



supporting families to support children



# What Scottish parents tell us

**FULL REPORT OF IPSOS MORI POLL**

**UNDERTAKEN FOR PAS 2008**

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# Contents

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Summary of findings	3
1. Introduction	6
2. Support and advice for parents	10
3. Relationship and financial support	19
4. Behaviour and discipline	23
5. Media Portrayal of parents	29
7. Future support for parents	31
Appendices	
Appendix A: Statistically reliability	36
Appendix B: Survey questionnaire	38

# Summary of findings

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Ipsos MORI Scotland was commissioned by Parenting Across Scotland to undertake a national survey of parents, focusing on their experiences of bringing up children. The survey was conducted by telephone between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2008 and 1,011 interviews were achieved.

## Support in bringing up children

Depending on the specific issue they are facing, parents mostly rely on health visitors, doctors and their own parents or relatives for information and advice on parenting issues. Those with older children also rely to some extent on their child's school.

Health visitors are seen as an important part of parent's support network and are well regarded by parents. A large majority of parents disagree that "*health visitors should only visit parents who are having problems with their child*" (91%) and that "*health visitors should only visit parents who have asked for their help*" (85%). Most (89%) also disagree that "*health visitors interfere too much*". Meanwhile, nine in 10 agree that they "*found the health visitor's advice reassuring*" and 76% agree they "*would have missed the help provided by the health visitor if [they] had not had it*".

Just over two-thirds (69%) of parents are unable to name *any* organisation that provides support and advice on parenting issues. In terms of responses that *are* given, ParentLine is the most commonly cited organisation (mentioned by 6% of all respondents) followed by The National Childbirth Trust (mentioned by 3%).

## Relationship and financial support

Around a quarter (26%) of respondents would rely on their parents or relatives for help if they were experiencing relationship difficulties with their partner and a similar proportion would rely on friends (21%). Considerably smaller proportions would rely on other sources of support, with around one in 10 mentioning each of professional counsellors (9%) and Relate Scotland (7%). Twelve per cent would not go *anywhere* for help with relationship difficulties.

Only a third of respondents can name *any* groups or organisations that provide support to parents who are having difficulty agreeing arrangements for their children following a separation. Around one in 10 mention each of Family Mediation Scotland (9%) and Relate Scotland (7%).

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of parents are finding it more difficult to afford their household bills than they were a year ago, with 31% saying they are finding it *a lot more difficult*. Asked where they would go for help if they could not pay bills, around a quarter (23%) say the Citizens Advice Bureau and a similar proportion say their parents or other relatives (22%) and their bank manager (22%). No other source is mentioned by more than 5% of respondents.

## Behaviour and discipline

The majority of parents appear to experience no major problems managing their child's behaviour. Almost all (97%) say they find it easy to praise good behaviour, while 71% say they find it easy to discipline their child appropriately and 64% are confident in their ability to deal with difficult behaviour.

The methods of discipline that parents most commonly use are praise for good behaviour (99% have used this at least sometimes in the last year), discussing issues calmly (92%) and giving rewards or treats for good behaviour (91%). A majority have also sought to discipline their child by shouting or yelling (71%), by taking away something their child values (55%) or by not paying their child any attention when he/she is throwing a tantrum (52%), but these approaches are used comparatively less frequently. These results are consistent with findings from the 2007 survey in which the same question was asked.

Around half of parents with children aged two to four years have used a 'naughty step' at least sometimes in the last year and 65% have done so at least once or twice. This finding points to the influence of television programmes such as "*Supernanny*" on parental behaviour.

The methods of discipline that parents regard as most *effective* are discussing issues calmly (55%) and stopping children from going out or taking away something they value (47%). The methods that are *least* commonly thought of as effective are using a 'naughty step' (8%), shouting or yelling (7%), threatening to smack (3%) and smacking (1%).

## Media portrayal of parents

Half of respondents say that the media is generally negative towards parents while only 10% feel it is positive, and 37% say it is neither positive nor negative.

Views are more divided on the question of how fair the media is towards parents. Around a third of parents (36%) consider the media to be unfair while 21% consider it to be fair. Again, a significant proportion (41%) have a neutral opinion, saying that the media is neither fair nor unfair towards parents.

Those who say that the media is unfair towards parents were asked how this makes them feel. Around a third say they are "*frustrated and angered by it*", while 23% say that they feel "*worried about whether they are doing the right thing as a parent*" and the same proportion say they "*aren't bothered by it*".

## Future support for parents

When respondents are asked what additional support they would *most* like to receive as parents, the most common responses are more financial support (mentioned by 19%), more or cheaper childcare (11%) and more leisure and recreational facilities for young people (6%).

Around half of respondents (47%) say that the Scottish Government has a poor understanding of the challenges and problems faced by parents while slightly fewer (44%) say that it understands these challenges well. The proportion giving a positive response is down nine percentage points since the 2007 survey. Reasons for this difference are unclear. It may be that the current economic downturn has led respondents to evaluate government more negatively in general. The fact that the survey included questions about how parents are managing financially may have served to compound this effect.

Parents who say that the Scottish Government has a poor understanding of parenting issues were asked why they feel this way. The most common responses are that the Government does not provide enough financial help or support to parents (24%), is out of touch and doesn't listen to parents (18%) and does not provide enough support in general for parents (13%).

# 1. Introduction

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## Background

In 2007 the Scottish Government launched the National Performance Framework which set out, among other things, its vision for children and young people. Part of that vision is a commitment to provide all children with the *best start in life* and encourage young people to develop into *successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens*<sup>1</sup>. These objectives form an integral part of the Government's overall purpose to promote economic growth in Scotland.

In many ways the success of these objectives depends on the contribution of parents to the development of their children. While all parents want the best for their children, previous research<sup>2</sup> has shown that many find parenting very challenging. Supporting parents is therefore an important investment to ensure that children and young people get the best start in life.

The future of family support services in Scotland is outlined in the *Getting it right for every child* document. Services are to be developed so that they are integrated across the public sector and are centred around the needs of children and families. The document urges service providers to work in partnership with families and, in particular, to listen to parents, as they are likely to have a clear understanding of their child's needs, of what works well and what doesn't; and be able to identify areas in which children require additional support<sup>3</sup>.

Additionally, the Scottish Government and COSLA's (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) *Early Years Framework* aims to deliver better outcomes for children and families in Scotland by investing in the early years of children's lives. In order to achieve this, the *Early Years Framework* proposes to build *parenting and family capacity pre- and post-birth* and to ensure that parents receive the best support possible so that they have the knowledge, capacity and resilience to give their children the best start in life<sup>4</sup>. Delivering the right support for parents will depend on knowing where they currently get help from, what services they value and what support parents need.

Against this backdrop, Parenting Across Scotland (PAS) commissioned Ipsos MORI Scotland to undertake a national survey of parents to identify their support needs, building on previous research conducted by Ipsos MORI for PAS in 2005 and 2007.

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2007) "A National Performance Framework", *Scottish Budget Spending Review*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

<sup>2</sup> See for example; Ipsos MORI (2005) *Family Life in Scotland*, Report for Parenting Across Scotland; ParentLine (2007) *Why Being a Parent isn't Easy*, Children 1st: Edinburgh

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *A Guide to Getting it Right for Every Child*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Early Years and Early Intervention: A joint Scottish Government and COSLA policy statement*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

Parenting Across Scotland is a multi-agency organisation financed by the Scottish Government with a remit to research the concerns and issues affecting parents and to identify gaps in the support available to parents. It does this by bringing together agencies that provide support to parents and families, sharing good practice and promoting a positive image of parenting.

## Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of the survey was to explore parents' experiences in relation to a range of issues, including:

- The types of support and advice they draw on when bringing up children
- Relationship and financial support
- Behaviour and discipline methods
- Opinions on the portrayal of parents in the media
- Future support parents would like to receive
- Perceptions of how well the Scottish Government understands the challenges and problems faced by parents

## Methodology

### Sampling

The survey sample was drawn from a database of people who have taken part in the 2007 or 2008 Scottish Household Survey (SHS)<sup>5</sup> and agreed to take part in further research. This is a highly effective way of drawing a sample as:

- Only 27% of households in Scotland contain dependent children, thus considerable time and resources were saved by targeting these appropriate households directly using the SHS database, as opposed to 'screening' for households containing children, for example, using a door-to-door survey approach.
- The SHS database includes full contact details for all those individuals included in it. This meant it was easy to get in touch with respondents, which in turn contributed to the overall efficiency of the survey process.
- The database also includes full demographic information for all those included in it. This obviated the need to collect all such

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<sup>5</sup> The Scottish Household Survey is a continuous survey commissioned by the Scottish Government. The survey is designed to provide accurate, up-to-date information about the characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of households and individuals in Scotland on a range of issues.

information again as part of the survey and thus kept the questionnaire length down.

The sample comprised a total of 2,301 parents with children aged nought to 16 years. A total of 1,011 interviews was achieved, representing a response rate of 44%.

## Survey method

The survey was conducted by telephone between 31<sup>st</sup> July and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2008. All interviews were undertaken by Ipsos MORI Telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The average interview length was just under 15 minutes.

## Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI in close consultation with staff at Parenting Across Scotland and with the input from its steering group. A copy of the questionnaire marked up with the survey results has been included in the appendices.

Although many families consist of more than one child, it was decided that some of the questions would be easier to answer, and the results more meaningful, if they focused on one child only. Therefore, parents with more than one child, were asked to think about just one of their children when answering these questions. A random child is selected as part of the SHS interview and it was this child upon whom parents were again asked to focus.

## Analysis

Computer tables were produced in order to facilitate sub-group analysis of the findings. For each question the results were analysed by a number of key variables, namely:

- gender of the random child used in the survey
- age of the random child used in the survey (2 years or younger, 3-4 years old, 5-11 years old, 12 years or older)
- gender of the respondent
- location (large urban areas, other urban, accessible small towns, remote small towns, accessible rural, remote rural)
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) (most deprived 20%, least deprived 20%)

## Presentation and interpretation of the data

It should be remembered at all times that the results in this report are only based on a sample of parents and not the entire parent population, so they are subject

to sampling tolerances, meaning that not all differences will be statistically significant. Throughout the report, differences between sub-groups are commented upon only where these are statistically significant. A guide to statistical reliability has been provided in the appendices.

Where percentages do not sum up to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories or multiple answers. Throughout the report, an asterisk (\*) denotes any value less than one half of a percent but more than nought and a hyphen (-) represents nought.

## 2. Support and advice for parents

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This section looks at the different sources of support and advice on which parents draw when bringing up their children. It considers the types of support they rely on both when their child is first born and as their child grows up. The section also looks at parents' use of, and attitudes towards, health visitors specifically.

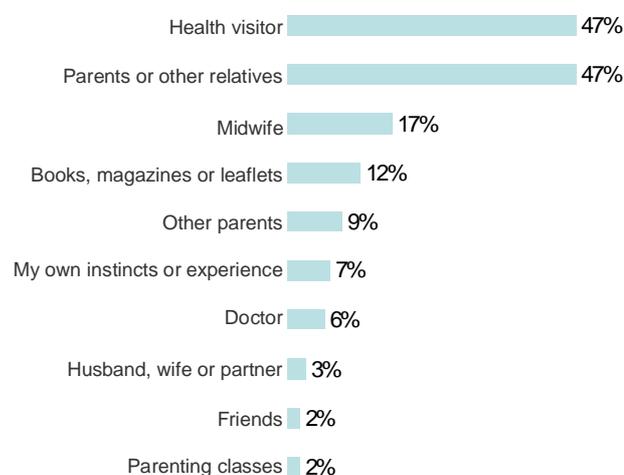
### Support when a child is first born

In order to identify the different sources of support parents rely on during the early years of their child's life, respondents were asked to think back to when their child was born and consider from where they obtained information and advice on a range of specific issues. Overall, the results show that parents rely on a network of support composed primarily of health visitors, doctors and their own parents or relatives.

Looking at the results in detail, respondents were first asked to state where they obtained information and advice about day to day issues such as **feeding, teething and sleeping**. Figure 2.1 presents the 10 most common responses. The two main sources of information are health visitors and parents or other relatives, each mentioned by almost half of respondents. Other sources of information are mentioned by significantly smaller proportions and include, midwives (17%), books, magazines or leaflets (12%) and other parents (9%).

**Figure 2.1: Sources of information and advice for day to day issues such as feeding, teething and sleeping – 10 most common responses**

Q. Thinking back to when your child was born, who or what would you say were your main sources of information and advice about day to day issues like feeding, teething and sleeping?



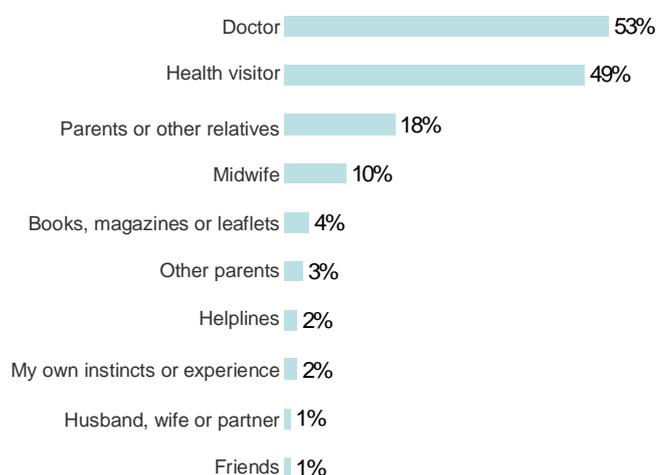
Base: All parents (1,011)

There are few sub-group differences in the findings but respondents in the least deprived areas of Scotland are more likely than those in the most deprived areas to consult their own parents or relatives (50% versus 38% respectively) and to seek advice from books, magazines or leaflets (18% versus 10% respectively).

Asked about their main sources of information and advice on concerns about their newborn child's **health**, just over half of respondents mention doctors and a slightly smaller proportion (49%) mention health visitors (figure 2.2). The next most common sources of information and advice are respondents' own parents or other relatives (18%) and midwives (10%).

**Figure 2.2: Sources of information and advice for concerns about their child's health – 10 most common responses**

*Q. Thinking back to when your child was born, who or what would you say were your main sources of information and advice about concerns over your child's health?*

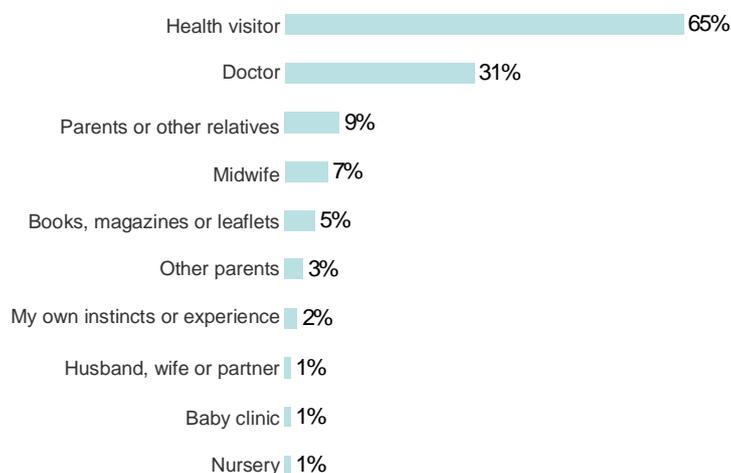


Base: All parents (1,011)

Respondents were also asked about their main sources of information and advice for concerns over their child's **development**. In this case, health visitors are by far the most popular source of support, mentioned by two-thirds of respondents, while doctors are mentioned by roughly half this proportion (31%) (figure 2.3). Smaller proportions of respondents mention their own parents or relatives (9%), midwives (7%) and books, magazines or leaflets (5%).

**Figure 2.3: Sources of information and advice for concerns over whether their child was developing properly – 10 most common responses**

Q. Thinking back to when your child was born, who or what would you say were your main sources of information and advice about concerns over whether they were developing properly?



Base: All parents (1,011)

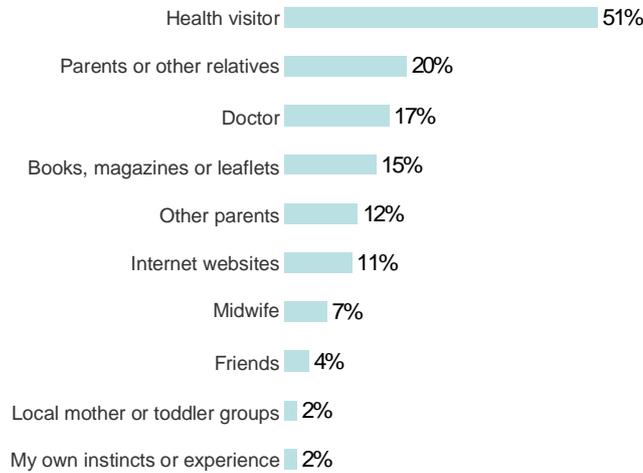
## Support for other specific types of problems

The survey also asked respondents to identify the sources of information and advice they would turn to in relation to a specific parenting problem they may encounter *now*. The problem respondents were asked about varied depending on the age of their child. Taken together the findings suggest that parents continue to rely mainly on health visitors, doctors and their own parents or relatives as their child grows up. While this finding holds true for parents of teenagers, this group also rely to some extent on support from their child's school.

Parents with children aged two years or younger were asked where they would go for advice or support if their child had ***sleeping problems*** (figure 2.4). Just over half say they would consult their health visitor while 20% would turn to their own parents or relatives. Slightly smaller proportions mention their doctor and books, magazines or leaflets (17% and 15% respectively). The results are similar to those from the 2007 survey, when the same question was asked.

**Figure 2.4: Sources of information and advice for sleeping problems – 10 most common responses**

*Q. Imagine you felt you needed advice or support with sleeping problems. Where might you go for information or advice about something like that?*

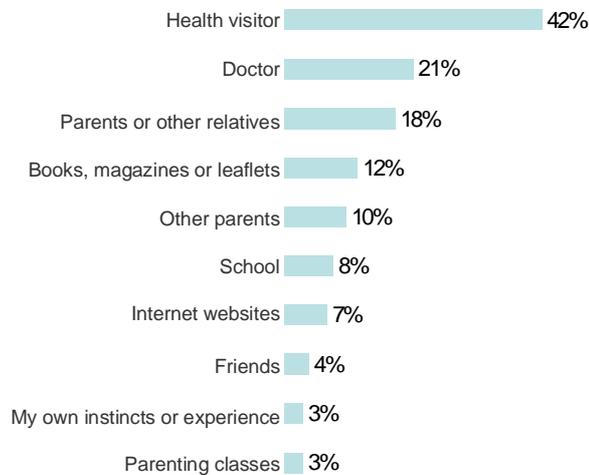


Base: All parents with children aged 2 or younger (135)

Parents with children aged three to four years were asked to consider where they would go for advice or support for ***behaviour and discipline problems***. As figure 2.5 shows, health visitors are again the most popular source of support, mentioned by roughly two-fifths of those asked. The next most common response is doctors (mentioned by 21%), followed by parents or other relatives (mentioned by 18%). Again, these findings are broadly consistent with those from the 2007 survey.

**Figure 2.5: Sources of information and advice for behaviour and discipline problems – 10 most common responses**

*Q. Imagine you felt you needed advice or support with behaviour and discipline problems. Where might you go for information or advice about something like that?*

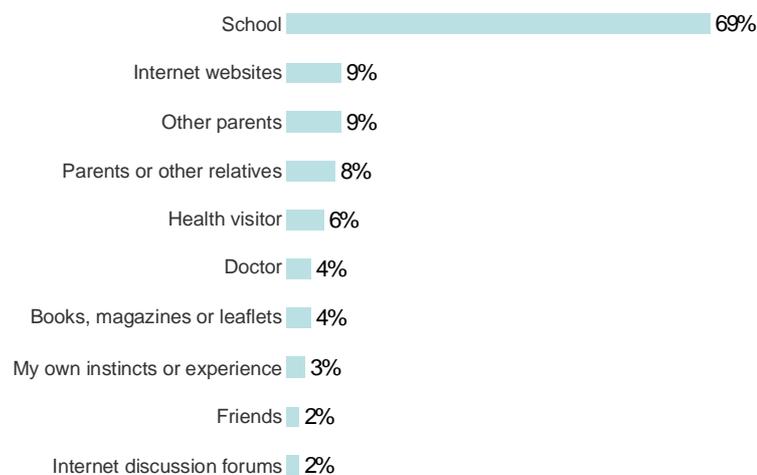


Base: All parents with children aged 3 to 4 (112)

Parents of children aged five to 11 years were asked where they would go for advice or support for problems their child might be having with other children, for example, bullying and making friends. As in 2007, most parents (69%) say they would turn to their child's school for advice (figure 2.6). Other sources mentioned include internet websites (9%), other parents (9%) and their own parents or relatives (8%).

**Figure 2.6: Sources of information and advice for problems with other children – 10 most common responses**

*Q. Imagine you felt you needed advice or support with problems your child might be having with other children for example bullying or making friends. Where might you go for information or advice about something like that?*

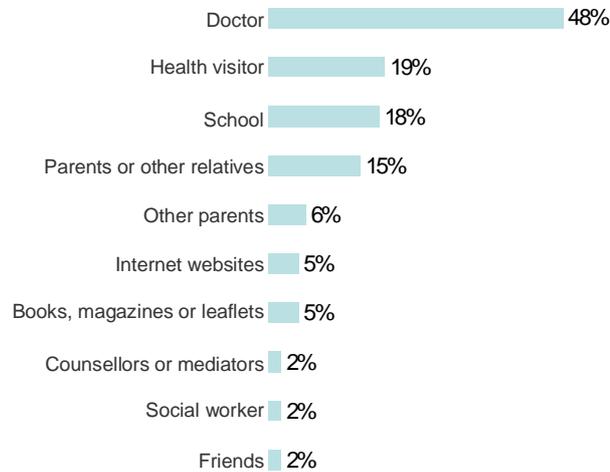


Base: All parents with children aged 5 to 11 (416)

Parents with children aged 12 or older were asked where they would go for advice or support relating to **behaviour problems** their child might have. As figure 2.7 shows, around half (48%) of respondents would consult their doctor about these types of problems while smaller proportions would consult health visitors (19%), their child's school (18%) or their own parents or relatives (15%).

**Figure 2.7: Sources of information and advice for behaviour problems – 10 most common responses**

Q. Imagine you felt you needed advice or support with behaviour problems. Where might you go for information or advice about something like that?

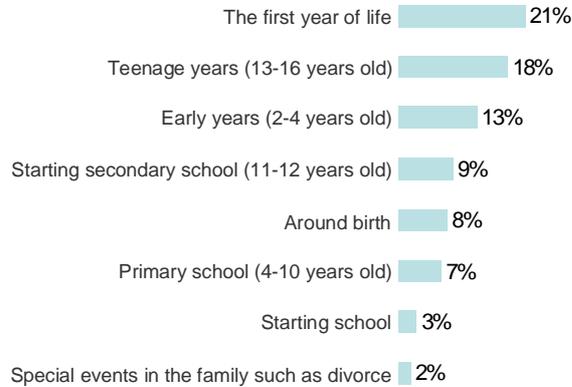


Base: All parents with children aged 12 or older (348)

Parents with children aged 12 or older, were also asked to identify at which stage of their child's life they feel they have needed *most* support or help with parenting issues. Views are fairly divided, with just over a fifth (21%) saying they needed most help during the first year of their child's life and a similar proportion saying during the teenage years (figure 2.8). A further 13% say they have needed most help during the early years of their child's life while less than one in 10 parents mention when their child started secondary school (9%), around birth (8%) and during the primary school years (7%). A significant proportion of parents (16%) say they have not required any parental support or help.

**Figure 2.8: Stages of childhood at which parents have needed most support or help**

Q. Thinking about when your child was growing up, which stage of their life do you feel you've needed most support or help on parenting issues?



Base: All parents with children aged 12 or older (348)

## Attitudes towards health visitors

The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Early Years Framework*<sup>6</sup> proposes to provide parents with additional support during the first few years of their child's life. As illustrated above and in previous research<sup>7</sup>, health visitors are an important source of support during these years, providing a universal service to all parents and acting as a gateway to other support services where necessary. However, the *Review of Nursing in the Community*<sup>8</sup> proposes a generic community health nurse model which will replace the health visitor specialist role. Given this situation, the survey explored perceptions of health visitors in more detail. Parents were presented with a list of attitudinal statements relating to health visitors and asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each<sup>9</sup>. The results are summarised in figure 2.9 below.

Taken together, the findings suggest that health visitors are seen as an important part of parents' support network and are well regarded by parents. Thus the majority of respondents disagree that "health visitors should only visit parents who are having problems with their child" and that "health visitors should only visit parents who have asked for their help" (92% and 85% respectively). A strong majority (89%) similarly disagree that "health visitors interfere too much".

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Early Years and Early Intervention: A joint Scottish Government and COSLA policy statement*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

<sup>7</sup> See for example; Ipsos MORI (2007) *What do we Know about Families in Scotland*, Parenting Across Scotland: Edinburgh; Scottish Government (2008) *Growing up in Scotland: Year 2*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

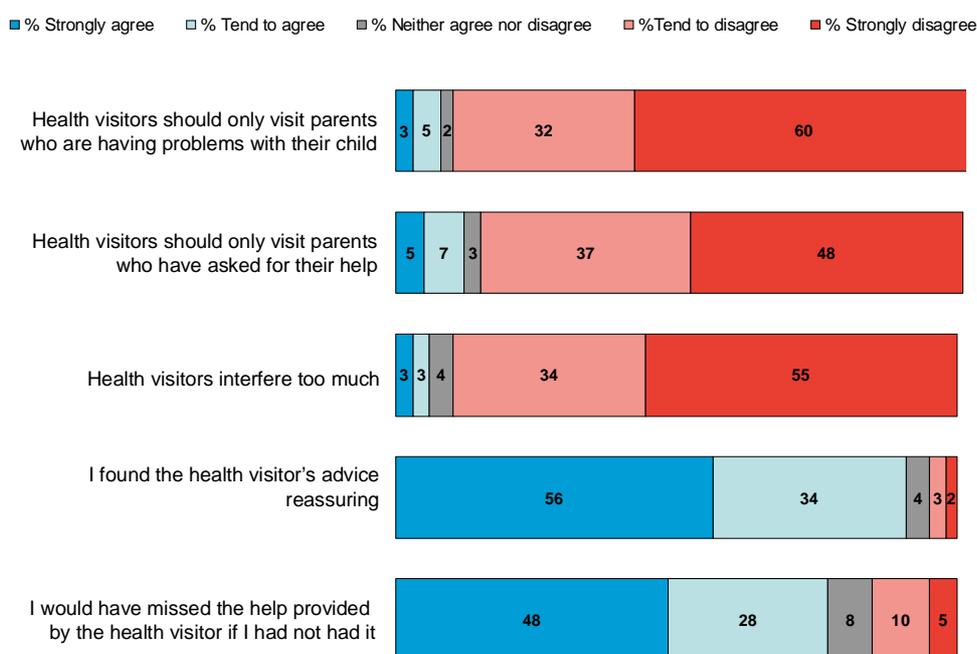
<sup>8</sup> Scottish Executive (2006) *Review of Nursing in the Community*, Scottish Executive: Edinburgh

<sup>9</sup> This question was only asked of respondents who had contact with a health visitor during the first year of their child's life (944 parents).

At the same time, nine in 10 agree that they “found the health visitor’s advice reassuring” and 76% agree that they “would have missed the help provided by the health visitor if [they] had not had it”.

**Figure 2.9: Attitudes towards health visitors**

Q. I’d now like you to focus on your experiences of health visitors. I am going to read out some statements and I’d like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each?



Base: All parents who have had contact with a health visitor (944)

The only notable sub-group difference in the findings is that parents in the most deprived areas are more likely than those in the least deprived areas to agree strongly with the statement “health visitors interfere too much” (6% versus 1% respectively). The lack of any further differences in the results reinforces the value parents place on health visitors, irrespective of their personal circumstances.

## Awareness of organisations that provide parental support and advice

In addition to support provided by health visitors and other agencies, information and advice for parents is also available from a range of voluntary organisations. When asked whether they can name any such organisations, almost seven in 10 respondents (69%) are unable to do so. In terms of responses that are given, ParentLine is the top answer, mentioned by 6% of all respondents, followed by The National Childbirth Trust, mentioned by 3%. The next most commonly cited organisations are Homestart and ChildLine, each mentioned by just 2% (table 2.1). Similar proportions mention public sector bodies – social services, the NHS and schools – in response to this question.

**Table 2.1: Awareness of organisations proving support to parents – 10 most common responses**

	<b>% who mention each organisation</b>
<i>Base: All parents (1,011)</i>	
ParentLine	6
The National Childbirth Trust	3
Social Services	2
NHS	2
Homestart	2
ChildLine	2
Schools	2
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	1
Mumsnet	1
Gingerbread	1

# 3. Relationship and financial support

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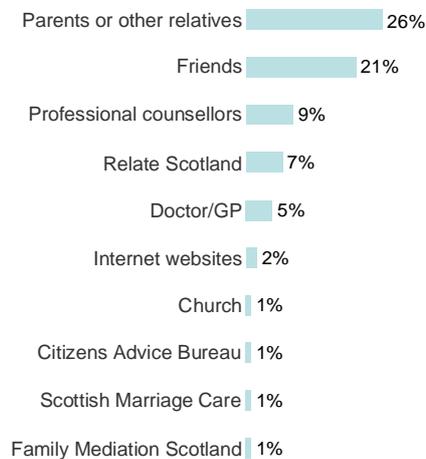
As well as considering the types of support on which parents draw in bringing up their children, the survey also included questions about both relationship and financial support for parents.

## Relationship support

In terms of relationship support, respondents were first asked where they would go for help if they were having difficulties with their partner<sup>10</sup>. As figure 3.1 shows, just over a quarter say they would discuss the issue with their parents or other relatives while a slightly smaller proportion say they would do so with friends. The next most commonly mentioned sources of help are professional counsellors and Relate Scotland, mentioned by 9% and 7% respectively. Twelve per cent of parents say they would not go *anywhere* for help.

**Figure 3.1: Sources of help with relationship difficulties – 10 most common responses**

*Q. If you were having relationship difficulties with your partner, where if anywhere, would you go for help?*



Base: All parents who live with a partner (800)

Women are more likely than men to say they would discuss their relationship difficulties with friends (24% versus 15%), Relate Scotland (9% and 4%) or a GP (6% versus 2%).

When relationship problems between parents are so serious as to result in a separation, those parents often have difficulties agreeing arrangements for their

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<sup>10</sup> This question was only asked of respondents who live with a partner (800 respondents).

children. Respondents were asked whether they are aware of any organisations that parents could go to for help under such circumstances. Only around a third are able to name *any* source of help and no single source is mentioned by more than 9% of respondents. As table 3.1 illustrates, the most common responses of those given include Family Mediation Scotland, Relate Scotland, lawyers and social workers.

**Table 3.1: Sources of help for estranged parents experiencing difficulties agreeing arrangements for their children**

	% mentioning each organisation
<i>Base: All parents (1,011)</i>	
Family Mediation Scotland	9
Relate Scotland	7
Lawyer	6
Social worker	4
Citizens Advice Bureau	3
Gingerbread	2
Child support agency	1
Counselling service	1
Marriage Guidance	1
Doctor	1
ParentLine	1

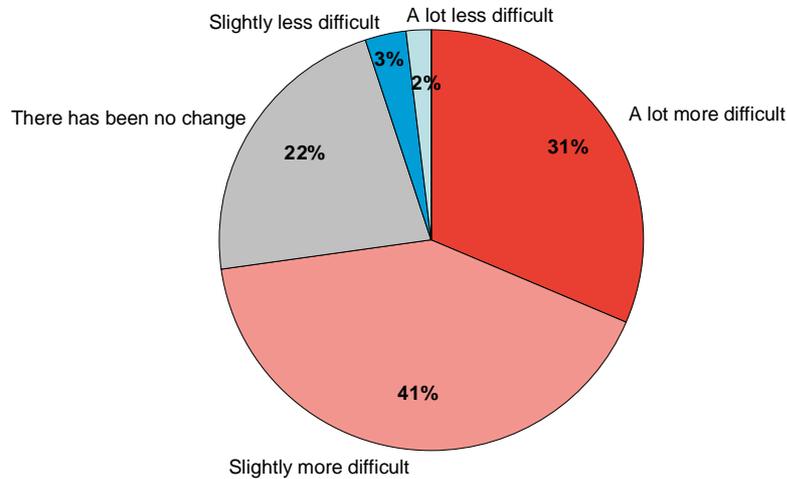
Women are twice as likely as men to give the top response, Family Mediation Scotland (11% versus 6%).

## Financial support

In respect to financial support, parents were first asked whether they are currently finding it more or less difficult to pay their household bills than they did a year ago. Reflecting the current economic climate, almost three-quarters say they are finding it more difficult, with 31% saying *a lot* more difficult. Meanwhile around a quarter say there has been no change and just 6% say they are finding it less difficult to pay their bills (figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2: Ease of affording household bills, compared with last year**

*Q. First I'd like you to think about the bills your household has to pay, everything from mortgage/rent, council tax, electricity to TV licence and landlines. Compared to this time last year, would you say your household finds it more or less difficult to afford these bills, or has there been no change?*



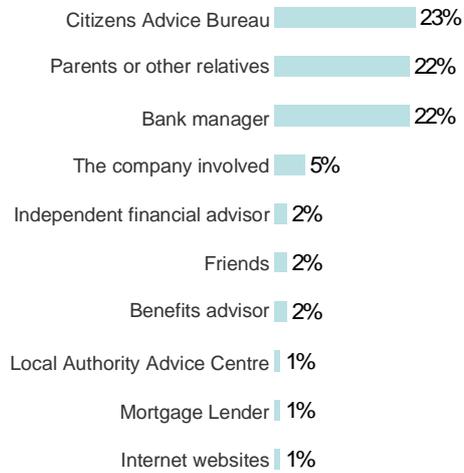
Base: All parents (1,011)

Significantly, there are no sub-group differences in the findings suggesting that some degree of financial pressures is being experienced by parents across the board, not just among those living in more deprived areas.

Asked where they would go for help if they were struggling to pay their bills, around a quarter of respondents mention the Citizens Advice Bureau while a similar proportion mention each of their own parents or relatives and their bank manager. No other source of help is mentioned by more than 5% of respondents (figure 3.3).

### Figure 3.3: Sources of support for financial difficulties – 10 most common responses

*Q. If your household was struggling to pay these bills, where, if anywhere, would you go for help?*



Base: All parents (1,011)

# 4. Behaviour and discipline

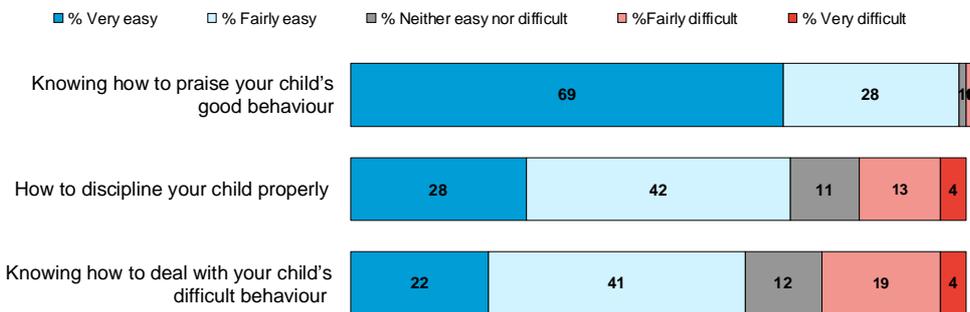
This section considers how easy or difficult parents find it to manage their children’s behaviour. It also looks at the main methods they use to discipline their children and the perceived effectiveness of these methods.

## Managing behaviour

The majority of parents appear to experience no major problems in terms of managing their child’s behaviour. As figure 4.1 shows, 97% say they find it easy to praise good behaviour, 71% find it easy to discipline their child appropriately and 64% feel confident that they are able to deal with difficult behaviour. While these results are positive, it is important to note the significant proportions of parents who *do* experience some problems; around a quarter say they find it hard to deal with difficult behaviour and 18% say they have trouble disciplining their child.

**Figure 4.1: Attitudes towards managing children’s behaviour**

*Q. Now, on a different subject, I'd like you to think about your child's overall behaviour. I am going to read out a list of things that some parents say they find difficult. For each one, please tell me how easy or difficult you find it to deal with your child.*



Base: All parents with children aged 2 or over (937)

There is little sub-group variation in the findings, although parents with children aged five to 11 years are consistently among those least likely to say they find it difficult to manage their child’s behaviour.

## Discipline methods

As in the 2007 survey, parents were presented with a list of approaches to disciplining children and asked how often they have used each of these with their own child in the past year. The results are presented in table 4.1 below.

Focusing on the proportion of people who say they have used each approach *at least sometimes*, the most common methods are praise for good behaviour (99%), discussing issues calmly (92%) and giving rewards or treats for good behaviour (91%). A majority of respondents have also sought to discipline their child by

shouting or yelling (71%), by taking away something their child values (55%) or by not paying their child any attention when he/she is throwing a tantrum (52%), but these approaches are used comparatively less frequently. These results are very much in line with the findings from the 2007 survey.

The item 'used a naughty step' was added to the question for the first time in the 2008 survey to gauge the influence of television programmes on parental behaviour. The 'naughty step' is one of the main approaches advocated in the TV series "*Supernanny*" which aims to provide guidance to parents on how best to deal with difficult children. As the approach is only really suitable for younger children, only respondents with children aged two to four years were asked whether they have used a 'naughty step' in the last year. Around half of this group say they have used a 'naughty step' at least sometimes in the last year and 65% say they have done so at least once or twice. These findings are consistent with recently published results from the *Growing Up in Scotland* study<sup>11</sup> (in which 65% of parents of children aged around four years said they had ever used a naughty step) and suggest that television is indeed a key source of help for a significant proportion of parents<sup>12</sup>.

Turning to the *least* commonly used forms of discipline, around one in five parents have threatened to smack their child at least sometimes in the last year and 5% have actually done so. Again, these results are consistent with findings from the 2007 survey.

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<sup>11</sup> Scottish Government (2008) *Growing Up in Scotland: Year 2*, Scottish Government: Edinburgh

<sup>12</sup> It is not possible to draw other comparisons with the *Growing Up in Scotland* study as the oldest age cohort of children in that study are around four years old. In contrast the present study focuses on children aged 0 to 16 years.

**Table 4.1: Frequency with which parents have used different forms of discipline in the past year**

	Very often	Fairly Often	Some-times	Once or twice	Not in the past year	Never
<i>Base: All parents with children aged two or over (937)</i>	%	%	%	%	%	%
Discussed an issue calmly with your child and explained why something was wrong	37	42	13	7	1	1
Shouted or yelled at your child	9	28	33	21	4	5
Stopped your child from going out or taken away something they value	7	20	28	26	7	13
Threatened to smack your child but not actually done it	3	6	13	15	16	46
Smacked your child	*	1	4	15	20	60
Praised your child when they did something good	68	28	3	*	-	-
Given your child a reward or treat for good behaviour	30	44	17	5	2	2
Not paid your child any attention when they are throwing a tantrum	10	22	20	13	19	16
Used a 'naughty step'*	13	21	19	12	2	33

\* This item was asked only of parents with children aged two to four years (173 parents)

As in 2007, women are more likely than men to have shouted or yelled at their child (73% have done so at least sometimes in the last year compared with 65% of men). In part, this may reflect the fact that women tend to be the main carer and therefore spend more time with their children.

There is further variation by the gender of the *child* – parents of boys are more likely than those with girls to have stopped their child from going out or taken away something they value (58% versus 51% respectively), or used a naughty step (60% versus 45% respectively).

As table 4.2 illustrates, area based differences are also apparent. Parents in the most deprived areas are more likely than those in the least deprived areas to have:

- stopped their child from going out or taken away something they value
- threatened to smack their child

- given rewards or treats for good behaviour
- ignored their child when he/she has been having a tantrum.

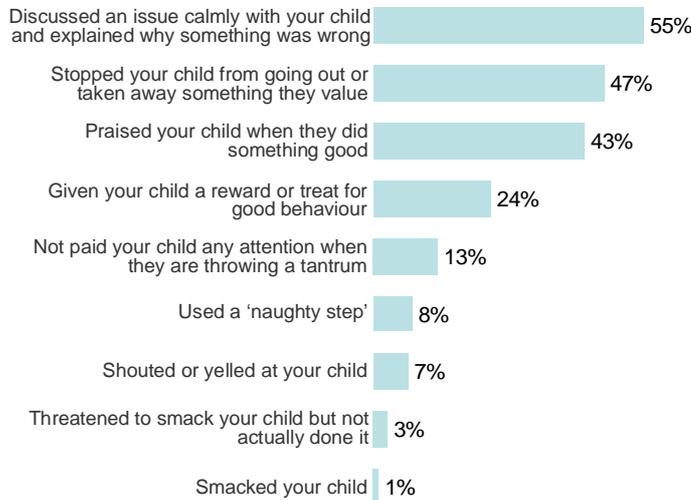
**Table 4.2: Frequency with which parents have used different forms of discipline in the past year by SIMD**

	Most deprived (137)	Least deprived (217)
	% who have done each at least sometimes	
Discussed an issue calmly with your child and explained why something was wrong	91	90
Shouted or yelled at your child	66	73
Stopped your child from going out or taken away something they value	57	48
Threatened to smack your child but not actually done it	34	17
Smacked your child	7	4
Praised your child when they did something good	99	99
Given your child a reward or treat for good behaviour	96	89
Not paid your child any attention when they are throwing a tantrum	59	48
Used a naughty step	44	56

In the 2008 survey, parents were also asked about the *effectiveness* of the different methods of discipline that they have used. As figure 4.2 shows, the methods that they regard as most effective are discussing issues calmly and stopping children from going out or taking away something they value. Using a naughty step, shouting or yelling, threatening to smack, and actually smacking are less commonly regarded as effective.

## Figure 4.2: Perceived effectiveness of discipline methods

Q. Thinking about all the things you've just said you have done with your child, generally speaking, which two or three would you say have had the most effect on your child's behaviour?



Base: All parents who used these discipline methods (893)

As might be expected, parents of children aged five and over are more likely than those with younger children to say that discussing issues calmly and stopping their child going out or taking away something they value are among the most effective methods of discipline they have used.

## Information and support

One of the aims of Parenting Across Scotland is to help ensure that parents have access to the information and support they need to deal with challenges they face as parents, including how to manage their child's behaviour. Asked how they would most like to receive such information, almost half (45%) of parents say via an internet website while around a third (31%) say from booklets and leaflets. Smaller proportions would prefer to receive the information via a telephone helpline and CDs or DVDs (12% and 9% respectively).

As table 4.3 shows, parents in the least deprived areas of Scotland are more likely than average to favour an internet website, while those in the most deprived areas are more likely than average to favour CDs and DVDs.

**Table 4.3: Preferred format of information on managing children’s behaviour by SIMD**

	Most deprived (137) %	Least deprived (217) %
An internet website	38	50
Booklets and leaflets	31	29
Telephone helpline	16	11
CDs and DVDs	14	7
Don’t know	1	3

# 5. Media portrayal of parents

This section examines respondents' views on the way in which parents are portrayed in the media. It begins by looking at whether they feel media coverage is generally positive or negative towards parents and whether it is fair or unfair. The section also considers the impact media coverage has on the way they feel as parents.

Respondents were asked to reflect on the various news stories about children and young people they have read or watched and consider whether such stories are generally positive or negative towards parents. As figure 5.1 (below) shows, half feel that the media is generally negative towards parents while only 10% think that it is positive. A further 37% of respondents have a neutral opinion, saying it is neither positive nor negative.

The proportion who feel that the media is *negative* towards parents gradually increases with the age of their child, from 39% of those with children aged two years or younger to 54% of those with children aged 12 years or older.

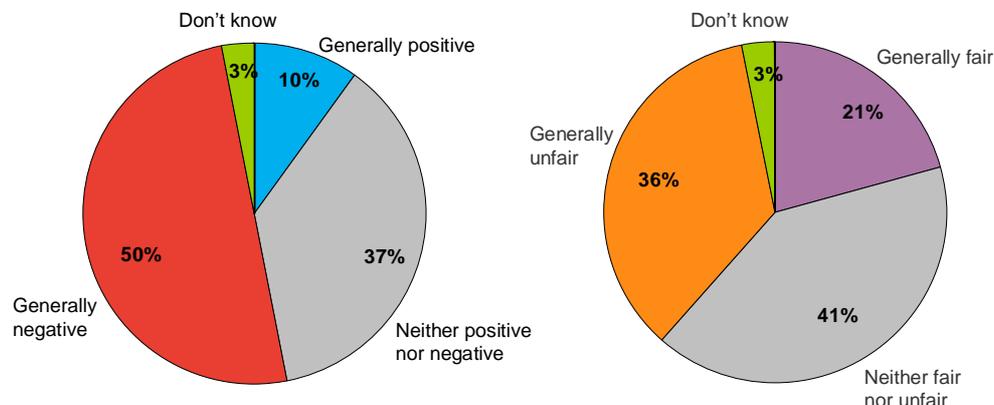
When asked how *fair* media coverage of parents is, a significant proportion of parents (41%) have a neutral opinion. However, just over a third consider the coverage to be unfair while 21% feel that it is fair (figure 5.1).

Again, respondents with older children (aged 12 years or older) are more likely than those with children aged two years or younger to feel that the media is generally *unfair* towards parents (41% versus 27% respectively).

**Figure 5.1: Views on the image of parents portrayed in the media**

Q. When you watch or read news stories in the media about children and young people, how positive or negative, do you think the media is towards parents?

Q. Still thinking about the various stories in the media about children and young people, how fair or unfair do you think the media is towards parents?



Base: All parents (1,011)

All those who feel that media coverage of parents is unfair were asked to consider what impact this has on them as a parent. Around a third (34%) say they feel “*frustrated and angered by it*” and 23% say they are “*worried about whether they are doing the right thing as a parent*”. At the same time, a further 23% say they “*aren’t bothered by it*”.

The only notable sub-group difference is that parents of boys are almost twice as likely as those with girls to say that they are “*worried about whether they are doing the right thing as a parent*” (30% versus 16% respectively).

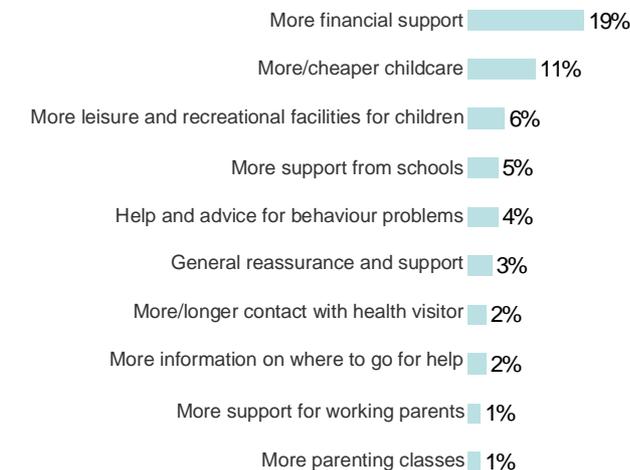
# 7. Future support for parents

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At the close of the survey respondents were asked to reflect on all of the issues raised by the questionnaire and consider what additional support, if any, they would *most* like to receive as parents. A very broad range of responses were given. As figure 7.1 shows, a relatively large proportion of these focus on a need for more financial support for parents – ranging from increased child benefit to tax incentives and breaks. The next most common responses relate to a need for more or cheaper childcare and more leisure and recreations facilities for young people.

**Figure 7.1: Support parents would most like to receive in the future**

*Q. Finally, taking into account everything we've just talked about what additional support, if any, would you most like to receive as a parent?*

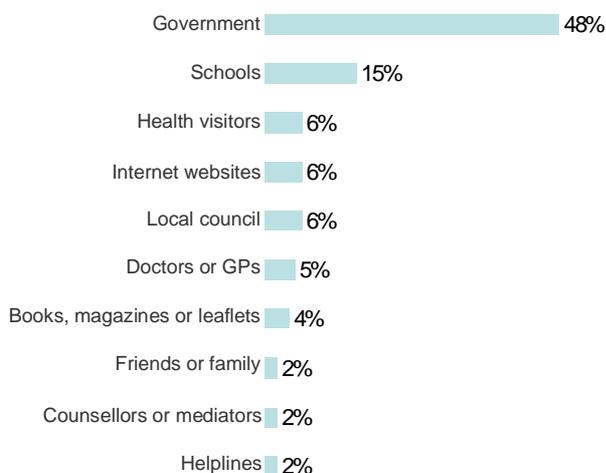


Base: All parents (1,011)

Asked *from where* they would like to receive this support almost half of respondents say from government (reflecting the emphasis on financial support), while 15% say from schools. The next most common responses are health visitors, internet websites and local councils, all mentioned by 6% (figure 7.2).

**Figure 7.2: Preferred sources of future support – top 10 responses**

*Q. And where would you like to get this additional support from?*



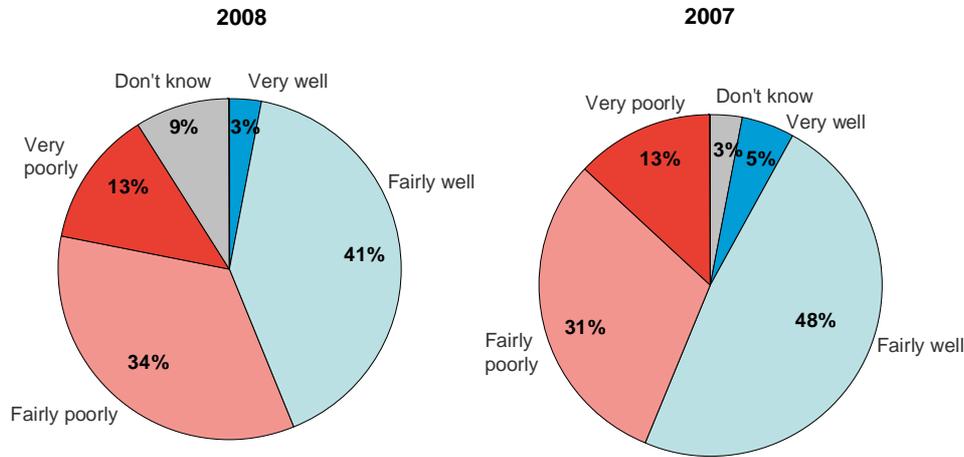
Base: All parents who would like additional support (649)

The emphasis on government support raises some important challenges moving forward. When respondents are asked how well they feel the Scottish Government understands the challenges and problems facing parents, opinions are divided. As figure 7.3 shows, just under half describe the Government's understanding as fairly or very poor, while 44% say that it understands the challenges fairly or very well.

It is notable that the proportion giving a positive response is down by nine percentage points since the 2007 survey, in which the same question was put to respondents. Reasons for this difference are unclear. It may be that the current economic downturn has led respondents to evaluate government more negatively in general. The fact that the survey included questions about how parents are managing financially may have served to compound this effect.

**Figure 7.3: Scottish Government’s understanding of the challenges and problems faced by parents**

*Q. How well do you think the Scottish Government understands the challenges and problems faced by parents bringing up their children?*



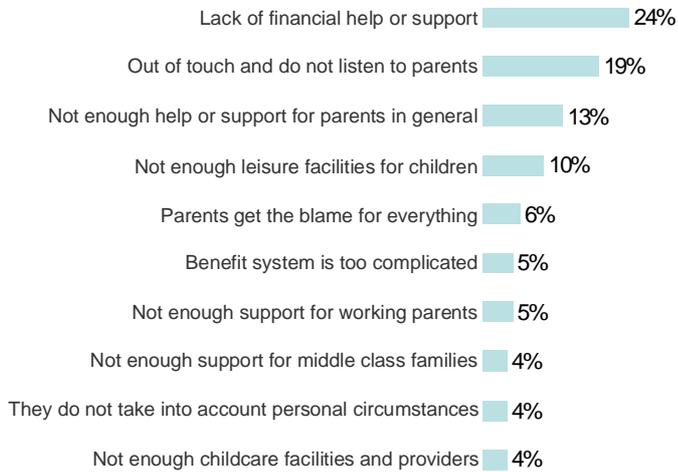
Base: All parents (2008:1,011, 2007:1,250)

As in 2007, perceptions are more negative among those who live in the most deprived areas of the country than among those living in the least deprived areas – 57% of the former group say the government has a poor understanding of the challenges faced by parents compared with 40% of the latter group.

All of those who feel that the Scottish Government has a poor understanding of the challenges faced by parents were further asked (unprompted) why they felt this way. A wide range of reasons were given and the 10 most common responses are presented in figure 7.4 below. Reinforcing findings reported above, a lack of financial help and support for parents is the most common response, mentioned by just under a quarter of parents (with 9% mentioning help and support with childcare costs specifically). This is followed by a feeling that the Government is out of touch and does not listen to parents and that it does not do enough to help or support parents in general.

**Figure 7.4: Reasons why Scottish Government is seen to have a poor understanding of the challenges and problems faced by parents – top 10 responses**

*Q. Why do you say that the Scottish Government has a poor understanding of the challenges and problems faced by parents bringing up their children?*



Base: All parents who say that the government has a poor understanding (477)

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# Appendices

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# Appendix A: Statistical reliability

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The respondents to the questionnaire are only a sample of the total ‘population’. We cannot therefore be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the ‘true’ values). However, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the ‘true’ values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the ‘true’ value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the ‘95% confidence interval’, based on a random sample.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
200 interviews	4	6	7
300 interviews	3	5	6
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
1,011 interviews	2	3	3

*Source: Ipsos MORI*

For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1,011 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than three percentage points, plus or minus from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures. However, while it is true to conclude that the “actual” result (95 times out of 100) lies anywhere between 47% and 53%, it is proportionately more likely to be closer to the centre of this band (i.e. at 50%).

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of a sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Size of samples compared	Differences required for significance at or near percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 and 100	7	13	14
200 and 200	7	10	11
200 and 400	5	8	8
200 and 500	5	7	8
500 and 500	4	6	6
700 and 300	4	6	7
700 and 400	4	6	6
1,000 and 100	6	9	10

*Source: Ipsos MORI*

# Appendix B: Survey questionnaire

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## INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. May I speak to [insert named lead from sample]?

My name is ..... from Ipsos MORI, the independent research organisation. You may remember that you took part in the Scottish Household Survey and agreed to take part in follow-up research. We are phoning to see if you would be willing to take part in a short survey about being a parent. The survey is for Parenting Across Scotland who are keen on making things better for parents in Scotland. We'd be grateful if you could spare a few moments to share your experiences with us. The interview will take 15 minutes at most.

I'd like to assure you that all the information we collect will be kept in the strictest confidence, and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals or address in the results.

Would you be interested in taking part?

YES – CONTINUE

NO - CLOSE

ASK ALL

Q1 When you completed the Scottish Household Survey, you mentioned that [insert child's name] lived with you. Can I just check that they are still living with you?

SINGLE CODE

	%
Yes	100
No	-
Refused	-

IF NO OR REFUSED AT Q1 (CODES 2 OR 3) – CLOSE

FOR RESPONDENTS WITH MORE THAN ONE CHILD READ:

For the following questions, I would like you to think about [insert random child's name] when you are answering.

FOR REST OF QUESTIONNAIRE ONLY USE THIS CHILD'S NAME

Q2a INTERVIEWER PLEASE CODE GENDER OF CHILD  
IF UNSURE PLEASE CONFIRM WITH RESPONDENT

	%
Male	51
Female	49
Refused/Don't know	-

Q2b **How old is** [insert child's name] **now?**

WRITE IN

	%
Less than 1 year	2
1 year old	5
2 years old	6
3 – 4 years old	11
5-11 years old	41
12-16 years old	34
Over 16 years old	-
Refused/Don't know	-

IF REFUSED/DON'T KNOW OR OVER 16 CLOSE

### SUPPORT AND ADVICE

To begin, I'd like to ask you a few questions about how people learn about being a parent – where they get help, information and support.

ASK ALL

Q3 **Thinking back to when** [insert child's name] **was born, who or what would you say were your main sources of information and advice about things like ....**

**A. Day to day issues like feeding, teething and sleeping**

**B. Concerns about their health**

**C. Whether they were developing properly**

DO NOT PROMPT

MULTICODE OK

	%	%	%
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
Health visitor	47	49	65
Doctor	6	53	31
Parents and other relatives	47	18	9
Midwife	17	10	7
Books, magazines or leaflets	12	4	5
Other parents	9	3	3
My own instincts or experience	7	2	2
Husband/wife/partner	3	1	1
Internet websites	1	1	1
Helplines	-	2	*
Parenting classes	2	*	*
Hospital staff	1	1	*
Local mother and toddler groups	1	*	1
Nurse	*	1	*
Baby clinic	*	*	1
Nursery	*	-	1
National childbirth trust	1	-	-
Internet discussion forums (e.g. mum's net)	*	*	-
Television	*	*	*
Other WRITE IN	1	1	1
Not applicable WRITE IN	1	*	1
Don't know	4	2	3

ASK ALL

- Q4 **Imagine you felt you needed advice or support with ...**  
**4.1. IF CHILD IS LESS THAN 2: sleeping problems**  
**4.2. IF CHILD IS AGED 3 – 4: behaviour and discipline problems**  
**4.3. IF CHILD IS AGED 5 -11: problems your child might be having with other children e.g. bullying, making friends**  
**4.4 IF CHILD IS AGED 12+: behaviour problems**  
**Where might you go for information and advice about something like that?**  
 DO NOT PROMPT  
 MULTICODE OK

	%	%	%	%
	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Health visitor	51	42	6	19
Doctor	17	21	4	48
Parents and other relatives	20	18	8	15
Books, magazines or leaflets	15	12	4	5
Schools	-	8	69	19
Other parents	12	10	9	6
Internet websites	11	7	9	5
Friends	4	4	2	2
My own instincts or experience	2	3	3	1
Local mother or toddler groups	2	2	1	1
Husband/wife/partner	1	1	1	2
Midwife	7	1	*	1
Internet discussion forums (e.g. mum's net)	2	1	2	*
Parenting classes	1	3	*	1
Counsellors/mediators	2	-	*	2
Library	1	-	*	-
Social worker	-	-	*	2
Police	-	-	1	1
Helplines	1	-	*	*
Television	-	1	-	-
Education department	-	-	1	-
Would talk to my child about it	-	-	1	-
Citizens Advice Bureau	-	-	*	-
Other WRITE IN	7	12	9	13
Don't know	7	8	6	11

ASK ALL

Q5 **Can you name any organisations that provide support and advice to parents?**

DO NOT PROMPT  
MULTICODE OK

	%
ParentLine	6
The National Childbirth Trust	3
NHS	2
Homestart	2
ChildLine	3
School/educational establishment	2
Social services	2
Children 1 <sup>st</sup>	1
Surestart	1
Gingerbread	1
Breast feeding support	1
Mumsnet	1
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	1
Health visitor	1
Barnados	1
Parenting classes	1
Parent and toddler groups	1
One Parent Families Scotland	1
National Autistic Society	1
Parenting Across Scotland	*
Aberlour	*
Capability Scotland	-
Family Mediation Scotland	-
National Children's Home (NCH)	*
OKtoAsk	-
Relate Scotland	*
Scottish Adoption Association	-
Scottish Marriage Care	-
Stepfamily Scotland	-
Other WRITE IN	6
Don't know	69

ASK ALL

Q6 **Moving on, did you have any contact with a health visitor in the first year of [insert child's name]'s life?**

SINGLE CODE

	%
Yes	93
No	6
Don't know/Can't remember	1

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q6 (CODE 1)  
OTHERS GO TO Q8

Q7 I'd now like you to focus on your experiences of health visitors. I am going to read out some statements people have made about health visitors and I'd like you to tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each.

READ OUT  
SINGLE CODE  
RANDOMISE ORDER

	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Refused %	Don't know/Can't remember %
Health visitors should only visit parents who have asked for their help	5	7	3	37	48	-	*
I found the health visitor's advice reassuring	56	34	4	3	2	-	*
Health visitors should only visit parents who are having problems with their child	3	5	2	32	60	-	*
Health visitors interfere too much	3	3	4	34	55	-	1
I would have missed the help provided by the health visitor if I had not had it.	48	28	8	10	5	-	1

ASK ALL WITH CHILDREN OVER 12  
OTHERS GO TO Q9

Q8 Thinking about [insert child's name] growing up, which stage of his/her life do you feel you've needed most support or help on parenting issues?  
SINGLE CODE

	%
The first year of life	21
Teenage years (13-16 years old)	18
Early years (2-4 years old)	13
Starting secondary school (11-12 years old)	9
Around birth	8
Primary school (4-10 years old)	7
Starting school	3
When there are special events in a family such as divorce/relationship breakdown	2
Have not needed support or help with parenting problems	16
Don't know	3

## BEHAVIOUR

ASK ALL WITH CHILDREN OVER 2

Q9 **No, on a different subject I'd like you to think about [insert child's name]'s overall behaviour. I am now going to read out a list of things that some parents say they find difficult. For each one, please tell me how easy or difficult you find it to deal with [insert child's name].**

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

RANDOMISE ORDER

	Very easy %	Fairly easy %	Neither easy nor difficult %	Fairly difficult %	Very difficult %	Don't know %	Refused %
<b>Knowing how to deal with [insert child's name]'s difficult behaviour</b>	22	41	12	19	4	1	*
<b>How to discipline [insert child's name] appropriately</b>	28	42	11	13	4	*	*
<b>Knowing how to praise [insert child's name]'s good behaviour</b>	69	28	1	1	*	*	-

All children misbehave sometimes. I'd now like to ask you some questions about different ways of teaching [insert children's name] about what is right and wrong.

Q10 First, I'm going to read out some things that parents do with their children and I'd like you to tell me how often you have done each with [insert child's name] IN THE PAST YEAR.

READ OUT

RANDOMISE ORDER

	Very often %	Fairly often %	Sometimes %	Once or twice %	Not in the past %	Never %	Refused %
<b>Discussed an issue calmly with [insert child's name] and explained why something was wrong</b>	37	42	13	7	1	1	-
<b>Shouted or yelled at [insert child's name]</b>	9	28	33	21	4	5	-
<b>Stopped [insert child's name] from going out or taken away something they value</b>	7	20	28	26	7	13	-
<b>Threatened to smack [insert child's name] but not actually done it</b>	3	6	13	15	16	46	-
<b>Smacked [insert child's name]</b>	*	1	4	15	20	60	-
<b>Praised [insert child's name] when they did something good</b>	68	28	3	*	-	-	-
<b>Given [insert child's name] a reward or treat for good behaviour</b>	30	44	17	5	2	2	-
<b>Not paid [insert child's name] any attention when they are throwing a tantrum</b>	10	22	20	13	19	16	*
<b>Used a "naughty step"</b>	13	21	19	12	2	33	-

ASK FOR EACH HAVE USED (CODES 1-4) AT Q10  
OTHERS GO TO Q12

Q11 **Thinking about all the things you've just said you have done with [insert child's name], generally speaking, which two or three would you say have had the most effect on [insert child's name]'s behaviour? I can read them out again if you'd like.**

3 CODES MAX

ONLY SHOW LIST WITH ANSWERS FROM Q10

	%
<b>Discussed an issue calmly with [insert child's name] and explained by something was wrong</b>	55
<b>Stopped [insert child's name] from going out or taken away something that they value</b>	47
<b>Praised [insert child's name] when they did something good</b>	43
<b>Given [insert child's name] a reward or treat for good behaviour</b>	24
<b>Not paid [insert child's name] any attention when they are throwing a tantrum</b>	13
<b>Used a "naughty step"</b>	8
<b>Shouted or yelled at [insert child's name]</b>	7
<b>Threaten to smack [insert child's name] but not actually done it</b>	3
<b>Smacked [insert child's name]</b>	1
<b>Don't know</b>	2

ASK ALL WITH CHILDREN OVER 2  
OTHERS GO TO Q13

Q12 **Information, advice and support on ways of dealing with children's behaviour can be provided in a number of ways. Which one of the following would you prefer?**

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

RANDOMISE ORDER

	%
<b>An internet website</b>	45
<b>Booklets and leaflets</b>	31
<b>Telephone helpline</b>	12
<b>CDs and DVDs</b>	9
<b>Don't know</b>	4

PARENTAL BREAK-UP

ASK ALL

Q13 **Do you currently live with a partner?**

SINGLE CODE

	%
<b>Yes</b>	79
<b>No</b>	21

ASK ALL WHO SAY YES AT Q13 (CODE 1)  
OTHERS GO TO Q15

Q14 **If you were having relationship difficulties with your partner where, if anywhere, would you go for help?**

DO NOT PROMPT

MULTICODE OK

	%
Parents or other relatives	26
Friends	21
Professional counsellor	9
Relate Scotland	7
Doctor/GP	5
Internet	2
Marriage Guidance	1
Church	1
Citizens Advice Bureau	1
Scottish Marriage Care	1
Family Mediation Scotland	1
Health visitor	1
Other	2
I wouldn't go anywhere for help	12
Don't know	26

ASK ALL

Q15 **Sometimes when parents have separated, they have difficulties agreeing arrangements for their children. In these situations, can you name any organisations parents could go to for help?**

DO NOT PROMPT

MULTICODE OK

	%
Family Mediation Scotland	9
Relate Scotland	7
Lawyer	6
Social worker	4
Citizens Advice Bureau	3
Gingerbread	2
Child support agency	1
Counselling services	1
Marriage Guidance	1
Doctor/GP	1
ParentLine	1
Scottish Marriage Care	*
Womens Refuge	*
ChildLine	*
Child Law Centre	-
Other	4
Don't know	66

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The next few questions are about financial support and advice available to parents.

ASK ALL

- Q16 **First I'd like you to think about all the bills your household has to pay; everything from mortgage/rent, council tax, electricity to TV licence and landlines. Compared to this time last year, would you say your household finds it more or less difficult to afford these bills, or has there been no change?**

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

	%
<b>A lot more difficult</b>	31
<b>Slightly more difficult</b>	41
<b>There has been no change</b>	22
<b>Slightly less difficult</b>	3
<b>A lot less difficult</b>	2
<b>Don't know</b>	*

ASK ALL

- Q17 **If your household was struggling to pay these bills, where would you go for help?**

DO NOT PROMPT

MULTICODE OK

	%
Citizens Advice Bureau	23
Parents and other relatives	22
Bank Manager	22
The company involved	5
Independent financial advisor	2
Friends	2
Benefits advisor	2
Local Authority Advice Centre	1
Mortgage lender	1
Go back to work/work more hours	1
Internet	1
Local council	1
Employer	1
Money matters	1
Lawyer	*
National Debtline	*
Money Advice Scotland	*
Credit Union	*
Consumer Credit Counselling Service	*
One Parent Families Scotland	-
Other – write in	1
Wouldn't go anywhere	1
Don't know	27
Refused	45

## EXTERNAL ATTITUDES TO PARENTS

For the next few questions, I'd like you to think about the image the media and the government give of parents in general.

ASK ALL

Q18 **When you watch or read news stories in the media about children and young people, how positive or negative do you think the media is towards parents? Would you say they are...**

READ OUT  
SINGLE CODE

	%
<b>Generally positive about parents</b>	10
<b>Neither positive nor negative about parents</b>	37
<b>Generally negative about parents</b>	50
Don't know	3
Refused	-

ASK ALL

Q19 **Still thinking about the various stories in the media about children and young people, how fair or unfair do you think the media is towards parents? Would you say they are...**

READ OUT  
SINGLE CODE

	%
<b>Generally fair towards parents</b>	21
<b>Neither fair nor unfair towards parents</b>	41
<b>Generally unfair towards parents</b>	36
Don't know	3

ASK ALL WHO SAY UNFAIR AT Q19 (CODE 3)  
OTHERS GO TO Q21

Q20 **And how does this make you feel as a parent? Would you say you...**

READ OUT  
SINGLE CODE

	%
<b>aren't bothered by it</b>	23
<b>are frustrated and angered by it</b>	34
<b>are worried about whether you are doing the right thing as a parent</b>	23
<b>None of these</b>	18
<b>Something else (write in)</b>	2
Don't know	*

ASK ALL

Q21 **How well do you think the Scottish Government understands the challenges and problems faced by parents bringing up their children?**

SINGLE CODE

	%
Very well	3
Fairly well	41
Fairly poorly	34
Very poorly	13
Don't know	9

ASK ALL WHO SAY FAIRLY POORLY OR VERY POORLY AT Q21 (CODES 3 OR 4)

OTHERS GO TO Q23

Q22 **And why do you say that?**

WRITE IN

PROBE FULLY

	%
Lack of financial help or support	24
Out of touch/do not listen to parents	19
Not enough help/support for parents in general	13
Not enough leisure facilities for children	10
Parents get the blame for everything	6
Benefit system is too complicated	5
Not enough support for working parents	5
Not enough support for middle class families	4
They do not take into account personal circumstances	4
Not enough childcare facilities and providers	4
Government interfere too much in parenting	4
They don't understand the problems faced by one parent/low income families	4
Rising cost of living (e.g. mortgage, fuel, shopping, utility bills)	3
Bad media/press coverage	3
Bad stigma attached to being a single parents/teenager	2
Not enough incentives for those who want to stay at home and look after their children	2
More information on how to access financial support	2
They concentrate on bad behaviour not the reasons behind it	2
Feel negative about the government in general	2
Not enough support from schools	1
Too many cutbacks in services	1
Not enough help for children with special needs	1
Lack of understanding of children in general	1
Not enough information for dealing with difficult children	1
Other	9
Don't know	3

ASK ALL

Q23 **Finally, taking into account everything we've just talked about what additional support, if any, would you most like to receive as a parent?**

WRITE IN

PROBE FULLY

	%
More financial support	19
More/cheaper childcare	11
More leisure facilities for children	6
More support from schools	5
Help and advice for behaviour problems	4
General reassurance/support	3
Longer/more contact with health visitors	2
More information on where to go for help	2
Advice/help on how to discipline children	1
More parenting classes	1
More recognition of the role of parenting	1
More support for working parents	1
More support for single parents	1
More funding for further education	1
Central website for support	1
More community networks/support	1
More counselling on family issues	1
A 24/7 helpline	1
More support with health issues	1
More involvement from social services	1
Help in getting back to work	1
Other	5
Don't know	9
No additional support required	2

ASK ALL WHO WANT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AT Q23 (WRITE IN OPTION)

Q24 **And where would you like to get this additional support from?**

DO NOT PROMPT

MULTICODE OK

	%
Government	48
Schools	15
Health Visitors	6
Internet websites	6
Doctors/GP	5
Local council	6
Books, magazines or leaflets	4
Friends/family	2
Counsellors/mediators	2
Helplines	2
NHS	2
Local community	1
Police	1
Social worker	1
Nursery	1
Inland revenue	1
Anywhere/anyone	1
Charities	1
Media	1
Television	1
Local mother and toddler groups	1
Employers	1
Library	1
Drop in centres	1
Parenting classes	1
Internet discussion forums	1
Other WRITE IN	4
Don't know	10

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE**



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Parenting Across Scotland (PAS) is a partnership of children's charities and adult relationship organisations working together to provide a focus for issues and concerns affecting parents and families in Scotland.

**PAS partners are:**

- Aberlour Childcare Trust
- Capability Scotland
- CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup>
- One Parent Families Scotland
- Relationships Scotland
- Scottish Adoption Association
- Scottish Marriage Care
- Stepfamily Scotland

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