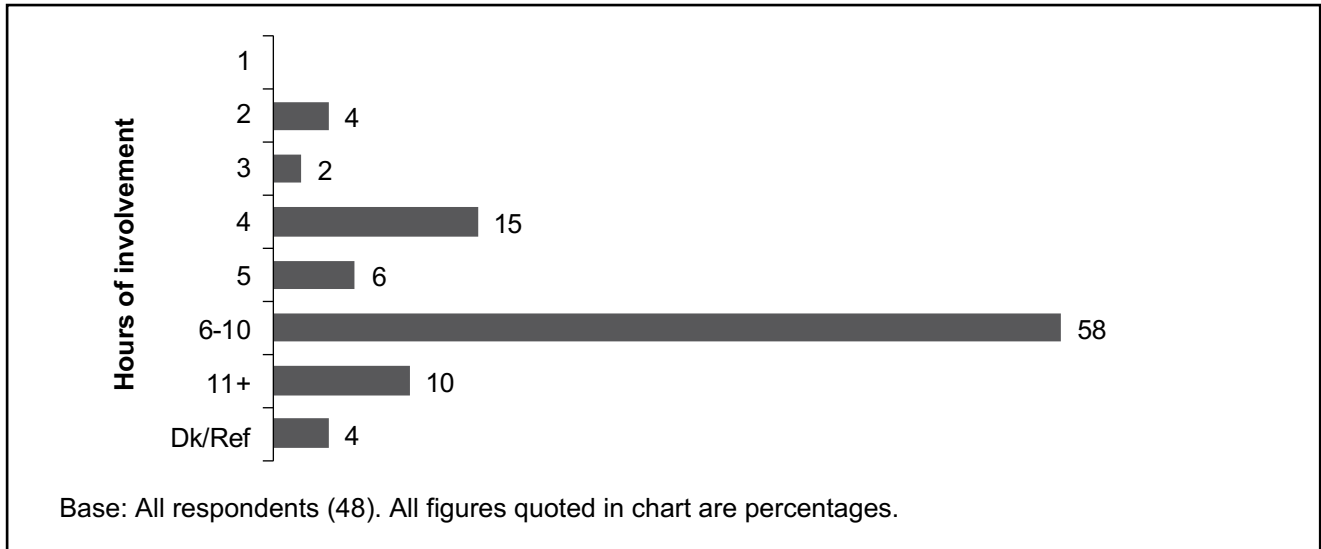
As illustrated, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is similar to profile of parents in the MI data. The most noteworthy difference is the older age profile and higher qualification level of survey respondents.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

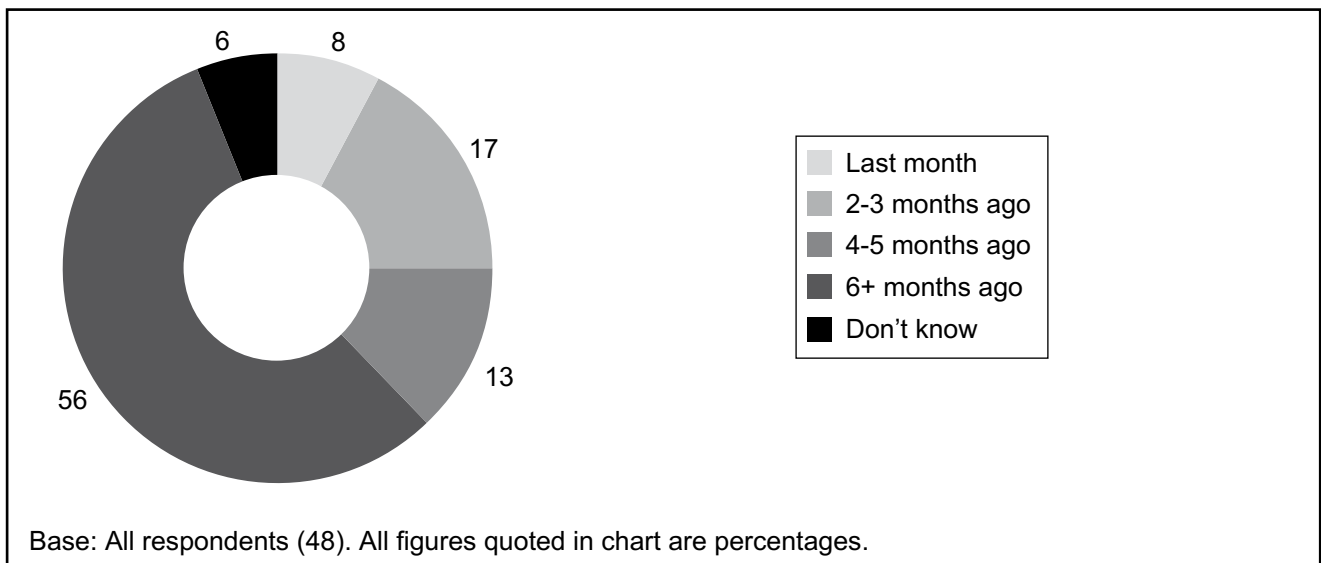


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of contact with the project varied, but seven in ten (68 per cent) of respondents had six or more hours of contact.



- Similarly, at the time of the survey over half (56 per cent) had not had contact with the project for at least six months.





## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=34), **almost six in ten (59 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=48):
  - **54 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
  - 15 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 29 per cent reported they were same (2 per cent were unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=48), **over two thirds (81 per cent) had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 19 per cent without.

- Where arrangements were in place (n=39), the most common were CSA/CMS agreements (49 per cent) family-based arrangements with money payments (46 per cent).
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=48), **77 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 95 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

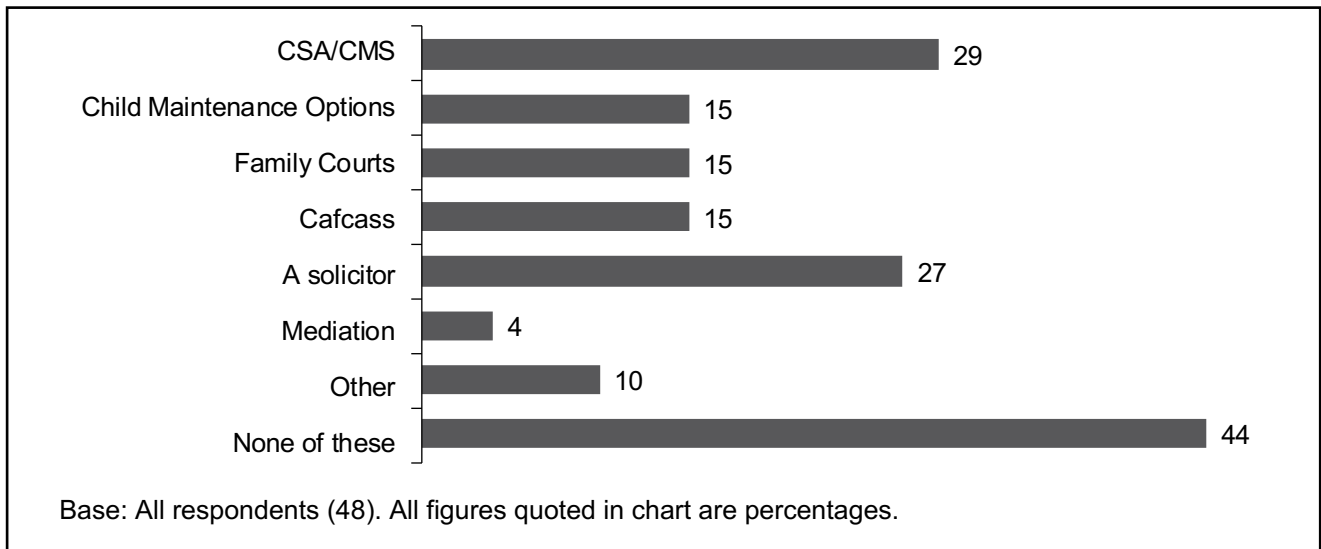
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=48):
  - **12 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 23 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 52 per cent reported they were same;
  - 8 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement (4 per cent were unsure).

## Use of the family courts

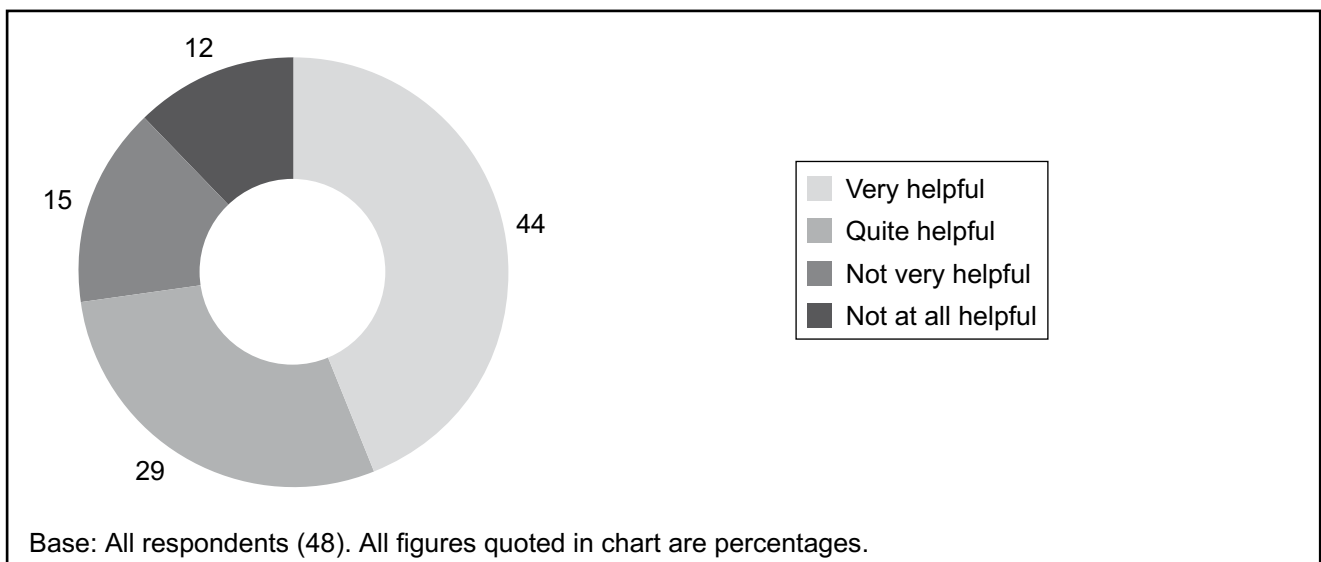
- 63 per cent of parents (n=30) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
- 25 per cent of parents (n=12) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=47), a further 13 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who had **not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=38), around three in ten (32 per cent) felt the project played a role in this decision.**

### Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned was the CSA/CMS (29 per cent).



- Around eight in ten (81 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, 11 per cent (n=3) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project (with 7 per cent saying it varies).
- Around seven in ten (73 per cent) of respondents felt overall that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

- Clients reported: emotional benefits for them and their child(ren); improvements in coping and communication strategies with their ex-partner and child(ren); and, a range of practical benefits, such as financial arrangements.
- Overall, the majority of those interviewed found their experience of the programme had positively progressed their situation, even if issues remained.
- In particular, they understood more clearly the impact of their relationship issues on their children (using the 'through your child's eyes' technique).
- Typically clients described a shift from tension and conflict with their ex-partner to a climate where constructive communication is possible. This was attributed to the practical communication tools they had acquired. For instance, the 'contact book'. Some clients reported employing conflict resolution approaches such as 'stopping and thinking' before speaking and actively seeking to avoid arguments.
- However, in a few cases, the programme was felt to be unhelpful. This appeared to be because clients wanted to have a more holistic discussion and therefore a structured 'co-parenting' programme was not the most appropriate form of mediation in these cases.

*'Looking at clients' communication changes everything.'*

(Staff)

*'We're not enemies anymore. We've gone back to being friends.'*

(Client)

*'It did help – I realised we could agree on things...it's not impossible to agree.'*

(Client)

*'It was really useful in a different circumstance where you have gone through a divorce and you have practical issues to resolve...I learnt a lot of useful stuff and agreed with how it was run but it was not relevant for me.'*

(Client)

*'I think the impact has been positive – now we see one another face-to-face rather than my ex's mum dropping off the kids. We talk and she tells me if anything is wrong with [my son].'*

(Client)

*'There has been a big change since using the service. Before whatever I said didn't count – things are a lot easier now. I see my son more often and for longer now.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Many clients reported that engaging with Mediation Now had enabled them to resolve both small and large points of conflict.

- Clients particularly value the support they have received in resolving seemingly trivial or petty issues (e.g. who washes the children's clothes), which are often irrelevant to or cannot be resolved by the court. Some felt learning ways to cope with these smaller issues has helped to pave the way to addressing bigger issues and has reduced tension.
- Larger points of conflict, such as financial arrangements or the amount of time, frequency and setting each parent spends with the child(ren) have also been addressed through the project.
- The development of structured parenting plans and child maintenance agreements through clients resolve points of conflict and formalise these arrangements.

Both staff and some clients recognise that they have achieved substantial cost saving to both individuals and society by avoiding engaging with the courts.

*'The conflict is all about things like you don't wash the clothes before they come back to me, not the big things the court can decide like visitation weekends.'*

(Client)

*'You're listened to equally...No one listens to you in the court system.'*

(Client)

*'Five weeks of court time is a massive saving.'*

(Project Manager)

*'[Without MN] I don't think I'd be here. That was the state I was in, going through the court system.'*

(Client)

## (1) Pen portrait: Mediation has helped along the journey to co-parenting

- Gerry's\* relationship broke down unexpectedly after a heated row with his partner. His ex-partner asked him to leave the family home and denied him access to his son. After several months his ex-partner allowed him access via an access centre for two hours a week. This is all the contact Gerry had with his son for eight months.
- With no history of aggressive behaviour or substance misuse, and having previously been an 'involved' father, Gerry could not understand his position.
- He decided his only option was to go to the Family Court.
- The court referred him to Mediation Now's Changing Lives programme. Gerry would have liked to have been offered support without having to contact a solicitor first.
- Gerry now sees his son two evenings a week and at weekends. Though mediation hasn't been without issue, it has significantly improved his communication with his ex-partner and resulted in increased contact with his son. Gerry has been advised by his solicitor and Mediation Now to be 'patient' and continue to work through the mediation process.
- Gerry is concerned that his partner might renege on what has been agreed to. Regardless, he believes the programme has brought him closer to having the relationship he wants to have with his son.

*'I felt bullied by the mother of my child – I had nowhere at all to turn to.'*

(Client)

*'I would recommend mediation now 100 per cent. If people are willing to do it, it will work in the favour of the child. That's what I believe.'*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.

## (2) Pen portrait: Changing Lives programme too structured for recently separated couple

- Juliet's\* marriage ended abruptly when her husband left the family home.
- Her friend is a family solicitor and suggested the Changing Lives programme to her. Juliet had many areas which she hoped to resolve through mediation, including access to the three children, financial support and the sale of the family home. Divorce proceedings were occurring alongside mediation and Juliet hoped that some of their issues could be settled out of court.
- Having completed the Changing Lives programme, Juliet thinks that it was not the right mediation approach for her particular set of circumstances. She felt that the programme was too structured in its approach. For her, the sessions 'stirred things up' and were not flexible enough to allow discussion beyond co-parenting. Juliet feels that it would have been helpful for her to have mediation regarding the breakdown of the relationship prior to mediation on co-parenting.
- Although agreement was reached on some matters, her ex-partner has since reneged on these. Given this, Juliet and her ex-partner paid for three further mediation sessions in which they hoped to make agreements about the sale of the house and financial support legally binding. However, this also failed and the separated couple are now communicating solely through solicitors.

*'I did think that the mediator lady was very good, very understanding. She was very helpful. She did give us an extra session to talk some of these things through. The timing of it was fine. But the content of it wasn't right for us. I'm not so sure I would recommend the changing lives course but would recommend the paid for mediation.'*

(Client)

*'We did agree on who would pay for what with regards to the children but then he reneged. He also reneged on child maintenance payment.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Mediation delivered by qualified solicitors alongside financial compulsion to engage is key to project effectiveness**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Clients and staff both reported the benefits of mediation via qualified solicitors with a background in Family Law. As lawyers trained in mediation, staff feel it is easier for mediators to get referrals and gain access to the courts. Clients appreciate their mediator's skills and were comforted that they have a knowledge of the law in the area of separation.
- The specific activities and approach taken in the sessions were thought to be more effective than other mediation approaches, where these had been experienced.
- Session 1, which uses a structured activity to engage parents in thinking about children/ the child together, is considered by staff and clients to be particularly effective. Clients enjoy the activity and often come to recognise they hold similar beliefs about their children as their former partner. Positive completion of this first session is thought to be key to engagement in the full programme.
- Whilst parental attitude following the first session contributes to positive further engagement, the threat of a charge if the programme isn't completed has also proven to be an effective engagement strategy.
- Outlining to clients that they often 'think the worst' of their ex-partner was also believed to be useful. Clients can relate and empathise with the concept and were led to re-evaluate their own behaviour.
- Overall, clients found the tools and strategies they had acquired helpful for future and ongoing communication with their ex-partner. In particular, having a contact-book – writing notes to one another, rather than speaking – was felt to help communication.
- Marketing to the courts has resulted in high demand for the service and has therefore contributed to positive outcomes for parents who will have otherwise sought resolution via the courts.



## There is a limit to how effective the project can be with some clients

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Clients with very challenging/aggressive behaviour, those with mental health issues, those with learning difficulties and those for whom English is a second language either could not engage with the service or did not get as much out of it as others.
- Overall, the PAM took more time than expected, with clients also requiring more support than anticipated. The PAM was particularly challenging for clients with learning difficulties and generally poor communication skills. This had implications for the availability of project resource for other activities.
- Staff strongly feel that cost would have been a significant barrier, if clients had to pay for the service.
- From the perspective of some clients, the fact that parenting plans and agreements resulting from the sessions were not legally enforceable was a major drawback of the service.
- Drivers/barriers of impact relate to the extent to which both parents are willing to embrace the sessions, their flexibility in terms of attendance and their expectations of the final outcome.

*'Have adapted with sheets with pictures rather than words. Now if they are on the phone and say they have a problem, then I just say they should do mediation. They can reach an agreement, but not necessarily move forward with their relationship.'*

(Staff)

*'That's the weakness. It [agreement] can't be relied on.'*

(Client)

*'Mediation needs to have the clout that the courts have.'*

(Client)

## Having a positive experience of the service is a key driver of clients' preparedness to pay

### Recommending the service

- Clients would recommend mediation and would recommend Mediation Now to provide this.
- With respect to the Changing Lives programme specifically, many would recommend it, assuming it remained free.
- The staff delivering the programme were very highly regarded by clients, regardless of whether the outcome(s) they expected at the outset were achieved.
- However, some clients would have preferred access to free mediation that did result in a legally binding output. It is likely that these clients would not recommend Changing Lives over this as an alternative. It should be noted that for some of these clients, the programme did not result in saved legal/court fees.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Whilst many satisfied clients felt the service was worth paying for, staff felt that few clients would have the resources to actually do so.
- Separating couples are characterised by financial uncertainty which impacts their ability to pay for mediation of any kind, regardless of their need for it and their view of it.
- Overall, clients were unprepared to pay £180 (per parent) per session and many were surprised at this as a potential price. Around £50, per parent and per session, was the expected fee.
- The lack of any legally binding output was key to clients' assessment of what the service should cost. Some simply felt that without this, paid-for mediation is not worth the cost.

*'£180 each from both parents – I wish I was getting paid that an hour. It's not far off that for a week's wage.'*

(Client)

*'I would be happy to pay for it because it genuinely worked...we could say what we wanted to say and all the techniques and paperwork [the sheets] really worked and helped us.'*

(Client)

## E.8 NACCC

### Project aim:

The project aims to support parents to use Contact Centres and also provide emotional and practical support to improve collaboration for the sake of the child(ren)

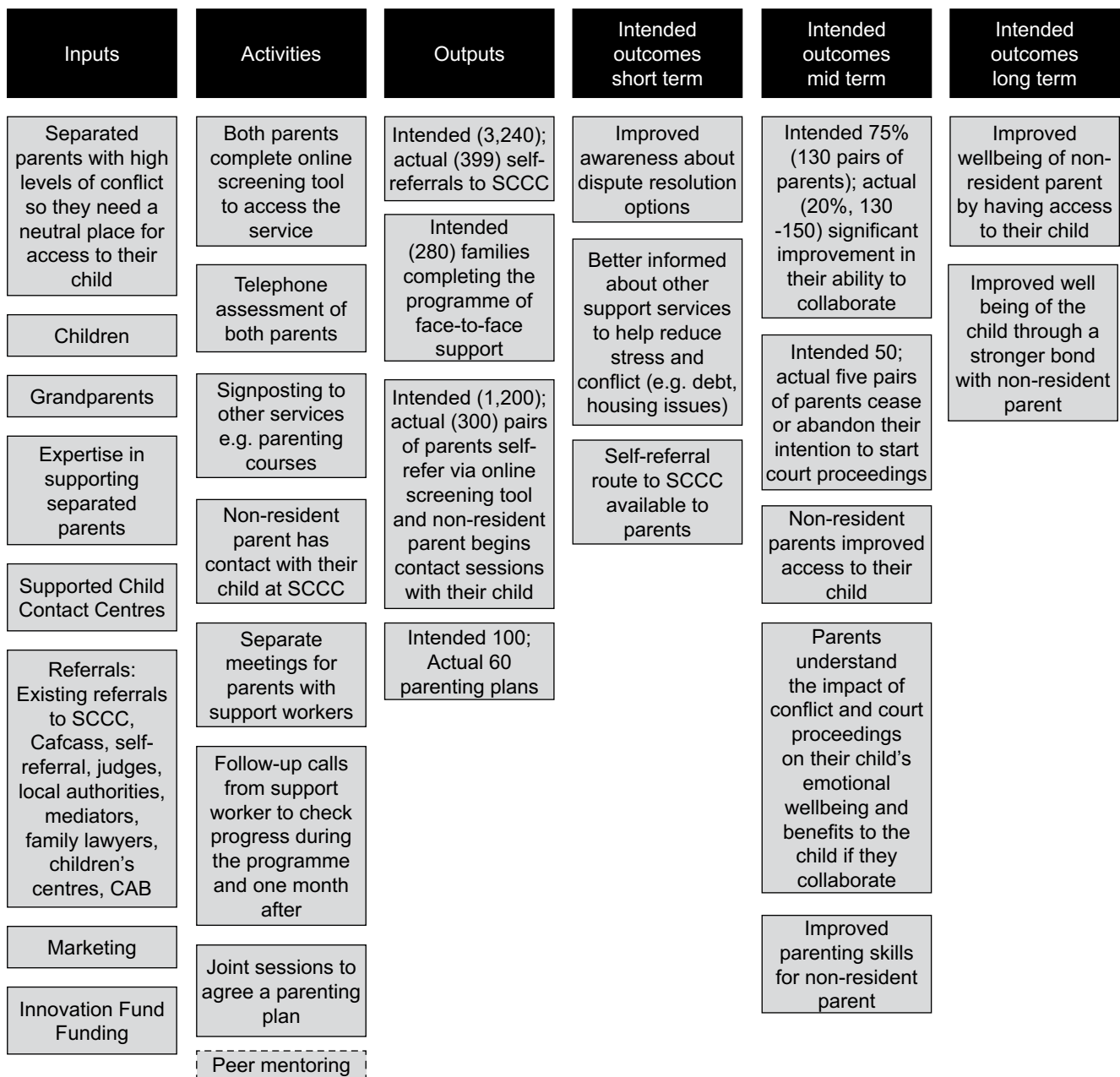
### Project delivery:

- The project had two key elements:
  - The introduction of a new online screening process that enables parents to self refer to a Supported Child Contact Centre (SCCC).
    - ~ An assessment by a social worker follows this to ensure there are no safeguarding issues before contact at an SCCC begins.
  - The second element is a face-to-face project working with parents who are using SCCC's. A social worker is attached to each group of centres to carry out and coordinate one-to-one work with parents to identify and tackle emotional and practical needs involving either joint provision with or referral to local services, e.g. mediation, parenting programmes and financial advice.
- The planned outcome of the engagement is the creation of a detailed Parenting Plan which will equip both parents to move away from contact centres and manage their contact with their child(ren) in the community.

### Target audience:

- The project targets parents whose conflict is so entrenched that the non-resident parent is required to see his/her child on neutral ground at an SCCC.
- SCCC's represent a cross section of separated parents. They can be recently separated, have cohabited for long or short periods, have had very short relationships or never lived together.
- The majority are either already in or have been through court proceedings, are considering court proceedings or would have opted for court before the introduction of legal aid restrictions.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			Qualitative interviews completed
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	
3,240 actual self-referrals to SCCC	As recorded in the qualitative (in March/April 2015):	58 parents	90 pre-PAMS 29 pre- and post-PAMS	Not included	Stage 1 – Total 1 interviews: 1 Project manager
280 families completing the programme of face-to-face support	399 self-referrals to SCCC  300 pairs of parents self-refer via online screening tool and non-resident parent begins contact sessions with their child				Stage 2 – Total 8 interviews: 1 Project manager 3 staff 4 clients
1,200 pairs of parents self-refer via online screening tool and non-resident parent begins contact sessions with their child	60 parenting plans				Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients
100 parenting plans	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period):  620 individual parents started, of which all 'completed'				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- NACCC was targeting parents whose conflict is so entrenched that the non-resident parent is required to see his/her child on neutral ground at an SCCC. Face-to-face services across six clusters of child contact centres in North, East Midlands, London and Home Counties, South, West of England, and South West.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- In the MI data, only comparisons can be made to the geographical area that parents were from:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined in the MI data (n=22):
    - ~ 27 per cent lived in the South West
    - ~ 18 per cent South East
    - ~ 14 per cent North East
    - ~ 14 per cent West Midlands
    - ~ 14 per cent Yorkshire
    - ~ 9 per cent North West

## Referral into the service is much lower than expected

### Reach

- Referrals numbers have been lower than anticipated.
- Staff believe the process involved in self-referral deters potential clients from using the service.
- In addition, self-referrals have become a key route to accessing the project given that many areas of Family Law have largely been taken out of scope for Legal Aid.
- Marketing efforts were made to increase referrals. Promotional materials were placed in courts, Children's Centres, Cafcass, GP surgeries. None of these contributed to a significant increase in referrals.

### Engagement

- Engagement is lower with the one-to-one support service. Clients were primarily motivated by access to the Contact Centre rather than access to the services the project offered as part of that.
- By default of the referral process being led by the resident parent; engagement was highest among resident parents. However, non-resident parents engaged where they recognised the contact centre as their only route to seeing their child(ren).

*'They [non resident parent] drag their heels at times.'*

(Staff)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

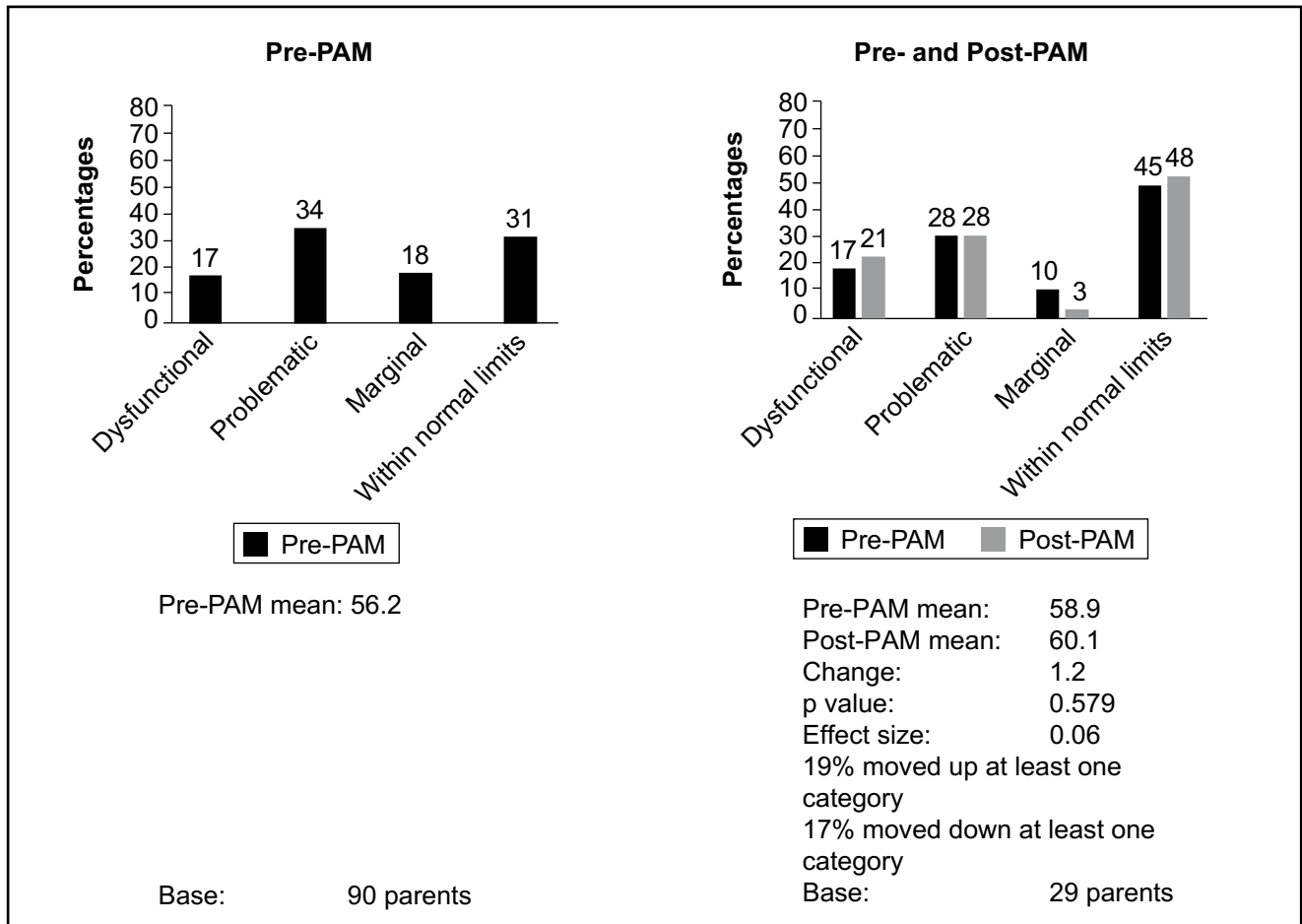
- Marketing for Child Contact Centres (via press releases to national and then regional press) was carried out in January 2014, which was successful in starting to boost the number of referrals. In hindsight, NACCC believes that national and regional marketing at an earlier point in the project would have been useful.
- Compared to NACCC expectations, a lower number of parents stopped or decided not to take court proceedings to ensure they had access to their child. Typically the non-resident parent still wanted a court order even after agreeing a parenting plan, as the mistrust of the resident parent was entrenched and they were reluctant to stop court proceedings once they had started.
- There is anecdotal evidence that some judges have been frustrated with the length of the process for parents to self-refer and access the services.
- NACCC have been disappointed with the lower than expected improvements in collaboration between parents as a result of the project. It was felt that the families accessing the project had the most entrenched, complex issues, so they take a long time to accept changes. One solution for the future could be to allow families to attend the Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) to help them understand how their behaviour impacts on their children, which is currently only available by court order.
- Parents needed to attend the Child Contact Centres for longer than was expected (around nine months rather than three to six months).
- It was hoped that parents attending the Child Contact Centres would encourage other parents to access the support services on offer by telling them how much their collaboration had improved with their ex-partner, but this peer mentoring did not happen in reality. When support staff attempted to initiate such conversations, parents had more negative perceptions than was hoped, so this was not pursued.



## **PAM overview**

- Pre- and post- data, no survey data.
- Half of clients either problematic (34 per cent) or dysfunctional (17 per cent) at baseline – 31 per cent within normal limits.
- Very little change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 1.2, non-significant) (NB small numbers).

MI data (small pre-post numbers)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients struggle to identify any project 'activities' and, in most cases, see the service as being solely use of a Contact Centre.

- Some non-resident parents simply used NACCC as a means of seeing their child(ren). Some resident parents simply used NACCC to exercise control over the non-resident parent.
- Many clients were not aware of an NACCC Support Worker being actively involved in their case.

*'The non-resident parent wants contact...not interested in any other thing.'*

(Project Manager)

*'The vast majority have not wanted support.'*

(Project Manager)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

The project had hoped to create a Parenting Plan with both parents. In practice, far **fewer parenting plans were produced than anticipated** as a proportion of clients.

- In addition, the process of producing the Parenting Plan was different in practice. In order to produce a parenting plan, the support worker tended to work with each parent separately and then act as a 'go-between' to agree it.
- The project **did not deter parents from further court action** in many cases. More than anticipated continued or began court proceedings during their contact with the project. Levels of trust between parents were so low, even when a Parenting Plan was in place, that a court order was deemed necessary.
- The Parenting Plan attracted criticism from some clients for not being enforceable.

*'Chocolate fireguard comes to mind. It needs some weight.'*

(Client)

*'The Parenting Plan concept is good but it is not enforceable.'*

(Staff)

*'I understand that NACCC has no power, only courts can make things stick.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Many clients reported **emotional benefits** from using the Contact Centres, which were overwhelmingly seen as a safe, secure and supervised environment.

- Even though many clients were ordered by the Court to use the Contact Centre and would have preferred not to allow the non-resident parent contact; they acknowledged that managed contact could be beneficial for their child(ren) and could be done in such a way that actually reduced the level of anxiety they felt about contact.
- Whilst few clients reported having done activities to improve their communication with their ex-partner, they did appreciate the availability of Support Workers to offer informal support and guidance through the Contact Centre process.
- Some non-resident parents, in contrast, reported feeling uncomfortable in a heavily supervised environment and felt that they had been unfairly grouped together with parents who had more serious issues than they did, e.g. where safeguarding or risk of safeguarding was present.

*'If it wasn't for NACCC...I wouldn't have seen [my daughter], I wouldn't have known what to do. I would have had to go to court.'*

(Client)

*'I wouldn't have coped without the support of the people at NACCC.'*

(Client)

*'The Contact Centre was the bridge that took us from being together as a married couple to being separated parents.'*

(Client)

*'It's a bit like going to an indoor play area but in prison.'*

(Client)

## **(1) Pen portrait: The Contact Centre has begun the journey to communication with her ex-partner**

- Jackie\* separated from her abusive partner shortly after the birth of her daughter. Her ex-partner initially denied paternity and refused to pay child maintenance. He then requested access to the child which Jackie refused.
- When the child was 14 months old, Jackie's ex partner began legal action. The court ordered that access be granted through a Contact Centre, subject to review, and subject to repeated successful drug and alcohol tests.
- Initially the referral was made to the Contact Centre via the solicitor, but Jackie was later informed that she had to do the referral process herself and online. Without access to a home computer and with no personal motivation to grant access, there was a delay to the referral being made. Further delay was encountered while the case joined the waiting list at the nearest Contact Centre. The case was eventually referred (at least four months later) to another Contact Centre. This process meant that both parents had to undergo the initial assessment appointment twice at each Centre.
- From that point, Jackie's experience of the service has been very positive and she praises the staff and facility highly. She has received a great deal of individualised and one-to-one support but has not undertaken any specific activities beyond making several arrangements for access via the Contact Centre. A Parenting Plan was attempted, but Jackie and the Support Worker agreed that the document was not appropriate to her circumstances nor the age of the child.
- At the outset, Jackie attended the Contact Centre with her own father and would not leave her daughter alone with the father of the child. Through a gradual process, access improved to her dropping off and picking up her daughter.
- Whilst Jackie is still involved with the Contact Centre, she does not feel close to making unsupervised contact arrangements.

*'It's a good stepping stone to establish some kind of communication between the two of you. It's a safe and secure environment while you work out the next bit – moving on from the Contact Centre and making arrangements between yourselves.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Despite Contact Centre support, communication has broken down**

- Tracy\* separated from the father of her two sons over 18 months ago. During their separation, her partner attacked her violently which resulted in her admission to hospital and social services denying him access to the children.
- Tracy's ex-partner wanted access to the children and so took the case to court.
- The court allowed access once a week in a Contact Centre.
- Although initially very apprehensive, Tracy was reassured by the measures the Contact Centre took to ensure her own safety. The Support Worker contacted the police to seek information about the terms of the restraining order and made arrangements around that. The Contact Centre staff closely supervised all contact sessions and raised issues with the father about aspects of his communication with the children.
- Tracy was very positive about the Contact Centre, though she would have preferred not to have allowed access. However, her ex partner eventually disengaged from the Contact Centre and refused to go on a course for violent perpetrators that he had been ordered to attend by the court. As a result, the father now has no legal access to his children.
- Communication between the Contact Centre and the father have broken down, but the Support Worker is making a home visit to help Tracy explain to the children that they will no longer be seeing their father.

\* Not her real name.

## **Dedicated and skilled staff are key to clients' positive experience of the Contact Centres**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Clients overwhelmingly speak positively about the staff and centre provision. Staff are described as 'friendly', 'helpful' and 'dedicated'. In addition, some clients praised the personal and bespoke approach staff took with their own specific set of circumstances.
- The centres challenge clients' perceptions. A few expected the facility to be simply an empty room, save for a table separating them and their child. In actuality, they found the centres to more closely resemble a nursery.
- Some male clients also appreciated the peer contact that the centres facilitated by default. They found it helpful and supportive to speak to other fathers in a similar position to them.
- Having qualified social workers perform assessment and one-to-one work with parents was perceived to be an advantage. This skill set and background provides a good understanding of the potential safeguarding issues and the appropriate responses.



## The significant level of conflict between parents means that few take up support

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Where conflict between the parents was live and/or when parents were gathering evidence for their court case, staff found that mediation was less likely to be successful because parents were not in the right 'frame of mind' to compromise and communicate.
- Where concern about the welfare of the children was high, parents were not relaxed enough for the sessions to be effective.
- Staff also felt that parents could sometimes be confused about the role each organisation was playing in their case and what the processes were.
- Staff found it difficult and even unhelpful to complete the Parenting Alliance Measure (PAM) with the majority of parents. They question the appropriateness of the tool given the level of conflict that characterises the relationships between the parents they work with.
- The registration process is perceived to be a significant barrier given the high level of conflict between parents and the known/potential safeguarding issues present.
- Delays between being ordered by the Court to NACCC and getting a first assessment appointment.
- Some clients experienced a further delay following the first appointment whilst they waited for a slot in their nearest contact centre to become available.
- Some clients were sent to a contact centre in a different area as their nearest centre was oversubscribed.

*'We are dealing with the most conflicted of families. They can't communicate.'*

(Staff)

## **Whilst many clients see Contact Centres as their only access route, few are in a position to pay for it**

### **Recommending the service**

- Overwhelmingly, clients see a role for Contact Centres and would recommend them to other parents in similar circumstances.
- Resident parents would recommend centres. Most parents feel anxious about unsupervised contact.
- Non-resident parents, whilst generally the most negative about the service overall, would recommend it as a route to contact, where the alternative is no contact at all.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Fundamentally, regardless of their view of Contact Centres and any benefits it had produced for them, few felt they are in a position to pay. Clients are predominantly unemployed/low paid and are lone parents.
- However, in principle, most clients would be prepared to pay. This was especially the case for non-resident parents.
- Some resident parents felt that the non-resident parent should pay as they were often the perpetrator of the situation or, at least, they were perceived to be.
- If a charge was levied, clients would have wanted the reassurance of a number of contractual stipulations as regards what they can expect from the service and redress should either parent renege.

*'I don't want to pay for my ex to see my child.'*

(Client)

*'It's an amazing service but I'm not in a position to pay for it.'*

(Client)

## E.9 National Family Mediation

### **Project aim:**

To divert families from the expensive and stressful court process and help them work together through mediation.

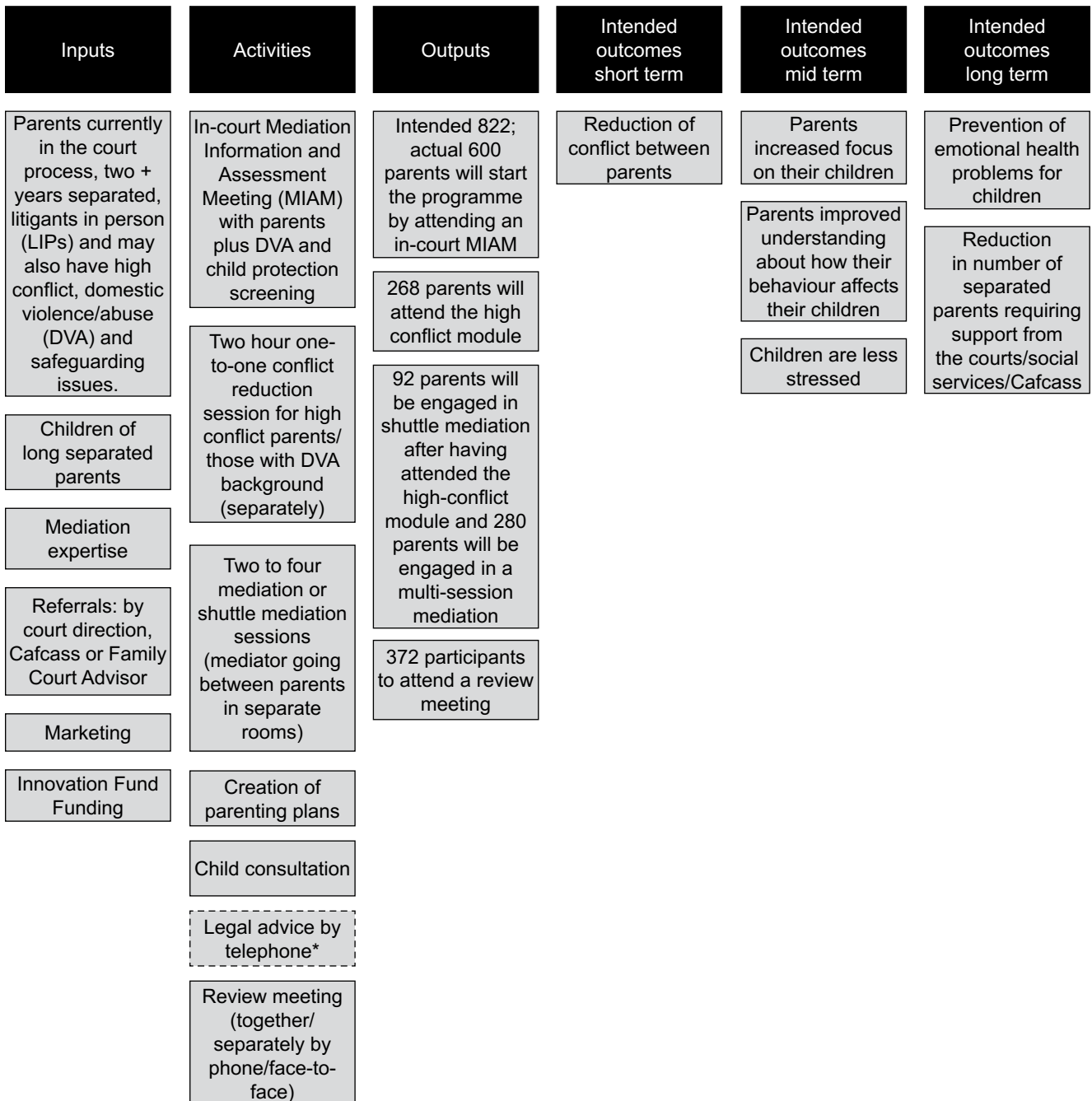
### **Project delivery:**

- In-court Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM).
- One-to-one two hour meeting with mediator and each parent (separately) to prepare them for mediation.
- Two to four mediation sessions with both parents and a mediator, with an opportunity to agree a parenting plan.
- Consultation with the children (where appropriate).
- Review meeting with mediator and parents.
- If referral via court, judge decides if mediation a success and closes case.

### **Target audience:**

- The project targets parents who have been separated for more than two years, including those with a background of domestic violence or safeguarding issues.
- It supports those who are in conflict and who have unresolved separation issues.
- It operates in the Berkshire, Hereford and West Yorkshire area.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
822 parents will start the programme by attending an in-court MIAM	As recorded in the qualitative (in March/April 2015): 600 parents started the programme by attending an in-court MIAM	414 parents	388 pre-PAMS 154 pre- and post-PAMS 104 pre- and survey PAMS	140 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
268 parents will attend the high conflict module			58 pre-, post- and survey PAMS		Stage 2 – Total 11 interviews: 1 Project manager 2 staff 8 clients
92 parents will be engaged in shuttle mediation after having attended the high-conflict module and 280 parents will be engaged in a multi-session mediation	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 544 couples started, 330 'completed'				Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 9 clients
372 participants to attend a review meeting					

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- National Family Mediation was targeting long-term separated parents who use the court system to resolve conflicts between themselves, living in Berkshire: Reading and Newbury; West Yorkshire: Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Kirklees (Huddersfield), Calderdale (Halifax), and Harrogate; Herefordshire: Hereford.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- The MI data suggests the parents who took part are in line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents who reported the length of time since they separated from their partner (n=400), 62 per cent had been separated for between one to five years and 38 per cent for more than five years.
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=337):
    - ~ 42 per cent in Yorkshire and the Humber;
    - ~ 38 per cent lived in the South East;
    - ~ 16 per cent in the West Midlands.

## Once clients enter mediation they typically went to all the sessions

### Reach

- Courts were the main referral source into NFM, although solicitors, Cafcass and social services did also refer.
- The strength of the project's relationship with judges was key to its reach. The perceived effectiveness project among the judiciary facilitated this.

### Engagement

- Once referred and engaged in the project, engagement levels were high.
- Once the process of mediation had started 85 per cent – 90 per cent completed their sessions.

### Drop out

- Clients were most likely to be 'lost' between referral and the first one-to-one session.
- Those who did drop-out typically did so for circumstantial reasons – moving away etc.
- A minority mentioned drop-out was due to expectations not being met – e.g. believed they would see child.

*'Every family is different. In a lot of cases contact is a big issue but the surrounding reasons that contact hasn't happened can vary – it can go from basic miscommunication...to domestic violence.'*

(Project Manager)

*'One party often wants to do [mediation], but the other doesn't. The one that doesn't often is the one that has been wronged (or feels they have been). They want justice and don't feel they will get that in mediation and so they go to court as they want the judge to tell the other person off, which is not what happens.'*

(Project Manager)

*'[My ex-partner] got into contact with National Family Mediation – he wanted to go to court to get a residency order and I think he thought it would help him do that...He never went to the joint sessions, though.'*

(Client)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- There was a lower take-up of the service than was anticipated, owing to some difficulties in getting the courts in West Yorkshire to allow National Family Mediation mediators into court. This was resolved after 12 months. The number of referrals through the other two locations was as expected.
- National Family Mediation learnt that the key to receiving referrals to the programme was getting the judges' support. Judges in Berkshire and Hereford were very supportive, particularly when they saw the positive impacts on the first few families through the programme.
- If parents want legal advice, they can be directed to this service (which is not part of the programme) but in most cases parents wanted to regain control and avoid further court action.
- Child consultation uptake was low with just 10 per cent using the service within the programme.
- Far fewer parents needed to use the shuttle mediation method than was expected. Mediators found that even in domestic violence cases, as long as the victim had recovered, most parents could manage to be in the same room.
- Far fewer parents than expected attended the review meeting, as they tended to feel that they would be going over previously resolved issues. As a result, and to ensure collection of evaluation data, project staff began conducting telephone reviews if necessary instead. Post-PAM questionnaires were also completed during the last mediation session rather than in the review sessions.



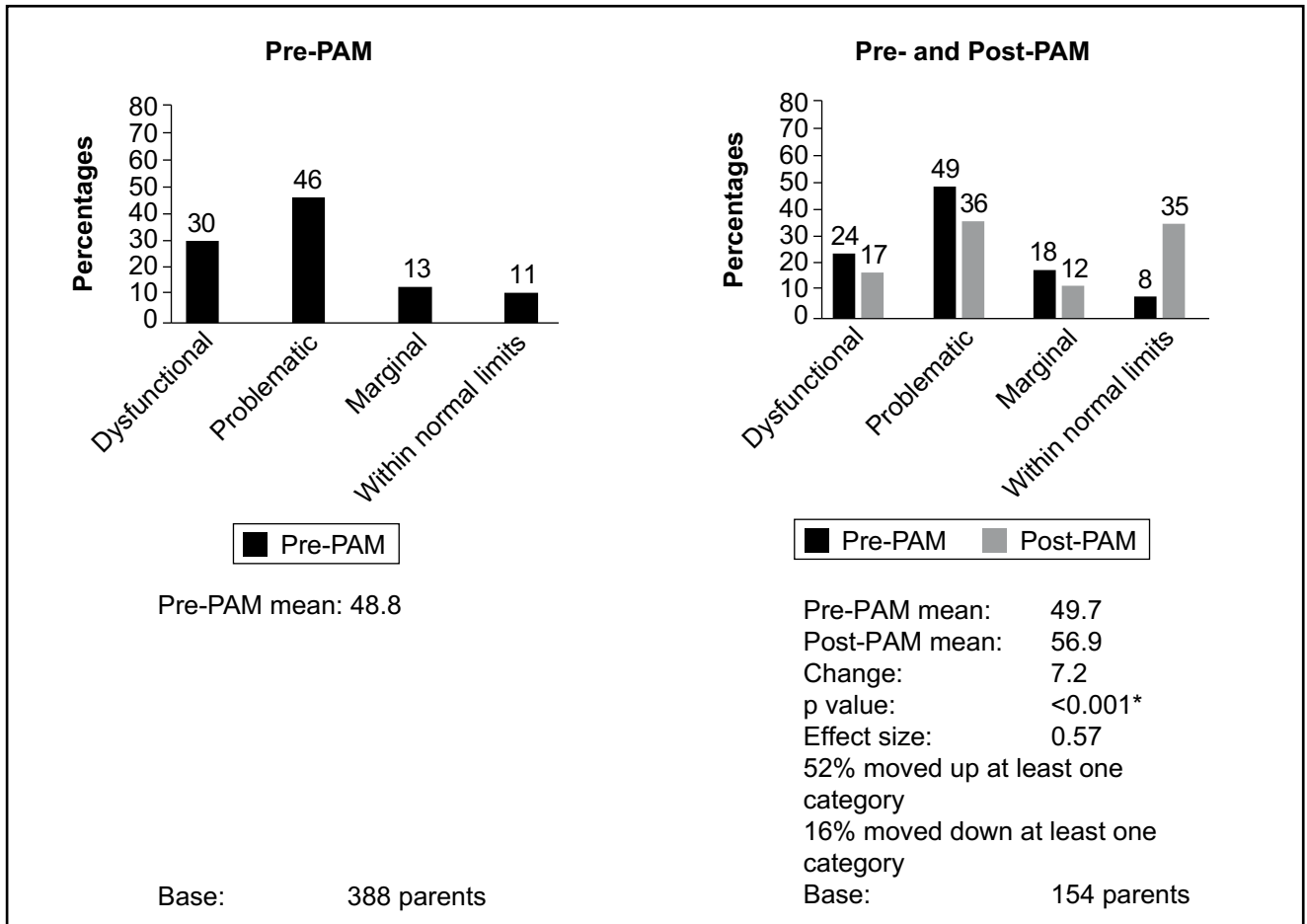
## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- In Berkshire, the mediation office is within the court building, which made it much easier to book all mediation and review sessions, as both parents would be there after their court session. This resulted in higher attendance at all meetings.
- The programme was perceived to be successful in helping the majority of participating families avoid further court action by project staff and, anecdotally, members of the judiciary. Staff at National Family Mediation believe that the key to the programme's success for families is the coaching session prior to starting mediation. This one-to-one session gives parents an opportunity to be listened to, unlike in court and prepares them well for mediation by teaching them strategies to work together.
- The project team feel there is potential to combine the Conflict Resolution Module (CRM) and the MIAMs sessions into a single introductory session. The CRM was also felt to have potential to be a standalone module and integrated into other National Family Mediation programmes.
- Relationships with those in the legal profession could have been further improved, and the effectiveness of the project enhanced. While the judiciary in areas where NFM was operating were invested in the service, there was concern among some staff members that local solicitors may have felt excluded from the process and may have felt they were losing a revenue stream.
- There is potential to extend the target group and access to those who have been separated for less than two years.

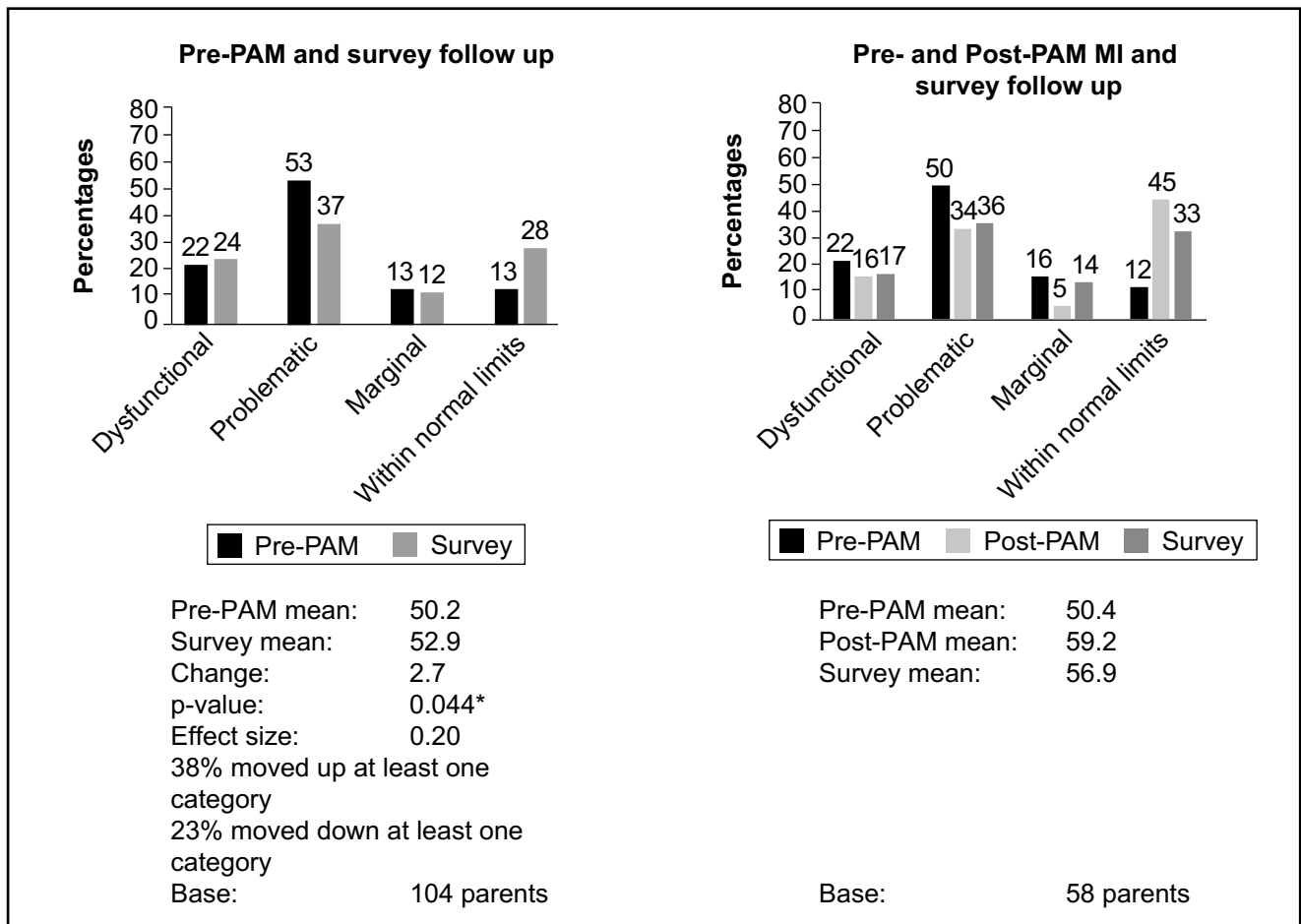
### **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Large majority of clients either problematic (46 per cent) or dysfunctional (30 per cent) at baseline – only 11 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 7.2):
  - 35 per cent within normal limits post-support and 17 per cent dysfunctional.
- Significant improvements continue to be evident by the time of the survey – but drop compared to immediately post-support:
  - mean change score of 2.7 between baseline and survey PAM.

MI data



## MI and survey data



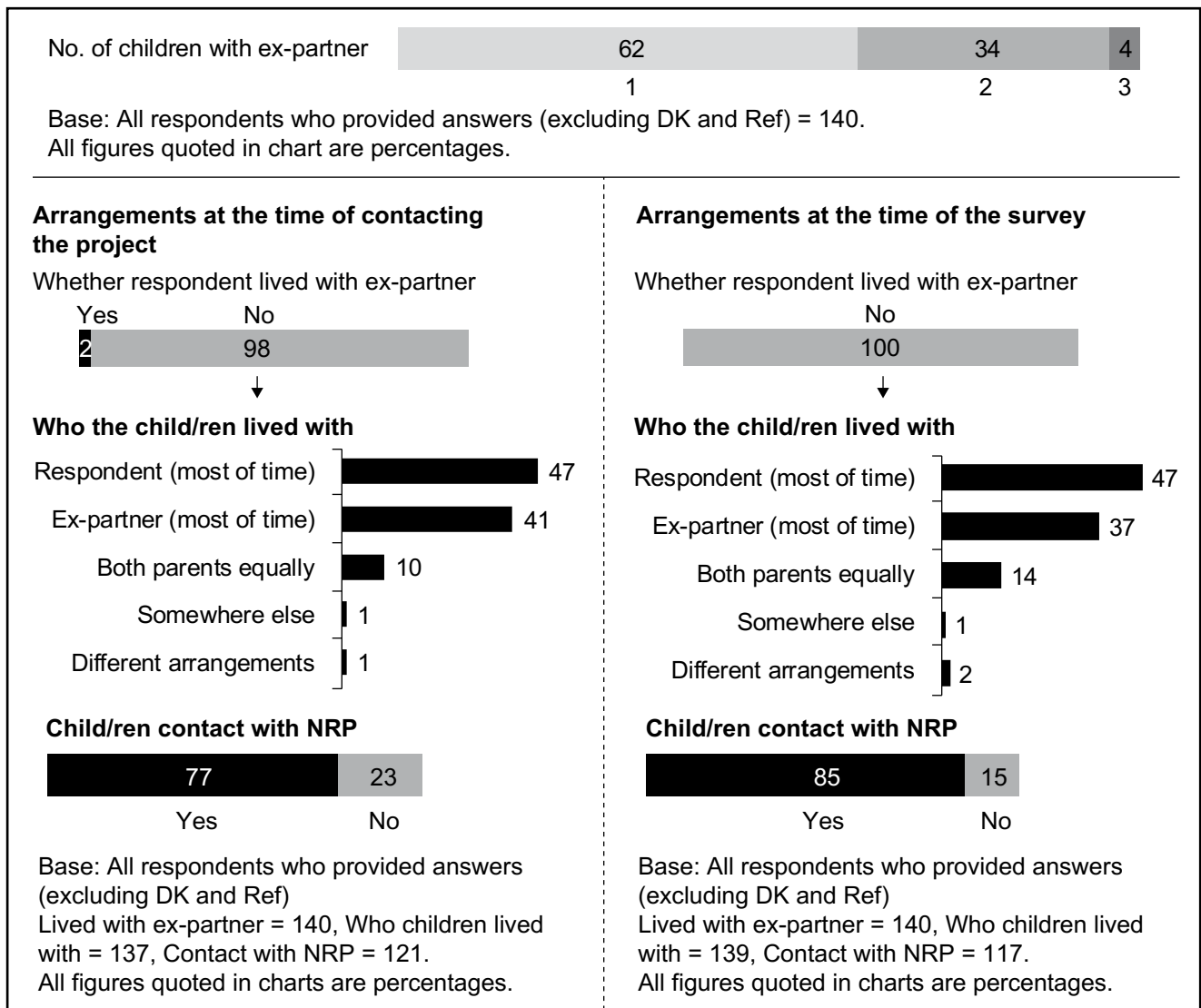
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	50	49
Female	50	51
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	5	7
25–34	40	30
35–44	38	43
45+	18	20
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	87	86
Black	3	6
Mixed	2	3
Asian	5	3
Other	3	2
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	54	57
Lower than A-level	46	43
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	11	15
No	87	85
<b>Base*</b>	414	140

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

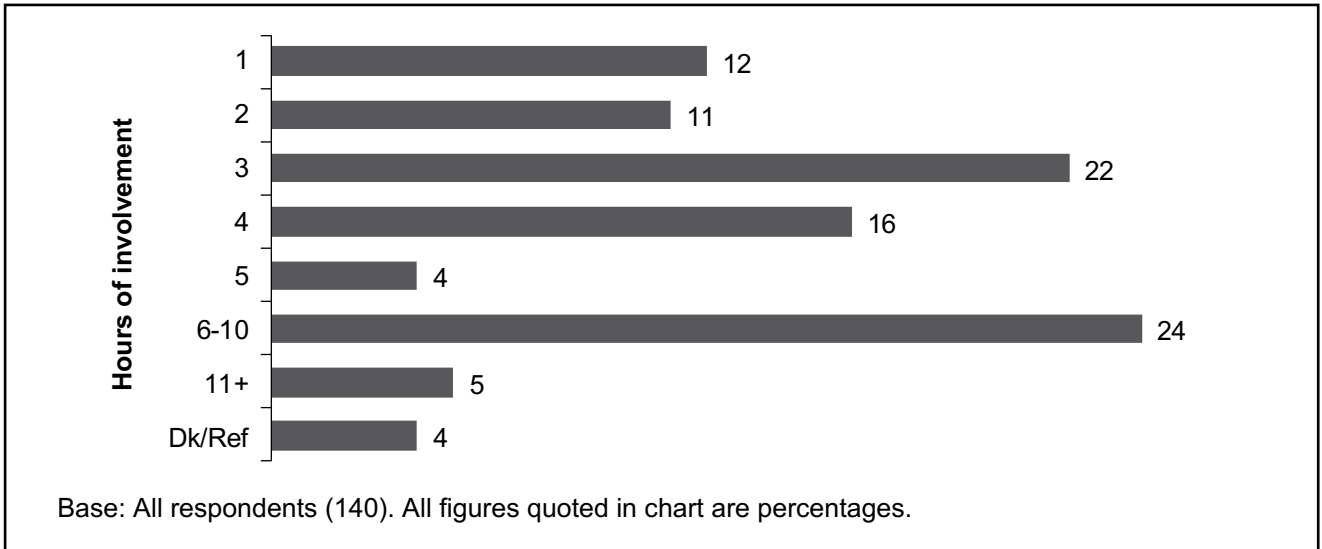
As illustrated in the table, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is very similar to profile of parents in the MI data. There are some small variations, the most noteworthy difference is within age, with a higher proportion of parents aged 25-34 in the MI data.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

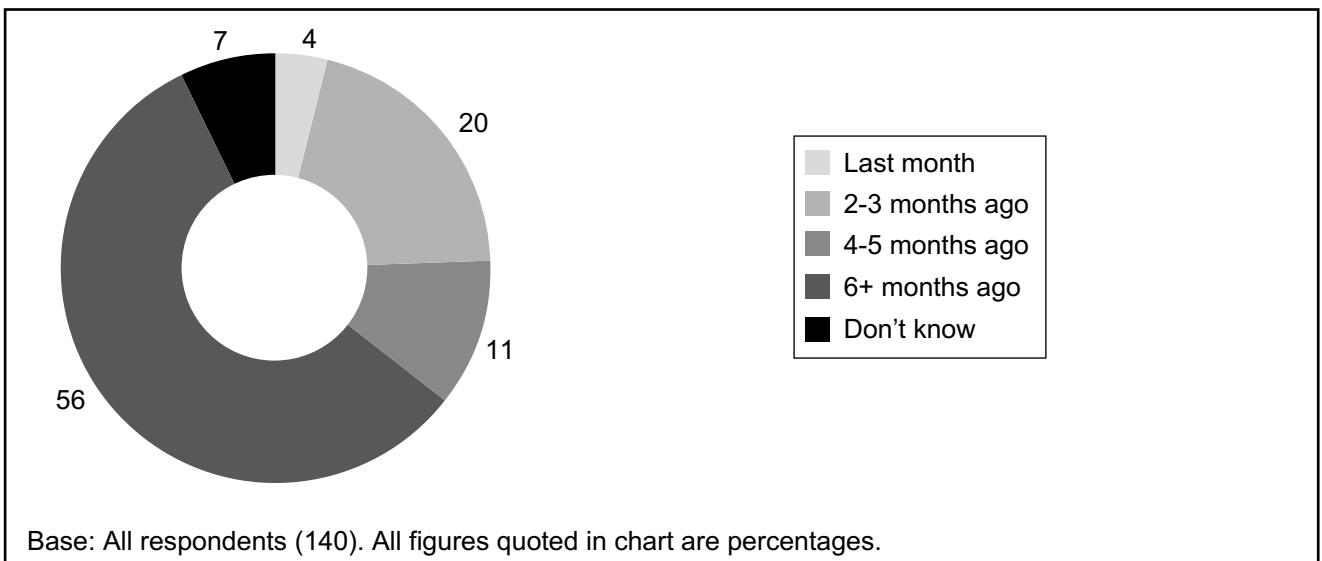


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of involvement varied between respondents as illustrated in the chart below. Around three in ten (29 per cent) had six or more hours of involvement.



- The time since parents had contact with the project varied. For the majority (56 per cent) it was more than six months ago.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren, **six in ten respondents (63 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=140):
  - **43 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before:**
    - ~ Of these (n=60), **85 per cent felt the project played a role in these improvements** (55 per cent a large role, 30 per cent some role);
  - 20 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 36 per cent reported they were same (with one per cent unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, **76 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or in the process of agreeing one), leaving 22 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=107), the most common were CSA/CMS agreements (57 per cent) and family-based arrangements with money payments (37 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=140), **73 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 95 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

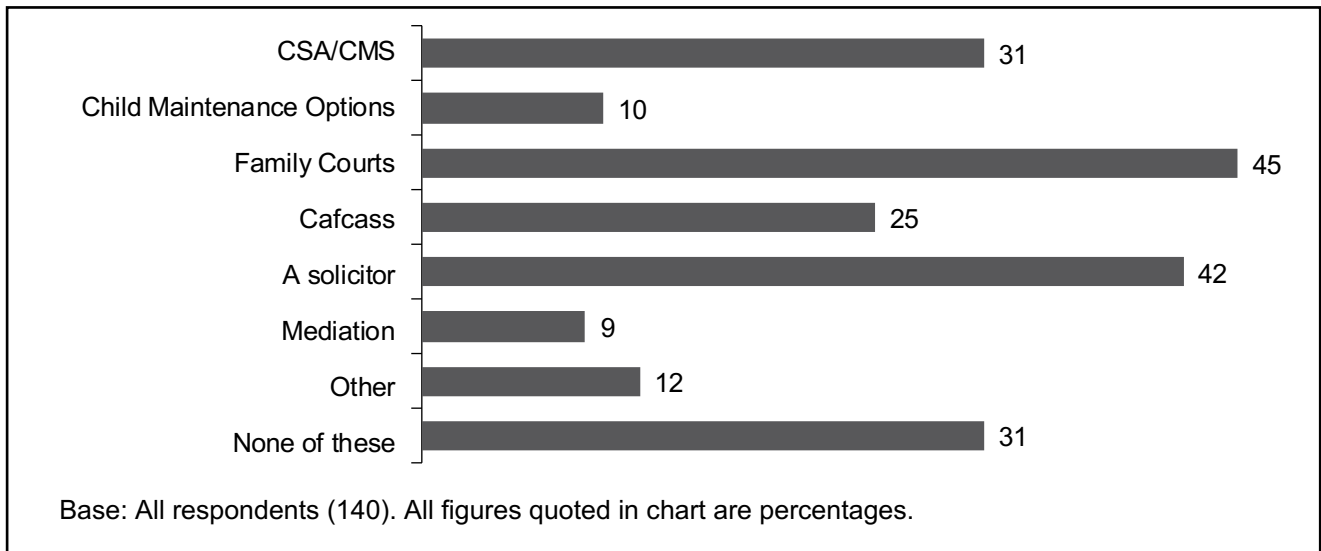
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=140):
  - **13 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 18 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 62 per cent reported they were same;
  - six per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement (with one per cent unsure).

## Use of the family courts

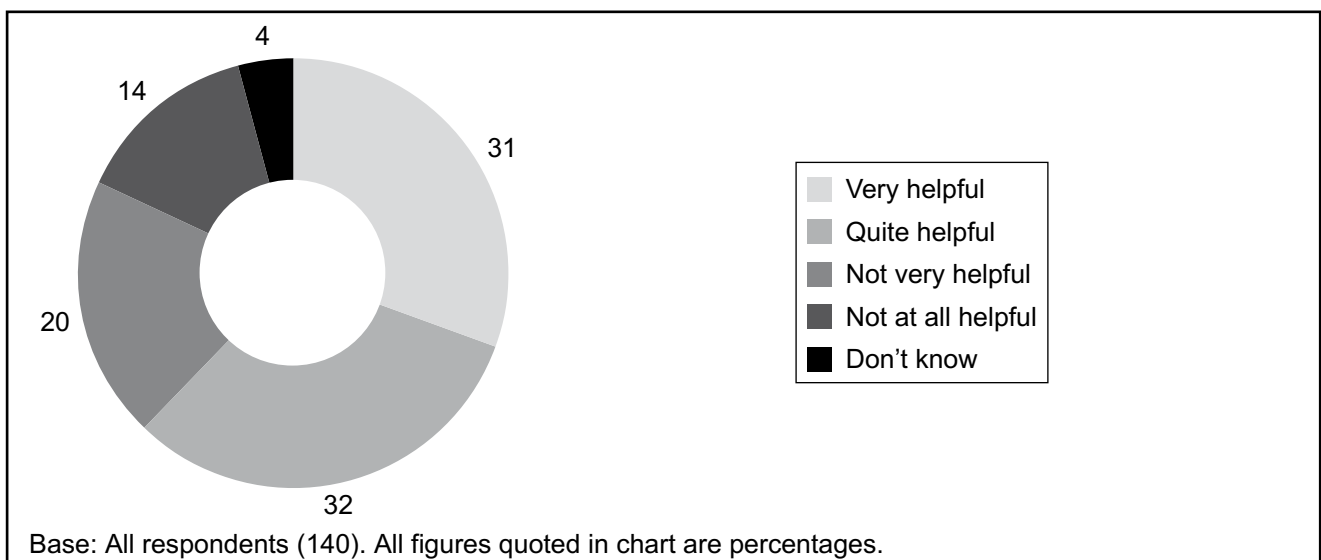
- Two-thirds of respondents (66 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
  - Of these (n=86), virtually all (94 per cent) reported that there had been a formal court case or one was being planned.
- Half of respondents (50 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
  - Of these (n=70), around nine in ten (91 per cent) reported that there had been a formal court case or one was being planned.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case, a further 24 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since, but were not planning to go back any further (n=90), 46 per cent felt the project played a role in this decision** (28 per cent a big role, and 18 per cent some role).

## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned were the family courts (45 per cent) a solicitor (42 per cent), followed by CSA/CMS (31 per cent).



- Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, **one in ten (9 per cent) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project** (with 12 per cent saying it varies, and 5 per cent being unsure).
- Just over six in ten (63 per cent) of respondents overall, felt that their contact was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients using National Family Mediation typically feel they have **benefited emotionally** from using the service. This is often despite joint mediation not taking place and only the initial one-on-one session being engaged with or joint mediation breaking down.

- Clients found explaining the context of their separation cathartic.
- It reduced the stress of the separation and ongoing court proceedings and conflict, where it existed.
- Allowed a time for reflection.

Some believe they have improved their soft skills, particularly around **empathy and how they communicate** with their ex-partner. Clients in turn felt this reduced the amount of conflict they experienced with their ex-partner.

*'I feel a bit stronger now [compared with before mediation]. It used to really upset me.'*

(Client)

*'Mediation takes away the emotion from the problem. It's a small step but its like having someone there to hold your hand.'*

(Client)

*'I found it very useful. It helped me organise my thoughts, what I need to do and how I could realise getting my children back home. It was a very important turning point for me.'*

(Client)

*'I did find [the CRM] helpful...I found new ways of putting my point over in a less confrontational way.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

A number of clients had created **parenting plans** as a result of engaging with NFM. The success of these arrangements varied, something which was attributed to the level of engagement of both parents with the process and the fact the plans were not legally enforced. However, even in cases where the parenting plans were not successful, **clients felt their creation had increased their awareness of their child's needs** and the **impact of their behaviour** on the child.

- Some had noticed improvements in their child's emotional wellbeing and behaviour as a result of their improved relationship.

*[Getting a parenting plan in place] has had a big impact. This has gone on for five years and it is a weight off my shoulders...My son is a lot happier and his behaviour has improved...he sees me and his dad getting along. My relationship with my ex has improved. Before we only used to argue, now he invites me in for a cup of tea when I pick [my son] up – even though he doesn't say anything we both know that he knows what is going on.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

NFM felt they **prevented clients going to/returning to court**, saving both their clients and the courts money and time.

- At the project outset courts would adjourn proceedings while mediation was taking place. Due to the success of the project and the perceived impact mediation had on service users, courts began closing proceedings thereby saving time.

Anecdotally, NFM staff felt the project reduced the amount of time external bodies – schools, social services etc. – spent engaging with NFM clients and their families.

*'We would still be in court [were it not for mediation]. I think the situation would have gotten worse and worse.'*

(Client)

## **(1) Pen portrait: Mediation reduced parental conflict and led to a change in contact arrangements**

- Mary\* separated from her husband six years ago and has had a child contact order in place for a number of years.
- Since starting secondary school, her daughter has become increasingly unhappy with the existing contact order and has been asking to see her father less often.
- Rather than believing his daughter wants to see him less, the father feels the mother is manipulating the situation and has become increasingly inflexible on access arrangements and regularly threatens going to court. This has led to his daughter becoming more frustrated.
- Having discussed the situation with a friend, Mary was recommended to go to National Family Mediation: she and her ex-partner had individual and joint sessions.
- Mary felt National Family Mediation had a positive impact on her own knowledge of the legal situation, her emotional well-being and on her ex-partner. Having gone to mediation:
  - Her ex-partner no longer threatens to take her to court, meaning she experiences less stress and anxiety.
  - She is now aware that, due to her daughter's age, the contact order can legally be reviewed.
  - They have agreed a change in contact arrangement so that her daughter sees her father every Sunday, rather than alternate weekends, and no longer stays overnight.
- Mary felt National Family Mediation allowed her to avoid going to court.

\* Not her real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Despite mediation breaking down, mediation positively impacted the client emotionally**

- Stacy\* separated from her partner about eight years ago, shortly after her daughter's birth.
- Since then she and her ex-partner have experienced issues arranging access and had been through the courts a number of times.
- Stacy felt that she "had tried everything" to resolve the conflict between herself and her ex-partner, apart from mediation. She had always wanted to go to mediation, but it had never been offered. She was referred to National Family Mediation by her child's guardian.
- In total, Stacy had two one-on-one sessions and three joint sessions of mediation. She praised the tone of the mediator and National Family Mediation's flexibility – some of the sessions were conducted over Skype as her partner was not able to physically get to the mediation session.
- Unfortunately, the mediation process eventually broke down. Her partner believed he would be able to see his daughter after the third joint session. This did not occur. As a result he felt 'cheated' and so refused to complete the sessions.
- Despite not reaching the intended outcome – a parenting plan and access arrangement – Stacy felt her emotional state had improved as a result of using the service and that she had gained listening skills.

*'I always wanted to use mediation from the start and was very pleased to be offered it... but it was too late.'*

(Client)

*'Despite on paper [the mediation] not working, it was extremely healing for me. I was listened to and it made me feel validated, almost.'*

(Client)

## **Staff skill was felt to be key to project impact as was parental attitude**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Having skilled mediators deliver the service was felt to be key to the project's effectiveness – clients typically felt staff were neutral, sensitive and balanced; staff had the necessary skills to deal with complex family circumstances.
- Ensuring confidentiality allowed parents to engage in the process without the fear discussions would impact court proceedings.
- One-on-one sessions helped establish expectations on what the joint sessions would be like and allowed the context of separation to be explored.
- The Conflict Resolution Module (CRM) was seen as an especially useful project element – it allowed clients and staff to identify issues/triggers and take the other person's point of view. It was felt this could integrate with other NFM services or be developed into a standalone offer.
- Flexible project delivery which allowed sessions to be tailored to client needs helped increase engagement and prevent drop out, e.g. mediation sessions were offered over Skype to parents who could not physically attend. Similarly, the order of sessions could be changed or omitted if the client did not want to engage with a specific element of the service – this particularly affected the CRM.
- Relationship with the courts and referrers was key to encouraging clients to attend and engaging clients. Basing referral service in courts also allowed appointments to be made when everyone involved was together, facilitating the scheduling of sessions within the court adjournment and allowed diaries to be coordinated.



## Barriers to project effectiveness focused on parental engagement and project timelines

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Both parents not being engaged/committed to process or having different expectations of the service.
- Lack of legal backing to parenting plan – some clients felt the fact parenting plans were not legally binding limited their effectiveness.
- Timeliness of the intervention – some clients, typically those who had been separated for a number of years or had been heavily involved with the court, felt mediation would have had greater effect if initiated earlier.
- Length of intervention (8 weeks) – increasing the number of sessions or spreading the same number of sessions over a longer time period would allow experiences and behaviours to be established, reviewed and confirmed.
- Scheduling sessions with a fixed time period – some clients had ongoing court proceedings which were adjourned so mediation could take place. In a few instances clients were unable to complete their mediation sessions within the window of the adjournment.
- The name of the CRM – some felt it was not clear what the module would offer and was potentially off-putting to clients.
- Lack of support from courts (an early issue that was resolved).

*‘Because we were involved so heavily in the court, we will never talk again. If we were involved in more mediation, earlier that would not be the case. If the judge had ordered it or if there was a legal basis to it we would be in a much better position and our child would be even happier.’*

(Client)

## Most would recommend and pay for the service they received at NFM

### Recommending the service

- The vast majority of clients said they would recommend using the service to separating couples who were in similar circumstances to themselves.
- Clients struggled to identify any exceptions to this – relationships where there had been domestic violence could be accommodate through existing services (e.g. shuttle mediation) and NFM offered a safe, neutral environment.
- One client mentioned the service would not be suitable for individuals who are manipulative or like to dominate social relationships.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- The majority of clients would have been willing to pay for the service they received at NFM.
- Clients commonly suggested figures between £30 and £70 a session, although some reflected that were NFM priced at that level they would not have been able to afford to use the service.
- However, both clients and project staff reflected that engaging with the service was cheaper and more cost effective than using solicitors or going through the courts – using NFM was felt to have saved service users money.
- Project staff felt asking clients to pay, particularly were they to operate a two tier system (where, perhaps, on party pays less than another due to income), can change the dynamic of mediation, add additional complexity to the process and act as a source of conflict.

*'I'd be in a similar situation with my ex but I'd probably be bankrupt! If it were not for mediation [my financial situation] would have been even worse.'*

(Client)

## E.10 OnePlusOne

### Project aim:

To overcome the usual barriers separating and separated parents experience in accessing support by providing an online service to enable them to reduce the conflict between them and work towards agreeing arrangements for their children through a parenting plan.

### Project delivery:

- A nationwide, easily accessible, free online service called 'Splitting Up? Put Kids First' (requires registration – users remain anonymous, yet receive tailored support).
- 'Early intervention' information, guidance and videos to help improve communication skills and develop a parenting plan for the service user to share with their partner and encourage their participation.
- The site offers behaviour modelling training (BMT) via videos and an online parenting plan.
- Working with two partners: Home-Start and dad.info information to facilitate referrals and/or support.
- Face-to-face support from Home-Start in certain areas intended for those lacking internet ability/good internet service.

### Target audience:

- Separated and separating parents (both mums and dads) concerned about the quality of communication with their ex-partner and those trying to discuss finance/contact issues.
- Particularly for those who struggle to talk directly (face-to-face/phone), communication online feels more possible, plus others who encounter additional barriers, e.g. fathers, teenage/step parents, etc.
- Home – Start face-to-face support areas:
  - Thanet and Shepway (Kent);
  - Lincoln and East Lindsey (Lincs.);
  - Angus and Stirlingshire (Scotland); and
  - Wrexham and Conwy (Wales).

## Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Online BMT Expertise	Online self-assessment tool	Parenting plan (Completed or partially completed)	Decrease in ongoing conflict
Parents at an early stage of separation	Online personalisation element	7,000 registered users completing 16,500 online interactions within the tool	Increase in ongoing positive communication
Home Start volunteers training	Online BMT program		Increase in non-resident parent's involvement
Innovation Fund Funding	Interactive Parenting Plan	Completion of BMT Skill units	Increase in ability to adapt to/manage transitions
Work with dad. info (website)/ Home-Start	Virtual/telephone coaching sessions via dad. info		Decrease in children placed at the centre of parental conflict
Development of materials	Home-Start Face to Face coaching for online access		

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		Registration/ MI data received	4 Collaboration question data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
7,000 registered users completing 16,500 online interactions with the tool	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 13,500 couples started, of which all 'completed'	9,906 parents	9,906 pre-questions 1,258 post-questions 521 pre- and survey questions 231 pre-, post- and survey questions	550 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 8 interviews: 1 Project manager 7 staff  Stage 3 – Total 3 interviews: 3 Project manager
	As recorded in registration/MI data collected (from January 2014 to July 2015): 8,733 users registered with the website, of which, 73% (6,407) created a parenting plan				

### Overview of Website

- The website required registration and consisted of two main sections:
  - **Parenting Plan:** Enabling website users to create their own personalised parenting plan.
  - **Communicating Better:** Training videos and advice to separating couples aiming to reduce conflict to improve communication. It focused on three areas: 'Get Ready', 'Talk it out', 'Sort it out'.
- In addition to the main website address, the platform was hosted on two other web addresses:
  - <http://dadinfo.splittingup-putkidsfirst.org.uk> to target fathers in parenting plan.
  - <http://homestart.splittingup-putkidsfirst.org.uk> a leading UK family and children's charity that works closely with individual troubled families at home.

### Section 1: Parenting Plan

- Users had to register to have a parenting plan.
- The website enabled partners to send and share parenting plans with each other, incorporate suggestions from both parties and eventually agree on a plan created together.
- The service provided a communication platform for parents remotely who may be experiencing trouble meeting face-to-face.
- The second parent received communication from the website when a plan was created and shared with them.
- Personalisation was one of the key aspects of the service. The website allowed users to personalise parenting plan so it would best suit their circumstances.
- Before creating a parenting plan, users were asked to choose statements which would reflect their situation. After the parenting plan was created, the website recommended users what the next steps were which were the skills sets needed to achieve an agreement.

## Overview of Website – Section 1

### The Parenting Plan: Profiling the situation of the parents

Tell us a bit about your situation at the moment

(Choose up to four)

They make it difficult to see my kids <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	It's hard to control my emotions <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	They change our plans too much <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>
They criticise me in front of our kids <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	They call all the shots <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	They get angry about certain issues <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>
We don't agree on what the kids need <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	I feel I'm the one doing all the work <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	I can't explain my views to them <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>
I feel pushed out of my kids' lives <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	I feel they are making our kids upset <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>	Things always turn into an argument <a href="#">Sounds like me</a>

[Create your Parenting Plan](#)

## Overview of Website – Section 1

### The Parenting Plan: Description of the Parenting Plan

#### What is a Parenting Plan?

Bringing up children involves lots of joint decisions. If you don't live together, it is harder to make these decisions as you go along. A Parenting Plan is a written or online agreement between parents. It helps you record how you will share the care of your child now and in the future. It can easily be changed and is not a legally binding agreement.



##### Agreeing on an approach

Making a Parenting Plan is easier if you both agree on why it is a good idea and what you both want for your child. The first part of the Parenting Plan explains your approach to parenting and your general aims.



##### Using the Parenting Plan

Your plan can be as simple or as detailed as you like. The simpler it is, the easier it is to stick to. It might include day-to-day arrangements, financial arrangements and decisions about the future. It's a good place to store information like medical records and contact details. You probably won't look at it every day, but it is good to have it available to refer to.



##### Our arrangements

This is the main part of the plan. It is usually divided up into sections such as childcare, communication, education, social activities and finance. You can add as many sections as you like and make it personal to your situation.



## Overview of Website – Section 1

The Parenting Plan: Description of the Parenting Plan. Users were able to add new sections or blocks to personalise their parenting plan

### Parenting Plan

Click on the plus button to expand each section. [Click here](#) to find out more about how to make your Parenting Plan.

#### Living and childcare arrangements

[Child] will live with [mum/dad/other] at [address]

[Edit](#) [Delete](#)

[Commit](#)

[Mum/dad/other] will pick up [child] from school on [changeover day] and drop them off at [place] on [changeover day].

[Edit](#) [Delete](#)

[Commit](#)

[Mum/dad/other] will be responsible for organising doctor, dentist [other health issues] appointments and taking [child] to them.

[Edit](#) [Delete](#)

[Commit](#)

+ Add suggested new block

#### Communication

#### Education

#### Social and leisure activities

#### Money and our child

+ Add new section

#### Tips for Communication

Get Ready can help you both agree, by **Staying Calm, Listening and Seeing Things Differently.**

[Find out more](#)

#### Who's involved



sinan

#### Children



+ Add another child

#### Having difficulty agreeing or sticking to your plan?

Check out the [skills section](#) This has lots of suggestions and tips for good ways to communicate, negotiate and solve problems.

## Overview of Website – Section 1

### The Parenting Plan: The website's recommendation of next steps and skill sets

#### My Aim

to sort out money issues.

Your invitation sent on 25/08/2015 has not been accepted yet.

Great, we've saved your changes. When you're ready you can [invite your child's other parent](#)

#### Recent activity



You have suggested 1 statement

#### Next steps

The first step is usually to **Get Ready** to agree. Getting ready means **Staying Calm**, making sure you **Listen** and being prepared to **See Things Differently**.

## Parenting Plan

Click on the plus button to expand each section. [Click here](#) to find out more about how to make your Parenting Plan.

 **Living and childcare arrangements** 

[Child] will live with [mum/dad/other] at [address]

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Commit](#)

[Mum/dad/other] will pick up [child] from school on [changeover day] and drop them off at [place] on [changeover day].

[Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Commit](#)

### Tips for Communication

Get Ready can help you both agree, by **Staying Calm**, **Listening** and **Seeing Things Differently**.

[Find out more](#)

### Who's involved

 sinan

## OnePlusOne: Overview of Website – Section 1

### The Parenting Plan: Invitation Text to Co-create a Parenting Plan

Your invitation sent on 25/08/2015 has not been accepted yet.

#### Invite your child's other parent

At the moment it's just you working on your plan. When you're ready you can invite your child's other parent so you can agree on it together. You don't have to completely finish your version before you invite them. If you can, it would be good to let them know what you are doing so they're expecting the email. When you've done that, fill in their email address below and we'll send them a link to set up their account.

Email of child's other parent

Hi [ParentB],

[ParentA] has started looking at an online service that can help you work together to agree on a Parenting Plan.

A Parenting Plan is a written or online agreement between parents who do not live together. It helps you plan how you are going to look after your children now and in the future. It is not legally binding and can be adjusted if your situation changes.

Getting agreements down in writing can help make things clearer for everyone. This service helps you to do this simply and easily.

[ParentA] has done their draft, but nothing can be agreed until you have made your own version. After that you can compare your ideas online and decide what you can agree on.

Thank you,

**Splitting Up? Put Kids First**

**Invite**

Do this later

## **OnePlusOne: Overview of Website – Section 2**

### **Sections 2: Communicating Better**


- This section was designed to provide the skills set needed to agree on a parenting plan.
- It was interlinked with the parenting plan so users interacted with the 'Communicating Better' section alongside with the Parenting Plan section.
- The section grouped the skills set under three main steps:
  - Get Ready: Staying calm, listening, seeing things differently
  - Talk it out: Being clear, sticking to the rules
  - Sort it out: Work things out and negotiate when things are difficult.
- Each step involved viewing a pair of videos reflecting real life situations. One video included a situation going badly and the other, showing the situation going more positively.
- After each viewing, users were asked how they felt about using the skills they just learnt. If users were not feeling ready, they were encouraged to look into the skills sets further.
- Registrations enabled users to keep a track of their progress.

## Overview of Website – Section 2

### Communicating Better: Three main steps – Get Ready; Talk it Out, Sort it Out

Agreeing can be difficult. Sticking to agreements can be even harder. It's especially tough when your child's other parent has very different opinions and emotions are running high. Practising communication and negotiation skills can help things go more smoothly. It's easiest to develop them step by step.

We'd recommend starting at the beginning as most people find that working on the skills in order helps them the most.

 From what you've told us so far, you might find it helpful to spend some time looking at the skills in Step 1

#### ● Step 1

Get Ready

The first step is usually to **Get Ready** to agree. Getting ready means **Staying Calm**, making sure you **Listen** and being prepared to **See Things Differently**.

[Get Ready](#)

#### ● Step 2

Talk it Out

The next step is to **Talk it Out**. Think about how to **Speak for Yourself** and the benefits of **Being Clear** and **Sticking to the Rules**.

[Talk it Out](#)

#### ● Step 3

Sort it Out

The final step is to **Sort it Out**. Bring it all together by looking at the best ways to **Negotiate** and **Work it Out** when things are difficult.

[Sort it Out](#)

## Overview of Website – Section 2

### Communicating Better: Training Videos

#### Get Ready

A situation going badly



You've just seen a situation going badly.

In this section you will look at three skills that help you make agreements for your child.

##### Staying calm

Take a deep breath. Staying calm means knowing how to control your emotions and order your thoughts. It will mean that you're in a better position to stop disagreements turning into raging arguments.

##### Making sure you listen

Listening sounds simple but how often are you just waiting for your turn to talk? Learning listening skills will help you to really focus on what your child's other parent is saying. This will help you understand their perspective - even if you don't always agree with it.

##### Be prepared to see things differently.

It's easy to assume the worst about someone you've separated from. Stepping into their shoes might be the last thing you want to do. But looking at a situation from someone else's point of view can help you make sense of their behaviour and actions.

Now watch the next clip to see how parents use the skills we've talked about to make the discussion go better for them and for their child.

A better way?



#### Talk it Out

A situation going badly



You've just seen a situation going badly.

The skills in **Get Ready** can help you prepare for difficult conversations. At the second stage we'll take a look at how you can use these skills to make sure your discussions go more smoothly.

##### Speaking for yourself

'You do this, you do that, you're a rubbish parent!' Angry? It's not surprising when it sounds like you're being blamed for everything. Avoid this by learning to phrase things in a less confrontational way.

##### Being clear and sticking to the rules

Do your discussions tend to move from a question about why your child hasn't done their homework to a shouting match about who is to blame for everything that's ever gone wrong?

When you've got something that you need to get sorted, good tactics can be focussing on the most important point, keeping things simple and trying to be polite.

Now watch the next clip to see how parents use the skills we've talked about to make the discussion go better for them and for their child.


A better way?



## Overview of Website – Section 2

Communicating Better: Checking with the user about how they feel about the new skill set they just acquired.

A better way?



Get Ready - A Better Way

How do you feel about using the skills you learnt to talk with your child's other parent right now?

Not ready      Very ready

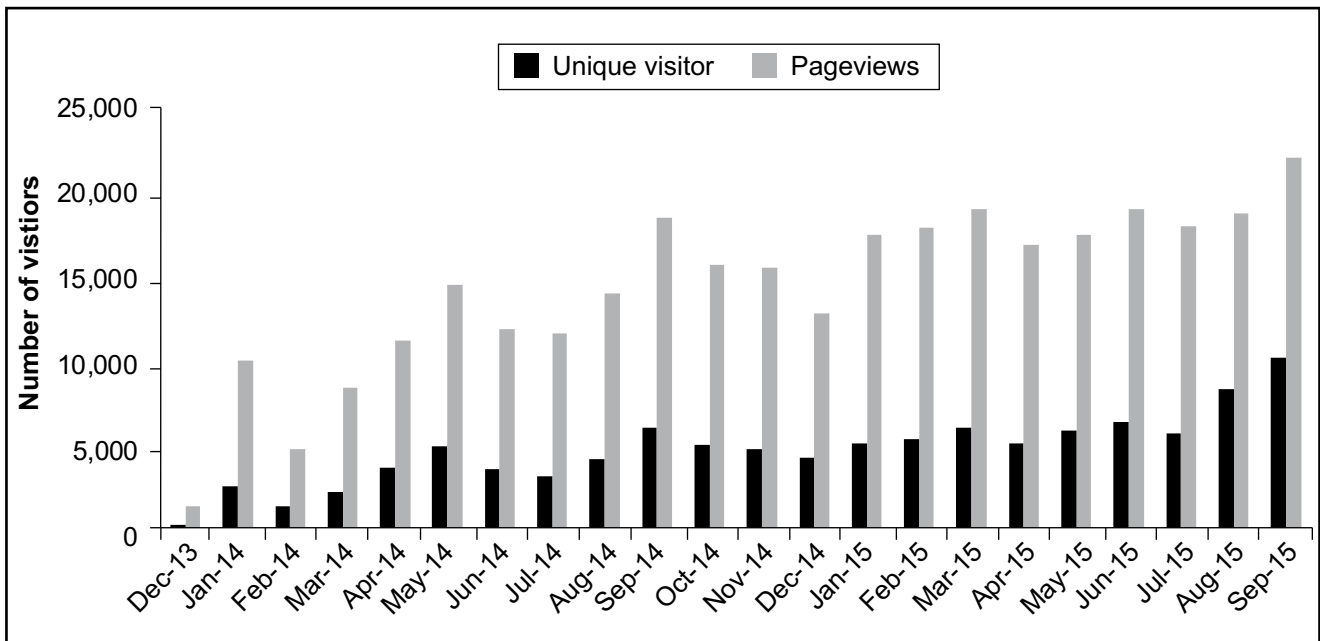
Show skills content

Next step

Return to Communication skills

## Web analytic data – Visits to the website

- Between December 2013 and September 2015\*:
  - The website attracted **103,307** unique visitors;
  - A total of **330,071** page views took place;
  - Each visitor viewed on average **2.60 different pages** in website;
  - Visitors spent on average **2.39 minutes** on average on the website.
- Visitor numbers showed a general upward trend throughout.

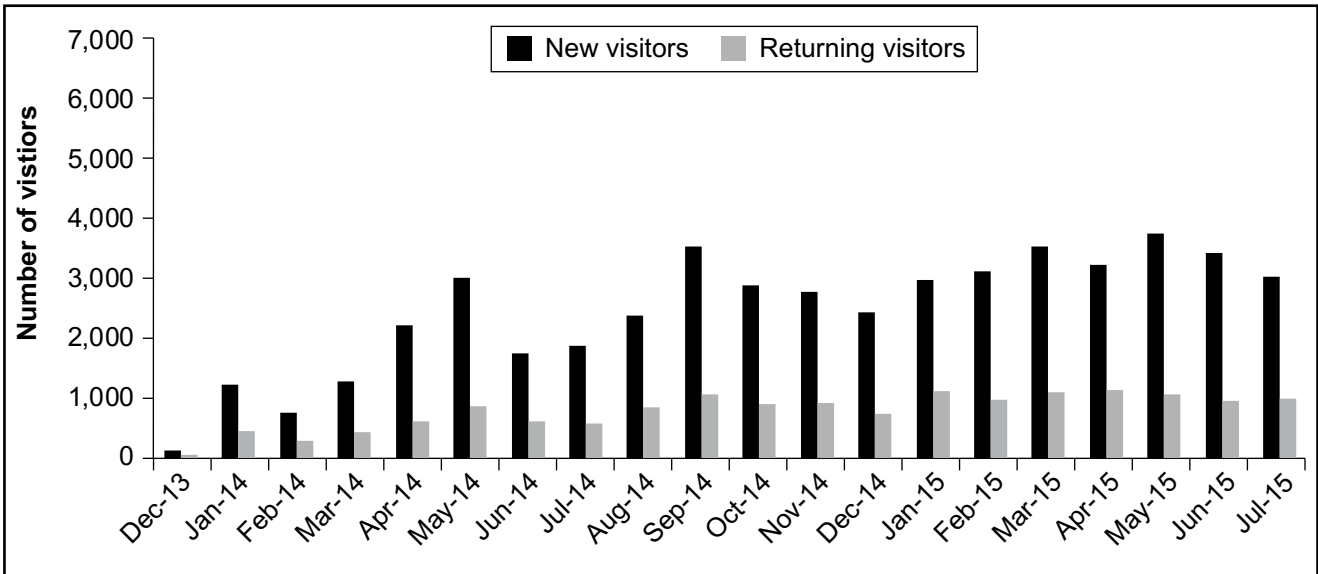


\*Since the site went live in December to date.



### Web analytic data – Visits to the website

- The ‘bounce’ rate\* was **58 per cent**. This may indicate that only four in ten visitors (42 per cent) showed engagement with the website. However, this figure must be treated with caution as some visitors may have found the information they needed from the very first page they visited, and others may have those who visited website by mistake.
- Overall, a **quarter (24 per cent)** of all the visitors who visited the website at least two times and the remaining visitors were new. The monthly trend was generally steady, as illustrated in the chart below.



\*Bounce rate is the percentage of users who visited only one page in the website and then left without engaging any further. It may indicate the percentage of visitors with low level of engagement, however, this is subject to variation depending on the landing page, the interaction one may have had with the page visited and overall structure and content of the website.

### Web analytic data – Referral sites

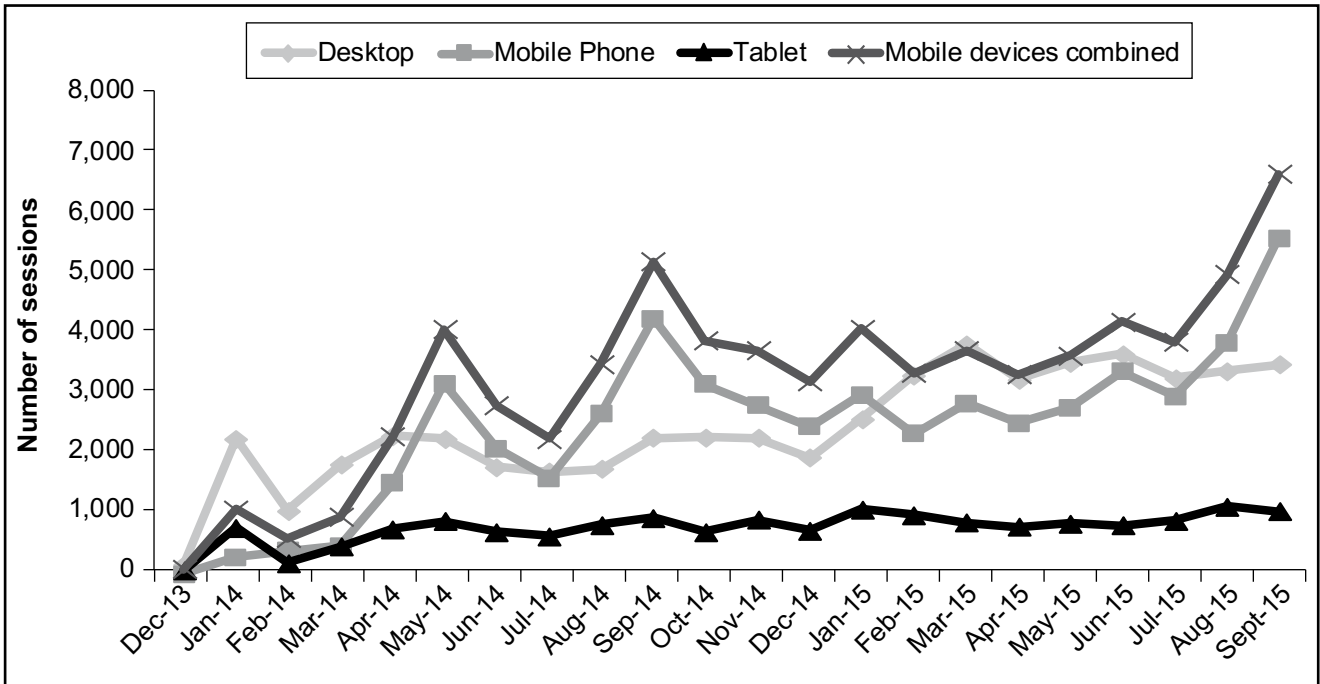
- The website hosted on three different domain:
  - The main website with Welsh option.
  - Mirror site on dad.info: A website targeting fathers.
  - Another mirror site on Homestart: A website targeting troublesome families.
- The chart below illustrates the referral pages to the website:
  - Some visits to the website were via referral pages. Majority of the referral visit traffic came from dad.info website as shown in the chart. This was followed by Cafcass.gov.uk.
  - The Project also ran an advertising campaign on Facebook which increased the web traffic referred from there.

Domain	Percentages
dad.info	52%
facebook.com	15%
cafcass.gov.uk	11%
netmums.com	7%
theparentconnection.org.uk	7%
oneplusone.org.uk	3%
twitter	2%
sortingoutseparation.org.uk	1%
home-start.org.uk	1%
bbc.co.uk	1%
other	2%

### Web analytic data – Mode of access

- Mobile devices (mobile phones and tablets) were widely used to access the website.
  - Overall, **57 per cent** of the sessions were from a mobile device.
  - After April 2013, the total number of sessions from mobile devices almost always exceeded the total number of sessions from a desktop.

### Access to the website by device type



### Web analytic data – Registrations

- Between December 2013 and September 2015 a total of **9,906** registrations took place.
- Three-quarters (75 per cent, **7,406**) of registrations were on the main OnePlusOne 'Splitting up? Put kids first' site. The rest came from the two mirror sites:
  - **22 per cent** of them were from dad.info mirror site, and (2163)
  - **3 per cent** of them were from Homestart mirror site. (337)
- **48 per cent** of overall registrations were by men and **52 per cent** were by women which showed a nearly equal split.
- One Plus One targeted fathers by creating the dad.info mirror site and this enabled them to increase the number of male registrations:
  - dad.info brought **35 per cent** of the registrations by men and around **7 per cent** of registrations by women.

### Web analytic data – Registrations

- Users had different options to engage with the website within both sections of the website, and the website was designed to integrate these two sections where possible:
  - Users were directed to communicating better section when they expressed that they were not ready to share the parenting plan with their partners.
  - They were offered the communicating better videos, during, before or after they created a parenting plan.
- The main ways to engage with the website were:
  - registering and setting up a parenting plan;
  - inviting the other parent to view/amend a parenting plan;
  - accepting a parenting plan (sent by the other parent);
  - watching videos;
  - completing a skill set video (a pair of video).
- Between January 2014 and September 2015, 9,906 users registered with the website:
  - **Section 1:**
    - ~ Of those registered, nearly three-quarters (77 per cent, 7,584) created a parenting plan.
    - ~ 18 per cent (1,351) of those who created a parenting plan invited their co-parent to agree on the parenting plan.
    - ~ 3 per cent (239) of registrations took place after a co-parent accepted the parenting plan invite.
  - **Section 2:**
    - ~ 8 per cent of registered users watched at least one video.
    - ~ 6 per cent of registered users completed a pair of video of the same skill set.

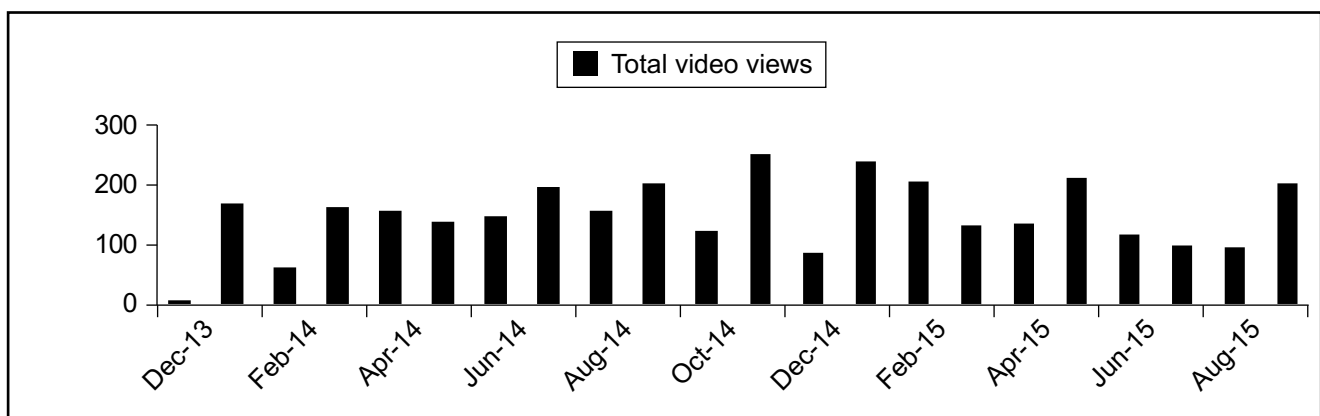
## Web analytic data – Engagement with the website

- There were 3,455 video views in total (between December 2013 and September 2015).
  - The first set of videos received the highest number of views, followed by the second and then the third.
  - Users had to watch the ‘a situation going badly’ videos in order to see the ‘a better way’ videos.
  - The average video view duration per video was good, being close to the overall video length. This suggests that most viewers would have viewed the majority of key messages in the videos.

	Total No. of views	Ave. view duration (m:s)	Video length (m:s)
Get Ready – A Situation Going Badly	1,183	2.87	3.52
Get Ready – A Better Way	805	4.13	5.30
Talk it Out – A Situation Going Badly	475	2.87	3.56
Talk it Out – A Better Way	354	4.23	5.57
Sort it Out – A Situation Going Badly	350	1.76	2.37
Sort it Out – A Better Way	288	3.95	6.16

- The monthly total video views showed some differences which correlated to the advertising campaign period.

## Total video views



## Engagement was highly dependent on the referral route and users being ‘emotionally ready’

### Reach

- The project marketed itself through social media; self-referral via Facebook or search engines resulted in large numbers registering.
- Referrals were also made by professionals or partner agencies, e.g. mediator, solicitor, Cafcass, support worker, Home-Start, dad.info.
- A small number of professionals used the site with the view of using/recommending it to clients.

### Engagement

- Highly dependent on referral route – encouraging engagement was difficult online: c.25 per cent engaged (continued after registration), of which c.9 per cent used skills section; c.70 per cent started a parent plan, of which c.18 per cent shared with co-parent. Not a linear process, so some dipped in and out over time.

### Drop-out

- Most dropped out following registration and first viewing c.76 per cent – perhaps not emotionally ready or lacked relevance at the time.
- Later drop-outs thought possibly to be due to videos being too long, parenting plan being misunderstood, or clients wanting a quick fix, etc.

*‘You have to be very specific about your audience. And also collaboration with other agencies is crucial and is key because some users might not be in a position to use the service immediately [but] they can be identified by their volunteer or front line worker that this can be a service that could be of assistance to them.’*

(Project Manager)

*‘There’s no linear process...there’s no beginning or end either, it’s a continuous collaboration, so they’ll always return.’*

(Project Manager)

*‘We sometimes get people who are in a cycle of signing up to everything, looking through everything...they’ve broadly been looking for what’s out there as a comfort thing...’*

(Project Manager)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Throughout the project changes were made to the website (and will continue to be made) to improve functionality and enhance overall effectiveness. The majority of changes focused on the platform and content, e.g.:
  - Successful social media promotion through Facebook resulted in many self-referrals, but it became evident this group were superficially engaged, so questions are being developed with the help of Sheffield University to:
    - ~ Help assess readiness via a short questionnaire at the start;
    - ~ Those ready will proceed, whilst others will be signposted elsewhere.
  - Choosing 4 of 12 statements was trying to mimic a face-to-face interaction to encourage the client to offload in preparation as well as provide the service with profiling data.
    - ~ This has not translated successfully online, so they are considering new approaches.
  - Better signposting, routing and navigation around the website.
  - Better promotion of the co-parenting skills benefits and linking them more effectively to the parenting plan.
  - Recognising the need for shorter/punchier videos as they're not always watched or watched to the end.
- OneplusOne is also exploring ways in which they can interact with, engage more, better motivate and reward service users for engaging with the site:
  - Feedback loops rather than longer questionnaires;
  - Normalising feedback into a natural interaction; and
  - Obtain more information about users, their activity and progress.

*'We are looking at ways to embed our measures into the service so that there is less burden and less obstacle placed on them [users]...so that they are not put off.'*

(Project Manager)



## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Less social networking activity and more targeted marketing to professionals and related services to facilitate more blended services and professional referrals as they produce more primed, ready and successful service users.
- OneplusOne would look to reposition how they market the service as a 'parenting plan with communication skills' (or similar) it was felt doing so would encourage better engagement with and use of the communication skills elements of the site. They could potentially achieve this by producing promotional videos featuring users and practitioners.
- The project is also exploring ways to target different and more emotionally ready clients by tailoring the service, approaching a wider range of professionals and working more collaboratively with other agencies or in the community.
- As anticipated, being an online service, PAM data was a challenge to obtain – post (done by phone) more than pre (done face-to-face with MI by Home-Start). Service users were very resistant, perceived PAM as burdensome and too formal.
- The project would re-evaluate how they spent and allocated resources on the project. They overspent on contracted digital developers initially and under-spent on marketing. In the future they would look to hire someone with the digital experience and have greater control of the platform as a result. They would also look to have more and better targeted marketing.
- The project would also look to capture and make better use of feedback from both service users (to impart knowledge and facilitate clarity/learning at each stage of the separation), and professionals (to understand and develop better collaboration).

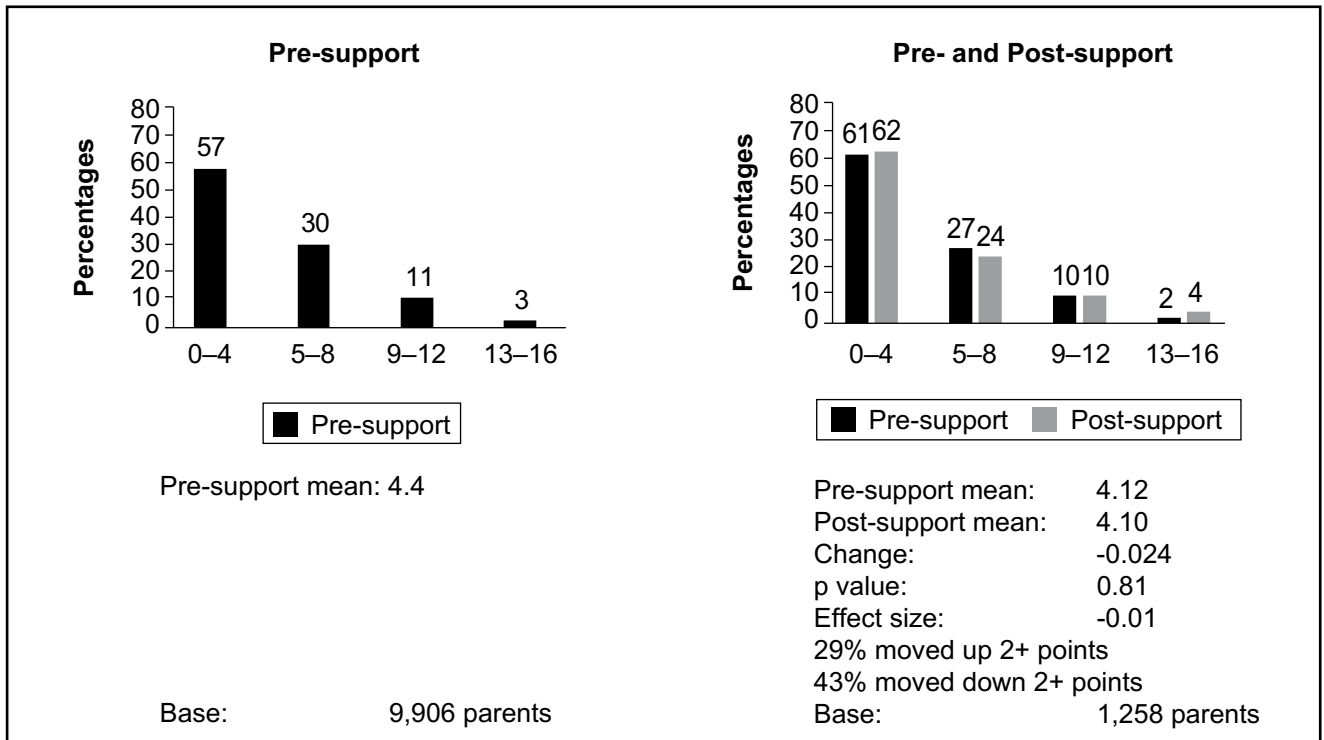
*You have to be very specific about your audience. And also collaboration with other agencies is crucial and is key because some users might not be in a position to use the service immediately [but] they can be identified by their volunteer or front line worker that this can be a service that could be of assistance to them.'*

(Project Manager)

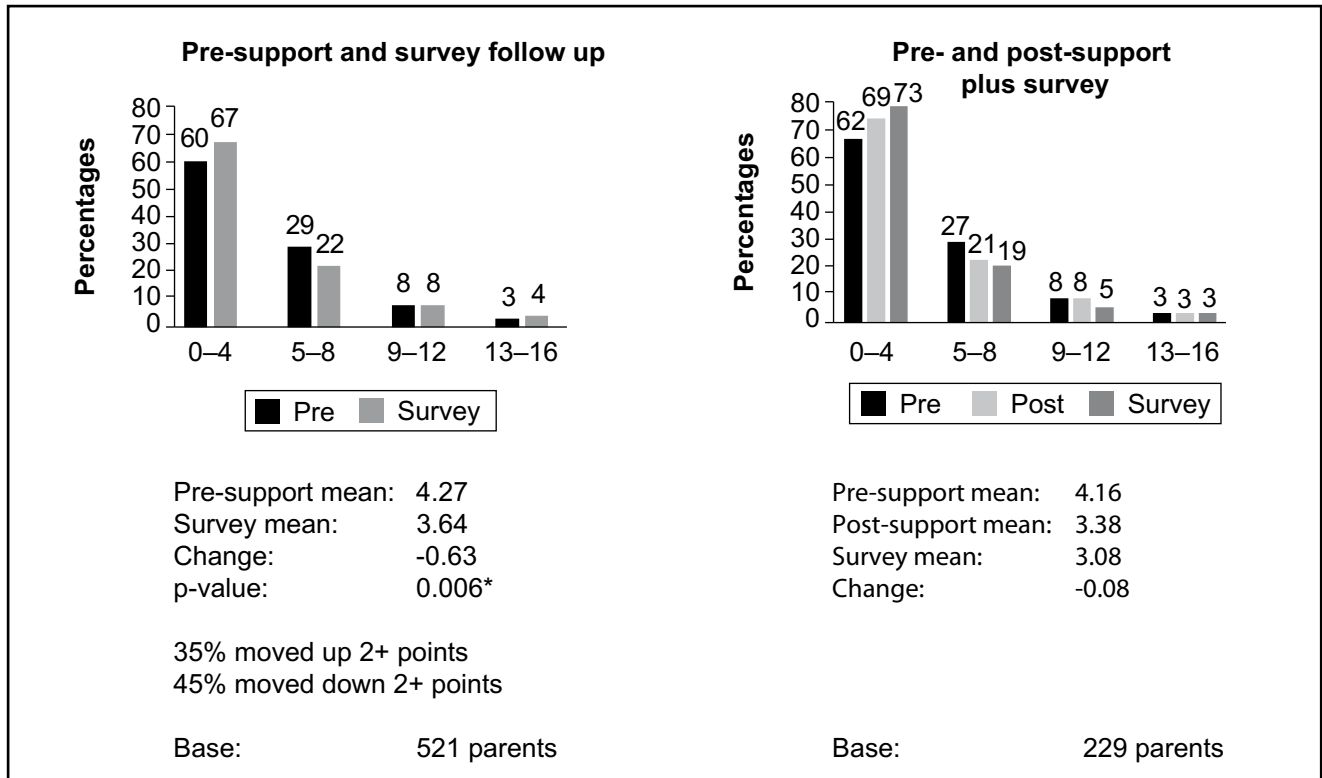
## Collaboration questions results overview

- Vast majority of clients scoring lower than 9 at baseline: 57 per cent scoring 0 to 4 and 30 per cent scoring 5 to 8.
- No significant change immediately post-support (mean change score -0.02).
- Significant **negative** change between pre-support and survey (mean change score -0.6): mean score of 4.3 pre-support and 3.6 at the point of the survey.
  - Apparent downward trajectory for those with collaboration scores pre-, post- and survey.

MI data



## MI and survey data

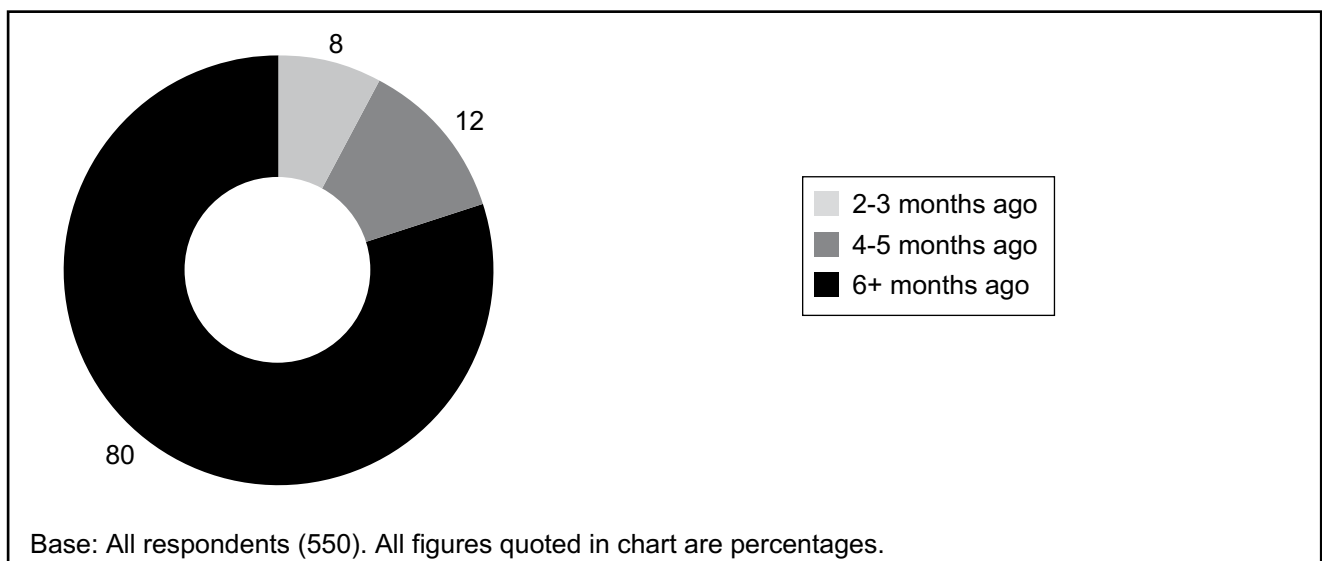


## Who took part in the web survey and their involvement with the project

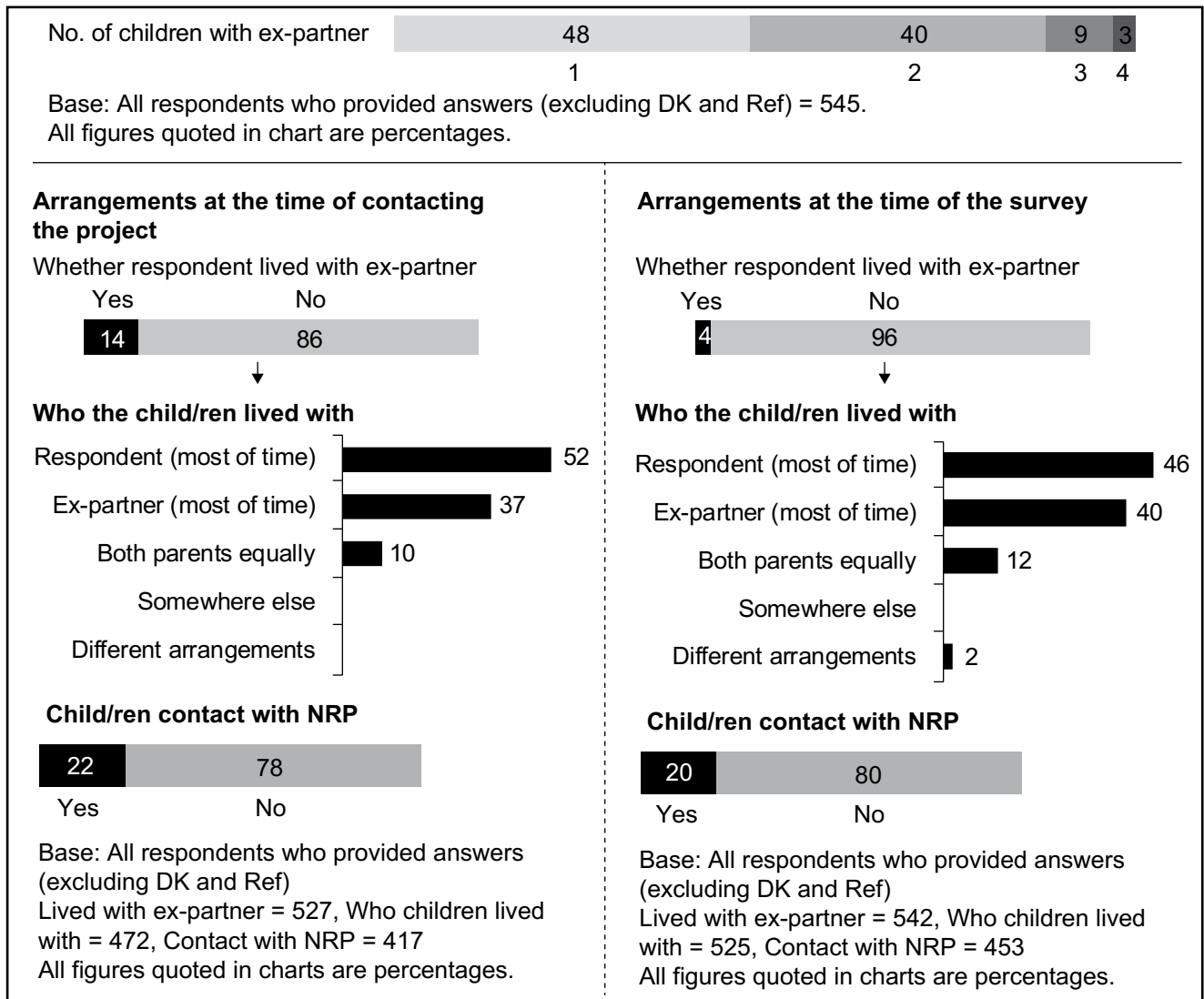
	Registration data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	45
Female	53	55
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	Not collected	4
25–34		29
35–44		51
45+		16
<b>Base*</b>	8,733	550

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

- Amongst those respondents who took part in the web survey, around three-quarters (76 per cent) created a parenting plan on the website.
- At the time of completing the web survey, the majority (80 per cent) had not been involved with the project for at least six months.



## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)



## Medium term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren:
  - **36 per cent were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner (5 per cent very happy, and 31 per cent happy).
  - 57 per cent were unhappy (27 per cent very unhappy and 31 per cent unhappy).
  - 6 per cent were unsure or refused to answer.
- Amongst respondents who didn't live with their ex-partner, and whose child/ren living with arrangements were the same before and after contacting the project:
  - **23 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
    - ~ Amongst these, half (50 per cent) reported that the project played a role in this change (5 per cent a big role, 45 per cent some role).
  - 25 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before:
    - ~ Three-quarters (74 per cent) felt that the project didn't play a role in this, however, 13 per cent reported that they played some role (with 13 per cent unsure or refusing to answer).
  - 47 per cent reported they were same (with 5 per cent unsure or refusing to answer).

## Medium term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, **82 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or in the process of agreeing one), leaving 16 per cent without (and 1 per cent sure).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and their child/ren lived (most of the time) with one parent, 78 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months (which is 91 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and whose child living with arrangements were the same before and after they contacted the project:
  - **15 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before:**
    - ~ Of these **38 per cent felt that the project played a role in these improvements** (13 per cent large role, 25 per cent some role).
  - 15 per cent that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before:
    - ~ Of these 10 per cent reported that the project played a role in this change (all reported 'some' role).
  - 58 per cent reported they were same.
  - 9 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement (with 3 per cent unsure/ refusing to answer).



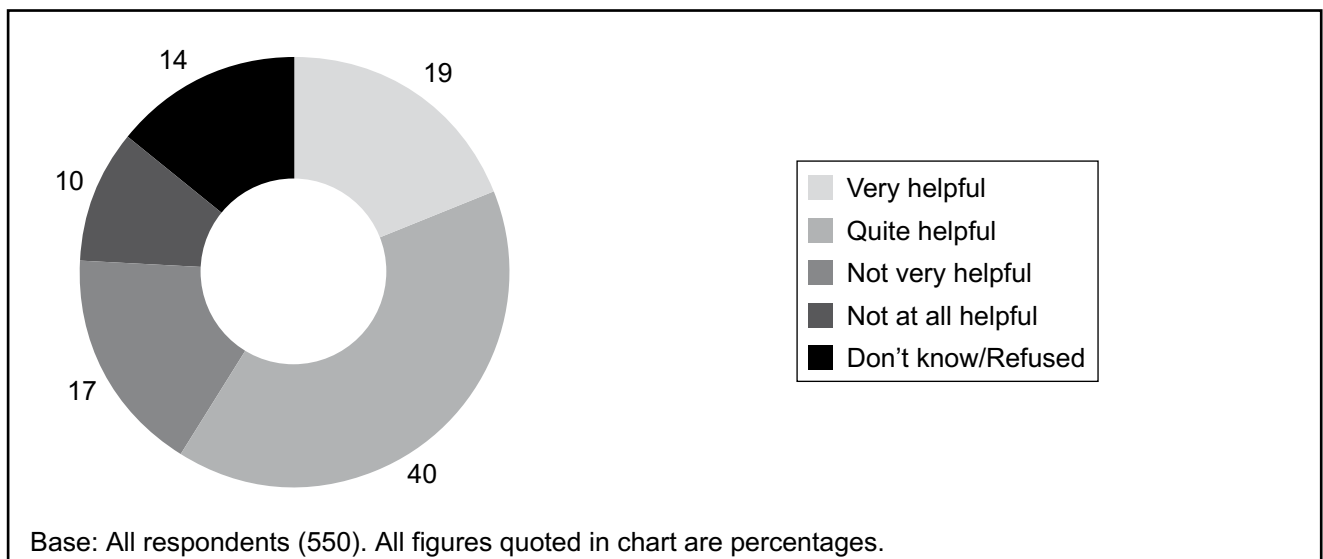
## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

### Use of the family courts

- Just over half (53 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts since their contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly rated to their child/ren).
- Four in ten (40 per cent) reported having plans to go to the family courts in the future.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project and had no plans to do so, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further, 17 per cent felt the project played a role in this decision.**

### Overall reflection on involvement with project

- Nearly six in ten (58 per cent) respondents overall, felt that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.



### Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

- The impact of the service was primarily evaluated using quantitative pre-post evaluation of service users' collaborative co-parenting and qualitative feedback from users through an online survey and phone interviews. No qualitative interviews were undertaken as permission to contact site users was not gained by the project.
- Overall, users did not significantly improve or decline in collaborative co-parenting between registration and follow-up six weeks later. In hindsight, six weeks may be too soon to measure and without a control group it is not known if this indicates limited impact or having a stabilising effect and preventing a decline. The most change was found amongst:
  - Those initially indicating 'It's impossible to agree on any arrangements', reporting a significant improvement in co-parenting,
  - Those saying initially 'Things have been working but there might be problems ahead' were accurate and their scores for co-parenting significantly declined,
  - Mothers and those supported by Home-Start showed improvements in their ability to get support,
  - Fathers became less optimistic (perhaps more realistic?) about finance/maintenance, and
  - Those completing any video-based skills claimed improvements in their ability to communicate with their child's other parent.

*'Really useful resource. Great place to get started and open communication.'*

(Client)

*'The parenting plan provided was very useful.'*

(Client)

*'I have shared these with parents and it has helped to build their confidence with managing parenting issues.'*

(Professional)

*'The plan, cushions animosity and protects all concerned from emotional hurt/s'*

(Professional)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

- Feedback from professionals was very promising, suggesting the potential for:
  - Wider use as a useful professional tool; and
  - More collaborative working with professionals (and other agencies) to better meet clients needs.
- Anecdotal feedback from lawyers, mediators and service users identifies OnePlusOne parent plans being used successfully in court, potentially speeding up or in future avoiding court processes.
- Service providers reported that the social media presence is:
  - Helping raise awareness of the issues and the importance of prioritising children's needs; and
  - Highlighting free services to fill the gaps left by changes in the legal aid.

*'The plan cushions animosity and protects all concerned from emotional hurts.'*

(Professional)

*'I have shared these with parents and it has helped to build their confidence with managing parenting issues.'*

(Professional)

*'We are being pushed into the spotlight a bit.'*

(Project Manager)

*'It's the whole ethos of everything we do. Try to intervene early, to either maintain, build, strengthen a relationship or to support the couple, the parents, in managing a relationship breakdown, to have the least damaging impact, outcomes for children.'*

(Project Manager)

## Overcoming the common barriers to separating and separated parents getting support

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The site was felt to be a means of overcoming common barriers to clients receiving support. The key barriers were believed to be availability, acceptability and affordability. By offering support online, on a 24/7 basis, anonymously, free and with no need for child care, the site believed they had overcome these barriers.
- The projects referral process supported the project's engagement of its target audience. The site was able to access fathers by using dad.info as a referral source; targeted promotion of professionals and relevant agencies supported the engagement of other clients.
- The combination of co-parenting skills and parenting plan supported the impact of both tools.
- Involvement of professionals/volunteers providing face-to-face help to assess readiness and guide clients through the online process was believed to substantially improved engagement in skills and the parenting plan, leading to better results.
- Having a good relationship with and support from DWP was felt to support the project.
- Good relationship and support from DWP.

*'Useful as it focused the discussion on specific things – and doing it on the computer makes it accessible.'*

(Staff)

*'What people are telling us is they want the practical but they recognise that they might need some help.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Better to catch them once they are already in a relationship with a professional of some kind.'*

(Project Manager)

*'I could not fault the support at all. It's been tremendous, huge engagement...good collaboration.'*

(Project Manager)

## Difficulties with the website design, content and identifying the right audience

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The websites' design was considered a barrier. While changes are outlined in more detail in the 'Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future' the greatest changes were suggested to the sites routing/navigation, interactivity, video content and linking skills to individual plans.
- OneplusOne struggled to identify and access the right audience for the site. In particular there was low engagement from those accessing the service via social media, as they were not 'emotionally ready'. This hindered the project's impact as clients were not ready to engage with and use the site and its content.
- There was a lack of engagement in the communication/co-parenting skills site elements, prior to using the parenting plan.
- Overall, the project struggled to measure the effectiveness and impact of the site on service users. Assessing effectiveness at six weeks was believed to be too early as benefits may be more evident in the longer term, whilst some users may dip in and out or return at a later date. Similarly, different sites users may engage with the site and complete the online parenting plan in different ways, which hindered understanding project effectiveness.

*'Not easy to complete and send to other parent for completion – lots of irrelevant questions.'*

(Client)

*'They weren't in the emotional state [that] was ready to get the most from it.'*

(Project Manager)

*'The payment triggers and therefore the perceived success is based on a very specific set of activities happening. Whereas what we think...is that sometimes people are printing a parenting plan off and using it to sit down to talk...sticking it on the fridge and adding to it as they go. In real life, people use tools in a way that suits them...it is highly likely that we have had a greater impact than we can report on.'*

(Project Manager)

## Professionals reported that they would recommend the service, whilst charging could be a barrier

### Recommending the service

- Service users were not asked if they might recommend the service to others.
- Some professionals gave spontaneous feedback that they recommend and/or would use it with clients as well as recommend it to colleagues.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Service users were not asked if they would be willing to pay for the service.
- Concerns were expressed by the providers about charging being a barrier, particularly for the vulnerable and those on low incomes.
- However, they thought others might be prepared to pay, perhaps as part of a support package, and may feel more reassured that it is worth doing as a consequence.

*'It has been extremely helpful and I have shared the site with my colleagues who have also used the service.'*

(Staff)

*'I can see myself doing the plan with a parent in front of me – very user friendly so happy to recommend – and there is nothing else out there like it!'*

(Staff)

*'I think there are other ways of doing it. Giving people a package of support which might include an access code to something like this service.'*

(Project Manager)

*'The people that need our service the most are the people that can least afford it... Expecting this vulnerable group to pay for this service would be an enormous barrier to use.'*

(Project Manager)

## E.11 Pinnacle People

### **Project aim:**

To help separated parents overcome their differences, improve their co-parenting skills and focus on the needs of their children.

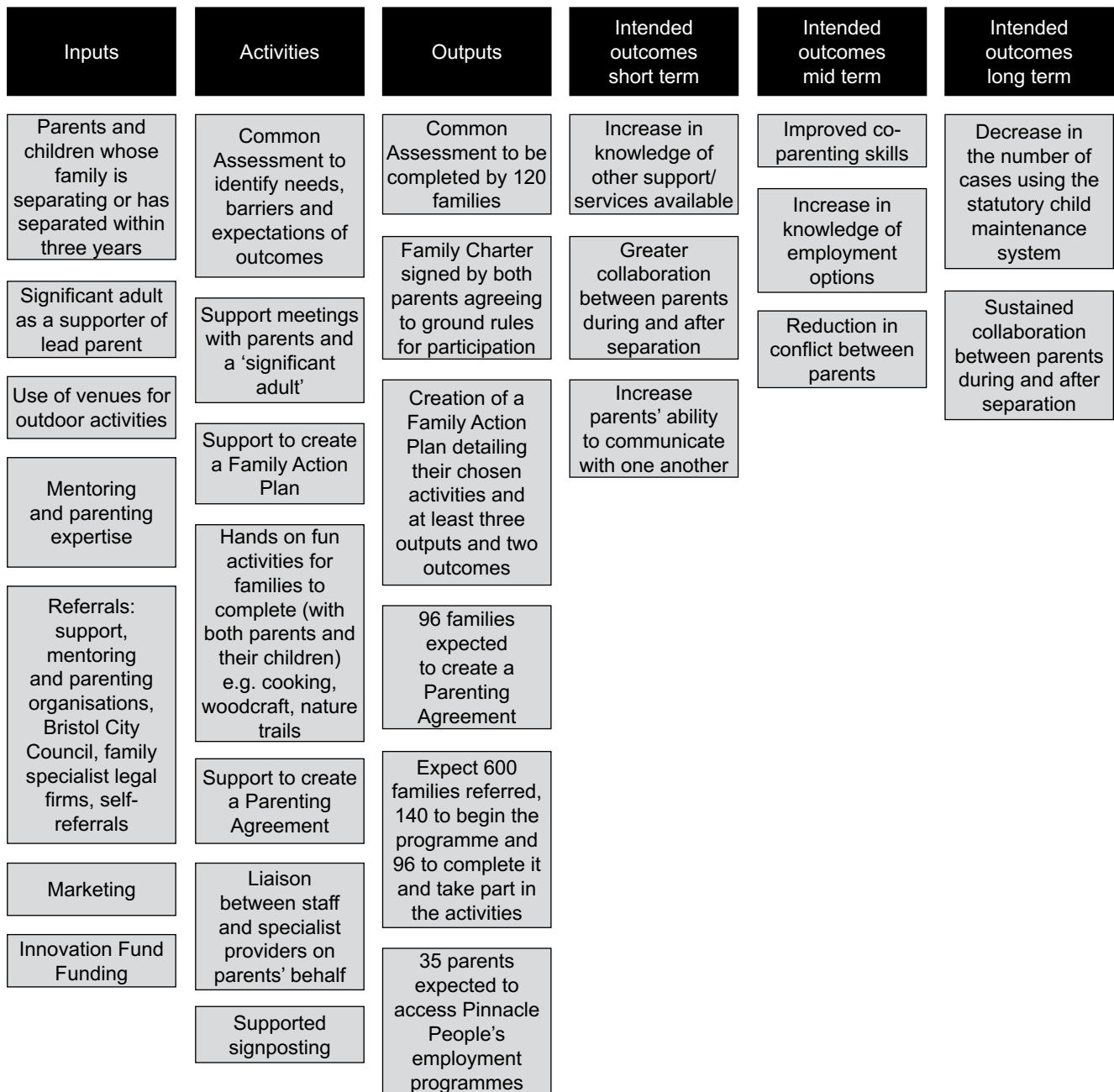
### **Project delivery:**

- The 'Families Together Programme' is a 12-week series of activities.
- Lead parent or parents meet a Family Coach to discuss a programme.
- A Family Coach meets with a 'significant adult' (family member or friend) who will support and encourage the lead parent through the programme (where relevant).
- Enrolment: the Family Coach supports parents to create a Common Assessment, identifying their needs, barriers and expectations of outcomes and outputs. They also create and sign a family charter, agreeing to ground rules for the programme and a Family Action Plan detailing their chosen activities with at least three expected outputs and two outcomes.
- Parents and children participate in three or more activities with ongoing reflection about progress towards achieving their desired outcomes and outputs (usually as separate meetings with parents).
- A Family Coach supports parents to create a Parenting Agreement.
- Parents are also signposted to other agencies and services where relevant e.g. employment programmes.

### **Target audience:**

- Families who are going through a separation or separated within the past three years.
- The service was offered in the Bristol area.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
Common Assessment to be completed by 120 families	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 98 individual parents started, of these 45 'completed'	103 parents	64 pre-PAMS 19 pre- and post-PAMS 4 pre- and survey PAMS 2 pre-, post- and survey PAMS	19 parent interviews	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
96 families expected to create a Parenting Agreement					Stage 2 – Total 11 interviews: 2 Project manager 2 staff 7 clients
Expect 600 families referred, 140 to begin the programme and 96 to complete it and take part in the activities					Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 2 Project manager 7 clients
35 parents expected to access Pinnacle People's employment programmes					

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- Pinnacle People was targeting parents and children living Bristol, Avon, South West, England, Local Authority area of Bristol City.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- In the MI data, only comparisons can be made to the geographical area that parents were from:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined in the MI data (n=60), 95 per cent lived in the South West, 3 per cent in Yorkshire and the Humber and 2 per cent in the South East.

## Despite good existing links with potential referral agencies, initial referral rates were low

### Reach

- Referrals predominantly came through social services, a local single parent network (SPAN) and self-referral.
- Emails and flyers were sent to social services, partner organisations and schools, with features on local news.
- Rates were lower than expected in the first few months.

### Engagement

- Although engaging the lead parent was generally easy, engaging the second parent was more challenging – they typically did not want to work with their ex-partner.
- Parents were satisfied with referral times and were able to phone their Family Coach at any time; sometimes parents were able to resolve issues quickly and did not need to stay on the full programme.

### Drop-out

- Engagement levels were variable, which staff attributed to parents' underlying issues (e.g. communication skills, debt, employment, substance abuse) not being addressed.
- Parents waiting for the court to rule on contact issues were often not in the right frame of mind to resolve their problems.

*'It is one thing to identify people and referral points. It's another to translate those people into active customers.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Some come along with the idea that they can come and play with the kids and animals, but they are thinking about the underlying issues...on a future project we would be looking to intervene with those issues and support families going forward.'*

(Project Manager)

*'You often get one perspective. When you get the second parent in you can find that you have the complete flip of engaging with parent one...you're not always going to know the challenges until you start working with people, getting to know one another as individuals and can find out the underlying issues.'*

(Project Manager)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Pinnacle People feel that the programme was most effective for parents who had not been through mediation – they were felt to have the greatest need for Pinnacle People’s services.
- When the project started, the Bristol Drug Project and some family law firms referred parents with considerable needs, such as drug and alcohol addiction. It was felt that these parents needed more than a 12- to 13-week programme, so Pinnacle People have referred those parents to more appropriate services. They have also worked closely with those referring into their service to ensure that they receive referrals of parents with less complex barriers to working together.
- Staff felt that in many cases a 12-week programme was not long enough. They suggested that an after-school club might be a good way of supporting families further by offering a place for children to play while their parents undertake adult learning and parenting courses.
- One of the challenges initially faced was that parents would frequently have quite complex circumstances and needs. These were often not apparent at the outset of engagement; when engaging with families they had a lead parent who was interested in the project (typically the mother). Often the perspective was one-sided, rather than a rounded view, and as a result it took time to identify and deal with the underlying issues.
- The project did not receive the number of referrals that was expected in the first few months because it took time to build trust within the community, to build a network for referrals and to find their place in the market.
- Feedback from participants has been positive. Parents felt that the farm was a safe space and was preferable to a formal solicitor’s office where they might otherwise be trying to work with their ex-partner. Being in an informal environment with the focus on their children also helped many parents come to a joint-parenting agreement and there was a high conversion rate for those completing a Common Assessment to signing a Parenting Agreement.
- As part of the programme, there were themed events to encourage families to take up the service and a number of children going through the programme were able to hold their birthday party at the farm for free. This allowed parents to talk to their peers and feel less alone during their separation.

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Though activities were generally felt to be appropriate, both clients and staff believed more age appropriate activities should be offered for older children.
- The Project Managers felt that in its current form, the project could be replicated but that they would want to enhance it. The nature of Pinnacle means that they could offer a wider range of services across the network. Pinnacle People could still use the farm if they were to enhance the programme with a wraparound service, but they could also utilise some other venues which they use around Bristol.
- Providing these wraparound services on a large scale could potentially save a lot of money for the taxpayer, in Pinnacle People's opinion
- Staff felt that it could be beneficial to add in a few sessions for parents to work one-to-one with a Family Coach before the family activities to prepare them for working together effectively.
- The Project Manager felt that the activities worked well as staff worked flexibly and it encouraged innovative ways of working. They felt that it takes time for the Family Coach to develop trust with parents to uncover all of the issues impacting their family, so the process cannot be rushed. However, staff also need boundaries for how much time they can spend with a family and how much they should do to help them.
- They felt the project could be offered by other providers if they have existing service provision.

*'It would be replication plus – to copy what we have done before we would be missing a trick...we would want to do more.'*

(Project Manager)

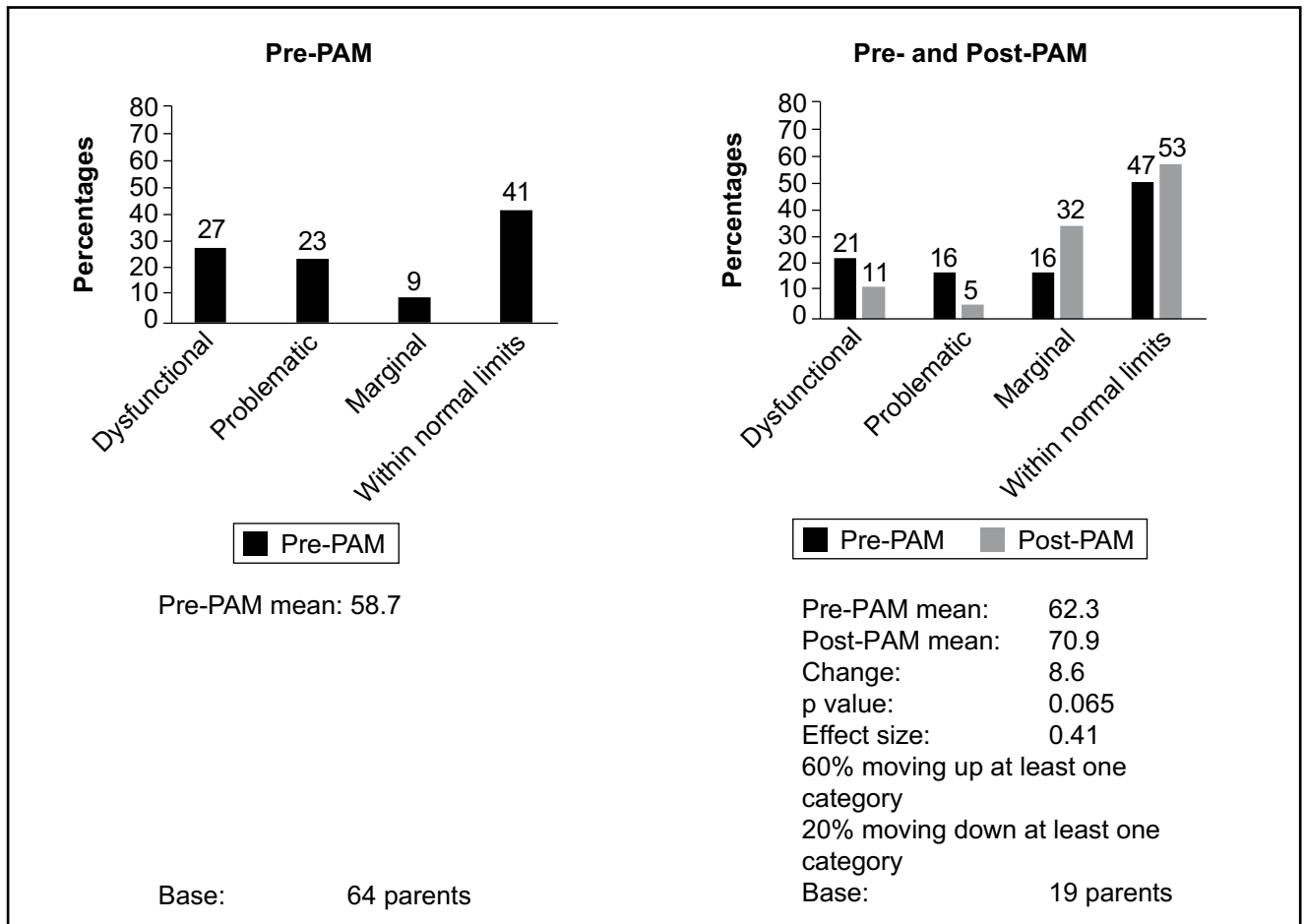
*'I felt that we just scratched the surface with these issues – you weren't dealing with all the issues in the family.'*

(Project Manager)

### **PAM overview**

- Pre- and post- data, no survey data (currently only four survey respondents with pre-PAM data).
- Half of clients either problematic (23 per cent) or dysfunctional (27 per cent) at baseline – 41 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 8.6) (NB small numbers):
  - 53 per cent within normal limits post-support and 11 per cent dysfunctional.

MI data (very small pre-post numbers)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Several clients reported **improved communications, and better relationships** between themselves and their ex-partner:

Clients felt they were better able so spend time with one another and argued less due to Pinnacle People.

Staff also witnessed the progression of clients from high levels of tension/animosity to being better able to work together, e.g. there has been progression from parents not being able to sit in the same room together, to sharing space.

As a result of improved communication, some have found it **easier to come to financial arrangements** or have **increased or formalised the contact they have** with their children. A few said they **avoided court** action.

**Clients commonly reported emotional benefits** from engaging with Pinnacle People, which they attributed to being able to see their children and the support they received from project staff.

A few also found connecting with families in a similar situation helpful.

*'I've witnessed instances where you have people screaming at one another and then they meet at the farm and they are civil to one another.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We would probably have ended up in court and she might have manipulated the court – you know it's a dangerous situation to be in.'*

(Client)

*'When you are told over and over for years that you are a monster, sometimes you start asking questions to yourself...it's like bullying...To have people reaffirm you are not a monster and she is talking [rubbish] is comforting especially when they are an outsider.'*

(Client)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients' children were also felt to have benefited emotionally:

- The project enabled children to have **increased contact with non-resident parents**.
- The project offered **relaxed environment** in which parents and children could interact with one another. This allowed children to improve their relationships with both parents, and let them feel secure that both parents loved them.
- The project helped parents reflect on how their behaviour affects their children.

### Children's behaviour was also felt to have improved:

- Many parents created parenting agreements and had stuck to them since attending. This has given their children more structure and consistency of contact, making the whole family more relaxed.
- Some parents agreed a common approach to discipline for the children so that they had more consistency and boundaries.
- Staff felt that the project also promoted the farm and improved their visitor numbers.

*'...we reached an agreement – she couldn't use our daughter as a weapon and have control over my life...having a timetable and rota makes it a lot easier...I know when I can see my daughter and it makes it so that I can work.'*

(Client)

*'It's a lot better and a lot healthier for the kids and for us...the oldest one would get upset with it all [arguments in the past] but it's got a lot better, he's a lot happier with mine and their mother's relationship.'*

(Client)

## (1) Pen portrait: Hugo felt Pinnacle People supported his relationship with his children

- Hugo\* had separated from his partner four years ago. The split had been acrimonious and he had lost access to and contact with his two sons, now aged 11 and 13.
- Hugo was referred to Pinnacle People by the courts. He valued the service they offered, in part, because it was free and he could not afford a solicitor.
- He also felt the experience of using Pinnacle People had been positive. He found the staff professional, impartial and able to diffuse tense situations between himself and his ex-partner. The project was enabled the engagement of his ex-partner by paying for taxies.
- Overall, Hugo believed the project had a positive impact on his relationship with his ex-partner and his children. They were able to create a parenting plan, which has been adhered to, and communications are calmer than before the intervention.
- He has also noticed that both his sons, particularly his youngest, are less volatile. He believed that without the service he would have had to go to court, struggled to gain access to his children and that his relationship with his ex would have been more bitter.
- Although Hugo was happy with his experience, he felt that the project was better suited to parents with younger children and that there could be more age-appropriate activities offered.

*'It was very good at building bridges which were very burnt. We basically couldn't stand the sight of each other and we were very argumentative and bitter...My ex is very fiery but [the staff] were able to calm her down.'*

(Client)

*'I feel my boys are a lot calmer, especially [the younger one]...[He] can get very aggressive but now he's completely different. He's like a different person.'*

(Client)

*'I'd have had no access [were it not for Pinnacle People]. My relationships would have been very bitter. We'd have gone down the solicitor route, which I can't afford. I'd have had a really big bill for the solicitor's fee.'*

(Client)

\*Not his real name.

## **(2) Pen portrait: Maria did not feel safe and secure when using Pinnacle People**

- Maria\* left her ex-partner having been the victim of domestic violence; she was being treated for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as a result of her experiences.
- The court referred her to Pinnacle People to facilitate access between her ex-partner and their three-year-old daughter. Dependent on her ex-partner passing various drug tests, it was planned that he would have more and more unsupervised contact.
- Unfortunately, Maria's experiences with Pinnacle People were largely negative and she had a number of suggestions for improvement.
- Due to her violent relationship, she did not want to see her ex-partner, though there was meant to be a staggered hand-over period. However, her ex-partner would arrive earlier and earlier and would wait outside the centre or in the car park, something she found intimidating, exacerbated her PTSD and meant she couldn't say goodbye properly to her daughter. She felt that the staff did not do enough to challenge this behaviour or set firm boundaries. Maria also felt the staff did not supervise activities adequately – they would pop out of the room or be on their phone leaving her daughter and her ex unattended – and that they inappropriately tried to reconcile her with her ex-partner. She was also upset that there was no security presence on site, which meant, if her ex-partner were violent, there would be no one to intervene.
- Maria also thought the venue could be improved. While she found the setting very beautiful and relaxing and reflected that her daughter enjoyed both the activities and engaging with her father, she did not feel it was secure. The site was shared with other visitors. Also, there was no safe waiting area where she could stay while her ex visited her child. On one occasion she had to sit in a small office with no toilet facilities for over two hours.
- Maria's views on Pinnacle People were mixed. Although she was not happy with her experience and felt a contact centre would have been more appropriate, she said had her circumstances been different, her relationship not violent and her split more amicable that she would recommend the service.

\* Not her real name.

## Project effectiveness was supported by empathetic staff, one-to-one assessments and flexibility

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The project benefited from empathetic staff with experience of families with complex issues. They needed to be balanced and conciliatory, but also tough and willing to be directive. Many parents mentioned the strong relationships they had with their key workers.
- The setting was felt to facilitate engagement with the project and its overall success. It was informal – allowing families to relax – and provided a range of activities.
- The structure of the programme was appreciated by parents, especially the one-to-one assessment appointments, which enabled them to be completely open about their situation.
- The programme offered flexibility, based on longer hours and availability at the weekend. Providing a six-day service was appreciated, especially by working parents and those with school-age children.
- Tailoring the approach to the individual and their needs proved effective.

*'It was really good [the assessment] – the way that we did it separately as well. It gave me the opportunity to speak about anything that I might not have wanted to speak about in front of my husband...It made us really really comfortable, which made me talk more than I probably would if it was a formal meeting.'*

(Client)

*'[My support worker] is a very friendly person and she just knows how to talk to people and is great at listening as well.'*

(Client)

*'Because a lot of the centre activity is on a city farm they have a play area and they can feed the animals – the children are happy...I think it is very difficult to maintain that anger around children and young animals.'*

(Project Manager)

*'The location is key for the project – it is non-threatening. It's not two parents going into an office to be interviewed and it is a massive plus.'*

(Project Manager)

## Barriers to project effectiveness focused on insufficient outreach and complexity of problems

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Staff felt that the initial promotion was too narrowly targeted. They should have put more into outreach earlier on as they felt they did not have a critical mass of people to start the project with.
- There were some difficulties in engaging second parents. The Project Manager was not sure how couples could be brought onto the same page. They would not recommend making attendance mandatory or compelling them to take part.
- Some parents who were referred had very longstanding, complex issues which could not be fixed in a 12-week programme.
- The Project Manager felt that they could have offered additional services. Many clients struggled with anger management, long-term unemployment and debt and, if they had been signposted to additional support, these underlying issues could have been dealt with. They could make the programme more comprehensive and tailored to clients' needs. They feel they would be well placed to do this as they already offer many of these services.

*'The other issues that parents are facing – anger management, debt, long-term unemployment – it is about making the programme more comprehensive if we were to move forward with the project.'*

(Project Manager)

## **The low incomes of service users impede their ability to pay for the programme**

### **Recommending the service**

- The vast majority of parents would recommend the service.
- It was most appropriate for parents with younger children (given the type of activities available).
- Those who would not recommend the service had typically experienced domestic violence and did not feel that the facilities and security was sufficient.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Most of the service users interviewed were reliant on state benefits or were on a very low income and therefore felt that they would not be able to pay to access the programme.
- They appreciated that there was a cost for materials used in the activities and most would have been willing to make a small donation towards that (e.g. £5 per session).
- Parents (typically fathers) who were using the centre as a contact centre, and who would otherwise not have seen their children, said that they would be willing to pay for the programme. However, they reflected that they may not have been as keen to pay a large amount of money until they had experienced it.
- Some parents on low incomes mentioned that a weekly payment plan would help them budget for the cost of the programme if it were not free.
- Where the second parent was already reluctant to attend the programme, having a charge for the service would be an additional barrier for engagement.

## E.12 Relate

### **Project aim:**

To help separated/separating couples reaching an amicable agreement by providing information, advice and support via an online platform.

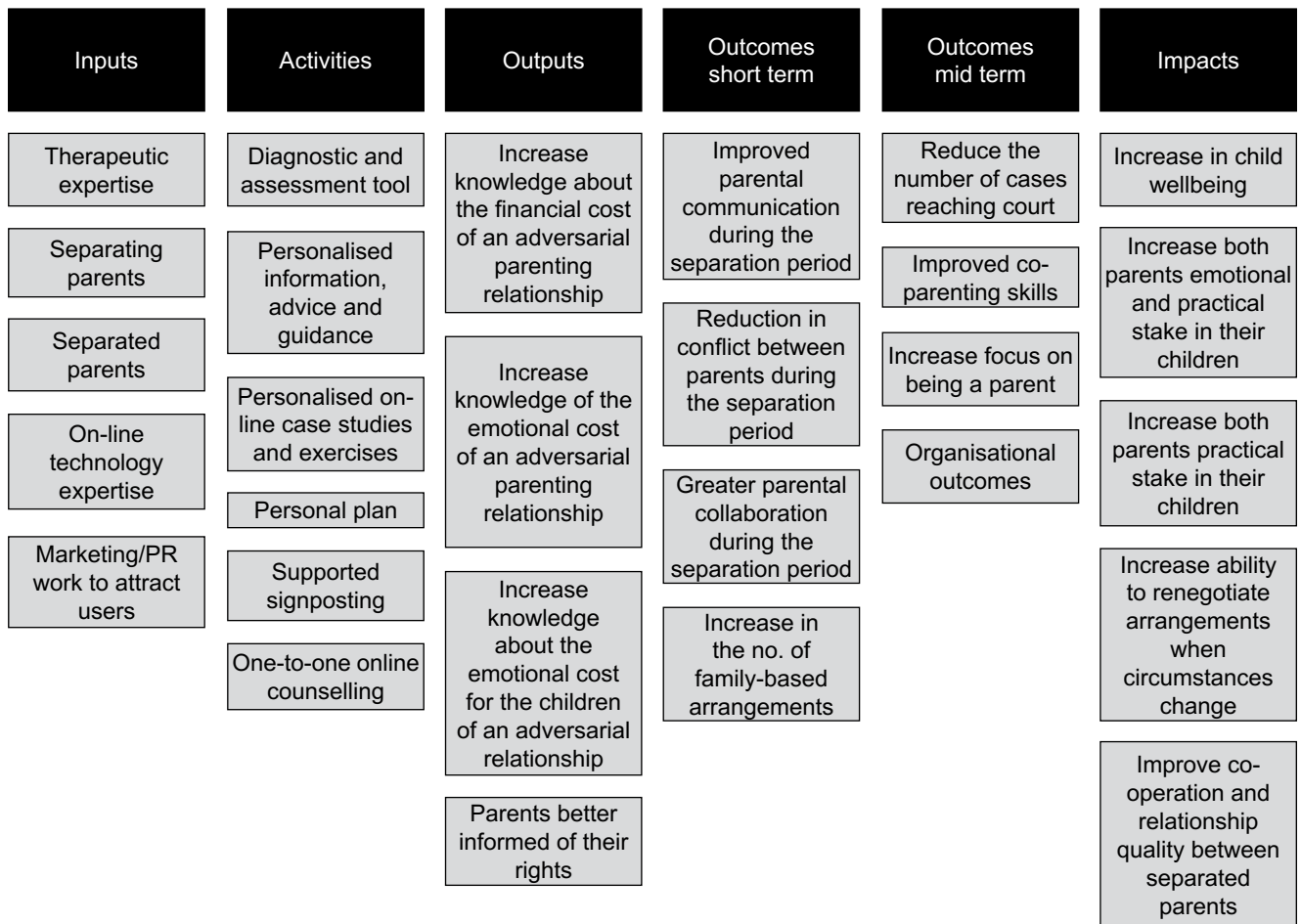
### **Project delivery:**

- An exclusively online project called 'What next'.
- Users register with the site, read articles and obtain exercises.
- The service is also available for non-registered users to access information without personalisation, i.e. progress tracker, tailored exercises.
- Users are encouraged to provide feedback after accessing the site, e.g. after reading an article or completing an exercise.
- A live chat service is available where users are able to speak to a fully trained counsellor at no cost.

### **Target audience:**

- It was assumed that online-users would fit the demographics accessing Relate's face-to-face counselling services, i.e. women aged 30-39 who are degree educated, have two children and are thinking of separating.
- Women are likely to access the service more than men, however, Relate aspired the online service to attract more men, and those of lower socio-economic backgrounds due to its anonymous, free and immediate nature.
- The online service is not suited for those who have experienced domestic and/or sexual abuse.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		Registration/MI data received	4 Collaboration question data received/collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
250,000 unique visitors and 90,000 registrants	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 2,482 individual parents started, of which all 'completed'.  As recorded in registration/MI data collected, (so only based on registrations from March 2014-June 2015 and not covering the full operational period of December 2013 to June 2015): 1,974 users registered with the website.	1,416 parents	1,380 pre-questions  13 survey questions	14 parent interviews	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 1 interviews: 1 Project manager  Stage 3 – Total 2 interviews: 1 Project manager 1 client

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Overview of website

#### Online service overview

- *What's Next? – The parents' guide to separation* included:
  - an advice page including articles and practical exercises;
  - option to chat with a Relate relationship counsellor; and
  - service in Welsh.
- Users had the opportunity to register. Registration was mandatory to have access to practical exercises but users were able to read advice articles without any registration requirement. Registration also enabled users to save the articles they read and create a list of articles they were interested in reading as well as monitoring their progress

#### Overview of advice pages

- The online service provided advice and practical exercises under seven main topics:
  - Thinking about splitting up.
  - Talking about separation.
  - Coping with thoughts and feelings.
  - Dealing with children's feelings and behaviour.
  - Living arrangements.
  - Preventing harm.
  - Legal and money matters.
- Each main topic included sub topics, articles written by Relate counsellors and practical exercises where possible.
- Users were provided the option to rate the articles and were provided a list of related articles and exercises.
- Next to each article, users were given the link to Relate's counselling services and the opportunity to chat with a Relate counsellor.

## Overview of website

There were 7 main advice topics:



What can we help you with right now?



Thinking about splitting up



Talking about separation



Coping with thoughts and feelings



Dealing with children's feelings and behaviour



Living arrangements



Preventing harm



Legal and money matters

[About us](#) [Contact us](#) [Disclaimer](#) [Accessibility](#) [Privacy & cookies](#)

Relate charity number: 207314, Company number: 394221 (Registered in England and Wales)

## Overview of website

Each advice topic included relevant articles and exercises:

**What next? The parents' guide to separation** Cymraeg Sign in | Register

Home Advice Feedback

## Thinking about splitting up

Help with things that might be going through your mind now

There are **8 articles** in this topic

- Staying together or not?**  
This article will help you think through whether you want to separate or whether you might be able to get your relationship back on track.
- My ex is pregnant**  
This article will help you think about becoming a parent if you've split up and your ex is pregnant.
- Separation checklists**  
This article will help you find ways to make good decisions and manage the practical aspects of separation.
- My partner doesn't want to split up**  
This article will help you to move forward when your partner disagrees with your decision to separate.
- Separation as a loss**  
This article will show you how seeing your separation as a loss can help you negotiate the practical tasks and emotional rollercoaster that lie ahead.
- I don't want to split up**  
This article will help you move forward when your partner wants to separate but you don't want the relationship to end.
- Talking to your partner**  
This article will help you find ways to talk to your partner about the state of your relationship or to agree terms for a separation.
- I'm pregnant and we've split up**  
This article will help you think about how best to look after yourself and your baby if you're pregnant and have separated.

**relate**  
the relationship people

0300 100 1234    Nearest Relate    [Talk to someone](#)

**What next?** The parents' guide to separation    [Cymraeg](#)    [Sign in](#) | [Register](#)

[Home](#) | [Advice](#)    [Feedback](#)

## Coping with thoughts and feelings

### Managing sad and angry thoughts and feelings



There are **13 articles** in this topic

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Surviving the emotional roller-coaster</b></p> <p>This article will reassure you that very many emotions are usual during separation and it will help you find ways to cope with them.</p> <a href="#">➔</a> | <p><b>Step families</b></p> <p>This article will offer you tips on how you can develop good relationships with step-children and other new family members.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>                   | <p><b>Help! I'm in chaos</b></p> <p>This article will reassure you that feeling overwhelmed by your feelings is normal and it will help you find ways to cope.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>     |
| <p><b>My partner's so angry</b></p> <p>This article will help you to understand and manage your partner's anger.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>   | <p><b>Sticks and stones</b></p> <p>This article will help you to cope and to support your child if your ex is saying unkind or untrue things about you.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>                      | <p><b>My self-esteem</b></p> <p>This article will help you to identify if you've got poor self-esteem and it offers ways to help you start to value yourself more.</p> <a href="#">➔</a> |
| <p><b>When children are used for support</b></p> <p>This article invites you to consider alternatives to relying on your children for emotional support.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>                                     | <p><b>When the other parent walks away</b></p> <p>This article will help you to look after yourself and adjust when your children's other parent has walked away completely.</p> <a href="#">➔</a> | <p><b>Fears and worries</b></p> <p>This article will offer you practical ways to deal with any fears and worries you have after your separation.</p> <a href="#">➔</a>                   |

## Overview of website

Articles were written by Relate Counsellors and included real life examples:

**What next? The parents' guide to separation** Cymraeg Sign in | Register

Home Advice Feedback

## Thinking about splitting up

Help with things that might be going through your mind now

There are 8 articles in this topic

- Staying together or not?**  
This article will help you think through whether you want to separate or whether you might be able to get your relationship back on track.
- My ex is pregnant**  
This article will help you think about becoming a parent if you've split up and your ex is pregnant.
- Separation checklists**  
This article will help you find ways to make good decisions and manage the practical aspects of separation.
- My partner doesn't want to split up**  
This article will help you to move forward when your partner disagrees with your decision to separate.
- Separation as a loss**  
This article will show you how seeing your separation as a loss can help you negotiate the practical tasks and emotional rollercoaster that lie ahead.
- I don't want to split up**  
This article will help you move forward when your partner wants to separate but you don't want the relationship to end.
- Talking to your partner**  
This article will help you find ways to talk to your partner about the state of your relationship or to agree terms for a separation.
- I'm pregnant and we've split up**  
This article will help you think about how best to look after yourself and your baby if you're pregnant and have separated.

### What's worked in the past?

Think about what's made you feel better in the past during difficult times. It could be sleeping more, or sharing your tough times with a good friend or family member.

Try your tactic again.

### Treat yourself

It can help to allow yourself some time to do something that's purely for you. Think about what you enjoy.

## Help! I'm in chaos

This article will reassure you that feeling overwhelmed by your feelings is normal and it will help you find ways to cope.

**Part of:** [Coping with thoughts and feelings](#)

**Estimated reading time:** 3 min

**Author:** Glin, Relate counsellor

As an adult, we're expected to cope with all the bad things life throws at us. We're grown up and supposed to be strong. But sometimes the future can look very complicated or bleak.

If your thoughts and feelings seem overwhelming, it can help to remember that you've probably already coped with a great deal in life already and survived.

You're far from alone if you feel that your chaos, pain, anger or fear are so great that you've no strengths to draw on to overcome them. People often feel they're drowning in their sad or angry or confused thoughts and feelings when their families split up.

### A way forward

A way forward is to find and use once more all the strengths you've used in previous challenging times. If you look for these resources, they'll be there.

You can find the ways that will help you cope with your thoughts and feelings by thinking about the challenging things that have happened to you in the past, particularly when you were young. You may have moved house, lost a pet, hurt yourself or changed schools, for example.

What did you think and how did you feel at the time? Was there something practical and helpful that you did that helped you cope? Write it down.

Is there something similar you can do now?

### Danny's story

Danny thought his whole world was collapsing when his wife said she was leaving and taking their two-year-old son back to Ireland to live with her parents. He thought he couldn't cope and said his feelings could go from rage and anger to tears and despair



[Find out about Relate's counselling services](#)

## Overview of website

Practical exercises were provided. Users had the opportunity to rate the articles:

When Danny was asked how he coped then, he said he'd planted a tree in the woods where he'd walked with his grandad. He also wrote a diary, telling his grandad what he'd been up to. He didn't realise these two things had helped him cope.

Danny had a good relationship with his counsellor and they worked out together that if he started a memory box and wrote a blog to himself he would feel closer to his son. He also started to email his ex regularly about ordinary things while they negotiated how to keep Danny in contact with his son for the short term without making big plans for the future.

### Work out your own plan

Use Livechat to speak online with one of our counsellors who can help you put a plan together for managing things now.

★ Rate this article



### Suggested Exercises (1)

Exercise 1

Add to Next steps

#### Lessons Learned

This article will help to remember how you've coped in the past and how to use these resources to help now.

[Register](#) or [sign in](#) to view the exercises in your Next steps. It's free and secure.



## A new direction

As time moves on you may find the motivation to start looking for a new direction. When that happens, you may find it helpful to consider the following:

- Look for ways in which you can find and promote lasting happiness within yourself, e.g. achieving things you feel would enrich who you are as a person like a new hobby, or helping others. This may be preferable to drifting towards external things, such as things to buy or eat, which may only bring short-term pleasure.
- Be courageous. Believe you can do what you want to do and don't put limits on your hopes and aspirations.
- Think positively. Be ready to catch yourself when negative thoughts pop into your head. Think about what you "could try" rather than what you "can't do", no matter how small.
- All relationships are learning. Find time to reflect on your relationship. Did it hold you back? What have you learned from it? What would you do differently next time?

★ Rate this article



### Suggested Exercises (1)

Exercise 1

Add to Next steps

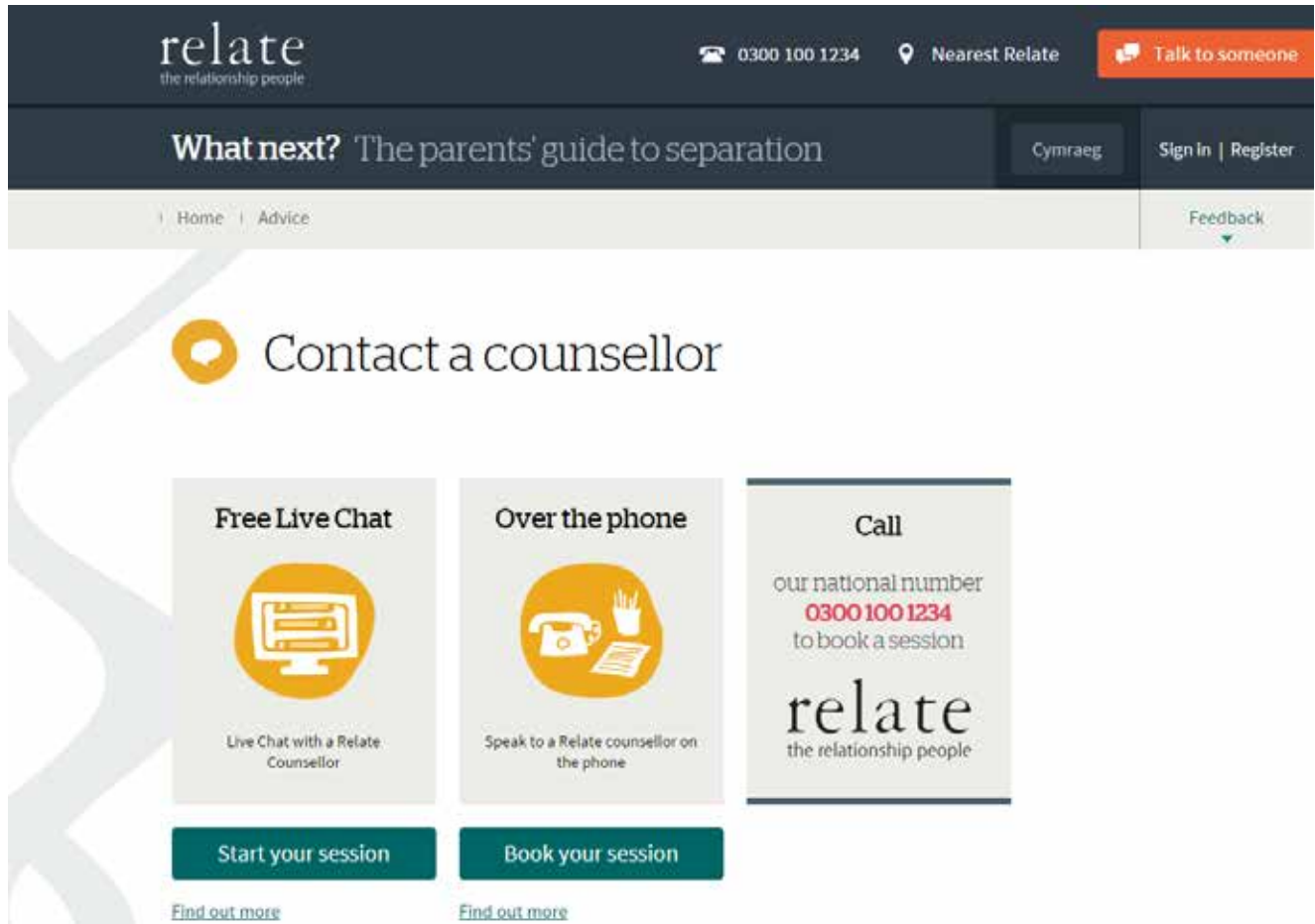
#### Looking forward

This exercise may help to explore where you are now, and what you would like from your future.

[Register](#) or [sign in](#) to view the exercises in your Next steps. It's free and secure.

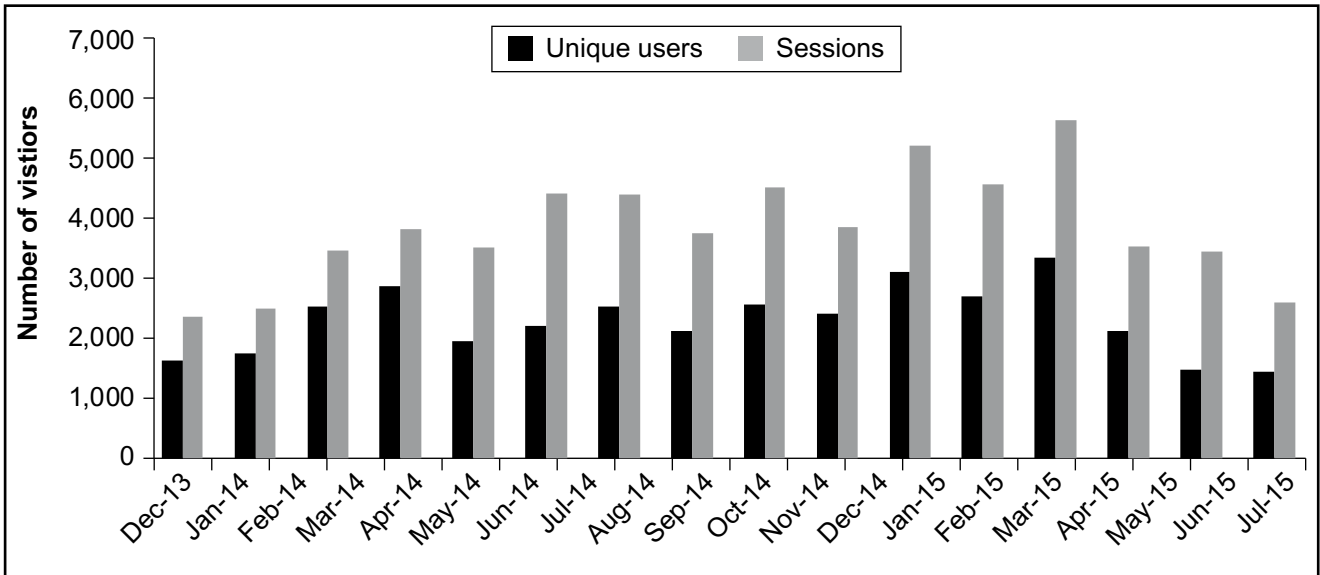
## Overview of website

Users had the opportunity to chat with a Relate counsellor or book an appointment over the phone:



### Web analytic data – Key metrics

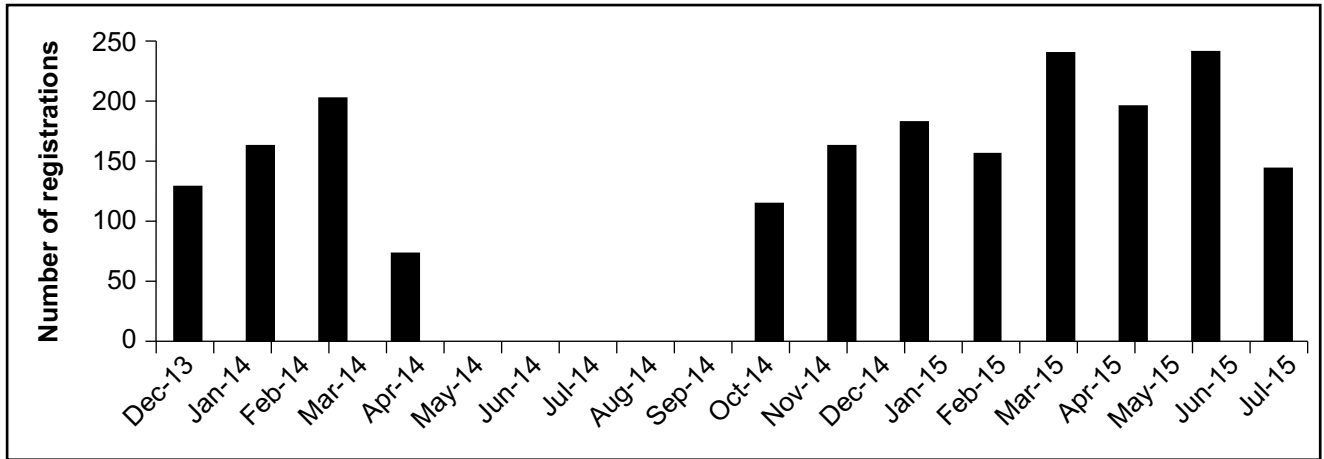
- Between March 2014 and June 2015\*:
  - There were 30,928 unique visitors to the website.
  - There were 1,974 completed registrations.
  - 61,922 ‘sessions’ took place. (A ‘session’ is a session of activity that a user with a unique IP address spends on the website).
- The following chart illustrates the monthly unique visitors and sessions to the website:



\* The website was operational from December 2013 to June 2015, but web analytic data was not available prior to March 2014.

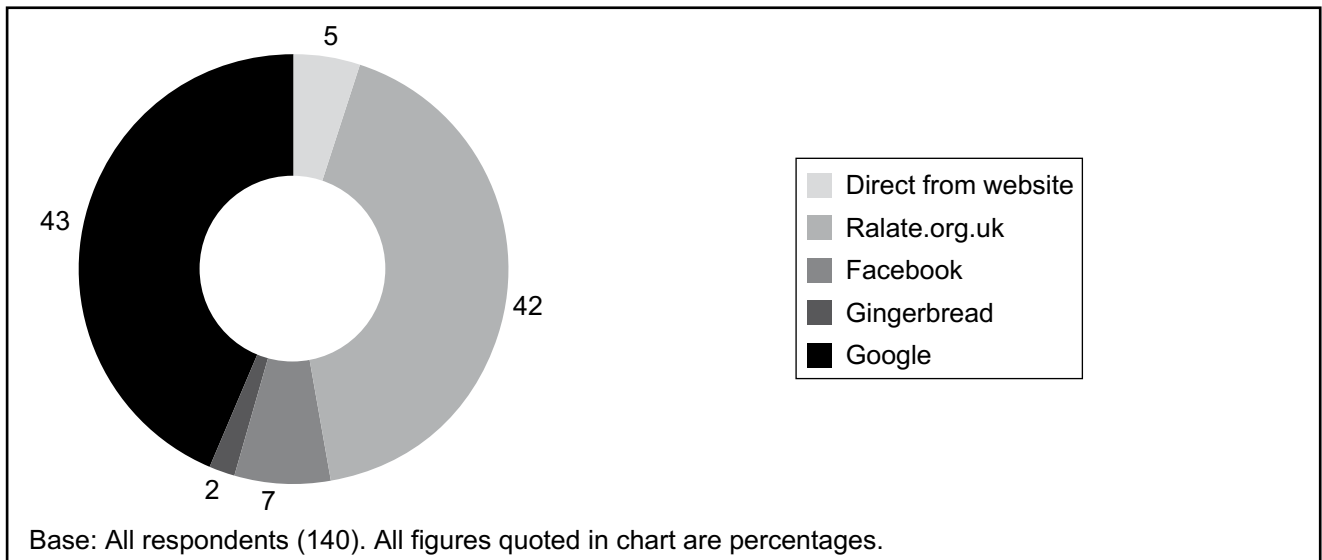
## Web analytic data – Key metrics

- The chart below illustrates the number of registrations per month. Number of registrations reached its peak in March and May 2015. There were no registrations in July, August, September and October 2014 due to technical issues with the website.



## Detailed metrics: Traffic sources

- The majority of the visits to the website were via referral pages.
- Between January 2015 and March 2015\*, almost 85 per cent of the unique visitors found the website via Google or the Relate website. Direct visits accounted for 5 per cent of the unique visits within this time frame.

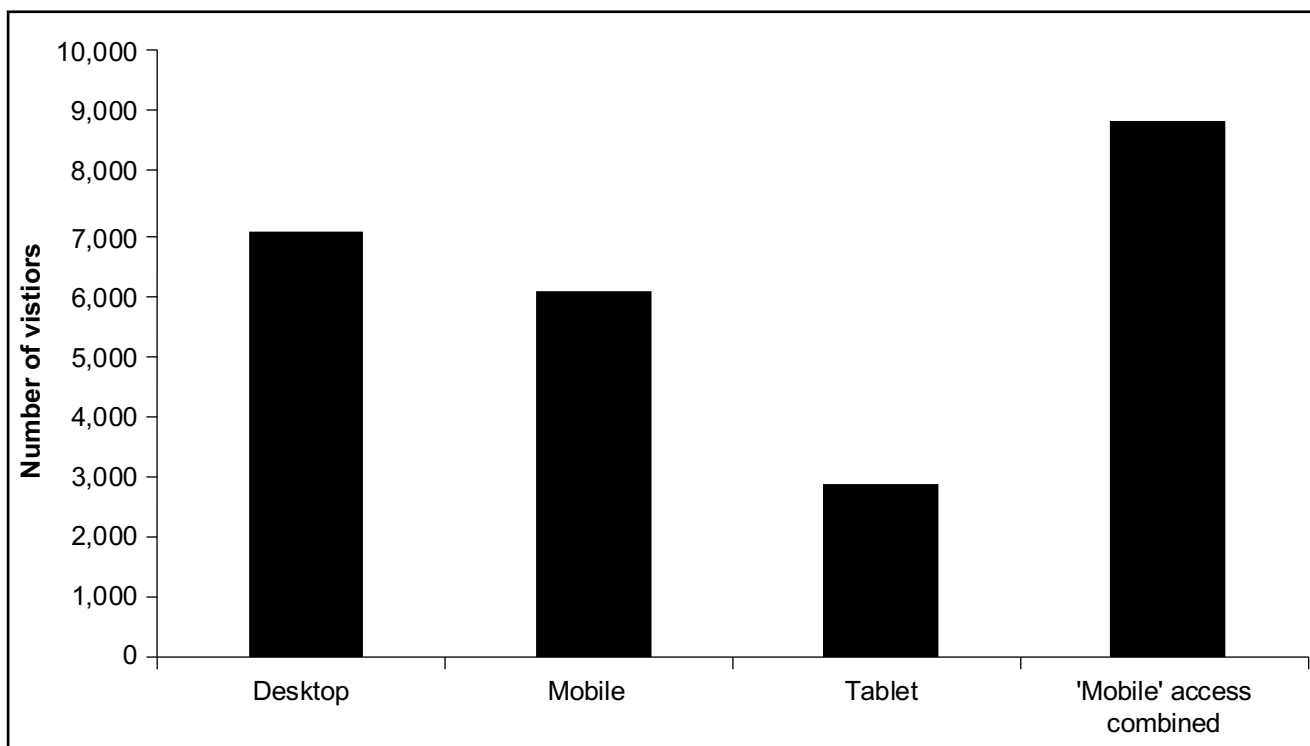


\*This more detailed metric information was provided over the 'snap shot' time period of January to March 2015.

## Detailed metrics: Access to the website by device, web page visits

### Access

- Between January 2015 and March 2015, the majority of the sessions were from a desktop computer, followed by mobile phones.
- Mobile devices were an important medium to access to the website, when access via tables and mobile are combined, access rates via mobile devices are higher than desktop access rates.



### Web page visits

- Between January 2015 and March 2015:
  - Three out of four users who entered the website's homepage, visited more than one page.
  - Just under four in five users who entered the website's advice page, visited more than one page:
    - ~ The 'bounce' rate\* for the homepage was **25 per cent** and for the advice page was **21 per cent**.

\* Bounce rate is the per cent of users who visited only one page in the website and then left without engaging any further. It may indicate the percentage of visitor with low level of engagement, however, this is subject to change depending on the landing page, interaction one may have with the page visited and overall structure and content of the website.

## Although traffic to the website was good, the project did not achieve its target numbers

### Reach

- Once users have access to the online service, the digital route could be tracked using Google analytics. However, it was difficult to identify the source of referral to the website.
- No concrete evidence to capture engagement levels, but project manager felt it reached the expected target audience – in particular, the online live chat service.
- Promotion and outreach activities, including a social media presence, had some impact although it was felt inefficient to attract the anticipated volume of users.

### Engagement

- Once registered on the website, users are engaged.
- Date collection allowed to capture number of unique visitors, repeat visitors, number of pages accessed per visit etc.
- An estimated 10-20 per cent of users registered with the site and completed additional exercises.

### Drop-out

- Not feasible to monitor drop out rates as there is no fixed number of sessions to take part in.

*‘There weren’t any measures or outcomes that were associated with continued engagement with the website’*

(Project Manager)

*‘At most people came back to the website maybe 4 or 5 times.’*

(Project Manager)

*‘We used some of our digital marketing budget to promote the project. That did have an impact, that increased the number of visitors to the site, and the number of registrations.’*

(Project Manager)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

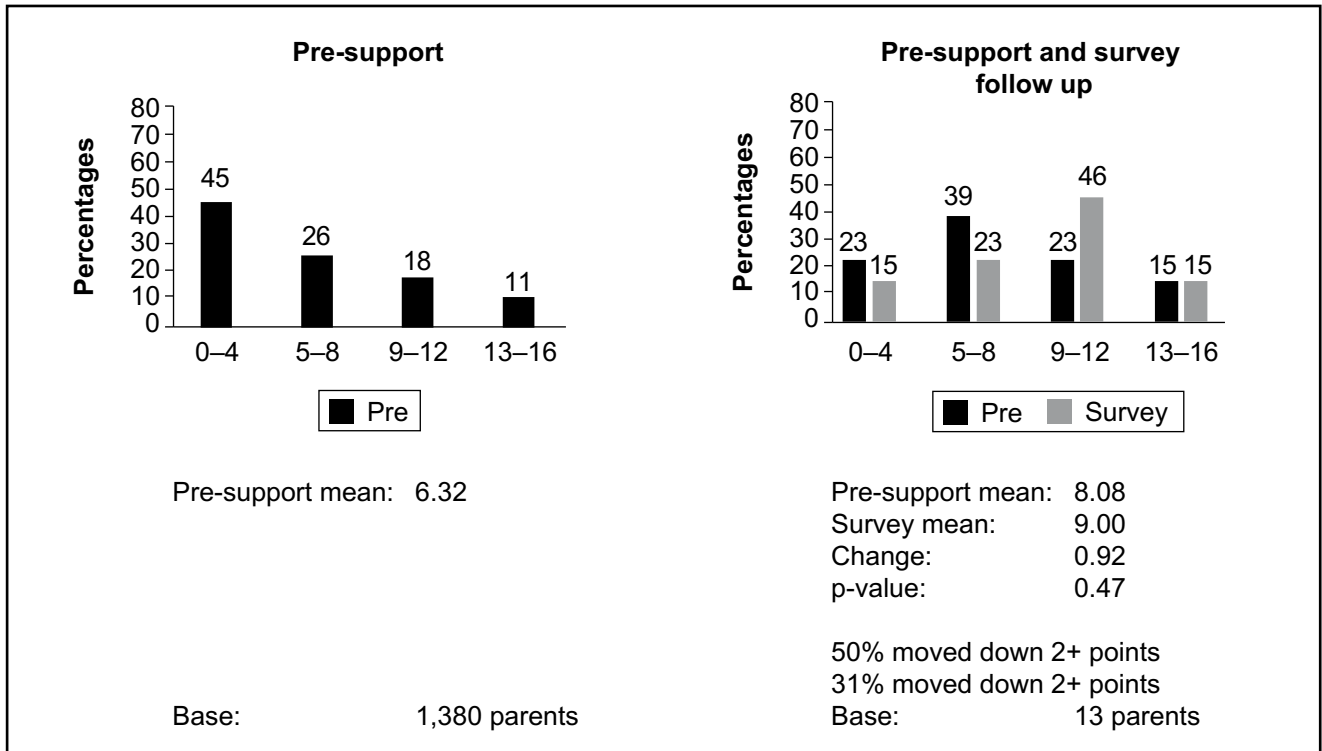
- There was good feedback about the website when user testing was conducted by an external company. They would consider introducing pre-launch user-testing in the future.
- Parents found the website useful and on average used it on three separate occasions.
- The website was accessed by a broader demographic than the typical Relate user.
- However, considerably fewer parents utilised the services offered by this project than was anticipated. Usage was in the thousands rather than hundreds of thousands.
- A significant marketing budget would have been required to reach such large numbers, which was not available and there was a degree of over optimism for the potential reach of the project. Marketing was limited to a small amount of policy-based marketing and some digital marketing.
- As funding for the project was based on the number of parents reached, staff at Relate felt that the project lost momentum as they could not justify investing further time or money when there was a relatively low income for them.
- Staff reflected that it was challenging to maintain resources once the project was live, i.e. keeping information updated and topical.
- Incentives and range of exercises for non-registered users were seen as not motivating enough.
- Staff felt that they would want to be able to lower targets and revise the costing model, without compromising the bidding process.
- The fact that typically only one of the partners engages with the service may hinder its effectiveness. An online mediation tool has been developed as a result of this learning to engage both parties equally.



## **Collaboration questions results overview**

- Majority of clients scoring lower than 9 at baseline: 45 per cent scoring 0 to 4 and 26 per cent scoring 5 to 8.
- No significant change between baseline and survey (mean score change 0.9).

MI data, pre-support and survey data



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

There has been limited scope to identify outcomes on service users, although project managers found it improved communication and collaboration between couples.

- To the project manager's awareness, the service was less successful in bringing about the desired family-based arrangement due to lack of involvement from both partners.

*'We've got some evidence that it changed behaviour in some people.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We had no way of measuring whether the other party was engaged.'*

(Project Manager)

## **(1) Pen portrait: Annabelle\* believed Relate's website to be one of the best she used**

- Annabelle had just separated from her husband when she was referred to the Relate website by the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB).
- At the time Annabelle was particularly interested in finding information relating to her financial situation, and potentially learning more about mediation. The Relate website was one of a number that CAB recommended.
- On the Relate site Annabelle accessed a range of resources on divorce and separation – she read various blogs and articles on both financial matters, and people in similar circumstances to her. Although she noticed that there was the option to engage in online counselling and mediation, she did not engage in this at the time as 'it was all a bit too soon.'
- Annabelle felt the Relate website was one of the most useful sites she had used over the course of the separation. She felt it differed from other sites in that it dealt with the emotional side of separation – she found the case studies and information on the different stages of separation to be especially useful. They reassured her that she was not alone and that others had experienced similar circumstances.
- She believed that without the website she would not have been as well informed when it came to working out a financial settlement with her ex-partner.
- Although generally pleased with the site, she did feel the financial advice could have been clearer. This was an aspect of her separation which she had found particularly complicated and confusing.

*'There was something on there about the stages of separation – that you might both be on different stages. That was useful as you don't feel that you are the only one or that you are going through something which no-one else has gone through.'*

(Client)

*'I'd have liked more financial advice on there for people in different situations – I think that has been the most confusing thing of the separation...more on [different state benefits] and who can claim them.'*

(Client)

## Information quality support effectiveness

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The quality of information available to users on the site was believed to be of good quality and relevant to most people.
- Although used by a minority, the live chat service was felt to be particularly impactful and one that could be developed as a standalone activity.

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The project only engaged one parent, which restricted its impact to only one party.
- Delays in agreeing expected outcomes with DWP was seen as a barrier to impact as was the funding model.
- Bidding process timescale did not allow for a thorough overview of service to set realistic targets.
- Reporting requirements found too vague and lacking in structure, resulting in failing to provide a measurement form to adhere to. This meant additional and non-budgeted time, resources and costs being allocated to meet DWP's evolving requirements.

*'You had lots of choices [of information] – you could think that's not right for me now, but I'll come back to that later.'*

(Client)

*'The way the funding was set up, we had to ask [users] questions in order to receive funding. Sometimes it felt a bit unnatural, some of the questions.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Our ability to make a big splash about the project was limited because we weren't getting any income.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Having enough time and space to gather evidence, make realistic calls about how the service is set up.'*

(Project Manager)

## E.13 Resolution

### Project aim:

To provide holistic support and improve communication between separated and separating parents to improve outcomes for their children.

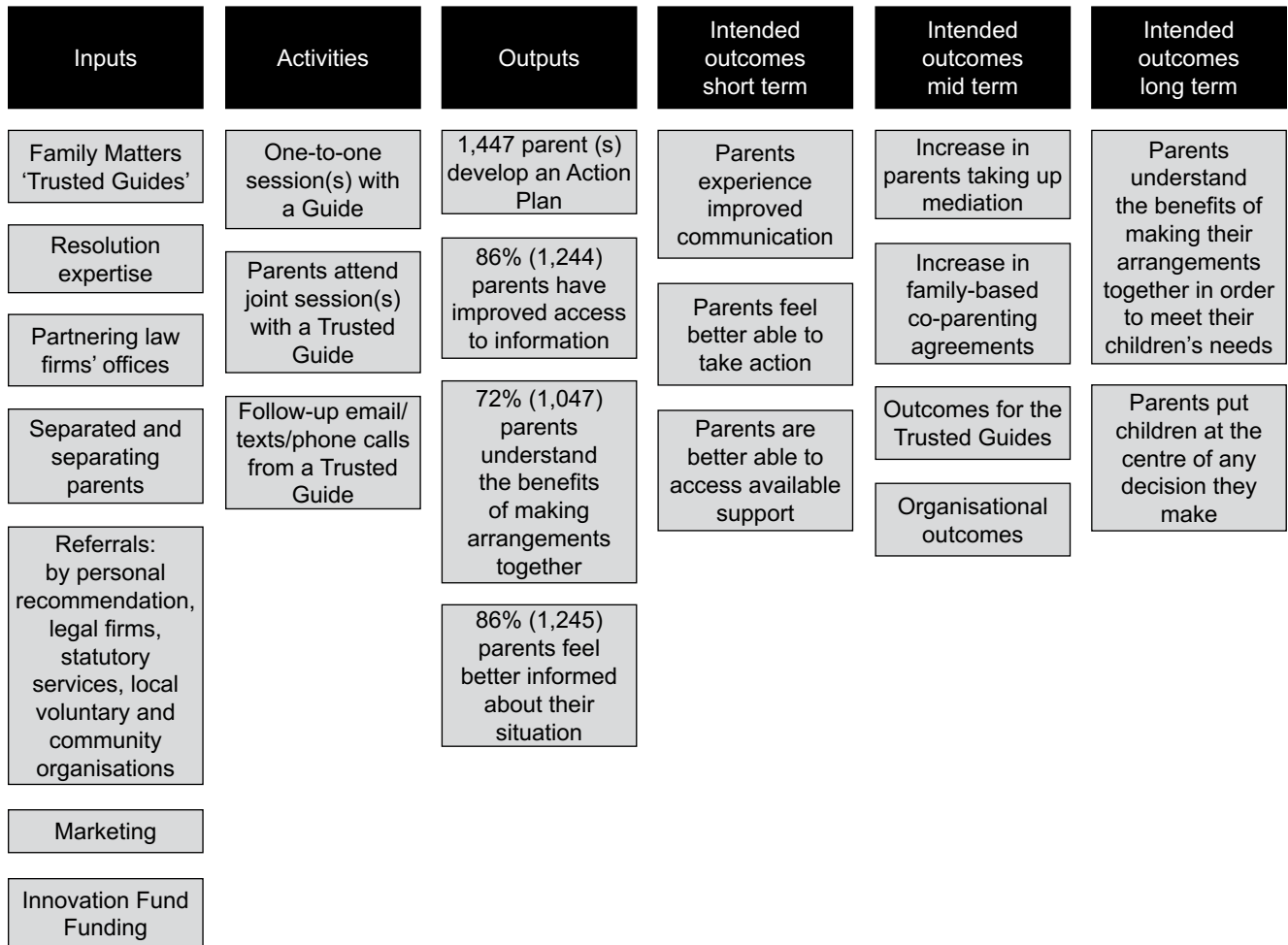
### Project delivery:

- The service is delivered by six Family Matters guides (qualified lawyer-mediators) based within legal firms in the three locations.
- Step 1: Parents have an individual face-to-face meeting with a Guide, where relevant needs and support are established and a parent action plan is developed. Following this session contact is made with the second parent to provide them with a similar one-to-one session.
- Step 2: If appropriate, parents attend a joint session with a Guide. Action plans are reviewed and longer term plans are established. Parents are provided with legal information and if relevant signposted to other services for additional support, such as drug and alcohol services, mental health services, GPs, social services.
- Step 3: Guides provide parents with follow-up support by phone and e-mail.

### Target audience:

- Separating and separated parents
- One of the parents must be on a low income: includes those on income-related benefits/benefits, no income and low income. The target group may have previously qualified for legal aid.
- In the Oxford, Crewe and Newcastle areas.

## Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
	As recorded in the qualitative (in August 2015) 86% (1,244) parents have improved access to information	1,164 parents	196 pre-PAMS 70 pre- and post-PAMS 27 pre- and survey PAMS 12 pre-, post- and survey PAMS	124 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 14 interviews: 2 Project manager 6 staff 6 clients  Stage 3 – Total 8 interviews: 1 Project manager 7 clients
	72% (1,047) parents understand the benefits of making arrangements together				
	86% (1,245) parents feel better informed about their situation				
	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 1,589 individual parents started, of which all 'completed'				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



### Target versus achieved clients

- Resolution was targeting separated and separating parents who are in receipt of a state benefits or receiving an income at or below the Living Wage (the Living Wage is currently £7.45 per hour, £8.55 in London), living in Oxford, Crewe, Newcastle
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- The MI data suggests the parents who took part are in line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=1,044):
    - ~ 39 per cent lived in the South East;
    - ~ 30 per cent lived in the North East;
    - ~ 24 per cent in the North West;
    - ~ 7 per cent in the West Midlands.
  - It is not possible to calculate from the MI data parents who earn less than the Living Wage, though it was clear that the majority came from low income households.

## Initial low referral rates and difficulties in engaging the second parent improved over time

### Reach

- Majority of referrals through legal firms, statutory services, local voluntary and community organisations.
- Service was marketed by networking with local organisations and outreach at community venues, e.g. Children's Centres, courts, CAB.
- Initially referral rates were lower than expected but increased as awareness improved and previous clients recommended the service to others.

### Engagement

- Frequent problems engaging the second parent: only achieved around 20-25 per cent joint meetings or referrals to mediation, while their target was 40-50 per cent.
- More resource was needed to secure engagement from the second parent and remind clients about appointments.

### Drop-out

- Parents sometimes needed legal advice but could not afford it so used this service instead and did not want to attend joint sessions.
- Once engaged in joint sessions, parents were unlikely to drop-out.

*'We've been working a lot with organisations in the local community...We hadn't anticipated there would be as much of a problem with the length of time it takes to build up that trust in the local community.'*

(Project Manager)

*'It's harder to engage with those more entrenched in their views, those more used to the court service, they tend to have fixed views of things. It tends to be easier to work with pre court people.'*

(Staff)

*'The lady from Family Matters sent him [ex] an email inviting him to attend and I think he just ignored it...I would expect and I would hope that there would be more effort done in approaching him, maybe sending more than one email or simply giving him a phone call.'*

(Client)

*'I think once they have agreed for the joint session, you are all most there, it's like a self selecting group...The difficulty is trying to get them to come to the joint session, but once you have done that you are a way down the road to cracking it.'*

(Staff)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

### Changes necessary to drive impact

- Parents often **needed the Guide to be more direct** when they were not making progress in communicating with their ex. Although most appreciated the neutrality of the service, on occasion they wanted them to have an opinion when they felt that their ex was being unreasonable.
- Useful if ‘the **ground rules**’ and topics covered in mediation, were explained prior to accessing this service, hence both parents will be aware of what issues can and cannot be covered in the session.
- More **signposting** or suggestions of **next steps**, e.g. parenting courses or what to do when your ex-partner drops out and you still need to arrange contact.

### Gaps

- Resolution would like to partner with a pro-bono service to fund legal advice for both parents, as many parents are no longer entitled to free legal advice, but desperately need it. Staff felt that the legal information they could provide as part of this project was not sufficient in moving some parents forward in their situation.

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

### **Referrals**

- Referral figures were low initially so in hindsight they would have conducted more outreach from the start.
- With some referral sources, gaining credibility can take a long time. Two years into the project, Resolution has developed relationships with new referral agencies. They have been invited to attend regular meetings and staff felt that they were keener to work with the Family Matters project once it had gained credibility.

### **Engagement**

- Family Matters' staff were disappointed that they only achieved around 20-25 per cent joint meetings or referrals to mediation, while their target was 40-50 per cent. They feel that it is very important to engage the second parent wherever possible and now, two years into the project they are more successful than at the start.
- There can be some resistance by the second parent, when the first parent has recommended the contact. This group may be initially 'anti' support or view their ex-partner as an 'opponent'. Explaining the neutrality of the service and the benefits to children increased engagement in a majority of these cases.
- Some parents were disappointed that Family Matters' Guides did not manage to engage their ex-partner and felt that they could have done more to persuade them to participate.
- It was more difficult to engage with and support people within the court system, than those who have not accessed the court system. The latter were less entrenched in their views and more open to this type of support service.
- Some individuals do not qualify for the service as they are not financially eligible, in such cases; Guides suggested checking the financial eligibility of the second parent in order to access the service.
- Some clients felt that it took too long to get the first appointment; one week to ten days. Ideally, the timeframe should be a few days; particularly for child access issues, as these caused the greatest anxiety.
- Overall, staff felt that the type of parent who agreed to joint sessions were more amenable to working together for their children, this attitude helped the success of the joint sessions.

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

### Recommendations for replicability

- Allow for around 20 clients per Guide per month. Once the project was up and running, with the equivalent of three full-time staff (in actuality they had six part-time staff, two in each location) they could realistically help 65 parents per month. During busy months they saw around 90 parents, causing difficulties in completing administration; they struggled to find time to chase clients for appointments and evaluation data and it was emotionally tiring for the Guides.
- Check what other services exist in each area of consideration – referral agencies will tend to refer to existing services as they have already built trust.
- Ensure that senior staff at the host law firm are supportive and that they have established links with community organisations to gain referrals.
- Outreach service can be offered at rural locations, however, appropriate costs to deliver outreach needs to be build in.
- Dedicated administrative support, particularly to support with data collection.
- Centralised IT solution to ensure that all appointments and client data could be stored securely and accessed by multiple members of staff at the same time.
- Good lead time for marketing, networking and promotion.
- Centralised publicity, e.g. by local authority, courts, police and children's centres.
- Initial engagement and impact is greater for people in the pre-court stage, hence useful to capture people at the early stages of separation.
- The model could be delivered to those on higher income; the service does not need to be free for this group.
- There has been some interest from grandparents to access this service, hence the project could target at this group in the future.

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

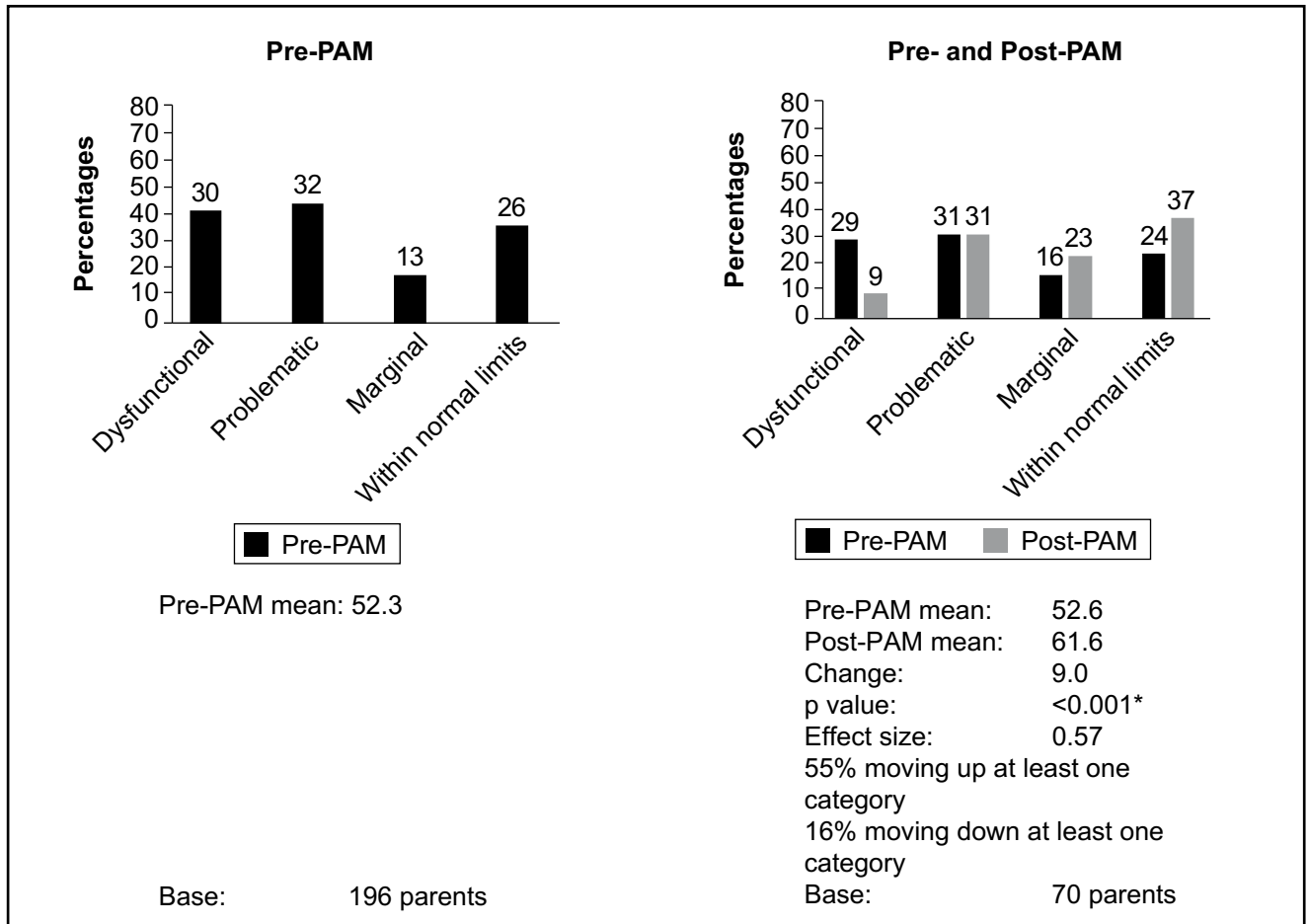
### **Recommendations for scalability**

- The project manager felt that the service could be successfully delivered across the country. While it would be difficult to find economies of scale for service delivery, a centralised IT solution for data collection and the ability to advertise on a national scale would produce cost savings on a large scale.
- Advertise on national websites.
- Create an opportunity for staff to share and learn from each other's experiences and discuss ideal approaches for specific cases.
- Manage quality control very carefully through regular case reviews, quality checks and training.
- Allocate sufficient resources to recruiting and training skilled staff for this innovative service, at the outset and replacing them as staff leave.

## **PAM overview**

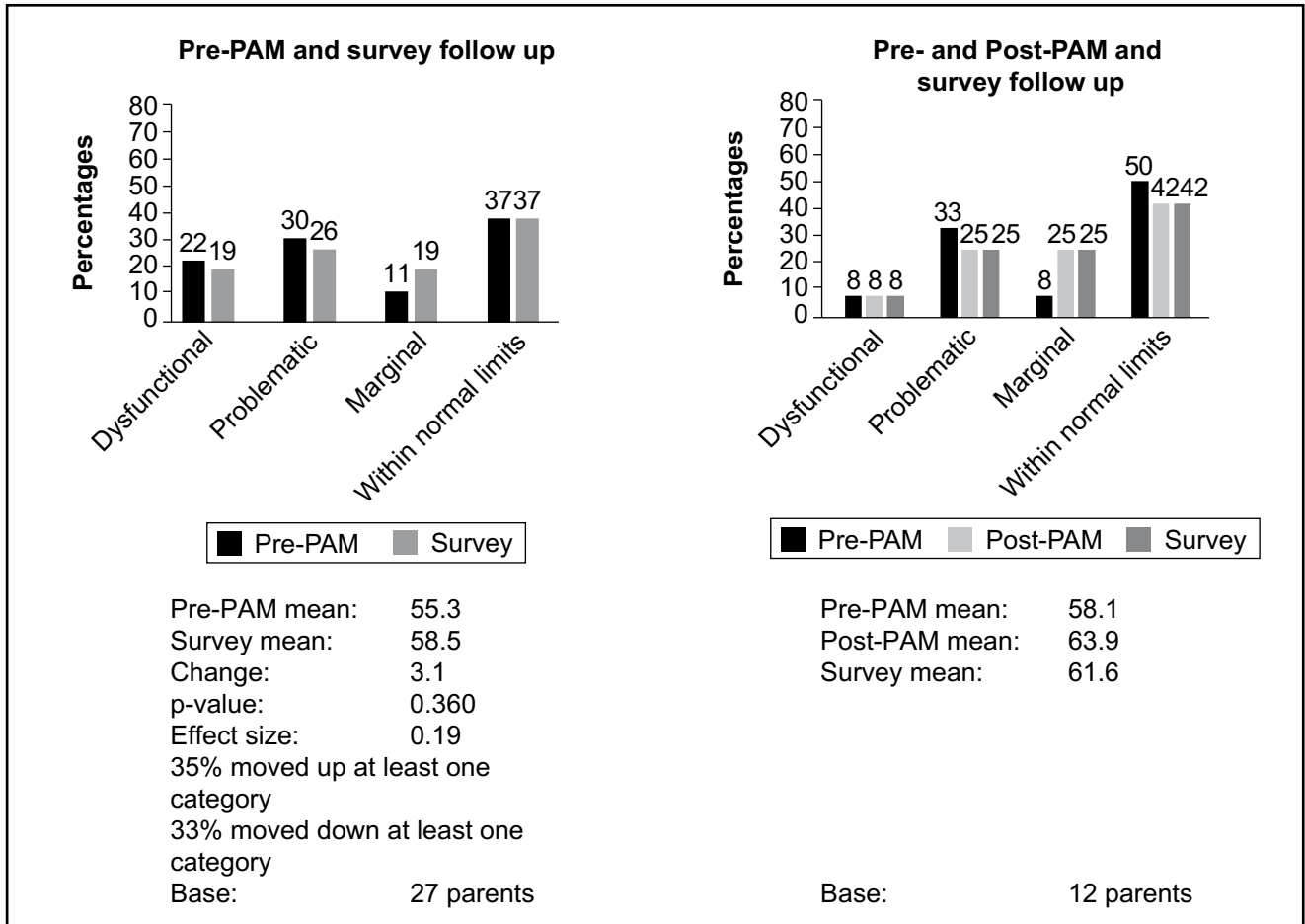
- Pre- and post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (32 per cent) or dysfunctional (30 per cent) at baseline – 26 per cent within normal limits.
- Significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 9.0):
  - 37 per cent within normal limits post-support and 9 per cent dysfunctional.
- Mean PAM score change between baseline and survey lower – and not significant (small numbers):
  - mean change score of 3.1.

MI data





## MI and survey data (very small numbers)



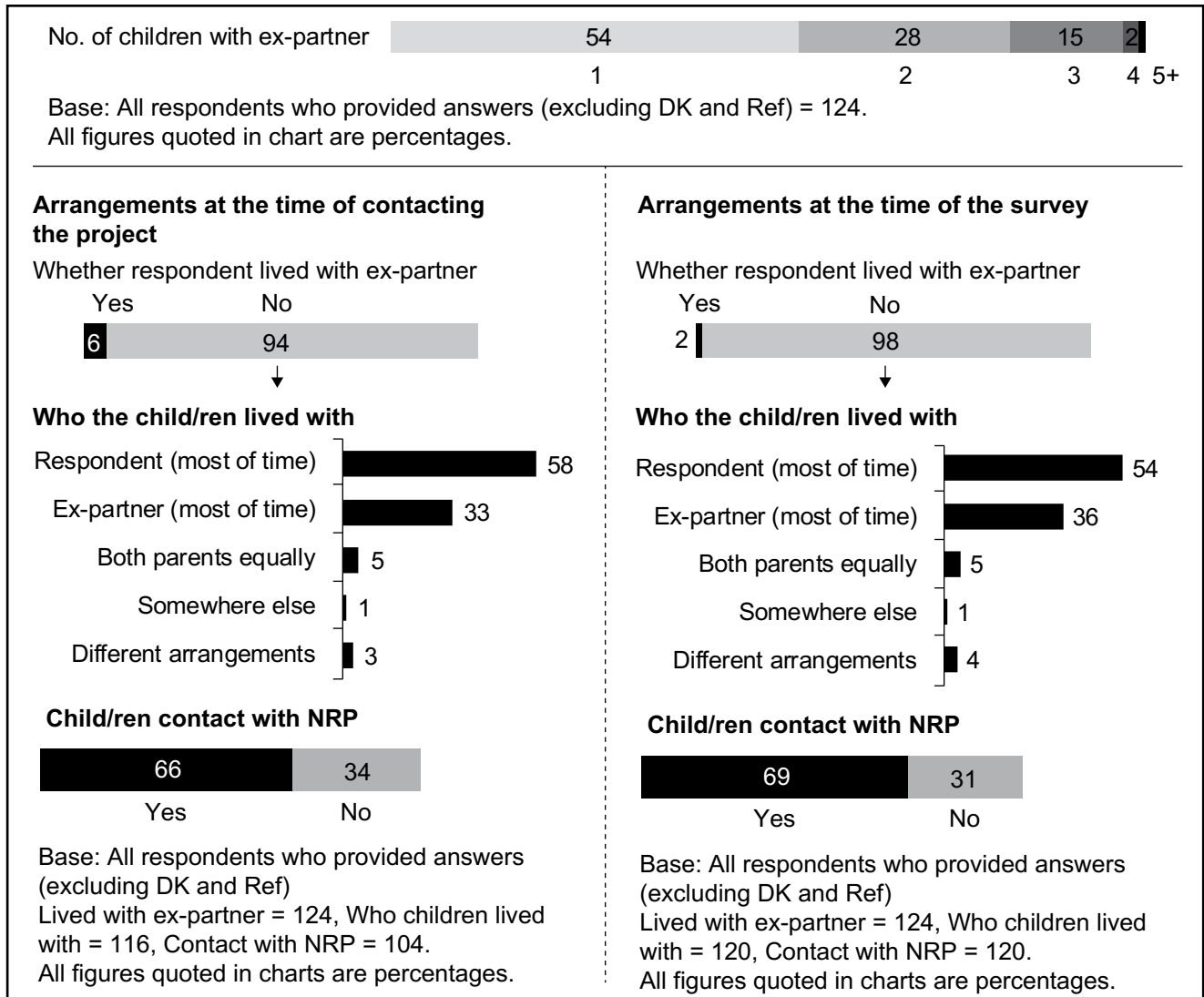
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	41	37
Female	59	63
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	15	13
25–34	40	41
35–44	31	27
45+	14	18
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	87	85
Black	5	9
Mixed	1	2
Asian	4	2
Other	2	1
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	20	26
Lower than A-level	80	74
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	24	17
No	76	83
<b>Base*</b>	1,164	124

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

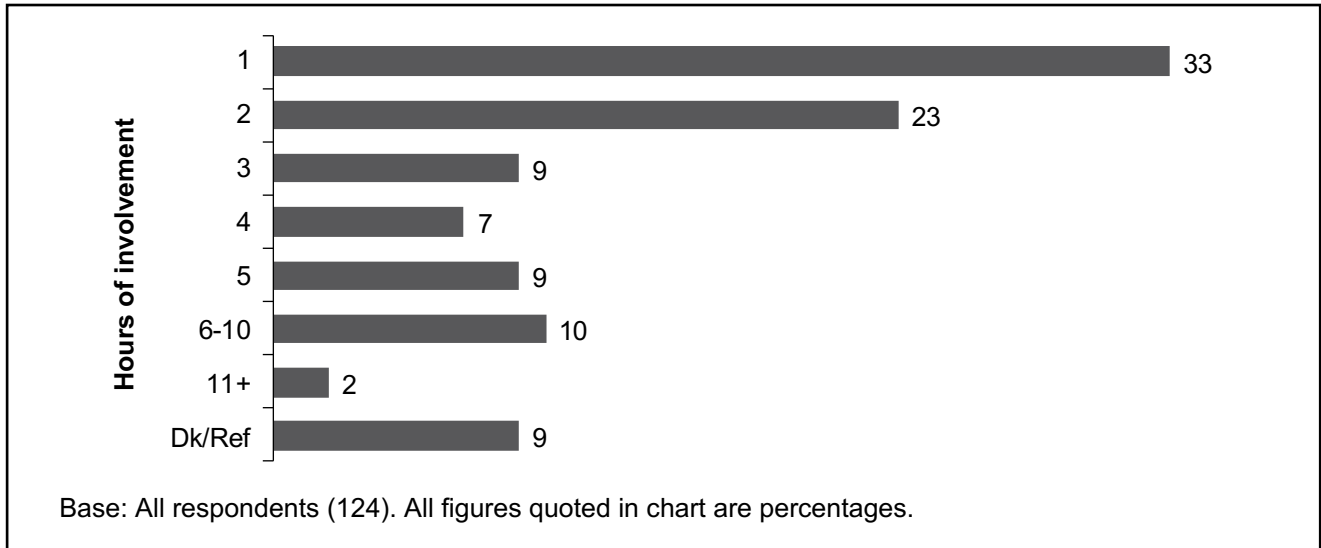
As illustrated in the table, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is largely similar to profile of parents in the MI data. However, survey respondents were, on average, slightly better educated and less likely to have a disability than those in the MI data.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

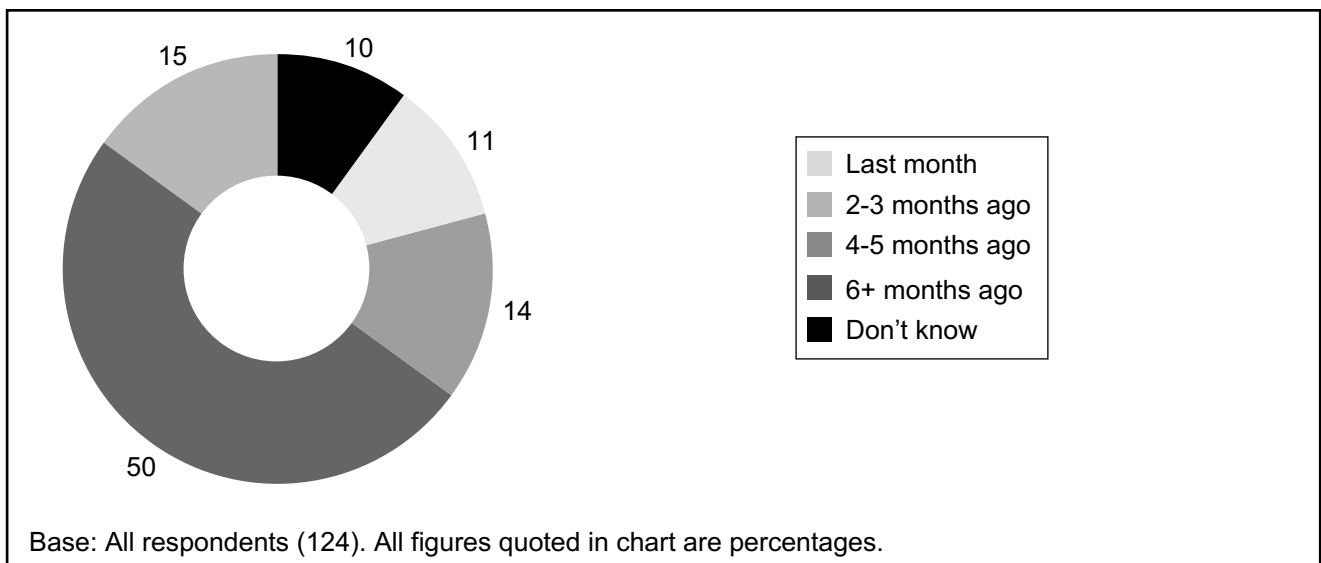


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of involvement varied between respondents as illustrated in the chart below. 33 per cent had just one hour of involvement with them.



- The time since had contact with the project varied. For half (50 per cent) it was six or more months ago.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=75), **just over half (51 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=124):
  - **31 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
    - ~ Of these (n=38) **74 per cent felt the project played a role in these improvements**
  - 24 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 40 per cent reported they were same (with 5 per cent unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=121), **nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or in the process of agreeing one), leaving 37 per cent without.
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=74), the most common were family-based arrangements with money payments (51 per cent) and CSA/CMS agreements (42 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=121), **60 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 99 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

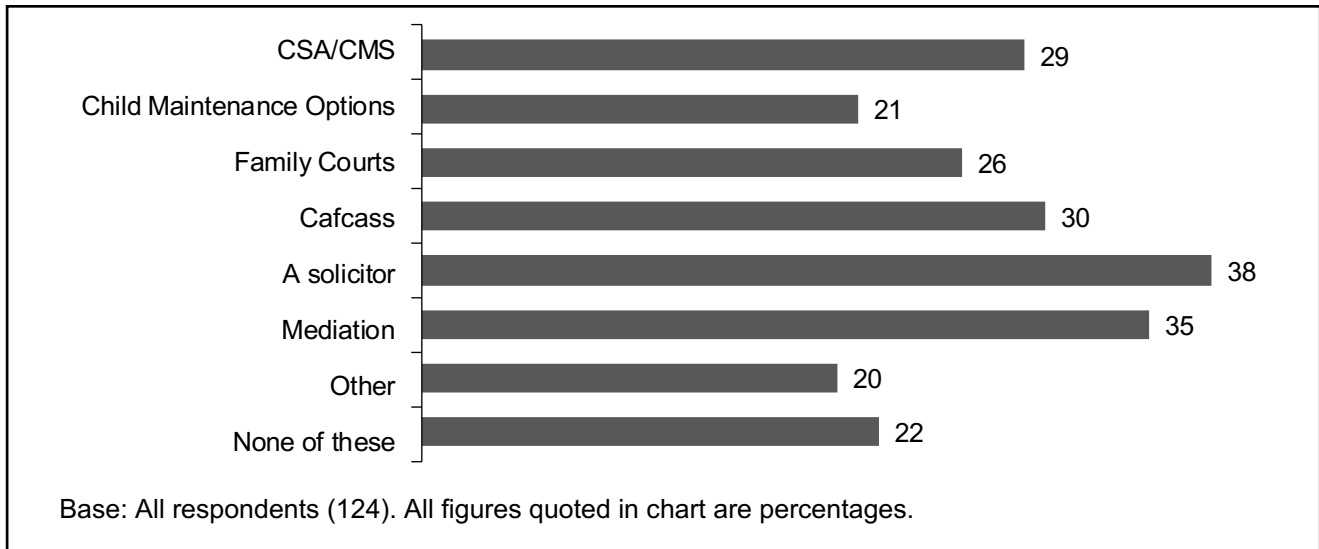
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=121):
  - **13 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 12 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 60 per cent reported they were same
  - 11 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement (with 5 per cent unsure).

## Use of the family courts

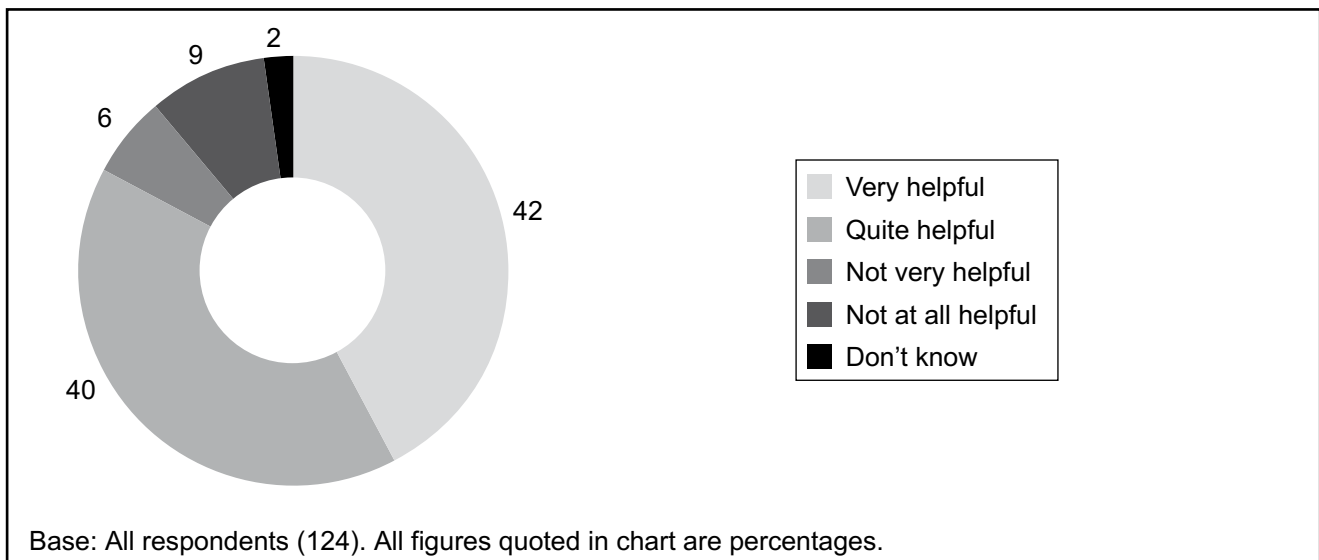
- A quarter of respondents (25 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
  - Of these (n=31), 90 per cent reported that there had been a formal court case or one was being planned.
- Three in ten (29 per cent, n=36) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=114), a further 41 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since but were not planning to go back any further (n=58), 36 per cent felt the project played a role in this decision** (12 per cent a big role, and 24 per cent some role).

### Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned were a solicitor (38 per cent) and mediation (35 per cent).



- Over half (55 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, a quarter (25 per cent) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project (with 13 per cent saying it varies, and 7 per cent being unsure).
- 82 per cent of respondents felt overall that their contact was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

The Family Matters' programme was helpful to parents in:

- Increasing **understanding of their position** and **direction** for next steps.
  - In the first one-to-one meeting action plans were developed, which helped focus on needs and underlined practical steps to be taken. Parents were pleased to receive direction, understanding of their situation and an increased knowledge of the law.
- Improving parents' **knowledge of what happens in court**.
  - Guides kept themselves up to date with relevant legal issues to help parents who would go through the court system in future.
- **Reducing the need to go to court**.
  - Anecdotal evidence suggests that some parents will have avoided going to court by using the Family Matters' service.

*'People always seem happy about getting some help and direction and knowledge about the law and what works particularly well is that they feel that they know what their position is, rather than feeling lost and in a black hole. They feel that they understand, so that we can help them to help themselves.'*

(Staff)

*'I feel more settled in mind, more at ease, I know what I need to do.'*

(Client)

*'Having that view of what the court's perspective would be as well, I found that really really helpful too. Being informed is such a vital part of it...Initially I think I was viewed as the mad, oversensitive, neurotic, crazy, obstructive, overprotective, mothering parent...in court you want them to take you seriously but they will only do that if you're acting in a serious or sane way.'*

(Client)

*'Feedback from the Guides would be that generally people feel that there's more chance of them reaching a solution without them going through the courts.'*

(Project Manager)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

- **Improved communication between parents:**
  - Staff felt that the neutrality of the joint sessions helped individuals listen and accept the other parents' views in a 'calmer' way. Communicating in this 'calmer' environment usually helped parents establish agreements.
  - Joint sessions also helped parents identify common ground and differences, leading to agreement of practical arrangements in many cases, which staff felt would continue in future.
- Those who attended the joint session(s) were also more **open to mediation and better prepared** for it.
  - Feedback from mediation colleagues suggested that parents often needed fewer mediation sessions after working through the Family Matters programme.
- **Improved attitudes to parenting apart**
  - Staff felt that many parents made progress even if did not attend joint sessions with their ex-partner, in terms of thinking in a more business-like way and feeling more positive about parenting apart.

*'It helps them learn to communicate, helps them hear one another while each of them is telling their side. Telling it in a much more neutral way they are more likely to accept it...Once they have listened to each other in a calmer way they are usually better at coming to agreements.'*

(Staff)

*'We get parents to work together, we start off with what sounds like really really small things but you can see that you're sowing seeds for future arrangements...things like helping them come to arrangements about who's going to pay for school uniform...what time they are going to pick so and so up.'*

(Project Manager)

*'It's dealing with the stuff that gets in the way of them being able to mediate...the mediator saying that she'd noticed the difference between couples she was seeing that had come through Family Matters and those that hadn't...it was a lot easier to work with them and she could support them in fewer sessions.'*

(Project Manager)

## (1) Pen portrait: Help to improve attitudes led to raised confidence and more child contact

- Amanda\* separated from her ex-partner Chris\* 2 ½ years ago and they have a young child together. Amanda's DV outreach worker referred her to Family Matters.
- A previous attempt at mediation was unsuccessful, but Amanda hoped that joint sessions at Family Matters would help them resolve problems they experienced at handover for contact. Both parents felt that the other was keeping them away from their child and were not sticking to their contact arrangements.
- Chris did not respond to two invitations to attend a joint session, so Amanda attended a one-to-one session with a Guide and then received ongoing support by telephone. She was disappointed that Chris was not willing to work together, but still felt that she had benefited greatly from the Family Matters programme.
- The Guide helped Amanda refocus on the best interests of her child and helped her to say yes when she would normally have said no regarding contact. This resulted in more contact for Chris and a better relationship between father and child.
- When they attended court previously Amanda did not have control of her emotions. Her Guide explained about court procedures and how they make decisions. This helped prepare her for future court appearances and she felt more able to present herself in a favourable light.
- Amanda's self-confidence had also improved. The Guide helped her realise that she was keeping them stuck in a negative contact situation by continually reliving the fear she previously felt. Amanda now approaches contact issues more positively and flexibly, and she has taken responsibility for their safety by informing the police about their situation and sought reassurance from her ex's care worker.

*'Lots of my friends were saying to me 'you've got to have 100 per cent contact'...that is really unhelpful...when I look back to two years ago I was very resistant to contact, I'd been through a lot and the thought of him having her on his own was terrifying. However, she now has a very good bond with him...and the Guide was there the whole way through.'*

(Client)

*'It's helped me be stronger, I think I would shy away from things and it's helped me face those things.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## (2) Pen portrait: Desire for an advocate and lack of progress led to frustration for one mum

- Tanya\* separated from her ex-partner six months ago and they have two young children. She needed legal advice about what would happen to their house and making child contact arrangements, but was unemployed and could not afford to pay, so was referred by the solicitor to Family Matters.
- They both attended an assessment session and have had five joint sessions so far.
- Tanya initially hoped to get someone to advocate for her and was disappointed that the service was impartial. During the sessions she wanted the Guide to be directive, but instead felt that they just sat and made excuses for him, while he was lying about work commitments that require flexible contact arrangements.
- She felt that they did not get through enough in the 90 minute sessions and by going around in circles trying to make contact arrangements (that he kept changing), she felt stressed that they had not yet broached the subject of finances and what would happen to their house.
- Tanya did not think that the service had a positive impact on their children, because they wanted regular contact times, so the 'chopping and changing' was making them feel less keen to see their dad.
- Although the service had not yet achieved the desired outcomes for Tanya, she did admit that the joint sessions had at least forced her ex to talk to her, so without them their relationship might have been even worse.

*'I kind of was hoping I could get someone to be on my side and kind of fight my side rather than someone who was just going to sit there and mediate.'*

(Client)

*'Maybe if we weren't going to mediation it might have been a lot worse...but he just says what they want to hear and lies and does what he wants anyway.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Knowledgeable staff who helped parents create an action plan and having willing parents were key elements for positive impact**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Experienced, knowledgeable and supportive Guides.
- Being given a neutral, objective perspective helped parents reflect on how their own behaviour was affecting their situation.
- Helping parents create an action plan – many parents felt lost, confused and emotional about their situation. The Guides helped them think more clearly, prioritise their next steps and take action to improve their situation.

*'She [the Guide] told me what she thinks was the priority, what to do first, she wasn't emotionally involved in my situation, I was very bitter and upset and wanted to prove my point and she told me 'well you need to look a few steps ahead'. Her advice was good, I appreciate that a lot.'*

(Client)

## Neutrality of the Guides and being unable to discuss issues outside of contact were the main barriers to effectiveness

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Some parents felt that they couldn't necessarily move their situation forward themselves because one party was being selfish or taking too long discussing certain issues and that the Guide was too neutral. Some felt that **the Guide should be more directive**.
- **Underlying issues**, such as alcohol addiction, could sometimes prevent the programme having a positive impact on parents. One father explained that they had to stop the joint sessions for this reason and he wished that they had been referred to an independent social worker with specialist knowledge of this issue, as their daughter was particularly vulnerable.
- In some cases, clients needed to resolve financial issues between them, such as who would keep the family home. They were encouraged to keep discussions to contact arrangements, which some felt was **not tackling all of the issues** they faced.

*'I'm still in the same situation as when I first started going to mediation...I need someone to say 'well yes you can do this and no you can't do that'. It's kind of he's just doing what he wants and I've just got to take everything...one of the ladies [Guides] just makes excuses for him.'*

(Client)

*'For two people who never speak to each other, if a mediator can't take control of that situation that's required then they're not really working...they need to stop anything that goes on rather than just sit there and observe it...The problem was that the person we had was a bit wishy washy.'*

Client

## Parents would recommend Family Matters, but paying for the service would be difficult for many and would complicate the process

### Recommending the service

- Most clients would recommend Family Matters to separating and separated parents in conflict.
- Considered to be a good option if you cannot afford a solicitor, although some parents dropped out after the first one-to-one advice session because they really needed legal advice not just information.
- Clients felt that the service would be most effective where both parents are willing to work together and be reasonable.
- Joint sessions were not felt to be suitable for those with considerable underlying issues such as alcohol abuse or financial conflict.

### Clients' willingness to pay

- Mixed views about paying for the service, some on low income and benefits could not afford to pay anything for the service. This group also felt that their situation would have been worse or taken longer to resolve if the service was not free to access.
- In contrast those who had access/custody issues (tended to be males) were more willing to pay for the service if it helped resolve the issue and avoided solicitors fees, although they would be very unhappy if their desired outcomes were not realised. This group made the following recommendations:
  - Service to be promoted by courts, probation offices, solicitors, social services.
  - Information on what the service includes (highlighting that it is tailored) including possible impact.
  - Pay as you go option so parents can prioritise what they need.
  - £50-100 per session seemed reasonable for the service.

*'It depends on what they're going to provide...I'd pay for a meeting...but then again you're going to have to weed it out because if I paid for two sessions and then they said "no sorry we can't deal with it", I'd say "I want my money back".'*

(Client)

*'Couldn't afford it, I am on income support and get no child maintenance, going through CSA at the moment.'*

(Client)

## E.14 Resolve Cymru

### Project aim:

To give emotional and practical support to separated and separating parents in order to achieve longer-term cooperation between parents.

### Project delivery:

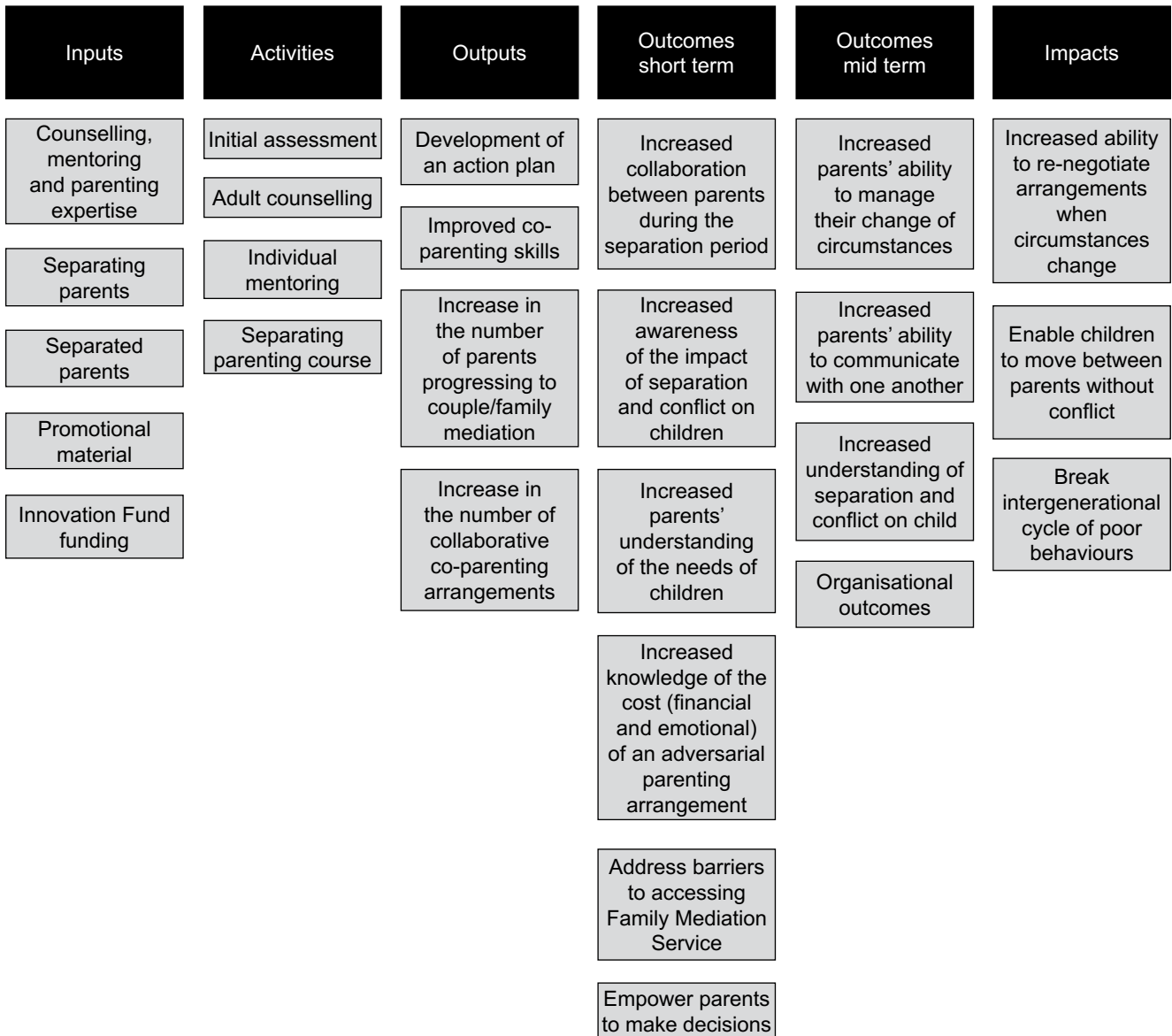
- Initial assessment meeting between practitioner and client identifying their needs and suitable interventions, outcomes and timescales.
- Adult counselling delivered over six sessions, with 5 x 1-hour long sessions and a review meeting.
- Mentoring sessions lasting a total of 4 hours, with 3 x 1-hour long sessions and a review meeting.
- Parenting classes conducted over six hours, with 2 x 2-hour classes on successive weeks and a review meeting within three months of the second session.
- Final review meeting to assess outcomes when a parent/parents exit(s) the intervention.
- Overall length of engagement will vary from client to client. Clients may engage in one or more of the project activities (parenting classes, mentoring or counselling).

### Target audience:

- Separating or separated parents with barriers to accessing Resolve Cymru's other services. Barriers may include:
  - Emotional resources.
  - Power imbalance in relationship.
  - Unresolved anger issues.
- Subgroups the project hopes to target include: young fathers; parents with substance issues; homeless parents; young mothers; parents with mental health issues; and parents involved in the criminal justice system.

**Please note: Due to issues with project funding, Resolve Cymru was only involved in Stage One of the evaluation. This report is based solely on their initial participation in the research and should be seen as indicative only.**

Logic model



Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.



## The project's reach was hampered by funding and geographical issues

### Reach

- Resolve Cymru was unable to meet its engagement target.
- The project promoted its services via face-to-face meetings with health workers, magistrates, the judiciary, legal advisors and other professionals working with their target group.
- Although professionals were enthusiastic at presentations, very few referred into the programme
- The project felt the lack of dedicated resource for project promotion, in part due to their organisation's size, created a barrier.
- An additional challenge was the large geographical area to be covered.

*'If you think how huge the area is, you know geographically enormous, these geographical areas. It's physically impossible to get everywhere.'*

(Project Manager)

*'You have to say what your message is again and again and again...when you are a small organisation it's really, really difficult to do that. [You need] a dedicated person you know to be saying the message several times over.'*

(Project Manager)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- The project identified the referrals process as a key area for improvement. It was felt that awareness of the project's offer could be promoted and the number of referrals increased by building a relationship with the courts.
- The project took more time to set up than expected. The project would dedicate more time to this in the future.
- Although they believed the parenting classes were a useful element of the project, the challenges Resolve Cymru faced engaging clients in this specific element were felt to detract from other project activities. These other activities – counselling and mentoring – were felt to be more valuable to supporting project outcomes. If they were to run a similar project in the future they would omit the separate parenting element.
- Resolve Cymru did not feel the PAM was nuanced enough for project evaluation. In the future the project would look to use a tool with a wider scale (nought to ten, rather than one to five).

## High quality mediators were key to project effectiveness

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- Employing experienced mediators and using narrative mediation and similar tools, helped support users when having difficult conversations.
- Resolve Cymru felt the project's model, which allowed clients to access services in which ever order suited them, supported the project's impact as its offer was tailored to the needs of their users.
- Providing one-on-one support (versus couple or group session) helped focus conversations and support individual clients' needs.
- Although the project would not look to include this activity in the future, parenting classes gave clients the opportunity to learn from peers' experiences and gain community support.

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The project manager was resourced onto the project for one day a week which, in hindsight, was not adequate for the attention the project required.
- Communication issues within the project team meant not all understood the importance of securing PAM data, contributing to low response rates.
- Staff continuity presented a challenge – only one person stayed for the whole of the project.
- The personal circumstances of clients made keeping appointments challenging, reducing engagement.

*'At the assessment meeting an action plan was set up for each of [the clients. It was] tailor made to their needs, so that they could access these different services in whatever order suited them.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We are dealing with a very fragile population, you know, people going through a really bad time and they are not necessarily the best of keeping appointments and doing all that kind of stuff.'*

(Project Manager)

## Respondent profile

The table below reflects the range of respondent involved in the qualitative element of this research.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3/4</b>
Project Manager	1	N/A	N/A
Staff	0	N/A	N/A
Clients	0	N/A	N/A
'Other'	0	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## E.15 Sills & Betteridge

### **Project aim:**

‘Moving Forward Lincolnshire’ aimed to improve communication between parents, minimise the impact of separation on children and provide information, guidance, support and signposting, via a behavioural change programme.

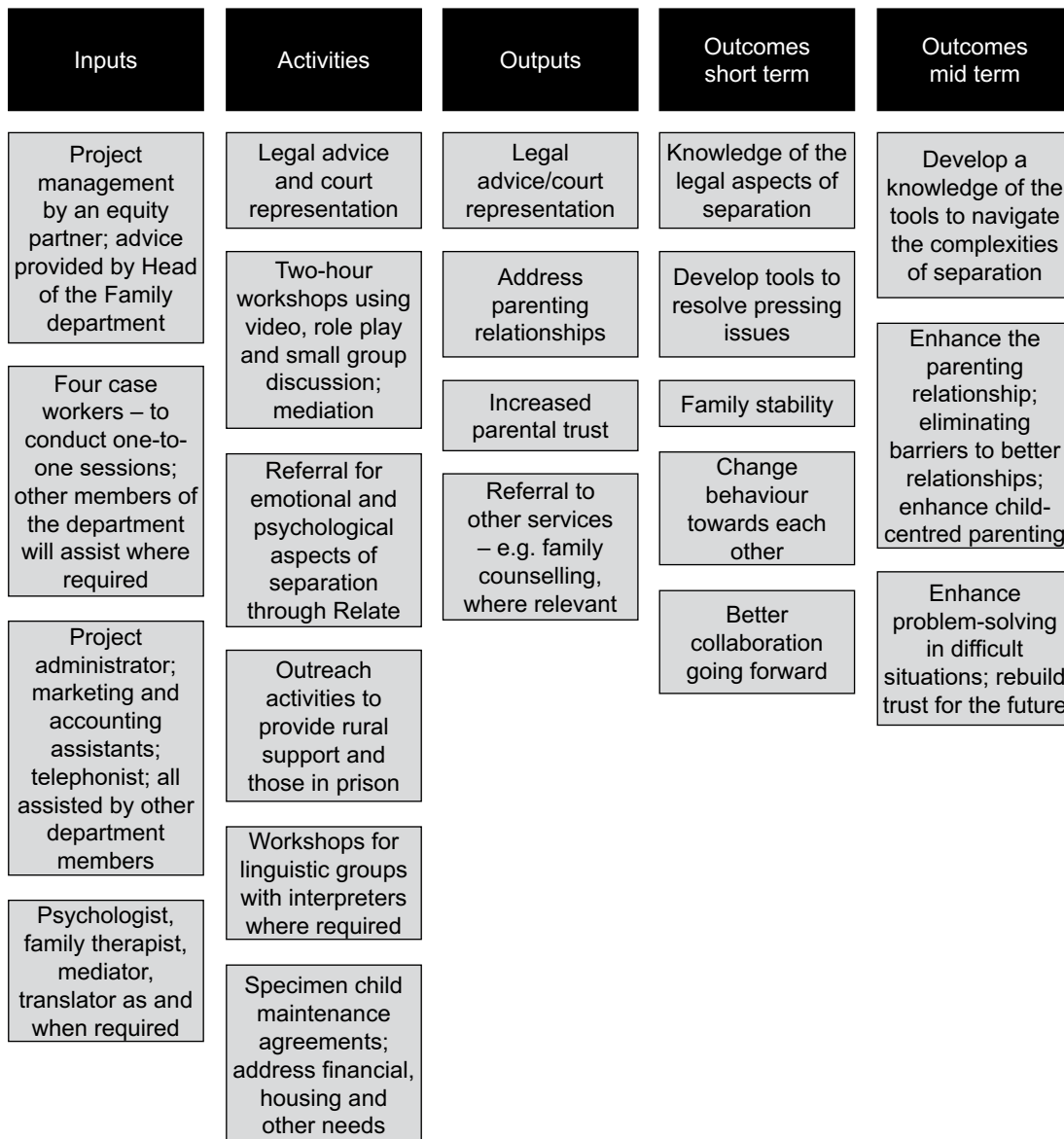
### **Project delivery:**

- Brief introduction and assessment, usually by phone.
- Clients could access any of these activities, in whichever order they chose.
- A two-hour group information session.
- One or two one-to-one information meetings.
- Mediation sessions, free to those earning less than £35,000.
- All activities delivered by solicitors who were also trained mediators.

### **Target audience:**

- Separated and separating parents who need information, guidance and support to minimise the impact of their separation on their children. The project was also offered to parents in prisons, detention centres and immigration units in Lincolnshire; and an RAF base.
- Lincolnshire has an increasing population of Eastern Europeans (particularly Polish) who had accessed the service.
- Delivered from the law firm’s offices in Lincoln, Boston, Gainsborough, Sleaford, Skegness and Spalding.

## Logic model



## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 2,633 individual parents started, of which all 'completed'	2,018 parents	1,752 pre-PAMS 524 pre- and post-PAMS 342 pre- and survey PAMS 131 pre-, post- and survey PAMS	426 parents	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 12 interviews: 1 Project manager 4 staff 7 clients  Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 8 clients

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- Sills & Betteridge was targeting those from rural communities, prisoners, the young and closed cultural communities, within Lincolnshire.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- The MI data suggests:
  - Amongst parents for whom the Urban-Rural Classification could be determined for in the MI data (n=1707), 38 per cent lived in rural areas, with 62 per cent in urban areas.
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=1,849), 92 per cent lived in the East Midlands, and 7 per cent lived in Yorkshire and the Humber.



## Accessing a group session beforehand made one-to-one meetings and mediation more effective

### Reach

- CAB were a good source of referrals, along with the courts, Cafcass, the local authority and other local solicitors.
- Sills & Betteridge promoted the service through CAB and using leaflet drops, local newspaper and radio advertising, as well as online. Word of mouth made a major contribution.
- They managed to reach all their target groups.

### Engagement

- Engagement was good, with clients particularly keen to take up one-to-one sessions (2,000 have done so in 1.5 years) and often going on to mediation.

### Drop-out

- Clients who attended a group session first were more likely to continue to one-to-one sessions and mediation.
- The group sessions also gave clients information and a willingness to change, which made subsequent engagement more effective.

*'I wanted to go to court, but my solicitor suggested this service, I don't know anything else but court...I had no knowledge of mediation...seems like the obvious thing to do.'*

(Client)

*'It's a road map to identify what they need and want to sort out.'*

(Staff)

*'The group session helped me formulate my thoughts for the individual meeting.'*

(Client)

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

- Clients' reasons for accessing the service included improving communication with their ex-partner, avoiding court and increasing access to their children. There was a gap in the provision of free services offering this level of support.
- Group sessions were delivered in local venues; they found that regular sessions worked better than one-off sessions, as reputation was built through word of mouth and by having a 'presence' in the community. For instance, regular sessions in Boston and Lincoln had a higher attendance rate than those in Market Rasen, which were irregular, despite good marketing.
- Sills & Betteridge had also intended to deliver group sessions in prisons, as the gap in services for the target group was particularly apparent there and in detention centres and immigration units; however, due to security issues they had to change the format to one-to-one meetings.
- The content of the group sessions was adjusted over time; for instance, lots of clients attending had not yet made a decision about separation or told their partner or children, so they adapted the sessions to include tips on how to tell the children, making them child focused from the outset.
- They have continued to signpost clients to counselling, but fewer people than expected have taken up the offer of marriage guidance through Relate, whilst take-up of mediation has increased. They have continued to tackle the emotional aspects of separation in the group sessions.
- They have not sent the planned ongoing motivational text messages because it would have been difficult given the scale of take-up; in particular, they felt that it would have been hard to come up with meaningful messages for all concerned.

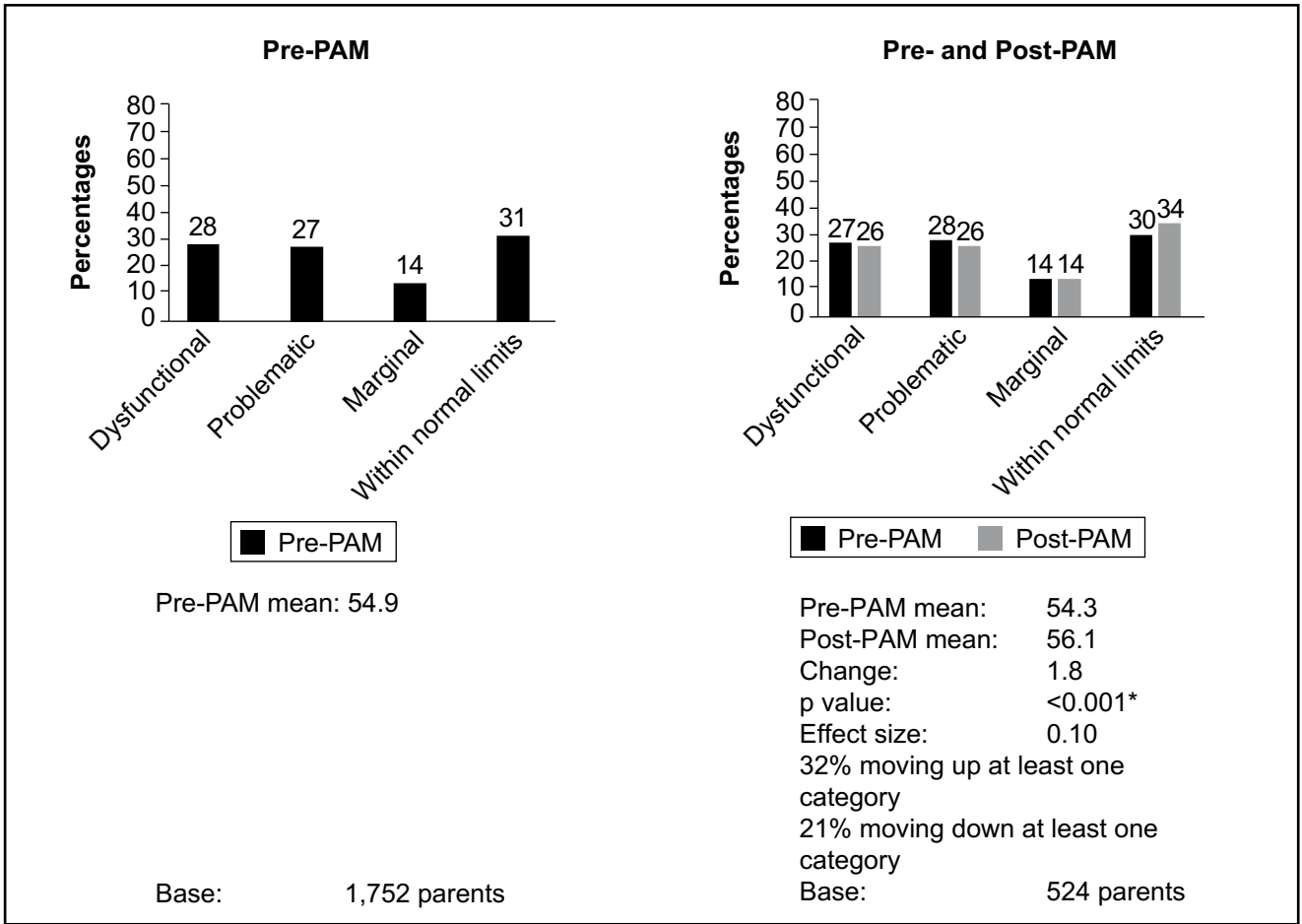
## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Both staff and clients felt that the one-to-one sessions were more useful if preceded by a group session, as the latter provided a broad range of information which helped clients identify their needs. There was also an improvement in how clients responded to mediation, as a result of having the ground rules established earlier on; they were better prepared, understood about the impact of their behaviour and were more willing to sort things out with their ex-partner. Conversely, if clients accessed the one-to-one meetings first, this tended to reduce subsequent take-up of the group sessions. Consequently, the Project Manager suggested that it might be useful to make the group sessions a prerequisite for one-to-one meetings.
- Clients recommended that referrals should also be made by GPs and schools, as these professionals were trusted and in a good position to identify needs.
- There was a good mix of resident and non-resident parents, from a range of social economic groups accessing the service.
- Sills & Betteridge managed to reach all their target groups including the Polish community in Boston, who have taken up one-to-one sessions and some marriage guidance; group sessions exclusive to this group were less popular, it is assumed because of religious and cultural attitudes to separation in this community. They have not needed as much translation as expected.

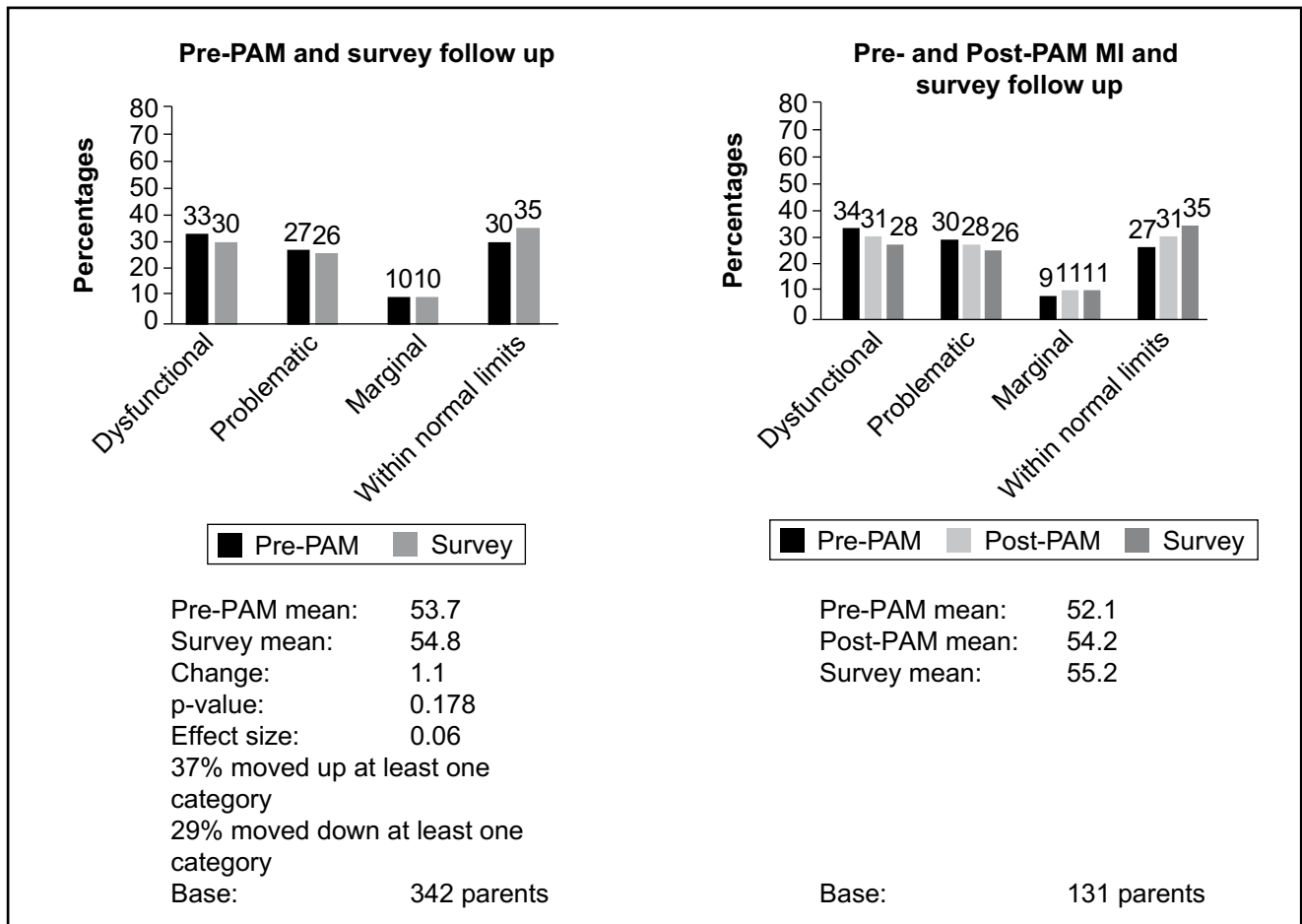
### **PAM overview**

- Pre-, post- and survey data.
- Majority of clients either problematic (27 per cent) or dysfunctional (28 per cent) at baseline – 31 per cent within normal limits.
- Small but significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 1.8):
  - 34 per cent within normal limits post-support and 26 per cent dysfunctional.
- Mean PAM score change between baseline and survey slightly lower – and not significant (small numbers):
  - mean change score of 1.1.

MI data



## MI and survey data



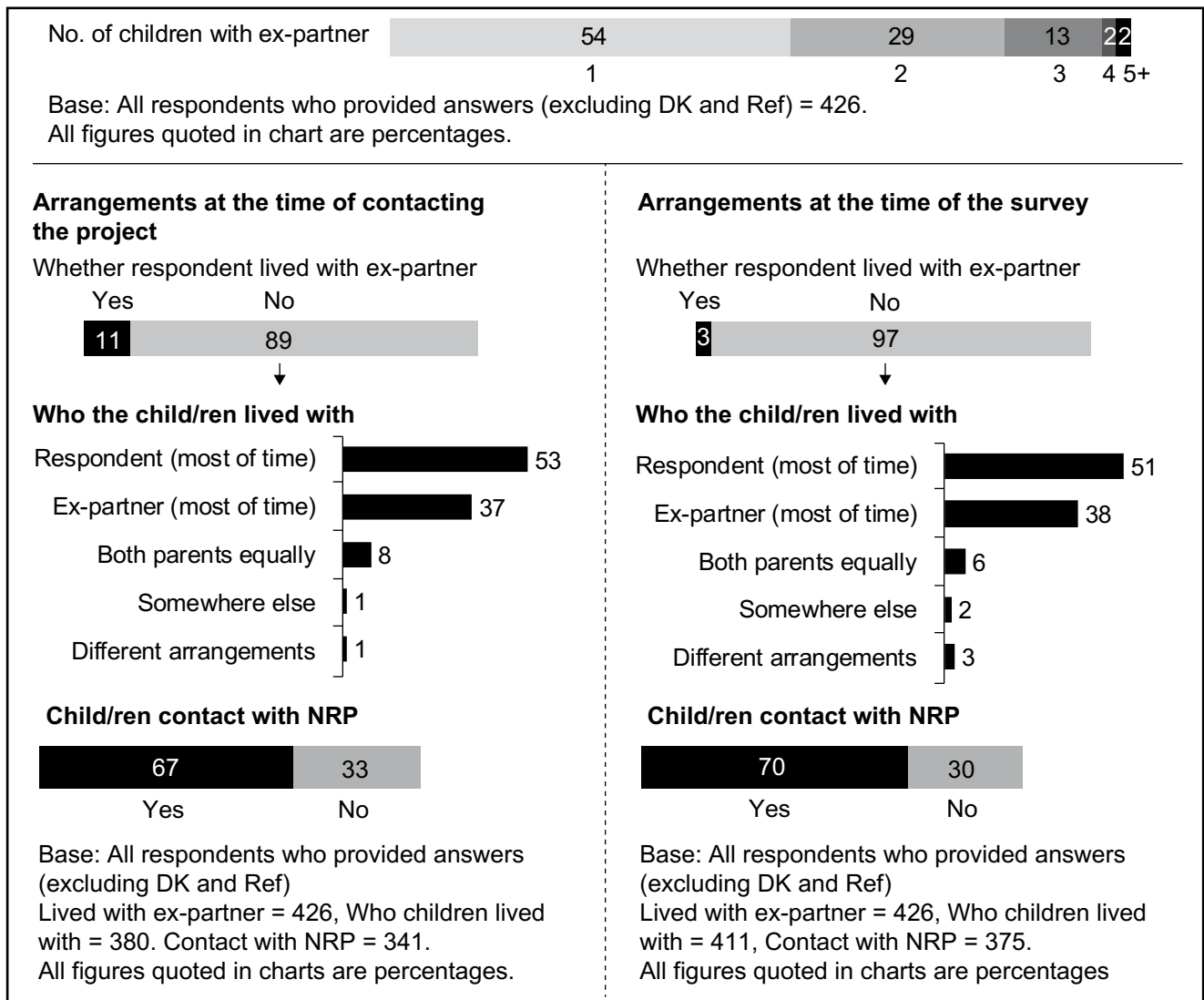
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	46	41
Female	54	59
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	13	13
25–34	39	38
35–44	33	34
45+	15	15
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	88	90
Black	1	1
Mixed	1	2
Asian	1	-
Other	8	7
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	16	16
Lower than A-level	84	84
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	11	13
No	89	87
<b>Base*</b>	2,018	426

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

As illustrated in the table, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is very similar to the profile of all parents in the MI data, though survey responders were slightly more likely to be male.

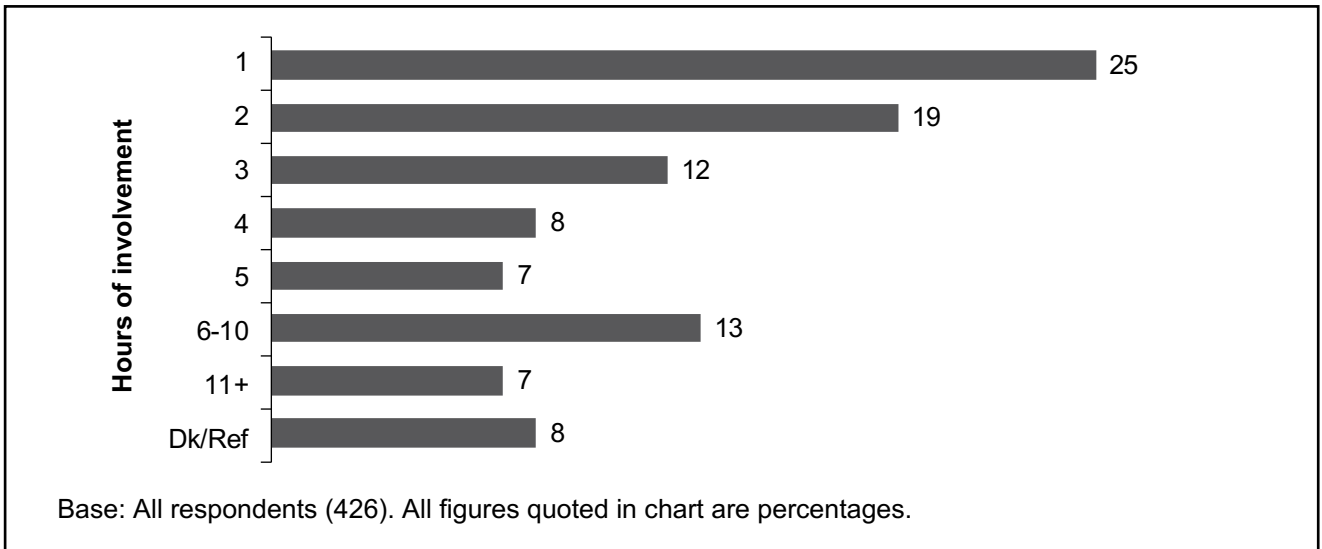
## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)



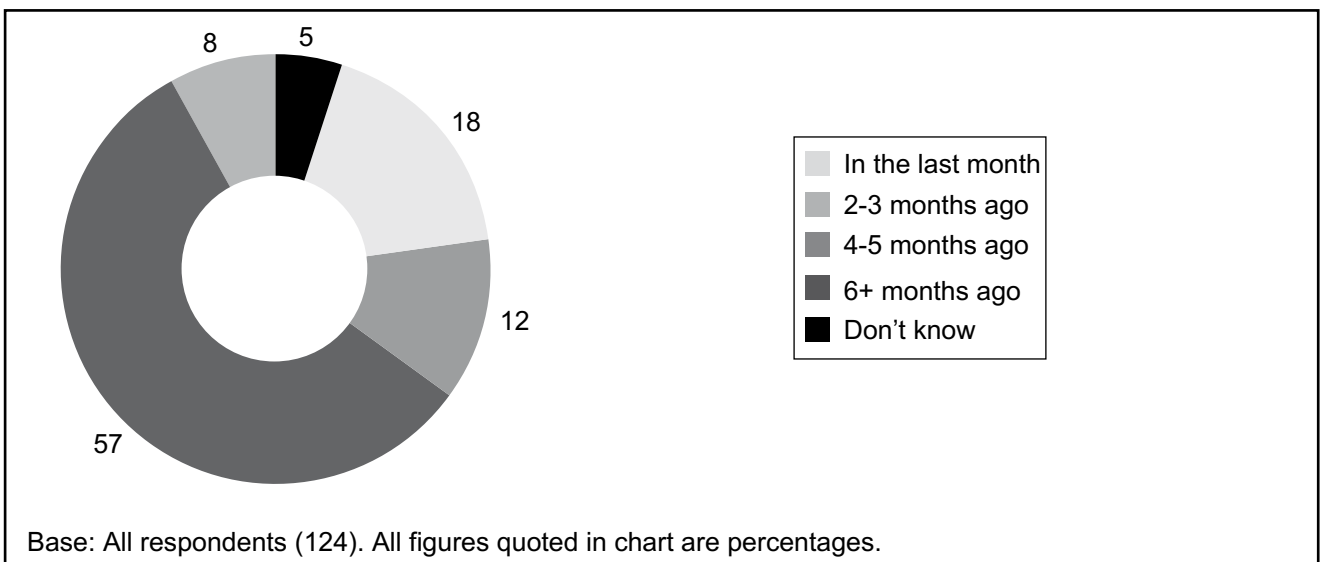


## Participants involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The majority of respondents had just 1-2 hours involvement with the project. Only 7 per cent had 11 or more hours involvement.



- The time since had contact with the project varied, but for six in ten (60 per cent) it was 6 or more months ago



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=163), almost **six in ten respondents (57 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=426):
  - **32 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
    - ~ Of these (n=137), **78 per cent felt the project played a role in these improvements** (39 per cent a large role, 39 per cent some role)
  - 25 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 47 per cent reported they were same (with 6 per cent unsure).

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, **59 per cent had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or in the process of agreeing one), leaving 40 per cent without (and 1 per cent unsure)
  - Where arrangements were in place, the most common were family-based arrangements with money payments (51 per cent) and CSA/CMS agreements (40 per cent)
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=411), **55 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 96 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

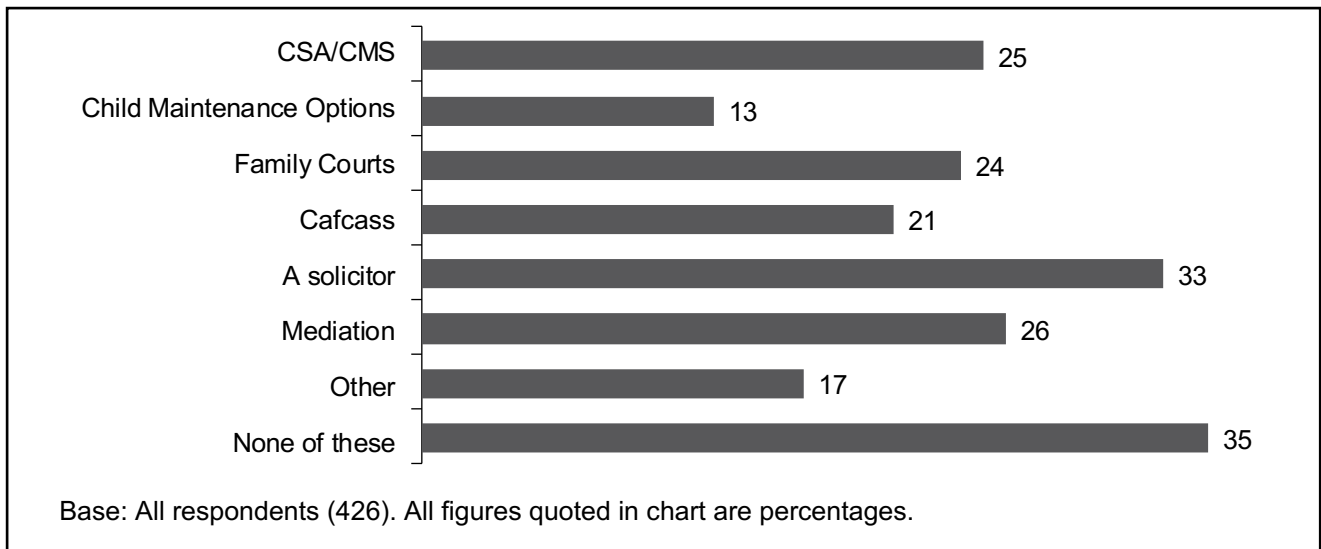
- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=411):
  - **17 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
    - ~ Of these (n=70) **37 per cent felt that the project played a role in these improvements** (11 per cent large role, 26 per cent some role)
  - 12 per cent that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 47 per cent reported they were same
  - 21 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement (with 3 per cent unsure)

## Use of the family courts

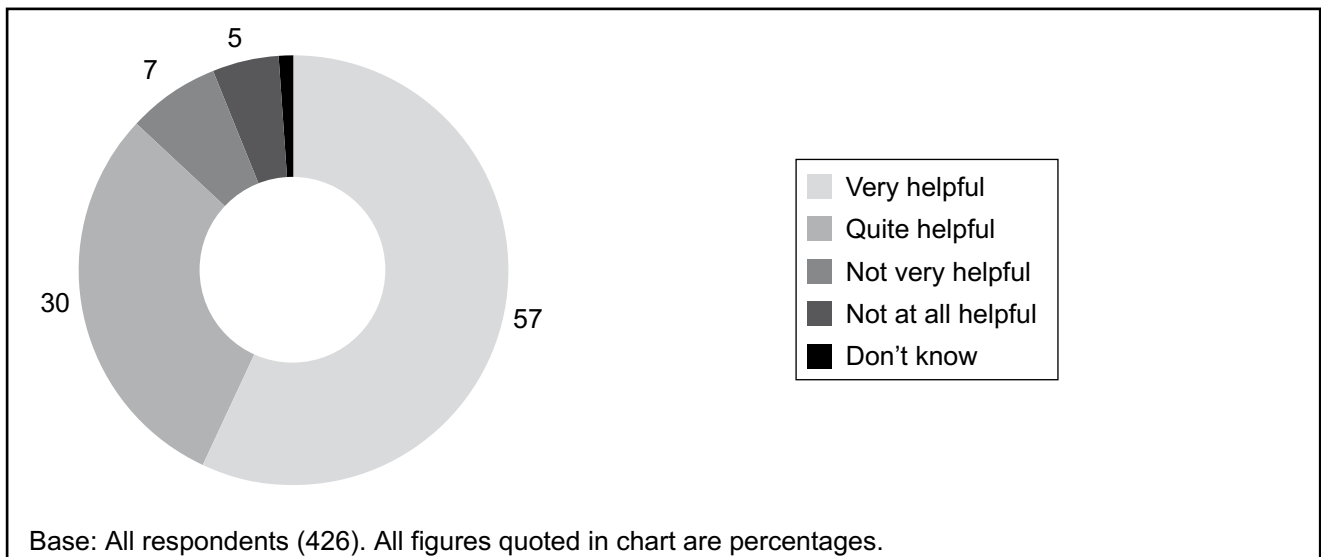
- Over two in ten respondents (22 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
  - Of these, 80 per cent reported that there had been a formal court case or one was being planned.
- Over one-quarter of respondents (27 per cent) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
  - Of these, around eight in ten (82 per cent) reported that there had been a formal court case or one was being planned.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case, a further 31 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts
- Amongst respondents who **had not been to the family courts following the project, or who had been since, but were not planning to go back any further, nearly half (46 per cent) felt the project played a role in this decision** (22 per cent a big role, and 24 per cent some role).

## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned was a solicitor (33 per cent), followed by CSA/CMS (25 per cent).



- Whilst 55 per cent said they would have sought this advice anyway, **29 per cent said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project** (with 13 per cent saying it varies, and 4 per cent being unsure).
- 87 per cent of respondents felt overall that their contact was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

The **one-to-one sessions** had an impact on individuals in terms of giving parents advice, helping them to understand their options and calming them down. Users found this aspect **invaluable in giving them a grounding in how the process of separation works and what their legal and financial options were**; and in giving them the confidence to follow the process through.

The Project Manager believed that this impact was underpinned by not minimising how difficult the process would be, and giving clients positive support rather than criticism.

*'It made me aware of a lot of things I wasn't aware of.'*

(Client)

*'I'm a bit clearer in my mind, not as anxious – aware of things I can do in the long-term financially.'*

(Client)

*'We try to get to them before they get that entrenched...we're guiding them through the process and getting an agreement.'*

(Project Manager)

*[We say] "Let's do this in a more neutral way". Dealing with emotions and giving a general road map.'*

(Project Manager)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

The Project Manager identified the **group sessions** as the element with the biggest impact, which was noticeable in a short space of time. Clients became **aware of their behaviour having an impact** and hence were more willing to change.

- Users found the information provided useful and reassuring; it gave them the tools to see the areas of dispute in a new light and to talk to an ex-partner calmly. In particular, the videos shown to illustrate scenarios were interesting and thought-provoking.
- There was a limit to the scope of the sessions, since the presenters were not there to act as legal advisers, but at the very least they gave users a means of taking issues to their own solicitors.
- Out of over 150 sessions only two had been disrupted by group members.
- The process of engaging in group work helped with mediation when this was also accessed.

*'It's the group sessions that impact on them – they are saying then 'This is really good, I hope my partner comes on this so we're both singing from the same hymn sheet'.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We talked through different ways of approaching matters rather than arguing...it opened your eyes up to how the other partner might be feeling.'*

(Client)

*'The only downside was I needed more in – depth help; they couldn't advise me as I wasn't being represented by them...I stood my ground and presented it to my solicitor, I wouldn't have done that if I hadn't received the advice.'*

(Client)

*'It [the group session] really has changed the dynamic – as parents, they know what the ground rules are so it makes the mediation process better.'*

(Project Manager)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

**Mediation built users' confidence** and gave both partners the space and the tools to **focus calmly on their child's wellbeing**. For some, however, it might have been more useful earlier when the relationship was less fraught.

In terms of **wider impacts**, the Project Manager believed that the group and one-to-one sessions enabled users to use mediation more effectively and to see it as an alternative to court. The service was likely to have reduced the burden on CAB and the courts, who were referring as they were currently very busy. It may have helped clients to realise that they need to ensure financial arrangements are adhered to.

*'I became less anxious – the mediator instilled confidence and drew attention to where we agreed and maintained our focus on our daughter. It made it more mature, calmer, less stressful.'*

(Client)

*'A lot of them [coming in to the mediation process] are saying 'We've sorted out the child maintenance'...they are wanting to get it sorted out and we are giving them the tools.'*

(Project Manager)

## **(1) Pen portrait: one-to-one sessions helped to explain and speed up the court process**

- Steven\* had already started court proceedings; he approached his ex-partner's solicitor, who referred him to Sills & Betteridge.
- He wanted to reach an arrangement with his ex-partner, who was refusing him contact with their children aged 5, 7 and 9, and also his step-children aged 10 and 14.
- He had an initial half-hour session with Sills & Betteridge in Boston to establish what he wanted to get out of the process; then about six brief meetings with the solicitors in the Lincoln office, when they needed further information from him; they also represented him in court – he qualified for Legal Aid.
- He and his ex-partner had reached a private financial arrangement outside the service.
- He was offered mediation but declined this as he was sure that his ex-partner would not co-operate.
- The service was very useful in terms of steering him through the court process and giving him advice about what the court needed. The solicitors were sympathetic, non-judgmental and neutral.
- Steven is pleased that the service enabled him to arrive relatively quickly at a satisfactory arrangement, and he now has contact with his children as hoped.

*'They had a big impact...they could sit me down and explain it in easier terms, what was required of me.'*

(Client)

*'It would have been a long drawn – out process...[previously] her solicitor tied me in knots...without Sills & Betteridge I would have been fighting a lot longer than what I was.'*

(Client)

\* Not his real name.



## (2) Pen portrait: A group session helped with seeing the other partner's perspective

- Joanne\* was referred to Sills & Betteridge by Child Services; she and her ex-partner had stopped communicating due to arguments around contact with their son, aged 4. The courts were not involved.
- She wanted advice about how to proceed; she and her ex-partner already had a financial arrangement set up through CMS.
- She had a one-hour one-to-one session with a solicitor, who offered her a group session and mediation and explained that these could help her to deal with her relationship with her ex-partner.
- She attended one group session with other parents, where there was a presentation about how to deal with separation; this dealt with a range of scenarios, so it was relevant to her.
- A joint mediation session was set up but her ex-partner did not turn up; nevertheless, she passed the Sills & Betteridge information pack on to him, which helped them to reach an agreement.
- Joanne is pleased that she and her ex-partner are now able to talk without arguing and that they have sorted out access arrangements for their son without going to court. However, although satisfied, she would have struggled to pay for the service.

*'It was very useful, like in the group session it talked through different ways of how to approach matters rather than arguing...it let you see from the other people's point of view, like fathers trying to gain access...it opened up your eyes to how the other parent might be feeling as well.'*

(Client)

*'They were very good...they taught you how to deal with situations better, it meant that I could compromise and negotiate with my ex...if it was left up to us we'd still probably be arguing about it to this day.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Well-trained staff were important and early group sessions enhanced effectiveness**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Each of the three features of the service (one-to-one sessions, group sessions and mediation) had a part to play, and it was important that clients should be able to pick the elements most relevant to them; but the order in which they were accessed made a difference. Group sessions had a particularly beneficial effect, in terms of raising users' awareness and providing them with information and tools, if attended prior to individual advice or mediation.
- Because of this, staff suggest that it might be a good idea to make the highly valued one-to-one sessions conditional on having first attended a group session, which might not otherwise be accessed.
- Smaller group sessions of 10 and under meant parents felt involved and could ask questions; a wider audience might reduce impact. The videos used to illustrate scenarios make a lot of impact in the sessions as users identify with the scenarios. In future they would improve these by making them more diverse.
- It was possible to run group sessions in a variety of environments, including immigration centres and RAF bases; establishing a presence, for instance by running regular group information sessions in local venues, was helpful for getting referrals.
- The service could be delivered by any firm of solicitors as long as staff had the right training and mentality; lawyers trained as mediators would be necessary for the one-to-one sessions and Sills & Betteridge used solicitors from the firm, retired Cafcass staff, mediators and other lawyers to run the group sessions.
- In any town there would be firms of solicitors with the right facilities and knowledge. The service could be replicated in a variety of areas by using staff who know local issues, and adapting the videos used in group sessions to reflect different populations.

## Some environments limited the practicability of group sessions

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- It was not possible to run group information sessions in prisons, as initially planned, because of security issues, so these had to be replaced by individual information sessions.
- Another difficulty with offering the service within the prison service was that staff movements could affect planning, making it more difficult to set up sessions.
- There was some risk of disruption to group sessions from clients who had mental health issues or did not want to hear the message being given.
- Group sessions could be tailored to particular audiences, but their appeal varied, it is believed because of religious and cultural attitudes to separation.
- Mediation was less likely to be accessed where there was a high level of conflict between partners or one refused to take part.

*'I tried to do some group information sessions just for Polish people in Spalding and Boston and they did not want to take those up. I think it's a cultural thing, there's a lot of shame in getting divorced anyway...if anything they were more wanting to take up the Relate marriage guidance.'*

(Project Manager)

## **Users would recommend the service to all with separation problems**

### **Recommending the service**

- Users would recommend the service, as the impact was very positive and often very quick.
- It was believed the service would be of value to anyone with problems around separation, such as making agreements about custody and access to children.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- The fact that it was free had been an incentive to use the service, but users felt it would have been worth paying for, to gain access to their children and get their questions answered.
- The suggested amount of £100 an hour would have been manageable for some clients, but many would have found it impossible to pay at all.
- The Project Manager felt that clients could most easily see the value of one-to-one sessions and mediation, but even so would struggle to see the value of the former compared with paying for a solicitor.

*'You can't put a price on access to your son, if it meant I could see my son I would pay for mediation, believe me it's far cheaper than courts. Solicitors can charge that much just to write a letter.'*

(Client)

## E.16 Spurgeons

### **Project aim:**

To offer targeted support to teenage parents to reduce ongoing reliance on state services.

### **Project delivery:**

- Single one-to-one initial assessment including risk assessment, delivery of information pack on locally and nationally available support services, and, if applicable, the client hand over of contact details of their former partner to the project.
- Two group work interventions for teenage parents in Spurgeons' Children's Centres.
- Single group work intervention for grandparents (as appropriate) summarising material covered with parents with a focus on conflict resolution and the roles and responsibilities of the extended family.
- Up to three couples' sessions lasting approximately two hours each, working towards developing parenting plans including agreements on childcare and financial arrangements.
- Delivery to take place over 12 weeks.

### **Target audience:**

- Young people who are separated, where one of the parties is aged 20 or under.
- The parties may have lived together or never lived together.
- They can attend jointly or separately; both or one party can engage.
- The service operates across ten sites in the West Midlands and Warwickshire in areas with high rates of teenage pregnancy.
- Grandparents are also invited to attend.

## Logic model

Resources/inputs	Activities	Outputs over two years	Outcomes short term	Impacts
Expertise working with teenagers	Assessment and information pack provision	Recruit 1,144 separated couples onto the programme (in some instances only one parent may attend). Grandparents will be included where suitable	Increased understanding of the impact of conflict on child and their needs	Teenage parents working collaboratively together in the interests of their child
Legal expertise	Two mixed gender group sessions with teenage parents (3 hours each)		Increased understanding of their rights and responsibilities as parents	Better life chances for child
Separated teenage parents (one parent aged 20 or under)	A group session with grandparents	50% of couples recruited complete the programme and have a parenting plan in place	Increased ability of parents to resolve conflict	Better life chances for parent (including more positive future relationships)
Marketing/advertising	Up to three couple-based sessions (two hours each)		Increased communication (both between parents and within wider family)	
Innovation Fund funding			Increased awareness of services available to parents/children	
Children's centres facilities				

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			Qualitative interviews completed
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	
Recruit 1,144 separated couples onto the programme (in some instances only one parent may attend). Grandparents will be included where suitable	As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period): 47 individual parents started, of which two 'completed'	27 parents	47 pre-PAMS 13 pre- and post-PAMS	Not included	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager  Stage 2 – Total 7 interviews: 2 Project manager 3 staff 2 clients  Stage 3 – Total 2 interviews: 2 Project manager
50% of couples recruited complete the programme and have a parenting plan in place					

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

### Target versus achieved clients

- Spurgeons was targeting separated parents where one parent is aged 20 years or younger living in the West Midlands and Warwickshire (Birmingham, Nuneaton, Walsall, Solihull and Wolverhampton).
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- The MI data suggests the parents who took part are largely in line with those targeted:
  - Amongst parents who reported an age (n=27) 63 per cent were aged 18-24, 33 per cent were aged 15-17 and 4 per cent were aged under 15.
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined in the MI data (n=27), all lived in the West Midlands.



## Engaging clients with the project overall and particular activities was challenging

### Reach

- Spurgeons engaged with a range of partners to secure clients, including social services, GPs/sexual health clinics, schools and other agencies working with teenage parents.
- Cafcass was the only compulsory referral route.
- Although demand amongst referrers has been high, this has not translated into clients.

### Engagement

- Throughout, engaging clients has been challenging.
- Once the initial assessment session has been attended engagement was better, however, few clients completed the whole of the project.

### Drop-out

- Project Managers reported clients typically dropped out due to existing commitments (e.g. engagements with other services), parental influence and chaotic/changing personal circumstances.
- Clients regularly changed telephone numbers and addresses, making contact challenging.
- Group activities proved unpopular with clients who did not want to share their personal circumstances in a groups setting.

*'We've sent materials to anywhere that we might get referrals from and its generated interest from professional, and we have received referrals, but its been difficult to get them to engage.'*

(Project Manager)

*'Some families are involved in social services...there are all sorts of things going on and they don't see [the project] as a priority. This is looking at the future, reducing conflict and getting parents to work together going forward. Explaining that has been quite difficult.'*

(Project Manager)

*'We've had a referral that was needed and we spent a lot of time with the client in meetings but when we contacted them again they were back together. They may only be back together for a few weeks, but they say that as they are together they don't need the service.'*

(Project Manager)

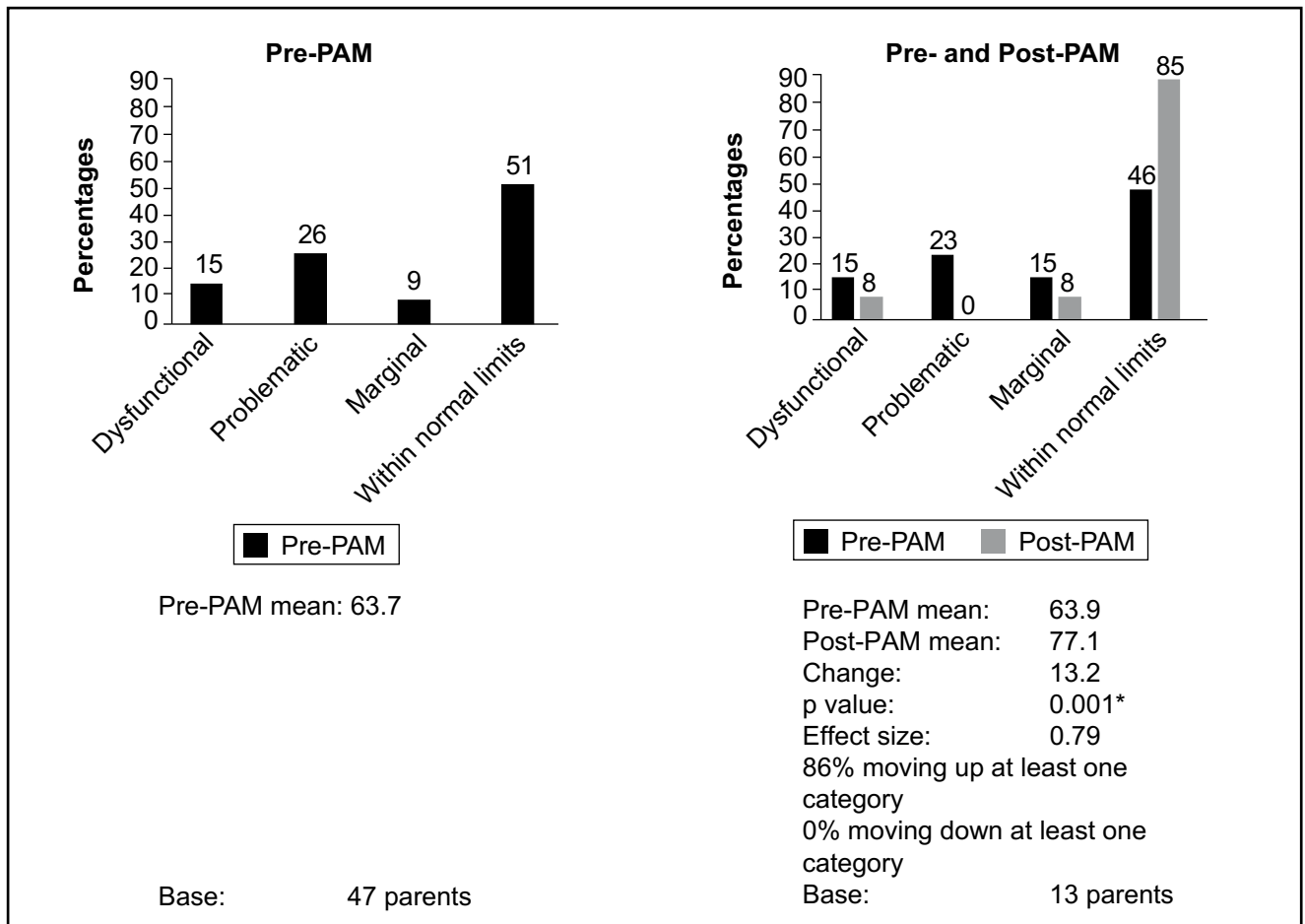
### Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- The name of the project 'Supporting Separated Teenage Parents' was believed to confuse potential clients and to have been a barrier to engagement. Spurgeons would look to change the project's name, removing the word 'separated'.
- The project pursued a variety of marketing and promotion channels, including Facebook and Twitter. However, they found at-event marketing to be particularly successful, especially when contacts are followed up quickly. As the project progressed they moved towards more traditional marketing methods (e.g. the creation of information packs).
- The project covered a number of topic areas, not all of which were relevant to every client. The project would look to market its offer in a more targeted way, positioning one or two service offers to clients, while ensuring the full range of services remained available. It was believed this approach would support engagement.
- Promotional items (e.g. pens) were liked by clients. Project managers felt that increasing the number and range of material incentives, potentially to include family days out or cinema tickets, may support ongoing engagement.
- The group work did not prove popular among service users: clients were reluctant to share personal details in front of strangers and did not necessarily recognise the benefit such activities could offer. As a result, the service offered elements of the programme as one-on-one sessions. In the future the service would consider dropping or augmenting the group activities within the project and deliver the content through individual sessions instead.
- In the future the project would be more flexible in the order in which sessions were delivered, so that sessions could be prioritised according to the needs of the client.
- There is potential to extend the target group to include 'young parents' – those aged 20- 25. Although this group may face slightly different challenges compared with teen parents – their children may be slightly older, they may be more likely to have multiple children and they may have more challenges with technological, rather than face-to-face, communications – the current project content is relevant and would remain broadly unchanged. Including 'young parents' may also bring benefits to the project's current target group by providing an example and empowering them to take action.

## **PAM overview**

- Pre- and post- data, no survey data.
- Four in ten clients either problematic (26 per cent) or dysfunctional (15 per cent) at baseline – but half (51 per cent) within normal limits.
- Large and significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 13.2) (NB small numbers):
  - 85 per cent within normal limits and 8 per cent dysfunctional.

MI data (very small pre-post numbers)



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Engaging clients in the research process, and therefore understanding the project's impact on service users, has been challenging. The number of clients the project engaged with was relatively modest and, as project staff members experienced, clients had been hard to contact, due to changing telephone numbers.

- **Creation of a parenting plan:** Staff regard this as the most useful and impactful project element. They feel, as it is the Cafcass parenting plan, it is regarded as an official document, and that it provides an avenue for parents to articulate to wider family members their wishes for their child. The plan also directs users to relevant local and national services meaning it has an ongoing use to their clients.
- **Knowledge and awareness of available support/services:** Throughout the project parents are provided with information about local and national services. The Sorting Out Separation App was felt to be particularly useful as it contains a large amount of information and, as it is presented at the initial meeting, means even those who only attend this first session can receive a tangible benefit.
- **Reflective activities:** Staff feel the project fills a gap in the market by allowing users to reflect on what they want for the future and how they may be viewed and understood by their partner.

*'The parenting plan empowers them to say they do want their child to see their ex, even if their parents are against it...putting things down on paper gives them another way rather than a confrontation.'*

(Project Manager)

*'The programme looks at them as parents and how they communicate to make it a less volatile relationship...the reflective practice is the biggest niche of the programme. Otherwise they are rarely asked how they would feel if they were sent a message. Explaining that it is like a business relationship.'*

(Project Manager)

## Pen portrait: Grace\* could not engage fully with Spurgeons as her partner refused to take part

- Grace engaged with Spurgeons having been recommended it by her daughter's health worker.
- She was hoping Spurgeons would help encourage her ex-partner to see his daughter, who is currently 12 months old. Although her ex-partner has two sons by a previous relationship and sees these children on a regular basis, he does not have a relationship with his daughter.
- Unfortunately, Grace only attended the initial session with Spurgeons – her ex-partner did not want to engage with the service and she did not want to attend on her own.
- Grace did feel, however, that she had benefited from the service. She was now more likely to seek support, and meet new people.

*'I'm not normally into meeting new people or getting myself into groups and that. I'd rather be on my own. But since talking to that woman [I've changed]. She's really helped me out.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## **Clients' understanding of their own circumstances was key to project effectiveness**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Clients' own understanding of their circumstances, particularly whether they regarded themselves as separated, impacted project effectiveness. If a client identified themselves as separated and understood that contact will happen with their ex-partner the project was more likely to have an impact.
- Referral source was felt to influence project engagement: those who self-referred were often more motivated and engaged with the process as they had made a conscious choice to take part; those engaging under a court order were also more likely to complete.
- Offering flexible engagement options, either changing the order of sessions or allowing one party to begin sessions while attempts are being made to engage the ex-partner, was felt to support project engagement.
- Although accessing up-to-date contact numbers was a consistent issue, reminding young people of appointments via text supported attendance.
- Strong relationships between project assessors/facilitators and clients supported project impact – ideally the assessor and facilitator would be one and the same.
- Reflective activities which focus clients' attention on the future and helped build their understanding of their circumstances, themselves and their role as a parent helped to shift participants' outlooks.
- Creating a parenting plan enabled parents to have a longer term resource which they could return to as and when it was needed.
- The services' SOS App covered a wide range of subject areas, was easy to use and accessible. It also meant that, even if they only attended the first session, clients received some benefit from the project.
- Basing services in children's/contact centres or venues which were convenient/suitable for both parties facilitated engagement of non-resident parents (typically fathers), some of whom felt they would otherwise lack a reason to enter such venues.

## Clients often lived chaotic lives or did not identify as separated

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- Target group characteristics created barriers to engagement and project effectiveness – chaotic lifestyles (changing telephone numbers, addresses and partners) and fears of being judged/criticised/labelled made some young people reluctant to engage.
- The name of the project was felt to discourage young people that may not identify as separated, or who may have started a relationship with a new partner from engaging.
- Lack of engagement of both parties.
- Wider family members (e.g. clients' parents) may not encourage current or potential clients to engage with the service. For instance, they may not wish their relative to see their ex-partner.
- Articulating the benefits of the project, which are longer term rather than immediate, was challenging and hampered engagement.
- The number of topic areas the programme covered and the volume of information available to service users was believed to overwhelm some clients/potential clients and made it difficult for them to quickly and easily identify how the service could help them with their problems.
- Low client numbers (and low interest) meant arranging group activities was challenging.
- Additionally, group work, which was not appealing to clients, acted as a barrier to engagement.
- Geography meant convening groups among the few who were interested in participating was difficult.

*'They don't identify as separated...they think they have to have been married and divorced [to be eligible].'*

(Project Manager)

*'Outside influences are a barrier. We had someone who was keen and we know its because the client's parents think it's a waste of time [that they dropped out of the project]'*

(Project Manager)



## **Clients were not believed to be willing or able to pay for the Spurgeons service**

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Project staff expected clients to be unwilling (and unable in many cases) to pay for the service.
- The one client who commented on paying for the Spurgeons' service said that they would have been willing to pay, if their ex-partner had engaged in the service, and that doing so would have made them more likely to engage and invest their time in the project. However, she did not feel it would be fair to provide the service free for some clients, but at a charge for others.

## E.17 Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships

### Project aim:

To support parents in high levels of conflict to come to long-term arrangements over their co-parenting, and access and child maintenance issues after separation, and reduce ongoing or recurring contact with the courts and Cafcass.

### Project delivery:

- Parents initially attend an individual assessment interview and complete a 'Detection of Overall Risk Screen' (DOORS) – a risk screening tool.
- Clients are then offered:
  - Up to 6 x one-to-one mentalizing therapy sessions with lead parent
  - Up to 6 x joint mentalizing therapy sessions
  - Co-parenting skills workshop
- Parents complete self-reports about changes in their perceptions and understanding, psychological wellbeing and parenting alliance.

### Target audience:

- The project is target at divorced and separated parents in enduring conflict who cannot manage their emotions and repeatedly use the family court system.
- Clients often have highly complex needs, and/or ongoing or recurring contact with the courts and Cafcass (i.e. 16.4 cases and those on Section 7 reports).
- Some have disputes so acrimonious that they are affecting the children's wellbeing and safety.

Logic model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes short term	Outcomes mid term	Outcomes long term
Divorced and separated parents in enduring conflict who cannot manage their emotions and repeatedly use the family court system	Parents attend individual assessment interviews	Intended 100; Actual 59 parents to take part in therapy sessions	Intended 65; Actual 81 Improved attitudes to help-seeking to reduce conflict	Intended 40; Actual 45 Improvements in collaborative behaviours	Improved cooperation between parents in the interests of the child
Counselling, therapeutic and research expertise	Parents complete DOORS risk screening tool	Intended 75; Actual 29 parents to complete the programme	Intended 65; Actual 72 Increase in awareness of the risk their behaviours pose to them and their child	Intended 51; Actual 29 Increased understanding about the harmful impact of conflict on their child	Improved emotional environment for the child, leading to fewer behavioural difficulties
Referrals: London Cafcass, CAMHS, mediators, family lawyers, self-referrals	Up to 6 x 1-1 mentalizing therapy sessions with lead parent	Plan for parents to keep themselves safe	Increased awareness of how to keep themselves and their child safe	Intended 24; Actual 9 Improved parental mental health/well-being	Less self-initiated use of the Family Court system
Marketing	Up to 6 x joint mentalizing therapy sessions				Improved and more stable financial settlements leading to lower burden on DWP
Innovation Fund funding	Co-parenting skills workshop				
	Parents complete self-reports about changes in their perceptions and understanding, psychological wellbeing and parenting alliance				
	Therapists measure changes in collaborative behaviours				

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## Target versus achieved clients

Target clients	Achieved clients (at time of collection of interim data)	Data collected			
		MI data received	PAM data received/ collected	Survey data collected	Qualitative interviews completed
100 parents to take part in therapy sessions	As collected in the qualitative (in March/April 2015):	70 parents	67 pre-PAMS 32 pre- and post-PAMS 27 pre- and survey PAMS	32 parent interviews	Stage 1 – Total 1 interview: 1 Project manager
75 parents to complete the programme	59 parents took part in therapy sessions  29 parents completed the programme  As recorded in the cost effectiveness data collection (estimation for whole operational period):  108 couples started, of which 87 'completed'		17 pre-, post- and survey PAMS		Stage 2 – Total 10 interviews: 1 Project manager 5 staff 4 clients  Stage 3 – Total 9 interviews: 1 Project manager 7 clients 1 'Other'

Note: Data on the number of parents taking part in the project/meeting specific outcomes were collected during the qualitative and cost-effectiveness phases of research and should only be viewed as indicative.

## **Target versus achieved clients**

- Tavistock was targeting parents identified in the judicial system as having been unable to come to long-term arrangements over co-parenting, access and child maintenance issues, living in inner London.
- The best indicator of who took part in the project can be determined from the MI data. However, this is subject to the caveats outlined in the main report.
- In the MI data, only comparisons can be made to the geographical area that parents were from:
  - Amongst parents for whom GOR could be determined for in the MI data (n=68), 84 per cent lived in London, 9 per cent in the East of England, 4 per cent in the South East and 3 per cent in the South West.

## The high volume of referrals from the courts meant the Tavistock Centre was, at times, inundated with applications

### Reach

- The Tavistock Centre experienced far higher demand than expected and had to close registration at several points.
- Although some parents self-referred or were referred by CAMHS, mediators or family law practices, London Cafcass was the project's main referrer.
- The project was promoted on a weekly basis with Cafcass via a project steering group and outreach.

### Engagement

- Engagement was generally considered to be good, although this was partially because clients had been mandated by the courts/Cafcass to attend.
- In many instances initial engagement was time consuming and resource intensive.
- Some, although physically present, did not engage in the mediation process itself.

### Drop-out

- Drop-outs occurred for a variety of reasons.
- Staff perceived dropping out/absenteeism to be used strategically by some, to have the potential to escalate quickly and to be a form of brinkmanship.

*'We were very quickly inundated by Cafcass referrals – my role [to arrange that] became unnecessary after a few months.'*

(Staff)

*'It was not successful for our objectives. My ex is an extreme case...she is very adamant and dogmatic and won't budge. She refused to engage in the process. She was very polite, but just not interested in letting me see my children.'*

(Client)

*'For example, one mother was assessed and didn't want the joint sessions. The father continued over the course of a few months. Then the mother came and asked for joint sessions. Then we had joint sessions and the mother said she wasn't coming back because I was biased. I then offered to see her on her own, which I did, and now they are back having joint sessions.'*

(Staff)

*'It is easy for their conflicts to seep into the meetings – if one cancels, then the other one cancels, then the first one cancels again. We then have to start putting our foot down.'*

(Staff)

## Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future

- Demand for the service was very high, leading to the closure of the waiting list. While the Tavistock Centre was able to mobilise resource to start the project quickly, staff have been stretched to capacity to deliver the services.
- Unexpectedly, in almost all cases both parents accessed the provision. This was possibly because they were engaged with sensitivity and the DOORS assessment tool made the purpose of the therapy sessions clear (i.e. the Tavistock Centre were not attempting to reunite them as a couple).
- Since parents attended the joint sessions in most cases, the Tavistock Centre decided that the co-parenting skills group workshops were not necessary. Therefore, this element of the project was not delivered.
- Initial evaluation data shows that the intended short-term and medium-term outcomes are happening for most couples, in particular improving attitudes to help-seeking and increasing awareness of the risk their behaviours pose to themselves and their child. Parents continued to attend the joint therapy sessions, demonstrating that they were able to talk directly to each other and work more collaboratively.
- Collecting evaluation data was straightforward and parents seemed to view the questionnaires as useful for self-reflection on their progress. The data gathered will be used internally by the Tavistock Centre's dedicated research team.
- The Tavistock Centre is keen to follow-up with parents who have accessed their services to assess long-term impacts of the intervention.
- The Tavistock Centre regarded one of the most successful aspects of the project was the engagement pathway – working closely with the courts and Cafcass supported the Tavistock Centre's achievement of their target numbers. Although at times they were overwhelmed, had to close the project's waiting list and incurred additional costs, the Tavistock Centre felt this demonstrated the need for their service and that if the project were to scale/be replicated there would be a secure supply of clients.

## **Changes/evolutions over the lifetime of the project; learnings for the future**

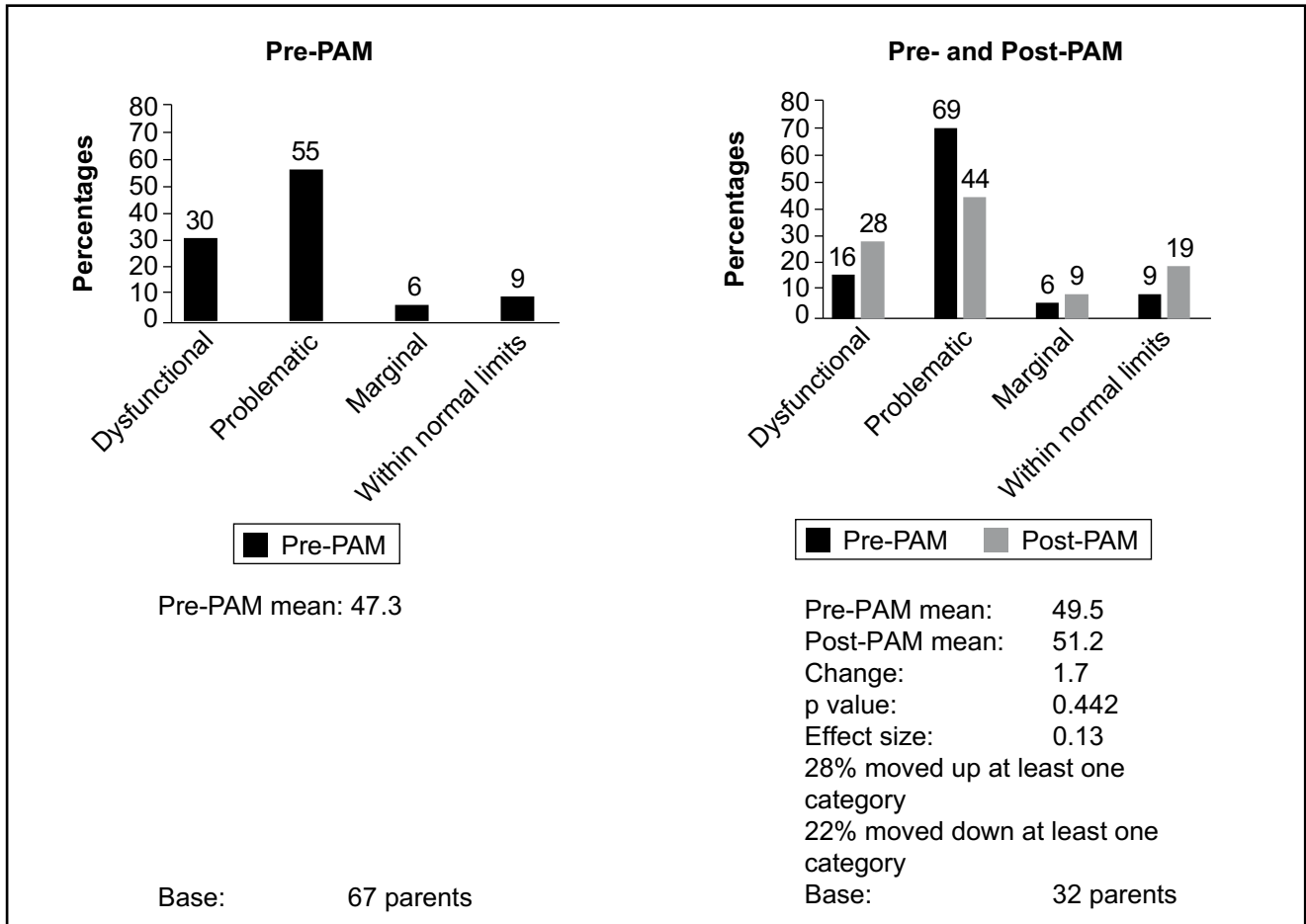
- While the Tavistock Centre would not look to make changes to their target group, they did feel their service offering would work well with those with less entrenched conflict. This group may require fewer sessions.
- Looking forward, the project would consider introducing two to three sessions of independent work prior to holding joint-sessions. This would better prepare clients for the joint sessions and could potentially support them to address their individual issues.
- The Tavistock Centre would also potentially change the structure of their engagement, to one that would offer engagements over a longer timeframe; they would also consider introducing 'top-up' sessions for those who complete the process. This was not possible within the innovation project itself.
- The Tavistock Centre felt their work could be replicated elsewhere with relative ease, providing staff were appropriately qualified and trained. Staff felt Relate centres and Cafcass could offer appropriate venues.
- However, the Tavistock Centre would expect limited economies of scale – you would need a finite number of directors, but would need to hire a substantial number of appropriately trained clinicians.



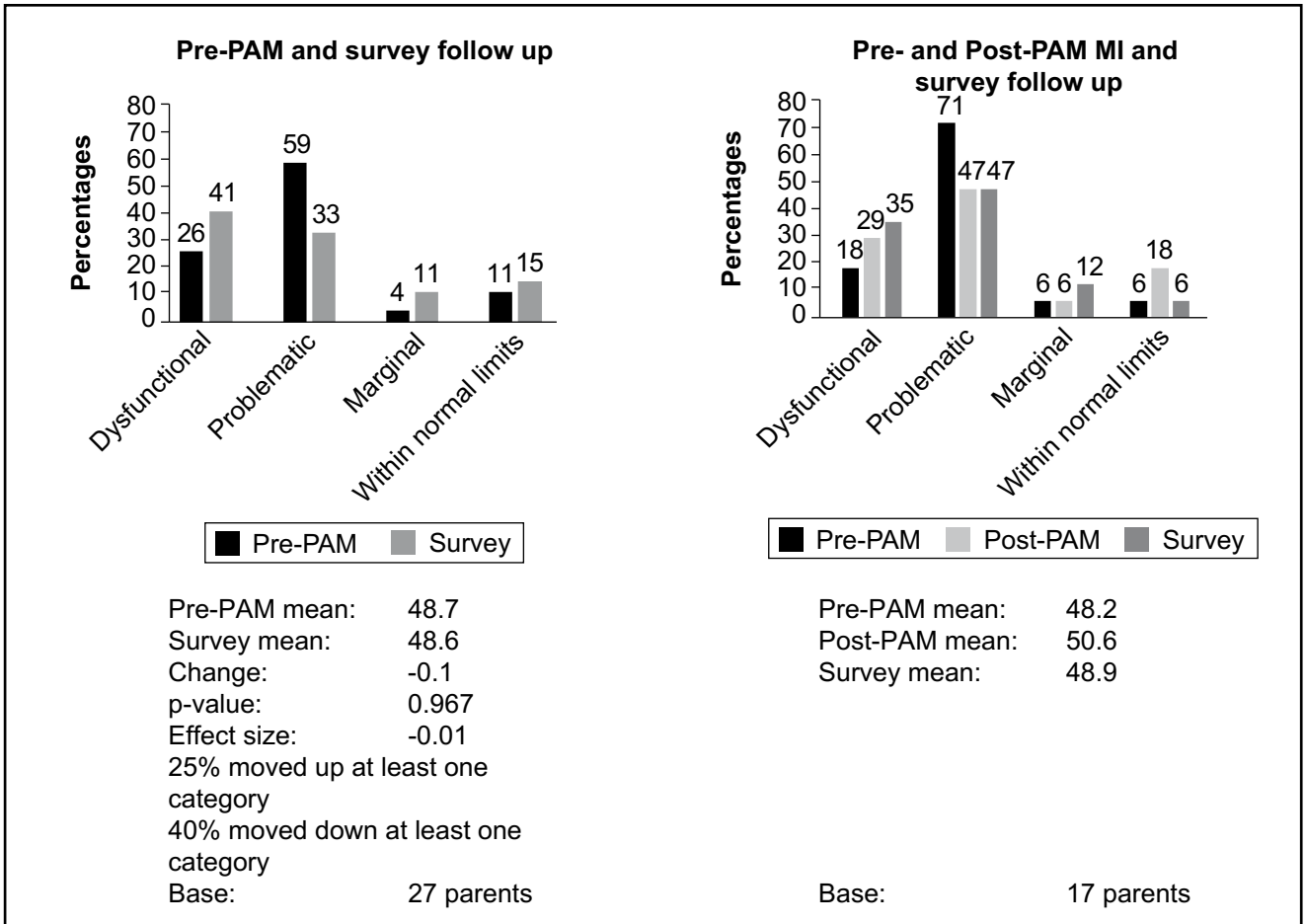
### **PAM overview**

- Pre- and post- and survey data.
- Vast majority of clients either problematic (55 per cent) or dysfunctional (30 per cent) at baseline – only 9 per cent within normal limits.
- Small non-significant change in PAM scores immediately post-support (mean change score 1.7) (NB small numbers):
  - 19 per cent within normal limits post-support and 28 per cent dysfunctional.
- No improvements evident by the time of the survey:
  - mean PAM score change between baseline and survey -0.1 (small numbers).

MI data (small pre-post numbers)



**MI and survey data (very small numbers)**



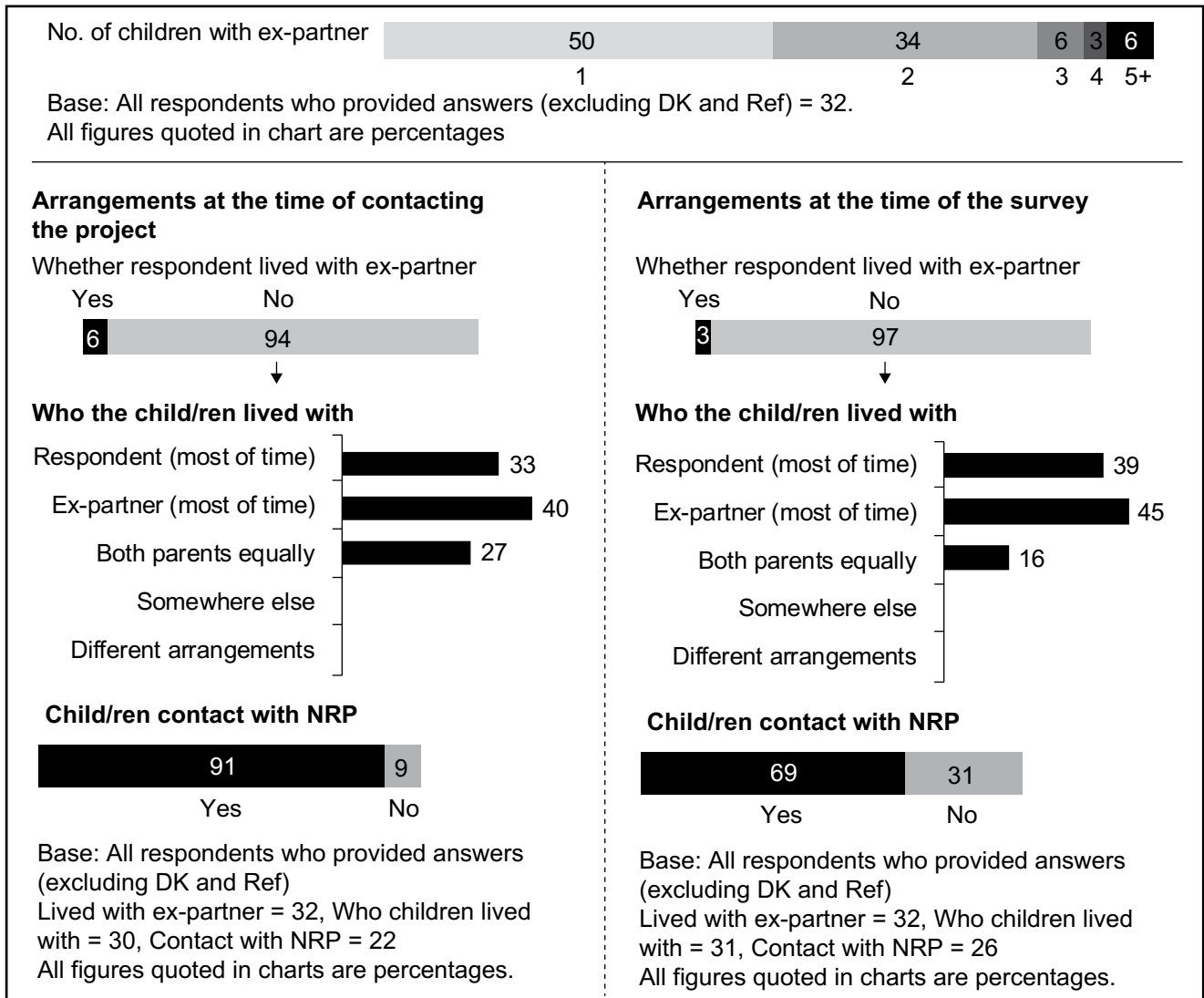
## Who took part in the telephone survey

	MI data (%)	Survey respondents (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	55	65
Female	45	35
<b>Age</b>		
Under 25	-	-
25–34	12	14
35–44	55	50
45+	32	36
<b>Ethnic background</b>		
White	58	55
Black	17	10
Mixed	1	-
Asian	17	21
Other	8	14
<b>Highest qualification</b>		
A-level or above	38	28
Lower than A-level	62	72
<b>Disability</b>		
Yes	11	18
No	89	82
<b>Base*</b>	70	32

\* Note – The base is the total number of clients who completed the MI data/the survey. Note clients who did not provide a response, or gave a ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused’ answer to a particular question have been excluded from the base of that particular question.

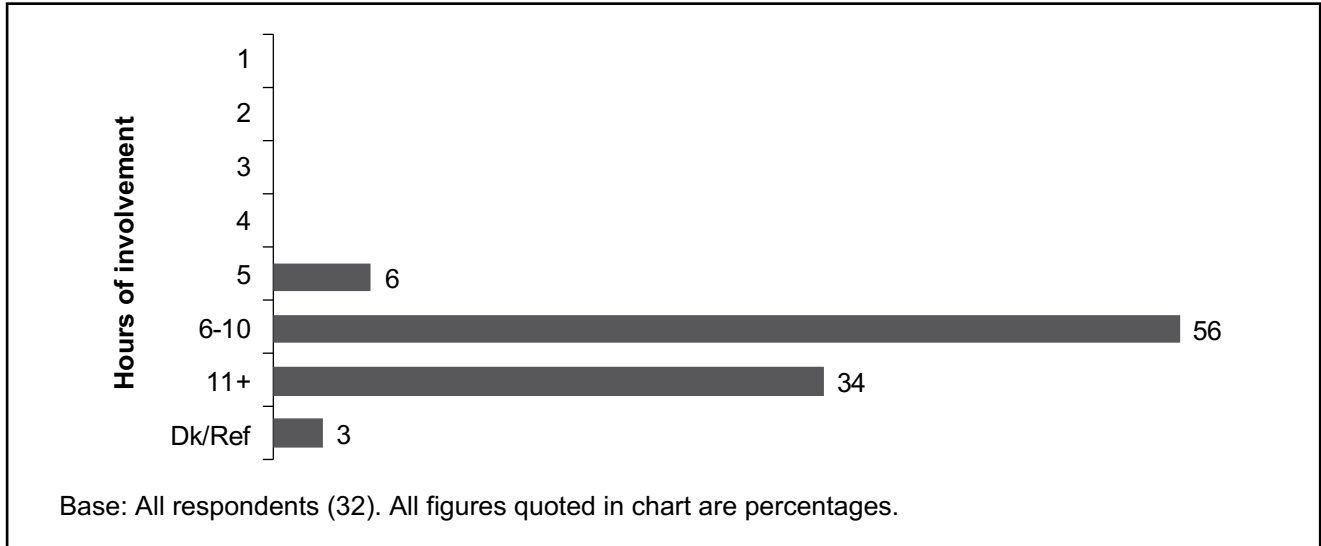
As illustrated, the demographic profile of responders to the telephone survey is similar to profile of parents in the MI data. While base sizes are small, the survey did have a higher proportion of men and respondents educated to below A-level.

## Relationship/family characteristics (identified in the survey)

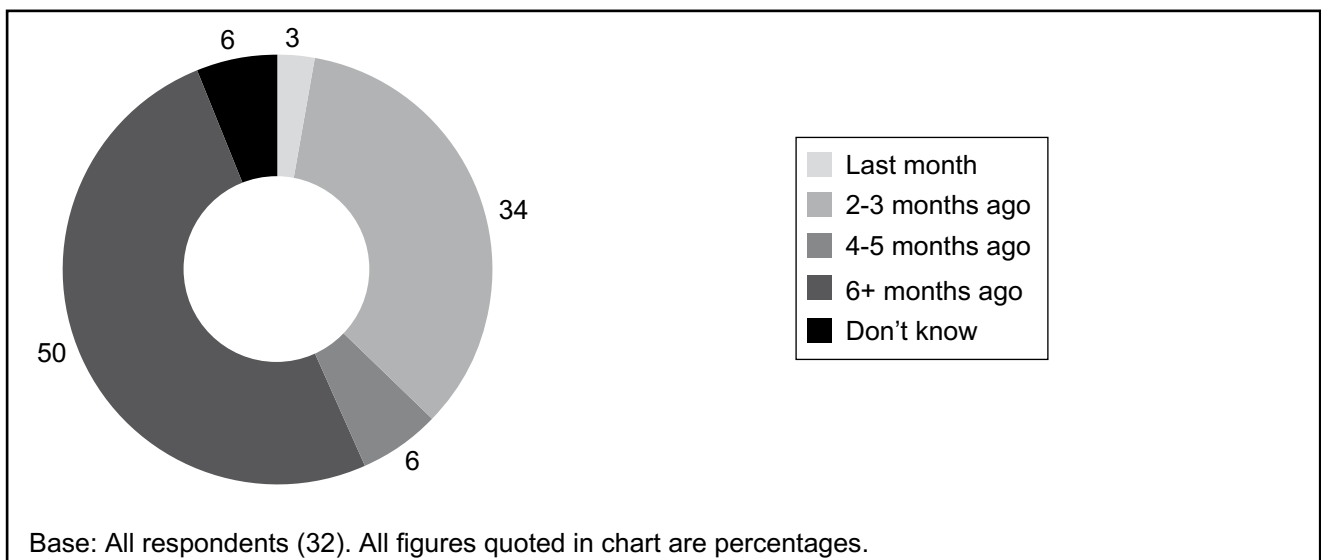


### Involvement with the project (identified in the survey)

- The amount of contact with the project was high and around nine in ten (91 per cent) respondents had six or more hours of contact.



- At the time of the survey, half of respondents (50 per cent) had not had contact with the project for at least six months.



## Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

### Contact arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner, and both parents had contact with their child/ren (n=18), **around six in ten (61 per cent) were happy with the child contact arrangements** they had with their ex-partner.
- Amongst all parents giving a valid answer (n=32):
  - **9 per cent reported their contact arrangements were better than before;**
  - 34 per cent reported that their contact arrangements were worse than before;
  - 56 per cent reported they were same.

### Child maintenance arrangements

- At the time of the survey, amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=31), **around seven in ten (71 per cent) had a child maintenance agreement in place** (or were in the process of agreeing one), leaving 29 per cent without:
  - Where arrangements were in place (n=22), the most common were CSA/CMS agreements (45 per cent) and family-based arrangements with money payments (32 per cent).
  - Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=31), **68 per cent reported that the NRP had paid child maintenance in the last three months** (which is 95 per cent of all such parents who had an arrangement in place).

### Medium-term outcomes (identified in the survey)

- Amongst respondents who did not live with their ex-partner (n=31):
  - **3 per cent reported their child maintenance arrangements were better than before;**
  - 13 per cent reported that their child maintenance arrangements were worse than before;
  - 71 per cent reported they were same
  - 13 per cent reported that there was no previous arrangement

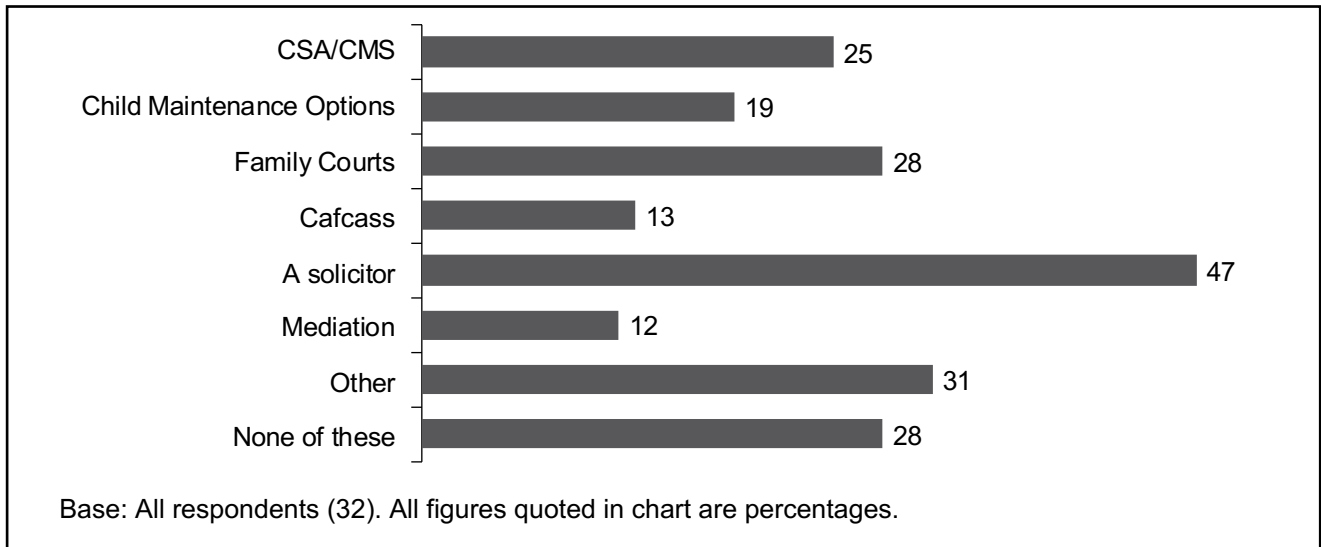
### Use of the family courts

- 94 per cent of parents (n=30) reported having contact with the family courts prior to contact with the project about their separation. (This could be regarding any aspect of their separation, not just aspects directly related to their child/ren).
- 50 per cent of parents (n=16) reported having contact with the family courts following their contact with the project.
- Amongst those who weren't planning a formal court case (n=26), a further 46 per cent were planning to go back to the family courts.

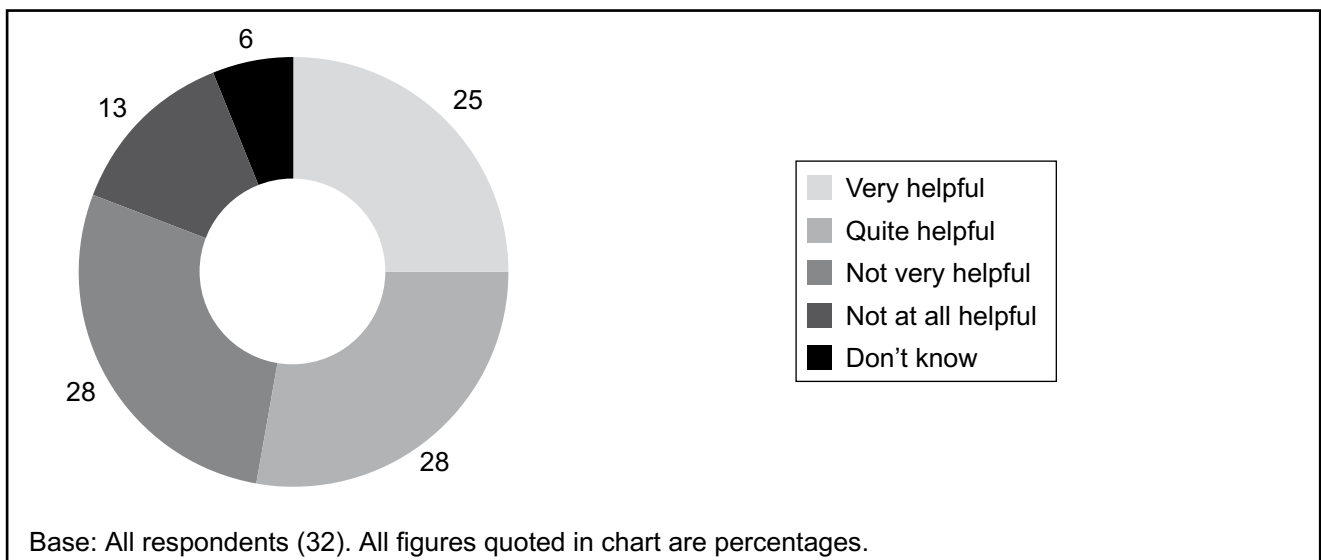


## Sources of support following the project (identified in the survey)

- Respondents reported a range of places they had sought additional support from following their contact with the project. The most commonly mentioned was a solicitor (47 per cent)



- Around eight in ten (83 per cent) said they would have sought this advice anyway, however, **9 per cent (n=32) said it was as a direct result of attending the sessions with the project** (with 4 per cent saying it varies).
- The majority (53 per cent) of respondents felt overall that their contact with the project was a helpful thing to do.



## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

**Clients' experiences** of the sessions and engaging with the Tavistock Centre were **mixed**. This was due, in part, to a misalignment between what clients believed the service offered and what could be achieved within the timescales of the project, and those of the Tavistock Centre itself.

- For some clients, the **significance of changes in relationships or behaviours were not recognised**, despite being regarded as extremely important by the Tavistock Centre staff and wider stakeholders (e.g. Cafcass).
- Additionally, clients often reported that **improvements** in their relationship, even small once, were **not sustained** once sessions had ended. They tended to feel partners had reverted to their previous behaviours.
- Consequently, some clients felt the sessions had been a waste of their time, and had not been worth the stress and anxiety of actually (or potentially) seeing their ex-partner, or the inconvenience and cost of attending the sessions.

*'In terms of resolving our issues I'd give the service 0/10, but in terms of helping me be the best parent I can be in light of the issues I'd give it 10/10.'*

(Client)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Clients and staff noted **improvements in the quality of relationships between parents, demonstrated by changes in their interactions, speech and body language:**

- Clients felt they had **changed how they communicate** with their former partner, something that was also noted by staff. For instance, staff noticed a shift in how clients addressed one another from saying 'Mr. R' or 'the mother' to addressing one another by their first names.
- Staff also believed **clients began to collaborate more** during the project. For instance, they begin to carbon copy (cc) their ex-partner in emails to the Tavistock Centre, rather than communicate wholly independently.
- Both staff, clients and Cafcass representatives noted clients are **more comfortable being physically with their ex-partner**. Staff saw clients' body language become more relaxed and noted that they address responses directly to their spouse, rather than the clinician, over the course of the sessions. Cafcass also noted that parents were able to be in the same room as one another as a result of the sessions.

*'I've learnt, through the counselling, to not be combative on points that are clearly confrontational.'*

(Client)

*'I feel my ex-wife is slightly more reasonable now – she brought [the children's] school reports to the session.'*

(Client)

*'Family Court Advisors have said the biggest impact, in a way because of how entrenched the hostility is, is parents actually meeting in a room together. It seems like a very, very small thing but...[previously] they were using separate entrances in the court, they wouldn't look at each other...the outcome of that often is that arranging contact is made easier.'*

(Cafcass)

## Outcomes: impact on the individual and society

Several clients mentioned **reaching a state of acceptance towards their current circumstances** and a recognition that they are unable to change the attitudes and behaviours of their ex-partner. This allowed them to refocus their attentions on what they could impact, e.g. their own behaviour, how they choose to communicate and their relationship with their children.

Clients and staff report **increased confidence** when interacting with their ex-partner and the courts.

- Staff are told by clients that they are more confident to engage in behaviour they once would have seen as risky, e.g. meet their ex-partner somewhere that is not covered by CCTV.

Outside of the direct impact on clients, some stakeholders feel the project has **positively impacted how Cafcass and the courts view services such as those offered by the Tavistock Centre**. The project has come to be viewed as a **viable alternative to the court system to resolve contact disputes**.

*'I took a huge amount of value from the sessions [despite not being able to see the children]. It forced me to think a lot harder on how things are from the children's point of view...[and] I've learnt that I'm never going to change my ex-partner.'*

(Client)

*'I'm more relaxed when I'm with him [ex-partner]...I can put my point forward and answer him...Facing him in front of the professionals gave me the courage and it made me think I can do this, it is possible and it's not for me, it's for my children, so I have to do this...it gave me the reassurance that it's going to be ok...I can do it again without the professionals.'*

(Client)

## **(1) Pen portrait: Joint counselling increased confidence, reduced anxiety and led to children observing civil behaviour between their parents**

Nilam\* separated from her husband Dinesh\* six years ago and they have two school aged children together.

They were recommended to attend counselling sessions at the Tavistock Centre by social services to improve their communication around contact with their children. They waited 10 months from referral to attending their first appointments and at the time of interview had so far attended an assessment appointment and 8 or 9 joint counselling sessions.

Receiving mentoring from the counsellors has been the most useful part of the programme for Nilam, as they helped both parents realise it was important for their children to see them speaking civilly to each other.

This showed the children that it was okay for them to talk about their Mum and Dad and they would be more relaxed as a result.

The fact that the counselling was joint made a great improvement to Nilam's confidence. Before starting the programme she would not have been able to sit with Dinesh face-to-face. By being brave enough to sit in a room with him every week and with the support and encouragement of the counsellors, she found the courage to tell him her point of view and she feels more relaxed around him.

However, up to this point, Nilam and Dinesh had not significantly changed their opinions of each other and she reported that he still accuses her of wrongdoing, so they still have opportunity for further improvements.

*'It was mentioned from the counsellors that if both of you show an ease with the conversation in front of the children...showing them is more useful than just talking about things, you know you can talk about your Dad and you can talk about your Mum...showing them by greeting, saying hello and goodbye to start with then they will be more at ease.'*

(Client)

*'The first session was really hard, I ended up crying...but it has been becoming more and more at ease...I can put my point forward, I can answer him...Facing him in front of the professionals gave me the courage and it made me think I can do this...it's for my children, so I have to do this...it gave me the reassurance that it's going to be ok...I can do it again without the professionals.'*

(Client)

\* Not her real name.

## (2) Pen portrait: Resistance from one parent is difficult to overcome and more direction from therapists is desired

- Tony\* has been separated from Karen\* for four years and they have one child together. They were ordered to attend the programme by a judge. Tony felt that Karen was denying access and they were in high conflict.
- They started attending joint sessions a year ago but after four or five joint sessions, they have so far attended three sessions on their own. Tony thinks that they need to go back to court.
- Tony had hoped that the sessions would improve communication with his ex and therefore increase contact with his child, allowing him to have a 'normal relationship' with them. He felt that the staff took a very human approach, were sympathetic and neutral, and did a good job during the assessment appointment of managing his expectations while being positive. However, Tony believed that Karen was delaying the appointments and purposely obstructing their progress.
- Although the joint counselling had not achieved its desired outcome, Tony did feel that Karen was somewhat more reasonable in her expectations and it had improved his relationship with his new wife.
- He suggested the following improvements to the programme:
  - Where one parent is unwilling to co-operate, those couples should be referred to alternative services.
  - They could directly refer families for family therapy where they involve the child in the therapy.
  - Therapists should be able to voice their opinions and be more directive. This could include reporting back to the judge if one parent is not co-operating.

*'You think well I've gone through every route now a reasonable man can... You don't wonder if you've left a stone unturned.'*

(Client)

*'I need a court to say "Yeah you can have more" [contact]. It's the only way forward that I can see.'*

(Client)

*'The Tavistock can address the broad range of needs but...where there is hostility, they need to just stop it there and then and say "I don't think it's useful".'*

Client

\* Not his real name.

## Staff quality was essential for project effectiveness

### Facilitators to project effectiveness

- The quality of project staff – both clinicians and support workers – was felt to be key to the project's impact. This was recognised both by clients and by project workers themselves:
  - In general, clients felt counsellors were highly experienced and skilled in listening and guiding sessions. Some clients noted staff made practical suggestions on how parents could resolve specific disagreements and move towards solutions, even when they were not making progress in how they felt towards each other.
  - Staff felt clinicians' experience enabled them to build a thorough understanding of couples' relationships.
  - Non-clinical staff prepared clients well in terms of what to expect from sessions and that there were a limited number of available sessions and time slots. Clients often built relationships with non-clinical staff, keeping them informed about their progress and engagement, even when this was not expected.

*'The person I was working with was extremely competent and extremely understanding. She clearly had a great experience and was a very good listener and was very good at guiding the questions towards the right context.'*

(Client)

*'It was really constructive that they took a particular thing which was important and needed action...they said to him, "well if you do have opinions then you need to research your opinions and do something about them".'*

(Client)

## **The involvement of two clinicians enabled both clients to feel supported**

### **Facilitators to project effectiveness**

- Providing each parent with a separate clinician and assessment session, allowed staff to build a clear understanding of their clients and supported the development of trust between all parties. During sessions having two clinicians present also enabled positive interactions to be modelled by therapists.
- Having a set number of sessions which clients had to 'use or lose' encouraged attendance and supported engagement.



## Client characteristics, particularly the entrenched nature of their conflict, acted as a barrier

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The context of clients' relationship and separation influenced their attitudes towards and willingness to engage with the service.
  - Splits are often acrimonious, with high levels of conflict between parties. Some have falsely accused one another of neglect or abuse. Getting parties to be in the same room as one another is challenging as a result.
  - Clients often externalise the causes of conflict in their relationships, seeing their ex-partner as the problem. Often, this meant they have little motivation to self-reflect or use insight.
  - Clients have often engaged with multiple agencies and the courts over an extended period. They often feel jaded by their experiences and found it challenging/were unwilling to engage with another programme.
  - Fear of returning to court, or an expectation that they would return in the future, led some clients to feel they could not be completely honest during the sessions in case what they said would be used against them later in court.

*'The previous year we had to go to Cafcass quite a lot during the summer holidays, we had to go to court and I said "I'm sick of it, I'm not doing any of this separation stuff over the summer holidays"...the programme finishes in September so that will be it, you'll just have to miss your last sessions.'*

(Client)

*'Parents often function well and hold down jobs, but in the context of their relationship they don't do so well...They don't want to go to therapy as they fear it will be used against them in the court – they will be painted as an unfit parent. They do have paranoid, troubled and defensive thoughts.'*

(Project Manager)

## Due to the therapeutic nature of the project, some felt underlying issues were not addressed

### Barriers to project effectiveness

- The impact of the service was more limited where clients had unresolved issues about topics that could not be addressed within the scope of the project (e.g. finances or previous domestic violence). Some clients felt they could not move on without first addressing these concerns.
- Some felt the tone of the sessions lacked force/authority and would have valued more assertiveness from staff. A few would have appreciated legally binding arrangements to have resulted from the sessions, or for project staff to be able to intercede on their behalf in the court process.
- Delays in the referral process created additional stress for clients and added to the issues they faced, making it more difficult for the Tavistock Centre to work with them when they had availability.

*'A lot of the problems I raised weren't covered because they felt that it was too inflammatory...the whole process is very "wallpaper over the cracks and move forward", which in our case didn't work at all.'*

(Client)

*'The model helps those with entrenched issues by putting them to one side...they have to focus on the here and now.'*

(Staff)

*'[The staff] are very gentle – to put it harshly I'd say they were wishy-washy. But if you are giving up part of your week and you have work pressures, you want to go in and there to be rules and clear guidelines...I would give professionals power to say you can't bring up things you've already gone round the houses on.'*

(Client)

*'She's neutral [the counsellor], but I can sense that she's not allowed to speak her mind...she should be allowed to, behind the scenes, contact Cafcass on an unofficial basis and say "this is what's happening, this is what needs to be done, in my opinion." Because...the therapists are more qualified to understand what a family dynamic is and what is happening behind the scenes.'*

(Client)

## **Most would recommend the service; clients were reluctant to pay due to negative past experiences**

### **Recommending the service**

- Most clients had valued their experience at the Tavistock Centre: although many had not achieved their desired outcome, most had received some positive impact.
- Commonly, clients said they would recommend the service to those with less entrenched conflicts.

### **Clients' willingness to pay**

- Despite praising the quality of counselling staff, most clients would not have been willing to pay for the programme.
- They typically could not afford to do so and felt that the programme had not achieved their desired outcomes.
- Many parents interviewed had been ordered to attend by the court, and so were not amenable to pay for the service.
- Clients were typically bitter about the cost of the divorce process and the court system as a whole and many had already unsuccessfully been through mediation or similar programmes.
- Parents reflected they would have been more willing to pay if agreements had been legally binding.

*'I remember paying in the past and I was so disappointed...mediation, whatever you agree on you then have to take it to court...if they have a mediation service where they have more power, make it more worthwhile or useful.'*

(Client)

# Appendix F

## Summary of target group, marketing channels and referral sources for each project

**Table F.1 Summary of target groups, marketing channels and referral sources**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Referral sources</b>
Changing Futures	Long-term separated Unresolved conflict Negative impact on children	Broad – leaflet drops Targeted – courts, Cafcass, health providers	Self Social services Health visitors Schools Cafcass
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	All separating and separated couples	Broad – public campaigns Targeted – relationship with statutory and other services	Self Statutory and non-government sources Solicitors, health visitors and social workers
Family Lives	Separating and separated couples reluctant to seek support, especially the Muslim community	Broad – press, posters, leaflet drops, social media Targeted – networking and local organisations	Self Via Barefoot Institute Children’s centres, schools, GP’s
Family Matters Mediate	Parents and their children (aged 7-15) who have been separated for at least two years who are in conflict and have either made more than one application to court or who have had concerns raised by the local authority or schools about the impact of conflict on their children	Broad – FMM website, leaflet drops Targeted – personal enquiries to FMM	Self Enquiries to FMM website Solicitors, agencies, courts, Cafcass, local authorities, schools, family centres, Citizens Advice and housing associations
Howells	Parents with low incomes £0 to £32k (currently eligible for limited legal-aid) Parents with middle incomes £32,000 to £45,000 (currently ineligible for legal aid)	Broad – local advertising Targeted – Judges/court system, Cafcass, legal firms, Citizens Advice, social services (including children’s services), internal referrals from Howells’ criminal department	Judges/court system, Cafcass, legal firms, Citizens Advice, social services (including children’s services), internal referrals from Howells’ criminal department

*Continued*

## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

**Table F.1 Continued**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Referral sources</b>
Malachi	Non-resident parents	Targeted – 70 participating schools	Self 70 participating schools
Mediation Now	All separating/separated parents	Targeted – existing clients, courts, lawyers and health professionals	Self Courts, lawyers and health professionals
NACCC	All separated parents trying to gain contact with their children	Broad – Supported Child Contact Centres (DSCCCs), Cafcass, National Family Mediation, CAB, Resolution and Relate and to local solicitors, GPs, judges and local authorities	Cafcass, National Family Mediation, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Resolution and Relate and to local solicitors, GPs, judges and local authorities
National Family Mediation	Long-term separated parents who are in conflict and have unresolved separation issues in Berkshire, Hereford and West Yorkshire	Broad – leaflets, posters to solicitors, radio, press, conference attendance Targeted – meeting with court user groups	Self Courts, Cafcass, solicitors
OnePlusOne	All recently separated parents	Website	Self Home Start volunteer trained by OnePlusOne, or via a dad.info referral
Pinnacle People	Families who have separated within the past three years or those currently going through a separation	Broad – leaflet drops to schools, public events, shopping centres Targeted – meetings with relevant local organisations	Self Mentoring and parenting organisations (e.g. SPAN), Bristol City Council and family specialist legal firms
Relate	All separating couples, but primarily Relate’s existing clients who tend to be used primarily by women aged 30-39 who are degree educated	Broad – Relate’s website	Relate’s website
Resolution ‘Family Matters’	Parents – either jointly or as individuals – who might once have relied upon legal aid, those who do qualify and those who have always fallen just outside financial eligibility	Broad and Targeted – Statutory and non-statutory services, legal firms	Self Statutory and non-statutory services, legal firms
Resolve Cymru	Separating or separated parents who have barriers (due to emotional resources, power imbalance with the other parents or anger due to the separation) preventing them from accessing Resolve Cymru’s Family Mediation, plus hard to reach individuals	Broad and Targeted – third sector (including, Women’s Aid, XenZone, CAIS substance abuse support), statutory providers such as the Children and Young People partnership, solicitors and the courts, GPs, Citizens Advice, and social services	Project closed

*Continued*

## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

**Table F.1 Continued**









<b>Project</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Channels</b>	<b>Referral sources</b>
Sills & Betteridge	Separating and divorced couples in Lincolnshire	Targeted – Lincoln County Court, the PAB Translation centre (for non-English-speaking communities), Relate, Family Focus, Lincolnshire Action trust and Children’s Links at Morton Hall (local Immigration Unit)	Self Courts
Spurgeons	Separated parents where one parent is 20 years old or younger	Targeted – midwives, health visitors, housing officers, lone parent advisors, youth services, social workers	Self Statutory and community organisations
Tavistock Centre for Couple Relations	Parents who have highly complex needs and have ongoing or recurring contact with the courts and Cafcass (i.e. 16.4 cases and those on Section 7 reports); separated parents identified as having disputes so acrimonious that they are affecting the children’s wellbeing and safety	Broad – Online marketing (parenting forums, council websites and social media) encouraged self-referrals, along with the use of posters and leaflets.  Targeted – weekly meetings with London Cafcass, a project steering group and outreach	Self Predominantly Cafcass, but also from CAMHS, mediators and family law practices

# Appendix G

## Service provision

In the following tables we use a key to show the primary and secondary services provided by the projects, along with their strengths and weaknesses. The ordering of the icons demonstrates whether the service is a primary or secondary offering.







**Table G.1 Overview of talk-based services**

Key:	Mediation	Visitation/contact	Therapeutic	Information
				
Project	Service offering	Target clients	Strengths/ Facilitators	Weaknesses/ Barriers
Changing Futures NE 	Initial assessment with an allocated practitioner, followed by individual and, if appropriate, joint sessions. The child then takes part in consultation or a children's group (if applicable).	Parents who have been separated for two years or longer with ongoing issues over parenting and or between themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled, experienced staff</li> <li>• Tailoring through pre-work</li> <li>• Involvement of children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parental engagement</li> <li>• Lack of legal backing</li> <li>• Length of mediation</li> </ul>
Family Lives 	Weekly befriending meetings with the couple over 9 to 12 weeks. The trained befriender meets with both parents, either together or separately.	Groups who are typically reluctant to seek support. In particular, in Waltham Forest and Leicester, Family Lives work with an Islamic relationship support organisation (Barefoot Institute) targeting the Muslim community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of staff</li> <li>• Links to community</li> <li>• Similarities between staff and clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of conflict</li> <li>• Lack of engagement of both parents</li> <li>• Cultural attitudes to seeking help</li> </ul>
Family Matters Mediate  	Seven-week process comprising assessment, individual pre-meeting, joint mediation between parents and sessions between child(ren) and child consultant. Process followed by feedback and review from mediator and child consultant.	Parents in conflict; separated for two years, who have had one previous application to court/concerns raised by the local authority or school regarding the impact of conflict on their children. In Doncaster area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with the courts</li> <li>• Child consultation element</li> <li>• Quality of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral process</li> <li>• Parents with entrenched conflict</li> </ul>

Continued






## Help and Support for Separated Families Innovation Fund Evaluation: Appendices

**Table G.1 Continued**

Project	Service offering	Target clients	Strengths/ Facilitators	Weaknesses/ Barriers
 Malachi	Weekly 1.5 hour therapeutic interventions for 8-12 weeks comprising weekly 1.5 hour sessions. Sessions focus on attachment and bonding, with the aim of changing behaviour in the interests of the child.	Non-resident parents (usually fathers); resident parents are often involved in the referral process and, sometimes, in the therapeutic session. Resident parents are offered support outside of this project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of staff</li> <li>• Integration of offer</li> <li>• Flexible, tailored support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not legally binding</li> <li>• Length of engagement</li> <li>• Wider family members</li> </ul>
 Mediation Now	Following a preliminary assessment, parents attend four 1.5-hour joint sessions, held fortnightly. Work is conducted on a face-to-face basis with a mediator.	Suitable for all separating/separated parents, although the core Mediation Now target group were standard legal aid clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of solicitors</li> <li>• Parental engagement in session</li> <li>• Content</li> <li>• Links with courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client behaviour and engagement</li> <li>• Lack of legal backing</li> </ul>
 National Family Mediation	Pre-mediation meeting with each parent (separately) with mediator followed by two to four mediation sessions, with an opportunity to agree a parenting plan. Consultation with the children (where appropriate).	Parents who have been separated for more than two years, including those with a background of domestic violence or safeguarding issues; involved in court. It supports those who are in conflict and who have unresolved separation issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled mediators</li> <li>• Confidentiality</li> <li>• One-to-one sessions</li> <li>• Flexible delivery</li> <li>• Relationship with courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement from both parents</li> <li>• Lack of legal backing</li> <li>• Timeliness and length of project</li> </ul>
  Resolution	The service is delivered by six Family Matters guides (qualified lawyer-mediators). They provide parents with a one-to-one mediation session, followed by joint sessions with the guide if appropriate.	Separating and separated parents. One of the parents must be on a low income.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of engagement from both parents</li> <li>• Presence of underlying issues</li> </ul>
 Tavistock Centre	Initial assessment and risk screening followed by up to six one-to-one mentalizing therapy and up to six joint mentalizing sessions and a co-parenting skills workshop	Divorced and separated parents in enduring conflict who cannot manage their emotions and repeatedly use the family court system. Clients often have highly complex needs, and/or ongoing or recurring disputes so acrimonious that they are affecting the children's wellbeing and safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral process</li> <li>• Quality of staff</li> <li>• Providing two clinicians per couple</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client characteristics</li> <li>• Unresolved issues outside of project scope</li> <li>• Delays in referral</li> </ul>



**Table G.2 Overview of information-based services**

Project	Service offering	Target clients	Strengths/ Facilitators	Weaknesses/ Barriers
Children 1 <sup>st</sup> (light touch) 	Website providing a one-stop-shop, tailor-made, integrated service, provided by three partnership organisations. There is also a telephone helpline, website and facility for mediation via a Family Group Conference (FGC).	The project targeted all separated/separating parents struggling with issues related to their separation and feeling this may impact their relationships with their child, partner or ex-partner or feel their child is being impacted or suffering due to the separation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strength of three-way partnerships</li> <li>• One-stop-shop offering</li> <li>• Expertise of experienced call-centre staff</li> <li>• Good marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set-up time for FGC</li> <li>• Challenges assessing impact</li> <li>• Speed of response time</li> </ul>
Howells 	One-hour first assessment providing information and legal advice; Additional support as necessary, including: ongoing legal advice; up to two hours of social welfare advice; up to two sessions of mediation OR three sessions of solution-focused individual or joint counselling.	Parents with low incomes of up to £32,000 (currently eligible for limited legal aid); Parents with middle incomes of £32,000 to £45,000 (currently ineligible for legal aid).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local profile of law firm</li> <li>• Staff knowledge and expertise</li> <li>• Client engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model allowed only one parent to be supported directly</li> <li>• Referral process</li> <li>• Engagement process took time</li> <li>• Geography</li> </ul>
OnePlusOne (light touch) 	A free online service offering behaviour modelling training (BMT) via videos and an online parenting plan. Some face-to-face support offered via Home Start.	Separated and separating parents (both mums and dads) concerned about the quality of communication with their ex-partner and those trying to discuss finance/contact issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of service</li> <li>• Links with dad. info</li> <li>• Support from professionals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website design</li> <li>• Type of client referred</li> <li>• Low engagement by users</li> </ul>
Relate (light touch) 	Online project where users register with the site, read articles and obtain exercises. Non-registered users can access site, but do not get personalisation. A live chat service with counsellor is available.	It was assumed that online-users would fit the demographics accessing Relate's face-to-face counselling services, i.e. women aged 30-39 who are degree educated, have two children and are thinking of separating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of information on site</li> <li>• Live chat element (used by minority)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement of just one parent</li> </ul>
Sills & Betteridge 	Post assessment clients can flexibly access: a two-hour group information session; one or two one-to-one information meetings; mediation sessions, free to those earning under £35,000. All delivered by solicitors.	Separated and separating parents, particularly in rural areas, who need information, guidance and support to minimise the impact of their separation on their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship between different service elements</li> <li>• Staff quality and legal background</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of prison access</li> <li>• Lack of appeal of group sessions</li> <li>• High degree of parental conflict</li> </ul>

Continued

Table G.2 Continued






Project	Service offering	Target clients	Strengths/ Facilitators	Weaknesses/ Barriers
Spurgeons  	Single one-to-one initial assessment, followed by two group work interventions with parents, single group work intervention for grandparents, up to three couples sessions. Delivery occurs over 12 weeks.	Young people who are separated, where one of the parties is aged 20 or under. Grandparents are also invited to attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client's attitudes to circumstances</li> <li>• Flexible engagement</li> <li>• Reflective activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client attitudes and lifestyles</li> <li>• Wider family</li> <li>• Project name</li> <li>• Geography</li> </ul>

Table G.3 Overview of the contact services

Project	Service offering	Target clients	Strengths/ Facilitators	Weaknesses/ Barriers
Pinnacle People  	12-week series of activities at farm: parents and children participate in 3+ activities with ongoing reflection about progress towards achieving their desired outcomes and outputs. Parents also signposted to other agencies/ services.	Families who are going through a separation or separated within the past three years.  The service was offered in the Bristol area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathetic staff</li> <li>• Setting</li> <li>• Programme structure</li> <li>• Tailored approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial promotion</li> <li>• Engagement of second parent</li> <li>• Length of project too short for complex cases</li> <li>• Lack of service integration</li> </ul>
National Association of Child Contact Centres 	Two innovative elements based around: 1) an online self-serve, screening process; 2) face-to-face support from social worker based at SCCC who identifies and tackles emotional and practical needs.	The project targets parents whose conflict is so entrenched that the non-resident parent is required to see his/her child on neutral ground at an SCCC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff positive and friendly</li> <li>• Access to peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing/live conflict between parents</li> <li>• Communication of project offer</li> <li>• Registration process</li> </ul>

# Appendix H

## Outcomes data by provider

Table H.1 How happy are parents with the current contact arrangements for child/children with ex-partner

	Changing Futures (CATI)		Family Matters Mediate (CATI)		Mediation Now (CATI)		National Family Mediation (CATI)		Resolution (CATI)		Therapeutic		Contact		Information		Relate* (CAWI)
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		
Very happy	16	5	10	9	4	10	[0]	[16]	9	7	6	[14]					
Happy	23	28	31	36	27	20	[13]	[26]	25	28	28	[50]					
Unhappy	13	14	23	18	15	10	[22]	[16]	12	13	28	[21]					
Very unhappy	12	11	6	6	10	22	[19]	[11]	9	10	33	[7]					
Don't know/refused	1	1	0	1	5	12	[3]	[0]	4	3	6	[7]					
Non-resident parent doesn't have contact with child(ren)	35	41	29	30	40	27	[44]	[32]	42	38	0	[0]					
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>14</b>					

\*Note: In the CAWI surveys this question was asked of all respondents, while in the CATI survey it was asked only of those families where the non-resident parent had contact with the children (and those who were not asked the question are shown in the bottom row). As such, the CATI and CAWI data are not directly comparable and this is likely to explain the high number of 'very unhappy' responses for OnePlusOne.

**Table H.2 Whether any child maintenance arrangements (formal or informal) are in place**

	Changing Futures (CATI)		Family Matters Mediate (CATI)		Mediation Now (CATI)		National Family Mediation (CATI)		Resolution (CATI)		Therapeutic Family Lives (CATI)		Tavistock Centre (CATI)		Pinnacle People (CATI)		Contact Howells (CATI)		Sills & Betteridge (CATI)		OnePlusOne* (CAWI)		Relate* (CAWI)		
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		
Yes, has an arrangement	54	64	81	76	60	54	69	53	62	56	63	62	56	63	62	56	63	62	56	63	62	56	63	62	56
Is in the process of setting up an arrangement	0	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	9	1	1	9	1	9	1	14	
No, no arrangement	46	33	19	22	36	37	28	42	27	38	22	27	38	22	27	38	22	27	38	22	27	38	22	29	
Don't know/refused	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	2	2	2	0	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	
Currently living with ex-partner	0	0	0	0	2	7	3	0	8	3	4	0	0	8	3	4	4	8	3	4	4	4	4	21	
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table H.3 Whether non-main care giving parent has paid any child maintenance in last three months (or whether paid each other any payments if share the care)**

	Mediation			Therapeutic			Contact			Information		
	Changing Futures (CATI)	Family Matters Mediate (CATI)	Mediation Now (CATI)	National Family Mediation (CATI)	Resolution (CATI)	Family Lives (CATI)	Tavistock Centre (CATI)	Pinnacle People (CATI)	Howells (CATI)	Sills & Betteridge (CATI)	OnePlusOne* (CAWI)	Relate* (CAWI)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	48	58	77	73	59	51	[66]	[58]	50	54	71	[50]
No	51	41	21	26	39	41	[28]	[42]	41	42	24	[21]
Don't know/refused	1	1	2	1	0	0	[3]	[0]	1	2	2	[7]
Currently living with ex-partner	0	0	0	0	2	7	[3]	[0]	8	3	4	[21]
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>14</b>

**Table H.4 Whether had contacted family courts before taking part in the project**

	Changing Futures (CATI)		Family Matters Mediate (CATI)		Mediation Now (CATI)		National Family Mediation (CATI)		Resolution (CATI)		Therapeutic Family Lives (CATI)		Tavistock Centre (CATI)		Pinnacle People (CATI)		Contact Howells (CATI)		Sills & Betteridge (CATI)		OnePlusOne* (CAWI)		Relate* (CAWI)		
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
Yes – TOTAL	40	73	63	65	25	39	[94]	[16]	12	22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yes, I had	12	21	15	9	6	12	[3]	[5]	4	7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yes, my ex-partner had	4	3	8	8	2	10	[16]	[0]	1	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Yes, we both had	23	49	40	49	16	17	[75]	[11]	7	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
No	59	26	35	34	75	59	[6]	[84]	88	77	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Don't know/refused	1	1	2	1	0	2	[0]	[0]	0	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**Table H.5 Whether have contacted family courts since taking part in the project**

	Changing Futures (CATI)		Mediation		Therapeutic				Contact			Information			Relate* (CAWI)
	%	(CATI)	Family Matters Mediate (CATI)	Mediation Now (CATI)	National Family Mediation (CATI)	Resolution (CATI)	Family Lives (CATI)	Tavistock Centre (CATI)	Pinnacle People (CATI)	Howells (CATI)	Sills & Betteridge (CATI)	OnePlusOne* (CAWI)	%	%	
Yes – TOTAL	16	47	25	50	29	29	29	[50]	[11]	19	27	53			[7]
Yes, I have	6	12	6	9	6	6	10	[13]	[5]	7	11	25			[0]
Yes, my ex-partner has	3	4	6	5	1	1	7	[6]	[0]	1	3	6			[0]
Yes, we both have	7	32	13	36	23	23	12	[31]	[5]	12	14	22			[7]
No	84	53	75	50	71	71	71	[50]	[89]	81	72	44			[86]
Don't know/refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	[0]	[0]	0	1	3			[7]
Base	69	76	48	140	124	124	41	32	19	134	426	550			14

**Table H.6 Whether have plans to go (back) to family courts**

	Mediation				Therapeutic				Information			
	Changing Futures (CATI)	Family Matters Mediate (CATI)	Mediation Now (CATI)	National Family Mediation (CATI)	Resolution (CATI)	Family Lives (CATI)	Tavistock Centre (CATI)	Pinnacle People (CATI)	Howells (CATI)	Sills & Betteridge (CATI)	OnePlusOne* (CAWI)	Relate* (CAWI)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes – total	23	32	15	32	46	42	[56]	[16]	34	37	40	[7]
Yes – no formal plans yet	16	18	13	21	38	32	[38]	[11]	29	28	n/a	n/a
Yes – already planning a formal court case	7	13	2	11	8	10	[19]	[5]	5	8	n/a	n/a
No	74	66	79	64	47	54	[34]	[79]	58	58	45	[79]
Don't know/refused	3	3	6	4	7	5	[9]	[5]	7	5	15	[14]
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>14</b>

\*Note: The CATI survey asked a more detailed sequence of questions than the CAWI survey. As such, it is not possible to specify whether plans to return to court were formal or informal for the CAWI projects.



Table H.7 Whether talked to other support services/organisations

	Changing Futures (CATI)		Family Matters Mediate (CATI)		Mediation Now (CATI)		National Family Mediation (CATI)		Resolution (CATI)		Therapeutic		Contact		Information	
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%	
CSA/CMS	30	37	29	31	29	15	25	16	25	25	25	16	25	25	n/a	n/a
Child Maintenance Options	7	18	15	10	21	5	19	5	13	13	5	13	13	13	n/a	n/a
Family Courts	9	40	15	45	26	22	28	11	17	24	11	17	24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cafcass	12	30	15	25	30	20	13	11	13	21	11	13	21	n/a	n/a	n/a
Solicitor	32	42	27	42	38	37	47	21	15	33	21	15	33	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mediation services	16	7	4	9	35	22	13	0	22	26	0	22	26	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	16	22	10	12	20	27	31	5	14	17	5	14	17	n/a	n/a	n/a
None of these	41	26	44	31	22	44	28	63	46	35	63	46	35	n/a	n/a	n/a
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Base</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>