

Healthwatch Thurrock

Brighter Futures Report



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Overview

Healthwatch Thurrock was asked by the Brighter Futures Board to complete a piece of work as an independent organisation.

The purpose was to gather the views of children and young people, carers and parents about their experiences of using the Brighter Futures services.

The information and feedback gathered will be used to shape services going forward.

Objectives and Scope

With the use of a targeted survey provided by Healthwatch Thurrock, 1000 users of Brighter Future Services were consulted via a paper and online survey.

In line with GDPR guidelines and to protect anonymity, the surveys were either sent out by Brighter Futures or users invited to complete via social media channels. All survey responses were received by Healthwatch Thurrock. An option to speak face to face with Healthwatch Thurrock was also offered.

All geographical areas of Thurrock were included in the surveys and of the 1000 surveys sent, a total of 191 were completed. This represents a robust data set of just under 20% of the current users of the Brighter Future services, who were surveyed.

The survey focused on several areas including;

- The service accessed
- The sessions accessed
- Referral route
- How supportive and good the service was
- What could have been better
- Invitation to make suggestions for improvement

Outcomes

The information gathered is contained within this report and will be used to inform future commissioned services and ensure service users voices are at the heart of service commission and provision.

Survey Constraints

- The survey was not compulsory
- Service users voices in receipt of social care services were reliant on providers of services contacting them directly from databases not available to Healthwatch Thurrock

About Healthwatch

Healthwatch Thurrock is the independent Health and Social Care services champion for the people of Thurrock. We gather and represent views of local residents in order to build up a picture of services that are doing well and where they can be improved.

Along with consultation work and gathering the voices of residents, Healthwatch Thurrock also provide an information, guidance and signposting service.

Residents are invited to “speak out” via an online forum as well as through targeted surveys, conversations and face to face engagement within the community.

Healthwatch Thurrock presents the voices of Thurrock to aid in identifying the need for change, considerations before commissioning and to support best practice across services.

Learning from a user led approach and hearing the voice of residents

Through conversation and engagement with people actually using the services Healthwatch Thurrock highlight and promote improvements.

We know that services are better when people are treated as individuals and are actively involved with shaping support.

To do this, services need to learn from examples of real experiences, how they can be adapted and fit around local needs.

It is also important to understand where services are working well and should be considered to be a blueprint of change when designing services and support.

Thurrock Picture

Thurrock consists of 20 wards. There is a great variance in the proportion of each wards population in terms of deprivation.

Only 6 of the 20 wards represented are green in the English indices of deprivation. At least 20% of Thurrock children live in poverty.

This in turn puts families and young people at greater risk of poor outcomes in Health, Education, Social and Housing issues.

It is therefore extremely important for Thurrock to provide supportive good quality Children's service to support the life chances of young people.

Thurrock has a very wide and diverse community that has been increasing by over 10% each decade. The Office of National Statistics estimate a population of 172,500 in 2018 with an expectation of 178,300 by the next census in 2021.

The estimates for 2018 based on projected data from 2015 (last census - Nomis) show a 0-19 age group population in Thurrock of 47,500 - broken down below. This equates to 27.5% of the total Thurrock population.

Age	Male	%	Female	%
Under 1 year	1300	1.5	1300	1.4
1-4 years	5500	6.5	5100	5.9
5-9 years	6600	7.7	6400	7.3
10-14 years	5900	7	5800	6.6
15-19 years	5000	5.9	4600	5.3
Total 0-19 years	24300	28.5	23200	26.5

Brighter Futures

Brighter Futures early help service is an integrated service encompassing Health Visiting, School Health (historically School Nursing), targeted support and a range of health interventions for children, young people and their families.

Brighter Futures Services

Thurrock Health Visiting Team - offering support, information and advice to parents with children within the Thurrock area from the antenatal state (pre-birth) to the age of 5 years.

Thurrock School Health Service - offering information, support, and advice to children, young people and their families who attend school in Thurrock. The aim of the service is to promote the physical, mental and emotional well-being of school aged children and young people (5-19) years and seek to develop skills they need to manage challenges they face in school, at home, in their personal lives or online.

National Child Measurement Programme - Raising awareness through weight measurement of potential health impacts. Offered to children between 4-5 and 10-11, the service provides information to parents with an opportunity to receive further support to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Hearing and Vision Screening - Screening for children aged 4-5 in schools by trained professionals. Results are given the same day and the team will reach out to parents should an unusual result be measured.

Children's Centres - Various services including family and parenting support, health services, activities for parents, carers and children and information / advice.

Prevention and Support Service - Focused support for families with specific needs including domestic abuse, parenting support and practical advice to prevent issues escalating and requiring statutory intervention.

What the survey told us

The survey asked which type of service had been accessed. Some respondents had accessed more than one service area eg: Children’s Centre or preventative support services. Most respondents selected they had used a Children’s Centre service or accessed a Preventative Support service at a Children’s Centre.

Children’s Centres are used for a variety of activities including ante natal, child development sessions and adult learning. From the surveys, 93% of responders had visited and used a service delivered by or at a Children’s Centre.

Children's Centre	178
Parental Outreach	21
Family Support	14
Community Support	7
Other	7
Social Worker	6
Youth Offer	3

The survey also asked what “other” services had signposted individuals or provided sessions at a Children’s Centre. The following were reported.

- Health Visitor
- Coram
- EWMSH
- Police
- Thurrock Council Housing
- SALT drop in
- EPEC

Children's Centre activity sessions

The most attended activity within a Children's Centre was Stay and Play. There were positive comments around how useful they were for both child development but also to support adult socialisation. When asked what was good people said:

"I liked how easy it was and how supportive and safe I felt at the centre"

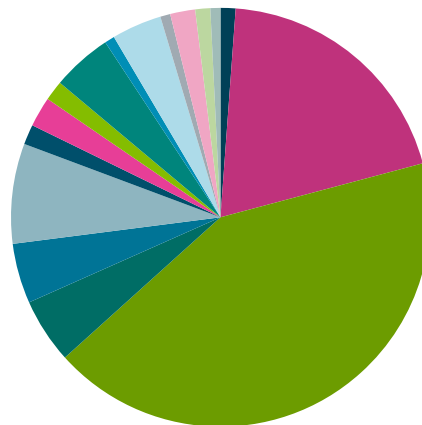
"Enjoy playtime and meeting other parents"

"Friendly staff, lovely place to socialise and meet other parents"

"Helps children to learn"

"Well planned and meeting new people"

"Important for kids and adult interaction, getting out of the house, socialising and learning new ways to play"



■ Childminder Group

■ Stay and Play

■ Baby Weigh

■ Adult Learning

■ Baby Based Group / Clinic

■ Development Review

■ Creche

■ Health & Fitness

■ Antenatal

■ Baby massage

■ Language Development Based Session

■ Play Based Group

■ Parenting Support Based Group

■ Specific or other

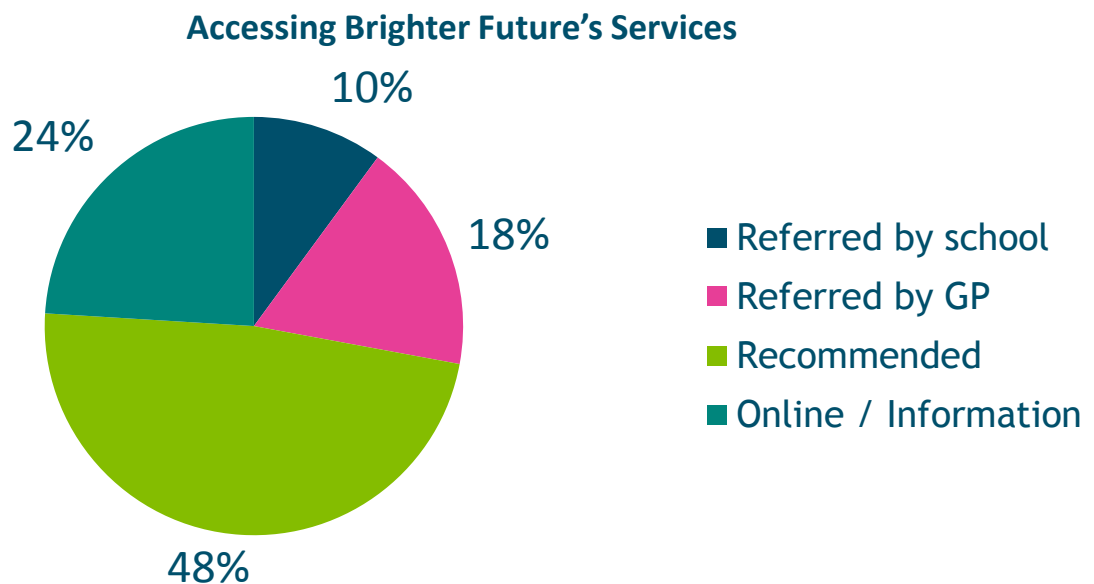
■ Reading or Book Group

■ First Aid

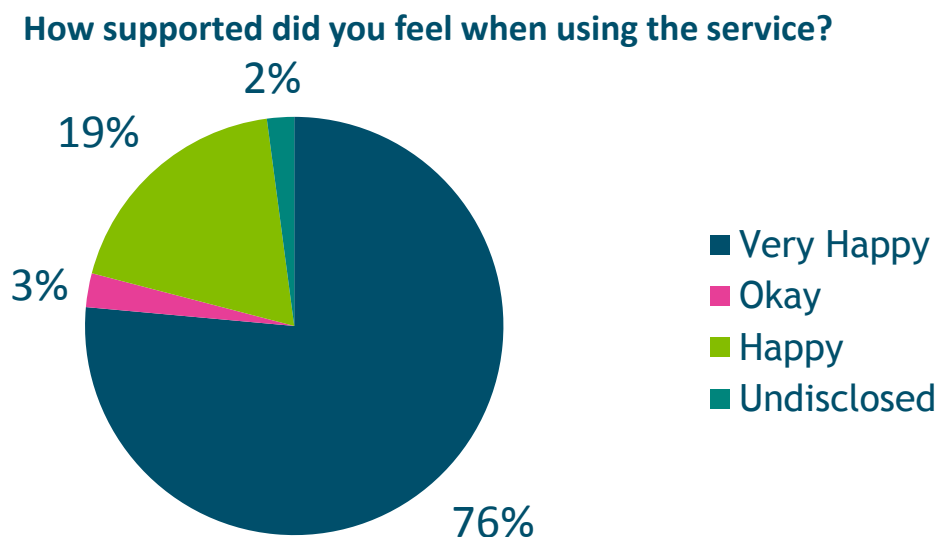
How were people put in touch with a Brighter Future's Service

The survey asked how people knew about the service and therefore accessed the various sessions or development groups.

Most of the responders did not disclose how they had first known about services. Of those that did, the majority had been recommended (48%). The second highest was through referral by a GP or school (18% and 10% respectively) and lastly 24% had seen information online.



People feel largely supported by the Brighter Futures Service with over 76% feeling Very Happy with support given.



What was good about the service?

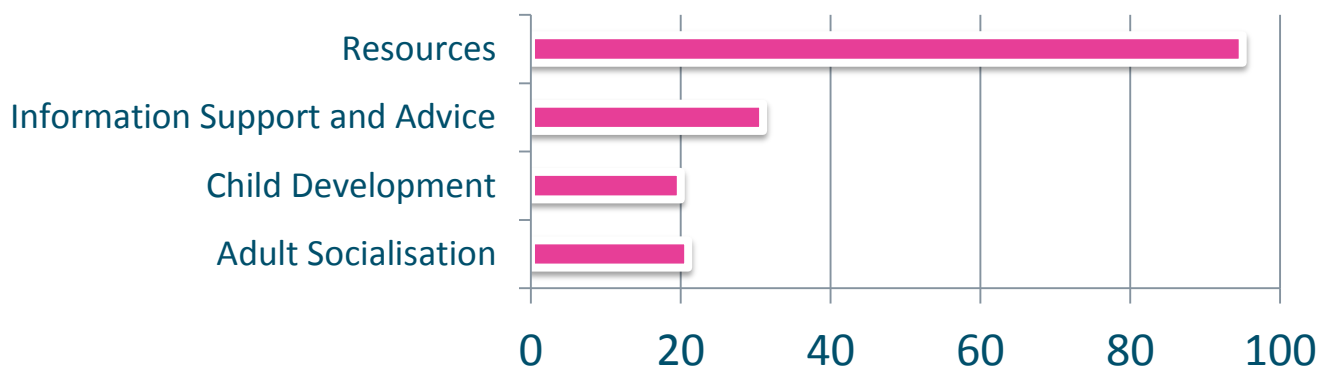
The survey asked what users identified as good about the Brighter Future's Services. This was a free text open question and the feedback was themed around the following:

- Adult socialisation and peer support
- Child development
- Information, Support and Advice
- Resources*

The answers showed a clear positivity for the sessions attended, staff working within them and the resources available.

*Resources were rated in several aspects such as staffing, environment, variety of sessions available and tangible things like equipment.

What was good about the service?



In particular, staff were mentioned by 32 surveys.

"The staff in the Children's Centre are fab"

"Staff are always friendly and helpful. Made aware of different services"

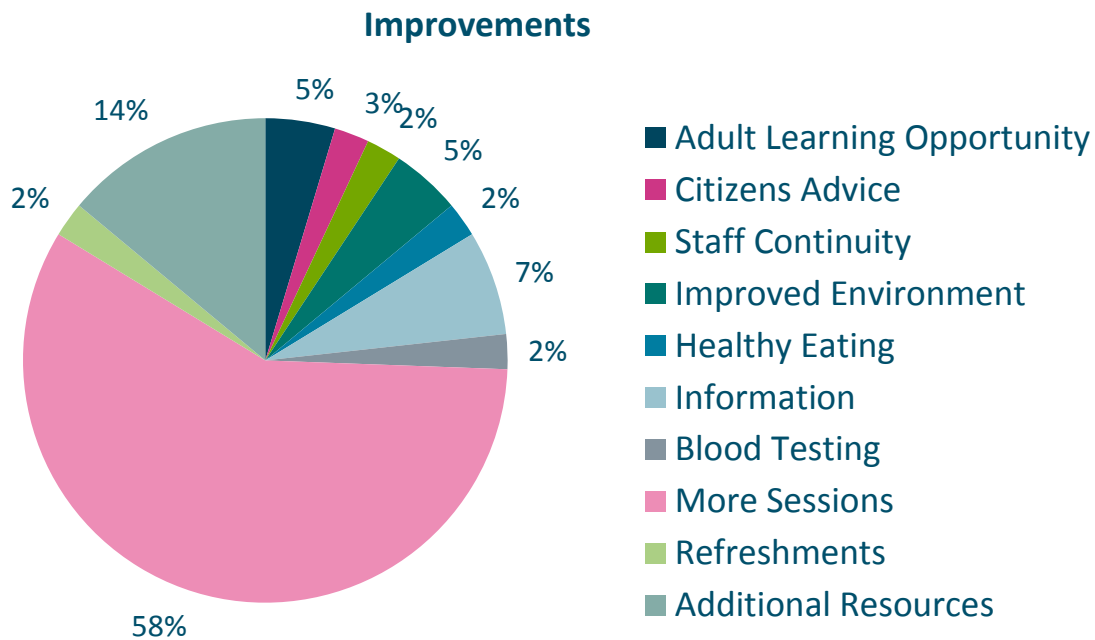
"Friendly staff, lovely place to socialise and meet other parents"



What could have been better about the service?

Responders were invited through the survey to make suggestions about what could be improved.

Over 33% of responders did make a suggestion, although 12% felt there was no improvements necessary.



The majority of surveys asked for longer and more sessions. This was requested mainly on the basis of additional times so partners could attend or fit in with individuals schedules or ages of children.

“More toddler groups and activities, as all groups put on are useful”

“A group Stay and Play on Saturday so Dads can come”

“More activities like messy play and nursery rhymes”

Other areas of improvement were around additional resources or information. Some suggestions were:

“Maybe a soft play”

“More books”

“Handouts or online resources”

Summary

Overall the impact of Children's Services was very positive. Lesser information was given by receivers of Prevention and Support services, however, there were no negatives measured around support for any service. The table below shows how happy people were with the support they received from a Brighter Futures Service irrespective of the way they accessed it.

Collectively the survey responses painted a picture of support, value and usefulness of all activities and gathered some ideas for improvement to the current offer.

Supported	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Neither Happy or Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy
Children's Centre Session			2	37	135
Social Worker Referral			2	1	5
Youth Offer Referral			2	1	1
Parental Outreach Referral			3	3	16
Family Support Referral				5	13
Community Support Referral				2	6
Other Referral			2	4	8

Feedback overall tended to focus on sessions accessed at Children's Centres.

A list of improvements in the survey are contained in Appendix A.

Appendix A - Improvements

More stay & Play on Thur/Fri

Some more toys

More playgroups for 2yrs

Healthy eating for child with allergies, exercise sessions.

More playgroups

More parent toddler groups

I would like to have more activities like messy play & nursery rhymes

More sessions

Would require more visits to access properly

Maybe a soft play

Could install a water cooler

More courses for me to do

More support for breastfeeding

Keep blood testing at centre

More people to help

Longer groups & more of them

CAB to attend. Also bloods is gone in centre

More advertising

More fresh air

Post natal mum fitness

Proper support for smaller babies

Paperwork handouts/online/downloadable

More weighing machines

More books

More for adult course

More parent groups

Maybe play music

Timing to be improved, helps parents mix

Longer time at the group

Air conditioning & more room

I would enjoy a longer session so we have more time to discuss

A group stay & play on Saturday so Dads can come

More activities/classes for children 18-24 months

Better communication

More toddler groups & activities, as all groups put on are useful

More groups in the afternoon

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