



Consultation Work with Families from the A8 Accession Nations (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia) living in Cambridgeshire

Final Report

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Foreword

Families from the A8 accession nations (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia – further referred to as “Central and Eastern Europeans”) are one of the priority areas of focus for the Cambridgeshire Children's Trust, a partnership which brings together organisations that work with children, young people and families in a shared commitment to improving children's lives and life chances. In order to support the focus on Central and Eastern European Families, the Children's Trust wished to improve its understanding of the service needs of families from these countries recently arrived in Cambridgeshire, to help the right services to be planned in the right place at the right time. To underpin this, PCG Advisory Services was commissioned to carry out the consultation work with young people and with parents from Central and Eastern European communities in Cambridgeshire.

The objective of this report is to provide a summary of the consultation work with Central and Eastern European families living in Cambridgeshire carried out by PCG Advisory Services in December 2012 and January 2013.

The report discusses the critical problems and service needs of recent Central and Eastern European migrants. In addition, the report focuses on barriers to services encountered by Central and Eastern European families, as well as their suggestions on how to overcome them.

Acknowledgments



We would like to thank all the parents and young people who took part in the consultation for their time and responses. The research would not have been possible without their willingness to tell us about their experiences and problems on arrival in Cambridgeshire.

We are also grateful to Lisa Faulkner at Cambridgeshire County Council for her support throughout the project.

A number of schools and local organisations across the county have supported the project and helped us contact the target group. We would like to extend our particular thanks to: the schools that helped us organise focus groups: Soham Village College, Thomas Clarkson Academy in Wisbech and St Peter's School in Huntingdon, as well as the YMCA, The East of England Polish Community Organisation in Cambridge, the Polish Community School in Ely, Polish Supplementary School in Wisbech, KLARS (King's Lynn Area Resettlement Support), Nasze Strony (Polish Local Newspaper in East of England) and Polish Waves on Cambridge 105 community radio.

Executive summary

Cambridgeshire has experienced a high level of inward migration from Central and Eastern Europe in the last decade. This report assesses the main problems encountered by the incoming population on their arrival in Cambridgeshire.

Problems and services are influenced by socio-economic and demographic factors.

While many of the problems faced by Central and Eastern Europeans are experienced also by other families living in Cambridgeshire (and in fact, many respondents stressed they do not want to be treated differently than English people), there are a number of socio-economic and demographic differences about Central and Eastern Europeans that impact on their service needs, creating new ones and intensifying some of those already existing. These differences will need to be taken into consideration when designing future service models.

- The population of Central and Eastern European families at present have a high proportion of young children: 51% of parents surveyed have children below the age of 5. This means they are about to enter the education system, which could create additional tensions in schools that already have to deal with large numbers of students not fluent in English. Most households have more than one child, and 17% of parents we surveyed have more than two children.
- The disruption of moving so far from home brings many stresses. It was reported during the interviews and focus groups that these stresses can bring with them an increased risk of relationship breakdown, alcohol abuse or domestic violence.
- Central and Eastern Europeans often have jobs that require working outside normal office hours, including night shifts and work during weekends. Atypical working patterns increase the need for childcare and make it impossible to benefit from some services provided in typical hours.
- Few Central and Eastern Europeans live close to grandparents or other close relatives who could help them with the childcare. It often means that one of the parents cannot work, which subsequently reduces the family's financial stability. At the same time, parents who stay at home with children (mostly mothers) could be a good group to target with information about local services.
- Most Central and Eastern Europeans came to Cambridgeshire looking for better jobs and increased financial stability. They are often (at least at the beginning of their stay in Cambridgeshire) not interested in integrating with local communities. However, this means they do not learn more about local activities or services that they could benefit from, unless they have a direct impact on their financial situation.
- Often, there are cultural differences that can have impact on service needs of Central and Eastern Europeans and interactions between service providers and customers. Some of our respondents mentioned they would be reluctant to ask for help in case of more personal

problems (such as domestic violence, problems with raising children, mental problems) and may not feel comfortable turning to public services for help. A long term engagement strategy will be needed to gain their trust.

Generations: similar problems, different support needed

Young people and their parents tend to have similar problems on arrival in Cambridgeshire (language barriers, alienation stress and depression, limited understanding of the education system). However, young people adjust more quickly to the new reality, while their parents continue to struggle. These two groups of customers would benefit from different service delivery models. Services aimed at improving social inclusion for children and young people (e.g. bilingual support at schools) are needed promptly on their arrival. On the other hand, while parents also experience most difficulties on their arrival, their service needs do not decrease substantially with time and they will need support to reach further into their stay in Cambridgeshire.

Tackling language barrier becomes a priority

The report concludes that the target population experiences barriers to accessing services (such as language barrier, information barrier, high cost or even reluctance to seek help), rather than real service gaps. Limited English proficiency seems to be the biggest problem of the adult population, as it is an underlying cause of many problems experienced by Central and Eastern Europeans, including lack of understanding of the education system and social benefits, problems with finding work, discrimination and stress. While it is a problem faced mainly by parents, children are affected by it as well, as they often need to act as interpreters for their parents, which is a role often too mature for their age and competencies, sometimes conflicting with their school duties. More bilingual support (especially in schools, but aimed not only at students, but also at parents, in order to increase their understanding of the local education system and enhance communication with schools) would be beneficial. At the same time, while bilingual support would definitely help Central and Eastern Europeans to settle in faster, its amount needs to be well-weighted, as it could be counterproductive and discourage learning English. Providing help in native languages could also be balanced with a greater range of affordable and flexible English language courses.

Focus on early intervention and root causes

Focus should be not only on mitigating problems, but on tackling their root causes. Early intervention would make life easier for Central and Eastern Europeans immediately on their arrival in Cambridgeshire, making sure they settle in quickly and understand the local system (e.g. education, healthcare). It is especially important to ensure rapid integration of children and young people.

For pre-school age children who speak little or no English at home, free early education, children's centres and nurseries enable them to start school with some grasp of English. These services are also beneficial to a wider spectrum of stakeholders, as they enable families from different ethnic groups to

meet and mix, thus supporting good community relations. Although take up of these services is already relatively substantial (45% of parents surveyed use or have used in the past free early years education for their 2/3/4 year olds and 35% attended Children's Centres), more parents should be encouraged to make use of them. Many respondents said they did not use these services, as they believe they can provide care to their children themselves, but this denies their children contact with English peers, which increases barriers to integration when the children start compulsory school education. It would be beneficial to increase parent awareness that these services will facilitate the development of their children and their future education.

For school age children, apart from short term bilingual support at school, participation in summer schools before a school year starts can be helpful. It is also important to ensure their parents have as much information on schooling and the UK education system before children start school (and preferably before they even arrive in Cambridgeshire). Some information for parents could be provided through employers before employees decide to bring their families to Cambridgeshire (21% of our respondents declared that they first came to Cambridgeshire alone before they decided that their families should join them).

Enhanced information

For UK citizens and residents living in Cambridgeshire from birth or for a longer period of time, some aspects of life, laws, requirements and even cultural expectations are obvious and taken for granted. It is not always the same for newcomers. Our respondents believe that a better information strategy, including a centralised web-based information gateway, including very practical information that new arrivals may need, would help them settle in faster (45% of parents surveyed). Such a website could be supplemented with brochures with practical information in the native languages of Central and Eastern Europeans.

Peer support

Respondents also believe that peer support and outreach elements delivered by the community itself would be beneficial. The Central and Eastern Europeans surveyed exhibited strong preferences for face to face, rather than telephone, contact and for drop-in, rather than appointment, services, suggesting a "One-Stop-Shop" type of provision could be extremely useful. Such drop-in sessions, provided on a regular basis in which assistance is given to those who wish to fill out forms, translate documents, receive information on topics that are of particular concern to migrants, would be beneficial and appreciated (e.g. those who use similar services offered by KLARS in Wisbech are extremely satisfied). Such services could be delivered in cooperation between public agencies and voluntary groups: the working team would ideally be comprised of immigrants who possess hands-on knowledge not only of their own culture but of the culture of the host location.

Problems potentially intensified in the future

Most of our respondents reported that, in spite of any difficulties they had encountered, they are better off living in Cambridgeshire than in their home countries and 87% of them believe they will be still living in Cambridgeshire in 5 years. However, further inward migration to Cambridgeshire from new European countries is expected, and this could aggravate existing problems. Some symptoms are already visible in Fenland, where high numbers of immigrants combined with the demographics of both the incoming and local population (often low skilled labourers) cause some tensions and affect the types of service needs reported. For example, young people in Wisbech tend to pick up English more slowly than in other parts of the county. In these areas, students report a need for English courses, whilst students in most other districts believe English classes would be redundant as they learn English faster by participating in everyday activities.

Introduction

The consultation work carried out by PCG in December 2012 and January 2013 consisted of two workstreams: questionnaire surveys and focus groups. In the first workstream, 177 questionnaires were completed by parents and 97 by young people (mainly studying in secondary schools or sixth form colleges) using both online and in person survey methods (*see Table 1*). In the second workstream, we interviewed 21 parents and 37 young people (total of 58 interviewees or focus group respondents, *see Table 2*). In order to increase number of participants in the consultation and win their engagement, we decided to expand this workstream to include both larger focus groups (of 5-8 participants), and additional smaller focus groups and individual interviews (both in person and over telephone). In order to better understand the environment in which Central and Eastern Europeans live, we have also interviewed people who interact with them on a daily basis, in particular: EAL Coordinators, teachers and teaching assistants, a Cohesion Police Community Support Officer and a priest working with Central and Eastern Europeans (these interviews are not included in the numbers cited above). This allowed us to gather additional insights into problems Central and Eastern Europeans may encounter but are unwilling to discuss in public.

The below tables present the scope of the consultation work: numbers of focus groups or interviews participants and numbers of questionnaire respondents in different regions.

Table 1. Number of questionnaires collected by PCG.

	City of Cambridge	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	East Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire	Total
Parents	46	49	36	36	12	180
Young people	9	23	24	24	17	97
Total	55	72	60	60	29	277

1 respondent did not give their postcode or town they live in; their responses are counted into the overall total, but not totals for specific districts

Table 2. Number of participants of the focus groups and interviews carried by PCG.

	Cambridge	Wisbech	Huntingdon	Rural	Total
Parents	5	5	4	7	21
Young people	4	8	10	15	37
Total	9	13	14	22	58

We managed to reach out to all A8 nationalities, and collected also single survey responses from a Roma parent and a Roma student. Polish respondents were the most numerous group (both among parents

and young people), followed by the Lithuanians, which is in line with the demographics of Cambridgeshire population of Central and Eastern European students (*see Table 3*). The Polish community is more established and there are more local organisations and voluntary groups that provide support to the Polish community (such as Polish community schools) that were willing to facilitate the consultation work, which explains the fact that survey is slightly skewed towards the Polish population.

Table 3. How do the demographics of our respondents compare with the demographics of Cambridgeshire students?

	Czech	Estonian	Hungarian	Latvian	Lithuanian	Polish	Slovak	Slovenian
Cambridgeshire schools	2%	1%	3%	7%	32%	52%	3%	0%
Respondents (young people survey)	2%	0%	5%	10%	20%	59%	2%	0%
Respondents (parent survey)	3%	2%	3%	4%	18%	69%	1%	1%

This report provides a synopsis of the findings from both workstreams. It discusses the most critical needs, gaps in services and the common barriers to services across all Cambridgeshire districts. In some cases we have identified specific needs and barriers to services, which seem to be of high importance only in some particular parts of the county. In such cases, we provide district-level findings.

The report is based primarily on findings from the consultation work. PCG does not identify with, and cannot be held responsible for opinions and views expressed by the respondents. Some opinions or ideas on services that could be delivered are analysed in more detail or followed by comment from PCG. All such instances are marked in the text to make clear that these are the views of the consultants, rather than coming from the respondents. PCG also supplements this report with examples of good practice – projects implemented in other countries or other local authorities in the UK, that could be adapted to the needs present in Cambridgeshire and might be a useful inspiration for the future service design.

Detailed results of the survey and focus groups (including charts presenting responses to all questionnaires, as well as high-level transcripts of the focus groups and interviews) are presented in the annexes.

Consultation approach

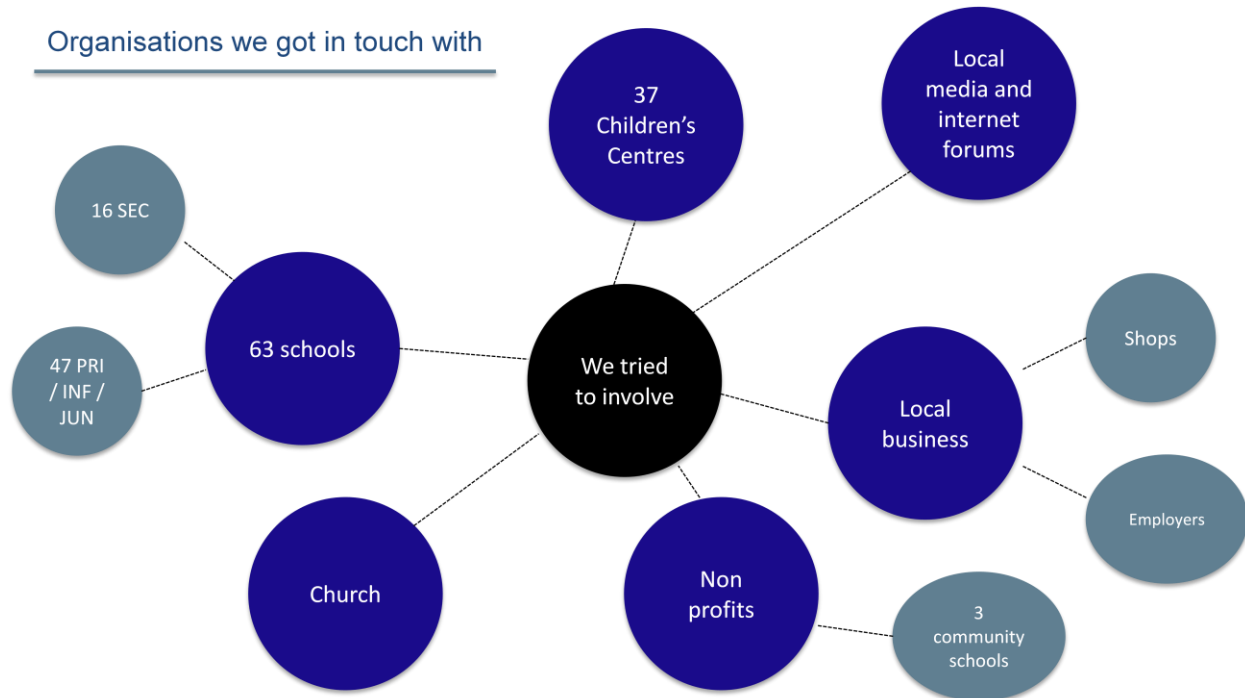
We identified multiple channels to approach and engage the target population. Schools were the primary access channel. Additionally, the project team, building on firsthand experience of the life of Central and Eastern European immigrants in the UK, used a variety of other approaches to access the target group (especially parents), both in person and on-line.

Immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe perceive their ethnicity in a complex way. They tend to be individualistic and critical of compatriots, but at the same time, the majority are still embedded within ethnic networks, both socially and economically¹. To harness these networks for the benefit of the research, we used the “snowball method” to approach the target group (sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future respondents from among their acquaintances, thus the sample group grow like a rolling snowball).

While living abroad, immigrants tend to cultivate some of their homeland traditions. In regions where large Central and Eastern European communities are based, there is a broad ethnic infrastructure including shops, youth organisations, cultural centres and churches. We treated these locations as stakeholders in the consultation process and engaged them as part of our approach to the target groups. Our project methodology assumed involvement of a wide variety of local educational institutions, including community organisations, ethnic businesses, and churches. We cooperated with them in order to obtain their buy-in to the project and receive their support in approaching the target group. In particular, this approach allowed us to disseminate the information about the consultations and provide physical locations for the focus groups interviews. While some institutions and organisations proved very helpful (see Acknowledgements), it is worth noting that not all the stakeholders were equally willing to cooperate. In particular, businesses and employers were harder to engage in the consultation, perhaps because they found it harder to perceive any potential benefit to them from involvement in the project.

¹ See for example: Prof. John Eade, Dr. Stephen Drinkwater, Michal P. Garapich, *Class and Ethnicity – Polish Migrants in London*, Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism, University of Surrey, 2007

Figure 1. Overview of stakeholders we approached in order to reach the target group.



Part 1. Critical problems and service needs

Most respondents consider themselves better off in Cambridgeshire in comparison to their home countries. 82% of young people surveyed feel as good here as in their home country (or even better). Moreover, both students and parents admit their lives are better now than in their home countries:

- in terms of **finance**: “In my country I had a job, but my salary was hardly enough to survive from payday to payday. Here I might not be an affluent person, but I can live in dignity.”

Parent interviewed by PCG

- in terms of **work**: “I’m not saying it’s easy to find work in the UK, especially one that is interesting and lives up to my expectations and qualifications, but in my country I didn’t have work at all!”

Parent interviewed by PCG

- in terms of **education**: “I know my children have better prospects here. In our country they could finish best universities and still would be unemployed. Here they can receive good education and become whoever they want.”

Parent interviewed by PCG

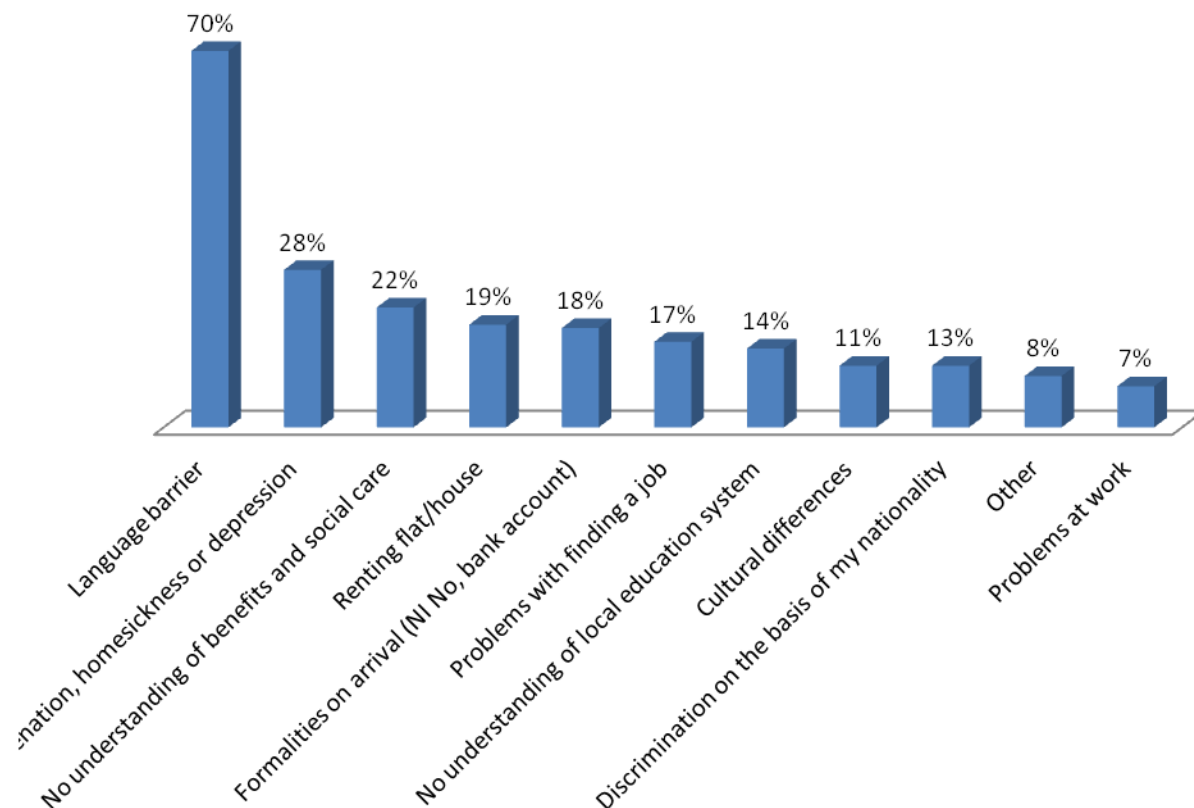
- in terms of their **future**: “Had I stayed in my country, I probably would be in a Young Offenders Institute now. Most of my old friends ended up there. Here I started a new life.”

Student interviewed by PCG

As a result of this, most of the interviewed (both students and parents) do not want to go back to their countries of origin: 87% of parents and 50% of young people surveyed believe they will be still living in Cambridgeshire in 5 years time. However, the overall satisfaction with living in Cambridgeshire does not mean that Central and Eastern Europeans do not experience severe problems or barriers to services.

Using survey results and the analyses of focus group discussions as a basis, the following are deemed the most critical problems facing the Central and Eastern European families in Cambridgeshire. Each critical problem identified is coupled with service needs, which – according to our respondents – if addressed by Cambridgeshire agencies, could help them overcome the problems encountered.

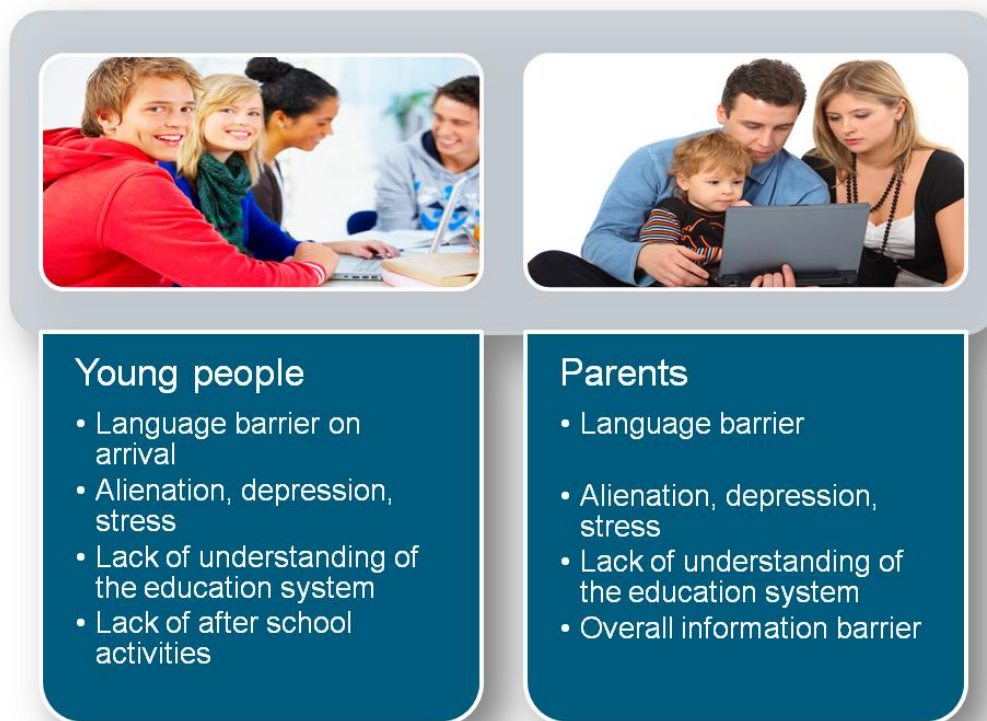
Figure 2. What did you find most difficult when you came here? (Parent survey)



Note: all figures in this report are based on data gathered by PCG during the consultation work.

Figure 2 presents answers given only by parents surveyed with regard to issues experienced on their arrival. A list of critical issues from **Figure 3** (that are described in more details below) was informed both by the questionnaire survey, interviews and focus groups. The order in which problems are discussed reflects the frequency and acuteness of problems according to our respondents.

Figure 3. Most common problems faced by Central and Eastern Europeans living in Cambridgeshire as reported by our respondents.



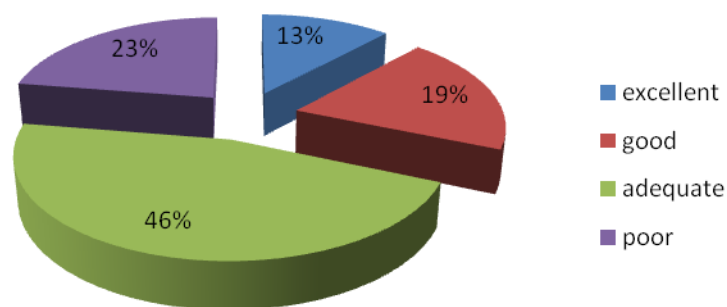
Young people and their parents tend to have similar problems on arrival to Cambridgeshire. However, young people adjust more quickly to the new reality, while their parents continue to struggle. These two groups of customers would benefit from different service delivery models. Services aimed at improving the inclusion of children and young people (e.g. bilingual support at schools) could be delivered promptly on their arrival. For their parents, while they also experience most difficulties on arrival, their service needs do not decrease substantially with time and they may require support to continue for longer into their stay in Cambridgeshire.

Language barrier

Parents

Language issues were the top concern expressed by our adult respondents: 69% of parents surveyed think their English is less than good (*see Figure 4*). Some parents we surveyed have lived in Cambridgeshire for several years and still experience substantial problems with communicating in English. The language barrier intensifies other issues faced by the target group. Respondents without good knowledge of English have more problems with finding interesting and/or well paid employment, have difficulties with settling in, suffer from additional stress, and have higher information barriers with regard to the locally offered services.

Figure 4. How good is your English? (Parent survey)



"Because my English is poor, I can only work in a factory or as a cleaner. In these jobs I'm not exposed to English: it's a vicious circle. I have a sincere desire to learn English for myself – to raise my self-esteem, for my kids – so that they were not ashamed of me, and for the English people – to stop causing troubles or being laughed at. I wish to continue living and working here and I would like to feel a member of the community. But the language barrier stands in my way". (Parent questionnaire opinion)

It was evident from the survey results and focus group discussions that parents often ask their children to act as interpreters for them (e.g. at school during parents evenings, at various public agencies, banks, etc.). Such situations can distort the communication between parents and schools. This could be

especially problematic if children are expected to interpret conversations concerning their own behaviour or performance at school. It can be also detrimental to the development of children, as such situations might expose them to additional stress, especially when they themselves may not be fluent in English. Some cases reported the interruption of a child's own education in order to accompany a parent to a meeting to act as interpreter.

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

- more affordable (or free) English courses for adults;
- financial support to participate in commercial courses;
- English courses organised by employers;
- Bilingual support and information.

How to mitigate the problem?

Our respondents recognised that information is available in their home languages, but they reported that they would appreciate a wider range of information being translated (including websites of public agencies and schools). They also indicated that it would be good if materials were translated by native speakers, instead of using online translating applications, as such translations tend to be fraught with errors and may be difficult to understand. Several respondents also suggested that it would be beneficial if councils and the main public agencies employed interpreters (at least part time), as filling out paperwork and contacting offices is difficult without good English.

At the same time, while bilingual support would definitely help Central and Eastern Europeans to settle in faster, its amount needs to be well-weighted, as too much support could be counterproductive and could discourage learning English. Most respondents did not seem to recognise this, however one person pointed out that if people decide to live in the UK, it should be their responsibility (if not obligation) to learn the local language, instead of expecting that everyone will have information provided in their home languages.

How to tackle the problem at its roots?

Respondents felt that more English language courses should be available. The most common barriers to participation in the courses are:

- Financial – in some places across Cambridgeshire parents can participate in free English courses, however, some parents reported that in their regions there are no free of charge classes and they cannot afford to participate in commercial courses. They believe that free courses would be very beneficial for them. However, some respondents also pointed out that they would like

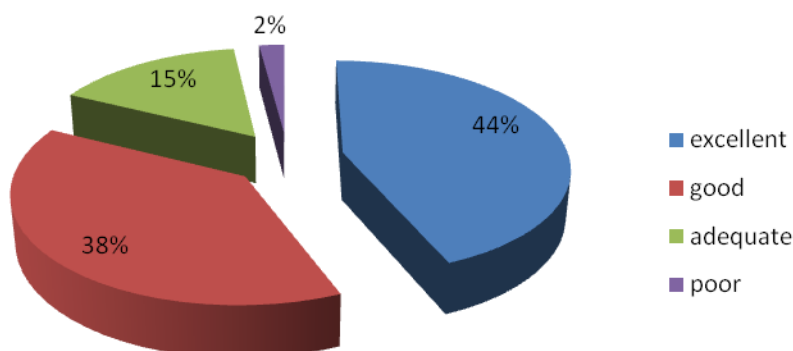
to co-finance their lessons, as services received for free do not motivate high involvement as much as those that are partially funded by service receivers.

- Timing – as many respondents work very long hours or have atypical working patterns (night shifts, weekends), they find it difficult to participate in regular classes which are run during work hours. They stated that courses organised by their employers (if they employ large numbers of immigrants) would be very helpful. They also believe that a council's support (financial or in terms of fiscal or other benefits for the employers) would encourage companies to organise English classes for their staff.
- Taking care of children – one respondent mentioned that she is unable to participate in language courses, as she needs to stay at home with her children. Courses for young mothers, where they could take very young children with them, would be really beneficial.

Students

Students reported arriving in Cambridgeshire with no or very limited English language competency. However, the vast majority of them did not need much time to become fluent in English: some claim it took them as little as 1-3 months to start feeling confident about their English skills². Only 17% of the young people surveyed believe their English is less than good (in comparison, it was 69% among the parents; see **Figure 4 and 5**).

Figure 5. *How good is your English? (Young people survey)*



² However, according to the research on English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils' language proficiency, it takes about 3-4 years on average to become confident in English and 6-8 years to acquire academic English proficiency. See Feyisa Demie, *English as an Additional Language: An empirical study of stages of English proficiency*, <http://www.naldic.org.uk/Resources/NALDIC/Research%20and%20Information/Documents/EALEmpirical2011.pdf>

However, this picture varied across different districts. In Wisbech, due to very large numbers of Central and Eastern Europeans living there, and the fact that students tend not to integrate with their English peers and spend time only with their nationals, they reported being less exposed to English on a daily basis. For example, in the Thomas Clarkson Academy, the only secondary school in Wisbech, there are over 220 students from Central and Eastern Europe (approximately 15% of the whole student population in this school), who consequently have greater exposure to their native languages than students at schools with proportionately smaller Central and Eastern European student populations. Teachers at Thomas Clarkson admitted that sometimes students do not speak English during classes and communicate in their home languages. Cases of students who graduated from the school and still had very limited English competency were reported by our respondents.

Respondents from two other regions (Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City) described early symptoms of the problems that are already very visible in Wisbech. They said that children who were arriving several years ago tended to pick up English very quickly, but that more recent arrivals were less likely to expand their social circle to include people of different cultures, have fewer English friends, and as a consequence do not learn English as fast as they could.

Some parents were also worried that schools are not ready to deal with high levels of immigration. We were told by one of the parents that at their local primary school there are separate classes for English students and for Central and Eastern European students. They believe it has a negative impact on students: they do not pick up English fast enough and they feel segregated from their English peers.

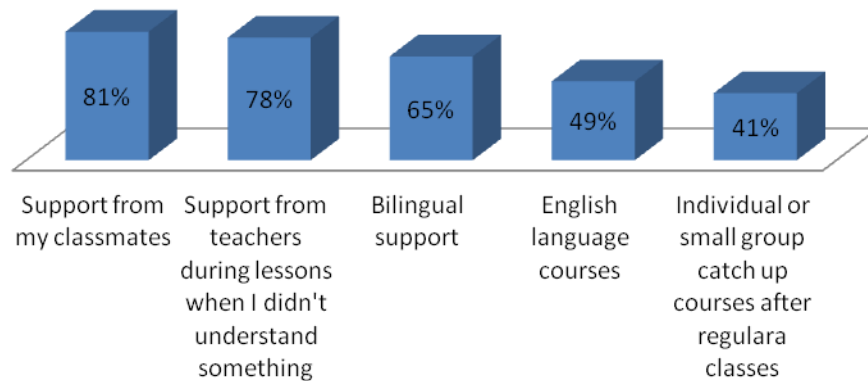
What would be helpful according to the respondents:

- bilingual support on arrival in a greater proportion of schools (both teaching and in a pastoral role)
- summer schools for newly arrived children
- in Wisbech – learning materials, such as language courses, dictionaries, and learning aids.

How to mitigate the problem?

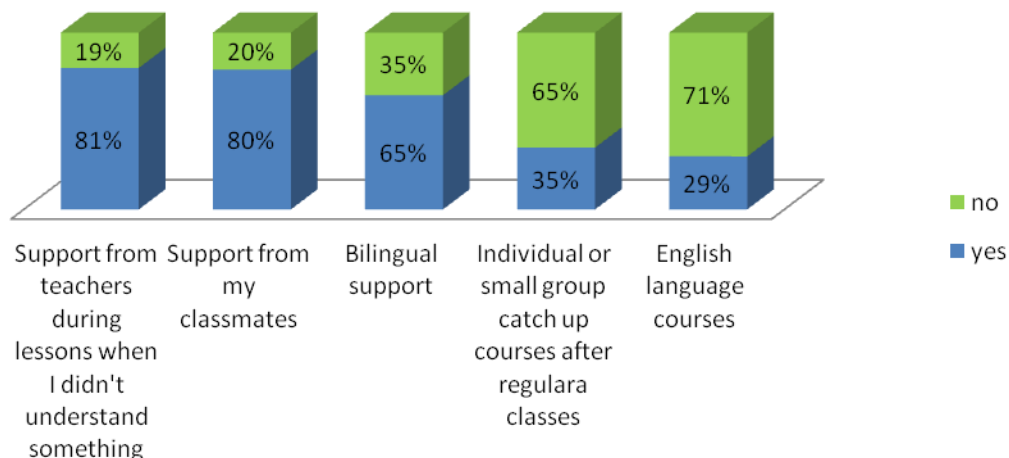
Bilingual support on a student's arrival at a new school is highly appreciated by them (*see Figure 6*).

Figure 6. Do you believe this support was helpful (for those who have received it) or would you have liked to receive such support (for those who have not received such help)? (Young people survey)



65% of students surveyed received bilingual support in school on their arrival (*see Figure 7*), and 84% of these students believe it was helpful for them. Students reported that such a support should last one or two terms (depending on their initial language competency) and should encompass not only teaching but also a pastoral role (e.g. explaining the education system and grading, what is expected from students, what exams they will need to take, mentoring, and providing career guidance). We talked to a number of students who received such bilingual help and claimed it was not helpful, but in each of these instances their poor experience was because they did not get along with a bilingual support officer or a bilingual teaching assistant, rather than because they did not believe such a form of support to be necessary.

Figure7. Did you get any extra help at school on your arrival? (Young people survey)



How to tackle the problem at its roots?

Most students we talked to believe they do not need specific activities, language courses or other measures aimed at teaching them English. They stated that it is best when language competency comes with time, through talking with English peers and learning at school. One respondent mentioned that organising summer schools or courses for incoming students before a school year starts would be a good idea. As many parents first arrive in Cambridgeshire alone and spend substantial time here before they decide whether their families will join them, such courses would give them a reason to bring their children during summer before school starts. Participation in a summer school would give a student an opportunity to have first contact with the language before regular classes commence and would also give parents time to organise schooling for their children and apply for a school placement. Currently, families arrive throughout the year, which makes it more difficult for children to start school: language barriers, social ostracism, learning challenges, and difficulty adapting to the new environment – all these factors may lead to a situation developing where children do not enjoy going to class and do not get on well at school.

The situation was very different in Wisbech, where students do believe they would benefit from English courses (and those who currently participate in English courses are satisfied). Another issue mentioned only by students from Wisbech is that they would find it useful to have dictionaries, English as a foreign language books and other materials that would help them learn the language.

Alienation, stress, and depression

Parents

The percentage of the Central and Eastern European population experiencing stress, alienation, and depression in their daily lives presents cause for concern. Having a lot of anxiety, stress, or depression was reported as a problem by nearly one-third (28% - it was the second most common problem experienced by the Central and Eastern Europeans on their arrival, after the language barrier) of the parent survey respondents. Parents mentioned that stress caused by living in a foreign country, being far away from their families, and in some cases an uncertain financial situation takes toll both on their physical and mental health. We were also told about a recent suicide of a Polish professional in Cambridge, supposedly due to inability to establish themselves in the UK.

The disruption of moving so far from home brings many stresses. It was reported during the interviews and focus groups that these stresses can bring with them an increased risk of relationship breakdown, alcohol abuse or domestic violence. This issue seems to be of particular importance in Wisbech, where our respondents reported that many Central and Eastern European families they know are incomplete.

According to their knowledge, it happens quite often that children come to Wisbech with only one parent (and sometimes their new partner). Respondents reported that especially among Lithuanian families it is quite common for a father to live alone with children (when parents split as well as in situations when a mother decides to stay in Lithuania with younger children). Respondents also pointed that such families sometimes may require additional support, as it may be harder for them to provide necessary attention to children (especially if a single father works long hours to provide financially for his family).

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

Psychological / therapeutic / counselling support in native languages would be very beneficial.

How to mitigate the problem?

Some respondents mentioned that they lack psychological support or counselling in their home languages. They feel isolated in their problems, do not have anybody to talk about what they experience and do not know where to seek support. Even if there are some therapy or support groups in their region, these may be held in English, which creates a barrier to migrant participation. It is believed by some of our respondents that psychological, therapeutic or counselling support in native languages would be very beneficial.

Often, there are cultural differences which can lead to an unwillingness to talk about domestic problems to strangers. Some of our respondents, and some of the interviews with people connected to these populations, reported that recent Central and Eastern European migrants are sometimes reluctant to seek psychological support, as very often those who participate in therapies are stigmatised and believed to have serious mental health issues. An information campaign aimed at increasing immigrant awareness about counselling services combined with long-term trust building between local communities and counsellors may be useful to increase acceptance of these services and ensure higher take up. PCG believes that an early intervention model could be worth implementing. A counsellor could be based at schools, as these institutions enjoy high public confidence among Central and Eastern Europeans. Such a person could proactively look for parents experiencing a difficult time (for example by identifying changes in students behaviour pattern), instead of waiting till they approach somebody seeking help.

How to tackle the problem at its roots?

The phenomenon of alienation, depression and stress experienced by large part of the population could be viewed as a symptom of the social and economic pressures placed on the families living in a foreign

country and struggling to provide sufficient incomes for their families. Some focus group participants felt that attention should be directed to providing help for some of the problems contributing to the stress, alienation, and depression rather than on providing more counselling or mental health services.

However, the extent of the problem does necessitate a closer examination of whether counselling services for families are readily available and accessible even for those with limited English fluency.

Students

Most of the parents we interviewed admitted that the time after their arrival to the UK was extremely stressful for their children (especially those in their teens) leading to students being withdrawn and lacking in self-confidence. While most of the stress is caused by the language barrier students experience at school on their arrival and disappears (or at least significantly decreases) as their language competency improves, our respondents also mentioned some other stress generating factors that young people are exposed to:

- Financial problems faced by their parents;
- Acts of discrimination and racism at school or in the neighbourhood (several students reported they were bullied on their arrival; some respondents mentioned they are exposed to acts of aggression by their English peers, e.g. because it is believed that their parents take away jobs from English students parents);
- Lack of strong parental support and role models (our respondents reported that they often observe swapping of roles between parents and children – it is the child who needs to take care of their parents, help with formalities, act as an interpreter);
- Broken families (some respondents told us about cases of sexual abuse they heard of – mainly when a new partner of a parent molests a child).



“When I first arrived to Cambridgeshire, it was a nightmare. Every single day I was crying my eyes out. Every single day we argued at home, as I wanted to go back to my country and my parents insisted on staying. I hated my life.” (*Student interviewed by PCG*)

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

psychological support (or simply a person – like a student counsellor – who children could talk to and report problems, possibly in their native languages)

How to mitigate the problem?

Interestingly, adults often reported that children might be exposed to enormous amounts of stress and have some problems they cannot cope with on their own, whereas most students we interviewed said that since they settled in, they enjoy their lives and do not have major problems. However, some respondents reported lacking a person they could talk to freely and openly about their needs and problems and with whom they felt secure. In some schools we visited, an EAL coordinator was playing such a role and students – especially younger or newly arrived to Cambridgeshire – tended to spend great deal of time with them (including breaks between lessons). In more serious cases psychological support might be useful (for newcomers in their home language), but again, it may be initially difficult to encourage those in need of support to come forward.

How to tackle the problem at its roots?

Again, attention could be directed to providing help for some of the problems contributing to the stress, for example language barrier on arrival.

Lack of understanding of the education system

Parents

Some parents admitted they have problems with understanding the local education system, e.g.

- when the school starts – sometimes they are not aware that full-time education is compulsory for all children from the age of 5 (in Poland education is compulsory from age 7, in Lithuania from 6/7),
- which school they can choose for their children,
- how to apply for a school placement (they often miss deadlines),
- exams and when their children need to take them.

The language barrier can aggravate the problem: they are reluctant to participate in parents' evenings, and do not take calls from schools, as they are afraid to speak in English. Often parents use their children to interpret or translate their communications with schools, which is stressful for students and at the same time can give parents a distorted picture of how well their child performs.

It was reported that some parents are initially misled by the way schools deliver information on their children's progress. Where there is an emphasis on communicating positive achievements of students (even if minor), instead of focusing on shortages in knowledge and areas that require improvement and failures (which would be an approach parents were more used to in their home countries), they get an

impression that their children are doing very well at school and do not need any additional support. They are subsequently often blind to emerging problems with the performance of their children, and they do not motivate their children to study more or react on time when the first symptoms of problems occur.

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

- brochures about schools in various languages
- bilingual personal support to help them understand how schools work and communicate with them more often

How to mitigate the problem?

Various forms of information materials (e.g. brochures or Internet websites), possibly in native languages, were mentioned by our respondents as potentially useful to help them familiarise themselves with the English education system and the way schools work. Bilingual support at schools would enhance their communication with teachers.

How to tackle the problem at its roots?

In order to tackle the problem at its roots, parents should have as much information on the UK education system and local schools before they decide to bring their children to Cambridgeshire. It might be worth considering engaging employers in an information campaign aimed at increasing awareness for parents who already live and work in Cambridgeshire and are considering bringing their families to join them. Such a campaign could cover the problems mentioned above.

Students

Most students who moved to the UK after they had started school in their home countries believe that school is much easier and less stressful here. They mentioned that in most cases they learn material that had already been covered at school before they moved, which makes it easier for them to catch up in spite of the language barrier they experience.

However, students we interviewed admitted that they struggle with understanding the system, including what is expected from them, and what exams they will have to take. It is extremely stressful if a student arrives in an examination year (which they reported happening quite frequently due to the fact that parents are not aware of how the education system in England works).

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

Support of a bilingual person who would explain the UK education system and had a pastoral role for newly arrived students

How to mitigate the problem?

While with time students learn what is expected from them and what choices they have if they want to continue education, they would understand more quickly if the process was facilitated with guidance from a bilingual teacher, teaching assistant or an interpreter based at school.

Activities for young people

Parents and students

Some parents mentioned that there is a variety of activities for younger children (e.g. playgroups, children's centres,), but that most activities that are easily accessible for low income families cease when their children turn 5. Parents also indicated that school hours are relatively short and there are no activities for children before and after classes at school. In practice it often leads to a situation where one of the parents cannot work, as they need to bring and pick up children from school during regular working hours. One respondent who used to live in Northern Ireland before he moved with his family to Cambridgeshire pointed out that schools there were offering clubs for children before (e.g. breakfast clubs) and after school (additional activities, homework club), which allowed both parents to undertake employment.



"In Ely, where I live, there are 10 or so care homes for elderly people. But there's not much going on for young families with children. I was very satisfied with Children Centre, but now my kids are too big to go there, and I have no idea what they are supposed to do after school." *(Parent interviewed by PCG)*

Many students believe that their towns do not offer them enough after school activities. but some students admitted to not being interested in participating in after school activities .

Figure 8. Do you belong to any after school clubs or sports clubs? (Young people survey)

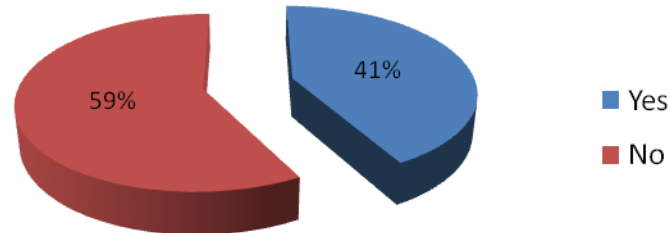
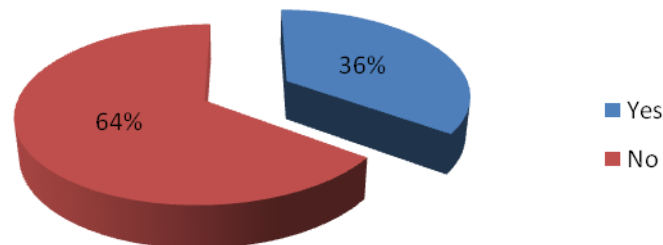


Figure 9. Do you go to any activities in your local area outside of school? (Young people survey)



Parents (as well as students) we talked to stressed that they do not want activities addressed specifically to minority groups, they would prefer their children to integrate with English peers and have opportunities to interact with the locals. The only specific “ethnic need” that was reported to us independently by several respondents would be a Polish school in Huntingdon. Currently three Polish families from Huntingdon take their children to Cambridge on a weekly basis so that they could participate in classes organised by a Polish Saturday School in Cambridge. They are convinced that many families would benefit from such a school if it was opened in Huntingdon.



“With a group of other parents concerned by their children future I would like to establish a Saturday school for immigrants’ children in Huntingdon. We hope that classes will start in September. Most of these kids have problems at school and do not have access to learning their native language. Local schools cannot deal with such huge numbers of foreign students , we should help them and help our children.” (Parent interviewed by PCG)

What would be helpful according to the respondents:

More information to parents about local activities and financial support for lower income families

How to mitigate the problem?

Responses from some of those surveyed suggest that some areas may have deficiencies of activities aimed at young people, such as extracurricular activities, after school clubs, or simply entertainment that young people could participate in (with their parents or on their own). The relatively large proportion of young families among incoming migrants has rapidly changed the age pyramid of the local community, and it would require further investigation to assess whether local services and entertainment are keeping pace with the constantly changing demographics of the local population. However, in some cases the issue might be that parents have limited knowledge on local services and are not aware of activities that currently take place (or cannot afford to take advantage of the commercial offering). In such instances more information on local entertainment and activities would be beneficial, so that parents not only are well informed, but could also encourage and motivate their children to take part.

Many of our respondents (especially boys) reported that sports activities are the only type of after school activities they are willing to take up; however, students believe they are not easily accessible in all parts of Cambridgeshire. As sports activities are useful to widen young people's social network and facilitate making friends with English peers, their accessibility throughout Cambridgeshire could be assessed. Sports tournaments between schools, towns or districts could encourage students to participate, motivate them to aspire to achieve more and promote healthy sense of competition. Such activities could be especially beneficial to children (whether they come from an immigrant background or not) from troubled families, suffering from stress and turning to violence, vandalism or even crime. For example, leveraging the interest in the Olympic Games generated by the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games and encouraging schools to participate in the School Games is recommended.

Other problems

Discrimination and racism

Most of the respondents said they do not experience direct racism or acts of aggression due to their nationality, yet they reported being mocked or laughed at (mainly because of the accent they speak with). Students we interviewed mentioned that such behaviours were painful at the beginning of their stay in Cambridgeshire, however with time they learned how to respond to such taunts. Both young people and their parents mentioned numerous cases of discrimination at work. Children notice that their parents often need to take less well-paid jobs and work longer hours than their peers' parents: they have to work during the weekends, holidays or at nights and cannot negotiate their working hours, as they are immediately threatened with dismissal. Parents we talked to often mentioned that they feel less respected at work due to their nationality.

It was also claimed by some respondents that some English people may use the fact that they have Central and Eastern European neighbours to request a change to their social accommodation - perhaps citing stereotypical behaviours such as noisy arguments, alcohol abuse or domestic violence which may not in fact be taking place.

Housing problems

Substantial number of respondents mentioned they have problems with finding good accommodation for their families. Depending on their income levels, they face various problems. Some more affluent people say they would like to buy their own houses, but find it difficult to meet the criteria for accessing credit (according to our respondents, banks explain that they do not have credit history in the UK, and credit history from their countries of origin is not taken under consideration; we were also told that some banks do not perceive their employment contracts as granting long term financial stability, as they expect immigrants to be the first to lose jobs in the event of dismissals). Those less well-off financially, especially those living in multiple occupation houses, mentioned they cannot escape from poor housing conditions, as they are on low incomes and cannot afford to move.

Several respondents mentioned that they had applied for social housing, but their applications were rejected (as they believe, without good reasons). Some people we talked to complained that they were denied social housing, even though the health conditions experienced by themselves or their family members (chemotherapy or severely asthmatic children) made it difficult or harmful for them to stay in their previous accommodation. Some interviewees expressed bitterness or frustration over the social housing system.

Living at the edge of poverty

Most respondents believe they are better off financially in Cambridgeshire than in their countries of origin. However, in Fenland we met quite a numerous group of people living on the edge of poverty: the working poor. They work in low-paying jobs and their incomes are not sufficient to move them out of poverty. What little income they have makes them ineligible for some services (e.g. free school meals for their children). Our respondents who found jobs with support of employment agencies mentioned that the agencies always pay them minimal wages (even if an employer actually paid more, surplus is consumed by the agency). This means that while they are able to cover all basic living costs, they are deprived any possibility of saving in order to raise their standard of living.

Problems with transportation within Cambridgeshire County

Respondents mentioned that they believe the transportation system across the county could be improved and services available are simply not sufficient to meet their needs. Public transportation is not accessible for rural residents and those who do not live on bus routes. As many Central and Eastern

Europeans have atypical work patterns, working night shifts or during weekends, lack of transportation presents an important problem for them.

Health care related problems

While most of the respondents are registered with GPs (93%) and believe that finding information on the primary health care was not difficult, some interviewees mentioned they are not satisfied with quality of services they receive. Several Central and Eastern Europeans we talked to believe they receive inadequate care, as doctors do not try to diagnose illnesses and in most cases give exactly the same prescriptions. This leads to general distrust in GPs and doubts as to their qualifications, which consequently makes people reluctant to seek health assistance and refrain from preventive care that could be offered to them.

Our respondents also mentioned that it is very difficult to access specialist health care and get specialist referrals (especially to gynaecologists). Moreover, the share of people registered with dentists is relatively low (68%).

Employment assistance services

Employment assistance services, while available, may not be fully meeting the needs of Central and Eastern Europeans. Unemployment rates are high among our target population (17% of the parent survey respondents said they do not work currently but are looking for work), some respondents also mentioned they have difficulties in finding work that would meet their qualifications or family needs. Respondents pointed out that they are often forced to perform work well below their level of skills (e.g. especially in Cambridge many people surveyed had very high qualifications, master's degrees and relevant experience, yet they were offered low-skilled positions). People (especially women) who used to work as office clerks in their home countries can only find physical work, which is below their aspirations. As a result, they often decide not to enter the job market at all and instead stay at home with their children.

Respondents suggested that more flexible working hours should be promoted. They believe it is hard to find part time jobs, which makes it impossible for some parents (especially single parents) to undertake employment.

Respondents also mentioned that employment assistance services that are available do not prepare them adequately for jobs in a foreign market. They would like to see more practical advice on how to write CVs in English, how to translate their education so that it is understandable to local employers (e.g. how do A-levels compare to their counterparts in the home countries), and how to gain additional professional qualifications.

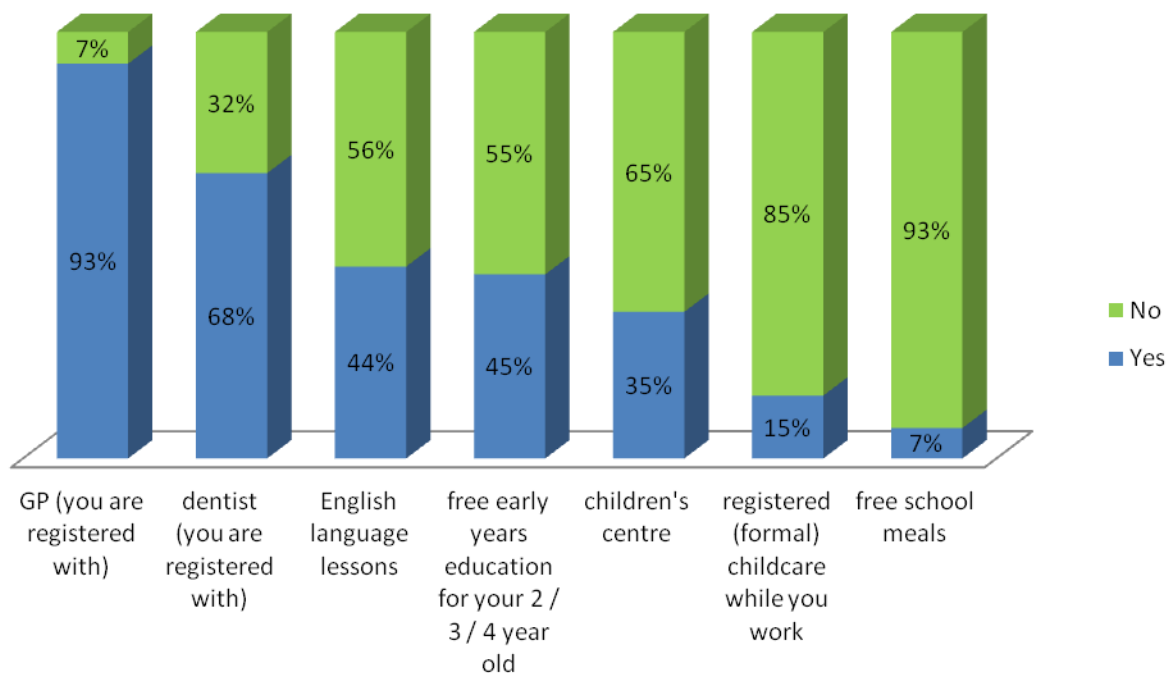
Cooperation of local organisations with the Council

Members of some local organisations and voluntary groups that provide information and support to the immigrants from various Central and Eastern European countries believe they would benefit from more cooperation with local authorities. While they organise events to support local communities and disseminate practical information on living in Cambridgeshire, they would welcome the support of a contact person within Cambridgeshire County Council, district councils or other local agencies structures. They would like to be able to refer their customers to such a contact person in cases where more specialist help is required.

Part 2. Current use of services and main service barriers

The figure below presents take up of various services among the Central and Eastern Europeans. The barriers that most affect access to the locally offered services cannot easily be overcome by applicants seeking help,. Some of them – such as reluctance to ask for help – may be very specific to the Central and Eastern European community.

Figure 10. Do you use / have you used the following services? (Parent survey)



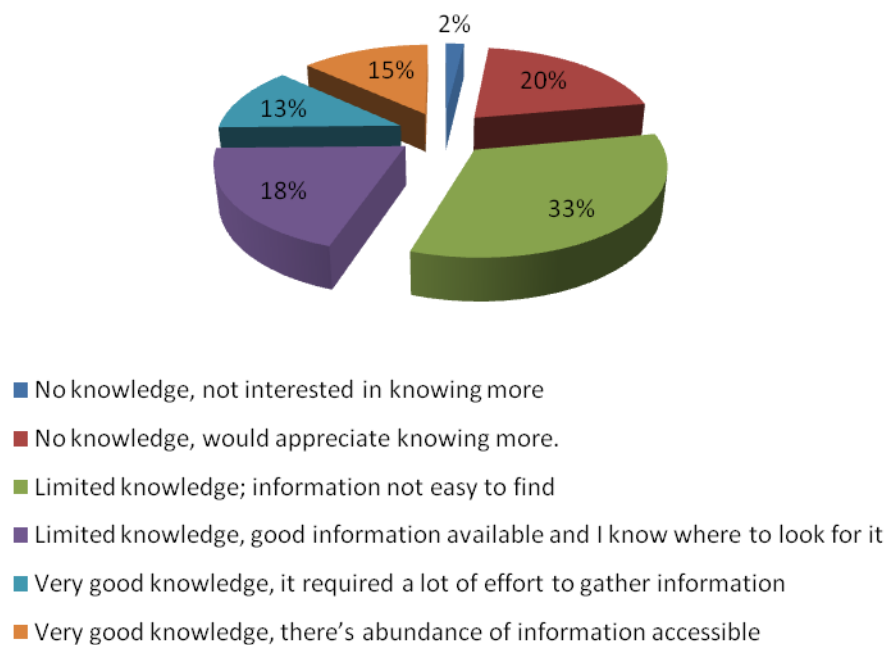
Costs

The cost of some services may appear prohibitive for poor and low-income families. Focus group discussion revealed that cost is primarily an issue when seeking language courses for adults and additional activities for children. A large group of respondents also mentioned that they do not use dental services as they are too expensive (some declare they see dentists when they go back to their home countries, as it is substantially less expensive there).

Information barrier

Getting information about available services to the people who need these services is especially difficult where those who would most benefit do not speak English fluently. 72% of parents surveyed admitted they have no or limited knowledge about local services (*see Figure 11*).

Figure 11. How do you assess your overall knowledge about local services provided by the Council and local organisations that your family could access? (Parent survey)



Most of the parents we talked to mentioned that they struggled to find practical information on their arrival: information is scattered across multiple sites, often with inconsistent advice and only in English. In most of the cases, people draw upon their family and friends to get information, however they often get conflicting or out of date advice.



“My husband had a heart attack when he was 26 and requires regular health checks. For two years after our arrival to Cambridgeshire he was regularly going back to our country to have his exams. We simply didn’t know that he is entitled to the same health care here, in Cambridgeshire.” *(Parent interviewed by PCG)*



“I used to work as a waitress. It took me over two years to find out that I can get a tax relief for some of my work related expenses. What was obvious for the local people never occurred to me until someone finally told me that I’m losing money every year.” *(Young person interviewed by PCG)*

Reluctance to seek help

A desire to be independent, a reluctance to ask for help and distrust or skepticism for public agencies has long been part of the Central and Eastern European culture³. This issue was rarely raised in the questionnaires (although one respondent said that it is “pointless to count on anybody’s support: if people don’t help them themselves, nobody else will help them” and one respondent, asked “What would have helped you to settle in better?” answered: “Piece of nonsense”). However, focus group participants and (more often) people working with immigrants on a daily basis reported that it was their experience that many people were reluctant to seek help with a problem. They talked about people’s pride and hesitancy to discuss their personal problems with a stranger or simply being skeptical about receiving help from any public agency or organisation. Our respondents indicated that they may not have anyone that they feel comfortable turning to for help.

³ See for example: William Mishler and Richard Rose, *Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Potential Institutions in Post-Communist Societies*, The Journal of Politics, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 418-451, Cambridge University Press; Richard Rose, *Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust*, Journal of Democracy, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 18-30

Part 3. Main recommendations

While the list of problems that our respondents reported was long and varied, some issues were more commonly reported than others. Two of the main recommendations presented below (increasing language competency of immigrants and providing an integrated information strategy), are aimed at parents. The main objective of the recommendations emerging from the research with young people is to ensure more prompt integration of young people into the local community, minimising a stressful transition period for children and young people on their arrival. Our recommendations are supplemented by examples of good practice implemented in the UK or abroad that could be used by Cambridgeshire County Council and local agencies in considering future service design.

How to tackle the language barrier

Limited English proficiency seems to be the biggest problem faced by the parents that requires addressing: it hinders their professional, financial and personal development and aggravates most other problems experienced by Central and Eastern Europeans in Cambridgeshire. Respondents reported that they would benefit from more bilingual support (especially based in schools, but aimed both at students and parents, combining teaching and pastoral role) and wider range of language courses available also to low income families and provided outside regular work hours. At the same time, while bilingual support would definitely help Central and Eastern Europeans to settle in faster, its amount needs to be well-weighted, as it could reduce the incentive to learn English. Many respondents stressed they do not want to be treated differently than English people.

How to ensure rapid integration

Different steps should be undertaken to ensure rapid integration of children and young people, depending on their age.

For pre-school age children who speak little or no English at home, free early education, children's centres and nurseries enable them to start school with some grasp of English. These services are also beneficial to a wider spectrum of stakeholders, as they enable families from different ethnic groups to meet and mix, thus supporting good community relations. Although take up of these services is substantial: 45% of parents surveyed use or have used in the past free early years education for their

2/3/4 year olds and 35% attended Children's Centres, more parents should be encouraged to make use of them. Many respondents said they did not use these services, as they were not needed – one of the parents stays at home with children. These families could benefit from greater awareness of how these services will be useful for good development of their children and will facilitate their future education.

For school age children, apart from short term bilingual support at school, participation in summer schools before a school year start can be helpful. It is important to ensure their parents have as much information on the schooling and the UK education system before children start school (and preferably before they even arrive in Cambridgeshire). Some information for parents could be provided through their employers before they decide to bring their families to Cambridgeshire

How to bridge the information gap

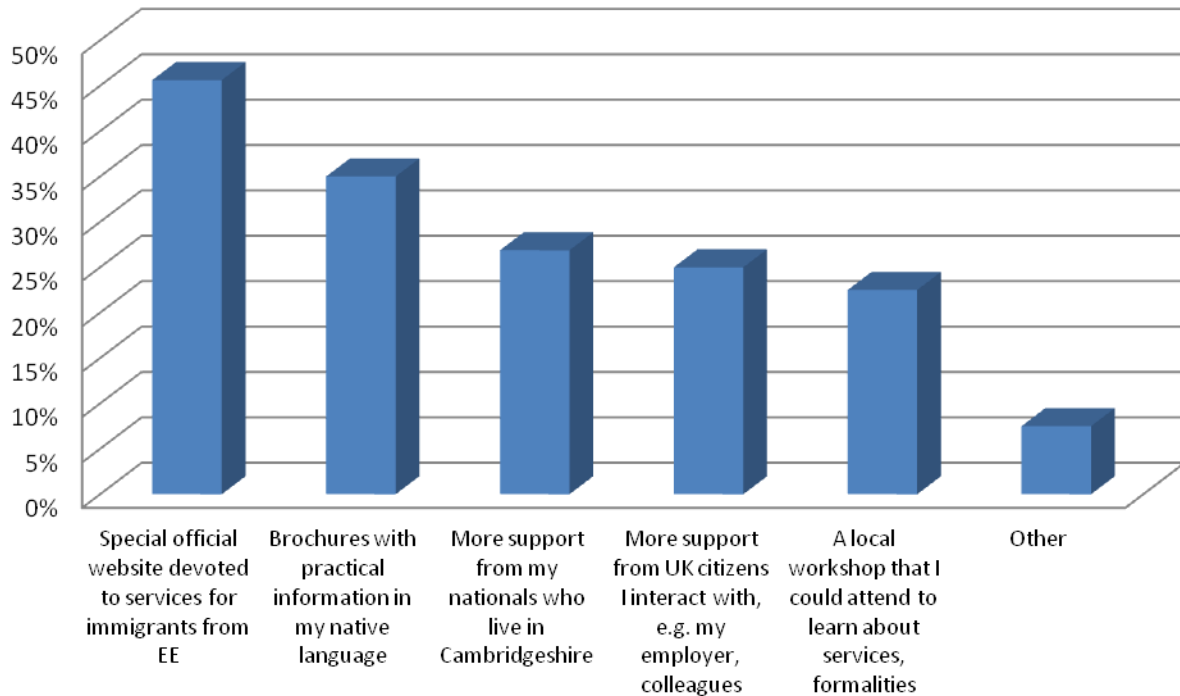
Our interviewees and focus groups participants, while asked about their preferences with regard to the communication channels, mentioned the following:

- personal contact rather than telephone or written information (problem: working hours),
- if personal contact: walk-in service rather than appointments,
- if telephone: direct contact rather than call centre,
- when possible: native languages.

Both interviewed and surveyed parents reported a need for a centralised web-based portal with all practical information that an immigrant from Central and Eastern Europe may need gathered in one place (45% of the survey respondents believe a special information portal would have helped them settle in better – *see Figure 12*).

A mix of information channels may be needed. One of our respondents proposed comprehensive communication strategy consisting of a web-based information portal supported with a leaflet series with practical information.

Figure 12. What would have helped you to settle in better? (parent survey)

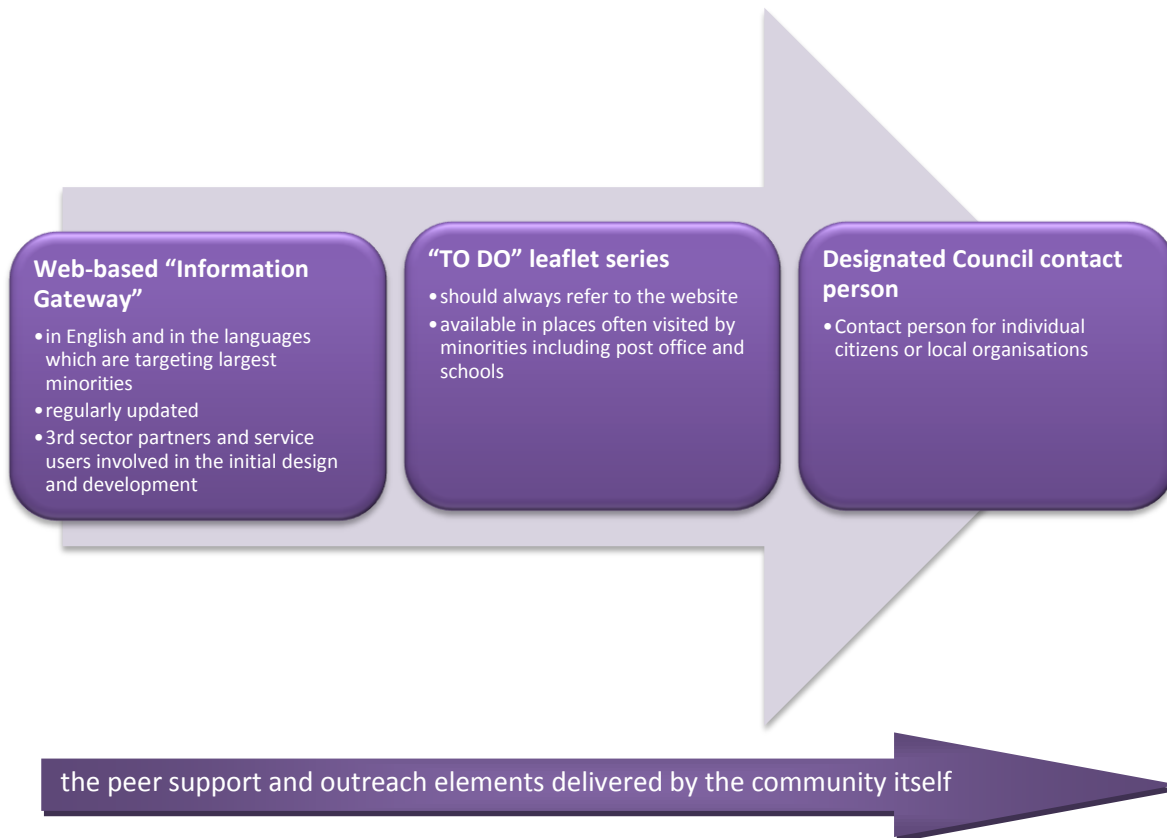


"For UK citizens and residents living here from birth or for a longer period of time some aspects of life, laws, requirements and even cultural expectations are obvious and taken for granted. It is not always the same for newcomers.

I think a helpful move would be to prepare a concise "TO DO" leaflet series along with webpages about renting, finding work, moving house, beginning of children education, continuing education, adult and child leisure, childcare options etc.

I think the web version should be in one place so that people would find it and refer to easily, say <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ee> and it should be edited to contain up to date information about changes in laws and forthcoming events prepared in English and in the languages which are targeting largest minorities.

The leaflets should always refer to a website and be available in places often visited by minorities including post office and schools."



The web-based portal / Information gateway should present practical information (sometimes taken for granted for people born in the UK), e.g.:

- Living in Cambridgeshire (council tax, benefits),
- Employment (NINo, JCP, NVQs, examples of CVs),
- Childcare options,
- Health care,
- Paying taxes (especially for self employed),
- Basic legal information ,
- Renting / buying house,
- Going to school,
- Driving a car (car registration and insurance),
- Practical information (banks, credit cards).

Much of this information already exists and in many cases a portal website would bring these various sources together without the need to duplicate (please reference Box 1. for some information on an example of an information gateway developed by Essex County Council).

We also know from other respondents that they would welcome a local council employee designated as a contact person for minorities (a desire expressed by both individuals and community organisation).

Our Wisbech respondents seem to be extremely satisfied with advice drop-in sessions organised by the KLARS (King's Lynn Area Resettlement Support). We believe wider application of this type of support would be beneficial both in terms of providing the individuals in need with relevant information, but also integrating the local community.

Box 1. Good practices: service information gateway.

'Putting Essex People First' Information Gateway

Summary

Essex County Council developed the 'Putting Essex People First Information Gateway' (www.essex.gov.uk/portal) as part of the self-directed support implementation which went live on the 6th October 2008.

Objectives

To support, empower and enable all families experiencing exclusion to gain more control of their lives by encouraging self-confidence, growth and development.

Approach

The site aims to bring together a number of disparate elements to provide a centralised resource that can be utilised by Council, their partners and the general public to provide information, advice and guidance as well as listings of local providers and services.

What to learn from Essex

- How to design a comprehensive single point of access to community information.



More information

<http://www.ppfportal.co.uk/display/home/index.jsp.html>

Box 2. Good practice: holistic approach to community needs in multi agency framework.

Bryncynon Community Revival Strategy LTD, Wales

Summary

Bryncynon is a small community that has experienced long-term deprivation, including a lack of adequate health and transportation services. The Bryncynon Strategy was set up by local people to improve this situation. A community consultation took place at the onset of the programme to establish local needs and long-term issues within the community. Various programmes and interventions have and are being developed in order to meet the needs identified.

Objectives

“For Bryncynon to be a self-sufficient, self governing community where all ages work together to ensure that its people are caring, tolerant, healthy, skilled and forward looking – a place we are proud to live.”

Approach

A wide range of projects and interventions have been developed and are delivered in order to achieve the established aims and objectives of the Strategy. These include the provision of advice, guidance and mentoring as well as formal training on particular issues. Initiatives also include a range of community projects to address local needs, such as a luncheon club for the over 50's, a food co-operative and healthy living initiatives with children aged 0-5 years and their families. A number of local partnerships were developed to take forward the Healthy Living agenda and a Steering Group was established to inform the overall direction of the Healthy Living Centre, which includes for example the local authority, local G.P. practices, local County Voluntary Council (CVC) and regeneration partners. One possible problem experienced so far has been the temptation to take on too much.

What to learn from Bryncynon

- How to adopt a holistic approach to community development to problems identified, because tackling issues in isolation does not work, as the problems and challenges we face in our communities are complex and interrelated
- How to coordinate work of multiple agencies having a common goal (using a specific business model: a registered charity company limited by guarantee with the Board of Directors made up of representatives from the local community, local councillors and schools).

More information

<http://www.bryncynonstrategy.org.uk/aboutus.htm>

Box 3. Good practice: trainings for immigrants aimed increasing their social inclusion and motivation.

Education for Integration, Livani, Latvia

Summary

Training sessions delivered for unemployed and socially excluded migrants suffering from multiple and complex problems, including: inability to speak Latvian; lack of social skills necessary to participate in community life and psychological problems resulting from economic transition which can lead to a lack of motivation to adjust.

Objectives

To develop sustainable training opportunities for people representing national minorities and to promote their participation in the labour market. The long-term aim is to promote active participation and integration of national minorities in society.

Approach

A training course was developed by an Association „Balta Maja” for immigrants living in Livani to provide them with the skills they need to facilitate integration with the local community. The course initially included four separate programs: Latvian, social psychology, computer skills and business communication. It was subsequently with other courses requested by participants, e.g. practical workshops (tailoring, jewellery-, making, making decorative elements from fabrics, etc.) as well as English classes at different levels and business correspondence including CV and cover letters. These modules, taken together, aim to raise the motivation, self-confidence and self-esteem of students, to provide knowledge and skills they need to adapt in new situation, to find a job, and to become active members of the community.

What to learn from “Balta Maja” in Livani

- How to tackle multiple and complex needs of the migrant community (e.g. educational training aimed not only at increasing skills, but also promoting social inclusion of the participants).

More information

http://www.baltamaja.lv/en/balta_maja/index.html

Box 4. Good practices: using creative approach to work with young people.

Glasgow Braendam Link, Scotland

Summary

Glasgow Braendam Link (GBL) is a community development project approach that uses experiential learning to develop the means of discussion and action around the issues of poverty that affect people's lives. The project assists people in their own development and in the development of their skills and gives them the opportunity to increase their confidence and self esteem.

Objectives

To support, empower and enable all families experiencing exclusion to gain more control of their lives by encouraging self-confidence, growth and development.

Approach

Innovative methods (for example digital film and photography or public art events such as evening film projections and spectacles invented and performed by young people in front of public audiences) were used to prompt children's creativity. These media were used as a vehicle for children and young people to speak out on their issues and bring them to the attention of a wider audience.

What to learn from Glasgow Braendam Link

- GBL is about an approach to working with people, not about a specific place or issue. It may show how to work in a innovative way with young people who experience problems yet are not likely to take part in more traditional activities organised for them.

More information

<http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk/Organisation/Detail/71513/0/Glasgow-Braendam-Link>

Annexes

1. Comparison of parent survey result between Polish and Lithuanian respondents

A short summary of survey responses of Polish and Lithuanian respondents is presented below (other nationalities were not taken into consideration in this summary, as the analysis could be biased due to smaller number of responses collected from them). Substantial differences are observed between these two nations with regard to their needs and challenges. However, it is highly probable that these discrepancies stem not from nationality, but from socio-economic factors. These populations differ from one another on a number of socio-economic factors, including the education level, type of employment and place (district) where they live in Cambridgeshire (most Lithuanians we surveyed live in less affluent areas of Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire). However, no significant difference in the length of time people have been established here was observed; therefore differences in their answers cannot be explained by this factor.

How good are your English language skills?

Polish respondents seem to have a better understanding of the English language than Lithuanian immigrants. One third (33%) of Polish respondents declared that their knowledge of the language is good or excellent. At the same time, only 21% of Lithuanian respondents reported the same answer. This implies that around 79% of respondents with Lithuanian citizenship considered their understanding of English to be adequate or poor. The percentage of Polish respondents who considered their language skills to be on the similar level was 67%.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Polish respondents reported a higher level of education in comparison to Lithuanian respondents. In particular, 38% of Polish immigrants who participated in the survey declared themselves to hold qualifications to either the undergraduate or graduate level. At the same time only 9% of Lithuanian respondents declared themselves to have a master's degree, and none of them had a bachelor's degree.

Do you access any benefits (e.g. housing benefit, child benefit)?

Interestingly, Polish respondents seem to have a better access to social benefits, as around 80% of respondents have declared that they have an access to such services. At the same time, less than 58% of Lithuanian respondents declared the same response.

When you first came to Cambridgeshire, how did you first find out information about housing/services/employment?

For information concerning housing and employment services, the vast majority of Lithuanian respondents declared that their relatives were the main source of information (78%). At the same time, 61% of Polish respondents gave the same response. Polish immigrants seem to base their knowledge to greater extend on the local press (30%), church (8%), and the Internet (48%). When it comes to Lithuanian citizens, respectively 16%, 0%, and 34% have declared the same answer.

What did you find most difficult when you came here?

The greatest difficulty on arrival to Cambridgeshire was common for both Lithuanian and Polish immigrants (70% reported experiencing difficulties with the language barrier). However, as many as 40% Lithuanian respondents declared that they had problem with understanding benefits and social care system. The same response was given by only 16% of Polish respondents. In contrast, over one third (36%) of Polish respondents reported experiencing a sense of alienation and only 10% of Lithuanian respondents gave the same answer.

What services do you / have you used?

Polish respondents use local services more often than their Lithuanian counterparts. 96% of Polish migrants are registered with a GP and 71% with a dentist (it is respectively 83% and 60% for Lithuanians).

What are you most worried about / challenged by?

When it comes to the current worries and challenges, Polish respondents seem to be much more concerned about their future. Over 60% of Polish citizens who have taken part in the survey were worried about sustaining the financial stability for their families. A similar fraction of respondents were concerned about the education of their children. While financial stability was also the most common answer chosen by Lithuanians, only 52% declared themselves to be worried about it (and 35% were concerned about the children education). Problems with accommodation were the second most common answer among the Lithuanian respondents (45% of them are worried about finding or renting a right flat, whereas it is a problem only for 37% of Polish respondents). Polish immigrants tend to be more worried about communication problems (40% of respondents), the stress caused by living in a foreign country (26%), and the safety in their neighbourhood (14%). Respectively 35%, 6%, and 6% Lithuanian citizens were concerned with these issues.

2. Comparison of parent survey result between respondents from Fenland and Cambridge City

Results across most districts in Cambridgeshire exhibited no significant differences from each other, with the exception of the two extremes – Fenland and Cambridge City.

How good are your English language skills?

Concerning language skills, over 56% of respondents living in Cambridge City declared that their knowledge of English is good or excellent. This substantially differentiates this region from Fenland, where only 16% of respondents consider their language skills to be on a similar level. This implies that around 84% of immigrants living in Fenland have only an adequate or poor understanding of the language.

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

The language skills are likely to be closely related to the level of education reported by respondents in the two districts. In Fenland over 84% of respondents had finished their education at the level of post-secondary school (equivalent to A-Level or sixth form college) or lower and only 12% of survey respondents in Fenland had higher education. At the same time, 50% of respondents in Cambridge City had a bachelor's or master's degree.

Do you access any benefits (e.g. housing benefit, child benefit)?

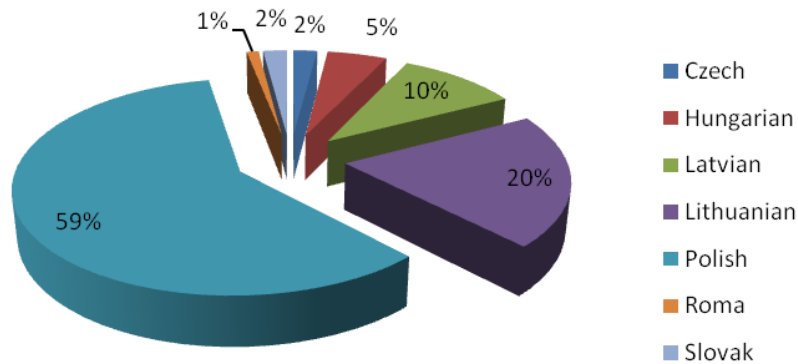
Respondents in Fenland seem to benefit from various social care services more often than those in Cambridge City (69% in Fenland, versus 52% in Cambridge). We consider this difference to be directly related to the level of economic development in the two districts.

What are you most worried about / challenged by?

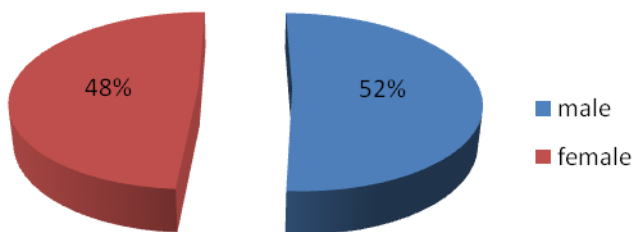
Given our conclusions presented in the above paragraphs, it should be no surprise that around 44% of respondents living in Fenland were worried with language and communication problems, while the percentage of individuals in Cambridge city who answered the question in a similar way was only 19%. More respondents living in Fenland than in Cambridge declare not to feel safe in their neighbourhoods (respectively 18% and 7%).

3. Young people questionnaires – responses

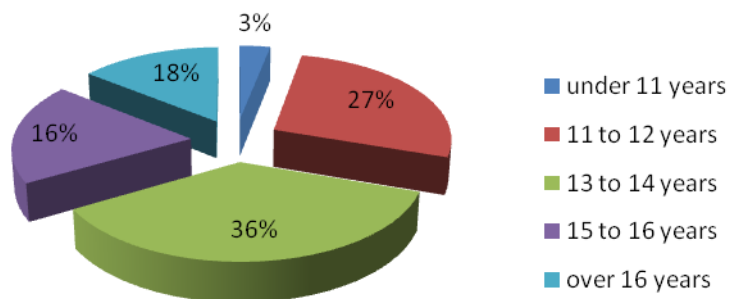
1. What is your nationality?



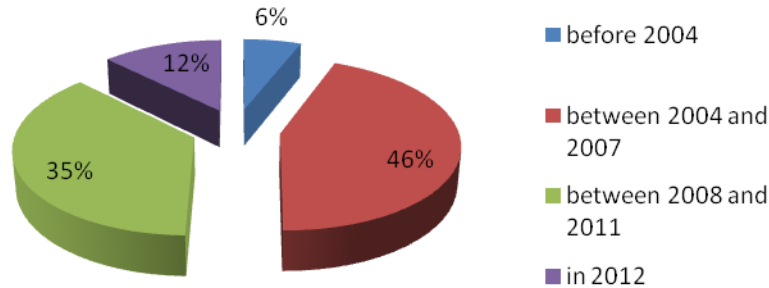
2. What is your sex?



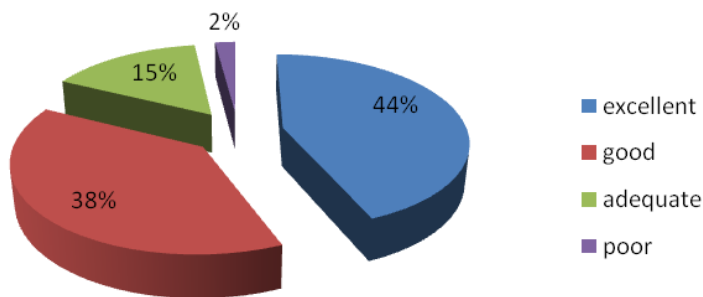
3. How old are you?



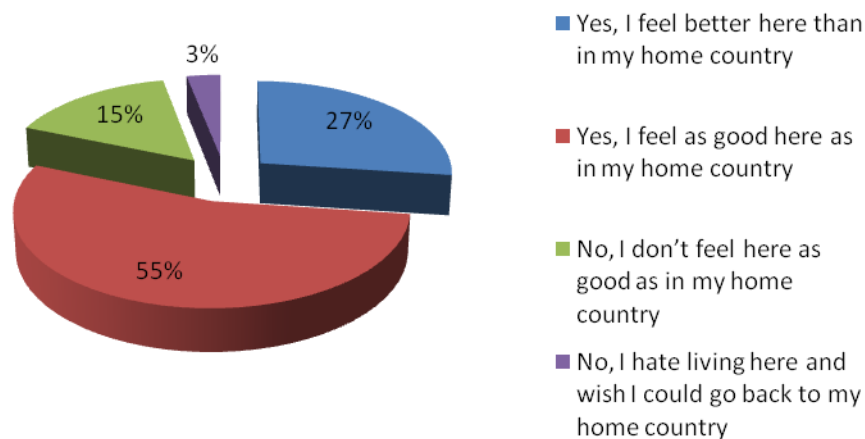
4. When did you move to Cambridgeshire?



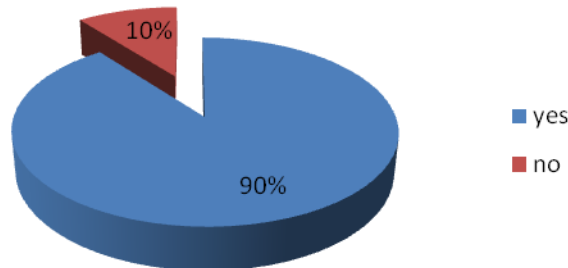
5. How good are your English language skills?



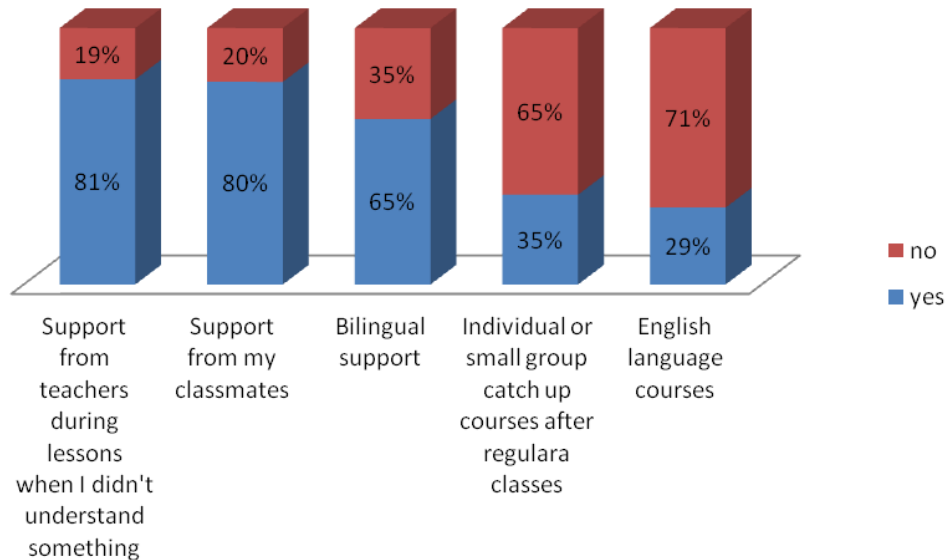
6. Do you like living in Cambridgeshire?



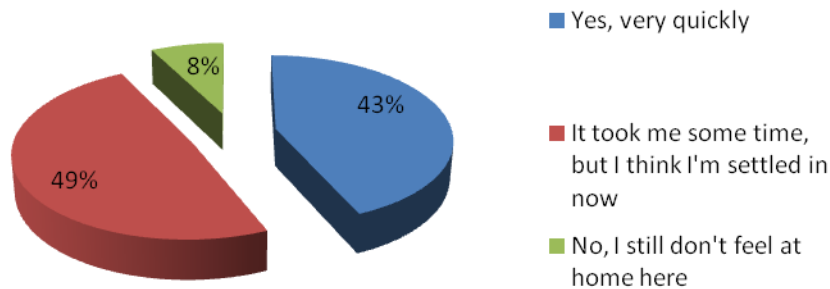
7. In general, do you feel safe in the area where you live?



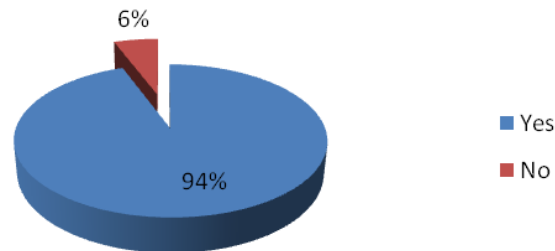
8. Did you get any extra help at school on your arrival?



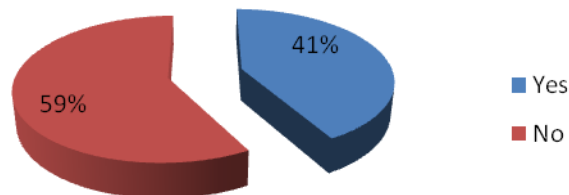
9. Do you feel you settled in quickly when you moved to Cambridgeshire?



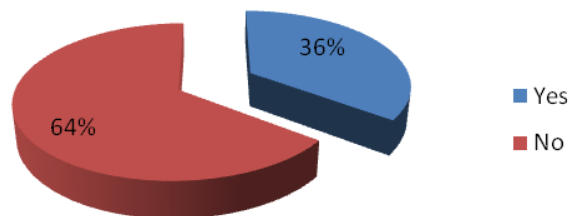
10. Do you get on well at school?



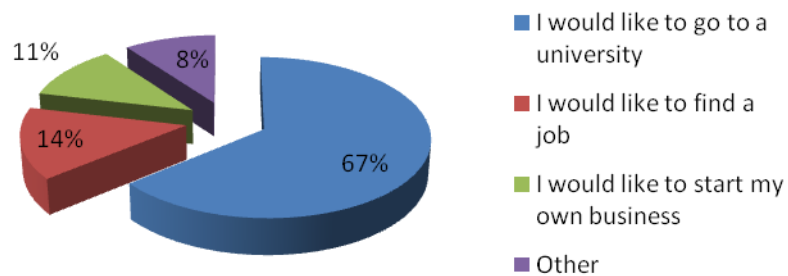
11. Do you belong to any afterschool club or sports club?



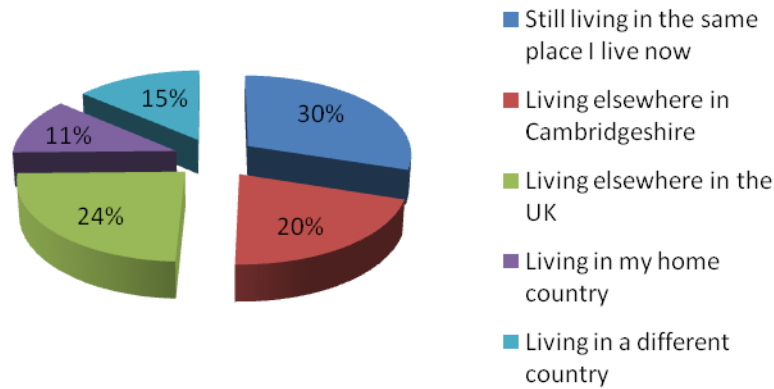
12. Do you go to any activities in your local area outside of school?



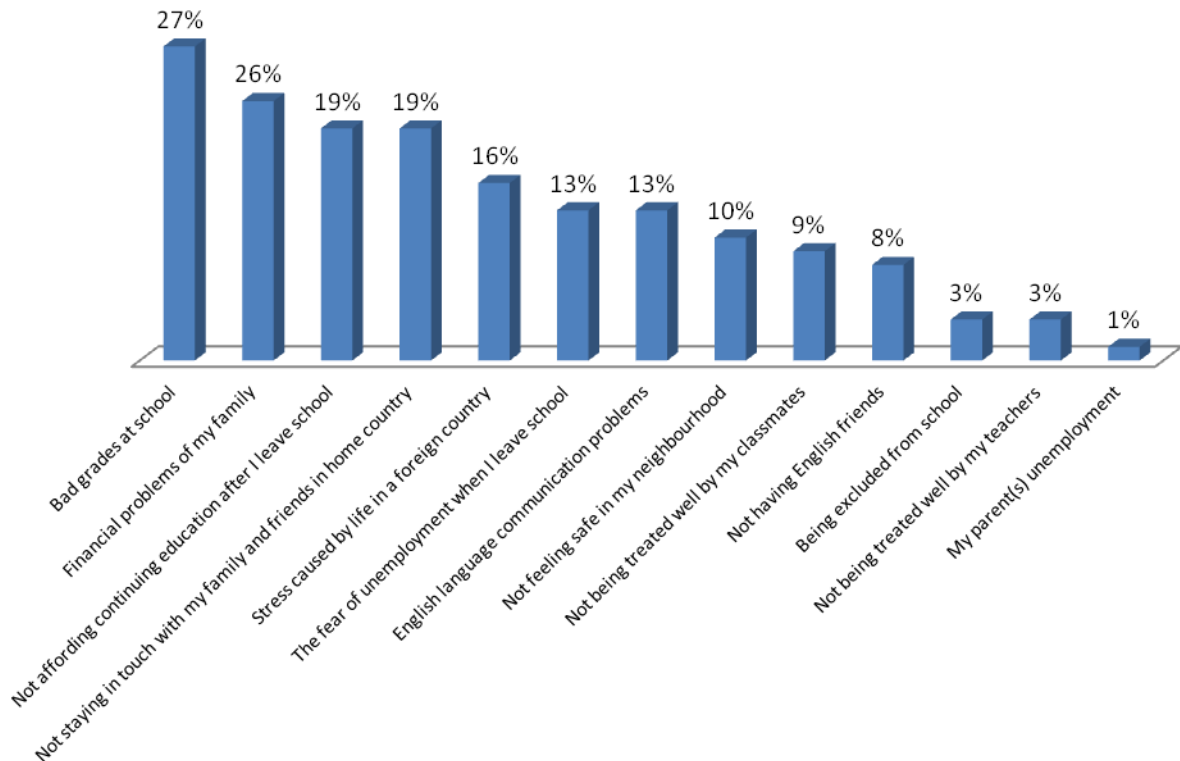
13. What do you want to do when you leave school?



14. Where would you like to live in 5 years?

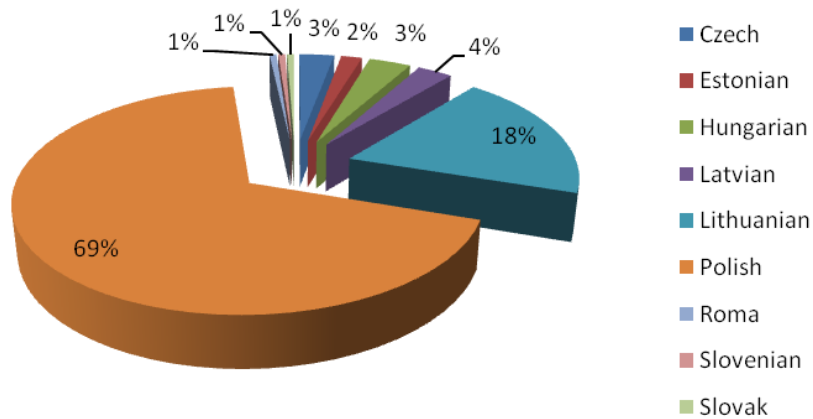


15. What are you most worried about / challenged by?

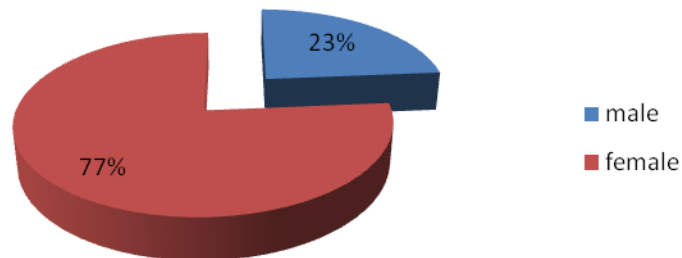


4. Parent questionnaires – responses

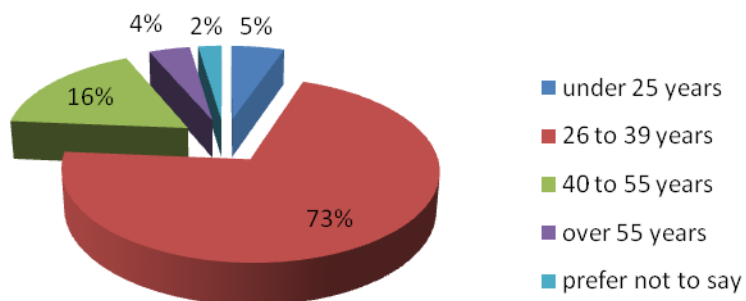
1) What is your nationality?



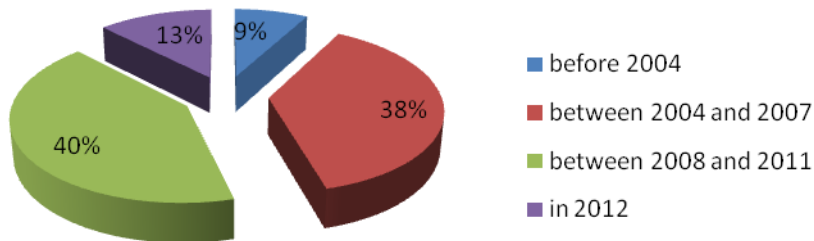
2) What is your sex?



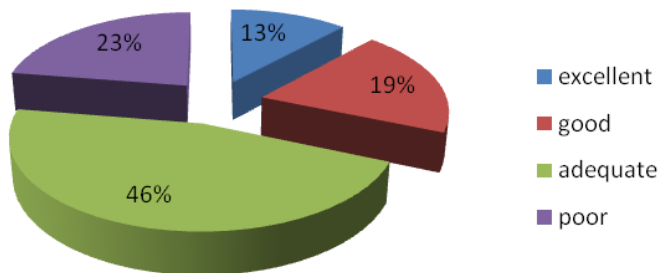
3) How old are you?



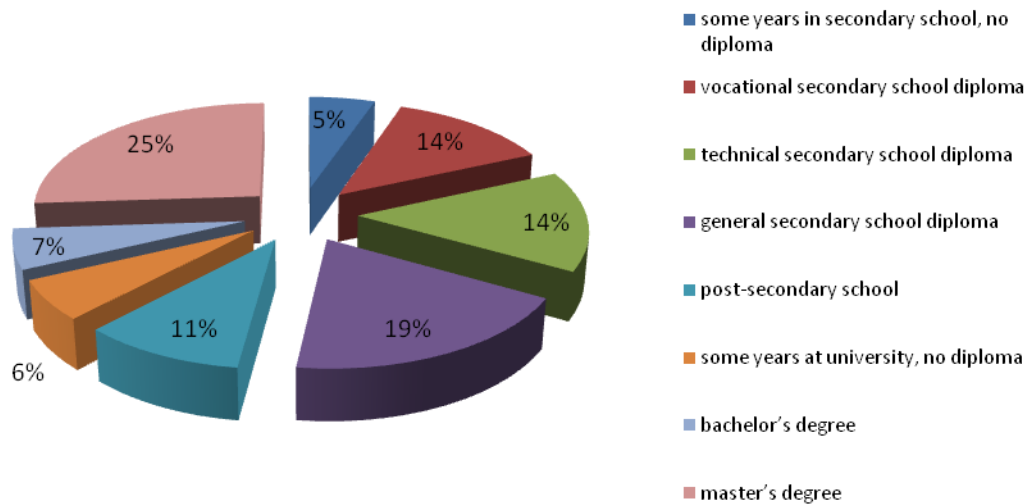
4) When did you move to Cambridgeshire?



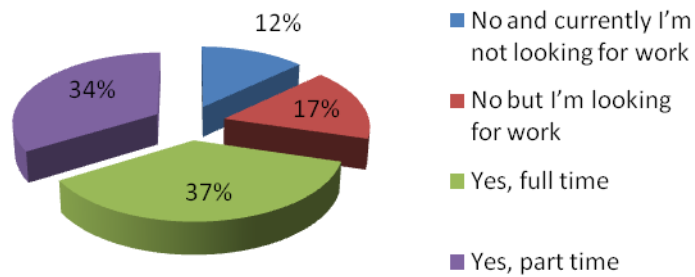
5) How good are your English language skills?



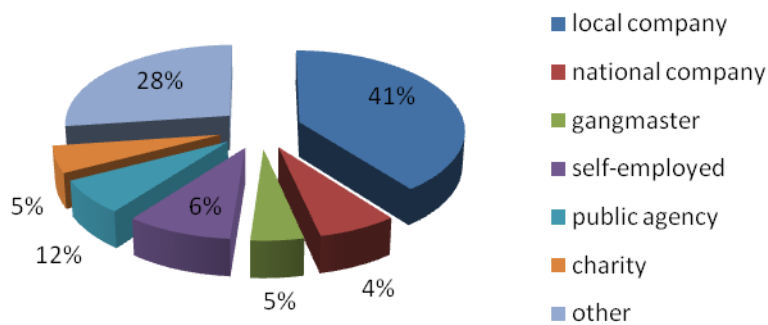
6) What is the highest level of education you have completed?



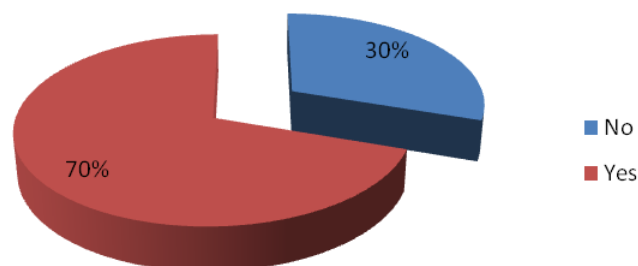
7) Do you work?



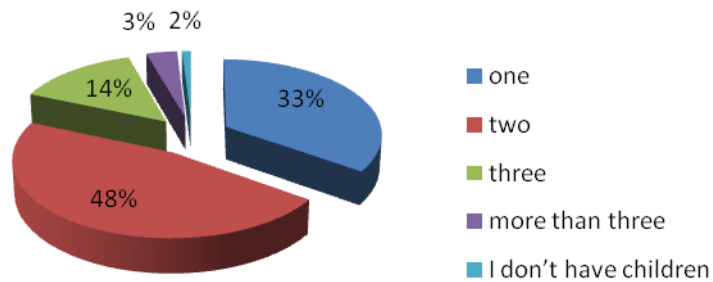
8) Who do you work for?



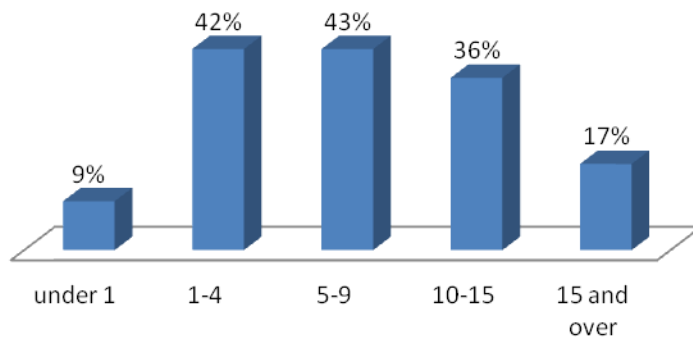
9) Do you access any benefits?



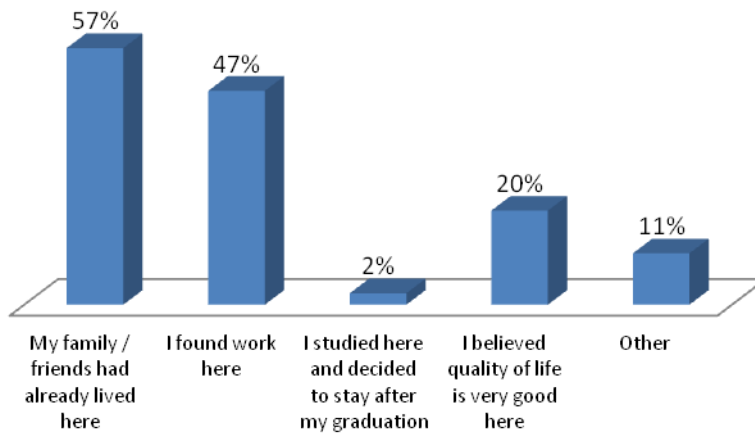
10) How many children do you have?



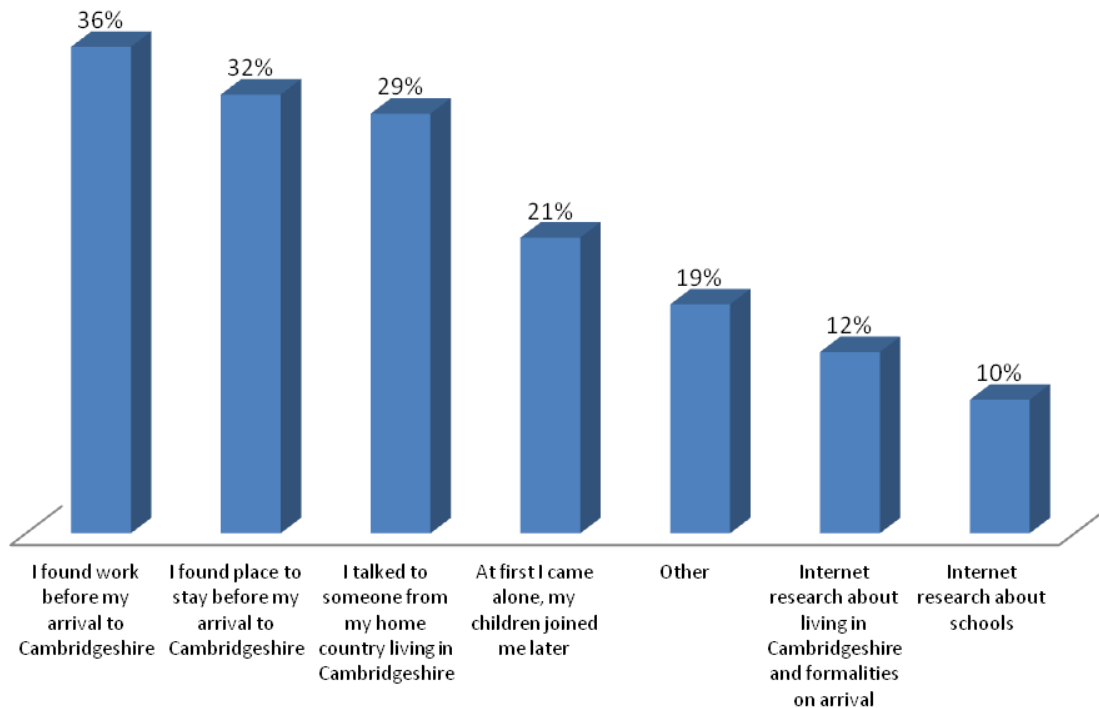
11) How old are your children?



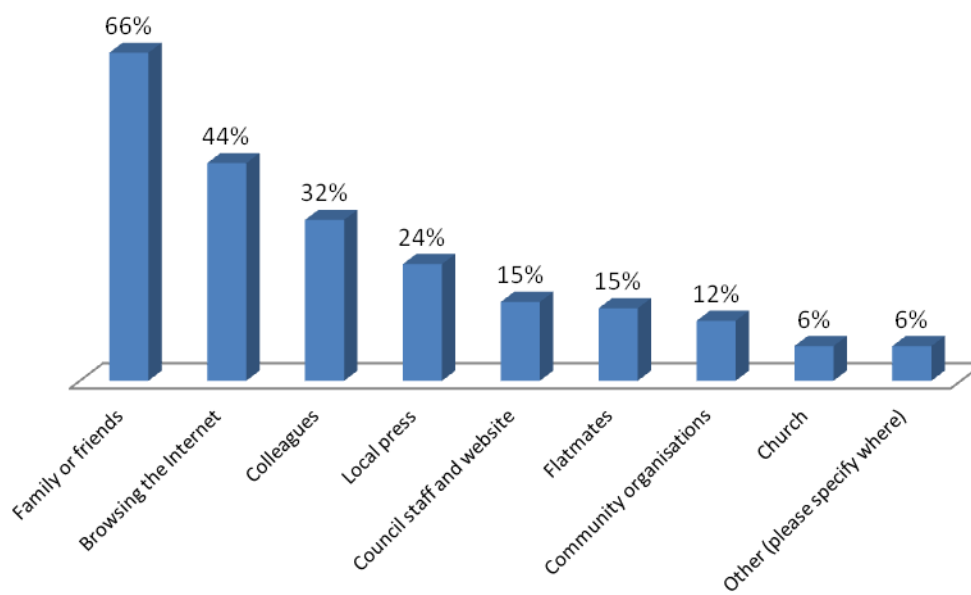
12) Why did you choose to live in Cambridgeshire?



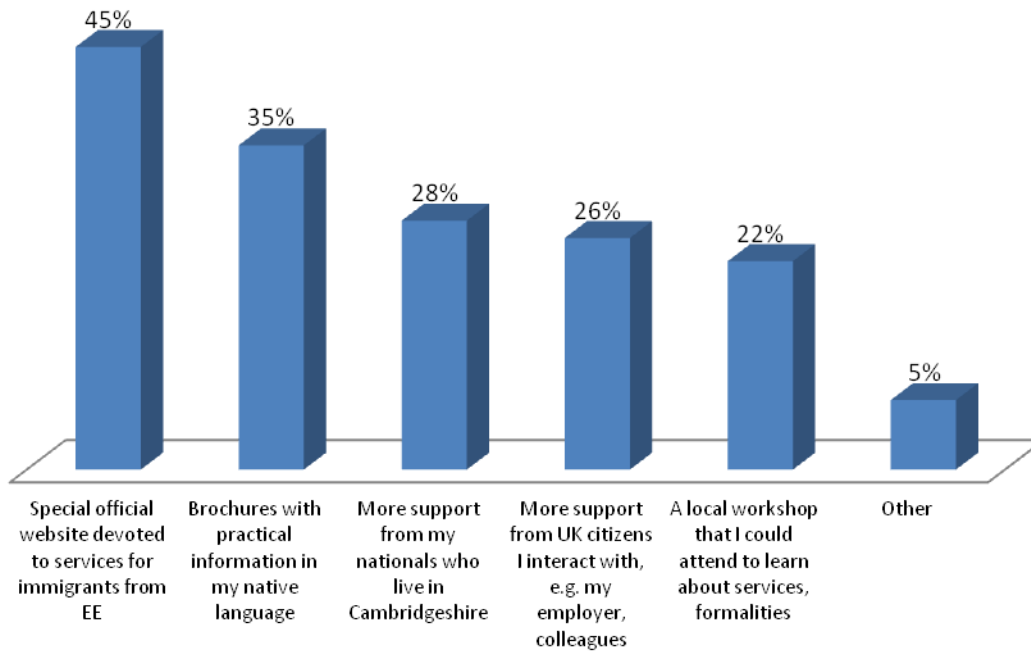
13) What preparations did you make for coming here



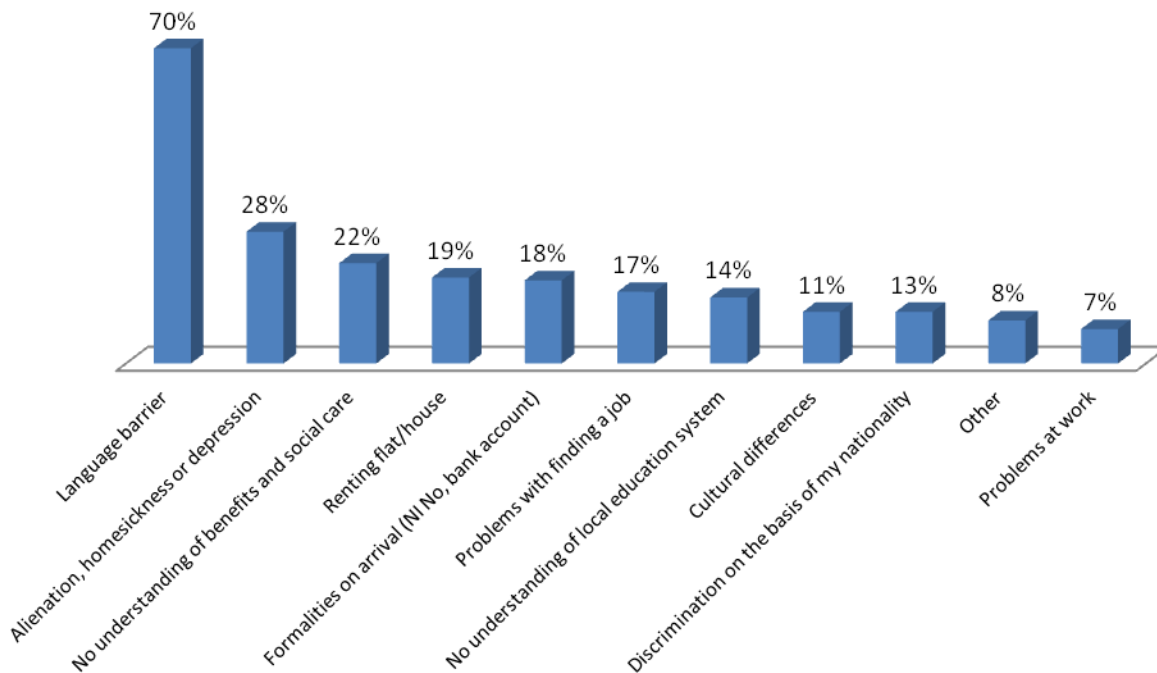
14) When you first came to Cambridgeshire, how did you first find out information about housing/services/employment?



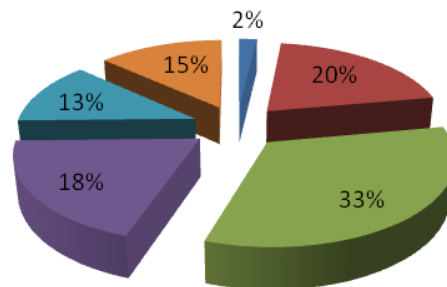
15) What would have helped you to settle in better?



16) What did you find most difficult when you came here?

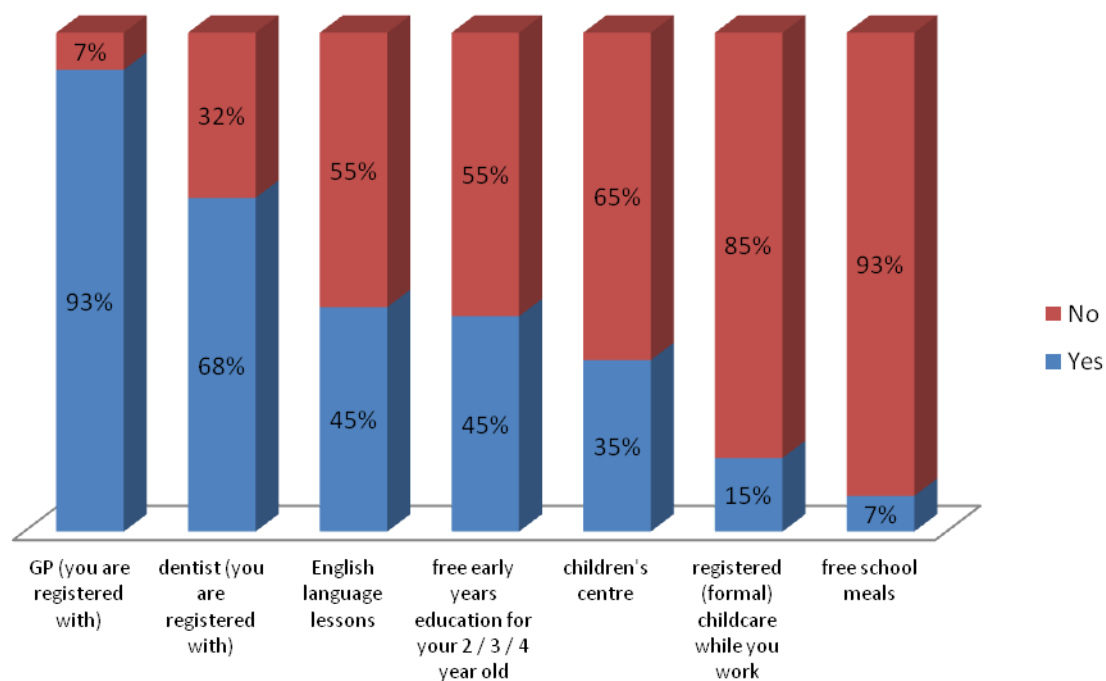


17) How do you assess your overall knowledge about local services provided by the Council and local organisations that your family could access?

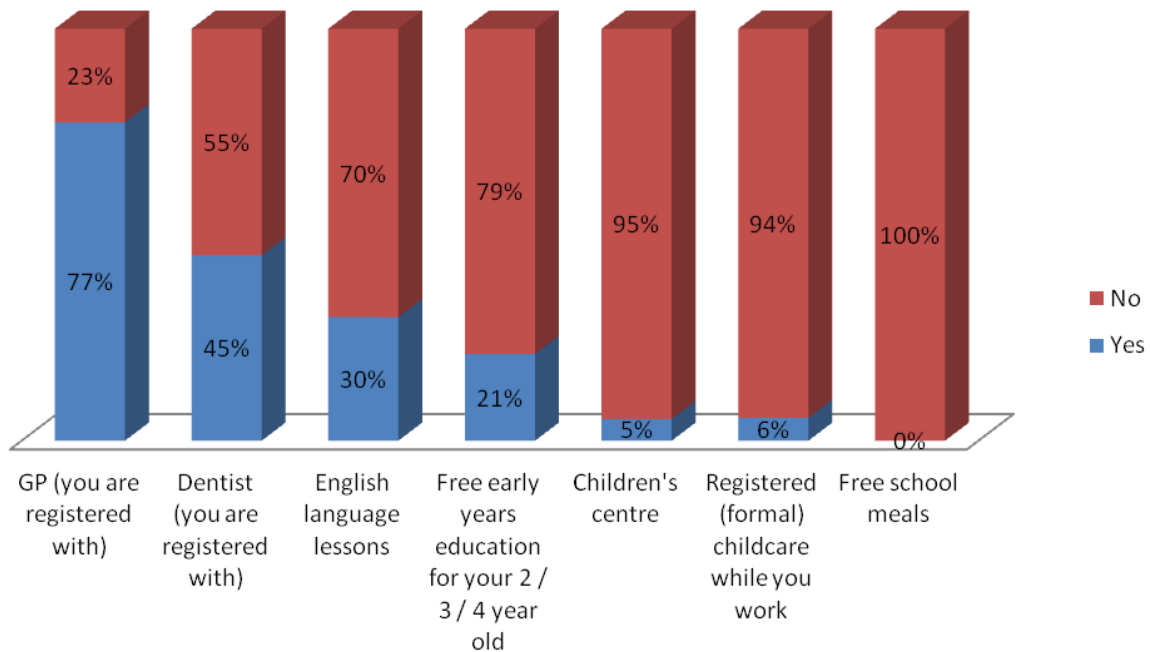


- No knowledge, not interested in knowing more
- No knowledge, would appreciate knowing more.
- Limited knowledge; information not easy to find
- Limited knowledge, good information available and I know where to look for it
- Very good knowledge, it required a lot of effort to gather information
- Very good knowledge, there's abundance of information accessible

18) Do you use / have you used the following services (all respondents):



Do you use / have you used the following services (only respondents who arrived in Cambridgeshire in 2012):

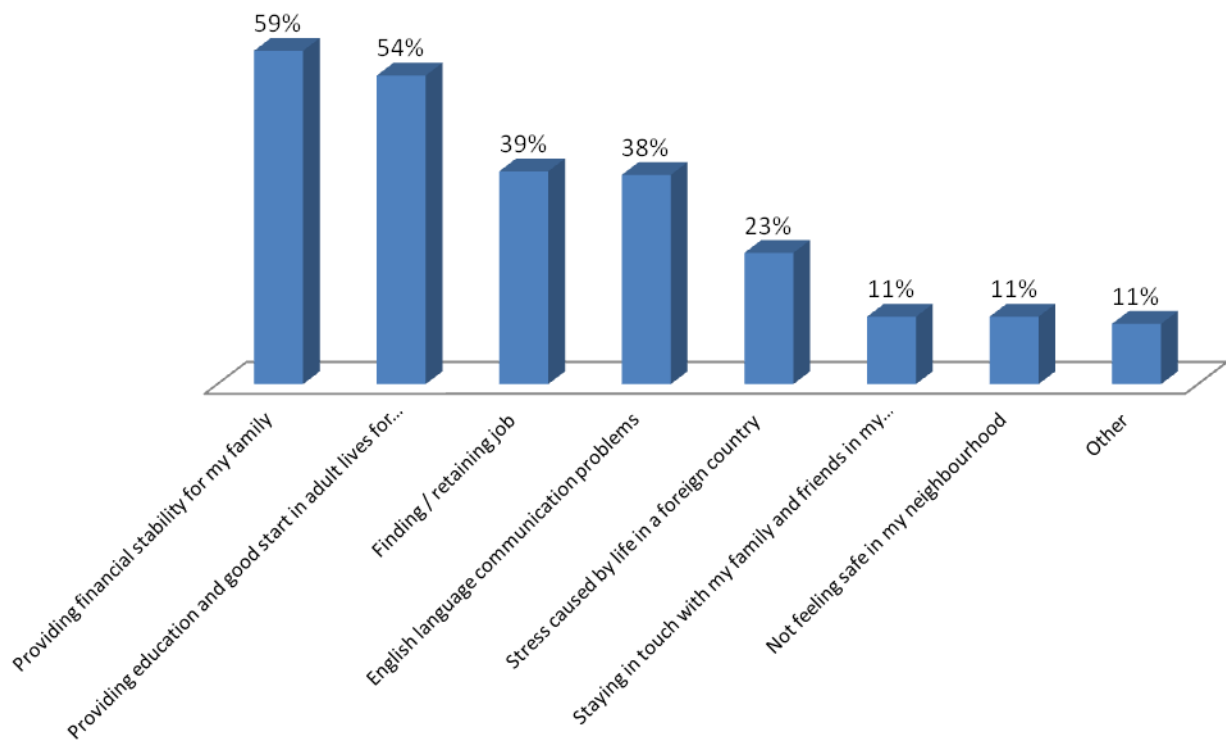


19) If not (if you do not use the following services), why? (open question, most common responses for each service)

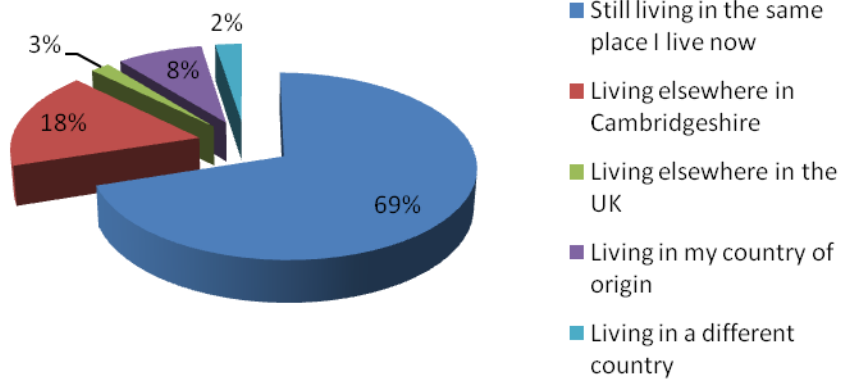
Service	Reason	% of all respondents
GP	- no need / healthy - no information	3% 1%
Dentist	- no need / healthy - no information - expensive - I go to dentist in my country	9% 3% 3% 3%
English language courses	- no information - timing of courses not convenient - English is good enough	12% 3% 3%
Free early education	- children too young/old - no need - no information - no places for my 2 year old	11% 10% 6% 1%
Children's centre	- no information - no need - no time - children too young/old	20% 9% 2% 1%

Registered childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no need - no information - I take care of my children alone / with my family help - no care accessible (due to location or timing required) 	18% 11% 7% 2%
Free school meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not eligible - no information - I do not want my children to eat at school / my children prefer homemade meals - no need 	16% 11% 7% 7%

20) What are you most worried about / challenged by?



21) Where do you think you will be living in 5 years time?



5. Parents focus group format

Introductions

1. Moderator makes a short introduction:
 - a) thanks everyone for coming;
 - b) introduces herself,
 - c) explains the aim of the consultation, who it was commissioned by, and what the main topic will be.
2. Moderator encourages all participants to introduce themselves in order to make everyone feel at ease and to share the following information:
 - a) their first name (or an alias, if they prefer);
 - b) their country of origin,
 - c) how long they have been in the UK/Cambridgeshire;
 - d) where in Cambridgeshire they live;
 - e) what age their children are;
 - f) what their favourite restaurant/pub/place to spend time in a city they live in (the moderator will take down names of all places – the aim of this exercise is to get to know each other better, encourage sharing information between participants and also create a list of places worth visiting that all participants could benefit of).
3. Moderator introduces ground rules for the meeting (and encourages participants to add their own rules):
 - a) Reminds how long the focus group will take and whether breaks are planned;
 - b) Asks participants not to share comments made during the focus group with people outside this group;
 - c) Asks that participants speak one at a time;
 - d) Asks participants to treat one another with respect;
 - e) Explains data confidentiality rules – individuals comments will be recorded but names or any other personal data of participants will not be used while presenting results of the consultations.

Engagement Questions

Moderator will ask participants to try to recollect their first months after their arrival to Cambridgeshire, what barriers they encountered and what they found helpful to settle in. Subsequently, she will ask what their plans for the future are. These questions will introduce participants to and make them comfortable with the topic of discussion.

1. Why did you choose Cambridgeshire as place to live?
2. Do you feel you settled in quickly when you came to Cambridgeshire?
3. When you first came to Cambridgeshire, how did you first find out information about housing/child care, health care and other services/employment?
4. What did you find helpful when you arrived?
5. What would have helped you to settle in better?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?
7. What are you most worried about/challenged by?

Exploration Questions

Moderator will first try to gauge what knowledge participants have about services offered by the Cambridgeshire without naming types of services accessible (spontaneous awareness). If participants have problems naming relevant services, moderator will help them and give names of specific types of services (formal childcare, free early years education, free school meals, children's centres, health services, English language lessons, etc.).

This is followed by questions aimed at understanding why participants decide to use or not specific type of service. Moderator will also ask participants to assess the quality of services they have used, how services could be improved and where the available services do not cater for their needs.

Moderator will use direct and indirect probes to get participants to expand upon their answer.

1. What services are available to parents / children in Cambridgeshire according to your knowledge?
Where did you learn about them?
Do you use / have you used any of them?
If yes, how did you find out about them?
If no, why not?
2. What services do you and your children appreciate most and why?
3. Are there any services that you have stopped using, as they were not useful or not adjusted to your needs?
Have you informed the Council about the reasons of your resignation?

Have you noticed any efforts to improve them?

4. What services that you would appreciate are not available in Cambridgeshire at all?
5. Do you think that the Council allows you to get involved in the decision making process around services and facilities that affect you and your family live?
Would you like to get more involved?

Exit Question

Moderator will ask the following question in order to check if anything was missed in the discussion.

1. Is there anything else you would like to say about how services could be improved or what other services would make your lives easier?

About PCG Advisory Services

PCG Advisory Services, Ltd. is a part of **Public Consulting Group, Inc.** (PCG), a privately held consulting firm with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Since it was founded in 1986, PCG has concentrated on providing management, consultancy and outsourcing services to the public sector, mainly in the fields of health, social care, and education. The combination of management expertise and government knowledge, experience, and focus has been a successful formula for PCG. It has been growing steadily since it was founded and currently is a firm of 40 offices and approximately 1200 employees across the United States, the United Kingdom (London), Canada (Montreal), and Poland (Warsaw and Lodz). From these offices, PCG provides services in countries throughout the world. PCG is a for-profit firm but is totally dedicated to helping make public services work better for the consumer and for the taxpayer.



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